

SPATIAL APPARATUSES* IN CENTRAL ASIA.
THE CASE OF ASTANA

Gianni Talamini

IUAV, Architecture University, Venice, Italy
E-mail: giannitalamini@gmail.com

Abstract. The aim of the research is to reconstruct the *spatial apparatuses* that are being used in Central Asia after the collapse of the Soviet Union. What our analysis would like to report, is closely related to the central hypothesis from which our thesis departs: the evidence, in this case, of a symbiotic relationship between the forms of the becoming-urban of these territories (Astana, the new Kazakh capital, is the main case study) and the post-Soviet social dystopia^{**}; the fact that this dystopia is visible and understandable *in primis* through the lens of urban planning. Urban transformations, living standards, and *spatial welfare* are the main aspects that have been considered on a small scale. Transformations of territories, infrastructure development and the border *apparatuses* are, instead, the ones on a bigger scale.

Keywords: Central Asia, Astana, dystopia, spatial apparatuses.

Introduction

In the last two hundred years, the Central Asia has always been a centre of geopolitical question. Since the *Great Game* (Hopkirk 1992) started (in the early nineteenth century), until the first World War, tsarist Russia and England tried to conquer these territories. Russia formally conquered most of the area, but it started to have a strong control on the region only after it became the Soviet Union. In the period from 1920 to 1989, in a state of manifested stability, the Central Asia has been industrialized and its population has undergone a rapid process of sedentarization. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the five countries' independence, however, the *New Great Game* (NYT 1996) started: the world's most powerful nations established diplomatic relations and trade networks following the logic of energetic and strategic resources appropriation, as after the breakdown of the former Soviet Union huge new potential reserves of hydrocarbons were freed up in these territories (Herberg 2010). How geopolitics influences urban and regional planning, how it is translated into *spatial apparatuses*, are the main themes of this dissertation.

Study Area

The territory under analysis is the one that is commonly (we refer to the definition that has been given by the Commonwealth of Independent States) known as the Central Asia. It is located between Europe and Asia, in

a strategic position (Brzezinski 1997)¹, surrounded on one side by two powerful nations: Russia (North), China (East), and on the other side by problematic countries: Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran. The region under analysis includes these five republics of the former Soviet Union: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Even though they are the part of the same area, these countries are different in terms of extension, geo-morphological characteristics, population and resources. Kazakhstan is the largest one (with 2,724,900 km² it is the ninth vastest country in the world), followed by Turkmenistan (488,100 km²), Uzbekistan (447,400 km²), Kirghizistan (199,900 km²) and Tagikistan (143,100 km²). The first three are mostly flat and they are covered by steppe or deserts, while the last two are mountainous. Almost half of the fast growing population (in total 61,551,945) is concentrated in Uzbekistan (27,606,000), while the other half is distributed as follows: 16 million people live in Kazakhstan, 7.3 in Tajikistan, 5.5 in Kirghizistan and 5.1 million in Turkmenistan. Most of the underground natural resources are concentrated in Kazakhstan (Neef 2006)² and

¹ "Eurasia is thus the chessboard on which the struggle for global primacy continues to be played, and that struggle involves geostrategy – the strategic management of geopolitical interests".

² "Kazakhstan has boomed since it managed to gain control over its own natural resources, including oil, natural gas, uranium and gold. It has already set aside \$13 billion in reserves, is sending its own satellites into space and, with \$ 40 billion in foreign direct investment, is, with the exception of the Baltic states, the biggest per capita recipient of foreign capital among the states of the former Soviet Union".

the largest oil and gas reserves are found along the Caspian Sea and the entire region is involved in several pipeline projects (Escobar 2009), which in part have already been completed. The Caspian Region and, the Central Asia in general, is one of the world's last great frontiers – still partly unexplored – for geological survey and analysis, with profitable opportunities (Cheney 1998)³ for discovery, production, transportation and refining of massive quantities of oil and gas (Dorian 2001).

Astana, the new Kazakh capital, is our main case study: according to us, this city, better than all others, demonstrates the process of rapid modification faced by the entire region. Here changes are visible, evident. Contrariwise in other parts, particularly those that have not been subjects of economical and political interests, the state of abandonment and consequent deterioration could be observed. For these reasons, we concentrated on Astana, while also leaving the background in focus.

Methods

We have been using different kinds of approaches: firstly we studied the situation in many publications, then we worked on the field (using three main instruments: photography, interviews and *dérive*) and finally we connected the two distinct analyses with conceptual maps. An important part of our work has been the collection of material in the local institutions, specifically in archives, libraries, universities and urban planning offices. Our hypotheses started not only from the first kind of approach, but also from the *work on the field*: in our research we have always sought a dialectical relationship between the two spheres.

1. Urban Transformations: from a Socialist City to a Potemkin Capital

Astana is the last name of a town (Akmolinsk, Tselinograd, Akmola, Astana) that has been developed since the 1830's, but that has been a village for more than 120 years: indeed the village became a town in the fifties, when Nikita Khrushchev, the leader of the Soviet Union at the time, decided to transform it into the *Virgin Lands*' capital. The town didn't grow very much and it was still a small centre (less than 300,000 inhabitants) when in 1997, Nursultan Nazarbayev (the first and only Kazakh president) changed it into the capital of his young republic. The capital was moved from Almaty to Astana for many and partly still obscure reasons: if on one hand Nazarbayev – who is said to have taken this decision intuitively (Antelava

2006) – wanted to emulate Peter the Great or Kemal Ataturk, on the other, it is clear that some geopolitical reasons also lay behind: in the north of the country, where oil reserves are located, ethnic Kazakhs were a minority to the ethnic Russian majority and Almaty location is in close proximity to China; moving the capital closer to the country's centre meant having a better control on such a vast territory. But there is also other explanation that many experts give: Nazarbayev wanted to set apart himself and his government from Almaty's powerful business clans (Jensen 2009; Neef 2006). For these reasons and with weak official justifications (e.g. earthquake risk) the capital was moved; since that moment a huge amount of money (Jones Luong 1999⁴; FCA 1998: 8; Kuandykov 1997: 1) – according to the official sources, \$2 billion a year – ran into the ambitious project realization, “in establishing an intimate symbolic association between the new capital and the country's absolutist father-figure” (Jensen 2009).

It is possible to divide the recent urban transformations into three main categories:

- What is called *the new city*, a new part of the city, which has been initially developed according to Kisho Kurokawa's masterplan;
- Old downtown restyling;
- Peripheral development.

In 1997 Kisho Kurokawa, probably the most representative Japanese Metabolist, won the competition for the new capital, with a masterplan that concentrated all the institutions on a monumental axis on the left bank of the Ishim River. The project was heavily reworked and the definitive version presented in 2001 is actually based on the masterplan that has been developed by the Saudi Binladin Group (2000).

The buildings on the new axis refer to plenty of different styles and if we want to comprehend them all in a word we must talk about eclecticism; what unites them is also the influence of the head of the state – who personally approves every project – on their design. Even the star-architects “who win construction assignments because of their reputation as the cultural avant-garde, have to compromise the independence and the culturally liberating practice that give them their social legitimacy. At some point the artistic autonomy invoked by these world-famous architects has to submit and adapt to a symbolic language that is ready-made and controlled by a political elite” (Jensen 2009).

If the new developments on the left bank of the Ishim

³ “I cannot think of a time when we have had a region emerge as suddenly to become as strategically significant as the Caspian”.

⁴ “Kazakhoil is estimated to have spent \$25–30 million on improvements in Astana. The President of Kazakhoil himself admitted that “a major portion of the oil dollars are being invested in the construction of the new capital”.

River are the place where most of the economic and intellectual energies were and are focused, the old down-town, where government was temporarily settled in 1997, has been quickly renewed, and with an operation of cheap make-up “Astana’s urban planners have concealed Khrushchev’s pre-fabricated concrete high-rises behind white façades, creating space for pubs and nightclubs on their ground floors” (Neef 2006).

What happened to the periphery is more complicated: spontaneous sprawl is mixing with new edifices that have been developed mainly by Kazakh and Turkish companies, with a high rate of speculation and deadly accidents (Kazinform 2006a, 2006b; Neef 2006; Radio Free Europe 2009); according to Tsubokura Takashi, Kurokawa’s assistant, these buildings, and many of the new ones, won’t last more than 20 years (Neef 2006). Finally, in the southern part of the city, where many old little dachas are located, new big constructions like the airport, football stadium, velodrome and ice stadium seem to land as giant UFOs in the middle of nowhere.

Astana, with its fictitious façades, its empty new buildings, its garish or kitschy architectures and its tawdry lighting, seems to be something midway between a disneyesque city (Baudrillard 1996) and a *Potemkin metropolis* (Koolhaas 2000).

2. Standard of Living

Architecture is not the only reflection of changes in Kazakhstan, which are clearly visible in society. If our goal is to reveal the connections between architecture and society, we must first focus on the latter through units of measure such as income distribution and social inequalities.

Even if the Gini coefficient lists Kazakhstan at the same level as some developed countries that have a strong welfare system, our analysis evidences how inequalities in the biggest country of the Central Asia country are growing. The gap between different parts of the population is constantly increasing in terms of salaries and freedoms: in some areas of work like education (Tolstoy 2010)⁵, mines (Franchetti 2008)⁶ and construction, salaries haven’t changed so much in the last decade, while in others (e.g. oil (Kalinina 2010)⁷) remunerations are rising impressively.

⁵ “According to the Republic of Kazakhstan’s Statistics Agency, the average salary in the “Education” sector for June 2010 was 61 765 tenge (\$418.7).”

⁶ “[...] miners said that the highest salaries after 20 years’ service were still only £500 a month”.

⁷ “Many Kazakh professionals earn 20,000–45,000 KZT (US \$135–\$306) per month, while oil workers earn about 200,000 KZT (US \$1,360) per month”.

Also in the pension system there is a huge gap between the different classes: for instance the military, one of the most privileged categories, can achieve retirement after only 25 years of service (Republic of Kazakhstan 2010). The old public social security treatment (*pay-as-you-go*) was replaced by a private one (the first private pension system in the Commonwealth of Independent States) starting from 1997 and migrant workers do not enjoy the right to pension benefits as they are not recognized as permanent residents in the country (Vadim 2008) – a conspicuous part of Astana’s construction labor comes from Uzbekistan. A similar situation affects the public healthcare system and public education, which are decaying to the benefit of the private ones. Although, in general, we can observe that living standards have increased thanks to economical growth, but inequalities are increasing and the population below the poverty line is still at 12.1% (CIA 2010).

3. Spatial Welfare

If salary, pensions, healthcare, education and, more widely, social services form the basis of wellbeing, welfare is not just a matter of them, but it has a lot to do with space: with the comfort that a particular space can provide us, with the ease of access and use of public places, with the number of them and quality of services (Munarín, Tosi 2009)⁸.

If Astana is changing fast, most of its population is still living in the old Soviet blocks, which are left to their slow deterioration and are located on the right bank of the Ishim River, on the opposite side of the *new city*. The apartment prices on the left side are so high (Neef 2006)⁹, that only a few can afford to move there and the new public areas are so far away that they are “used only on weekends or public holidays. So, in terms of common spaces, the new development seems, in working days, to have been built for nobody and the population still have to deal with lack of services, flooding streets or rusted playgrounds; in short, with the same previous situation.

⁸ “Children’s day-care or a nursery that is too far from home, the discontinuity of a sidewalk or bicycle path, the absence of a nearby baker, the insufficient shelter of the bus stop, the negligible presence of green spaces and the difficulty to maintain those existing, the inefficiency of drainage systems for roads: all these aspects may be considered a short list in which we can begin to specify what makes for laborious living in our territory”.

⁹ “**Though just completed, the 459 “Elite” and “Deluxe” condominiums in the “Triumph” Palace behind the “Astana Tower” are already sold out, at a price per square meter of about €1,300. The sum is roughly the equivalent of a Kazakh teacher’s average annual salary – nevertheless “every second customer paid in cash”, says Shanar Ainabulatova, the deputy director of Basis-A, the developer of Astana’s new high-rise residences”.**

4. Architectonic Apparatus

However welfare is also something else: as well as of materiality, it may also be made of something intangible, such as freedom or happiness. It's exactly there, in the search for welfare, in the desire of happiness, that the *apparatus* takes root, and "the capture and the subjectivization of this desire in a separate sphere, is the specific power of the *apparatus*" (Agamben 2006: 26). Astana's architectonic apparatus works exactly like this: projecting an image of a golden future in the lack of ideals left by the collapse of communism ("the ideology of building Communism was so heavily imposed on everything, and the moment it was gone, a huge gap was left there waiting to be filled" (Ulykbanov 2010)), capturing in a standardizing image, deceptive production of a subject and illusion of individual freedom. It does that in the same way as other contemporary capitalist processes of de-subjectivization ("It sends out visual messages to the people of what one should dream of, creating a desire of money and fancy lifestyle. Architecture, just like TV ads, has become another medium through which one is imposed with a certain lifestyle" (Ulykbanov 2010)), with the consequent "triumph of *oikonomia*, which is a pure activity of the government which aims only to reproduce itself" (Agamben 2006: 32).

Architecture also works as a *mythological machine* (Jesi 1993), with a set of references ranging from Washington to Abu Dhabi (i.e. Ak Orda), from the traditional Kazakh yurt (i.e. *Khan-Shatyr*) to quotations from 19th-century European architecture (e.g. *Romance* neighborhood), from the Soviet architecture replicas (i.e. *Triumph*) to mere symbolism (e.g. Palace of Peace and Reconciliation, finance ministry palace). Astana's architecture uses the myth in a *technicalized* (Jesi 2008) way: its purpose is to legitimize a power that has lost the old Soviet reference points and is facing a hybrid political condition characterized by the mixture of references (religions, clans, Western World). In this context, the elites must build, or invent, a new ideology that can strengthen people's sense of belonging to the new nations. The state provides images that are based on mythology or on any element that, properly treated, could form a basis for symbols shared by all parts of society (Jelen 2000: 142–143). The process constitutes a reconstruction of both the political and cultural tradition; various literary and artistic expressions, folklore, dances and folk music, epic literature and narrative are used as a cultural and moral legitimacy of the new independent state. It is in this way that the architecture becomes a tool, an instrument in the hands of power (Jelen 2000: 134–135).

5. The Background

Transformations of Territories, Infrastructure Development and Border Apparatus

The peculiarities of condition in the post-soviet Central Asia are social and territorial fractures: only some social or geographical areas have been and are going to be developed. In these areas, living standards are the same as in the most advanced part of the western world: five star hotels, new nomenklatura's palaces, ski resorts or future (and futuristic) gambling cities are just a few examples. On the other hand, the new class of poor remain excluded from all this. Excluded are the former regime apparatchiks, retirees and employees on fixed incomes – regardless of their education level and curriculum – the collective-farm population and the unemployed (Jelen 2000: 146).

Looking to the situation on a city scale, we can notice how old quarters, lacking even basic services, clash against new gilded neighborhoods; observing it from a higher point of view it's plain to see how some cities (e.g. the ones where the headquarters of oil companies are located) are incredibly growing, while others (e.g. the ones on the south of Kazakhstan or the ones close to the Aral Sea) are left to their own miserable destiny.

Public infrastructure development also seems to follow the same principles, a lack of an overall vision, with clear increase of differences. The only infrastructure that has enjoyed a unitary project (due to economical and geopolitical reasons), and that has been built within record time, is the pipelines, which already forms a network so vast that someone renamed the Central Asia *Pipelinestan* (Escobaar 2009). If we point out on the map the cities connected by this network, we can easily spot the fast growing ones.

Among the things that have changed after the collapse of the Soviet Union is the role played by the borders. These lines, that had a secondary function during the communist times, are now a powerful control *apparatus*. Their system is based on the same catch (inclusion / exclusion) mechanism as all the others *apparatuses*, but in this case they work with the concept as nation, ethnicity and identity. They are used to build up a subjectivization based on the nineteenth-century idea of a nation-state rather than through a developed system of biopolitical control. The effects of policies related to the creation of an image built to give strength to the idea of a new Kazakh state have been immediately visible: from 1992 to 2000 1.5 million Russians left the country, "by contrast, ethnic Kazakhs are being encouraged to return to Kazakhstan and are initially supported by a state fund that provides money for the resettling of Kazakhs returning to their motherland" (Brill Olcott 2010).

Since 1989 and especially after the independence, in the Central Asia, ethnic conflicts grew (e.g. Osh riots – Kirghizistan 1990 / 2010, Khwarezm, Karapalkastan) and we can register new migratory flows due to the differences generated by the border *apparatus*. This produces a social polarization that can be traced back to an imposed form – there are obvious influences of geopolitics – of balkanization. Focusing on the territory, it is evident how cities that in the past have been trading hubs because of their strategic positions (e.g. Shymkent, Taras) have now lost their importance in favor of centers (e.g. Atyrau, Astana) connected to the international economic network (not, as in the past, to the local). The process is basically one of coagulation and fragmentation with its most visible effect.

6. Conclusions

The two *apparatuses* we have described are just a small part of the governmental ones; we decided to focus on them because more than others they are related to space and *spatial justice* (Soja Edward 2010), besides being directly connected to our disciplinary field. Observing how they work reveals the society in its transition from communism to a free market economy, characterized by dystopian aspects. It is also evident – even if we have not analyzed it directly – that in this delicate transition process the role and responsibilities of developed countries are enormous.

References

- Agamben, G. 2006. *Che cos'è un dispositivo?* Roma: Nottetempo.
- Ahrari, M. E.; Beal, J. 1996. *The New Great Game in Muslim Central Asia*. McNair Paper 47, January 1996. Institute for National Strategic Studies and National Defence University, Washington, DC.
- Antelava, N. 2006. *Giant tent to be built in Astana* [online]. Available from Internet: <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/6165267.stm>>.
- Baudrillard, J. 1996. Disneyworld Company, *Liberation* March 4: 1–3.
- Brill Olcott, M. 2010. *Kazakhstan: Unfulfilled Promise?* Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.
- Brzezinski, Z. 1997. *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives*. New York: BasicBooks.
- CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) 2010. *CIA World Factbook 2010*. (cia.gov).
- Cohen, A. 1996. *The New "Great Game": Oil Politics in the Caucasus and Central Asia*. January 25th 1996, Background 1065, The Heritage Foundation.
- Dorian, J. P. 2001. Oil, gas in FSU Central Asia, northwestern China, *Oil & Gas Journal* September 10: 3.
- Escobar, P. 2009. Liquid War Across Asia and the Asia-Pacific: Postcard from Pipelineistan, *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 21(2).
- FCA. 1998. A New Capital is Being Built with Money from Sold Oil, *Focus Central Asia* February 15th 3.
- Foucault, M. 1980. The Confession of the Flesh (1977) interview, in *Power/Knowledge Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977*, Colin Gordon, Pantheon Books, New York.
- Franchetti, M. 2008. *Cannon fodder' men dying in mines of UK's richest man. The Kazakh miners say conditions were better in Soviet times* [online]. Available from Internet: <<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/europe/article3736048.ece>>.
- Herberg, M. E. 2010. *Pipeline Politics in Asia: Energy Nationalism and Energy Markets* [online]. Available from Internet: <www.nbr.org/publications/specialreport/pdf/preview/SR23_preview.pdf>.
- Hopkirk, P. 1992. *The Great Game: The Struggle for Empire in Central Asia*. New York: Kodansha International.
- Jelen, I. 2000. *Repubbliche ex sovietiche dell'Asia Centrale: nuovi centri, nuove periferie, nuove frontiere*. Torino: UTET.
- Jensen, B. 2009. Astana in My Mind, *Scenarios and speculations* 1: 62–71.
- Jesi, F. 1993. *La macchina mitologica in Scritti italiani*. Napoli: Guida.
- Jesi, F. 2008. *Mito*. Torino: Aragno.
- Jones Luong, P. 1999. Kazakhstan: The Long-Term Costs of Short-Term Gains, *Energy, Wealth, and Development in Central Asia and the Caucasus* 10(3): 29–59.
- Kalinina, Y. 2010. *KazMunaiGas strike enters 3rd week in spite of police pressure* [online]. Available from Internet: <http://centralasiaonline.com/cocoon/caii/xhtml/en_GB/features/caii/features/business/2010/03/15/feature-02>.
- Kazinform 2006. *A worker died at the Astana construction site, Astana*, October 12th, 2006. Kazinform.kz
- Kazinform 2006. *Worker dies at one of construction sites in Astana*, Astana. July 3rd, 2006. Kazinform.kz
- Koolhaas, R. 2000, *Singapore Songlines: Portrait of a Potemkin Metropolis, or, Thirty Years of Tabula Rasa*. Eds. Malcolm Miles, Tim Hall and Iain Borden, Routledge, London.
- Kuandykov, B. 1997. Baltabek Kuandykov, President, National Oil and Gas Company, Kazakhoil, *Kazakhstanskaia pravda* December 3: 29–59.
- Munarin, S.; Tosi, M. C. 2009. The New Urban Question – Urbanism beyond Neo-Liberalism, in *The 4th International Conference of the International Forum on Urbanism (Ifou)*. November 26–28, 2009, Amsterdam/Delft.
- Neef, C. 2006. *Central Asian Powerhouse: The Kazakhstan Klondike* [online]. Available from Internet: <<http://www.spiegel.de/international/spiegel/0,1518,447451,00.html>>.
- NYT. 1996. *The New Great Game in Asia* [online]. Available from internet: <<http://www.nytimes.com/1996/01/02/opinion/the-new-great-game-in-asia.html>>.
- Oxford English Dictionary*. 1989. Oxford University Press. 2nd ed. Oxford.
- Radio Free Europe. 2009. *Fire At Astana Warehouse Kills At Least 16* [online]. Available from Internet: <http://www.rferl.org/content/Fire_At_Astana_Warehouse_Kills_At_Least_16/1873927.html>.
- Rashid, A. 2000. *Taliban: Islam, Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia*. London: I. B. Tauris.

- Republic of Kazakhstan 2010. *Pension provision of military men* [online]. Available from Internet: <<http://mod.gov.kz/mod-en/index.php/2009-06-24-08-09-40>>.
- Sneider, D. 1992. New 'Great Game' in Central Asia, *The Christian Science Monitor* May 5th, 10.
- Soja, E. W. 2010. *Seeking Spatial Justice*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Tolstoy, A. 2010. *Teacher Salaries in Kazakhstan and Abroad* [online]. Available from Internet: <<http://www.neweurasia.net/business-and-economics/teacher-salaries-in-kazakhstan-and-abroad/>>.
- TRANS: 2009. *What is an Apparatus?* in *What is an Apparatus? And Other Essays*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Ulykbanov, K. 2010. *Architecture of Astana as a projection of ideology of its time* [online]. Available from Internet: <http://kazakhstudents.org/all/kazakhstan/architecture_of_astana_as_a_projection_of_ideology_of_its_time/>.
- Vadim, N. 2008. *Rights of Migrant Workers in Kazakhstan: National Legislation, International Standards and Practices*. Almaty: ILO.

CENTRINĖS AZIJOS ERDVINIAI MODELIAI. ASTANOS ATVEJIS

G. Talamini

Santrauka

Tyrimo tikslas – rekonstruoti erdvinius modelius, naudojamus Centrinėje Azijoje po Sovietų Sąjungos žlugimo. Nagrinėjamas Astanos, naujos Kazachijos sostinės, atvejis. Analizuojamas posovietinės socialinės distopijos reiškinys ir jo suvokimas per urbanistinio planavimo prizmę. Miesto transformacijos, gyvenimo standartai ir erdvinė gerovė yra pagrindiniai aspektai, kurie buvo detalai analizuojami.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: Centrinė Azija, distopija, erdviniai modeliai.

* Apparatus

“What I’m trying to pick out with this term is, firstly, a thoroughly heterogenous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions—in short, the said as much as the unsaid. Such are the elements of the apparatus. The apparatus itself is the system of relations that can be established between these elements”. (Foucault 1980: 194–228).

“Further expanding the already large class of Foucauldian apparatuses, I shall call an apparatus literally anything that has in some way the capacity to capture, orient, determine, intercept, model, control, or secure the gestures, behaviors, opinions, or discourses of living beings.” (Agamben 2009: 14).

** Dystopia

“An imaginary place or condition in which everything is as bad as possible; opp. Utopia (cf. Cacotopia). So dystopian n., one who advocates or describes a dystopia; dystopian a., of or pertaining to a dystopia; dystopianism, dystopian quality or characteristics.”

The example of first usage given in the OED (1989 ed.), cites “1868” writing by John Stuart Mill: “1868 J. S. Mill in Hansard Commons 12 Mar. 1517/1 It is, perhaps, too complimentary to call them Utopians, they ought rather to be called dys-topians, or caco-topians. What is commonly called Utopian is something too good to be practicable; but what they appear to favour is too bad to be practicable”. (Oxford English Dictionary 1989).