

1. David Rieff: “Civil Society and the Future of Nation State”.

This is a somewhat confusing newspaper article. The author begins with a fast survey of the vague concept called ‘Civil Society’. After that, he expresses his skepticism about its virtues, without to take the previous step to define the term he is going to talk about. Rieff blends references to countries, states, governments and globalization, without an adequate order and clarity; and stating emphatically the only thing I can got from his paper: that he doesn’t share the faith of many people about all this stuff of ‘civil society’. In contrary as the article’s title suggests, Rieff never states what the problem he is going to talk is; neither is consistent in his terms nor *arguments*. It’s too much to expect that he gives some kind of *evidence* supporting his position. My only point for him is for underlying that ‘bad’ NGO’s, like the National Rifle Association, could be also called ‘civil society, as well as ‘good’ or humanitarian inspired ones.

2. Jessica T. Mathews: “Power Shift”.

This *Foreign Affairs*’ paper is an overall description, in plain English, of the global redistribution of power that has been happened since the end of II War, and especially in the past 20 years, with emphasis in the new roles of NGO’s on international issues. Mathews makes a survey of the main characteristics of the political and cultural changes in the social and politic arenas that has been induced by the technological revolution in information management and retrieval, as well as personal and institutional communication. All the way along this paper, the author maintains her discourse close to her initial statements: “Power shift” and “The rise of Civil Society”. This is an easy reading, clear and informative, but not particularly analytic. Considering the date of this paper, 1997, some of its concepts could be considered *public domain*, but this doesn’t diminishes its inherent values: the text “stand alone”. On the other hand, if you are well informed and updated in globalization issues, this reading could seem more or less irrelevant.

3. Mary Kaldor: “The Idea of Global Civil Society”.

This reading is a scholar memorial lecture; therefore it’s a soundly built and carefully reasoned paper. Its main feature is a review of the historical roots and philosophical evolving of the ‘civil society’ concept, as well as its changing role in a number of contexts. Kaldor makes a survey of the civil society considered as social movement, institutionalized opposition, and most recently, as an emerging ‘global civil society’. Interesting paragraphs are those devoted to the coincident role of civil society both in Latin America and Eastern Europe, in the 70’s, and the new perspectives for the action of the global civil society after the 11 September. The most important lesson I got from this reading is to regularly ask myself what I have in mind, each time I’m talking about ‘civil society’.

4. John D. Clark: “Worlds Apart”, (Civil Society and the Battle for Ethical Globalization).

I did’nt finished this reading. I’m sorry.