

recognition and empirical observation of bifurcated structures operating at the global level. Rosenau & Durfee state that "alongside the traditional world of states, a complex multi-centric world of diverse actors has emerged, replete with structures, processes, and decision rules of its own." These authors go on to label these two worlds as "state-centric" and "multi-centric". As these two sets of structures intersect, one should expect that multilateralism at that specific historical juncture will be different in character from the multilateralism that emerged out of the immediate post-World War Two period. Certainly, the empirical evidence points to a changed socio-political environment within which multilateral institutions are forced to operate today. The international stage is now crowded with a proliferation of actors. The large number and vast range of collectivities that clamber onto the global stage exhibit both organized and disorganized complexity.<sup>31</sup> Literally thousand of factions, associations, organizations, movements and interest groups, along with states, now form a network pattern of interactions which reminds one of Burton's "cobweb" metaphor.<sup>32</sup>

The direct impact of the convergence of state-centric and multi-centric worlds on multilateralism has been observed and evaluated, at least at a cursory level, by a number of scholars that have either explicitly or implicitly adopted the post-internationalist and critical paradigms. In the foreword to a recently published edited volume by Thomas G. Weiss and Leon Gordenker, former UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali had this to say about formal and informal interactions between the UN system and non-governmental organizations (NGOs):

Until recently, the notion that the chief executive of the United Nations would have taken this issue seriously might have caused astonishment. The United Nations was considered to be a forum for sovereign states alone. Within the space of a few short years, however, this attitude has changed. Nongovernmental organizations are now considered full participants in international life.

He went on to note that in France 54,000 new associations have been established since 1987. Also, 40% of all the associations in Italy were created within the past 15 years. In recent years 10,000 NGOs were set up in Bangladesh, 21,000 in the Philippines, 27,000 in Chile and a very large number in Eastern Europe since the fall of communism.<sup>33</sup>

It may have been a slight exaggeration on Boutros-Ghali's part to say that NGOs are "full participants" in international life. However, there is no denying that these entities now play an important role in global governance: e.g. in agenda setting for global conferences; as the engine for virtually every advance made in the field of human rights; in response to complex humanitarian emergencies; in preventive diplomacy missions; in planetary management and protection of the biosphere; as epistemic communities or knowledge-based networks particularly with regards to environmental and developmental issues as well as the AIDS epidemic; in advancing the rights of women, children, and the disabled; in promoting development in poverty stricken areas of the Third World, and; in the pluralization of global governance generally.<sup>34</sup>

The second major contribution of the post-internationalist school has been the focus on the ways in which dynamic technologies have resulted in a decline of distances in the modern world (what Rosenau calls distant proximities). Technological advances in communications and transport have resulted in an increase in the level of complex interdependence.<sup>35</sup> Modern