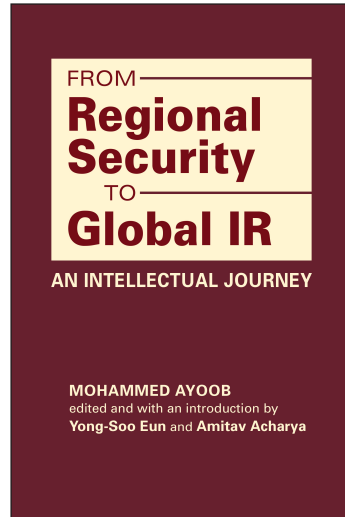


EXCERPTED FROM

From Regional  
Security to Global IR:  
An Intellectual  
Journey

Mohammed Ayoob,  
edited and with an introduction  
by Young-Soo Eun and  
Amitav Acharya

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# 1

## Mohammed Ayoob and Global IR

*Yong-Soo Eun and  
Amitav Acharya*

**THIS VOLUME IS A COMPILATION OF WRITINGS AND INSIGHTS ON INTERNATIONAL Relations (IR) authored by Mohammed Ayoob over the span of the past five decades. The issues addressed in these writings and the problems sought to be resolved encompass a broad spectrum, ranging from security concerns in the “Third World”<sup>1</sup> to international conflicts and orders, state sovereignty, international norms, the meaning of security, and the structure of knowledge production in the discipline of IR. While acknowledging the extensive scholarly contributions of Ayoob, one may still harbor doubts. Why does it matter to revisit these works? We believe that this volume not only provides us with a systematic guide to understand Ayoob’s wide-ranging intellectual insights but also serves as a unique window through which we can fully appreciate Ayoob’s critical, yet often underacknowledged, contributions to challenging the Western-centric biases within the discipline of IR and navigating today’s complex and decentralized world order. And this, in turn, advances the idea of “Global IR,”<sup>2</sup> a diverse, inclusive, and dialogical approach to opening up the study and practice of international relations.**

### **Why Does a (Re)reading of Mohammed Ayoob’s Work Matter?**

#### *The Problem of Western-centrism*

Western-centrism is an enduring problem in IR. Although critics have different views on the problem of Western-centrism embedded deep within mainstream IR (see, although much abridged, for example, Acharya 2014; Acharya and Buzan 2007, 2019; Bilgin 2014; Buzan and Acharya 2021; de Carvalho et al. 2011; Hobson 2012; Krishna 2001; Ling 2014; Seth 2013;

Shilliam 2011, 2015; Tickner 2003; Tickner and Blaney 2012; Vitalis 2015), a common thread running through each is a profound critique of the universalization of a particular Western—more specifically, the Euro-Atlantic—way of knowing and practicing world politics. For example, Cartesian-Newtonian dualist ontology, the Westphalian model of sovereignty, European experiences of war and modernity, and research agendas primarily published in the US-based journals constitute a set of particular Western worldviews. Mainstream IR, however, adopts these as the foundation for constructing narratives about the progress of international relations and formulating theories, asserting their universal applicability and validity.

Western-centric IR inevitably entails the marginalization and silencing of “non-Western”<sup>3</sup> (Global South) understandings of and approaches to international politics as well as their agency in and contributions to shaping regional and world orders. This is especially true in security studies. Given that the standard narrative stresses the origin of IR as a normative project of avoiding another war in Europe and building a universal collective security system, it comes as no surprise that IR scholarship has focused on and attached importance to the Global North and their “power politics” based on “the Eurocentric Westphalian system” (Tickner 2016, 158) while seeking “to parochially celebrate or defend or promote the West as the proactive subject of, and as the highest or ideal normative referent in, world politics” (Hobson 2012, 1).

Many scholars have long devoted a great deal of attention to this problem of Western-centrism in the discipline; few scholars today would dispute the importance of attempts to broaden the discipline in this regard. With varied theoretical or normative orientations and terms, ranging from post-colonial and decolonial thinking to Global IR, critics have continued to call for a more active embrace of heretofore marginalized voices and experiences from the non-Western world, aiming to transform the current Western-dominated IR into a more diverse and inclusive discipline. Despite the persistent call to broaden the discipline and the significant contributions of this “broadening” project to encourage theoretical or epistemological pluralism in the study of world politics, implementing this change has been and will likely continue to be challenging.

### *Two Major Hurdles*

We believe that there are two major issues or hurdles in this change; one of them is an epistemic stance that maintains that conventional Western IR theory can serve as a general fit for the study of global politics. In this thinking, the Global South states’ behaviors that cannot be satisfactorily explained by conventional IR knowledge frameworks are often regarded as “anomalies” or “trivial” cases having little impact on the international order or system—

and thus the contour of the disciplinary study thereof, namely what to study and how to study it. This is especially true with respect to the subfield of international security and its mainstream (realist) discourse (see, e.g., Rosenau 1966, 47–48; Waltz 1979, 194–195; 1996, 54–55; Snyder 1991, 317–318; Paul 1994, 176–177; Van Evera 1999; Walt 1991; Mearsheimer 2001).

Another hindrance to recognizing and promoting greater diversity in IR theory in geo-cultural contexts is a common perception that theories developed or proposed from the perspectives and experiences of the non-Western world are mere political beliefs or moral injunctions, lacking explanatory and predictable capacities over a wide range of empirical cases. Although it is acknowledged that the Global South has abundant traditions and different ways of thinking about the world, the common belief is that they do not deserve the title of “scientific” theory since they are not articulated in a way that is consistent with positivist scientism upheld by mainstream IR scholarship.

These two issues contribute to the continuation of a “colonial modernity” or a “coloniality of knowledge” (Mignolo 2000, 2007; Quijano and Ennis 2000; Quijano 2007) in which the Global South is considered a “consumer,” rather than “producer,” of theory: the West is considered to perform most of the theoretical or philosophical work, whereas non-Western societies and regions serve either as test groups to determine if Western-derived theories have general applicability or as producers of local knowledge mainly relevant for “area studies” (Aydinli and Biltekin 2018, 16; Tickner and Wæver 2009; Derichs 2017). The origin of this colonial belief dates back to the European Enlightenment thinkers of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: Immanuel Kant, for example, divided humanity into discrete categories and used the capacity for abstract thought as a yardstick to distinguish groups fit and unfit for theoretical/philosophical thinking. He argued that all humans descend from common “lineal root genes” in Europe, and that “the race of the whites contains all talents and motives in itself. . . . Hindus were educable in arts but not sciences as ‘they would never achieve abstract concepts’” (Van Norden 2017, 21–22). Although the Global South has indeed made significant theoretical contributions to the study of international politics and political economy, and several non-Western scholars seek to build alternative IR theories based on the Asian philosophies and traditions of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Hinduism (Yan 2011, 2018; Qin 2016, 2018; Shahi and Ascione 2016), these undertakings and bearings remain underappreciated and/or are often considered cosmological imaginaries or political slogans unable to meet the “positivist” standards of science as defined by the modern West.

This is clearly a misperception or, more to the point, an illusion. Not only are there several yet equally legitimate ways of defining what theory is or does (Acharya and Buzan 2007, 2019; Dunne et al. 2013; Eun 2016;

Jackson 2010; Rengger 2015; Wight 2019) but also (and more importantly from the perspective of our intervention here) there exists a non-Western and “positivist” IR theory.<sup>4</sup> In other words, despite not having been fully explored or recognized to its potential, IR theory originating from non-Western contexts by scholars from the Global South, explaining large parts of the world, is present among IR. And this is where we throw light onto Ayooob’s insights and his theory of “subaltern realism.” We believe that Ayooob’s work contributes to penetrating and unsettling the two aforementioned hurdles, helping to broaden the current parochial (Western-centric) state of IR and encourage global dialogue as “mutual learning” (Acharya 2023; Eun 2018).

### **Ayooob’s Alternative yet Complementary Way of Knowing**

As early as the 1970s, Ayooob had begun to realize that conventional Western IR theory, particularly that of the neo-realism commonly used in the Cold War era to explain states’ security concerns and conflicts, cannot serve as a general theoretical approach (chapters 1 and 2 in this volume; see also Ayooob 1978). The standard argument posits that states’ behavior, in particular their security behavior, can be adequately explained with reference to external factors and structural material environments of the international system; moreover, it is premised on the view that the boundaries of ethnic, religious, and social relations map directly onto the boundaries of nation-states. Ayooob problematizes these theoretical premises and propositions and demonstrates they do not hold up to the evidence from the empirical cases of the Third World (chapters 3 and 5; see also Ayooob 1983, 1986). Rather, security concerns and the root causes of intra- and interstate conflicts in the Third World are primarily domestic in character and sociohistorical in nature: they are deeply associated with material, epistemic, and normative legacies of past European colonial domination, which continue to influence “the twin tasks of state making and nation building” in the region (chapters 4, 7, and 9).

This pattern of conflicts is not an empirical “anomaly” in that most states in the world are located in this Third World (the Global South). Nor is this a “trivial” case precisely because most of the armed conflicts since the end of World War II have taken place within and/or between post-colonial states in the Global South (Luard 1986; Petersson et al. 2019). Thus, any theory of international relations, in particular that of international security, should be able to explain and address security issues in the Global South. But conventional, structure-oriented Western IR theories are unable to do so—even though they claim (or at least seek) to possess universal/

general validity across space and time. Ayooob's observation (chapter 8) is worthy of note in this regard: they fail "because they formulate generalizations from data drawn from a restricted universe and because they lack historical depth." In other words, they restrict their choice of universe primarily to the Global North, from where they draw their assumptions and examples, while excluding much of the Global South—where most states are located and most conflicts occur.

The key here is that Ayooob's contributions are much denser and broader than merely levying a critique against the Western-centric way of knowing. Based on rich empirical evidence from multiple conflicts across space (from South Asia to the Middle East) and time (the histories of state making in the Global South from the nineteenth to early twenty-first centuries), Ayooob identified key variables that explain post-colonial state conflicts, which is couched in the theoretical concept of "subaltern realism" (chapters 8 and 12). This is a positivist theory in nature, the prime objective of which lies in explaining *why* post-colonial states behave as they do in the international system; and its explanatory/predictive power comes from generalizations drawn from the comparative analysis of a wide range of empirical cases in the non-Western world, cases that remain largely overlooked in Western-centric IR. Furthermore, Ayooob's inductive generalization has been tested against cases that were not used to derive the initial generalization, namely wars in Europe from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries (chapters 4 and 6). Through this rigorous process of the combination of inductive and deductive theorizing, subaltern realism identifies necessary conditions for why post-colonial states become a candidate for wars and conflicts.<sup>5</sup>

Although critical of Western mainstream (namely, neo-realist and neo-liberalist) ways of knowing in the discipline of IR, Ayooob's approach needs to be approached with care. As outlined above, his work has always had a strong undercurrent of dissatisfaction with Western-centrism in IR theory, which fails to offer satisfactory explanations for the origins of most contemporary conflicts in the international system (chapters 5 and 12). But this does not necessarily indicate complete opposition to existing Western IR theories. He argues neither for the universal application nor for the unquestioning rejection of existing IR theories. Rather, his approach has complementary or eclectic inclinations. That is, Ayooob's alternative theory, or what he prefers to call an alternative "perspective," expands and enriches existing IR theories with examples from the Global South germane to international relations and security but hitherto overlooked in mainstream IR scholarship. The thread that runs throughout Ayooob's theorizing is epistemological "pluralism" and complementarity (chapter 8): in his subaltern realism, "realism" refers to the original "realist" thinking epitomized by Thomas Hobbes's philosophy, while "subaltern" refers to the state-building experiences and security concerns of



post-colonial states in the Global South. In this sense, an eclectic and dialogical mode of knowing is placed front and center of his epistemology. In Ayoob's words from his new piece "My Intellectual Journey," subaltern realism has been created as a result of "marrying the classical realist insights embodied in Hobbes's writings . . . with the recent and current security predicaments facing Third World states."

More specifically, Ayoob's subaltern realism is rooted in the fundamental elements of realist thinking—statism, survival, and self-help—with the aim of depicting international politics as they really are, rather than prescribing how they ought to be. It observes that the existing *reality* of the contemporary international system contradicts the key rationalist assumption underpinning neo-realism and neo-liberalism: the notion that all states are homogeneous. Although modern states, as sovereign entities, rationally pursue their own national interests within the anarchic structure of the international system, their historical processes of achieving or struggling to consolidate sovereignty vary significantly, especially between states in the Global South and those in the Global North (chapters 1 and 7).

This is where Ayoob's realist perspective intersects with insights from historical sociology and the English School regarding modern state-building processes and the expansion of international society. Drawing from historical sociological literature that examines the parallels and distinctions between state formation in early modern Europe and twentieth-century post-colonial states in the Global South, Ayoob articulates a central thesis of his subaltern realism: "In Europe, sovereignty followed the establishment of effective state control," whereas "in the Third World, juridical sovereignty *preceded* the establishment of such control" (chapter 8, emphasis added). Despite this disparity, international society and norms have evolved in a manner that renders the Global South more susceptible to both physical and normative crises. Today's international norms necessitate states to exhibit effective territorial and demographic control while also mandating humane treatment of domestic dissenters by state elites. However, as the history of early modern Europe clearly illustrates, violence inevitably accompanies state-making processes. Stability, and indeed sovereignty, in Europe were achieved through incessant wars within and between European polities (Tilly 1975), often at the expense of stability and order in much of the rest of the world. Nevertheless, contemporary international norms expect post-colonial states in the Global South to establish effective state control and social order in a significantly shorter time and through more peaceful means than their counterparts in the Global North. Failure to do so often serves as a justification for "humanitarian intervention" by the international community (chapters 7, 9, and 13). Furthermore, a prevailing expectation in today's international society is that states can engage in (re)shaping the rules of the international order only when they establish sta-

ble political order *domestically*. This adds further complexity to the security challenges of the Global South: many states in this region continue to struggle with the intricate processes of state- and nation-building at the domestic level, often leading to violence.

The preceding discussion underscores the necessity for an approach to the study of regional and international security that is sensitive to *realist* principles while also taking into account the experiences of *subaltern* (weak and vulnerable) states in the Global South as they navigate these realities. Ayooob's subaltern realism has emerged as a fitting response to this imperative. His perspective embodies an eclectic and dialogical mode of understanding, skillfully combining classical realist concepts of anarchy and survival with insights from historical sociology regarding state-making processes, and the English School's perspective on international norms. The result, subaltern realism, offers a truly "global" perspective that provides deeper insights into the origins of the majority of contemporary conflicts within the international system, thereby enriching the field of IR as a whole.

### *Advancing Global IR*

The idea of "Global IR" emerged after Ayooob scholarship on the Third World had already made its mark on the field of IR. While Global IR is a broader overarching framework to rethink and reshape the entire discipline of IR, it is closely intertwined with and benefits from Ayooob's scholarship. This is so in two main ways. First, a key focus of Global IR is to expose the marginalization of the Global South in mainstream IR. Ayooob shows how this marginalization occurs, not just in theories but also in actual praxis of world ordering. One of his insights is that the security order dominated by the two superpowers might have suppressed direct war between the superpowers during the Cold War, but it also paradoxically exacerbated Third World conflicts by making them "permissible." Since any direct conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union might have escalated into mutual nuclear annihilation, Third World conflicts and proxy wars became a necessary "safety valve" to release the tensions in the superpower rivalry. This insight, earlier suggested by Global South scholars such as India's Sisir Gupta, but developed and given a much more theoretical framing by Ayooob, suggests the marginalization of the Third World in mainstream Western strategic thinking, which overlaps and feeds into one of the major concerns of Global IR.

Second, a distinctive aspect of Global IR is that while encouraging entirely new theoretical concepts and innovations, it does not, unlike other critical IR theories, completely reject the relevance of traditional IR theories such as realism, liberalism, and constructivism. This is because Global

IR recognizes that there are many scholars in the Third World who find traditional theories, especially realism and constructivism, useful. Indeed, a great deal of initial work on non-Western IR and Global IR, including the work of Acharya (dating back to 2004), and Chinese IR scholar Yanqing Qin (2018), has been constructivist in orientation. Similarly, realism, in particular classical realist thought, has underpinned the work of Yan Xuetong (2011), among others.

Instead of “canceling” traditional theories, Global IR exposes their hitherto ethnocentrism and parochialism and calls upon them to recognize and incorporate the voices and experiences, and especially the agency of Third World countries in constructing global order (Acharya 2018). Ayooob’s subaltern realism shows exactly how this “bringing the Third World in” can take place. His refusal to reject realism outright and embrace post-colonialism wholesale, but to enrich it with the security and normative positions of the Third World, thus offers an early and prime pathway for how to find common ground between traditional theories and Global IR. It also illustrates how Global IR can be a bridge, or a middle ground, between the two.

This alternative yet complementary way of addressing the issue of Western-centrism resonates with and contributes to the growing calls for a more pluralistic discipline in IR studies, especially the ongoing call for “Global IR,” an idea proposed by Amitav Acharya in his presidential address at the annual convention of the International Studies Association in 2014. While problematizing Western-centrism and American parochialism in IR knowledge and narrative production, Acharya’s approach does not involve the nativist orientations of counterapproaches. Instead, guarding against both problems of the current Western-centrism of IR and the “potential danger of the nativism” of home-grown theorization (Eun 2019, 79), Acharya presented the necessity and possibility of “Global IR,” defining the concept as a “truly inclusive” and “global” discipline that recognizes and includes multiple and diverse voices, foundations, perspectives, and histories in the study of IR (Acharya 2014, 647–648). Viewed from the perspective of Global IR, to challenge and change “IR’s existing boundary markers set by dominant American and Western scholarship” (Acharya 2016, 6) means to move boldly toward “greater inclusiveness and diversity” (Acharya 2014, 649) by embracing “non-Western ways of being and knowing” and encouraging “new understandings and approaches to the study of world politics” (Acharya 2016, 4–5).

More specifically, Global IR emphasizes that the challenge lies not only in exposing and disclosing the colonial origins and Western-centric assumptions of existing theories but also identifying and developing new theories and concepts from non-Western contexts that are absent in IR’s core disciplinary narrative. In a related vein, Global IR not only seeks out

such alternative or “local” sources of theorizing but also explores the two-way circulation between global and local ideas and practices (Acharya 2014, 654). As such, Global IR works with existing theories developed and deployed by the Anglo-American mainstream IR. Of course, working with existing IR knowledge frameworks may reinforce the very Western dominance that Global IR seeks to challenge. However, in working with existing theories and analytical categories, Global IR does not assume the primacy of the latter, nor does it assume that they constitute endogenously developed knowledge apparatus. Instead, Global IR foregrounds the nature of multiplicity and entanglement inherent in their emergence and operation. What is more, rejecting or discarding existing theories from the discussion and starting with a “clean slate” would make it difficult to have a meaningful dialogue between conventional IR discourses and newly emerging Global IR perspectives (Acharya 2020, 305). Such a dialogue is not only helpful for the “discovery” (Acharya 2011) of non-Western ideas and practices that are challenging to the Western-centric IR but also necessary for moving the discipline and its theoretical scope toward greater diversity. Our call for a more pluralistic IR discipline necessitates “dialogue” as a “mutual” interaction and learning of knowledge frames from both mainstream IR and its critics (Eun 2018, 442). That is, greater diversity comes neither from conversation among the like-minded nor from merely levying critiques against those committed to mainstream IR thinking who “have stopped listening” to their critics (Lake 2011, 11). This is where the Global IR agenda, in particular its call for not rejecting but enriching the existing conceptual apparatus of the discipline, performs a significant role in catalyzing such a dialogic mode of moving IR toward a more diverse and inclusive discipline. As many have recognized, including skeptics of the whole idea of going beyond Western-centrism, such as John Mearsheimer (2016, 2022), much-needed dialogue between Western mainstream IR research and its counterproposals is taking place at the site of, or through the debate on, Global IR (Eun 2023, Risse et al. 2022).

Viewed in this respect, Ayoob’s work is inextricably intertwined with the Global IR agenda, and together this contributes to expanding structures and practices of IR’s disciplinary knowledge. Ayoob’s subaltern realism debunks the colonial myth in which “perspectives” derived from the Global South are perceived as falling short of a scientific theoretical knowledge framework and dereifies the coloniality of knowledge in which the Global South is treated as a test bed for the Global North’s theory. Ayoob’s subaltern realism can be defined as a scientific and positivist theory even in terms of the epistemological understanding of the modern West. It challenges the standard argument of mainstream (realist) IR theory by offering a different explanation about causes and beginnings of intra- and interstate conflicts. Beyond the restricted universe of the contemporary Global North,

it expands its inductive theorizing scope both in terms of space and time, working back and forth between the Global South and the Global North, between the prewar and the postwar periods. In this way, Ayoob's framework obtains *general* applicability of its explanation across most conflicts in the international system. At the same time, however, it serves not as an opposite but rather as a complementary and eclectic way of looking at the world. Subaltern realism enriches existing IR theories by bringing in non-Western experiences without losing focus on the issues central to the discipline, namely war and peace. As the name indicates, subaltern realism also lies in mainstream IR theory's traditional gambit that assumes the "state" as both the primary constituting unit of international politics and the "indispensable provider" of order and security for the population inhabiting it (chapters 2, 5, and 8).<sup>6</sup>

### *Navigating Today's Emerging World Order*

In addition, Ayoob's work provides a guide for analyzing global insecurity after the Cold War and for understanding today's changing international order. As the danger of East-West conflict diminished, the problems of state failure and regime struggle proliferated around the world, including in Eastern and Central Europe, and emerged as major challenges to the security of the West. This forced a redefinition of the whole paradigm of national security and the agenda of security studies. In other words, when it comes to world security and world order, the security predicament of "the periphery," as Acharya (1996) noted, had become "the core" problem of global security and hence of security studies in the post-Cold War era. Furthermore, the contemporary world is no longer defined or determined by the hegemony of any single set of nations or values. The United States (and by extension the West) is no longer in a position to make the rules and dominate the institutions of global governance and world order as it did for much of the postwar period (Acharya 2018; Babic 2020; Beckley 2020; Callinicos 2010; Colgan and Keohane 2017; Lake 2018; Trubowitz and Harris 2019). Rather, multiple states, be they larger/stronger or smaller/weaker, along with non-state actors, have diverse stakes in the design of an order at and across local, regional, and global levels. In other words, there are multiple forms and sources of agency on the global stage, especially in today's emerging world order where power is fragmented and actors are pluralistic (Acharya 2014, 653; see also Acharya 2018; Acharya and Buzan 2019; Acharya et al. 2023). This structural change of the contemporary international system indicates that actions and choices of the Global South states can no longer be viewed as "anomalies" or "trivial" cases. Rather, there is need for a conceptual or theoretical apparatus that listens to the voices of the "subaltern" while explaining their own "self-interested" moves that (trans)form global and regional orders.

Although Ayoob did not engage in the policy debates that are common among US-based academics, his writings have profound policy relevance for the management of the contemporary world order. Anyone seeking to understand the challenges to world order posed by recent conflicts, be it the Russia-Ukraine war or the Israel-Gaza war, could gain a much better understanding not only of the roots of these conflicts but also of the limitations of the current Western responses to them. Regarding Ukraine, although the majority of countries in the Global South considered the Russian invasion a violation of international norms and voted to condemn it in UN General Assembly resolutions, they did not support the West's response to the conflict, which included comprehensive sanctions led by the United States against Russia. They believe that NATO's expansion toward Russia played a significant role in triggering the war. They also saw double-standards of Western nations in their response acquiesced with the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, among other past US interventions. This exercise of spectacular dissent by the Global South on a major issue of world order today nicely fits into Ayoob's concept of "acute schizophrenia" (chapter 1): Third World countries want to be acknowledged as legitimate sovereign actors in the current world order while simultaneously challenging and demanding a change to it, in order to more effectively address security predicaments that have arisen from their colonial histories and post-colonial state-making processes. In the case of reactions to the Israel-Gaza conflict, it is clear that the majority of Global South countries, while they do not condone Hamas' killing of Israeli civilians, are appalled by the vastly larger scale of Israeli retaliation and more importantly the refusal of the United States to stop the killings of Palestinians. Also at play is the West's basic refusal to acknowledge the root causes of the conflict that lie in past Western policies and stems from disjuncture between the security concerns and strategies of the West and that of the non-Western nations (chapters 3 and 10). This is a central insight and theme in Ayoob's scholarship.

Given all of the above, Ayoob's work on IR theory and post-colonial state security deserves renewed and serious attention. By understanding how his ideas and theory have been developed in the predominantly Western-centered field of international security, while considering common or complementary grounds between his alternative perspective and conventional IR thinking, we can move beyond the colonial notion of the "division of labor" in which the Global South is positioned as a consumer, not a producer, of theory and go further toward a more dialogical discipline. Also, to appraise Ayoob's subaltern realism and draw wider implications for navigating today's multiplex and decentralized world can both enrich the debate on the crisis or resilience of the postwar liberal international order—an issue of central interest to many IR researchers in the Global North—and open up greater possibilities for rethinking and addressing the regional and

global challenges of the day in more effective and fair ways that give the Global South a stake that it deserves. In short, a (re)reading of Ayoob's writings in the broader contexts of the Global IR debate and today's evolving world order where the Global South actors play a pivotal role in its (re)making can generate constructive conversations between Western mainstream IR research and the alternative ways of knowing and practicing derived from the Global South. We hope readers will join us on this "intellectual journey" and collectively contribute to advancing IR toward a more pluralistic and diverse discipline.

## Notes

1. The term "Third World" in this chapter refers to the states and societies of Asia, Africa, and Latin America that have experienced colonialism throughout the modern era. There is disparity in discursive power between these formerly colonized nations and the developed countries of the Global North, which include the former colonial powers of Europe and North America. While the gap in wealth between them is beginning to close (Buzan and Lawson 2015), the Global North still remains the dominant actor when it comes to exercising the discursive power (e.g., the power of framing and agenda setting in the study of IR). In this sense of the politics of power knowledge, the term "Third World" is used here interchangeably with "Global South" and "non-Western" world. Despite differences within and across these terms, they remain cohesive in the following ways: that their political and economic developments in the post-World War II period have been largely conditioned by the material, epistemic, and affective legacies of past colonialism and racism; and that their worldviews, experiences, and voices remain underrepresented in the discipline of IR, especially in security studies and theorization enterprises. In this respect, the terms "Third World," "Global South," and "non-Western" world are relational and contextual, *not* binary and essentialist. That is, their marginalized positionality depends on the dominance of others in the field of knowledge and/or practice of international politics. For example, their voices are not weak inherently but only in relation to other voices currently prevalent in Anglophone "known outlets" in the IR discipline.

2. The idea of Global IR will be discussed in more detail in a later section.

3. It is worth noting that the terms "non-Western" and "Western" or the global "South" and "North" used in this chapter are not based on any form of essentialism. Emphasizing that the non-Western world possesses "different" historical experiences and worldviews does not imply that this world and its differences are derived from essential and fixed characters or properties endogenously generated and geographically bounded. Instead, differences exist in the form of particular assemblages actualized at the level of manifestation in specific instances of time and space. The key point is that these assemblages composed of a set of diverse ideas, values, and practices associated with social interactions and political orders, actualized in various human societies before "the rise of Europe" in the eighteenth century, remain largely underrepresented in the disciplinary, especially theoretical, studies of contemporary IR. Certainly, expanding the current Western-dominated field to include such marginalized experiences and perspectives will require addressing a range of issues and obstacles (for more on this, see the authors' work, especially Amitav



2014 and Eun 2016). In light of Ayoob's "intellectual journey," our attention here is focused on two key challenges, as detailed in the following section.

4. Certainly, this does not imply that having or developing a positivist theory is the only possible or ideal way in the pursuit of theoretical openings in IR. As noted in the authors' own works (see, e.g., Acharya and Buzan 2007, 2019; Acharya 2020; Eun 2016, 2021), there exists, and should continue to be, a variety of ways to define what qualifies as a "good" theory or a "valid" approach to producing knowledge in IR, with positivism being one of them. What we emphasize here is that the Global North does not have a monopoly on positivist theorizing in IR. Additionally, a positivist theory is not an end but a *means* through which conversations and debates between IR scholars from different locations, focusing on different empirical challenges, political struggles, and theoretical questions, can unfold. In this regard, Ayoob's subaltern realism contributes to this *dialogical* mode of knowing. This point will be discussed in depth in later sections.

5. These are the arbitrary nature of territorial boundaries, skewed distribution of power among various ethnic and religious groups, and the lack of political sagacity on the part of ruling elites. Most post-colonial states face these issues. For example, most of the boundaries of post-colonial states were arbitrarily drawn by departing colonial powers, which results in the lack of legitimacy both of state boundaries and, therefore, of states themselves and of the regimes that presided over these states. As Ayoob writes (chapter 8), "concurrent state building" between neighboring political entities whose territorial boundaries are largely given by outside powers, indifferent to indigenous, ethno-historical contexts, "is usually a recipe for conflict and leads to the search for relative rather than absolute gains." Moreover, territorial boundary change as a conflict prevention or resolution mechanism has become implausible or impractical since territorial boundaries, regardless of their arbitrary nature inherited from the past colonial rule, are now considered "sacrosanct" under the international norm of sovereignty constructed and accepted since World War II (chapters 7 and 12). These problems have been exacerbated by the policies of the great powers, which have often interfered in the state-building process in many Third World countries in order to advance their own political interests (chapters 10 and 11).

6. At the same time, critics note that the state-centrism of Ayoob's perspective supports defense of "the current theoretical and political mainstream" that Ayoob contests (Barnett 2002, 51). For many critical and post-structural scholars committed to "bottom up" approaches to security studies, the "state" ought to be problematized and deconstructed if the aim is to develop richer understandings of mundane and quotidian experiences of (in)security and to speak with, rather than for, "ordinary" people and their daily existence and thus better deal with the security challenges of everyday life (see, e.g., Croft and Vaughan-Williams 2016; Huysmans 2009; Jarvis and Lister 2013; Luckham 2017; Vaughan-Williams and Stevens 2016). While fully acknowledging the significance of this "everyday" or "vernacular" security (studies), our concern is not the role of the state or the lack thereof in addressing security challenges. As mentioned earlier, our concerns are primarily with the questions of whether and how Ayoob's theorization and his subaltern realism perform an epistemological role in encouraging mainstream IR to "see" the Third World not as an outlier of Western-oriented IR theory but as a theoretical resource for catalyzing a pluralistic and inclusive IR. From the perspective of Global IR, although Ayoob's subaltern realism, specifically his view on the state, is subject to criticism, his way of IR theorizing can drive an important debate over how to address IR's Western-centrism and theoretical imperialism.