



Will be there a world?



In the aftermath of history's greatest nuclear disaster, the explosion of a power plant in Chernobyl in 1986, the German sociologist Ulrich Beck coined the term "Risk Society", which would be the title of his seminal book years later. Far beyond the paranoia of a nuclear war that had fostered nightmares throughout the Cold War period, Beck analysed many other threats that would menace the existence of mankind on the long term. Irreversible environmental changes, sudden tragic economical crises, super-population, massive displacements, uncontrolled outbreaks of new super diseases, terrorism, starvation... Beck foresaw many of the challenges we are facing nowadays and, frankly, I doubt whether we, as a global society, are mature enough to cope with it.

Elysium: the triumph of the 1%

The 2013 Neil Blomkamp feature film "Elysium" is probably not a sci-fi masterpiece, but the movie is generous in providing hints of mankind's future. It takes place in the year 2154, an age when mankind is definitely and literally torn apart. The wealthy minority lives in an artificial heaven: a giant spaceship where everything is controlled, without disease, violence, environmental disturbance and so on. The majority of mankind keeps living on Earth, a true hell, where, among the ruins and pollution, people experience a semi-slavery system, where they are controlled by robots.

Democracy and the digital age

In 2100 the term "democracy" certainly will be nothing more than an entry in one of those encyclopedia websites. It will be as old-fashioned as the Middle Ages for our contemporary eyes. With a delay of 116 years, the predictions of the English writer George Orwell in his masterpiece "1984" will come true – actually, they're coming true right now! In a recent interview with BBC News, the German guru of Big Data Martin Hilbert warned: democracy is not ready for the digital age. From his point of view, we are experiencing a sort of control foreseen by Orwell.