

Student CJ

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### A New World Awaits

In the dystopian world of Panem found in *The Hunger Games*, a novel by Suzanne Collins, death could be your only escape from a land crowded with unjust formalities. As families watch their children be taken every year to face their death in the arena, some may argue that living in Afghanistan is better. In *The Hunger Games*, the government requires 23 children to die every year for their entertainment, while in Afghanistan this process does not happen. In addition, the people in Panem could constantly feel trapped up inside their district with no escape, but people living in Afghanistan are allowed to do things more freely. Lifestyles in Afghanistan are also more preferable than those of people in Panem who go to work every hour, earning nothing. No food, no money, nothing, but a tired and sore body. In conclusion, living in Afghanistan is better than living in the world of *The Hunger Games* because of the more stable government, fewer limitations, and healthier lifestyles.

The government in Afghanistan is less stable than that of Panem but allows many more opportunities for the people. To start, the government in Panem is authoritarian as all the districts are controlled by the Capitol city. People living in the districts don't have any chances to voice their own opinions in the government while all the capital does is make them work and then obtain all of their products. Commerce hardly occurs, because the Capitol hoards all the goods while the district people have to work hours and hours, earning little to no money. Poaching is also prohibited mainly because of the inability to

leave the district's territory, causing many to starve to death with no main food sources around them.

In the second book of the series of Hunger Games, *Catching Fire*, Katniss says, "The pieces of the picture do not quite come together until I see his arm raise the whip." (Collins 105). During this time, Gale was being beaten for being caught carrying a turkey he got from hunting in the wilderness which was banned in all districts. Moreover, in *The Hunger Games*, it is mandatory to watch people fight to death in the arena with no escape, while some bid and laugh on who's going to win. However, those on the opposing side may think this seems acceptable compared to the many more wars in Afghanistan. Families have to watch their children being called to be in the game one by one, and every year all they can do is to hope not to be selected into the horrific games. This was especially difficult for Katniss, hearing her little sister's name be called in the drawing. In the first book, it states, "Prim is screaming hysterically behind me. She's wrapped her skinny arms around me like a vice. "No, Katniss! No! You can't go!" (23). Whereas, in Afghanistan, there isn't the idea of entertainment by watching people die in addition to the fear of having your name selected.

Lastly, not allowed to escape their district, with death meeting them first, the people in Panem have no rights. Meanwhile, in Afghanistan, people have a choice to live freely, although earning up for it could be a difficult task. Many may argue that the government of Panem is much more stable than the government in Afghanistan. For example, in Panem, the government is not always changing, due to the constant warfare and rebellions. Unlike Panem in which the capitol chooses everything, Afghanistan allows people to vote. The article written by Shereena Qazi and Alia Chughtai, talks about how voting is allowed in Afghanistan. "The Afghan government has striven to assure people

that it will be safe to vote....”(aljazeera). To give some backstory, Afghans were still in terror of the last Taliban attack. but they were still able to vote safely, contrasting the people living in Panem where voting is not an option. Not only is the government more organized in Afghanistan, but there are also less restrictions that the people have during their daily lives.

People living in Panem are limited to certain things in their life more than the people living in Afghanistan. In *The Hunger Games*, rebellions aren't allowed, causing the people to feel more captivated and controlled by the government. In the book *Catching Fire*, Katniss walks around looking for her friend's room, when she hears a random beep coming from the mayor's office. Hesitant, she examines the TV, only to discover an uprising in District 8. “I've never seen anything like it [the uprising], but I can only be witnessing one thing. This is what President Snow calls an uprising.” (88). Additionally, a huge number of deaths don't happen in the rebellions of Afghanistan. In Panem, an uprising causes thousands to die, sometimes with a gunshot to their skull. The Peacekeepers in Panem have strict rules in which everyone has to follow or they'll be asking for a death wish. In Afghanistan, the Taliban taking over can often cause massive rebellions against the government. To explain, the documentary, *The Complete History Of The Afghanistan War*, shows the time in which Afghanistan went against the taliban. Thousands of people died that year, causing the Taliban to be forever hated by everyone. Through the many rebellions, Afghanistan was still able to take over the Taliban, causing those attacks to become less common. But in Panem, the constant rule of the capitol never ends.

Although there might be more drastic rebellions in Afghanistan, they are not under full control, scared of doing the wrong thing every time they do something. While in

Afghanistan, rebellion can still happen at any time for the sake of their freedom, and usually, not as many get murdered in the process. But, in Panem, when a district rebels, their whole district could be decimated. Furthermore, people in Afghanistan don't feel captivated inside their country because if they're lucky, they would be able to escape too, whereas in Panem, there is no escape, and if you were to get caught, death would be your next step. Likewise, if a district were to rebel continuously, the capitol has full control of just bombing the whole district.

In the first book, *The Hunger Games*, during the reaping, they mention that the thirteenth district was brutally bombed after they rebelled. "The result was Panem, a shining Capitol ringed by thirteen districts, which brought peace and prosperity to its citizens. Then came the Dark Days, the uprising of the districts against the Capitol. Twelve were defeated, the thirteenth obliterated." (18). On the contrary, it may be argued that since people in Panem are to stay in their district without rebellion, they feel safer. But, the thought of always being watched, controlled, with no rights whatsoever is more frightening than having small wars here and there. Mentioned in the documentary, *Guns, Germs, and Steel* changed how the world fought forever. In Afghanistan, the U.S. has already donated millions of guns and steel weapons to help Afghanistan conquer any war. So far, the extra help seemed to work. In addition to having more freedom, the lifestyles of people in Panem are also better maintained.

Additionally, daily lives in Panem and Afghanistan are greatly different, both having pros and cons. For example, people living in Panem often have to add their name multiple times in the drawing, just to receive one more pound of food for the family. Without it, so many more families could be starving to death. As mentioned in the first book, *The Hunger Games*, "You can opt to add your name more times in exchange for

tesserae. Each tesserae is worth a meager year's supply of grain and oil for one person. You may do this for each of your family members as well. So, at the age of twelve, I had my name entered four times. Once, because I had to, and three times for tesserae for grain and oil for myself, Prim, and my mother." (13) Meanwhile, in Afghanistan, people don't have to risk their lives to death, just to provide food for their families. Although they could work more, their life would still be spared. People in Panem also have to work constantly, only to receive no money.

Along with the district people working non-stop, higher districts get more fortunate benefits too. People in District 1 live way better lives than people in district 12. The Capitol favors only some of the districts, giving them more opportunities than the other territories. While in Afghanistan, a person is able to gain what they worked for and everyone has the same equal rights. Sadly, many people living in the districts of Panem may experience feeling 'trapped' inside their district. Others may argue that people in Afghanistan don't get any medical care while in Panem districts still are able to heal the sick. But, in the year 2022, the United States donated more humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan; nearly \$134 million was donated from the Department of State to help Afghanistan care for those in need. And more than \$70 million from the U.S Agency for International Development was given (state.gov). To sum up, the lifestyle of Afghanistan people is better than those of people in the Hunger Games.

Afghanistan has better government, smaller amount of limitations, and better lifestyles are topics that prove that living in Afghanistan is better than living in Panem. Government shows that Afghanistan is better than Panem because of the overwhelming amount of control the capitol has in The Hunger Games compared to everyone else. The government in the Capitol has too much control, which could lead to warfare, but the

district people have nothing to do even if there was. All the control causes them to be highly controlled by the capitol. Even the people living within the capitol are oblivious to all the things happening in all the other districts. In other words, the capitol is twisting their minds. Moreover, people living in the districts have no freedom whatsoever and they have to work tirelessly, only to receive nothing but pain. People in the districts also have to sacrifice their own lives sometimes to feed their own family. If you were a child, living in Afghanistan, life would be better. Although you'll be scared of war, your family works, and are able to bring back food, even if it's the smallest amount. No such thing as the Hunger Games is there, people aren't picked yearly just to die, you could feel not controlled by the government, you would thrive. In conclusion, it would be better to live in Afghanistan than the hunger games because of the government, limitations, and lifestyle.

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