KAUTILYA'S *ARTHASHASTRA*

PHILOSOPHY OF STRATEGY

Medha Bisht

"*Arthasashtra*, a seminal text on ancient Indian statecraft primarily studied by historians and political scientists has at long last found a brilliant interpreter. Medha Bisht's meticulously researched and lucidly argued work is stunning in its scope and extremely stimulating."

——Pushpesh Pant, *Former Professor, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi*

"This is a book that I was waiting for. Medha Bisht has revived and made contemporary the political cum philosophical text of Kautilya. She navigates and integrates the foundational Indic text and tradition seamlessly with various disciplines. A refreshing piece of work of knowledge production. Recommended as a text book for International Studies, social science, strategic studies and International Relations."

——Pradeep Kumar Gautam, *Consultant to the Indigenous Historical Knowledge Project at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi*

"As scholars of political science and international relations from around the world begin to discover the non-Western contributions to the understanding of power, order, justice and statecraft, Medha Bisht offers a rich and rewarding theoretical engagement with Kautilya's *Arthashastra*."

——C. Raja Mohan, *Director, Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore*

"For whatever reason, the western scholars have mostly ignored the Arthasastra, a majestic work on statecraft by Kautilya, a third-century BC Indian scholar and statesman. Rooted in the Hindu philosophy and the concept of Dharma, *Arthasastra*, a grand strategic work, deals with the nature of state, power, morality, ends-mean-ways, and foreign policy. Using modern political science vocabulary, Medha Bisht inquires into *Arthasastra's* philosophy, ideas and methodology and their contemporary relevance. Deserving wide readership, this is a serious work of scholarship aimed at western political scientists."

——Arvind Gupta, Director, *Vivekananda International Foundation and Former Deputy National Security Adviser, Government of India*

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Kautilya's *Arthashastra*

This book examines in detail the strategic relevance of the *Arthashastra*. Attributed to the fourth century B.C., this classical treatise on state and statecraft rests at the intersection of political theory and international relations.

Adopting a hermeneutic approach, the book discusses certain homologies related to concepts such as power, order, and morality. Underlining the conceptual value of the *Arthashastra* and classical texts such as *Hitopdesha* and *Pancatantra*, this volume highlights the non-western perspectives related to diplomacy and statecraft. It shows how a comparative analysis of these texts reveals a continuity rather than a change in the styles, tactics, and political strategies. The book also showcases the value these ancient texts can bring to the study of contemporary international relations and political theory.

This volume will be of interest to students, scholars and teachers of political studies, Indian political thought, and philosophy, South Asian studies, political theory and international relations.

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Philosophy of Strategy

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To Ma and Ba

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Preface and Acknowledgements

Kautilya's *Arthashastra* had crossed my path multiple times, but it was only in 2012 that my orientation towards Hindu philosophy and its link with strategy got channelised. An informal working group on '*Arthashastra*' was formed under the leadership of Colonel Pradeep Kumar Gautam, and the multiple discussions and engagements that followed captured my interest, as I saw it as a legacy of pre-westphalian tradition. With my existing leanings towards Strategic Thought, Kautilya's *Arthashastra* appealed to me as a text, which lay at the interface of philosophy and grand strategy. It is in this backdrop that a journey towards understanding the intellectual tradition of *Arthashastra* was undertaken. Conceptual categories emanating from *Arthashastra* animated my thought process given the ethno-centric nature of international relations theory. A key question sustaining my inquiry was, how concepts are articulated and their meanings constituted in different cultural contexts.

While researching and writing this book, many times the concept of 'Hindu rashtra' has crossed my mind and the consequences it can have for a discourse on 'Hindu India'. However, I do realize how misplaced this discourse could be as ideas on state and statecraft presented here were born in the pre-westphalian tradition, inspired from Hindu philosophy. In this book, I celebrate Kautilya as a strategic thinker, who was giving some patterned understanding to the idea of state and statecraft. Kautilya emerges as an exemplar strategist reconciling Hindu values with strategy. A modern Kautilya would perhaps not be different from the traditional Kautilya as intertwining of values and strategy in contemporary India would demand that one differentiates between an ethnic nation and a civic nation and dialectically engage with the question of political. Some of these questions have been raised in the book to caution the readers about the creative use of Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, which if not understood in a comprehensive manner can lead to a 'presentism' of sorts and burden the work with mimicry.

Along this exploratory journey, I have come across many people who in direct and indirect ways have contributed to the birth of this book. I should thank first and foremost, my parents, who have been a continuous

Introduction

Kautilya's *Arthashastra* has been passed down as a significant text on foreign policy and strategy. While the text is generally considered a product of realpolitik thinking, this book revisits *Arthashastra* as an insightful text of grand strategy. It considers order, interpreted as dharma to be central to Kautilyan analysis of state and statecraft. I argue that Kautilya was a system theorist, who crafted policies based on the notion of interrelatedness, which shaped the architecture for governance and strategy broadly identified with the idea of state and statecraft in classical Indian thought.

In this regard the philosophical strands of Hindu political thought become an essential epistemological entry point for understanding strategic insights enunciated in Kautilya's *Arthashastra*. It is argued that the notion of dharma, the theory of karma, and the interaction of these in underlining the duty of state and society were inspired by the cosmic understanding of order – which in Hindu political thought is interpreted as "holding together". The use of rod (danda), therefore found a legitimate place in Hindu political thought – as it was directed and conceptualized towards establishing, legitimizing and even regulating order. This understanding offers insights on the meanings through which political was conceptualized and even intertwined with social life in *Arthashastra*.

Thus, an intellectual text of its time, *Arthashastra* embeds its reasoning in both philosophy and strategy. This is because important questions of statecraft and the logic of state are addressed through careful details and specific qualifications. Kautilya's reference to shastras (hindu scriptures) can be perceived as serving strategic and instrumental purpose for underlining the need of maintaining societal order (saptanga theory) in secular terms and introducing the vocabulary of mandala – the circle of states in spatial terms. Indeed, the spatial dimension of the theory of mandala is instructive of a balancing/interactionist act in a fluid-changing uncertain external environment. To regulate this balance in the mandala, Kautilya suggests a six-fold measure on foreign policy (sadgunya), which is indicative of an adaptive strategy, obviating any logic for rigidity in foreign policy. Given the value that *Arthashastra* holds for the discipline of strategy and diplomacy, the

notion of balance foregrounded in the logic of order reinforces the normative inclination of this text as a non-western contribution to traditions of political thought and diplomatic practice. Dharma thus becomes an interpretive lens for foregrounding the reflexive approach in Arthashastra, which is a different way of "knowing, understanding and judging the world.[1]"

Sceptics might relegate this argument to margins claiming that dharma need not be invoked to justify Kautilyan morality and immorality. However, recasting of Kautilya's *Arthashastra* in a grand strategic and systems framework needs to be reckoned with for understanding the endogenous vocabularies and concepts, which shaped the definition of power, morality, and order – the central building blocks for understanding Kautilyan grand strategic design. The attributes that are associated with these specific concepts have larger ramification for understanding the constitutive and causal elements, which interacted with strategy and statecraft. While an ancient classic should not be considered as a template for the present as it is situated and articulated with a certain context, culture and tradition in mind, the ideational and philosophical underpinnings need to be recognized, as they can be considered as a source for epistemic practices for underlining the intellectual legacy and contours of strategic thinking in classical India. The Kautilyan strategy needs to be understood because it offers sophisticated techniques for highlighting the important elements, which determined, defined and constituted the boundaries of the political. Its use and abuse in contemporary times can only be judged when the philosophical and strategic underpinnings in *Arthashastra* are put in proper perspective.

The method

What is the most appropriate method of investigating a text like *Arthashastra*, which is a non-western intellectual resource and rests at the intersection of disciplinary boundaries? Given the inter-sectionality it can be argued that the methodological importance of this non-western intellectual resource stems from two specific reasons. First, it expedites ontological inquiries into the nature of thought per se which substantively acknowledges the importance of acknowledging, rather than subsuming the differences.[2]

This becomes useful from the perspective of comparative political theory. Second, it directs one to epistemological inquiries that facilitate the process of understanding. Such a process adds epistemic value to concepts in world politics, which help in reestablishing conceptual plurality in international relations theory and makes one aware of the ethical sensitivities that need to be employed in encountering the comparative in the international. Both these ontological and epistemological ways of knowing and understanding are helpful for assisting comparative theorizing in the much-needed domain of international relations theory and (diplomatic) practice, significant because the former has primarily been inspired from the history of ideas that owes its origins to western philosophical tradition. This book seeks to emancipate concepts familiar to non-western space and is therefore not an attempt to

create alternative theories of the world. However, it does underline 'global' ways of understanding concepts and vocabularies in international relations. In this respect, it takes note of how cultural contexts gave meaning to the vocabularies of power, order and morality. The rationale for underlining the significance of this work is thus inspired from the import of understanding concepts, which emanate from different cultural topos (space). While it does not aspire to attain what Gadamer would term as a "fusion of horizons", it does intend to highlight conceptual nuances that emerge, when studying different cultural and philosophical traditions. It is in this context that the essential tool offered by Godrej merits discussion.

Termed Interpretive Hermeneutics, Farah Godrej's "three hermeneutic moments" draw heavily from phenomological-objectivist analyses of studying the text-context interaction, and offer a useful sounding board for taking the interpretive task forward. Godrej's three hermeneutical moments of Understanding, Representation and Relational Relevance are significant in this respect (Godrej 2009: 135–165). The first moment identified as Understanding, relates to existential hermeneutics, which means not intellectualizing but internalizing the text. This means understanding and familiarizing oneself with a different *topos*, particularly the cultural and philosophical milieu within which the text was written. Thus, embracing subjectivity in the first moment shrinks the distance between the reader and the text. In the first moment, the reader does not approach the text in a scientific manner but adopts a phenomological approach where the text and tradition are both taken into account. As Godrej notes, this is first step towards interpretation (Godrej 2011: 154).

This makes way for the second moment of Representation, which is significant because it is confronted with two reflective challenges. First, one can be influenced by the shade of authoritarianism and, second, one can be overwhelmed by claims over the authenticity of one's own understanding and interpretation. Godrej writes that in order to get over this "representational trap", the methodology adopted by post-modernism in the production of cultural accounts is insightful. Post-modernists seek to evade the "representational trap" by unravelling multiple experiences and in fact celebrate the multiplicity of experiences/truths. In this context, she notes that the post-modernists then are co-creators of meaning – since they adopt a phenomological – self-reflexivistic approach. It is then at this juncture that the third moment of relational relativism becomes important for Godrej as it goes beyond the limitations that post-modernists pose to the production of knowledge. For Godrej one needs to reconcile conflicting interpretations and move the discourse from peripheral inclusion to mainstream engagement. This moment is important for Godrej because it is with tools of scholastic engagement that cosmopolitan political theory takes shape, which challenges universal claims based on certain traditions. The task as she argues for political theorists then is to articulate how multiple meanings of concepts – which emanate from different traditions, illuminate political

life and political phenomenon. This transition from the first to the third moment is, as Godrej notes, the "transition from existential hermeneutics and to speech and discourse centered imperatives of scholarship" (Godrej 2009:159).

From the perspective of relational relevance, then, concepts become a central object of inquiry, as the purpose of the inquiry is to arrive at the meaning of concepts in distinct cultural settings. This exercise also raises far-reaching questions behind the methodological rationale for organizing knowledge. One of the main tasks of the social scientist is to reflect on ways through which knowledge can be produced (Jackson 2011:XII). While there are debates in the philosophy of science through which knowledge can be approached and produced, some scholars have critiqued ways through which IR theorists have (not) addressed the science question in social science debates within IR theory. They argue that positivism is no longer a valid account of science and needs to be replaced by scientific/critical realism, which considers both ideas and material factors as necessary guideposts for producing knowledge (Kurki and Wight 2007). Given that both constitutive and causal factors are important to understand phenomenon, critical realism that uses "abduction" as a form of reasoning is considered a mid-way between positivism and post-positivism (Jackson 2011:76). While critical realism is just an example for organizing the conceptual and philosophical basis of knowledge, the notion of "philosophical ontology", the conceptual anchor which produces knowledge in the first place becomes a significant meta-theoretical question for deliberation and reflection (Jackson 2011:13). For Jackson methods follow methodology and therefore clarity on the latter (which according to him is conveyed through the term "philosophical ontology") becomes an important starting point for the production of knowledge. "Philosophical ontology" helps a researcher to think through and choose the methods that are needed for research.

Given the significance of "philosophical ontology" to emancipate concepts and meaning, Godrej's method of investigation qualified as an appropriate methodological entry point. Its significance stemmed from the dialogical platform it offers to study some key concepts that can be discerned in *Arthashastra*. By underlining certain "homologies", a term employed by Liebig (2014) that exist between concepts such as power, morality and order, as understood in classical text, this book attempts to not only raise a conscious awareness of the absence of the other in the study of what constitutes international, but also highlights the larger ramification this can have on restoring the plurality of ideas thus reinforcing the caution and the optics necessary for theorizing non-western intellectual sources. Scholars like Boseman (1979, 2010) and Wolters (1999) have made some important contributions in this field. In the context of *Arthashastra*, Liebig and Mishra (2017) emphasize the significance of homologies or family resemblances between ideas. Focusing on the possibility of migration of ideas between different

epistemic spaces, they explore the possibilities of "trans-temporal and transcultural migration" of Kautilyan thought from South Asia to Europe (Liebig and Mishra 2017:25). According to them the homologous interface between concepts should not look anomalous as "Persian and Arab cultural spaces were the key transit points in terms of both the migratory route and hybridization" (Liebig and Mishra 2017:25). Amitav Acharya on a similar note has drawn attention to the concept of "constitutive localization", which is a "two way process in which foreign ideas do not dominate or disappear but blend into local setting" (Acharya 2014:131). "Constitutive localization" according to Acharya is one way to deprovincialize international relations theory and in fact gives agency to the non-west in underlining the unique cultural nuances they offer to concept, thus underlining the significance of non-western resources and critiquing historicism of international relations theory. All these debates are significant because they endow agency to the non-west in the history of ideas, which can have ramification for the pluralizing the layered nature of conceptual categories that animate the international.

Design and structure

The book unfolds in three distinct parts. The primary rationale for conceptualizing the book in three distinct parts is to highlight the intersectionality of disciplinary ideas, which makes sense when one tries to emancipate some ideas/concepts embedded in a non-western intellectual resource. In the case of *Arthashastra*, it helps to understand implicit and explicit assumptions, which inform the conceptualization of grand strategic design. This grand strategic design necessitates that one explores the constitutive nature of state, power, morality and order. What larger ramification this has for the field of foreign policy, diplomacy and even for theorizing concepts for informing global IR theory is a critical question, which directs this inquiry. The philosophical quest, which informs this inquiry, is significant though not central, as it flags off larger questions related to the production and politics of knowledge. The question of concern therefore is "whether one follows a constitutive mode of reasoning (How social objects are constituted) or a causal mode of reasoning (explanatory theory which are inclined to problem solving and take the world as given)" (Kurki and Wight 2007:28–29). In this backdrop, the constitutive claims are explored and the first part of the book examines the philosophical leanings of *Arthashastra*, whereby the context behind concepts is examined. The reason for foregrounding these philosophical leanings was to understand the constitutive nature of vocabularies, employed to study the objects of international relations. A note of caution needs to be placed at the outset that it does not "decentre" the ontological objects of study[3]. However, it does decentre certain ways of understanding the objects of study and highlights the constitutive role that ideas and values play in this regard. This is a book therefore which

privileges constitutive inquiry rather than a critical inquiry, which means it examines the constitutive understanding of state, power, order etc. This also means that it does not critically problemitize these concepts and casts them within the framework of pre-westphalian/pre-modern period and examines how they were imagined within the Hindu tradition. The emphasis on the critical inquiry of *Arthashastra* would demand a different approach and would compromise on the sophistication of techniques through which a grand design of state and statecraft was imagined. However, the constitutive inquiry (see last section in Chapter 8) does pave a way forward for more critical inquiries that could offer alternative ways for producing knowledge relevant to the field of state and statecraft. The reading of philosophical underpinnings is therefore situated within the broader discourse on grand strategic design, which, as the book argues, was a consequence of thinking in classical India.

Chapter 1 undertakes a broad overview on the (pre) disciplinary underpinning of *Arthashastra*. Some of the questions raised in the chapter are related to the identity of the text and the author. These arguments set the stage for understanding Kautilya's *Arthashastra* by highlighting terms and concepts associated with the broad disciplines of political theory, diplomacy and strategy. Questions on revisiting *Arthashastra*, its significance, and the logic of re-engaging the text is also underlined. Why is *Arthashastra* relevant? Why is the text an important referent point for strategic thought? Who was Kautilya – a mythical figure as some scholars argue or is the name associated with a broader Kautilya school? The chapter closes by underlining the civilizational value of *Arthashastra* in shaping political ideas and concepts.

The second chapter studies the methodology of *Arthashastra*, as the text cannot be divorced from the philosophical underpinning and cultural context that was its inspiration. In this regard, the broader understanding of Nitishastras and Dharmashastra of Indian philosophy is contextually studied, given its relevance to understanding concepts in *Arthashastra*. This chapter sets the pace for understanding of some key concepts in Indian philosophical tradition, which gave contextual meaning towards shaping Kautilyan thought and vocabulary. Questions raised in this chapter enable investigation towards understanding the nature of 'political' and the role that philosophy of science (logical inquiry) played in this respect. The understanding of the political can be gauged by understanding the dialectical understanding which existed between dharma (morality) and niti (policy) and how this understanding was elemental in defining and determining the boundaries of political (state).

The third chapter engages with ends-means-ways debate associated with the discipline of grand strategy in particular. It does not look into the history of strategic thought but reviews the state of the debate in conceptualizing grand strategy. The ends-means-ways triad is juxtaposed to a pattern of grand strategic design as visible in *Arthashastra*. The chapter also elaborates

on the significance of order and the place of morality within the Kautilyan grand design in particular.

Part II of the book offers a discursive treatment to concepts, which are used in international relations by focusing on conceptual vocabularies that emerge from the text. It deliberates on the desirable and feasible elements as articulated in Kautilya's *Arthashastra*. This part is a continuation of arguments of grand strategic thinking, which are flagged off in Part One of the book. By underlining certain similarities between concepts such as power, morality and order, as understood in the non-western text and mainstream international relations, it attempts to not only emancipate the ideational agency of non-western texts, but also highlights the larger ontological consequences this can have on displacing certain conceptual categories which emerge from non-western locations. This discussion if omitted can lead to the mis-representation of both the author and the text. The discussion is also helpful for mixing causal with constitutive analysis.

The fourth chapter thus sets the pace for this discussion by analysing three central concepts – morality, power and order. How the feasibility and desirability of these central concepts play out in the Kautilyan understanding of the idea of state and statecraft is discussed. The chapter digs a discursive understanding of these concepts in international relations and political theory. Thus, a broader question that the chapter seeks to raise is the conceptual value that texts like *Arthashastra* brings to the study of international relations in general and international political theory in particular.

The fifth chapter explores the pattern that emerges in *Arthashastra* and investigates it from the lens of systems theory. Morton Kaplan's systems analyses is introduced and juxtaposed to the Kautilyan understanding of power and order. One can say this is the theoretical hook for understanding the constitutive nature of the text, where a networked/web-based understanding of internal and external phenomenon becomes visible. What constitutes a state system and an inter-state system and what rules/norms were identified/accepted for regulating balance and order are examined.

The sixth chapter elaborates on the idea of the state and statecraft and discusses how variables of morality, order and power were interpreted, inter-related, interconnected to each other within the Kautilyan understanding of the state and statecraft. The role, meaning and significance of morality, power and order at the internal and external level are discussed. This discussion sets the pace for Chapter 7, which explores the functional parameters of the Kautilyan state. What was the rationale for the functioning of the state? How did the *saptanga* theory give meaning to the idea of state? Why were these key elements important for understanding the text? At the external level, the chapter looks at the rationale behind the mandala theory. What is the meaning of sadgunya (six methods of foreign policy) or the four upayas (prescriptive means for policy) is examined. What is the relationship between these two and how does the circle of kings, *mandala*, add meaning

to the Kautilyan concept of statecraft is discussed. The interdependent-interactionist approach between the various constituent elements is underlined and the interface between the state and statecraft highlighted.

Part III of the book underlines the meeting points between *Arthashastra* and international relations discipline. Disciplinary conversations with the field of diplomatic studies, strategic thought and international relations theory are highlighted in this context. This chapter thus underlines the learnings from *Arthashastra* as an embodiment of a non-western intellectual resource, but also nudges one to go beyond binaries when thinking about international relations theory as Western and Non-Western and the legacy of dharma, as a concept beyond *Arthashastra*.

The argument that I offer is that *Arthashastra* is not just a classic text; it is a resource – which needs to be understood and engaged with. The strategic relevance of *Arthashastra* lies in understanding the philosophy behind it, as it was the intangible/ideational elements which gave meaning and direction to concepts such as power, state and statecraft, concepts which are widely (mis) understood in *Arthashastra*.

Notes

1 For further details on the "reflexive" approach see (Innana 2010). It is interesting to note that ancient thinkers in Asia foregrounded the understanding of strategy in a more "reflexive" manner. Sun Tsu in *Art of War*, for instance emphasises on *Dao*, which, inturn is informed by Chinese philosophical tradition (Pratibha 2017). However, this is not to say that the tactics and strategems offered by these Asian strategic thinkers is similar. There are differences, which need to be teased out carefully. However, some interesting parallels can be drawn with scholarship on the strategic thinkers like Clausewitz, where "reflexivity" has been underlined for understanding the classic *On War* (Aron and Tenenbaum 1972). Thus understanding the philosophy of strategy inspires one to understand the historicity of the text in holistic terms, where thought needs to be engaged with keeping the ideational/intellectual traditions in perspective. The ideational underpinnings of Hindu philosophy (which is different from Chinese/Japanese/German tradition) becomes important in this context.

2 Bruce Buchan critiques the cosmopolitan assumption by certain Western political thinkers that laws of morality were universally the same. Buchanan argues "that early modern European political thinkers attitudes towards Asia were primarily determined by their desire to assert European superiority vis a vis their Asian counterpart" (Shogimen and Nederman eds., 2009:XII).

3 Nayak and Selbin offer a framework for understanding 'centres' of knowledge production and reproduction. For them more than constitutive theories, critical theories need to be prioritised for understanding the international and highlighting multiple ways of understanding and living in this world. According to them, privileging certain concepts (such as state and sovereignty) distorts and disciplines the field of International Relations in many ways (Nayak and Selbin 2010).

Part I

A text on philosophy and strategy

1 Introducing *Arthashastra*
Philosophy, concepts, practice

The interaction between philosophy, concepts and practice and its relevance to political questions becomes significant because it directs the investigator's mind on what should be rather than what is. This is not only helpful in distinguishing right from wrong, good from bad, but also enables one to go beyond mere episodic narratives and descriptions, offering insights to a researcher on how to aspire for desirable outcomes and define the meaning of political. This juxtaposition between the, is and the ought has been considered elemental in defining the meaning of the political per se. Upinder Singh argues meaning of political in ancient India was inferred from texts like dandniti, *arthashastra* and nitishastra and was often cast on a political, moral and metaphysical canvas (Singh 2017:6). Significantly, the relevance of *Arthashastra* provides an exciting site to students of political theory and international relations to understand the nature of political. It offers insights not only on the desirable and feasible elements of politics but also emphasizes the implications that philosophical questions have for formulating concepts intertwined with thought and practice.

This chapter revisits concepts, techniques and approaches that Kautilya built upon from earlier traditions in order to reconcile the desirability and the feasibility of political and social phenomenon. What should be the essential pillars of state and statecraft and what constitutes them, are central questions that Kautilya sought to address in *Arthashastra*. While Kautilya's *Arthashastra* has rarely been studied as a text in comparative political thought, its dialectical engagement with Hindu philosophical traditions on the nature of order and power qualifies it to be one. *Arthashastra* engages with the nature of state defining its central pillars as the seven elements (saptanga theory). How can the state augment power and maintain order in a fluid environment is a key question that the text poses. The task of a philosopher is to often point "out consistencies and inconsistencies of claims and thoughts from within the city or community by measuring the performance of the context against his own constitutive criteria" (Bessussi 2012:3). Kautilya's *Arthashastra* engages with his predecessors on the subject and offers his own suggestion on the prospective excellences (outstanding features) of state and statecraft. This is reflective of the fact

that *Arthashastra* as a text does engage with the normative. It not only attempted to reconcile philosophy with policy, but also gave meaning to concepts, which could potentially direct strategy. The method (technique) of dialectics offered by *Arthashastra*, which were reasoned-logical arguments (*anvikshiki*), thus sought to establish the truth of order and balance in political life. Reflective of a scientific temper, this logical reasoning for understanding objects of state and statecraft (ontology) was constituted by both material and ideational factors, thus engaging with dominant strands within the Hindu tradition. "A form of reasoning that works from observed phenomena to underlying principles and factors that give rise to those observed phenomena" (Jackson 2011:75) becomes an important entry point for understanding the ideational and material foundation of the political in *Arthashastra*. Thus, the capacity of the state as an important inference point for explaining its behaviour as well as its qualification as an inferior or a superior state through virtues and excellences become important questions for the intersection between values and strategy.

On the basis of this criterion and the value it brings to the discipline of international relations, this chapter revisits Kautilya's *Arthashastra*. Kautilya can be considered an 'exemplar' (paradigm) of how a philosopher and a strategist understood, conceptualized and endowed meaning to the political phenomenon and understood social order of the times. Rather than a thought on extremes, it is a text that adopts moderation and suggests a fine balance between internal well-being and external security. The method adopted by *Arthashastra* is therefore not only constitutive of norms prevalent in Hindu thought and tradition but also offers insights towards an approach that exhibits elements of holism. This in many ways can be a critique to the "culture of positivism", which emphasizes the exclusion of values (Hamati-Ataya 2011:261). In fact, it offers a perspective on how values were reconciled with systems thinking when conceptualizing the political and international.

Arthashastra: its origins, authenticity and debates

Arthashastra was brought back from antiquity as recently as in the early twentieth century. Many speculations have been offered regarding the sudden disappearance of *Arthashastra* as it is believed that the use of *Arthashastra* was restricted to a select section of elites who desired its extinction rather than survival. Aiyangar notes

> In the age of belief in the supernatural, parts of *Arthashastra* like Book Fourteen, Book Thirteen, Chapter Three and Book Four, which deal with secret means, magic, spells and incantations (respectively) should have been regarded by kings as dangerous literature which should not pass into the hands of enemies and disaffected subjects. Kautilya's inductive treatment of such topics as the overthrow of princes etc., should have made kings eager to prevent the popularisation of the *Arthashastra*. The

tremendous prestige of Kautilya's name would also have cast glamour on his treatise and generated even a fear of it.

<div style="text-align: right;">(Mishra 1993:23)</div>

It is most interesting that a text, which originated in the Gangetic plains of India, was found in South India. The intellectual activity around *Arthashastra* started in 1909, when Rudrapanta Shamasastry edited and published the text for the first time. It has been argued that, a priest in Tanjore district of the Tamil Nadu state of South India handed over two manuscripts to the Mysore Government Oriental Library in 1905. In 1915, the text was translated to English, and Shamasastry noted in the Preface that Kautilya lived and wrote the famous work of *Arthashastra* between 321 and 300 B.C. (Mishra 1993:19). This view has been corroborated by R.P. Kangle, who notes that a statement on the authorship in the first and the last chapter of the *Arthashastra*, which notes that the "shastra was composed by Kautilya" and that "it was composed by that person who in resentment rescued the earth from the Nanda king" (Kangle 1999:59). This chronological reference, according to Kangle eliminates any benefit of doubt apropos the historicity of *Arthashastra*.

However, not many scholars agree with this view, as historians, philologists, diplomats, anthropologists and political scientists have raised questions regarding the association of the text to the Mauryan period, with some even problematizing the very authenticity of the text per se. S.C. Mishra has organized the debates and positions of various contentious views on the authorship and authenticity of the text around five specific schools of thought – the German school, the Calcutta school, the Imperialist school, the Indian school and the Soviet school (Mishra 1993:21–35). While the rationale for the neat demarcation that Mishra makes is a bit misplaced, as there are overlapping arguments within and across schools, his work does offer a useful summary and a rich body of reference material for detailing the various contentious viewpoints regarding the identity of *Arthashastra*.

These schools are also instructive on the international interest that the text has generated amongst scholars. The broad arguments posited by scholars revolve around (a) the identity of the author and the text and (b) the broad periodization of *Arthashastra*. The first relates to the ownership of *Arthashastra*, i.e. whether it was written by an individual or was it a result of the contribution from different individuals, who belonged to the Kautilya School or was Kautilya a mythical character, with no existence in reality? The second relates to the temporality of *Arthashastra*, i.e. whether it was pre Mauryan or post Mauryan. The debate is relevant in terms of strategic thought which many scholars argue was non-existent in early India.

Identity of the author and the text

Authorship of Kautilya's *Arthashastra* has been questioned by a group of scholars such as A.L. Basham, Romila Thapar, Alfred Hillebrant and Arthur Berriedale Keith who disagree on the periodization of *Arthashastra*. The text

for instance has been traced to the pre-Gupta age on the grounds that it refers to people and places such as China, which were unfamiliar to people in the fourth century B.C. (Basham 1954:50). Thapar's argument that *Arthashastra* could be an edited composition, compiled around third and fourth century AD, corroborates this view (Thapar 1993:32). Taking this argument further some have concluded that *Arthashastra* was a product of 'Kautilya school' and that Kautilya was a student of *Arthashastra* and not its composer (Hillebrant 1923 cited in Mishra 1993:22). On similar lines Julius Jolly has questioned the identity of Kautilya, considering him half historical or mythical (Jolly cited in Mishra 1993:20). However, Kalidas Nag has been of the view that *Arthashastra* was not a homogenous text and was recast several times on several occasions. He argued that "frequent copying of manuscripts was a common phenomenon in Indian culture, where the transcripts were subject to continuous revision" (Nag cited in Mishra 1993:25).

Some have considered *Arthashastra* as a nationalist project, which was revisited during the Indian National Movement. Belongingness to an ancient past, which reconciled tradition with modernity, renders *Arthashastra* as a political project, which was foregrounded in the Kautilyan moment and in the making of modern India (Menon 2014; Vajpayee 2016). Jolly has questioned the claims on authenticity of text by highlighting the anti-colonial environment, where the swarajists were politically motivated to save interest in the intellectual legacy of ancient India. "History and politics as he argued, had to be kept separate from each other. It was the interaction between these two that *Arthashastra* was essentialised and established as the legend of Kautilya" (Jolly cited in Mishra 1993:21).

In order to explore the homogeneity and plurality of *Arthashastra*, some scholars adopted a statistical and temporal analysis to argue that the author's style in *Arthashastra* changes as he grows older and more experienced. Trauttman argues, that "there were three hands which are discernible in *Arthashastra*. One responsible for Book Two dealing with internal administration of the kingdom, one responsible for Book Three, a kind of Dharmasmriti dealing with law, and the third responsible for Book Seven, considering the struggle for power between states" (Trauttman cited in Mishra 1993:34). Grigoriĭ Maksimovich Bongard-Levin is of the same view, as he notes that the "text was gradually written in the pre-Mauryan, the Mauryan and post-Mauryan age, as the details in the text are relevant to all ages. He argues that there could be a possibility of the text being composed of several independent treatises" (Levin cited in Mishra 1993:36). These debates offer an interesting insight and can be reconciled by understanding the philosophy of strategy, which Kautilyan tradition highlights with regards to secular/political affairs.

Periodisation of *Arthashastra*

The periodization of *Arthashastra* has been speculated to have ranged from sixth century B.C. to seventh century A.D. For instance, in 1914–15 Julius

Jolly came up with a collection of parallel passages on *Arthashastra* and Dharmashastra. In one of the papers in the collection, he cited a passage from *Dasakumaracarita*, which claimed that *Arthashastra* was abridged by Vishnugupta into 6000 verses for the use of Mauryas. Jolly considered *Arthashastra* not to be older than *Dasakumaracharita* which was written around the seventh century A.D. Jolly's main contention was that "alchemy, metallurgy and surunga were used no later than third century" and hence justified his dating of *Arthashastra* (Jolly cited in Mishra 1993:20). Keith supported this view and argued that the text would have been written around the seventh century A.D. by a court official in South India (Keith cited in Mishra 1993:23). Supporting this hypothesis was also a well-known Indian scholar, Ramkrishna Gopal Bhandarkar, who assumed the date of *Arthashastra* to be between first and second century A.D. He traced his rationale to Vatsyayana's Kamasutra, whose author was the earliest to notice it (Bhandarkar cited in Mishra 1993:23).

On the contrary, Thomas and Monahan have traced *Arthashastra* to be a product of the fifth and fourth century B.C. as according to Thomas, it was during this period that a subject of "royal policy was a recognised topic" (Thomas cited in Mishra 1993:22). Monahan argued that *Arthashastra* was the basis of Mauryan institutions as the polity described in the treatise was that of a small state (Monahan cited in Mishra 1993:22). Kalidas Nag supported the view, and argued that diplomacy in *Arthashastra* "was not that of a centralised empire but rather of a divided family, in which each chief is in constant conflict with his equals for hegemony, which in its turn crumbles down by causing a new series of war" (Nag cited in Mishra 1993:25). This he argued was contrary to the politics of large empire, and therefore the text, according to him must have preceded the Mauryan empire.

However, tracing the roots of *Arthashastra* post-date Mauryan period, Devdatta Ramkrishna Bhandarkar, notes that "*Arthashastra* must have been authored around seventh and second century BC" (Bhandarkar cited in Mishra 1993:24). Finding similarities between *Dharmasutras* and the *Arthashastra*, Bhandarkar argued that while the work was composed by Kautilya; the first and last chapter of the text must have undergone some modification or amplification shortly before Kamandaka 500 A.D. (Bhandarkar cited in Mishra 1993:26). Buddha Prakash, considering the rich historical events mentioned in Patanjali and similarities with Archaemedian empire, concludes that portions of the text, specially portions discussing slavery, would have been written during the Mauryan period. The text according to him can be pushed to second century B.C., when India had familiarity with Nepal, Malaya Peninsula and China (Prakash cited in Mishra 1993:30). Another scholar Hemchandra Raychoudhury pushes the date further from 300 A.D. to 150 A.D., arguing that, "Asoka's ignorance of Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, his use of Prakrit as against the prescription of Sanskrit in Kautilya, his scribes familiarity with only forty-one letters as against sixty-three of Kautilya, the use of wood against bricks and the later and wider geographical horizon of Kautilya" makes it go against traditional

dating (Raychoudhury cited in Mishra 1993:30). Charles Driekmeir on the other hand notes that *Arthashastra* includes revisions by several other writers, and Kautilya could belong to a period as late as the fourth century A.D., rather than the minister of Chandragupta. He argued that, "whoever composed the text on statecraft had an extensive knowledge of the Maurya administrative and diplomatic procedures" (Driekmeir cited in Mishra 1993:32).

While a categorical conclusion on the authorship and periodization could be a difficult task (Mishra 1993:36), as there is little consensus on the dating and authorship of Kautilya, the text does not lose its intellectual value. Given that *Arthashastra* was a piece of classical work in terms of raising important, eternal questions associated with the organization of state and statecraft, claims and debates on its historicity cannot be a limitation in drawing lessons and analytical value to the discipline of and debates in international relations. Kautilya's *Arthashastra* could have been authored by a single individual or a school of scholars belonging to the Kautilya School, what is important is to note a *continuous pattern in terms of the interdependence and causality of variables (constituent elements) that have been established between the internal and external realm*. It indeed reflects a pattern of strategic thinking which sought to give meaning to the complexity of desirable (ought) and feasible (is) elements associated with state and statecraft.

The purpose of this book is therefore not to undertake a historical investigation; neither does it claim to add value to the understanding of the text, in terms of philological expertise. However, what it intends to do is to highlight its relevance to the discipline of international relations in strategic terms. It intends to offer a revisionist case for understanding Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, since the text seems to be understood and interpreted from narrow frames of realpolitik, bereft of any ideational or philosophical value. As has been argued in this book, *Arthashastra* finds a proximity with the systems analysis in international relations, and needs to be looked at as a tradition of thoughts passed down to later texts.

Interrogating the boundaries: considering, philosophy and strategy

Is *Arthashastra* beyond disciplinary boundaries? This question could appear anomalous as disciplinary boundaries were not invented when *Arthashastra* was written. Disciplinary boundaries came to be imposed on texts over a period of time. Ancient philosophers studied anything they found important and challenging and therefore rigidities of disciplines evaded them (Jandric 2016:4392). Significantly in *Arthashastra* issues under discussion range from the micro to the macro and from simple to complex, i.e. to the individual details which contributed to societal order; to matters which were relevant to the practice of effective statecraft and to philosophical

discussions and debates which bought value to the domain politics and strategy.

This relationship gets well articulated as the 'political' question in *Arthashastra*. For Kautilya questions associated with politics were the subject of much holistic rumination. While political scientists have dwelled on defining the political, liberals, feminists and Marxists have also approached its meaning in different ways. For instance political scientists would limit the definition of the political to institutions and administrative apparatus of the state where "operation of the state and its relationship with its citizens and other states" becomes an important entry point (Held 1991:5). For liberals, on the other hand, the definition of the political is centered on individual rights, liberty and equality of opportunities. For Marxists, any meaning of the political is intertwined with economics and class structures and for feminists the personal has always been political. The narrow interpretation of binding the political to institutions and society (public life) is rather parochial for feminist scholars. Thus, the debate over what constitutes political is about systematically reflecting about the nature of politics as a legitimate and inclusive activity. "Theorising the political is therefore about articulating norms and limits of state action" (Held 1991:7).

Kautilya's definition of political in *Arthashastra* is not only about placing the political institution as an organized structure (state) at the centre of political activity, but also emphasizing the limits of political action when it came to physical and natural environment. The ideational organization of the political is as important as its material manifestation. In this backdrop the purposive existence behind of the state becomes relevant. For instance it was categorically stated that the role of the state was to enhance prosperity and provide security and that the centre of all political activity was "labha and palana" (Kangle 1999:4). On similar grounds the duties of the ruler were specified as three-fold: "*raksha* or protection of the state from external aggression, *palana* or maintenance of law and order within the state and *yogakshema* or safeguarding the welfare of the people" (Rangarajan 1992:3). This in many ways defined the boundaries of the political and steps were taken to minimize factors which could jeopardize this idea of political.

The normative framework of the idea of state in Kautilya's *Arthashastra* thus comes across in the form of a detailed analysis on the workings of the state, where the seven essential limbs – also known as *constituent elements of state* were the essential functional grids which had to be preserved and maintained. Kautilya outlined the end purpose of the state as *yogakshema* – meaning the wellbeing of the people, and this according to him was the essential engine of the state, because it was the scaffold for ensuring the security of the king. The societal matrix, as described in Kautilya's *Arthashastra* was a hierarchical one, with specialized roles decided for various class and caste divisions. One can also say that it was an ordered society, where virtuosity earned its meaning only when one honestly did his/her duty. Virtuosity of duty can be qualified by the term dharma, which, as

Kautilya believed, would be the glue to hold the society together. Invocation of *Dharmashastras* is particularly relevant in this context.

It is most interesting to note that dharma thus assumed a relativist interpretation in *Arthashastra*, as it was the fundamental basis of order, giving meaning to concepts such as morality, justice and power. Every function was thus directed to strengthening the state, which was elicited as the highest embodiment of *dharma* itself. Thus, protecting the state (dharma) was not only considered the duty of the king, but also of the official bureaucracy and the common citizen. However, this did not qualify the state to be dictatorial as there were stipulated limits to state action – the political thus seemed to be well defined, where the boundaries of political were routed through existing philosophical tradition having authority and legitimacy. The understanding of the state and the normative characteristics associated with it, qualifies *Arthashastra* as a text on political theory, where the Kautilyan idea of the state assumes analytical, normative and interpretive value.

Given the worth that *Arthashastra* holds for defining the political, it would indeed be interesting to gauge its relevance to political philosophy. One of the central tasks of political philosophers as moral philosophers is to provide benchmarks for public conduct, which is essential in areas such as the distribution of scarce goods, or the exercise of power by political leaders. For the normative solutions that philosophy provides and on which societies rely are hinged on attempts at improving social institutions. This becomes an important conduit through which political ethics are translated to public practices (Freeden 2004:3–4). The essential task of the political philosopher then is to reveal the gap between the *ought* and the *is* and also offer ways to reconcile it.

This ought-is debate is indeed visible in *Arthashastra* and is communicated through the concept of order. For instance, ethics, when transposed to *Arthashastra*, become operational through the concept of dharma. Dharma was the bridging concept between nature and artifice or the notions associated with trans-secular and secular domains. This was deemed essential given the necessity of regulation of order and introducing the element of balance or moderation in societal functioning. It is important to note that a central theme of classical reflection not only in the Asian political philosophy but also western philosophy was unity of the world and the cosmos. In western philosophical tradition, "natural and human order were often seen as a reflection of the world. It was later with the influence of Saint Augustine that this tension between classical and Christian thought became much more prominent" (Rengger 2000:4). Augustinian thought emphasized not only the promotion of order but the minimization of disorder, instability and conflict. This as Rengger points out was 'balancing' of the cosmic order with societal order. Rengger's articulation has a consequence for understanding order and diplomacy from the perspective of the Asian philosophical/political tradition too (Jackson 2002:1–28).

The notion of dharma in Hindu thought was also linked to order or holding together. A synergy between the natural and the human world was an important syllogism, which was an inspirational end goal. The philosophical traditions of Samkhya, Yoga and Lokyata, which Kautilya mentions in Book One, is not only a revelation to the broad content which inspired *Arthashastra* but is also reflective of the importance placed on the ideas animating the concepts found in the text.

The philosophical tradition

Samkhya and Yoga schools are significant for understanding ideational influences on *Arthashastra*. These schools were one of the oldest philosophical systems of India. Unlike Upanishads, which believed in non-duality between the atman (self) and the Brahman (absolute reality), Samkhya and Yoga believe in the dualistic, dialectic opposition between soul (purusa) and nature (prakriti). However, these need not be understood as being dichotomous or incommensurable but more in the sense of emphasizing constitutive elements that give rise to interdependence, relationality (which leads to the constitutive understanding of being) and causality where the cause and effect interact with each other. One can say Purusa and Prakriti thus complemented, balanced and gave meaning to each other.[1]

Samkhya philosophy deduces its philosophy from three broad propositions. "First, everything in the cosmos (but with one prominent exception) is a part of prakriti – which is defined as one single material substance. This means that there is no fundamental difference between animate and inanimate objects. Second, the prominent exception is the infinite number of distinct souls or purusas, which is the pure consciousness. Third prakriti (matter) exists for the sake of the purusas (soul)" (Cooper 2003:28). The substance or constituents of prakriti (matter) as David Cooper argues "lies in it being an amalgam of three gunas or elements (sattava, tejas and tamas) – and thus prakriti is the name of an initial state of the cosmos, when the gunas are in perfect equilibrium. Prakriti can evolve so that the purusa or the pure consciousness can then exist in a condition of liberation" (Cooper 2003:27). Complex as this argument might appear to be, the causality of purusa and prakriti, while indicative of an equilibrium (action-reaction) of a balanced state, underlines the inadvertent process of nature's proclivity to maintain balance, order, equilibrium. As when purusa and prakriti meet a new entity a distinct, new identity is born, which has the potential of reaching a higher state. The purusa, which is the pure consciousness, while unchanging, does manifest itself in terms of prakriti (matter) and is shaped by the balance of gunas (elements) of the object. Cooper sums up the essence of Samkhya philosophy through three propositions:

> First, the sense that the world for all and its apparent variety, as a single coherent whole. Second the sense that human beings are a unique kind

of creature, set off against and separated from natural order. Third, human being is central in the scheme of things, and that everything else is for their sake.

(Cooper 2003:27)

Samkhya philosophy is relevant to *Arthashastra* because it describes the prakriti of the state being composed of seven material elements and according to Kautilya, the state would manifest its pure – essentialist form (purusa), only when all the seven elements manifest the excellencies or virtues which are the desired qualities of them. This is one of the most proximate familiarities that the concepts and terminologies in the text have with the Samkhya philosophy. The importance of discipline, emphasis on duties, the power of deliberation (knowledge) and the importance of balance are all pointers in this direction. These analogies are significant because of the importance of the logical mode of inquiry, which could have gone behind the envisioning of state and statecraft. However, the appeal for virtuous attributes associated with excellencies of the state are relevant for understanding the cultural and contextual underpinnings which the concept of dharma and duty underline as part of the larger Hindu tradition. This framework thus became foundational for legitimizing the existence of the state.

This in *Arthashastra* becomes an effective ontological departure point for understanding of concepts such as the state. The epistemological – methodological pluralism, as the *science for understanding the object of study* is illustrated by the Samkhya school, supplemented by 'Lokayata',[2] and 'Yoga-sutra'.[3] A discussion on these philosophical strands becomes important because of a significant verse in *Arthashastra*, which states – "Samkhya, Yoga and Lokayata these constitute philosophy" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 1.2.10:6).

The strategic tradition

If strategy is a fixed plan that set out a reliable path to an eventual goal, then it is likely to be not only disappointing but also counter-productive conceding the advantage to others with greater flexibility and imagination.

(Freedman 2013:609)

These lines by Freedman highlight the role of flexibility and imagination to strategy, which make it dynamically congruent with the developing situation. Taking this further Morton Kaplan writes, "In the (problems of) statecraft it is advisable to avoid the specification of a grand strategy because the information gained during the play of games is important. The game is a stochastic learning game. One does not know in advance whether the opponents will learn or not" (Kaplan 1957:197). Thus, Kaplan offers a

unified theory, which he terms as systems theory, which is inclusive of processes, values and strategy. These essential yardsticks (theory, processes, value and strategy), according to Kaplan "have a definite and an intimate relationship with each other and constitute a unified and coherent whole" (Kaplan 1957:147). Kautilyan grand strategy inclines more to the Kaplanian approach as it balances values with strategy and processes with information, not compromising on the element of flexibility.

In this backdrop, given the strategic and theoretical leanings of *Arthashastra*, this book attempted to juxtapose Kaplan's analysis within the Kautilyan framework of state and statecraft as it found some homologous similarities between the two. While it is not expected of a fourth century thinker to theorize a text on state and statecraft, if one makes sense of the text and explores its relevance to the discipline of international relations, Kautilya can very much be termed as a systems analyst, particularly because he does envision the political system as a constituent whole highlighting the relationality that exists between the social and political. The idea of 7 constituent elements in the internal environment and the 72 constituent elements in the external environment, and the close interdependence/interaction between the two is indeed indicative of the systems vocabulary.

The reason why these frameworks, which are indicative of different disciplinary interests, stand out as the introduction to Kautilya's *Arthashastra* is their close resemblance with the direction and substance of the text per se. While many would restrain from qualifying *Arthashastra* as a text of theory or political theory, echoes of both these disciplines are seen in *Arthashastra*. As the subsequent chapters would show, while philosophically *Arthashastra* attempted to redefine the science of politics by reflecting on elements of Hindu philosophical thought, theoretically it echoes a holistic framework of a networked interdependence pointing towards strategic thought and practice.

While the philosophical, and strategic aspects, are important to understand, and are indeed central to the subject of this book, the value of *Arthashastra* also stems from the civilizational roots it has to offer for imagining intellectual legacies of South Asia. Can *Arthashastra* be read as a civilizational bridge to understanding the traditions of strategic thought and techniques of strategic communication contemplated in South Asia? For instance, how is the fundamental difference between dialogue, dialectics and bargaining (verbal and non-verbal techniques of communication) reconciled through this ancient text?

Significantly, if one looks at the spatial history when *Arthashastra* was written, the region touched the Western fringes of South Afghanistan to the Eastern fringes up to Assam (India). In fact, the Empire of the Mauryas, stretched to the northern natural boundaries of the Himalaya mountains, and to the east into Assam. To the west, it reached beyond modern Pakistan and significant portions of Afghanistan, including the modern Herat and

Kandahar provinces and Baluchistan (Tanabe 2015). On the limits of the Mauryan empire, Biren Bonnerjea writes,

> the army of Chandragupta Maurya included the county now called Afghanistan, the ancient Ariana as far as the Hindukush range, the Punjab, the territories now known as the United Provinces of Agra, Oudh and Behar, and the peninsula of Kathiawar in the far west, and probably also comprised Bengal.
>
> (Bonnerjia 1934:35–36)

While spatial understanding such as above gives continuities to shared pasts, these also offer lessons which history of civilizations offer to conceptualizing ideas in the international. The following pages direct analysis towards attributes that often became ideational foundations for defining the discourse on civilization legacies. A common tendency is to equate modern South Asia with its shared civilizational pasts masked under the rubric of 'Indic civilization'. However, what has not been deliberated upon much is the recognition of ideas, which stem from pre-westphalian traditions like *Arthashastra* and what legacy did it offer to other emerging narratives in the sub-continent. Given this glaring gap, it would be interesting to make a scoping case, whether a resource like *Arthashastra*, can add some value to further our inquiry into the study of civilizations primarily in terms of its intellectual legacies and vocabularies.

Arthashastra as a civilizational resource

The idea of South Asia has been contested from various vantage points. In fact, the term South Asia itself is considered to be an exogenous concept of western import. The phrase was first used in an article in a 1951 journal *International Social Science Bulletin*, and was indicative of the establishment of area studies in the United States (Khosla 2014:142; Arif 2014). Post 1947 in post-colonial South Asia, with the legacy of partition, this geo-strategic imagination of 'South Asia' was further fossilized, and perpetuated by the geo-politics of the Cold War.

However, civilizational roots of Southern Asia are being revisited. Akmal Hussain and Muchkund Dubey, in an edited book *Democracy, Sustainable Development and Peace: New Perspectives on South Asia*, argue that,

> the challenges of achieving peace through an inclusive democracy and economy and of conserving the integrated life support systems of South Asia should be underpinned by the norms and the core values of society.
>
> (Hussain and Dubey 2014:2)

These societal values as argued have roots in the "geo-cultural wellsprings" and not geo-strategic past of South Asia. The concept of civilization also

highlights the intertwining of shared linguistic, aesthetic, literary and religious characteristics (Rudolf 2010:138; Eck 2012:144). Civilizational claims need to be historicized as beyond the spatiality of geography and material attributes, there are ideas which governed the very distinct societal-state relationship in South Asia. These "unobservables" become the antecedent conditions for undertaking ontological inquiries as they hinge on the constitutive underpinnings of state and society. This also demands that one understands the structures of state and society, institutions and customs, order and disorder, war and conflict and techniques of communication that have familiarity with ideas in early India. Civilizations foregrounded in the intellectual legacies of South Asia, thus become epistemic sites for engaging with ideas, which informed conceptual categories.[4] The following pages try to highlight some of these aspects by focusing on *Arthashastra* as an entry point.

Kautilya's *Arthashastra* is an important resource for understanding state-society relationship in early India[5] because it marked the transition from the clan system to the evolution for organized polities. The state-society contrast was stark. In fact, it was indicative of the advances that Indian societal structure had made. Historians argue that by 600 B.C. plurality of emerging identities were visible in Indian history, being shaped by ideational and material changes. These could be seen in institutional structures associated with monarchy and republican forms of governments. While the former were concentrated in the Ganges plains, the latter were concentrated in the peripheries of these kingdoms. Loyalties were consequently being attached to caste hierarchies and tribal structures respectively. As a result, republics were less opposed to individualistic opinion than that of the monarchies, which were inclined to tolerate orthodox views (Thapar 2002:52–53). These developments appear interesting from the perspective of construction of identities of these nascent political communities. The plurality of thought systems, which emerged as a consequence of these developments gave birth to two distinct traditions: Hinduism and Buddhism. It is most interesting to understand that the Buddhist philosophical learnings and ideas were emerging as a challenge to Brahmanical ideas, creating a distinct tradition in South Asia, marking the plurality of narratives (Black and Patton 2016). One of the most striking characteristics of these non-Brahmanical theories was the Buddhist account of the origin of the state, which are captured in the verses below.

> there was a time in the early days of the universe, when there was complete harmony among all created beings and men and women had no desires, everything being provided for. Gradually a process of decay began, when needs, wants and desires became manifest. The concept of a family led to private property, which inturn led to disputes and struggles, which necessitated law and a controlling authority. Thus it was decided that one person be elected to rule and maintain justice. He was

to be the great elect (*Mahasammata*) and was given a fixed share in the produce of the land as salary. Such a theory suited the political systems of the republics.

(cited in Thapar 2002:53)

In contrast, the monarchical form of government was centered in and around the Gangetic plains with some of the prominent kingdom being Kashi, Kosala and Magadha. The Monarchical form of government had a competing narrative of state and deliberated more on the sources of *artha* to create material prosperity (Chousalkar 1986:68). Different *arthashastra* teachers advocated and represented distinct ideas and schools. R.S. Sharma notes that according to Kautilya himself, there were as many as ten predecessors before him (Sharma 1990:158). The conceptualization of 'artha' in sixth century B.C. was to induce moderation and define the meaning of political. The political anarchy in the sixth century B.C., had made kings embrace amoral methods to get things done and two main schools, Brahamanism and Buddhism, emerged from this struggle. Chaulsakar writes while the "traditional Brahman religion was based on Vedic dogma and sacrifices; the anti-vedic religious teachers were individuals like Buddha, Mahavira and Gosala. The *arthashastra* teachers wanted to offer a mid-way and tried understanding the cause of new change advocating that the forces of change could be strengthened with the help of the institution of the state" (Chousalkar 1981:54–55). Significantly, the institution of the state was a unique moment in early India. While the state was regulatory in character, in terms of monitoring the roles of various organs and administrative structures, it also exhibited a layered understanding of sovereignty. This shift of focus from *rajanya* (who protects the *jana*) to the Kshatriya (who both protects as well as maintains law and order) is indicative of the notion of legitimate power (Thapar 2002:392).

The nature of state-society relations in early India has also received much attention. Gurcharan Das (2013) points out the king was a distant figure who did not penetrate the life of an ordinary person as everyday life was determined more by the immediate village, caste and family clan. The point Das underlines is that "customs and laws came much prior to the existence of the state and the duties of the respective rulers were to protect these customs and laws in a self regulating social order" (Das 2013:53–57). Much has been written on how the 200-year-old colonial rule changed the psychological and social fabric of India, giving rise of 'enumerated communities' (Bianchini et al. 2005). The transition between the pre-colonial and the colonial period in ancient India can be understood through the presence and changed character of state. Das's remarks bring out the centrality of the state quite appropriately. He notes, Hegel, once comparing China and India, noted that, "if China must be regarded as nothing but a state, hindu political existence presents us with people but no state" (Das 2013:56). The post-colonial idea of state took the centralized nature of colonial state and

foregrounded its identity in the idea of nation-state. While this transition is an important reminder of the continuities between past and present, the existence of caste cannot be obviated from any discussion on state and society. This is because caste in pre-colonial India provided a framework for all social activity and made the presence of central government "largely superfluous" (Moore 1966:315). The caste system, which owes its origin to the varna system was an important facet during the conceptualization of texts like *Arthashastra*. One could argue that *Arthashastra* as a text responded to the caste system in instrumental terms for sustaining, maintaining and regulating existing order of society and for endowing predictability to the idea of state and statecraft. Thus, while not a social revolutionary, in his own ways *Arthashastra* gave a functional meaning to the Varna (caste) system. In Book One of Chapter One Kautilya writes

> Duties common to all (the varnas and four stages of life), are abstaining from injury, truthfulness, freedom from malice, compassionateness and forebearance. The observance of ones own special duty (read caste) leads to heaven and to endless bliss . . . therefore the king should not allow the special duties of different beings to be transgressed (by them), for ensuring adherence to (each one's) special duty, he finds joy after death as well as this life.
>
> (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 1.3.13:8)

Thus, while the idea of state was introduced around the sixth century B.C., much attention was paid to drawing the limits of the state. One can say that the limits of the political were defined by establishing the high moral ground of the state per se. The purposive existence of the state was qualified with its role to regulate social order and raise the bar for any transgression. From a strategic perspective, it is important to understand varnadharma from the logic of social order because mobility in functional roles was permissible in *Arthashastra*. R.S. Sharma (1990) writes that during the Mauryan period, the economic position of the sudras underwent positive changes as they engaged as sharecroppers and owned lands. He further notes that, while custom had it that higher varnas were preferred for the post of councillors, Kautilya's *Arthashastra* does not make any explicit statement excluding the sudras from high administrative posts. *Arthashastra* also qualified a sudra to be a part of the espionage system and the army. The following lines become significant for understanding the instrumental use of the caste system for maintaining order.

> those employed as procurers of water for bathing, shampooers, bed makers, barbers, toilet makers, water servants, actors, dancers and singers should keep an eye on the private characters of the officers of the king.
>
> (Sharma 1990:173)

Further,

> the Dharmasutras give the impression that normally only the Kshatriyas and in emergency only the brahmas and the vaisyas, could take up arms. Kautilya on the other hand, preferred an army composed of vaisayas and sudras on account of numerical strength.
>
> (Sharma 1990:174)

While instances like these do not mean that Kautilya was a social revolutionary, as he does fiercely protect the varnadharma, some anomalies which do appear are suggestive of the fact that varna dharma was instrumental in his vision of maintaining the social order of the times.

Kautilyan state

Kautilya defined the state as constitutive of seven limbs (saptanga theory). These were: swami (king or the leader), amatya (councillors), janapada (territory and people), durg (fort), kosa (treasury), panda (army) and mitra (ally). What was the basis for organizing these elements in a coherent manner? What was behind the ordering of these discrete elements? Were there some normative beliefs, which gave meaning to the ways, techniques of governance and how statecraft was perceived? Do these sources reveal conscious articulation of legitimate power (authority)? The ideational influences that animate such concepts make the constitutive approach a significant entry point. This is an important question as concepts related to authority, legitimacy and power were also being deliberated in Buddhist thought.

A significant framework on the basis of which we can understand these alternative narratives and dialogic encounters that existed between traditions is the use of the term "upayas" in *Arthashastra*, which belonged to the Brahmanical tradition and "upaya kaushal", which belonged to the Mahayana Buddhist tradition. While the use of Upayas (*sana* -reconciliaton, *dana* -gifts, *bheda* -disssent, *danda* -use of force) in *Arthashastra* meant employment of tactics to manoeuvre the enemy and hence maintain, regulate or manage the order; Upaya Kaushal emphasized on relational techniques, which not only managed but transformed and directed relations. Pye notes that Buddhist upayas convey a consequential understanding of the 'power of skillful means'. The kushal (skilful) component is an integral part of defining the 'means' and determining the ends, and here the inner-method of emancipation (spiritual revolution and realization) in Buddhist religion is emphasized (Pye 2003:8). Attributes highlighted through the concept of skillful means were compassion, dependent origination, (not thinking of factors as inner and outer) and insight/foresight (wisdom to understand the nature of things) (Pye 2003:91–96). Buddha used the technique of stories to convey skillful means to his followers. The concept of non-violence based on compassionate value and understanding of other has also been an important narrative

in Indian tradition and is used as an epistemological tool in inter-cultural dialogue (Pannikar 1989).

The discourse on civilizations

The discourse on civilizations has been placed within two broad logics – the singular, homogenous form and the plural heterogeneous form. While the former is primarily essentialist in its arguments and is construed as internally homogenous within its firm boundaries, and taking strict cognition of collective belonging to a common past, the latter constitutes of multiple components, its attributes and its borders are contested (Rudolf 2010:137). Such a view would raise questions such as, who does the cultural past belong to? Is there a history of common pasts? This is specifically true when the civilizational logic has to unsettle uneasy questions of a Hindu India or a Muslim Pakistan? And multiple cultures exist within these two broad categories. Aizaz Hasan's book raises some of these unsettling questions. In *The Indus Saga* (2005), he posits a proposition arguing that the Indus region, which comprised of present day Pakistan, had a natural and inherent urge towards separatism, and its own separate identity and that the India-Pakistan divide is of primordial origins.

Thus, while discourses on civilizational roots of the early Indic region have often been traced to contestations made around the political identity of India and Pakistan, and the notion of India as a 'civilizational state' and not a nation state[6] can be contested by some, this book has intentionally avoided such identity questions. The rationale for doing so, as stated before, is to understand the ideational/intellectual influences, which endowed meaning to the political concepts that were prevalent at that time. What is the epistemic value that civilization systems can offer for understanding political concepts which originated in South Asia is the larger question for deliberation as political systems are influenced "by ways of living and thinking which exist in own nation and culture" (Nakamura 1964:3).

The 'civilizational value' of *Arthashastra*

Patrick Jackson offers two specific ways of studying civilization. These are "attribute ontology" and the "process ontology". While the former involves looking at historical data in order to reach a better understanding of what civilizations means, the latter focuses on following the actors themselves, as they make sense out of their situation in civilizational terms. In this case the analysts are generally constrained to limit their academic speculation by restricting their descriptions and explanations back to the ways in which social actors themselves engage the world and find meaning in the action laden accounts within which social actors generate and operate (Jackson 2010:185). This insider view represented by the latter and the outsider view represented by the former can be considered as causal and constitutive approaches to study civilizations. Examining this distinction, Jackson raises a critical question,

do we regard a civilization to be the kind of thing that is best identified by a detached scholarly analyst as a part of an academic explanation, or do we on the contrary regard a civilization to be a social and cultural resource that manifests primarily in the discourse in which actors engage as they seek to act creatively in and interact with their social environment? Is 'civilisation' a tool or instrument for making sense of social dynamics? Whose tool is it: does it belong to us or to the people whom we are investigating?

(Jackson 2010:187)

This definitional clarity by Jackson becomes an enticing entry point at which to investigate the common pasts of South Asia, which are also embedded and constituted through multiple narratives. Constitution of space through the notion of "dominant spatial production" can help capture values and nuances, which regional spaces bring to the study of civilizations. Duara argues that "in South East Asia the dominant or hegemonic modes of spatial production could vary from paradigms which represented the idea of Westphalian system or systems such as capitalism or even the idea of a nation per se, which tend to establish congruency in cultural and political authority" (Duara 2013:6). How ideas adapt and respond to spatial modes of production and how the force of ideas inform the process of spatial production become interesting departure points through which one can pull out the distinct civilizational value or "ways of thinking" that specific civilizational spaces can bring to the study of regions and regionalism. This also demands that one becomes more reflexivist in ones approach when trying to establish relevance of Kautilya's *Arthashastra* to the twenty-first century.[7]

By undertaking a civilizational analysis one can try to understand and identify nuanced ideational inputs dominating the intellectual space of South Asia. This can be a valuable tool in understanding the diffusion and privileging of certain ideas and not others. How certain concepts adapted and got transformed through the advent of colonialism, anti-colonialism and the Westphalia system, which structurally dominated the knowledge systems in multiple parts of the world, cannot be understood fully unless one engages with certain indigenous ideas.

The epistemological and methodological frameworks will only be enriched and informed by the rich plural tradition of South Asian philosophy – which consists of Buddhist, Islamic and Hindu strands of philosophical thought, which contemplated significant political ideas such as state, sovereignty, justice and order amongst others. The heterogeneity within these strands of thought is itself emblematic of the rich pluralism and diverse narratives in South Asian traditions, which inform the need to explore conceptual varieties. For instance, the notion of dialogue and its semantic range makes it a genre in its own right and open up epistemic spaces in the field of strategic communication (Black and Patton 2016).

The distinct strand that *Arthashastra* brings to the study of civilizations is its very systematic approach towards studying the notion of order, both at the internal and external level. This order determined the meaning of justice, morality, power, rights, duties, politics and statecraft. The understanding of order was not necessarily understood in terms of harmony of interests, but more in terms of internalizing norms and synergizing rules both at the individual and societal level. The concept of dharma was the broad rubric that was instrumental in reinforcing and operationalizing this notion of order. The moral element of dharma thus became a legitimizing factor in the perpetuation of social order at the psychological level giving meaning to the tangible and intangible aspects of what was considered political in ancient India.

While this does not suggest that one eulogize primordial values, it does however advocate that frameworks that engage with South Asia take cognisance of these notions/civilizational systems, which have had a psychological impact in shaping societies of South Asia. Much of the political and strategic culture of South Asian societies is informed by these common values and societal modes of thinking, where ones particular way of thinking inspired the other and then they independently developed in a syncretic manner (Nakamura 1964). Thus, engaging and debating these concepts as they existed at that time and how they seemed to have evolved given the political needs and shifting strategic contexts, can offer ways of knowing and understanding the historicity of indigenous concepts.

While this book does offer a nuanced understanding of state and statecraft as articulated by Kautilya, the meaning of dharma as order/duty as understood in different philosophical traditions of South Asia, can provide one such mediating ground for exploring the historicity of concepts.

A good case in point for the lack of such analysis can be seen around discourses on Indian strategic thought. While there has been a lot of focus on strategic culture, there is also an evident lack of engagement with substantive questions related to rich conceptual vocabularies, their meanings and interpretation. The discussion below is indicative of the overwhelming focus, which has been given to the concept of strategic culture, at the cost of concepts, which can offer rich insights on strategic thinking.[8]

For instance, George Tanhem in an influential essay argues that India doesn't have a strategic culture. He suggests this has largely been due to five reasons. "These are (a) lack of political unity, (b) Hindu conception of time, (c) a culture of viewing existence as mystery, (d) the effects of British colonialism which discouraged Indian participation in decision making and (e) in post-independence, the lack of planning among strategic elites" (Tanham 1992:50). K. Subramanyam agrees with Tanhem and argues that the government has no strategic culture thus they never plan offensively (Subrahmanyam 2005:16). He argues that normative approach of post-independence leaders was in absence of any concrete strategic culture and even argues that Nehru didn't think through the strategic consequences of non-alignment (Subrahmanyam 1986:258).

Kanti Bajpai argues the view that India not having a strategic culture is incorrect (Bajpai 2002:195). However, he points out that only canonical text, which alludes to the existence of a uniform strategic mindset, is Kautilya's *Arthashastra*. Bajpai focuses on post-independence era and recognizes three dominant strands of sub-cultures informing strategic culture of India, namely Nehruvianism, Neo-liberalism and Hyper-realism (Bajpai 2002:113). It is interesting to note that Pratap Bhanu Mehta (2009) categorizes the Indian approach to the world as Ashokan and Kautilyan.

One of the primary objections offered by these scholars is the lack of offensive understanding of power as an objective of foreign policy. But it is critical to note how power itself has been defined or conceptualized in the Indian strategic tradition. Bajpai provides a very unique explanation for this mindset. He notes that the Indian tradition includes the conception of national interest and ability to coerce the others, but is constrained by institutional and non-coercive means, which include the peaceful view of change and spirit of compromises. Thus, there is an ideational force behind this defensive outlook which informs the strategic choices (Bajpai 2002:124). In the context of *Arthashastra* the notion of purposive action with state capacity being a referent object becomes important.

It is significant to note that Swarna Rajagopalan (2014) argues that Mahabharata and Ramayana still inform Indian thinking. She notes that the narratives, values and argument of these texts are deeply embedded in the consciousness of Indians. The general debate centres on the role of order and chaos, dharma-adharma and self-other in deciding the operating norms of society. Similarly, Aruna and Amrita Narlikar also trace the intellectual thinking visible in India to bargaining techniques, which India uses in contemporary international negotiations. For them the cultural continuities and framing techniques, and distributive bargaining as a preferred strategy shaped India's disposition as a tough negotiator. For Narlikars (2014), Mahabharata offers an interesting entry point to understand why India is a tough bargainer. Bharat Karnad (2002:1–65) also talks about the influences of these texts along with various *dharmashastras*, *smritis* and *puranas* on the strategic thinking. This book situates Kautilyan thought to illuminate thinking on strategy through Kautilyan concepts of state and statecraft. While it refrains from the notion of presentism in terms of drawing parallels between Kautilya and contemporary Indian thinking, it nevertheless underlines the existence of strategic thinking in *Arthashastra*, which took a long-term view (grand strategic design) of state capacity and effective statecraft.

Thus, apart from its value for studying and understanding the strategic traditions, concepts that emerge from *Arthashastra* are of epistemic value in terms of redefining how one understands and theorizes certain key concepts in international relations and what contribution *Arthashastra* has as a resource offer to scholarship on strategic thinking. It is from this perspective that this book differs from authors like Roger Boesche (2012); Sasson Sofer (2014); and Henry Kissinger (2014) who have used a positivist lens to

define Kautilya. Roger Boesche frames Kautilya as a political realist, thus falling into the paradigm driven trap of International Relations. Interpretation of Kautilya in certain water-tight compartments, as this book argues, is problematic primarily because, one needs to situate Kautilya's *Arthashastra* within the broader philosophical strands of Dharmashastra and Nitishastras – two key strands of Indian philosophical tradition, which raise metatheoretical questions. To isolate Kautilyan strategy from the overall philosophy it was embedded in is indeed a misplaced approach. Similarly, Kissinger's recent book claims that *Arthashastra* was bereft of any philosophical background, where power maximization was the primary objective of statecraft (Kissinger 2014; Pillalamarri 2015).

While Kissinger's interpretation echoes the views of many scholars, the following chapters will examine the meaning of power and its relevance to another important concept in Hindu philosophical tradition – order. Sasson Sofer's (2014) book, while it is a significant contribution to Diplomatic Studies, also makes fleeting remarks on *Arthashastra* by completely ignoring the Nitisaras of ancient India. Such a dialogical understanding becomes imminent as it highlights the limits of understanding alternative epistemic spaces in the discipline of international relations.

Notes

1 "Kapila, who is considered to be the founder of Samkhya philosophy, lived before the Buddha (600 B.C.). Samkhya believed in dualism, since it maintained that there are two realities – spirit of soul (purusa) and matter (prakriti). Both prakriti and purusa are mutually exclusive. The reason for dualism was the belief that consciousness (purusa) cannot be derived from matter (prakriti), nor can matter be derived from spirit. The empirical world thus is manifest from its cause (prakriti), which is unmanifest (avyaktam)" (Chakravarti 1992:252). Thus, according to this belief, 'what is not existent cannot be brought into existence. Some specific material has to be employed to produce something. Everything cannot be produced from everything. Therefore, the effect preexists in the cause. Thus, while there is similarity between the cause and the effect, there are differences too (example the lump of clay and the pot made of the clay are same yet different). There are two kinds of cause (material and the efficient), as an effect depends on the raw matter being produced (for instance the pot can be made of clay), and also on the activity of some agent – the potter) (Chakravarti 1992:253).
2 The philosophy of Lokayatas is also known as Vitandavada. The name, according to Chakravarty is significant since it indicates that Lokayatas started as sophists and casuists. The term vitanda means tricky logical disputation or a discussion aimed solely at criticizing the theories of opponents and vada means a doctrine established through logical arguments. The Lokayatas revolted against the Vedas and rejected most of the commonly accepted philosophical concepts like an eternal, immortal soul, karma, rebirth, heaven, hell and liberation. They are also associated with establishing the doctrine of materialism. There is no possession of any original work of Lokayatas and is best understood through a group of Lokayata group of scholars (Chakravarti 1992:146–62).
3 Yogasutra, as Cooper puts it "rehandles the Samkhya philosophy adapting it to a rather superficial theism in which the practical values of meditation are exalted.

Against the atheism of Samkhya, Yoga philosophy argues for the existence of God. However, the god is not the creator of the world but he is an all embracing principle of reality of Brahman variety. Where Yogic philosophy departs from other darshanas (epistemology or methodology) is the importance given to meditation (subject-object interaction) (Cooper 2003:32–33). Solomon notes the difference between the two, where Samkhya emphasized on liberation through knowledge of purusa and prakriti and yoga emphasized liberation through ascetic practices and techniques of interpretation (Solomon 1983:218). Saurabh Mishra undertakes a comprehensive analysis of the Samkhya, Yoga, Lokayat dialectics (Mishra 2017:195-221).

4 Benedict Anderson talks about cultural system in western Europe to explain the evolution of nation states, thus defining them as "cultural artifacts". He does so in order to trace the primordiality and modernity of a nation state. A question that becomes relevant in the context of South Asia is 'civilizational systems' that gave meaning to a 'geographic landscape' such as India. Dianna Eck's work on sacred geographies becomes relevant in this context. Similarly, the anti-colonial moment in India, when Indian intellectuals were attempting to juxtapose the forces of modernity and tradition, the concept of dharma found itself at the intersection of these forces. The conceptual category of dharma and its relevance/irrelevance to modern state (political community) and society can be found in conversation between Tagore and Gandhi. (Anderson 2006; Bhattacharya 1997; Eck 2012; Parel 2008; Chatterjee 2011).

5 Romila Thapar has used the term Early India to signify the sub-continent of South Asia.

6 Ravindra Kumar makes this argument. Ravindra Kumar's definition of civilizations provides a good departure point. According to Kumar, "civilization consists of a major segment of humanity, characterized by some distinctive traits which confer on it a unique social character. Thus, for Kumar, a civilization rests upon (a) modes of social production which sustains its members (b) it is shaped by certain social and political institutions retained by social modes of production in which they are embedded and (c) a unique moral vision, or view of good life, which illuminates both sacred and profane worlds. These three parameters could be useful in understanding the unique contribution that *Arthashastra* makes to the broader contours of the Indic school of thought. This Indic school of thought can be seen in the societal mores and norms, which were used to ordering society and maintaining status" (Kumar 2002).

7 Nakamura defined ways of thinking as a self-conscious system of thought constituting of a coherent system of theology or philosophy (Nakamura 1964).

8 I would like to thank Shubham Dwivedi for his assistance on the literature and arguments around strategic culture especially in the last section of the chapter. Shubham is a doctoral candidate, Department of International Relations, South Asian University.

2 The philosophical moorings
Dharmashastra and nitishastra

Since Kautilya's *Arthashastra* finds its place at the interface of philosophy and strategy it would be appropriate to understand the constitutive sources that informed the content and conceptualization of *Arthashastra*. While there is indeed an extant literature on the meanings associated with *dharma*, *niti* and *artha*, a dialogic relationship between them is minimal (Gautam 2015). This is particularly relevant as one tries to emancipate the meanings embedded in conceptual categories as revealed in *Arthashastra* while relating them to concepts in international relations.

Parameters such as a critical understanding of human nature, the cosmic world view of Hindu philosophy, interdependence between the four goals of human life – known as the *purusharthas* and the reflection of these through ideas indicative of ways on governing the state and managing statecraft in *Arthashastra* demands that one engages with philosophical and strategic underpinnings of Hindu tradition.

On the tradition of politics and philosophy, MV Krishna Rao notes,

> the history of the tradition of Indian politics is as old as the Vedas and the politics was known in the early Smritis and Puranas, as Dandniti, whose content was the crystallization of Artha Shastra and Dharma Shastra tradition. Though there are references to the existence of the political texts earlier than the fourth century BC, perhaps the most popular and thoroughly scientific and authoritative interpretation of the tradition is the *Arthashastra* of Kautilya. This work is the quintessence of Aryan political wisdom as was interpreted and expounded by Brihaspati, Bharadwaja, Vatavyadhi and others and illumined by Kautilya's genius.
>
> (Rao 1953:1)

This invocation on the importance of tradition by Rao is significant, because it highlights the significance of the Hindu philosophical tradition, which in many ways was the foundation of cultural and philosophical legacies that were born later in ancient and medieval India. If one was to trace the tradition of statecraft and diplomacy in ancient India, it has had its presence both

in the oral and written traditions. Shatiparva of Mahabharata, *Arthashastra*, Kamandaka-Neeti Shastra, Shukra-Neeti Shastra, Pancatantra, Hitopdesha, are a few texts, which echo the reflections (Rajamohan 2009). However, the philosophical leanings and their relationship to vocabularies, which echo in *Arthashastra* are not just limited to Brahmanical texts but also find an intertextual conversation with other traditions, such as Mahayana Buddhism (Singh 2017:9).

Much ambiguity remains as to what defines tradition as temporal thresholds which mark the beginning of a particular tradition are difficult to determine (Thapar 2014:6). While some have defined it in terms of "continuity of ideas or the ancestry of thoughts" (Yost 1994:267), it is argued that traditions were consciously preserved in early India and that "knowledge and ideas flowed against disciplinary boundaries" (Singh 2017:9). That multiple traditions existed in ancient India is indicative of the fact that there was a practice to juxtapose different views, rather than to reject and replace them (Singh 2017:9). These reflections not only highlight ways through which knowledge was produced, preserved and contested in ancient India, but also acknowledge the presence of different thought systems (Buddhist and Hindu).

If one casts a look at the *Arthashastra* tradition semblance between *Arthashastra* and the later texts is noticeable. For instance commenting on the evolution and maturity of ideas of the *Arthashastra* tradition, Haksar notes,

> the works on niti (policy) that followed Kautilya's *Arthashastra* are many, and stretch over an approximate 1000 year period from the 7th to the 17th centuries, and across venues ranging from present day Kerala to Kashmir and Gujarat to Bihar.
>
> (Haskar 2015:6)

This metamorphosis of the (Kautilyan) text into tradition is further revealed through texts like the Hitopadesa and Pancatantra where there is a resemblance of ideas regarding peace treaties, sadgunya (six methods of foreign policy) and four methods (Haskar 2015:6). One can verify these similarities by looking at some stories mentioned in Pancatantra and Hitopdesha, which have a clear semblance with techniques of statecraft mentioned in *Arthashastra*. For instance, *Estrangements of Friends* (a story in Pancatantra), character Wily, the jackal thinks,

> this fellow (Lively-the bull) has sharp horns and a strong, well-nourished frame. It might turn out that through fate's decree, Lively might strike down our lord. That would not do at all. It is rightly said that in battle, victory is uncertain even for mighty warriors. Better try the three expedients (conciliation, bribes, intrigues or dissension) first. To fight is the shrewd man's last resort.
>
> (Sharma 2014:149)

A similar thought resonates in another story on Vigraha (a story on War in Hitopdesha). Character Goose advices the king,

> to vanquish enemies one should try, but never by the means of war. For in that case of victory, neither party can be sure. Further, enemies one should influence by measures conciliatory, by gifts, or stroking dissidence; By one of these, or all the three used together, to be sure; but never by resort to war.
>
> (Narayana 1999:153)

Similarly, in Pancatantra, another story in the third book (Of Crows and Owls) focuses on matters of war and peace. The character, King of Owls, asks his ministers for advice.

> Tell me which of the following options should we make use of: start negotiations, or hostilities; begin a retreat or make a stand, seek alliance or sow discord in his ranks.
>
> (Sharma 2014:269)

The reference to ideational frameworks emphasizes continuity to "ancestory of ideas", which considered these strategems as expedient for policy (Sharma 2014:447; Gautam: 2015). In Kautilya's *Arthashastra* these are policies suggestive of strategic adaptation, specifying types of verbal and non-verbal communication. While some might consider this historicity of ideas simplistic, given that these strategies in *Arthashastra* are conceptualized in context to state and in Pancatantra and Hitopdesha in terms of imagined characters (non-state), one cannot deny the ideational continuities embedded in them. These continuities in ideas as elicited in texts of ancient India, irrespective of temporality, reveal the limitations of constraining oneself to the interpretive – linguistic methods of embedding the text to certain contexts. This also raises key questions on the dichotomy often raised by scholars working on the history of ideas, who debate whether ideas are contextually embedded or do they exercise a transhistorical existence.

There are two conflicting modes of inquiry for understanding the history of ideas: "the mythology of doctrines" and "mythology of coherence". While the former insists that ideas are embedded in religious, political and economic factors and this gives a deterministic meaning to any given text, the latter claims that the autonomy of the text is the sole necessary key for understanding its meaning (Skinner 1969:5). According to Skinner, both these myths are tantamount to undermining the texts per se as he argues that the danger lies with the historian, who attempts to examine those doctrines constitutive of his/her interest and not the essence behind the ideas per se (Skinner 1969:9–16). Skinner's suggestion in this regard is to 'understand' the intention of the author, which can be traced by understanding the given utterances and the broader linguistic context to decode the entire

context and establish a dialogue between philosophical discussion and historical evidence.

While Skinner's broad understanding on the dilemmas of interpreting the history of ideas that stem from certain texts can help endow coherence to certain concepts that emerge from a specific cultural space[1] juxtaposing the text along with the tradition helps in going beyond some of the limitations that have been highlighted in the literature on the history of ideas. First, it problemitizes the boundary of the discourse that exists between text-context interaction in terms of the "mythology of coherence" and "mythology of doctrines" and second, it helps to trace continuities to the ancestory of ideas that find familiarity with both texts and tradition.[2]

Studying concepts unique to certain traditions and then juxtaposing them with the generic understanding of concepts in international relations can be helpful in giving agency to certain non-western ideas. The rationale for exploring the philosophical moorings behind concepts in *Arthashastra* becomes imperative with the ruthlessness associated with the text, as it perpetuates the perception that the text prescribed territorial acquisition and expansion. While partially true to a certain extent, the expansionist – acquisitive prescription was qualified in *Arthashastra*. The limits of territorial acquisition are clearly stated in the opening paragraph of *Arthashastra*, which clarify that,

> this single treatise on the science of politics has been prepared mostly by bringing together the teachings of as many treatises on science of politics as have been composed by ancient teachers *for acquisition and protection of the earth*.
>
> (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 1.1.1:1, emphasis added)

The particular insertion of "acquisition and protection of earth" demands a closer scrutiny given its relevance to the imperial limits of Chandragupta Maurya's empire. Kautilya in Book Nine, Chapter One specifies the limits of ancient India. He writes, "the region of the sovereign ruler extends northwards between the Himavat (Himalayas) and the sea. One thousand yojanas in the extent across" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 9.1.17–18:407). While the term *chakravarti* does not appear in *Arthashastra*, these lines are indicative of the limits of ambitious pursuit for an able ruler. Scholars have therefore refuted arguments of expansionist design and consider it as the great puzzle of the mandala nothing that ancient Indian political ambition was not of a grabbing nature (Phillip 1950:23; Baxi 1967). Arrian, a Greek historian, notes that "a sense of justice, prevented any Indian king, from attempting conquests beyond the limits of India" (Phillip 1950:23). Opinions such as these are indicative of the teleological element, which defined the political in ancient India. The imperial restraints of the Mauryan Empire can also be inferred from the methodology that Kautilya adopted in *Arthashastra*. On the philosophical underpinnings of *Arthashastra*, Kautilya

notes, "philosophy, the three vedas, economics and the science of politics – these are the sciences . . . as (it is with their help) that one can learn what is spiritual good and material wellbeing, therefore the sciences (vidyas) are so called" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 9.1.18:407). This specific enunciation by Kautilya to include a gamut of Hindu philosophical strands becomes an important pointer not only to the cultural and philosophical milieu he was referring to, but also the epistemological approach one needs to adopt to interpret the text. The clear reference to Hindu political thought is also indicative of the region that Kautilya intended to determine as the chakravartikshetra, as intangible spiritual values of the time were dictating material interests. One could also argue that this was necessary in order to deter external aggression. It is in this respect that the framework of the Indian philosophical tradition becomes an antecedent condition for understanding *Arthashastra*. This argument and understanding is quite contrary to Henry Kissinger's claim that, "morality was more in the name of practical operational purposes and not indicative of the unifying concept of order" (Kissinger 2014:197).

Clearly then, as the following pages reveal, Kautilya's *Arthashastra* was not just a mere treatise that outlined prescriptive parameters for the King. It was also not just a document that suggested an expansionist policy. In fact, it was a more profound text on the philosophy of strategy, which took into account the philosophical, cultural and social milieu of time, and made the intangible (unobservable) values integral towards determining and defining certain norms in the political domain. The norms that stand out in the Indian philosophical tradition in this regard are (a) the broad methodological orientation in Indian philosophy and its resonance with *Arthashastra*, (b) the concept of dharma, (c) norms associated with maintaining order and balance in politics and (d) articulation of strategems/techniques associated with maintaining order and balance in politics. These four factors would not only enable one to place *Arthashastra* within the broad Indian philosophical tradition, but will also facilitate a dialogic conversation between *Arthashastra* and the legacy associated with the history of ideas in Hindu political thought.

Arthashastra and the history of ideas

Shastras are broadly identified with authoritative guidelines that informed the public and private domains in ancient India. Often identified with righteous conduct, they can also be defined as systems of thought which Hindu political thinkers presented in their systematic treatises on politics. Shastras can also be defined as a systematic study of general principles and a detailed organization of a specific form of human activity. Given this definition, it would be interesting to understand the role and place of *Arthashastra*s within the Dharmashastras. The methodology adopted by Kautilya becomes critical in determining the place of *Arthashastra*s with the dharmashastras and nitishastras.

Kautilya's methodology – anviksiki, vedas, economics and politics

In Book Fifteen, Kautilya reiterates,

> This single treatise on the science of politics is composed mostly by bringing together (the teachings of) as many treatises on the Science of Politics.
>
> (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 1.1.1:514)

He further notes,

> this science, expounded with these devises of a science, has been composed for the acquisition and protection of this world and of the next. This science brings into being and preserves spiritual good, material well-being and pleasures, and destroys spiritual evil, material loss and hatred. This science has been composed by him, who in resentment quickly regenerated the science and the weapon and the earth that was under the control of the Nanda kings.
>
> (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 15.1.21–73:516)

These clarifications in *Arthashastra* are instructive for three reasons. First, the emphasis on the importance of the meaning of artha, i.e. *Arthashastra* is not primarily a treatise focused on economic activities, but rather a treatise which takes a holistic view on the science of economics. Second, the normative content of *Arthashastra* becomes explicit, i.e. it is a science that not only emphasizes material prosperity but also highlights the import of spiritual wellbeing and third, the meaning of *Arthashastra* becomes explicit in terms of its leanings as a science of politics i.e. a science which discusses the rationale and legitimacy of danda (use of rod/weapon) – and that the rod was used to wean off injustice.

In Book One, Kautilya, provides a detailed account of the authoritative sources that *Arthashastra* relies upon. The explicit mention of Anviksiki, three vedas, economic and the science of politics are a pointer to this direction. Anviksiki (philosophy) was represented through the Samkhya, Yoga and Lokyata body of thought, and the three Vedas, were the Samaveda, Rig Veda and Yajur Veda. Amongst the four sciences mentioned here, Aniviksiki was the foremost, as Kautilya considered it as the "the lamp of all sciences, as the means of all actions and as the support of all laws and duties" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 1.2.12:7). For instance, underlying the importance of anviksiki he wrote, "philosophy (anviksiki) confers benefits on the people. It keeps the mind steady in adversity and prosperity and brings about proficiency in thought speech and action" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 1.2.7:7). This argument merits attention given the emphasis that philosophy or anviksiki should be considered the primary reference framework for

understanding vedas, economics and politics, as it was only through logical reasoning that one could learn the nature of spiritual good and material well-being. *Arthashastra* emphasizes on Anvikshiki to communicate and discern the truth regarding the political. These inferences by Kautilya are instructive as it enables one to decipher not only the nature of *Arthashastra* as a text, but also helps in directing broad meaning of concepts, within which the text needs to be read and understood. It would therefore be appropriate to understand the various views associated with Anviksiki in some detail.

Anvikshiki

The concept of Anviksiki is considered distinct within Kautilya's *Arthashastra* as it not only underlines the balanced nature of the text, clearly distinguishing it from the dharmashastra tradition, but also from the Mahabharata, which does make a mention of the sciences, but nowhere refers to the importance of anviksiki (philosophy) (Chousalkar 1986:95). V.P. Verma defines Anviksiki as dialectics, and considers it significant, given its investigative and critical nature and argues that the dialectical form of reasoning was employed in *Arthashastra* with the help vedas, varta (economics) and Danadaniti (punishment or the use of force) (Verma 1953:87). Emphasizing the instructive nature of the term K.J. Shah, argues that the use of philosophical concepts, which constituted Anvikshiki, such as Samkhya, Yoga and Lokayata was employed to emphasize the symbolic representation of the wideranging Hindu body of thought. While emphasizing the plurality however, Anviksiki also aimed to – (a) offer holism in terms of unifying thought, speech and action of the individual and society, (b) establishing what counts as valid knowledge, where it offers a teleological approach in terms of synergizing the thought system with the goals of the state and (c) highlighting the universal aspects associated with the four sciences rather than emphasizing a sectarian one. Thus, it offered a critical perspective towards acquiring knowledge (vidya) and differentiating between "dharma and adharma (good and evil), artha and anartha (economic and uneconomic), naya and apnaya (politic and impolitic) and the relative strength of these three in politics" (Shah 2010:118).

It is perhaps for this reason that *Arthashastra* has been defined as a text that avoided extremes which exhibits a dialectical/dialogical method to approach the meaning of political in teleological terms. This teleological approach is conveyed through the dialectical method in *Arthashastra* – which aimed to unify the material with the spiritual and political with the social anchoring it to the purpose of the state. Thus, emphasizing on the plurality of ways of knowing, Anvikshi was a logical progression of arguments that sought to define the meaning of (political) knowledge in holistic terms.

Writing on similar lines Anthony Parel notes that anviksiki brought an element of pluralism to *Arthashastra*. For Parel, "where Samkhya and Yoga dealt with the issue of spiritual liberation, Lokayata dealt with the issue of

materialism – thus conveying the message that philosophy was neutral and secular as far as the basic assumptions of the various systems of knowledge were concerned" (Parel 2010:149). He further writes that *Arthashastra*'s basic role was to make the sciences argumentative in character as Kautilya intended to convey that the systems of spiritual philosophy could develop only when they became argumentative and dialectical (Parel 2010:49–50). In Kautilya's view, philosophy or anviksiki had an important place given its relevance for the production of knowledge. The invocation of Samkhya, Yoga and Lokayata (even though contradictory) reveals ways through which they could be reconciled to give meaning to political. In this case, Lokayata emphasizes the material pursuits of state, Yoga recognizes the need to discipline human nature and Samkhya needs to be understood in context of three gunas formed through the fusion of purusa and prakriti.

The reference of Vedas in *Arthashastra* – Sama, Rig and Yajur, makes *Arthashastra* be identified with Dharmashastra tradition. Kautilya writes, "the law laid down in this Vedic lore is beneficial, as it prescribes the specific duties of the four varnas and four stages of life" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 1.3.4:7). Kangle notes that it is only in Dharmasutras, a branch of "Vedanga Kalpa" that the duties of varnas and asramas are laid down in detail (footnote citation in The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 1.3.4:7). However, given the emphasis on logic and philosophy in *Arthashastra* mediated through the notion of Anviksiki, one needs to understand that reference to dharmashastras could be instrumental, and *Arthashastra* revisits them to emphasize the purposive rationale that it wants to convey.

While it might be instructive that Kautilya intended to make reference to dharmashastra for purely instrumental reasons, given that he preferred to use the word Veda instead of terms like "science of dharma" or dharmashastras, K.J Shah has considered this usage unimportant, as among the sources of dharma, *sruti* as a source has been mentioned in Manusmiriti (11.6). Thus, according to him, "Vedas are *sruti*" (Shah 2010:118). Anthony Parel on the other hand considers the specific terminology, vedas to be an important inference point. According to him knowledge is not derived from reasoning but from internal experience (anubhava) of the seers and that seeing (pramana/evidence) has priority of reasoning and only after seeing do "thinking, reasoning, speaking, writing and acting comes" (Parel 2010:149). However, given that Kautilya emphasized on "four sciences", where philosophy (anviksiki) is considered to be the lamp of all sciences, the influence of dharmashastra on *arthashastra* requires further investigation.

The concept of dharma

The relevance of dharmashastras to *arthashastra*s stems from the important place and legitimacy they occupied in Hindu thought – not only in terms of emphasizing the role and place of the king, but also in terms of varnaashramas and theory of karma. Ghosal notes that *Dharmasutras* occupy an

important place in Hindu political thought as they underlined the meaning of dharma as the "law of social order, which was supreme over its members" and "which laid down the sum total of distinctive duties of the constituent units of the social system" (Ghosal cited in Chousalkar 1986:180). While the former mandated the King to maintain social order, the latter brought in the concept of karma to lend additional sanction to the observance by individuals concerned (Chousalkar 1986:81). The debates on the varnadharma and the karma theory in ancient India are instructive in terms of their relevance towards maintaining and sustaining social order. In the Brihadnayaka Upanishad the concept of varnadharma was linked to social order (Chousalkar 1986:80). A discourse available in Shantiparva, particularly between Bhrigu and Bharadvaja, Vyasa and Shuka, and Janaka and Parashar, reveal interesting insights associated with the dialectics and skepticism related to Varnadharma theory in the Hindu philosophical tradition.

In the Brighu and Bharadvaja dialectics, while Brighu initially upheld that castes were divided according to colour, where Brahmans were white, Kshatriyas were red, Vaishyas blue and Shudras black, he later conceded to Bharadvaja in an argument, that all human being were the offsprings of Prajapati (God-Brahma) and because of their nature they were divided into different classes. When probed by Bharadvaja later, Brighu concluded that if the marks of the Sudra were not seen in a Sudra or the marks of the Brahman were not seen in a Brahman, then such a Sudra was no Sudra and such a Brahman was no Brahman (12.18.21.28 cited in Chousalkar 1986:81). This discourse is important because it indicates the permissibility of functional mobility associated with varna theory.

In another discourse between Shuka and Vyasa, Vyasa discussed the duties of the four classes and four ashramas stating that dharma could be achieved only through the obedience of rules of these institutions (12.226.230 cited in Chousalkar 1986:81).

Meanwhile, in the dialectics between Janaka and Parashar, Parashar responds to Janaka that the only principle of knowledge that brought human happiness was when everyone followed his or her duty honestly. Parashar introduced the law of karma to justify caste duties. It is most interesting to note that when Janaka asked Parashar that "though all creatures originated from Brahmadeva, who was the embodiment of sattava (highest virtue), how is it that all human did not have the same type of sattava dominance?" (Chousalkar 1986:83). Parashar responded to this question that the "answer lay in the law of karma, and that qualities like rajas, tamas, and sattva were distributed according to the penance that a person had performed in the last birth. Performing good or righteous acts were considered akin to purifying ones soul and liberating oneself in next life" Chousalkar 1986:84). Parashar further added that, "true Brahmans regarded the shudra who followed these duties as equivalent to them" (Chousalkar 1986:84).

By adopting a dialectical approach, these examples reveal the debates associated with the varna (caste) system in ancient India. Significantly, what

is instructive in all three of them is the very meaning of dharma, which has been articulated in a distinct Hindu way. The relativist understanding of dharma to duty and the performance of one's duty being akin to following one's dharma, is a conscious usage of words and merits attention in a specific social and cultural context. Dharma was thus indirectly related to the sustenance of social order. Kautilya's specific reference to anviksiki and vedas perhaps underlines the dialectics which is associated with this relativist understanding of dharma. The theory of Karma, if properly understood thus had in it a "sense of personal responsibility of enormous rigour" (Cooper 2003:20). David A Cooper argues that karma in Indian philosophical thought was not a fatalistic concept. It was linked to the doctrine of liberation (moksha). Karmic deeds were not the result of the physical deeds one performs, but of the intentions or motives behind them. As he puts it, "killing a man will bear a very different fruit, according to whether it is done out of jealousy or out of military duty" (Cooper 2003:20). Duty, in *Arthashastra* was thus clearly linked to following one's own dharma, according to the varna. This then was the fundamental apex of social order.

The concept of dharma receives a more complex treatment when further juxtaposed dialectically to artha. The meaning of artha in *Arthashastra* is significant, as *Arthashastra* developed its political theory around the concept of artha. Chausalkar argues that artha consisted in acquisition and preservation of wealth, as without it both spiritual (dharma) and material (economic) goals could not be achieved. Rangarajan argues that, according to Kautilya, "Artha followed Dharma" (Rangarajan 1987:1). He argues that artha as used in *Arthashastra*s and by Kautilya in particular, had a much broader connotation beyond its translation as mere wealth. On a similar note Thomas Trautmann points out that artha, economics and politics were a conjoined unit in *Arthashastra* – and for its "original audience, artha was a unitary whole, comprising wealth and power" (Trautmann 2012:2) Thus, according to Trautmann, "*Arthashastra* was the science of kingship, the business of running a state (rajya), where wealth was identified with kingship itself" (Trautmann 2012:2). The importance of moral agency that Trautmann emphasizes is instructive in this regard.

In Book 15, Kautilya writes, "the source of the livelihood of men is wealth, in other words the earth inhabited by men. The science which is the means of the attainment and the protection of the earth is the science of politics" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 15.1.1). For Thomas Trautmann this sutra is instructive, as the concept of artha was defined in three steps – "first, as human production of livelihood, second, the earth inhabited by human beings engaged in such production and finally, the acquisition and protection of the inhabited, productive earth by the king. Thus, according to him, wealth found its highest expression in kingship" (Trautmann 2012:3).

The reference to kingship is significant as the king is the wielder of the fourth science – the science of danda. What is interesting indeed is the dialectics between artha and danda. K.J. Shah notes that since "not much

is said about this, it is not clear whether (artha) has a separate status or whether it is only a distinguishable adjunct to dandaniti" (Shah 2010:118). It is this anviksiki (dialectics) on artha and danda that is most significant for V.P. Verma as dandaniti dealt with the preservation and acquisition of earth. Verma arrives at the conclusion that dandniti aided the vedas, as it prescribes ways and means to regulate four castes and four orders and it also treated varta (economic activity) as both treasury and punishment were necessary for control both for one's own kingdom and of enemies. Citing Kautilya he notes that, "it is on this art of government that the course of the progress of the world depends" and further that "the first three branches of knowledge are dependent for their well-being (or rooted in) on the art of punishment" (Verma 1953:187). Thus, Kautilya's methodology appears as a logical inquiry, which probes into the question of 'what constitutes political'?; and Anviksiki becomes an important tool for paving this path for knowledge production. This view is further perpetuated when one studies the relationship between *arthashastra*, dharmashastra and nitishastra.

Debates: the *Arthashastra*, the dharmashastras and the nitishastras

So, what is the critical difference between *arthashastra*, dharmashastra and nitishatra? B.N. Sarkar considers *Arthashastra* and Dharmashastra as two distinct sets of literature, where there was no differentiation between *arthashastra* and nitishastra. He writes that "there were generally two literary categories which were associated with Hindu social science. The first category was that of the smritishastras, dharma-shastras and dharmasutras and the second was that of *arthashastra*s and nitishastras" (Sarkar 1939:156). The former, according to him, were more social and religious, including all treatises on Hindu law and customs, and the latter were political and economic in orientation According to Sarkar, *Arthashastra* was an important *niti* (policy) work, and combined the theory of "Machiavellian realpolitik with the blood and iron statecraft of Bismark" (Sarkar 1939:59). This interpretation by Sarkar and the reading of *Arthashastra* in specific stems from equating *arthashastra* with nitishastra, which was essentially considered a science of "punishment, sanction, and sovereignty is generally equated with the discipline of dandaniti. The body of precepts and literature associated with dandaniti, was in turn associated with Sukra, who was the advocate of Sukraniti, associated with nitishastra" (Sarkar 1939:161). It would, however, be appropriate to mention here, that unlike *Arthashastra*, Nitishastra was more restrictive in its scope. According to Sukra himself, Nitishastra primarily dictated policies about allies, enemies and neutrals (Sarkar 1939:162).

   V.P. Verma argues that Kautilya's *Arthashastra* had an emphatic thrust on two pertinent concepts of artha and danda – an emphasis which perhaps becomes relevant to understand the nature of *Arthashastra* in general and

its relevance to Nitishastra in particular. Verma notes that the supreme significance of Kautilya's work "lies in being the systematic compendium of ancient teachings . . . and that its significance lies in being the systematic epitomization and constructive synthesis of the political ideas and notions available in those days." (Verma 1953:61). According to Verma the text was about artha (wealth) and the science of politics – which was the method of acquiring and maintaining the earth (Verma 1953:63). The dialectics between artha and danda in *Arthashastra* seems significant as it served a twofold purpose. First, it emphasized the justification of *Arthashastra*, which as a Shastra legitimized the just act – which was essentially putting an end to unrighteous, uneconomical and displeasing act, and second, it also emphasized the notions of preservation and acquisition of territory, an idea which was slowly being relegated to a subordinate place given the influence of Upanishadic and secular teachings (Verma 1953:64). The emphasis on materialism in *Arthashastra* was thus also a response to the existing philosophical debates of the time.

A significant limitation for understanding *Arthashastra*, primarily as a text restricted to artha (acquisition of wealth), is the emphasis on the notion of dharma. This, as Verma notes, is evident in the explanation given in the rationale for writing *Arthashastra* itself. In *Arthashastra*, Kautilya starts from the fourfold classification of the end goals that every human being should aspire for. These were dharma-righteous performance of one's duties, artha – economic activities needed for the pursuance of wealth and power, kama-sexual desires, and fourth moksha, which was final liberation. Significantly, thus Kautilya was clearly not a proponent of materialism, as he "did not repudiate the belief in heaven and hell and in prospects of release from worldly migrations" (Verma 1953:65). Thus, one needs to go beyond a very parochial understanding of artha – which the text is generally associated with.

> The political thought in India is generally associated with three main schools. The first was represented by ancient writers like Brahma and Manu – where the primary focus was on the dharmashastras, which were the legal text books, emphasising what righteous conduct was. The second were represented by Brihgu, whose primary focus was on Shukranitishastra. Shukranitishastra focused on issues of policy related to the issues in the secular domain and its successor was Sukra. This second school – the Brigh school was named as Bhargava or Ausanas school. The third school meanwhile was represented by Angiras, and the primary focus was on *Arthashastra*s. Its successor was Brihaspati. Brahaspati was the propounder of materialist philosophy, with Lokayata Sastra associated with him. This third school was named Brahaspatya and generally interpreted generally as worldly philosophy.
>
> (Chakravarti 1992:146)

This has been generally qualified by Brahaspati Sutra, which mentions that a preponderant emphasis upon wealth has been emphasized by Kautilya. (Verma 1953:66). Kamandaki Neetishastra has been associated with Brahaspatya, where Kamandaki invokes Brahaspati rather than Kautilya.[3] Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, according to Putambekar thus came to be identified with the Brihaspati School. This clear difference between these three schools of thought is indicative of a definitive thrust with which *Arthashastra* has generally been associated.

However, Putambekar's analysis goes further when he says, *Arthashastra* was the mediating link between the secular issues related to niti (policy) and the issues related to dharma (morality). It is significant to note as S. Putambekar writes, "Kautilya who mentions other writers on political science makes a solution to both Sukra and Brihaspati, as pioneers in the beginning of his treatise. For him while Brihaspati recognised only economics and politics as sole branch of study, the Ausanas school recognised only politics, as the sole branch. It also perhaps needs to be noted that the notion of dharma, as the ethical aspect has not been emphasised by Putambekar as being a significant part of *Arthashastra*. Instead, Putambekar traces it to the Sukra political thought and not *Arthashastra*, stating that Nitishastra emphasised that morality (niti) and power (danda) were both necessary for an all round prosperity of the people and state and therefore Sukraniti Shastra was the science for the regulation of human life in all its aspects and relations. It was primary directed towards the welfare of the people" (Putambekar 1942:2).

Anthony Parel's intervention in this regard is instructive. Parel argues that the ideas introduced in the fourth century B.C., received their formal recognition in Kautilya's *Arthashastra*. These ideas were picked up later by authors such as Kamandaki in the fifth century A.D., Somadeva in the tenth century A.D. and the author of Sukraniti in the fourteenth century A.D. Parel further argues that one of the most important ideas that took root in *Arthashastra* was that the relevance of political science was an important discipline. This, as he argues, "was to create *cultural conditions necessary* (emphasis added) for the pursuit of four great ends of life – the purusharthas – which were ethical goodness (dharma), wealth and power (artha), pleasure (kama) and spiritual transcendence (moksha)" (Parel 2010:147). Parel's intervention becomes relevant with respect to the methodology mentioned in *Arthashastra*. This cross-conversational approach in *Arthashastra*, which emphasized economics along with politics, material along with spiritual, necessitates that one goes beyond parochialism in terms of interpreting both the text and its writer.

Advancing and broadening the debate further, Bhikhu Parekh provides a pertinent distinction between Dharmashastra and *Arthashastra*. He writes, "in contrast to Dharmashastras, the authors of *Arthashastra*s were interested in the organization and mechanization of danda. They concentrated on the nature and organization of government, the nature and mechanics of power. The way power is weakened, acquired and lost, the source of threat

to government and the best way to deal with them" (Parekh 2010:7). He cautions however, "that it would be a mistake to compartmentalise the two, believing that the authors of dharmashastras were moralistic, and those of *arthashastra*s realistic. However, he claims that the former were not particularly naïve and freely acknowledged the political need to disregard moral principles and values under certain circumstances, even as the *arthashastra* writers acknowledged and insisted on the observance of the dharma" (Parekh 2010:108). Thus, Parekh argues that while the *Arthashastra* writers were occasionally believed to treat political power as an end in itself, they did not generally lose sight of the moral ends of the government.

If one analyses the relevance of dharmashastra and *arthashastra* the difference was thus indeed in emphasis and orientation, where the former underpinned a psychological deterrence to any violation, the latter a physical deterrence to violation. It can also be said that while dharmashastras laid down the broad framework of dharma and were more legalistic and religious in orientation, the *arthashastra* while analysing the structure and functions of government, was more secular in orientation. Neither approach was complete in itself and shared a symbiotic relationship. Thus, it can be said that *Arthashastra*, through the articulation of dharma, which was a source of legitimacy of all actions, bridged the glaring gap between politics and morality. In this respect the difference between the dharmashastras and the nitishastras (a school of thought which later emerged to explain and contemplated more specifically about politics and policies related to the secular domain – state) is also instructive.

Niti in Sanskrit parlance meant policies and shastra authoritative guidelines; Dandaniti, thus implied policies pertaining to the use of force, and, formed a key component of the Nitishastra. It would be appropriate here to look at some of existing debates on the treatment of dharma and niti in the evolution of Indian political thought.

Nitishastra or dandaniti was considered a science for the regulation of human life in all its aspects and relations and was primarily composed for the welfare of the people (Putambekar 1948:2). According to Sukra, nitishastra differed from other sciences in terms of its association with specialized departments or aspects of human activity. Since it was meant to deal with all aspects of human life and relations, it was considered as a chief means for the preservation of society. As Putambekar further notes, it was the fundamental basis for all aspects of human pursuits namely dharma, artha, kama and moksha, as it was believed that without it there would be no stability of human affairs and human welfare (Putambekar 1948:2). Dandaniti, it can also be said was a powerful means of ordering society.

The three specific approaches viz dharma, niti and artha in *Arthashastra* exhibit dialectical and dialogical pattern in Kautilya's *Arthashastra*. One can say *Arthashastra* brings to the fore a relative meaning associated with each of them. It has been argued by Charles Drekmeier that "Whereas the dharamashastras considered government and political process with reference

to the ideals expressed in the Vedic canons, the largely secular analysis of *arthashastra* treats this subject more *objectively* (Italics Gautam). In the *arthashastra* literature, the *interest of the state* (italics Gautam), rather than the king's personal fulfillment, are of foremost importance" (Gautam 2015).

One can also say that while dharmashastra, *arthashastra* and nitishastra differed on their subject matter, they were complementary to each other – one chose to explore political life from the stand point of dharma (moral-righteous conduct), the other explored from that of danda (use of rod), and the third from the view point of artha (economic prosperity). Where *Arthashastra* stands out as a text, is the use of rod or force in order to regulate dharma and artha. Kautilya writes, "for the king, seeking the orderly maintenance of worldly life, should ever hold the rod lifted up to strike" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 1.4.5:9). However, he qualifies that the king severe with the Rod, becomes a source of terror to beings. The King mild with rod is despised, and the King just with rod is honoured. Justifying the legitimacy to exercise force, Kautilya notes that "the rod used after full consideration, endows the subject with, spiritual good, material wellbeing and pleasure of the senses" cautioning further that "if not used at all, it might give rise to law of fishes" (anarchy) (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 1.4.11:10). Thus, the use of rod was essentially to maintain and sustain political order.

This dialectics between dharma, artha and danda can be considered as the essential background condition, which was a prerequisite for the Kautilyan strategy to operate. It was indeed the ideational structure, which shaped the objectives of the state and endowed principled value to state and statecraft. To use Bartanlaffy terminology, there were the "input factors", which could predict and regulate the stability in the system. One can also say that the meaning of dharma was indicative of creating a social order, whereby everyone was bound by one's own duty in society, and the meaning of danda, was indicative of legitimate power to regulate this duty. To emphasize this viewpoint was then in fact also the broad 'dharma' of both the text and its author.

If one revisits the entire methodology adopted by Kautilya, an appropriate way to make sense of it is by identifying certain "unobservables". Critical realism directs one's attention to the unobservables (abductive inference) and posits why and how these unobservables play a role in explaining events in the social world. These "unobservables" (abductive inference) find a potential explanation in Kautilya's analysis towards underlining the role of constituent elements of state and statecraft, which play a causal/constitutive role in maintaining/regulating order. Jackson notes that "Abductive inference is a way of reasoning from some puzzling set of observations as a likely explanation of those observations: we go beyond what we have observed in order to posit something that plausibly accounts for what we have observed" (Jackson 2011:82). Kautilya's explanation in determining the code of conduct for individuals, society, states and the mandala merits attention in this context.

The next chapter explores the strategic leanings informed through these philosophical concepts.

Notes

1 Amrita and Aruna Narlekar's work is one such example, where authors by undertaking an analyses of Mahabharata argued for a robust bargaining tradition in India. See Narlekar and Narlekar (2014).

2 The interdependence between text and tradition is also significant given the Eurocentricity of International Relations and the broad genealogical origins of concepts to western philosophical tradition. Vivekanandan draws attention to this point and situates her analyses from the post-modernist lens of the contextual embeddedness of texts, cautioning against the neutrality of concepts discussed in IR (Vivekanandan 2015). This argument of Eurocentricity, to name a few, scholars has been raised by scholars such as Terence Ball and Leigh Jenco, who have exposed the limitations of these approaches as they tend to "exclude certain ancient/premodern and pre-liberal knowledge of political things", thus highlighting possibilities of excluding epistemic contribution of the significant other or marginalized body of knowledge. Leigh Jenco writes, explorations such as these, "seems especially necessary now that political theory and philosophy increasingly recognizes the value of historically marginalized thought traditions, but nevertheless continue to engage those traditions using methodologies noted in their own concerns, such as to rectify inequalities of power or to address (mis)-representations of historically marginalized groups" (Jenco 2012:93). So it might be recognized that while each concept is context specific, nevertheless it must also be emphasized that undertaking textual analyses of non-western intellectual resources and the relevance it holds for understanding concepts widely used in the discipline and vocabulary of international relations is integral to the task of a student who wants to examine the 'international' in international relations. Farah Godrej has emphasized the need for a cosmopolitan political thought, where rather than seeking universal values, one should examine the new insights that form assorted traditions. She argues both Confucius Analects and Bhagwad Gita could be seen as objects of contextualized inquiry but also potential sources of politically relevant knowledge across time and space (Godrej 2011:62).

3 This distinction is important, as Kamandaka considered Brihaspati as the authority on seven elements of state, which underlines the purposive action of the state towards wealth creation. On Kamandaka Nitishastra see Singh (2017:198).

3 The strategic undertones
Engaging the end-means debate

A recurring dilemma in international politics is the end-means debate. This is because when it comes to addressing critical issues of politics, certain unworthy means need to be employed to achieve certain worthy ends. The debate lies at the intersection of strategy and philosophy. Worthy ends might be derived from a purely categorical principle of what needs to be done in contrast to a rather normative understanding of what ought to be done. In other words, a normative understanding locates morality in the consequences of an act, where this normative moral reasoning is judged by the intrinsic quality of the act itself. On the other hand, the categorical moral reasoning locates morality in certain duties and rights judged by certain deontological imperatives. Kautilya falls into the category of a categorical-ist thinker, which justifies the consequences based on the desired long-term view of the act. The moral content of consequences become immaterial in this regard, as the primary emphasis is on the duties embedded in the deontological imperative. Not surprisingly, it is argued by categoricalists that the consequences that follow are the most appropriate as they serve social and political order (a desirable end) and sustaining this can be regarded as a moral act.

Thus, the tension between means and end debate is reconciled through the articulation of morality. The definition and degree of morality might differ according to the thrust one provides to duties and the teleological purpose which duties intend to serve. This can also be considered as a way of privi-leging status-quo patterns and avoiding revolutionary ones. In *Arthashastra* this definition of morality masked as dharma is critical to understand given the implication it has for reconciling morality with strategy. Defining the 'right thing' is after all one of the great questions of political philosophy (Sandel 2009).

On the dilemmas of morality, Bhishma in Shantiparva, Mahabharata noted,

> it is difficult to decide what is dharma (moral) and what is adharma (immoral), as when an actual instance presents itself before one, he might get confused. Before the time comes, one should understand the

circumstances under which dharma and adharma become confused. Having gained this knowledge – the wise king should know when the time comes and act accordingly.

(Shantiparva cited in Chousalkar 1986:8–9)

This statement by Bhishma in Shantiparva is just one instance of how dharma and adharma are discussed in Hindu philosophy. This chapter intends to highlight the meaning of morality from the Kautilyan viewpoint and shed light on how it was determined by the strategic logic, i.e. how was morality employed as a means to achieve certain strategic ends. The ends/means framework is relevant to the debates on grand strategy and the chapter seeks to tease out the nuances that emerge from the Kautilyan grand strategy (if any). This would enable one to not only identify the moral justification of strategic behaviour but also underline the relativist/constitutive meaning of morality in *Arthashastra*. One need not forget that the primary motivation behind Kautilyan strategy was to unite thought, speech and action with the existing philosophical tradition. Keeping these arguments in mind, the chapter is divided into three sections. The first section broadly looks at the debate on morality in *Arthashastra*. The second section attempts to locate *Arthashastra* within the broad framework of grand strategic thought. The third section discusses some key attributes of Kautilyan grand strategy both at the level of state and statecraft.

Morality and *Arthashastra*

Kautilya's *Arthashastra* becomes important from the means-ends perspective as it introduces an important element of dharma, which can be understood as a tool to justify desired ends. Kautilya's relativist understanding of dharma is significant because it not only has categorical leanings, but it also aims to balance desirable elements of strategy with the feasible elements of policy. One can also say that this balance can be found at the intersection of morality (dharma) and policy (niti) in *Arthashastra*, which was made operational through the notion of the state. The state thus was not only the embodiment and agency of dharma but a "human artifact" meant to get the "human race out of human nature". The state thus enabled its subjects to follow their respective duties and the King was perceived as a protector of dharma rather than its interpreter (Prakash 1993).

The holistic understanding of dharma has made scholars interpret it in a relativist manner. Its manifestation in important aspects of daily life such as law, duty and justice therefore merit attention. The contrast between state and non-state highlights the importance of the former over the latter. For instance, it is argued that the state is a law giving institution; a justice dispensing institution and a duty enforcing institution (Sarkar 1939:211). This distinction refers to a state of order and disorder (matsyanyaya), as in the latter there is no law, no justice, no duty. State is thus the originator

of law, justice and duty and an institution for ordering social relations (Sarkar 1939).

The preponderance of the state and its symbolic connotation as the provider of political and social order is similar to western political thought, where social contract theorists deliberated on a similar theme focusing on transition from the state of nature to the laws of nature. However, the primary and an essential difference between Kautilyan thought and western philosophy is that while the social contract theorists considered rights to life, liberty and property as inalienable and inviolable, Kautilya considered duties of the individuals elemental for realizing the dharma of state. A breach in following one's duties was considered to be a justification for using rod or exercising "legitimate force".

Thus, an important tool for ordering the society, according to Kautilya was the danda (rod). Kautilya offers a note on legitimate force,

> whether in passion or anger, or in contempt, it enrages. If not used at all, it gives rise to the law of fishes. For the stronger swallows the weak in the absence of the wielder of the rod. The people of the four varnas and in the four stages of life, protected by the king with the rod (and deeply attached to occupations prescribed as their special duties, keep to their respective paths.
>
> (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 1.4.16:10)

As one can see regulation of order through the legitimate use of rod was the central focal point. State thus emerged as the moral force and an agency of dharma. Identified as the primary operational unit for ordering society, an intersubjective understanding was cultivated for foregrounding dharma with the agency of state. So what does dharma mean and what significance did it have for defining morality in particular? In order to explore this issue an attempt is made to situate the larger grand strategic design in *Arthashastra* and the particular role and place of dharma (read state) within it.

Grand strategy and *Arthashastra*

> Theories all too often aim at fixed values, but in war and strategy most things are uncertain and variable. Worse, such approaches deflect inquiry toward objective factors, whereas strategy involves human passions, values, and beliefs, few of which are quantifiable.
>
> (Cited in Murray and Grimsley 1994:I)

These words by Clausewitz are a good primer to understand the nature of the political domain within which strategy operates. Given the absence of predictability in strategy, it often becomes necessary to have appropriate tools or stratagems in place, which can manage unpredictable elements associated

with political phenomenon. Kautilyan grand strategy in many ways is about defining and strengthening unpredictable elements and endowing predictability to elements that could order political life. Before one discusses these issues in further detail, it perhaps becomes imperative to explore the broad contours and parameters, which have gone into the understanding of grand strategy in particular.

A disciplinary understanding of grand strategy

Grand strategy was coined in the 1960s by a soldier scholar Liddell Hart who used the concept for emphasizing the comprehensive nature of strategy. For him all military activity should be subordinated to politics and its grander scheme. While Liddell Hart was criticized for restricting the meaning of strategy to a military domain, it was also appreciated for its emphasis on the need for a longer and comprehensive vision. Terming it as "higher strategy", Liddell Hart wrote that the aim of grand strategy "is to co-ordinate and direct all the resources of a nation, or band of nations, toward the attainment of the political object of the war" (Hart 2003:323). It needs to be noted however that while war was the preeminent political objective behind Hartian analyses, he nevertheless emphasized "total victory" – which avoided the possibility of mutual ruin in the battle-ground. The term "total strategy" was used by Andre Beaufre who defined grand strategy as a "method of thought" (Beaufre 1965:13). Total strategy meant that the political, economic, military and diplomatic aspects needed to be woven together in order to meet the desired political objective. The difference between the two was the centrality of military means, which was emphasized by the former and a more comprehensive approach privileged by the latter.

One also needs to differentiate between grand strategy, strategy and tactics as often the three are used interchangeably. Where strategy can be defined as a comprehensive approach geared to achieving a political objective, tactics was more about specifics. One can say tactics are about operational art concerned with conducting campaigns. Strategy thus gave meaning to tactics as it was operationalized through military force, considered useful for fulfilling ends of policy (Mahnken 2013:62). Grand-strategy on the other hand is a higher view and it too is concerned with achieving identified political objectives. However, the use of military force is just one element of strategy. There are other aspects such as economic, cultural and diplomatic, which become a part of grand strategy. It therefore "aligns the military strategy of the war with the political, diplomatic and economic strategies that form part of the war effort, making sure that they interact harmoniously and that one of these strategies does not have a detrimental impact on another" (Athanassios and Koliopoulos 2010:5). Grand strategy is therefore about using all means available at one's disposal. It is a craft embedded on the teleological notion of attaining one's objective.

Geography, historical experiences, ideology and culture have been considered as elemental variables for defining the strategic behavior of states. To

emphasize the difference between material and ideational elements in strategy, the difference between "strategic effect" and "strategic performance" is emphasized. Colin Grey defines strategic effect as "the impact of strategic performance upon the course of events" (Grey 1999:19). Focusing on both the descriptive and subjective, knowledge of culture is considered to be a key variable in sharpening the efficacy of one's performance and enhancing its broader perceptual impact. Thus, cultural sensitivity and cognitive acumen are essential elements for operationalizing grand strategy. Given this argument Grey comes up with a strategic tool kit, which he terms as the "dimensions of strategy". The dimensions which he considers essential for the understanding of strategy, amongst other factors are: economics, logistics, intelligence, technology and command, and people and politics.

Going beyond a deterministic to a more dynamic understanding of strategy, constant adaptation to shifting conditions has been highlighted as an important tool for shaping responses (Murray and Grimsley 1994). Freedman argues that the ability to think ahead and think through successive stages is the strength of the strategist. Contemplating on the dynamism of strategy as a process-oriented approach he writes,

> if strategy is a fixed plan that sets out a reliable path to an eventual goal, then it is likely to be not only disappointing but also counterproductive, conceding the advantage to other with greater flexibility and imagination. Adding flexibility and imagination according to him offers a better chance of keeping pace with a developing situation, regularly re-evaluating the potential risks and opportunities.
>
> (Freedman 2013:609)

Freedman argues that a more constructive approach to strategy requires recognizing its limits and strategy would only come into play when the element of conflict is present. This is important according to him, as strategy starts with an existing state of affairs i.e. with an acknowledgement of a latent and potential conflict and only gains meaning by an awareness of how one can better one's position or situation. For him strategy is not about reaching a prior established objective, but it is more about "coping with some dire crises or preventing further deterioration in an already stressful situation" (Freedman 2013:611).

Thus, survival is the primary departure point for Freedman, and he argues for a continuous reappraisal of the ends and the means (Freedman 2013:611). He writes, "some means will be discarded, and new ones found, while some ends will turn out to be beyond reach even as unexpected opportunities come into view" (Freedman 2013:611). While the end-means framework has been perceived as a fluid one by Freedman, John Lewis Gaddis was perhaps the first scholar who conceptualized strategy as ends-ways-means triad. He defines grand strategy as the calculated relationship of means to larger ends. While focusing on how parts relate to the whole, he terms it as an "ecological discipline", which requires an ability to see how

all of the parts to a problem relate to one another and therefore to the whole thing (Gaddis 2009:16). Meanwhile, Collin Grey (1999) supports Gaddis's argument by stating that strategy can be approached within the triad of ends, means and ways (note the order of preference). According to Gray any definition of strategy unambiguously must convey the idea that it is about direction and the using something to achieve a selected purpose.

John Boyd who is associated with the Orient, Observe, Direct and Act (OODA) model of understanding strategy is instructive, given that it provides the mediating ground between Freedman's and Gaddis's definition of strategy. According to Boyd, strategy is a "mental tapestry of changing intentions for harmonizing and focusing our efforts as a basis for realizing some aim or purpose in an unfolding and often unforeseen world of many bewildering events and many contending interests" (Boyd cited in Osinga 2005:258). Boyd defined strategy as a process of adaptation to changing circumstances so that one can survive and shape circumstances according to one's own terms (Boyd cited in Osinga 2005:258).

From the above snaphot on how multiple scholars have theorized end, means and ways to understand grand strategy, one can identify two broad approaches. While scholars on grand strategy agree that the long-term view is essential, the difference lies in emphasis given to ends on one hand and means on the other. The former advocate a systems approach and the latter a dynamic approach. Where the systems approach focuses on broadening one's understanding of grand strategy to domains such as social, economic, political and cultural and using them in synergistic ways to achieve desired political objectives, the dynamic approach focuses on imagination, flexibility, adaptability and creativity where the focus is on coping with a stressful situation or surviving in a hostile environment. While the cognitive model becomes important to the latter, the focus is on improving one's ability to shape and adapt to unfolding or unpredictable circumstances.

Given the analytical value that the end-means-ways debate holds for both a systems and dynamic approach, this chapter explores the triad further from the Kautilyan point of view. It can be argued that Kautilyan strategy appears as a via media between systems approach and dynamic approach. It is in this context that identifying the pattern of the 'triad' in Kautilya's *Arthashastra* becomes an interesting entry point.

Revisiting *Arthashastra* through grand strategy

Framing Kautilya as a strategist and his work *Arthashastra* as a work of grand strategy breaks paradigms (Realist and Constructivist) that one associates Kautilya with. The departure point for framing Kautilya as a strategic thinker stems from the Kautilyan idea of state, which was monitored and regulated, aiming at the optimum use of all possible sources for the benefit of state and its constituent elements. Ritu Kohli's analysis seems to be the most appropriate qualifier towards understanding the Kautilyan grand

strategy. She writes that, "Kautilya's conception of state was so comprehensive in scope that it regulated even the minutest details like fixing the rates of washer men and even prostitutes. According to her, Kautilyan state not only subordinated moral principles to the necessities of its own existence and welfare but the same attitude was adopted towards religion which was often used as a means for accomplishing political ends" (Kohli 1995:14). The understanding of morality, which Kohli points to was the notion of dharma being personified by the state. This is well reflected in other writings too. For instance, M. M. Sankhdher writes that, "for Kautilya upholding the dharma and good governance was the main aim of the state" (cited in Kohli 1995:2). This preeminent role and place of state in ancient Indian political thought is instructive in terms of the strategic end which it aimed to serve, where the understanding of end was primarily related to the maintenance of social and political stability. An important concept which has been used extensively by Kautilya to facilitate this end-goal dialectics, was the concept of *yogakshema* – which as an umbrella concept ensured the stability of the state. Ashok Chousakar writes that term 'yoga-kshema' has two qualifying words – yoga (acquisition of objects) and kshema (peaceful enjoyment) (Chousalkar 2018:1190). In the Kautilyan strategy, *yogakshema*, thus can be considered as the primary end goal.

The end goal in Kautilyan grand strategy – Yogakshema

The word yogakshema is composed of two words: yoga and kshema. Yoga means the acquisition of things and kshema is its secure possession (Kangle 1992:9). Rangarajan considers yogakshema as the conceptual hook of *Arthashastra*, because it ensured that the King followed his own dharma. He writes, "a king should not only obey his own rajadharma but also ensure his subjects obeyed their respective dharma. For, when adharma overwhelms dharma, the king himself will be destroyed" (Rangarajan 1987:70). Kangle equates the king's dharma with the concept yogakshema as the means of ensuring security and well-being (footnote 3 in Kangle 1992:3). Kautilya himself notes in Book One, Section 19, paragraph 34 that, "in the happiness of the subjects lies the happiness of the king and in what is beneficial to the subjects is his own benefit. What is dear to himself is not beneficial to the king, but what is dear to the subjects is beneficial to himself" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 1.19.34:47). This advice for the wellbeing of the people was indeed rooted in Kautilyan pragmatism, as he writes, "subjects, when impoverished, become greedy, when greedy they become disaffected; when disaffected they either go over to the enemy or themselves kill the master" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 7.5.27:385). Kautilya further pointed out that internal rebellion is more dangerous than the external one. Therefore, the interests of the people should always be the priority of the king. Yogakshema was thus not only important for preserving domestic order and stability but also directed the king's foreign policy choices. Rangarajan,

referring to Kautilya's *Arthashastra* writes, "A weak king who needed to recoup his depleted strength should try to promote the welfare of the people so that he might have the support of the countryside" (Rangarajan 1987:71). He further adds "nowhere is Kautilya's emphasis on the welfare of the people seen more clearly than in the advice to the king on how to deal with territory newly acquired by conquest" (Rangarajan 1987:71). This can be corroborated under Kautilya's discussion on 'six measures of foreign policy', where he writes, "when the choice is between a strong king unjustly behaved and a weak king justly behaved, he should march against the strong king unjustly behaved. The subjects do not help the strong unjust king, when he is attacked they drive him out or resort to his enemy. But the subjects support in every way the weak *but* just king when he is attacked or follow him if he has to flee" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 7.5.16:335).

The way in Kautilyan grand strategy – dharma

As would be evident from the above discussion, ways become significant to facilitate the end goal. Dharma appears to be the way as it helped sustain the concept of yogakshema – which served the end goal of serving prosperity, security and wellbeing for the king. Dharma in Indian philosophy has varying connotations associated with it. In the Kautilyan scheme, its most proximate interpretation is order – an order, which psychologically informed the behaviour of people. Kautilyan reflections on dharma as order can be gauged from the consequences it holds for domestic and external affairs. At the domestic level, it was operationalized through the concept of danda and at the external level it was operationalized through the concept of mandala. While the means adopted to regulate this order will be discussed in more elaborate detail it would perhaps be more appropriate to discuss the relativist understanding of dharma in terms of order.

To understand the linkage between dharma and order, the etymology of dharma becomes significant. Dharma stems from the Sanskrit word dhairya, meaning to hold (Parekh 2010:109). Broadly, understood as the concept which holds the society together, dharma had a special place in ancient state systems as the society was held together by each individual and group doing his or her specific duty. Danda or the power of rod was needed in order to regulate dharma. To extrapolate the meaning of dharma in terms of an order regulating tool, a deeper investigation of dharma, varna and karma, and danda becomes imperative.

Dharma, varna and karma, and danda – the relational tools for ordering society

Dharma, varna and karma can be considered as central precepts in ancient India. A Kautilyan understanding of means situates these central concepts as the key reference frameworks for endowing a logical understanding to

Kautilyan grand strategy. Having said this, a detailed exposition of these concepts become significant given the central place they occupied in Hindu social structure, and hypothetically to Kautilyan grand schema. Since these concepts evolved over a period of time and had a distinct interpretation associated with them, which was often subject to the school of thought that was defining them, this section will restrict the meaning and interpretation of these terms to Kautilya's *Arthashastra*. However, it will engage with the meaning of dharma as it seemed to have evolved over a period of time.

Dharma, varna, and karma as antecedent conditions of order

There is unanimity amongst scholars that dharma as a term goes beyond the limited interpretation of being specifically restricted to religion. The *Indian Journal of Political Science* states that, "it is by no means a synonym for öther worldiness, on the contrary it stands for a perfect harmony between matters mundane and super-mundane" (Thakurdas 1970:406–10). In the Vedas, dharma was understood as a concept which sustained the earth. The Purusa Sukta in particular described dharma as the cosmic order or rhythm (Jain 2011). Ashok Chousalkar on the source and evolution of the dharma writes that the "development of dharma could be traced back to the vedic period, when the concept of rta (cosmic order) was conceived to regulate nature as well as human behaviour" (Chousalkar 1986:67). According to him "it was primarily in the post-vedic period that supremacy of cosmic law or order was applied to individual and social units" (Chousalkar 1986:63).

Another scholar, Rudolf Otto has stressed the social aspect of dharma by pointing out that the word rta comes from ar, which means to order, arrange or regulate. According to him, dharma often "had a regulatory and constraining impact on others" (Chousalkar 1986:63). One can also say – dharma had deep psychological connotation and acted as an invisible regulatory concept in ordering behaviour. One can even term it as a regulatory norm.

Similarly, according to D. Chattopadhaya, the nearest etymological meaning of dharma can be traced to the notion of ordering. According to Chattopadhaya, "order was not merely restricted to cosmic law but also the ways and means through which human relations were conducted" (Chousalkar 1986:63). Bhikhu Parekh writes that in Hindu political thought, dharma found a central place in regulating societal order, which was envisioned to replicate the cosmic universal order (rta) (Parekh 2010:109). R.P. Mukerji defines dharma as a 'socio-ethical' concept different from 'commands' dictated from sovereign. Defining it as a fulcrum of social harmony, where individuals prioritized their duties with the purposive intent to protect societal harmony and hence follow their dharma was fundamental to the understanding dharma (Mukerji 1950:1–12).

Dharma in *Arthashastra*, according to Ashok Chousalkar, emerged as a relativist concept, which laid down that self preservation is the fundamental

duty of the individual. Chousalkar draws a parallel between Mahabharata and *Arthashastra* in this relativist understanding of dharma, whereby the state came into existence to establish dharma (Chousalkar 1981).

The understanding of the state symbolic of regulating order rather than obviating anarchy is significant for understanding the comprehensive (psychological and physical) reach of the state. Also what emerges from the above definitions and scholarly analysis is the preponderant understanding of dharma as the regulator of order. In this respect 'varna' and 'karma' become important categories as they were functions of dharma/order.

Bhikhu Parekh notes the dharma and karma were deeply interconnected. According to him, an individual's karma not only determined caste, but also the rightful karma (Parekh 2010:109). Kautilya takes support of the Vedas and writes that, "the law laid out in this vedic lore is beneficial, as it prescribes the duties of the four varnas and four stages of life" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 1.3.4:7). Ashok Chousalkar writes that Dharmasutras directed the social and political relevance of dharma, which over a period of time emerged as a normative societal benchmark. According to him, "Dharmasutras used the concept of karma and the *authority* (emphasis mine) of the three vedas to lend additional sanction to the observance of dharma" (Chousalkar 1986:67). Kautilya's reference to vedas thus attests to the necessity of invoking authority which could establish the cognitive interface of Dharmasutras with *Arthashastra*.

In Hindu political thought, varna as a category has been associated with the law of karma and has been influential in structuring/ordering the Indian social system. In Mahabharata, the distinction between 'sadharana dharma' and 'vishesha dharma' is significant, as it aims to reconcile conflicts, which manifested when caste (individual) duties conflicted with general moral norms. The general belief was that caste duties should have primacy over moral norms (Chousalkar 1986:76). In Bhagvad Gita, when Arjuna witnesses a dilemma over conflicting duties, Krishna responds by emphasising, "your duty as a member of the warrior class, to fight in a righteous battle, trumps any obligation you may feel towards other members of your family . . . it is better to do your own duty, even poorly, than to perform the duty of someone else well" (Davies 2015:16). A duty-based understanding of dharma thus becomes visible through the concept of varna and karma. According to Chousalkar, "the dharmasutras worked out different duties of different castes and the application of this code in the concrete sense strengthened king's authority" (Chousalkar 1986:67). The link between personal and political was fundamental to invoke authority (then) personified by the state.

The concept of danda as the regulator of dharma of individuals in society thus becomes relevant in this context. Danda had a special place in regulating the varnadharma of individuals. Citing Kautilya, Rangarajan writes, "The people of the four varnas and the four walks of life will follow their own dharma and pursue with devotion their occupation if they are protected by the king and the just use of danda" (Rangarajan 1987:80).

The means in Kautilyan grand strategy – danda and mandala

Based on the above analyses one can say that the concept of dharma captured the idea of a moral order in *Arthashastra* and this concept of morality balanced personal with political. One can also say that the moral order was about thinking strategies or crafting policies, which minimized harm to one's own citizens (duty) and Kautilya was very categorical in stating that the interest of the state and its subjects in general should be prioritized. The idea of advancing just administration is central to Kautilyan analysis of order at the domestic level. The strategic thinking in Kautilyan grand strategic design becomes evident through the six measures of foreign policy. Also known as sadgunya theory, which was closely related to the strength and weakness of the state. Revisiting the 'dynamic' approach to understand Kautilyan *Arthashastra* become necessary here.

When transposed to the external level, order does find an important place in the Kautilya's mandala theory: the circle of states. Mandala theory represented a unique order of states, wherein one could identify one's foes and allies on the basis of geographical proximity, but also in terms of material strength and cognitive intentions. For instance, if one moves on to the mandala theory one finds that the capacity of the state is important as it directed strategy in engaging with a set of superior, inferior and neutral states. The state most proximate to the saptanga theory could aspire to become the leader (vigigishu). To read mandala theory without the state (in terms of its capacity and strength) is therefore misconstrued, given the Kautilyan emphasis on the saptanga theory. However, the cognitive element becomes important, as circle of states (mandala), consisting of allies, enemies and neutrals. While there were 12 actors, which have been identified, for classification and broad relevance five primary set actors played an important role.

The five independent actors, which therefore need to be reckoned with are: the conqueror,[1] the enemy,[2] the ally,[3] the middle king[4] and the neutral king.[5] The rest of the actors were classified as per the sequence established for identifying enemies and allies. These actors were important as they acted as facilitators to measure the success of diplomacy. The intent of these actors can be approached by articulating the cognitive aspect which gave meaning to 'friend' or 'enemy'. An important pointer in identifying the intent was the motivation of the actor and its internal cohesiveness, which was reflective in the excellent virtues of the seven constituent elements. Thus, the more proximate a particular state was to the saptanga theory, the more susceptible and aware was one to become of its motivation. The mandala thus constituted of a total of 72 elements, which was numerically arrived by taking into account the individual attributes of the state, its allies, its enemies, the neutral king and middle king.

In Kautilyan terms the constituent units were predicated upon the internal strength, which gave the state a distinct identity of a 'superior state' and an

'inferior state'. If the state declined in terms of its capacity and influence, it had to adapt to various situations in order to regain its relative influence in the mandala. The circle of states was thus a fluid entity, which was prone to transformational elements dependent on state capacity and influence. The inside-outside or the internal-external dichotomy thus seems superficial in *Arthashastra*, as the strategy which the state was expected to adopt had to be in resonance with its internal capacity and strength. Order thus was not an arrangement which was fragile, but was a grand strategic design, taking a long-term view of things holding the states in the mandala together.

It can be said that order in *Arthashastra* comes across as an instrument of grand strategy seeking to reconcile feasible elements with desired outcomes. The broad strategic objective was to augment and strengthen the power of the state in the long term and also secure the balance in the mandala by avoiding any rigidity in the policy (six methods of foreign policy ensured the flexibility to the inferior or superior state). Reflections on dharma, and recognition of its value in sustaining order and exercising power to achieve the political purpose seemed to be particularly relevant in these terms.

Thus, the definition of 'strategy' indicative in *Arthashastra* was directed towards upholding a 'political purpose' hinged on securing order. This order was foregrounded in dharma and was thus duty based. The authority of dharma differentiated between the political right and wrong and posited the specific argument on what ought to be done in order to survive. The 'ought' in this context was intertwined with the social norms of behaviour and honest commitment to one's duty, which in the political domain was an antecedent condition for preserving the regulation of order and stability of the political system and also the survivability of the state in the mandala. The objective of both statecraft and governance was to advance this objective, the former was done by the mandala theory based on the six approaches to foreign policy; the latter was done by regulating the seven constituent elements of state.

The chapters on state and statecraft in Part II will explore these issues in further detail.

Notes

1 Conqueror is a king who has excellent personal qualities, as well as desirable material constituents. These is *Arthashastra* are defined as a "seat of good policy." The aspirant king is also known as vigigeeso (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 6.2.13:318).
2 Enemy or an antagonist is defined as a king whose kingdom shares a common border. However, not all the kingdoms are enemies worth the attention, as a king *deemed* to be an antagonist is the one, who has powerful excellent personal qualities, resources and constituents. Vulnerable enemies are the ones inflicted by a calamity (weakness of seven constituent elements). Of the most dangerous of all enemies was an enemy by intent. The characteristics of a destroyable enemy were: greedy, vicious, trusting in fate, unjust behaviour, does harm to others, mean

mantri parishad (advisors) with unhappy subjects, powerless or helpless. Note the elements of unjust behaviour as one characteristic which weakens the enemy. The inimical neighbours were a soulless enemy with intent on harming the neighbour. Enemy in the rear allied with enemy in the front is a potential source of threat.

3 Ally was a king whose territory has a common border with an antagonist. A natural ally was one who was noble by birth or related to the conqueror. An ally by intent was one who needs the conqueror for wealth or personal safety. Interestingly, Kautilya adds, kinship can be a source of enmity or friendship. Common interest may bring them together and opposing interest may make them allies. An ally was also defined through common objective. Vassal neighbours who could be controlled were also allies.

4 Middle King was the one whose territory was contiguous to that of the conqueror and the conqueror's enemy, who was powerful enough to help them. Middle king was important because it could influence the balance of power between two groups – the conqueror and his friends on one hand and enemy and his friends on the other.

5 A neutral king was one whose territory is not contiguous with those of the conqueror and the conqueror's enemy. The middle king (was totally outside the area of hostilities and strong and powerful enough to help).

Part II

Exploring the feasible and desirable in *Arthashastra*

4 Morality, power and order

Concepts in international relations

While power as a concept does not seem anomalous to a discussion on *Arthashastra*, the terms morality and order could appear unusual, unfamiliar and inconsistent. However, given the discussion on constitutive sources that have influenced *Arthashastra*, a discussion on morality and order seem pertinent. Given that these concepts find a discursive treatment in international relations, it might be useful to understand philosophical trajectories that shaped the understanding of these terms in different cultural contexts. Shahi and Ascione (2015:1–22) have argued for going beyond western scienticism, aiming at breaking the epistemological dominance of western perspectives and reorienting international relations to post western understanding. The authors propose the concept of "Advaitic monism, wherein the perpetually connected globe has no separate existence apart from Brahman", and this they argue "offers insights for situating the epistemological ground for theorising post-Western IR" (Shahi and Ascione 2015:1). It is well known that epistemological frames are important for guiding and knowing the world critically, however, ontological priorities can also direct one to causal/constitutive explanations and can be critical for engaging with the academic identity of international relations. Both these frames which does not suggest a strict demarcation between the two, become significant for understanding a text like *Arthashastra* because it thickens the conceptual layers, through which knowledge was determined, and helps us determining the epistemic practice through which knowledge production in the realm of political and international is undertaken. Scholars have underlined the symbiotic relationship between ontology and epistemology, where both ontological and epistemological frames of inquiry mutually interact with each other, paving the way for a reflectivist/reflexivist tradition for 'understanding' and 'explaining' and even 'judging' international relations (Weaver 2010; Hollis and Smith 1990; Hamati Ataya: 2010). Attempting to counter argument, where ontological frames guide epistemological inquiries, Smith highlights the views of Gadamer who comments on the fuzziness, which exists between ontology and epistemology. Gadamer, as cited in Smith writes that, "this embeddedness means that notions of truth and reason are themselves historically constituted, so that the kinds of claims about objective knowledge that have dominated epistemological discussions between rationalism and empiricism are fundamentally mistaken"

(Smith 1996:27). In a similar vein and taking this argument further in her own ways, Inanna (2010:1080) emphasizes on knowing and judging and notes that 'reflexivity' should be employed as the foundational epistemic practice for the ontological unity of subject and object, given these debates and the role of philosophical underpinnings animating central concepts in *Arthashastra* – the ideas on strategy merit attention. It is primarily for this reason that Kautilya's *Arthashastra* cannot be situated within the paradigm led trap (Realism or Constructivism) of international relations, and an alternative revisionist understanding of the text needs to be emphasized, which could perhaps underline the agency of non-west in the history of ideas.

A key question that animates such discussion is how does one tap the source of ideas used as concepts in international relations. The conceptual nuances often do not come to the fore, and often result in misrepresenting ideas articulated in non-western tests. The question of prioritizing ontology over epistemology becomes relevant in this context. For instance, if one prioritizes ontology the ideational nuances behind concepts might get compromised and if one privileges epistemology, one might compromise on multiple ways through which concepts in different cultural locations were constituted. It can problemitize first order questions in international relations and take a more critical turn "decentring" the international. One can therefore point out that both ontology and epistemology are not prior to each other as they are mutually and inextricably interrelated (Smith 1996:18). Kurki Milja and Collin Wight (2007) privilege ontology and argue that 'critical realism' should replace positivism (a major limitation for ontological inquiries) as it goes beyond binaries of positivist and interpretivist epistemologies. In the context of *Arthashastra*, philosophical-cultural-intellectual leanings of concepts, which organically evolved from the ancient Hindu political thought become relevant as they underline alternative world views for understanding concepts and vocabularies in international relations.

Arthashastra and its intellectual relevance

Thus, a pertinent question, which comes to mind when discussing the ideational value of *Arthashastra* is its relevance to the field of international relations. Significantly, the comparison becomes fuzzy as the text can be approached from multiple disciplinary lenses. This is because *Arthashastra*, is not just a text which is of value to foreign policy or statecraft, it has equally informed debates in Hindu political thought and philosophy. Thus, it would be no exaggeration to state that a paradigm treatment of Kautilya as a realist or a constructivist would be a bit misplaced. Even political theorists have found difficulty in agreeing whether Kautilyan state was a welfare state or an authoritarian state. Given these limitations, it would be appropriate to discuss some concepts that are used across disciplines and morality, order, and power are three such central concepts which are isolated for study as they find relevance to both disciplines of political theory and international relations.

It is encouraging to note that the literature, which unites international relations and political theory has matured under the broader rubric of international political theory. One of the primary reasons that the two had been kept apart, was the focus on is (international relations theory) and ought (political theory). On this note it has been argued that international relations theory is both empirical and normative where it is concerned with questions of both *is* and *ought* of world politics.

> all theories of international relations and global politics have important empirical and normative dimensions, and their deep interconnection is unavoidable. When realists criticise national governments for acting in ways inconsistent with national interest, or for acting in ways that destabilise international order, they base their criticism on values of interest and order that can be defended only normatively. When post-modernists recommend a scholarly stance of relentless critique and deconstruction, they do so not for the interpretive reason (though this is in part their motive) but because this constitutes a practice of resistance against structures of power and domination.
>
> (Reus-Smit and Snidal 2008:6)

Thus, as the authors argue, any theoretical exposition has three facets attached to it – ontological, epistemological and normative and all of these three are interconnected to each other. Nicholas Regnner, Jean Elshtain, Charles Beitz, Arnold Wolfers, Chris Brown, Michael Walzer, are some select scholars who have tried to highlight the relevance and questions of the normative in international relations. On the merits of bridging the thought between political theory and international relations theory, *history of international political thought* is highlighted, as scholars from diverse disciplines such as law, philosophy, history and politics have contributed to the development of normative turn in international relations theory. Cautioning against theories, which lean towards problem solving, Rengger advises, that "one of the best ways of addressing our moral and political problems is to distance ourselves from them, (and) to see how people in distance time and space sought to identify and grapple with their problems" (Rengger 2000:770). This critical advice by Rengger is instructive for the reading of Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, where the effort is not to see the text as a toolkit for the problems impinging the twenty-first century, but to engage and understand the pattern and approach, which were directed towards addressing problems of its time.

Normative aspects of international relations theory have also been discussed given the intertwined nature of "moral and political structures" which states are embedded in, as, in practice normative and empirical principles interact in complicated ways (Beitz 1999:183). The primary reason why Beitz gives substantial importance to moral structures is the discipline's emphasis on state autonomy. The undue emphasis on state autonomy as Beitz notes is incorrect as boundaries are considered to be derivative. For Beitz,

states should be seen as mere institution of shared practices within which communities of persons establish and advance their ends (Beitz 1999:180). This reliance on moral structures has been questioned by some scholars. Wight's essay on *Why is There No International Theory* can be discomforting to students of international relations, since he argues that "International Relations Theory is marked not only by paucity but also by intellectual and moral poverty" (Wight 1966:20). The reasons for this poverty are-*first*, the prejudice posed by modern state and, *second*, the phenomenon of progress associated with International Relations'. The solution for Wight is to subordinate international relations theory to political theory, as the sources for theorizing international relations are scarce, which primarily rely on historical interpretation. Political Theory, as Wight argues, could endow a normative dimension to international relations, as 'political theory is a theory of good life (desirable) and international relations theory is a theory of survival (feasible) (Wight 1966:33). The debate between norms and state behaviour has been an animated one in international relations, and Wight's explores the possibility of reconciling the two.

Significantly, the various facets of political, and international, which have been raised by the aforementioned select scholars are instructive in drawing parallels to the methodology which Kautilya adopts in *Arthashastra*, where states (political) and circle of states (external) were integral to his analysis. It was a domain of material goals as well as ideational values. Boundaries for Kautilya were of course not products of westphalian understanding, but awareness of internal politics and external policies was well articulated. The state and society were intertwined with each other in a distinct manner, where a self-regulating order hinged on awareness of one's duties became significant. Indeed, foreign policy in *Arthashastra* was not a prescriptive package for managing relations between states, but the prescribed choices were inspired from the internal/measurable characteristics of state specified through seven constituent elements of states. The discussion on morality, power and order, as the three central but binding/relational elements to understand the internal and external therefore becomes useful from this point of view.

Understanding morality[1]

In international relations, scholars and practitioners alike have been known to elaborate the meaning of morality in politics. Some of the well-known names are: Hans Morgenthau, E.H Carr, Reinhold Neibuhr and George F. Kennan, amongst others. E.H. Carr in *Twenty Years Crises* writes, utopia and reality are "the two facets of political science, and therefore the synthesis of political be based on the twin elements utopia and reality" (Carr 1981:87). The critical task that Carr had set for himself through the concept of utopia and reality was to bridge the desirable (ought) and the feasible (is) in international relations, and it could be said that defining the nature of the

political seemed to be the way. He notes "morality can only be relative not universal. Ethics must be interpreted in terms of politics, and the search for an ethical norm outside politics is doomed in frustration" (Carr 1981:35). Critiquing the notion of relative morality, Meirsheimer (2005) wrote that Carr's postulations are not helpful, in bridging the divide between morality and ethics as Carr argued at different points that utopia and reality were incompatible, The pertinent question for Meirsheimer was to explicitly address the syncretic link between morality and politics, which Carr's analysis fails to match up to. While the syncretic link between the is and ought of international relations has been a continuing debate, it would be interesting to locate the relationship between the two, in the field of strategic studies. Scholars have argued that a primary reason that makes such marriage between morality and politics difficult is the deontological and utilitarian argument in strategic studies.

Kimberly Hutchings, in an interesting article, analyses the politics/ morality argument by studying a debate on nuclear deterrence from the deontological and utilitarian perspective. She writes that deontological arguments are concerned about the inadmissibility of intentional harm that nuclear weapons can make to innocent men and women, thus making use of nuclear weapons immoral. On the other hand, utilitarian arguments justify use of nuclear weapons based on the premise of rationality of deterrence. The utilitarians in her words consider that "both the intention to use nuclear weapons and the enactment of that intention can be justified by reference to the maximization of utility" (Hutchings 1992:55). The dilemma between morality and politics, according to her is rather irreconcilable. The problem she argues can appropriately be captured in Trachtenberg's statement who writes, "the philosophers do not seem particularly concerned with questions of degree. They apply their yardstick and either the policy measures up or it does not" (cited in Hutchings 1992:56). While the deontological and the utilitarian argument will be discussed later in the context of *Arthashastra*, it would be useful to discuss some other conversations between morality and politics. The discussion is also useful in terms of determining the boundaries of the political.

Arnold Wolfers (1951) acknowledges that morality and politics has indeed been a case of "the battle of minds" between idealists and realists. However, he draws attention to Woodrow Wilson, who as a statesman talked about power politics moving onto a new era. Wolfers provides a critical treatment to the realist premise that the pursuit of power and survival is the primary end goal for the states in the international system, as he argues that the strategy for peace which the realists offer through the balance of power system has limited use, where the process of maximizing power leads to an equilibrium. For Wolfers, the primary problem with this proposition is his argument that the 'pure power conditions' do not always exist in international relations. For Wolfers the bigger question is an investigation on the definition of power itself, as for him equating power to a competitive struggle

between states, is entering into a vicious circle. Wolfers therefore argues that power is a means to an end not an end. He notes "one would get a very different picture, if one considers the values and purposes for the sake of which policy-makers seek to accumulate or use national power, as they may also seek alternative or supplementary means" (Wolfers 1951:48). He thus proposes a theory of ends, where he argues that a policy maker always makes his choices, commensurate to the degree to which power is available. Citing Walter Lippman, he notes that, "prudent policy-makers will keep their ends and aspirations safely within the power, which their country possesses or is ready and willing to muster. He therefore proposes three templates as the primary goals which various policy makers can have." These are "goals of national self-extension," "goals of national self-preservation," and "goals of national self-abnegation" (Wolfers 1951:50). These goals become important for going beyond the blanket endorsement of statement, leading to partial analysis, which orients all states to a struggle of power. Wolfers analysis seems pertinent, as it encourages to think beyond watertight compartments, directing one's attention to ends. The teleological treatment to the concept of morality and power also become important. Grand strategic design becomes an important framework for understanding his views. For Wolfers morality and ethics are indeed compatible, given we recognize the conceptual and contextual multiplicity associated with terms used for analysing international politics. Wolfer's analyses is also useful in terms of informing text like *Arthashastra*, which was categorical about defining the nature of power based on the superior and inferior status of states and thus gave flexibility to entities (big and small) to survive the international system.

Reinhold Niebuhr's (1932) discussion of the "moral man and immoral society" is one of the most interesting analysis, which explains the limits of morality in human societies and social groups. According to Niebuhr, while an individual is governed by a rational faculty which often prompts him to a sense of justice, in social groups there is a lack of rationality to guide and check impulsive behaviour. Niebuhr writes,

> the inferiority of the morality of groups to that of individuals is due in part to the difficulty of establishing a rational social force which is powerful enough to cope with the natural impulses by which society achieve its cohesion, but (also) in part it is merely the revelation of collective egoism, compounded of the egoistic impulses of individuals, which achieves a more vivid expression and a more cumulative effect when they are united in a common impulse than when they express themselves separately an discreetly.
>
> (Niebuhr 1932:4)

Neibuhr thus argued for the central place of immorality in politics as for him relations between groups were always political rather than ethical. The relationship between groups was determined by proportion of power that

each group possessed vis à vis the other. Thus, politics for him was determined by a 'collective ego' and directed the limitations of human nature and human imagination. This, as he argued, could be surpassed only when human groups could achieve a "degree of reason and sympathy, which would permit them to see and understand the interests of others as vividly as they understand their own" (Niebuhr 1932:9). This self and other dichotomy, which Niebuhr brings out, is most essential to political philosophers and animates the discussion of what is political. If the idea of state compromised on principles of community solidarity and humanitarian principles it could never embody the character of moral agency.

Contemplating on the lack of morality and inefficacy of natural law to effectively inform international relations, John Dewey argues that, "instead of considering antecedent ready-made laws, we should search social consequences to find principles of criticism of positive laws and current customs and of plans for legislation and new social arrangements" (Dewey 1923:90). Thus, articulating the necessity of social consequences of an action as the utmost utilitarian way to search for morality in international relations, for Dewey, such analysis has not benefitted the rationality of international relations. In this regard, Dewey underlines the evident self-contradictory position of the moral sentiment itself. The only way to improve international morality, according to Dewey is therefore to outlaw war (Dewey 1923:95). He writes, "till this move is taken, I do not see much chance that any other improvement in international relations will win general assent or be practicable in execution" (Dewey 1923:95).

While Dewey in his analyses did talk about morality in terms of it being defined as a distinct type of moral idea, which is embodied in the state, he notes how it could give rise to populist tendencies. Dewey writes, "ideas played an important intellectual weapon in regenerating and unifying the separate and particularistic states of Germany under the hegemony of Prussia" (Dewey 1923:93). He cautions that such notions of morality associated with the state can run into the risk of practical shallow populism.

Nevertheless, given these objections, views that emphasize state personification of morality, have been upheld as a norm for understanding morality in international relations. One such example of juxtaposing morality with politics is the work of George F. Kennan. In an article, *Morality and Foreign Policy*, Kennan argued that, "the interests of the national society for which government has to concern itself are basically those of its military security, the integrity of its political life and the well-being of its people" (Kennan 1985:206). For Kennan, these needs have no moral quality as they arise from the very existence of the national state in question and from the status of national sovereignty it enjoys. They are the unavoidable necessities of a national existence and therefore not subject to classification as either good or bad. While Kennan argued such normative notions associated with politics, might be questioned from a detached philosophic point of view, there is a certain assumption that when the state accepts the responsibilities of

governing implicit in it is the recognition that the state should be sovereign and that the integrity of its political life should be ensured. Kennan notes, "for these assumptions the government needs no moral justification, nor need it accept any moral reciprocal for acting on the basis of them" (Kennan 1985:206).

While the idea of state is critical to the analysis above and can be framed as the justification for morality in the realist tradition, Kautilya's *Arthashastra* too at the outset finds familiarity with this logic, as it considers the state as the primary moral agency. However, where the Kautilyan analysis departs from this frame of understanding is the emphasis on the principle of dharma, which as mentioned earlier has not only an ontological value in terms of defining the concept of state, power and order in a dialectical fashion, but also in terms of the epistemological value it offers for directing the nature of inquiry and dictating the contextual embeddedness (or reflexivity) of/towards these concepts in *Arthashastra*. Dharma here can be interpreted as a philosophical-psychological concept, employed for ordering both group as well as the individual behaviour. Kautilya's notion of dharma thus lies at the intersection of socio-cultural political domain in *Arthashastra*, which was operationalized and regulated through the intervention of the state as the primary moral agency. With the state as the focal point, embodying the essence of dharma, morality in *Arthashastra* can be better defined as the code of virtuous conduct demanding obedience. The utilitarian and deontological debate in *Arthashastra* routed through dharma, becomes interesting in this context, thus carrying meaning for duties of the individual and the duties towards society. It paves the way for understanding and articulating another important concept i.e. order. If one was to refer to *Arthashastra*, from the utilitarian and deontological framework, one can argue that while at the internal level Kautilya operated within a deontological argument, at the external level, this deontological argument qualified the utilitarian principle. The definition of political is defined through the existential purpose of state, and makes order, stability and well-being a referent point to determine strategic action at external level. The inclusion of Mitr (ally) as the seventh constituent element directs this analysis. Any actor who was against the property of the state was defined as the other. Notion of the 'other' and how does one treat the 'other' thus becomes a major marker for politics and morality. This assumption would become clearer once the theoretical understanding of order is put into perspective.

Understanding order

The concept of order has been elaborated and conceptualized by Hedley Bull in *The Anarchical Society*. Bull describes order as a relative concept – defining it broadly as a perceptual means to understand the objective world. For Bull the idea of order is not "any pattern or regularity in the relations of human individuals and groups, but a pattern that leads to a particular

result, an arrangement of social life such that it promotes certain goals and values" (Bull 1977:3–4). For Bull therefore order was primarily defined by the *purpose* it served. In other words, "different set of values or ends" endow meaning to the concept of order. While Bull operationalized this broad definition of order to the societal (domestic) and international realm, the common, overlapping concern at the domestic and the international front was the underlying concern for 'obedience' or conformity to certain set of rules of conduct that order entailed.

It is from this perspective that Bull in *The Anarchical Society*, defines order as a pattern of behaviour, which underwrites the fundamental goals of social life. He writes, "order in this sense is maintained by a sense of common purpose . . . by rules, which prescribe the patterns of behaviour that sustain them and by institutions, which make these rules effective" (Bull 1977:53). Socialization of states thus is the primary tool for sustaining order at the international level and also is the key element that enables the transition from an international system to an international society. Diplomacy, by Bull, was perceived as an important conduit for facilitating order and also a tool to facilitate socialization between states. Bull delineated four functions of diplomatic activity: (1) to facilitate communication, (2) to help negotiate agreements, (3) to enable the gathering of intelligence and information, (4) and to minimize the effects of friction in international relations (Bull 1977:170–72). Bull further argued that as diplomatic activity between states flourished, the concept of international society started gaining prominence. International society then denoted a group of states, conscious of certain common international values and conceived themselves to be bound by a general set of rules in their relations with each other. This understanding associated with international society and thus of order has been attributed to the English School of International Relations. It is pertinent to note that all the historical antecedents of these schools have been traced to the western philosophical tradition (Brown, Nardin and Rengger 2002). Little referencing has been made to Indic, Chinese or Islamic political thought and their linkages to these broader traditions, which have in due time informed international relations discipline.

However, this gap has been filled by Adam Watson, who in *The Evolution of International Society*, has deliberated on the nature of ancient state systems. While the idea of order in ancient state systems is far from the conceptual framework of international society, there are two broad trends, which have been identified. These are: (a) hegemonial authority and (b) autonomy.

Hegemonial authority is an overarching concept extending to the whole system, where the system became a society within the compass of a common or dominant culture. The mandala theory of Kautilya fits appropriately into the system, encompassing society of states. Autonomy, according to Watson, was also an important factor in the Kautilyan conception of international system (society of states), where it was required by the conqueror to respect local forms and traditions. Watson also argued that according to

the Kautilyan understanding acceptance of autonomy could bring benefits to both the ruler and ruled, and that the enforcement of direct administration could require more effort, money and even more blood than it was worth (Watson 1992:124). Thus, the idea of hegemony (dominance) but also autonomy of states had a legitimate place in the system of states conceptualized by Kautilya.

Order thus in the Kautilyan context can be understood through the mandala theory at the external level as stipulating certain rules of action for state interaction. Meanwhile the concept of state embodying the notion of dharma and its interplay with karma at the societal (domestic) level, endowed meaning to order or conformity at the domestic level, which made the state role more prominent as a purposive actor.

Given the understanding of morality and order in international relations and its specific relevance to *Arthashastra*, it will be useful to situate the understanding of power as treated in the field of strategic studies.

Understanding power

The concept of power has widely been conceptualized in western discourses and in its varied interpretations have been associated with influence, authority, violence/use of force (Arendt 1969a, 1969b; Brown 2009; Mattern 2010). In *Arthashastra*, Kautilya elucidates the concept of power as a tool to achieve political ends. He writes, "strength is power and happiness is the objective of using power" (Rangarajan 1992:525). There are certain interesting parallels on the understanding of power in *Arthashastra* by both sociologist and political theorists (Hearne 2012; Dowding 2006). Given that power is defined as an essentially contested concept, there is no unanimous consensual definition on the concept of power. One of the most widely accepted definitions of power is by Barnett and Duvall (2006) who have developed a taxonomy to understand the different facets of power such as compulsory power, institutional power, structural power and productive power. In understanding *Arthashastra*, two prominent strands of power compete for relevance – power as legitimate authority and power as soft and hard power (Bisht 2016:20–33).

Legitimate authority: Max Weber's (1919) engagement with power can be equated with the understanding of power as domination, where domination is the exercise of power through command with the probability that such command will be obeyed. Weber considered legitimacy as central to domination as he argued that when legitimacy is ascribed by participants, power can be endured and sustained over a period of time. In this regard, Weber termed authority as 'legitimate power'. Weber took this analysis further to describe the state as the actor, which had the monopoly over the use of legitimate force. In *Arthashastra*, the notion of legitimacy as the use of legitimate power can be equated with danda being subsumed within the broader concept of regulating dharma. As evident in *Arthashastra*, Danda, was necessary to provide order to society. Kautilya wrote, every society needs a sovereign

power wielding kshatra, "power of command", to maintain order and "protect creatures". Hence dandniti, the science of punishment has been the core of the instruction of kings in ancient times' (Das 2013:92). The primary reason for this is that authority as legitimate power differs from the totalitarian form of government and therefore Weber's definition appears significant and appealing as it defined state as a purposive institution.

In fact, some political thinkers have distinguished between authority and power, thus emphasizing on the element of legitimacy as understood in ancient India. Bhikhu Parekh, for instance argues that authority was suggestive of *adhikaar*. According to Parekh, adhikaar is a complex and difficult Hindu concept as it meant a "deserved right". A right one deserves to possess as judged by established social norms. A ruler thus acquired *adhikaar* power to rule when he was "deemed and qualified to possess appropriate intellectual and moral qualifications" (Parekh 2010:112). Rights and duties were not separate concepts. The understanding and internalisation of duties qualified one to exercise certain rights. This in Hindu political thought becomes an example of how holism rather than dualism gave meaning to concepts.

Soft and hard power: while Kautilya does not exclude the possibility of coercion, he emphasizes facets of soft power too before invoking the importance of force. This is evident through the usage of terms like sana (reconciliation), dana (gifts), bheda (dissent) and danda (use of force). Kautilya also notes that the importance of three constituents of power, which were- power of the counsel and correct judgement, power of might i.e. the actual strength of the fighting forces; and power of enthusiasm and energy. Kautilya emphasized these three facets as, according to him, these elements of power were relative rather than absolute. Thus, he argued that sheer military strength is more important than enthusiasm and power of judgement is important than might (Rangarajan 1987:588).

Given these distinct variations of power in *Arthashastra*, where do we place the Kautilyan understanding of power within the broader discourse on international relations? While many would translate Kautilyan interpretation of power as an expansionist and coercive instrument, the reading of the text and the contextual-cultural embeddedness on the understanding of power indicates that the idea of power lay at the distinct intersection of authority, legitimacy and mixed use of soft/hard power. Power for Kautilya thus has more of an authoritarian connotation and is broadly qualified with the idea of legitimacy and a purposive act, which seeks to institutionalize and strengthen the role of state. One can even say that power as a conceptual category facilitated the idea of a strong state, with a qualification that it personified the element of morality – a tool directed towards achieving worthy political ends, which became an essential instrument of maintaining order both internally and externally.

Having said this, an engagement with power as concept in the discipline of international relations would be useful. As mentioned before, power has in fact been the most widely used concept in international relations, so much so that its meaning remains definitionally fuzzy. This section rather

than adopting a discursive treatment of power, explores its specific usage in political theory and field of strategy and diplomacy.

Robert Dahl is one of the most prominent scholars to have conceptualized power. Power according to Dahl means both influence and control. Power for Dahl can primarily be associated with the cause and effect where the cause stems from the base of actor's power. This could include opportunities, acts, objects, etc., which can be exploited in order to affect the behavior of another. While the base is assumed to be primarily inert, the means employed for exploitation are numerous. These could be a promise, threat, veto, charisma etc., which means that having the capability to mobilize the requisite resources for political purposes is important. Thus, Dahl defines power as relative concept, where A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do (Dahl 1957:202–203).

Karl J. Holsti (1964) defines power as "situational, purposive and perceptual, which means that it is always exercised in context to goals, and is made functional by the perceptions of influence and capabilities that are held by policy makers." Thus, Holsti provides a more elaborate definition of power, where it can be viewed from several distinct vantage points. According to him, "it is a means, it is based on capabilities (tangible and intangible), it is a relationship, it is a process and it can also be a quantity" (Holsti 1964:16). Unlike Dahl, who uses power, influence and control interchangeably, Holsti makes an explicit differentiation between them. He points out that the exercise of influence often works in a multilateral manner and is more than merely A's ability to change the behaviour of B. Influence thus can be defined as "A attempts to get B to continue a course of action or policy which is useful to, or in the interest of A" (Holsti 1964:182). Thus, power can be defined as the enduring capacity of an object normally indicated by agency and the realization of intentions (Hearne 2012:20). In the context of *Arthashastra*, this discussion is important, as Kautilya stipulated that seven elements constituted the capability of the state – qualities of the King and his ministers, and quantity and quality of the territory, fortresses, treasury, army and allies. Kautilya also mentioned explicitly that the capability of the state to mobilize its resources should be the key criteria in choosing one's allies.

A more elaborate and comprehensive definition of power has been given by Moses Naim (2013), who elaborates on "four channels of power". According to him power can be understood as muscle, code, pitch and reward. Muscle according to him is the use or the threat of force. Code on the other hand can be found in morals, traditions, cultural mores, social expectations, religious beliefs, and values handed down through generations or taught to children in school. This channel of power does not employ coercion but operates through one's sense of moral duty. Pitch requires neither force, nor moral code, it changes one's thinking, one's perceptions, and is more persuasive in its nature. When people accept payment to do things

they otherwise would not do, power operates in terms of rewards. An individual who can provide coveted rewards has a major advantage in getting others to behave in ways aligned to its interests (Naim 2013:23–24) Naim further argues that all these four channels of power are directed towards manipulating a situation in a way that affects the action of another person. Therefore, according to him, any power interaction has an element of manipulation embedded within it. Naim draws attention to two kinds of manipulations, which MacMillan considers significant in defining power. "First, does the manipulation change the structure of the existing situation? And second, does the manipulation offer the second party to accept a result that is not an improvement?" (Naim 2013:24). The taxonomy of power which therefore emerges is something like this:

Table 4.1 The taxonomy of power

	Outcome seen as improvement	Outcome seen as non-improvement
Change incentive	Inducement via Reward	Coercion via muscle. Law enforcement, repression, violence
Change preference	Persuasion via Pitch	Obligation via code, Religious or traditional duty. Moral suasion

Source: Adapted from Moises Naim, p. 23

The changes in preference and incentives are important yardsticks because they specify the tools that are available to the leader and to the opponents and allies. Also, the yardsticks are illustrative of what scope and what limits exist for improving the situation. This taxonomy is also useful as it helps differentiate between different aspects of power – which appear as useful analytical categories in *Arthashastra* in terms of changing incentives and preference of the other. For instance, incentives could be changed through a combination of rewards, and the use of force preferences could be managed through the discursive use of power such as the moral code of conduct perpetuated through moral suasion and obligations linked to one's dharma. Thus, influence, authority, domination – to different degrees became significant. How were these concepts taken up, operationalized and interpreted in the idea of state and statecraft at the desirable and feasible level? This discussion is taken forward in the following chapters. However, one needs to understand the relativist and not absolute treatment that have been endowed to these concepts. The strategic framework within which the meaning of these concepts was embedded in Kautilyan understanding becomes important to give a perspective within which these terms are invoked. If one reads the Kautilyan text as a via media where the limits of political are being articulated through the field of state and statecraft, concepts such as morality,

order and power offer insights towards recognizing patterns and understanding attributes that determine the nature of a state vis à vis the power of leader (adhikaar-deserved right) and informs the direction of statecraft beyond rigid positionalities. The strategic tradition visible in *Arthashastra* gives new meaning even to the concept of mandala, which highlights relationality and interdependence as a critical framework for manoeuvring the actor defined as 'other'. This makes us think of categories such as states, power, order, meaning of political and the boundaries between the political and moral. While not treating these concepts in their pure essentialist form, the framework envisioned by Kautilya does emphasize the notion of fluidity of ideas and logical reasoning in determining the character of state. Techniques of statecraft, which are enunciated, were complimentary to augmenting the capacity of the state and should not be interpreted in isolation. The next chapters elaborate on the system's perspective to emancipate the relative interpretation endowed to these terms.

Note

1 Some ideas for this section are drawn from Medha Bisht, "Revisiting the *Arthashastra*: Back to Understanding IR", in Gautam et al., *Indigenous Historical Knowledge* (Vol. II), New Delhi, Pentagon Press, 2016, pp. 20–33.

5 Morality, order and power
A systems analysis

In order to take the discussion forward, this chapter engages with the concept of balance/equilibrium/regulation from the systems theory perspective. This chapter is a continuation of some of the ideas that were introduced in the preceding chapters and the discussion becomes important to put thinking on order in perspective. While the phenomenon of order has been studied from a realist, neorealist, liberal, neo-liberal and a constructivist perspective (Rengger 2000), systems theory has generally been ignored. It has been argued that the Kautilyan notion of state and statecraft finds familiarity with systems theory analysis that was introduced by Morton Kaplan.

It thus needs to be perhaps reinstated that while much has been written on the realist undercurrents of Kautilyan thought, few studies have been undertaken to understand Kautilya's *Arthashastra* from a systems perspective. Upendra Baxi notes that *Arthashastra* provides analytical value to the work of system theorist like Morton Kaplan. He notes:

> it is our responsibility to apply the refinements of methodology and the social sciences in searching out the intended or latent sense of the ideas that confront us. The discovery of meanings that might otherwise remain hidden to us is a nobler employment for our newer knowledge than its restriction to the essentially negative tasks of controverting and deriding.
>
> (Baxi 1967:13)

Ontologically then, Kautilya's identity as a system theorist becomes significant and the concepts of power, order and morality find significance within this broader framework. It is for this reason that this chapter intentionally avoids the possibility of studying the concept of balance and order from a realist/neorealist/constructivist perspective, as there is an eclectic mix of these paradigms reflected in *Arthashastra*. The holism in the text therefore becomes important and makes one go beyond the paradigm driven trap in international relations. This holism becomes evident when one traces the identity of Kautilya as a grand strategist.

Given the relativist understanding of the concepts like morality, order and power, which can be defined/redefined/revisited as per the limits set by each of these theoretical paradigms, an attempt to understand *Arthashastra* as a text of philosophy and strategy and the nuances that come with it can get compromised in due process. While much of the relativist understanding of morality was studied under grand strategy, this chapter examines how Systems Theory treats the notion of order and balance and what implications and consequences does *Arthashastra* hold for it.

Systems theory

In 1950 Ludwig von Bertalanffy introduced the General System Theory (GST). In his seminal article, *An Outline of General System Theory*, he wrote,

> in the past centuries, science tried to explain phenomenon by reducing them into an interplay of elementary units which could be investigated independent of each other. In contemporary modern science, we find in all fields conceptions of what is vaguely termed wholeness.
>
> (Bertalanffy 1950:134)

This understanding by Bertalanffy contained in it the seeds of the General System Theory, which he considered elemental to the understanding of interdependence or the relationship between parts to the whole. Bertalanffy argued that there existed a general system of laws, which seemed relevant to any system, irrespective of the properties, which characterized a particular system. In his words, "there is a logical homology of systems in which the entities concerned are of wholly different nature" (Bertalanffy 1950:140). General System Theory as he pointed out was a system of 'logico mathematical' laws. The reason why a reference to General System Theory has been made is its evident resonance with methodology offered in Kautilya's *Arthashastra*. While *Arthashastra* cannot be categorized into a specific theoretical school of thought, there is indeed an existence of an articulated notion of 'systems' that was composed of certain interdependent elements, characterizing a pattern of connectivity between different constituent units.

While the focus here is not on investigating the General System Theory in particular, it does intend to draw some inspiration from specific principles, which seem relevant to the idea that Kautilya tried introducing in *Arthashastra*. The resonance between General System Theory and *Arthashastra* stems from an example used by Bertalanffy to describe closed and open systems. According to him, a closed system was a system, when no materials could enter or leave it and an open system was a system, when there was an "inflow and outflow of materials", which could induce a change in the nature of system. This distinction between closed and open system is relevant from the perspective of social sciences in particular, as open systems

are analogous to political systems thus being vulnerable to certain unpredictable factors (inputs) entering the system, which can interfere with its stability. However, Bertalanffy argued that it was possible to transit from open system to closed system by stopping the inflow elements into the system and that the open system could be made constant. This constancy or stability in the system could be maintained through managing the continuous change of "inflow and outflow of material". This dynamism, as Bertalanaffy argued was the ideal steady state of an open system (Bertalanffy 1950:155–57). This example of open and closed system becomes relevant to *Arthashastra*, primarily because of certain similarities in methodology, where Kautilya does identify the system of states (mandala system) being made of 72 constituent elements. Regulation, balancing and management of these 72 constituent elements, through alliances, negotiations, mediations, treaties tactical approaches and maintaining and regulating domestic order/disorder were elemental in determining the survivability and maintaining the superior status of the ambitious power. A key feature which also emerges is the role of the constituent elements of the state (saptanga theory), which determined the capacity and internal strength of the state in the system. In this respect, it will be useful to understand what steps did Kautilya prescribe for creating certain conditions in the political system, through which the input and output methods could induce stability in the system thereby increasing the capacity of the state.

Influenced by the General System's Theory, more specifically cybernetics theory, Morton Kaplan wrote a book in 1957 on *System and Process in International Politics*. Kaplan's efforts were directed towards theorizing the international system, whereby he introduced six typologies to describe the international system. Kaplan's attempts to offer a detailed analysis of the (international) system, in contrast to Waltz (1979) who adopted a deterministic reductionist approach to theorize international system and Bull (1977), who preferred to use the term international society to international system. Kaplan's definition of the international system and its constituent elements become a useful frame of analysis because of the various input and output factors that have been mentioned to understand what endows stability/order to the system in international politics. It is indeed instructive to note that Kautilya's understanding of state and statecraft was heavily governed by an understanding of input and output factors, and the notion of stability (order).

The input factors in *Arthashastra* can be seen in the attention given to normative-philosophical concepts, viz., appreciation of human nature, which underlined the importance of discipline, establishing the code of conduct through dharma, seven constituent elements of the state and functioning of the state machinery, understanding of power (which necessarily did not mean the use of force), and prescriptions (sadgunya theory) regarding maintaining a flexible position for regulating and enhancing one's relative power in the mandala. It would be appropriate to therefore discuss in some

detail the defining parameters of the system as articulated by Kaplan. The discussion however would not be so much on the process but on the content and method, which was important to establish predictability and regulate stability of the system in particular.

Morton Kaplan and the definition of the system

"Can systematic regularities be observed in organisation of materials of international politics, so that they have some explanatory and predictive power?" (Kaplan 1957:19). This is the research puzzle that Kaplan posits in the opening pages of the book – *System and Process in International Politics*. Kaplan as a response to this question adds that in order to abstract the materials of international behaviour, one needs to go beyond the labeling of actors, so that there is an amount of predictability in the behaviour of the system. However, he cautions that given that actors change in international politics, one needs to take account of the certain constant and the changes that actors undergo, in terms of their capabilities (technological, physical, moral, economic and military). Kaplan further notes that when these materials of politics are treated in terms of systems of action – a scientific politics of international relations can be developed (Kaplan 1957:1–2). Given this approach Kaplan does not define a system, because a system is susceptible to change over a period of time, nevertheless, he does define the "state of a system" at a given point of time. This state of a system according to him, "designates a description of the variables of a system" (Kaplan 1957:2).

The concept of closed system and open system as articulated by Bertalanaffy has received some attention by Kaplan and becomes relevant because he applies it to social sciences. Following his footprints, he notes,

> when an input leads to a radical change in the relationship of the variables of the systems – or even the identity of variables, it is said to transform the behavorial character of the system.
>
> (Kaplan 1957:2)

Kaplan terms this transformatory input as a "step-level-function". The centrality of systems analysis lies in its search for equilibrium and stability in order to minimize the revolutionary element that jeopardizes the functioning of the system. Significantly, Kaplan differentiates between stability and equilibrium, where the latter is more short-lived than the former. He argues that, "the stability in a system can be maintained through some form of homeostatic process in which some variables continually readjust to keep other variables within given limits" (Kaplan 1957:4). Making an analogy with a political system he writes, "that political equilibriums may be dynamic in the sense that the system keeps changing its internal arrangements in order to maintain its stability" (Kaplan 1957:5). This metaphor seems instructive to the interpretation of Kautilya's *Arthashastra* because

Kautilya talks about excellences – the constituent elements of the state that need to be constantly guarded and monitored by the king. The emphasis on certain measures which needs to be introduced when calamities or exigencies invade a system are reflective of a systems element in Kautilyan concept of state. In the mandala, Kautilya's *Arthashastra* specifies measures, which a King could employ to forge alliances and coalitions and hence augment his capacity within the system of states. These according to Kautilya were essential markers for determining the survival of a state. The diplomatic tactics, alliances, stratagems, and flexibility to adopt and adapt to a changing external environment are instructive of prioritizing order in states. An important departure point for understanding *Arthashastra* through the systems analysis is also the normative content that bound the political system – in his parlance the state and mandala together.

It is in this context that the framework offered by Kaplan is instructive in not only observing and understanding the nature of system of states (external) but also its relationship with the political system (internal). The normative inferences, which Kautilya makes to the body of Indian philosophical tradition, become interesting in this regard. This normative content often informed the moral ground that the King was advised to take before making policy choices at the internal and external level. As a political strategist Kautilya's *Arthashastra* privileges, stability as the pre-eminent end goal and safeguarding the survival of state in the mandala, shaped his primary advice on conducting statecraft. In order to maintain superiority, survivability and stability, Kautilya outlined specific parameters, and discussed in detail the inter-relationship, which they had with the stability of the state. Needless to say here that his ideas drew their source from the prevailing philosophical ideas of the time. A key question that emerges therefore is the translation of these ideas to political craft? Kaplan has argued that the needs of the system are set by the structure of the system itself and the objectives of a system are set by the needs in the environment. The objectives of the system are values of the system (Kaplan 1957:121).

This interrelationship between the objectives, structures and values are important, because it underlines the value of *stability*, *order*, *national interest* which becomes valuable for the system. In the context of Kautilya's *Arthashastra* the cultural and social aspect were important and these *values* were built upon and synchronized with the objectives of the state. The notion of purposive power, order and morality (termed as dharma) was often invoked while justifying policy choices.

In Kaplan's systems theory the distinct set of interacting variables, which can endow stability to the system, received much attention. However, given that political equilibriums are dynamic and keep changing; regulating the internal variables to maintain stability becomes important. In this context, Kaplan draws attention to the distinction between stable and ultra-stable systems.

An ultra-stable system according to Kaplan is the search for stable patterns of behaviour, and is the marker for neutralizing dynamism in the

political system. According to Kaplan, ultra-stable systems reject unstable patterns of behaviour and in the search for stability internal and external changes are induced. Ultrastable systems generally take shape when social and political transitions are going on, and, as the theory posits, stability is achieved when adjustments occur either in behaviour of individuals or in the behaviour of the social system, which becomes representative of a new form of stable behaviour as the old pattern has been made redundant. Kaplan also considers it important to distinguish between stability and equilibrium, as equilibrium according to him would imply short-term stability and can be induced for convenience. However, according to him the logic of an ultra-stable system will necessitate that the system achieves stability, primarily because the search from equilibrium to stability is inadvertent. Thus, stability of a given state of equilibrium and stability of a system are perceived as two different terms which need a separate treatment, as in his words, "it is the ability of the system to find a stable equilibrium" (Kaplan 1957:4–5). Thus, the primary argument that Kaplan offers is that one needs to appropriately understand the nature of ultra-stable systems, or political system which have been manifesting revolutionary or witnessing volatile uprisings. Even though restoration of order, which resembles the old patterns of arrangement of governance might superfluously indicate that order or stability has been achieved, the cosmetic changes from above will only provide short-term stability, as the system will continue to search for long-term stability not short-term equilibrium. In this context stability in his words, can then be defined as the "state of a system, that is to its state of equilibrium as well as to the system itself" (Kaplan 1957:5).

Having established the primary parameter for defining a stable system, Kaplan articulates five sets of variables that are critical to the understanding of system and its behaviour. These are: (a) the essential rules of the system, (b) the transformational rules, (c) the actor classificatory variables, (d) the capability variables and (e) the informational variables (Kaplan 1957:6). This classification is important to understand, as it illuminates the meaning of order and power in systems theory. Thus, before an analysis is undertaken on these lines from a Kautilyan perspective, it is important to get the definitional understanding of them as provided by Kaplan himself.

The essential rules of the system are those rules which describe the general relationship between actors of a system. The rules are more symbolic than legal in character. Essential rules are reflective of the core belief system of the actors. They highlight general relationships and are independent of specific units that constitute the system. Thus, according to Kaplan essential rules permit the investigation of categories rather than of a particulars (Kaplan 1957:6). The philosophical foundation of *Arthashastra* and the methodology adopted by Kautilya through the emphasis on the four sciences can be considered implicitly establishing the essential rules. They describe not only the relationship between actors in the system but also specify the appropriate code of conduct necessary for direct and guide the political.

The transformational rules of the system are those rules which relate given set of essential rules (facts that are held constant) to given parameters (facts that are allowed to change). They are rules, which streamline transformatory elements (parameters) to the essential rules of the system. The transformational rules are thus programming rules for the entities, which manifest behaviour corresponding to the set of essential rules. Thus, while transformational rules imply that behaviour is a product of internal system influences as well as external influences, they are important as they pre-empt the element of predictability/unpredictability in the system. Explicit rules and laws laid out in the political system are indicative of how transformatory rules are operationalised (Kaplan 1957:7). In *Arthashastra*, norms related to social and administrative order can be considered as measures for translating transformational rules, as they enhanced the synergies between the transformational and essential rules of the system. The varna and dharma dialectic in particular is indicative of how synergies of social and political order were established. The detailed enunciation of Laws to be followed in Book Three (rules and regulation for administration and governance) are indicators of minimizing the possibility for any transformational parameters. The detailed attention to calamities (natural and unnatural), which could weaken the state or the political system in the long term were parameters, which could induce disbalance between the transformational and essential rules.

The actor classificatory variables specify the structural characteristics of actors. These characteristics modify behaviour in terms of the nature of a state being either authoritarian or democratic. The structure of an actor system produces needs which are peculiar to the structural form of organization and which therefore distinguishes its behaviour from other kind of systems (Kaplan 1957:7). If one was to characterize the Kautiyan state it was hierarchical in structure, and this need of the political system were very much inspired and entrenched in the cultural and philosophical thought of the time. Obedience by following one's duty was a privileged value defining authority.

The capability variables specify the physical capability of an actor in order to carry out different actions in specific settings. They do not express a general power to act but are relative to the type of situations and the conditions under which such actions are taken. The factors which determine capability are territory, population, industrial capacity, skills of various kinds, military forces, transportation and communication facilities, the willingness to use physical objectives for given objectives and the capacity to draw upon the aid of others (Kaplan 1957:8). In *Arthashastra*, the pillars of the saptanga theory – which is indicative of intellectual, social, military, economic power are specific capability variables.

The informational variables include knowledge of long-range aspirations as well as of immediate needs. It includes estimate of capabilities. Information, whether accurate or inaccurate was an important determinant of action

in any political or social system, and information variables were specific variants of power, as accurate information aided in achieving ones objectives (Kaplan 1957:8). The detailed analysis of espionage system advocated by Kautilya is indicative of the importance given to informational variables, as it was assumed that the knowledge of information which an actor has was important in predicting what the actor was likely to do.

Thus, these five variables can be considered essential elements of the systems approach, and as reflected above, Kautilya's understanding in Arthashatra finds specific resonance with it. The three central concepts that *Arthashastra* enunciates find an integrative meaning at different levels within the systems theory approach as all of these played an important role in balancing the political system at both the internal and external level. Since a detailed analysis of some critical variables is undertaken in the next chapter, it would be useful to understand how a system theorist analyses power and order, and what echoes does it have in Kautilya's *Arthashastra*.

Power and order

According to Kaplan, power in political systems is generally understood as being correlated with monopoly over the use of force. He writes, "political system is the coercive subsystem in the social system and is usually defined in terms of the ability to attain goals, a usage which goes back to Hobbes" (Kaplan 1957:8). According to him this understanding is misplaced, as it provides no independent measure of power. He rejects this popular understanding of power on three grounds. First, its definitional limits as an operating principle, second the accomplishment of the desired objectives, and third, the sources of power itself. On the limits of power as an operating principle, Kaplan argues that the use of force does not always lead to proportionate results as a "small input of energy at one source can give rise to a disproportionate output of energy elsewhere in the system" (Kaplan 1957:9). Thus, he argues that to define power in terms of input-output process and the physical result it produces, where the output might be disproportionate to the input is misappropriate. Clearly then Kaplan is against the much-used understanding of power as control where coercion was equated to the use of force, which limits its effectiveness with regard to the consequences it has on other parts of the political system. The second objective is related to the quantifiability of power. Kaplan questions, "how should one measure power, when the government (which has the right to use force) is unable to achieve its objective. . . . Is the government more powerful than its citizens? It may be less able than the citizen to achieve its objective" (Kaplan 1957:9). The central question for him therefore is how to compare power when the objectives and aspirations of the government and people are different. This dilemma is raised in his third objective, which pertains to the sources of power. Kaplan argues that there are multiple sources of power. These are apparent in the use of force, persuasion, influence of

legal or moral norm amongst others. Thus, he cautions against the generic understanding of power as he argues that because power is an all pervasive in both public and private domains, it becomes banal, given the lack of its definitional unanimity.

Given these objections, Kaplan offers his own definition of power, which stems from a rule-based understanding of the system. His definition is a useful entry point for this analysis as it explains the understanding of the system at both the internal and external level. In his words, "a political system is the largest or most inclusive system which has recognizable interests, which are not identical with those of the members of the system and within which they are regularised agencies and methods for making decisions concerning those interests. These rules for decision-making, including the specification of decision-making roles are independent of actors who fill the decision making roles of the system" (Kaplan 1957:9–10). This definition of a political system is important because it lays out the distinction between a political system and international system. According to Kaplan, "political system has specific rules which specify the areas of jurisdiction for other decision making units, and also provide methods for settling conflicts of jurisdiction. They are therefore hierarchical in character and territorial in domain" (Kaplan 1957:10). Thus, a political system cannot exist in an area where it is ineffective in resolving jurisdictional disputes. On the other hand the international system is a collection of states, which have a 'null political system' (Kaplan 1957:10).

This distinction between political and international system is important because it brings out the two criterions of power important for systems analyses – first, laws or the essential rules of the system and second, the effective communication of these rules within the social system. According to Kaplan, the equation that these two factors share with each other, would determine the efficacy of power. Communication plays an important role in determining the effectiveness of power, because if ineffectively communicated, the system will cease to exist, and for Kaplan a system will cease to exist if the essential rules are substituted by new rules. Thus, power according to Kaplan constitutes of both the desirable and feasible elements. He notes, "it is imperative to communicate oughtness as well as (the is-ness of) specific demands for action as those to whom information is channelled must consider its authoritativeness. Such oughtness must be an integral part of the message" (Kaplan 1957:10–11). Significantly then how commands are communicated is important, because they are not only reflective of an inter-subjective understanding to certain rules but also enable obedience to essential rules of the system.

Another important distinction brought to the fore by Kaplan is the distinction within the political system, i.e. whether it is system dominant or sub-system dominant. This distinction is important to understand because these two dominant types of systems have a particular role to play in the shaping the nature of the international system. Kaplan writes, "depending

on whether they couple activity within the sub-systems of a larger system or between system levels will determine whether the international system is deviant, accommodative, assimilative, or conflictual" (Kaplan 1957:12).

Thus, the five variables which have been outlined by Kaplan are significant to understand in terms of what gives meaning to power, how it is communicated, and how can a synergy between the various input and output factors be established. Communication and interactive dimension of power is thus equally important to endow order and predictability to the political and international system. Power and order thus in many ways are critically related to each other, especially when it comes to analysing systems. How are values privileged in political systems to cognitively respond to the effective questions of power is important to understand. While a critical analysis on these patterns and interactions will be undertaken in a detailed manner, Kautilya bears close resemblance to systems analyst. In this context, it will be useful to look at some conceptual categories offered by Kaplan, which emphasize the nature of balance or order for regulating stability in political systems.

Balancing the system

Kaplan has introduced the term regulation, which is indicative of a "process by means of which a system intends to maintain and preserve its identity over time as it adapts to changing conditions" (Kaplan 1957:13). There are usually two ways in which systems regulate themselves – integrative and disintegrative. While integrative actions occur when units join together or cooperate under conditions, which do not permit satisfaction of their system needs in any way, disintegration actions on the other hand occur when sub-systems regulate to sustain themselves and satisfy their systems' needs at the expense of systems within which they are sub-systems. Disintegrative actions can take place in democratic societies, which has been termed as the non-directive systems. Since *Arthashastra* falls under the category of a directive political system, the discussion in the following pages will be restricted to the insights offered by Kaplan which are relevant to directive systems.

The first characteristic of the directive system is that the roles of the system are arranged in a complete hierarchy, where the levels of each are specified. While lower levels do have the choices with respect to the means through which actions could be undertaken, decisions made at the higher level are not challenged at the lower level.

The second important characteristic of the directive system is in terms of tackling instability, which can be quite flexible and adaptable. While, it is true that a directive system operates within a framework of imposed constraints, given the nature of a hierarchical system and division of labour, each decision-maker is able to pay attention to only a specialized aspect of the problem. This characteristic, according to Kaplan, often works out well because complete attention can be given to those aspects of the problem

that are relevant to the adaptive success of the larger system. This is specifically true of a smaller system and seems to be relevant to the Mauryan period, where polities were small, but at the same time were centralized. These were monarchies rather than republics. As Kaplan argues, the flexibility and rigidity of the system in many ways depends on the total capacity of the system (Kaplan 1957:74).

Kaplan, however, cautions that a directive system can become rigid, if the disturbances overload rigid decision makers, so much so, that they cannot perform their individual role functions properly, and when rigid personalities at the apex system may interfere with the specialization necessary for flexibility. A second reason, which can make directive systems rigid, is the capacity of the highest authority. Thus, the directive system can only function well when it is directed in the most appropriate manner. It is therefore important that the head of the hierarchy in the directive systems is efficient and flexible, as a failure of appropriate response might make a system unstable. The focus on the abilities and discipline for the King in Kautilya's *Arthashastra* becomes instructive.

Apart from understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the directive system, it is also important to understand how a political system is regulated (Kaplan 1957:74). For Kaplan, regulation in political system is not so much needed at the task (specific) level but in fact at the meta (grand) task level, as it is through the meta-task level, that the task-oriented activity is regulated and organized. Since the task and meta-task activity is well interlinked in the system, Kaplan argues that the meta-task capacity of the system is absorbed by task activity (Kaplan 1957:75). Regulation of the system thus entails that routinizing operations or surveillance activities take place on a regular basis, especially in areas in which potential problems can occur. This, according to Kaplan, could be a good way towards increasing the metatask capacity of the system.

Since regulation at various levels is an important activity, mechanisms for regulation become important. Mechanism means, "examining the ways in which systems employ information and the patterns into which their activities fall" (Kaplan 1957:76). Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, as discussed in the next chapter has a detailed elaboration on various regulatory mechanisms to discipline the functioning of the commoners and the bureaucracy.

While most of the points discussed above are relevant to political systems, it is also important to understand the nature and the dynamics inherent in the international system. This becomes important because of the interdependence that exists between the political systems at the internal level and international system at the external level.

Kaplan delineates six types of international systems – the balance of power system, the loose bi-polar system, the tight bi-polar system, the universal system, the hierarchical system and the unit veto system. Similar to the political system, he assigned values to a set of variables, which described the state of the each of these international systems. These were: the essential

rules of the system, the transformational rules, actor classificatory variables, capability variables, and the informational variables. According to Kaplan then a hierarchical system would manifest the tendency of high integration.

Description of the 'international systems' and the patterns of choices that actors make

In the balance of a power system, the essential rule states that the primary goal of national actors is to augment their capabilities by increasing their relative power. However, this increase of capabilities foregrounds the logic of avoiding war on all accounts, as it might lead to disequilibrium. Nevertheless, it is also argued that if avoiding war is at the cost of compromising one's capabilities, then the war becomes the only potential option for actors. The third rule, primarily relates to the limits posed to the augmentation of one's capabilities, as one needs to be mindful of not exceeding the "optimal size of just and law community", and also not threatening the interests of other actors in the system, as it might lead to defections, thus jeopardizing the balance. Meanwhile it is essential that a minimum number of actors is available, because if the number of actors decreases, the equilibrium of the system might shift to a bi-polar. Thus, as Kaplan writes, "it is necessary to limit ones objectives, and not to eliminate other essential national actors, so that one can make necessary alignments in future" (Kaplan 1957:18). This, according to Kaplan, is essential, as the failure to restore the place of a defeated national actor, will interfere with the formation of coalitions, which will be unable to constraint deviant behaviour and in the long term give rise to potential blocking coalitions.

The balance between the essential actors in the system is indeed instructive to *Arthashastra*, given the typology of essential actors which Kautilya provides in *Arthashastra*. The six measures of foreign policy which emphasize negotiation and bargaining also undermine any place for a prominence of a singular hegemon. The specific mention of neutral and middle powers underlines the importance of other competent powers in the system or mandala. A state could aspire to be a dominant power, but had to be cautious of rules and regulations, both at the individual and societal level. Thus, as Kaplan argues, since most of the rules are interdependent, observing the pattern of events rather than particular events becomes the key to analyse the international system.

A loose bi-polar system generally occurs after the breakdown of a balance of power system, where the rules are not uniform for all the actors. The difference between a balance of power system and a loose bipolar system is that, in a loose bipolar system, supranational actors as well as national actors participate. The second difference is that the class of supranational actors is also divided into a subclass of blocs of actors, for instance a NATO, a communist bloc, or a universal actor such as NATO. Each sub-class has a leading actor, which forms a bloc in the system, where each of the blocs has

a specific role function, thus possessing a specialized set of norms. The functioning of a loose bipolar system depends on an organizational structure of the bloc. If the blocs are non-hierarchical, they would represent a balance of power system, where shifting and alliances take place between two fixed positions. However, if there is asymmetry between the organizational structure of blocs, i.e. one is hierarchical and the other non-hierarchical then, the hierarchical bloc will witness lesser defections than the hierarchical one. The non-hierarchical bloc, on the other hand, while it will have a looser hold over its members, it is likely to enter into cooperative alliances. Thus, the pressures emanating from hierarchically organized bloc, as Kaplan argues, "will be likely to force the non-hierarchically organised bloc to integrate the non-hierarchically bloc activities more closely" (Kaplan 1957:26). The characteristics of a loose bi-polar system are: presence of two major bloc actors, a leading national actor within each bloc, non-member national actors, and universal actors, all of which perform distinctive role functions. This typology again finds an interesting echo in *Arthashastra*, given that the mandala was inspired by two hypothetical units – the unit representing the enemy and the unit representing the aspirant power at the centre and their respective allies. Neutral and middle power find their relevance only with respect to the balance of forces existing between these two. This vijigisu, as Baxi writes who was the "aspirational power of the nucleant mandala was thus ultimately to become an all-India emperor" (Baxi 1967:23).

A tight bipolar system on the other hand had lesser actors than a loose bipolar system. Bloc actors were hierarchically organized as there was no place for universal actors to mediate, as there was no wider frame of references to be mediated as such (Kaplan 1957:34).

The Universal International System, on the other hand, had a subsystem of political action, and to some extent it determined the scope of jurisdiction of its national actors. A universal international system is an integrated system, and performs an integrative function, where the national actors obtain their objectives only within the determined boundaries of the universal system. Thus, as Kaplan writes, "the universal system will integrate the values structure of its member actors and establish frame of reference within which both value conflicts and disputes concerning the allocation of rewards and facilities may be settled" (Kaplan 1957:35).

The hierarchical international system may be imposed by force upon a bipolar or universal system, in which case there is a likelihood of a directive system. The rules of the hierarchical system will legitimise the structure and functions of the hierarchical system and will integrate the role functions and values of the system of states, The system will be an integrated system, thus linking rewards and access of facilities according to the criteria of the system (Kaplan 1957:38).

The unit veto system is a system where the interests of all are opposed. In this system al actors possess the capability to destroy other actors. Universal actors cannot exist in such a system. This system according to Kaplan is highly unlikely in international politics (Kaplan 1957:40).

In the international system, while the pattern of classification is a product of how actors interact, collaborate and balance each other, Kaplan argues that their actions in the international system are generally influenced by their organizational forms, their cultural values, and the specific experiences they have undergone (Kaplan 1957:43). Thus, capability factors, logistic factors, information, history of the past are specific to the systems and have a great explanatory value in terms of the broad evolution of the international system.

Kaplan mentions five specific ranges of choice, which are available to actors and which are intricately related to their political systems. The first range has reference to the organizational focus of decisions, where the environment within which decisions are made need to be neatly categorized into objects and instruments of policy. Thus, the relationship between instruments used to frame policies and desirable objectives are interconnected and have to be linked to each other. Further, the objectives that an actor can pursue primarily depend on the resources they can manipulate. Thus, the organizational focus of the decisions depends upon the areas in which manipulation is necessary in order to pursue the objectives. This is because, as Kaplan argues, "a national actor cannot pursue external policies unless it has access to domestic policies or external allies" (Kaplan 1957:45). This is an important point, given the focus on the seven constituent elements, which include access to domestic resources as well as importance of external allies in *Arthashastra*.

The second range relates to the allocation of rewards by national actors. This principle of allocating rewards and instrumentalities, as Kaplan argues, constrains the range of possible actions that are acceptable to the system. While Kaplan notes that given that national interest plays an important role determining the behaviour of a national actor of the international system, national interest may also depend on the essential rules of the political system. Thus, as Kaplan writes, "depending on the essential rules, one national actor may give more proportional weight to non-national objectives, than will another national actor" (Kaplan 1957:45). Thus, national actors depending upon their values and essential rules, differ in their evaluation of situation and the decisions which they generally take. This might influence the formation of alignments and blocs in the international system. Thus, this principle primarily specifies the allocative principles underlying goal activity. The principles of four upayas which focused on offering reconciliation, gift giving, sowing dissent and use of force and the stipulation, where each of the specifically need to be employed become significant in this context. A detailed discussion on the four upayas has been undertaken at a later stage.

The third range is related to alignment preferences and specifies the actions that are acceptable as allies or bloc members. Kaplan writes, "an actor may have a preference to align itself with actors peopled by individuals of common ethnic or religious origins, or with actors having similar structures in

the national subsystems, or with actors that are able instrumentally to assist or cooperate on the attainment of its political objectives" (Kaplan 1957:46). Any of the alignments which are made on this cognitive /cultural ground can bring disbalance to an international system. Thus, this choice primarily determines the preference for cooperation. It is most interesting to note that Kautilya provides a detailed typology of allies and enemies in the *Arthashastra*, and stipulates preferences for aligning with allies and enemies.

The fourth factor primarily relates to the scope and direction of political activity by the national actor system, where the national actor may attempt to facilitate the formation of a directive of non-directive national actor system. It may either play an active role in the process or follow the leadership of some other actor to play a mere coordinate role. It might also be indifferent to the problem and act in pursuit of political objectives without reference to the consequence of such activity for the rules of the international system. This choice primarily specifies the levels of organization activity, which could take place by individual units within the international system. The six measures of foreign policy, which are mentioned by Kautilya, emphasize these arguments in a detailed manner.

The fifth range primarily refers to the adaptive quality of decisions. The decision in this case may have reference to specific instrumental goals objects, the rules or essential variables of the system or the transformational rules of the system. Different actor systems have different patterns of action in terms of the terms of the choice range. Rigidity of behaviour might prove to be a deviance in the nature of choices that an actor makes. For instance, when choices are made keeping in mind the essential rules of the political system, rather than the international system, a deviance in behaviour could be observed. The frame of reference, within which certain choices are made thus become important. This specific range also influences the time preference of an actor. The cognitive-cultural context of the mandala thus is increasingly important in determining the reflection of this range of choice in Kautilya's *Arthashastra*.

While Kaplan's analysis is an interesting take on how international systems evolve, are influenced by the specific political systems and take shape given the dynamics of balance and equilibrium in the international system, Kautilya's *Arthashatra* has described the system of actors (states) through the concept of mandala and situates the balance and equilibrium by specifying ways and approaches through which actors coordinate and collaborate with each other. As the next chapter will show, the reflection of systems analysis can be clearly seen in the four upayas and six measures of foreign policy that Kautilya emphasizes. The cognitive–cultural theoretical conceptualization of order and the socio-cultural context that *Arthashastra* was written in reveal an interesting interplay with values. In positivism the interplay of values have been minimized primarily through the fact/value dichotomy, which leads to a confusion between between "value freedom (cognitive objectivity/impartiality) and ethical neutrality (moral disengagement/ indifference)"

(Inanna 2011:268). In *Arthashastra* deontological arguments on state and statecraft are evident as it was meant for a cultural group hinged on values and norms advocated by shastras. It would not be wrong to say that Kautilyan knowledge responded to social and cultural reality and the treatment to values was a composite one. The desirability and feasibility of politics was reconciled in this manner. The purpose of the state, to regulate order was well stipulated by Kautilya and details on state and mandala seemed to serve this purpose. Similarly, for Kaplan the purpose of political system had to be established apriori. Kaplan's neat categorization of the various kinds of 'international systems' and 'role functions' attributed to specific actors reveal that unconnected events can be related (Kaplan 1966:8).

To conclude, it would be appropriate to investigate the political system in Kautilya's *Arthashastra*. The *Arthashastra* shows how a networked approach through the hub and spoke model in the mandala was emphasized. What makes it unique is how rules of engagement, bargaining, application of power and survivability of states in the mandala was regulated and made functional, an issue, which highlights the feasibility of these concepts in *Arthashastra*. In the next chapter we will have a look at why these three concepts were privileged and more desirable than others.

6 The Kautilyan state and statecraft

Contextualizing desirability

There is significant contextual relevance in *Arthashastra* for underlining desirable elements embedded in the concepts such as morality, power and order. Their significance both at the level of state and statecraft meets at the intersection of *is* and *ought*, where the two are reconciled by activating a web-based approach. However, before this argument is further developed, one needs to note that the relational logic embedded in these concepts was guided by the 'purposive nature of action' undertaken by the state, which in Kautilyan case was to prioritize order. Order in this case got its ideational and material relevance in cultivating the awareness of dharma (duty) at multiple scales and locations. In this backdrop, it is important to understand, how does Kautilya bridge this gap between the desirable and feasible and make it relevant for the grand design of state and statecraft? This chapter elaborates on how desirable elements have been framed, expanded and emphasized upon in Kautilyan state and statecraft.

The Kautilyan state – morality, order and power

In order to understand the central variables that dictated the philosophy of strategy in *Arthashastra*, it is important to examine the idea of the political institution 'state' as the primary organizing unit in the Kautilyan strategy. The logic of state is important because it determined what is political. The agency of state delimited the understanding of order bearing the ideational/societal context of ancient India in mind. The state therefore emerged as an apex ordering entity exhibiting the goal of cultivating a shared understanding of norms for governing society and the central anchor underpinning these norms was the concept of dharma. The authoritative invocation of Shastras and intellectual inspiration from Hindu political thought becomes relevant in this context. The state in Kautilya's *Arthashastra* was well organized, had a structured mechanism for undertaking covert operations and a suggestive framework to guide foreign policy. The purpose of the state thus was to regulate "ordered heterogeneity" of the Indian society and not to dictate domestic order (Das 2013:56).

In order to understand the state and its desirable aspects in a more elaborate manner, a discussion on functions and objectives of the state becomes important. Rangarajan writes, "the notoriety which Kautilya has acquired as an advocate of immoral and unethical policies is unjust because he always adds a qualification, when he recommends such policies" (Rangarajan 1987:24). This statement is quite contrary to various assessments, which have been made on *Arthashastra*. For instance, D. D. Kosambi wrote, "in *Arthashastra* there is not the least pretense at morality", Erich Frauwallner argued, "Kautilya had no moral scruples", and T.W. Rhys Davies noted, "Kautilya was depraved at heart" (cited in Boesche 2002:259). Max Weber in a well-known essay concluded that "in contrast to Kautilya, Machiavelli's *The Prince* is harmless" (Weber 1919:25). The reason for him saying so, are the details, which Kautilya provides on the treatment and description of spies, assassination of enemies and torture. Roger Boesche writes that, *Arthashastra* is "a book of political realism, a book analyzing how the political world does work and not very often stating how it ought to work, a book that frequently discloses to a king what calculating and sometimes brutal measures he must carry out to preserve the state and the common good" (Boesche 2002:17). On a similar note Henry Kissinger notes that "Kautilya exhibits no nostalgia for the virtues of the better age. The only criterion of virtue he would accept was whether his analysis to the road of victory was accurate or not" (Kissinger 2014:197). Given these views on the Kautilyan understanding of ethics, morality and virtue, it would be appropriate to deliberate a bit on the role and place of morality and its desirability in Kautilya's *Arthashastra*.

Understanding Kautilyan morality

As mentioned before, the term *yogakshema* has been used as a moral qualification for the state in *Arthashastra*, where the interests of the subjects were identical to those of the king. Rangarajan points out that, "welfare in *Arthashastra* was not an abstract concept and included not only human but also animal welfare. Maintenance of social order, increasing economic activity, protection of livelihood, protection of the weaker sections and welfare of slaves and prisoners were some primary activities which were taken care of" (Rangarajan 1987:69). For instance, Kautilya writes, "the King should protect agriculture that is oppressed by the troubles of fines, labourers from taxes, and herds of cattle oppressed by thieves, wild animals, poisons and crocodiles as well as diseases" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 2.1.37:58). His notion of fairness can be gauged from the oversight he prescribes to the king. He writes, the king, "should keep clear trade-routes that are harassed by the king's favourites, robbers and frontier chiefs, or are reduced by herds of cattle" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 2.2.38:59).

Apart from this, it also perhaps needs to be underlined that the notion of civic responsibility has been talked about in a detailed manner in Kautilya's

Arthashastra. "Human qualities or certain virtues such as abstaining from injury (to living creatures, truthfulness, uprightness, freedom from malice, compassionateness and forbearance were some essential duties which had been highlighted for everyone despite the class/caste divide" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 1.3.13:8).

The concept of morality becomes visible through its association with duty, which was emphasized through the notion of dharma. Dharma was not only associated with the king's duty in protecting his subjects and giving them security and justice but also to individuals and their responsibility to societies, communities and natural flora and fauna they lived with. Like Anthony Parel (2008, 2010) who has invoked the concept of 'purusharthas' to trace the ideational inspiration of Gandhian thought to *Arthashastra*, Ritu Kohli adds that through the notion of purusharthas – dharma, artha, kama and moksha – which were the four goals of human life, the aim of the Kautilyan state was to create "such conditions and environment that enabled people in society to live in peace and harmony by following *swadharma* (duty), customs and needs" (Kohli 1995:18). This comes across as a fundamental entry point for understanding the nature of state where the rights and duties of rulers, ministers, priests and people was governed by the concept of dharma (Rangarajan 1987:1). Dharma, thus in many ways could be identified with the act of duty, a composite value, where it had a comprehensive and totalizing effect in determining its supremacy of a *code of conduct* over all facets of life.

If one looks at the text, the call for "necessity of philosophy" (anviksiki) can be considered the fundamental pre-requisite for understanding this constitutive rationality. Kautilya considered anviksiki the fundamental departure point for science of politics, as in his words "only by means of reasoning (can one learn) what is spiritual good and evil in vedic lore, material gain and loss in economics, good policy and weak policy in the science of politics" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 1.2.10:6). Given the emphatic tone of this statement right in the opening chapter of *Arthashastra*, one can argue that Kautilya's *Arthashastra* does intend to reconcile the is and ought and offer an intersecting template which balanced the political with ethical. The concept of order and its relationship with morality and power become a significant relational turn for understanding political institutions and the role that values played in due process. It is interesting to note the nature of dialectical arguments between order, power and morality in *Arthashastra* for qualifying the vocabulary of political.

Order and power in *Arthashastra*: mediating morality

As has been argued the conceptualization of order in *Arthashastra* was drawn upon by adapting to cultural and philosophical systems pertinent to the context within which it was articulated. However, it was operationalized through a grand strategic design built upon a web-based approach. The

key anchors for holding this web-based approach at the level of the state were – social, cultural, administrative, perceptual, psychological, and material factors.

Social Order was indeed heavily influenced by reaffirming the varna system. Kautilya wrote, "the observance of one's own special duty leads to heaven and to endless bliss. In case of its transgression, people would be exterminated through the mixture of duties and castes" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 1.3.1–16). So much was mixture of duties and caste authoritatively deliberated upon that any transgression of it legitimised the use of force and ensured loyalty to one's duties. For instance, in order to explicate the dialectics between *social order* and the legitimacy of *use of force* Kautilya notes, "the people of the four varnas and in the four stages of life, protected by the king with the Rod, and deeply attached to occupations prescribed as their special duties, keep to their respective paths" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 1.4.16:10). One can gauge through these verses, the importance of order in Kautilya *Arthashastra*, an order, which has psycho-social leanings. The legitimacy for sustaining this order, by taking refuge of the dharmashastras in general seemed to be a significant strategic entry point in terms of *authoritatively* disciplining the code of conduct. It also precludes in it the definition of political, where the identity of other is clearly articulated. The other was the transgressor of order. There are various instances, where the notion of power (use of legitimate force/danda) has been invoked which has a consequence for defining the identity of 'other'.

The first explanation or justification that Kautilya provides for the use of force is the necessity of maintaining and sustaining order in secular affairs. He writes,

> the means of ensuring the pursuit of philosophy, the three vedas and economics is the rod (wielded by the King); Its administration constitutes the science of politics, having for its purpose the acquisition of things not possessed, the preservation of things possessed and the bestowal of things augmented on a worthy recipient. Therefore, the king, seeking orderly maintenance of worldly life should ever hold the rod lifted up to strike.
>
> (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 1.4.16:10)

He, however, adds a cautionary note that:

> the king severe with rod, becomes a source of terror to beings, the king mild with rod is despised and the King just with rod is honoured.
>
> (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 1.4.16:10)

Clearly from the above verses legitimate power and order were tethered to the "moral code of conduct" (Naim 2013:24). In this context the moral code through which power operated was the authority of dharmashastras and its translation to political domain. It would not be wrong to even

say that Kautilya translated these ideas into action through a web-based approach. Coercion was not used in causal terms to regulate social order but a justification for its necessity dialectically arrived upon. Thus, one can say that social order was one of the key pre-requisites towards maintaining the required balance in society and danda (use of rod) was essential to regulate this balance.

Apart from social order, the issue of administrative order was also closely deliberated upon. A fundamental factor indicative of the farsightedness of Kautilya was to link elements of administrative order with a holistic strategy, which is not only indicative of the critical temper in *Arthashastra* but also its role as an important pillar of a web-based approach. For instance, rather than having any specific qualifications on recruiting ministers based on caste, class, merit, relationships or nobility, Kautilya unlike his predecessors was of the view that the capacity for doing work should guide the criteria for judging the ability and merit of the person. This is indicative of revisiting the character of Kautilya's *Arthashastra* as a strategic text. Kautilya focused on using *available means in order to use them optimally* in the interest of the state. On the recruitment of ministers, he writes, that,

> from the capacity of doing work is the ability of a person judged, and in accordance with their ability by suitably distributing ranks amongst ministers and assigning place, time and work to them, the (king) should appoint all the ministers.
>
> (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 1.5.21:16)

Administrative order in Kautilya was hinged on maintaining a high standard of accountability for officers in charge. Details given to the understanding of human nature and caution on closely guarding the administrative order is revealed through the instructions he gives to monitoring the officers in charge. He suggests that the,

> king should have the activities of departments watched closely by spies. He cautions that officers who are not conversant with the rules and customs may cause loss of revenue. He further added that the loss of revenue might not only be caused due to ignorance but also due to laziness, addiction of the senses to worldly pleasures, due to lack of courage, loose character, anger, arrogance and greed.
>
> (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 2.7.9:82)

Human nature thus was another important factor for underpinning the relationship between power and order. One can also say that human nature received substantive deliberation as it optimized predictability of strategy. There is substantial discussion on the fundamentals of taming human nature through the concept of discipline. One can also say that the Kautilyan insight of human nature made him emphatic about discipline, and this is invariably

reflected in his instruction to the King to refrain from arbitrary use of force (rod). For instance, the emphatic tone of caution is reflected in the following verse, "Administration of the rod, when rooted in self-discipline, brings security and well-being to human beings" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 1.5.2:10). Reflections on a duty-based order to discipline human nature is also indicative of importance that is placed on training and disciplining the king in the sciences, which according to Kautilya could only be acquired by accepting the authoritativeness of the teachers of the respective sciences. In this regard Kautilya wrote,

> for the king, trained in the sciences, intent on the discipline of the subjects, enjoys the earth without sharing it with any other ruler, being devoted to the welfare of all beings.
>
> (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 1.5.17:11)

Self-discipline also meant control over one's senses and emotions. Underlining its importance, Kautilya wrote that the King having no control over his senses would "quickly perish even though he be the ruler right upto the four corners of the earth" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 1.6.4:12). His advice on the control over emotions and senses was thus clearly a response to the fickleness of human nature. It also reflects the moderation, qualifications and the antecedent conditions, which were required for the just King to be victorious and legitimate. The use of spies can also be considered to enhance the perceptual power of the state in order to regulate domestic order. The meaning of political was as much an ideational concept as it was a material (institutional) one. The king earned the right to govern only when he followed his duties. In this context, Kissinger's claim that, *Arthashastra* encompassed a "world of practical statecraft not philosophical disputation" seems to be a bit misplaced (Kissinger 2014:195).

Kautilya also talks of material wellbeing. His emphasis on spiritual good as well as material wellbeing is the identified middle way, and is a key pointer to the balance and moderation that Kautilya brings in to regulate domestic order. Thus, his statements need to be read in a specific context where he pre-empted unpredictability of human behaviour. One could not separate material from spiritual as they were braided to each other. At one instance on the importance of material wellbeing Kautilya wrote, "material wellbeing alone is supreme, for spiritual good and sensual pleasures depend on material wellbeing" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 1.7.6:13).

Last but not the least, perceptual and intelligence seeking nature of the Kautilyan state also becomes visible. Kautilya's activation of a web-based approach can be perceived from his suggestions to conduct secret tests for gauging deception (*upadhas*), which were aimed at testing the honesty of ministers. These were called the 'test of piety, tests of material gain, tests of lust and tests of fear' (The Kautilya *Arthashastra*). The council of ministers

(amatya), treasury, and army, was an important constituent element of state and were subject of these tests. Lisa Wesman Crothers notes,

> that that the tactics and relational responses envisioned in such *upadha* point to a dialectical relationship between trust and deception (i.e. trust relies on deception and successful deception is predicated on certain markers of trust).
>
> (Crothers 2016:208)

Upadhas become an important pointer towards understanding constitutive elements for sustaining order and increasing the power of state. What the "upadhas" also illustrate are elements of spiritual good, loyalty and belongingness to the duties and not other factors, governed order in the state.

Test One
Kautilya writes,

> the king should get each minister individually instigated, through secret agents under oath (in this manner): This king is impious; well, let us set up another pious king, either a claimant from his own family or a prince in disfavour or the member of a (royal) family or a person who is the one support of the kingdom or a neighbouring prince or a forest chieftain or a person suddenly risen to power, this is approved by all; what about you?
>
> (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 1.10.3:19).

If he repulses (the suggestion) he is loyal. This according to Kautilya was the test of piety.

Test Two
Kautilya writes,

> The commander of the army (seemingly) dismissed by reason of support given to evil men, should get each minister individually instigated, through secret agents, to (bring about) the king's destruction, with (the offer of) a tempting material gain, (saying): 'This is approved by all; what about you?' If he repulses (the suggestion), he is upright.
>
> (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 1.10.5:19).

This according to Kautilya was the test of material gain.

Test Three
Kautilya writes,

> a wandering nun, who had won the confidence (of the different ministers) and is treated with honour in the palace, should secretly suggest

> to each ministers individually: The chief queen is in love with you; and has made arrangements for a meting (with you); besides, you will obtain much wealth. If he repulses (the proposal) he is pure.
>
> (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 1.10.7:19).

This according to Kautilya is the test of lust.

Test Four

Kautilya writes,

> on the occassion of festive party, one minister should invite all (other) ministers. Through (seeming) fright at this conspiracy, the king should put them in prison. A sharp pupil imprisoned there earlier should secretly suggest to each of those ministers individually when they are deprived of property and honour (in this manner): the king is behaving wickedly; well let us kill him and install another, this is approved by all; what about you?' If he repulses the suggestion he is loyal.
>
> (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 1.10:20).

This according to Kautilya is the test of fear.

If read bereft of the context, these verses could be interpreted otherwise, as being a tool in the hands of a despot who believed in penetrating surveillance. However, upadhas not only reveal the detailed attention, which is given to the constituent elements of the state, but also a technique to cultivate loyalty to duties of important constituent elements. What is instructive about it is also the Kautilyan advice that once the ministers qualified 'tests of honesty' they should be appointed in commensuration to the tests they passed. For instance, the ministers who had proven their loyalty through the test of piety should be appointed to posts in the judiciary and suppression of criminals; those who had passed the test of material gain should be appointed to the post of Administrator. Those proven pure by the test of lust should be posted to guardianship of places of recreation inside the palace as well as outside and those proven loyal by the test of fear to duties should be appointed near the person of the king. Those proved honest by all tests, should be made the king's councillors and those found dishonest by the test should be employed in mines, on forests, in elephant forests and the factories (Kangle 1992:20–21). Thus, treating people by understanding their natural impulses was an important practice for securing and enhancing the power of state.

This description on tests of honesty (upadhas) also underlines the importance of four goals in life (purusharthas) and its relationship to the state. The state thus was not only restricted to the material domain, providing physical security but also regulating the (inner) spiritual domain of its citizens. What becomes evident through this analysis is Kautilyan understanding of human nature, which was consciously cultivated not only through physical surveillance (spies) but also spiritual surveillance. These concepts were tethered to dharma and order, which endowed coherence to the institution of state.

Significantly, it must be emphasized here that Kautilya's appreciation and understanding of human nature does not mean that he had pessimistic understanding of human nature. While there are instances, where his scepticism comes out with regards to human nature, these are qualifications through which he determined the meaning of 'political'. In fact, one can say that Kautilya viewed human nature as malleable, where it could be influenced in multiple ways. Thus, rather than having a static, eternal animalistic, bestial like qualities, human nature had an upward and downward swing and through discipline and conscious awareness towards one's duty, unpredictabilities of political life could be minimized. In one instance, 'on the protection of the kings from the sons', where other *arthashastra* teachers suggest either death or confinement, Kautilya suggests that, "a fresh object absorbs whatever it is smeared with. Similarly, the prince immature in intellect, understands as the teaching of science whatever he is told, Therefore, (he should be instructed) in what conduces to spiritual and material good, not on what is spiritually and materially harmful" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 1.17.41). The authoritative tone of four sciences towards cultivating and directing human nature becomes significant in this context.

Any discussion on the nature of Kautilyan state is incomplete without the 'seven limbs of the state'. The seven elements that constituted the state were – king, minister, people and territory, forts, treasury, army and the ally – also known as the seven limbs of the state or saptanga theory. While dictating the nature of state both quality and quantity were taken utmost care of, and the instructions were categorical in nature. The king was the most important individual to be blessed with good fortune. He had to cultivate his intelligence and develop his resolute and liberal character. It was also expected of the king to be a possessor of great energy who was desirous of seeking and undertaking training activity amongst others. Kautilya also placed much emphasis on the spiritual /internal qualities of King to develop fortitude, as he wrote that a "king endowed with personal qualities endows with excellencees the constituent elements not so endowed. One not endowed with personal qualities destroys the constituent elements that are prosperous and devoted (to him)" (Kangle 1992:317). The notion of interdependence amongst all the seven elements and the desirable qualities identified with them become significant to understand the systems approach, which is reflected in Kautilya's *Arthashastra*. The systems approach becomes explicit in the interdependence established between the seven constituent elements of the state.

Apart from the seven constituent elements, which constituted the state, Kautilya also identified the qualities of the enemy, which were exact opposite to that of a strong King or aspirational conqueror. These were,

> greedy, with a mean council and disaffected subjects, unjust in behaviour, not applying himself to duties, vicious, devoid of energy, trusting in fate, doing whatever pleases him, ever doing harm to others.
>
> (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 6.1.13:316)

These qualities become important as it underlines the necessity for disciplining and directing the character and personality of the king. On the importance of these qualities Kautilya further noted, "those possessed with these qualities though ruling over a small territory but united with the excellences of the constituent elements and conversant with the sciences of politics, conquers the entire earth and never loses" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 6.1.18:317).

The constituent elements become significant for discussion, as they are instructive of how power operated. It is also reflective of the fact that the use of force was exercised to regulate this order. Thus, morality in Kautilya's *Arthashastra* had an order-based understanding and was an important means for giving meaning to 'power' in ancient India.

Understanding channels of power

While power played a central role in maintaining order, various channels of power operating in *Arthashastra* become visible. For instance, understanding of power as reward played a central role. Reward or material gain is significant to the understanding of artha in *Arthashastra*. One can also say that while societal order did play an important psychological role in regulating and inducing an element of predictability in the way people behaved, material rewards were emphasized upon to motivate people to do things, which they otherwise would not do. Kautilya translated the benefit of reward in terms of its manifest effect, where the king capable of endowing coveted rewards had a major advantage in getting others to behave in ways which were aligned to the interests of the state (Naim 2013:24). Rewards (economic prosperity) were thus an important means to sustain and shape structural frameworks within which individuals performed specific functions. For instance, apropos tax payers who played an important role in strengthening the treasury of the state, Kautilya writes, "The king should allot tax payers arable fields for life" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 2.1.13:56). Inducements through rewards and favours for motivating people to work are also visible in *Arthashastra*. For instance, he wrote, "the king should take away fields from those who do not till them and give them to others, or to village servants and traders who till them and those who do not till them, should make up for the loss done to the territory. If the losses are compensated to the state treasury, Kautilya suggests that the King should favour them with grains, cattle and money, which could be paid back later" (Kangle 1992:56). As mentioned before, spying was an important method suggested by Kautilya for regulating administrative order. Perceptual abilities and knowing the capabilities of the other elements present in the society, was considered as an important means of augmenting power of the state. Kal Holsti notes that, "when there is great discrepancy between perception and reality, the result of a country's foreign policy may be disastrous. This is the primary

reason that that governments invest million of dollars for gathering of intelligence, inorder to develop a relatively accurate picture of the resources of the other states" (Holsti 1964:184). Kautilya's *Arthashastra* from this perspective is instructive as Book Five is primarily devoted to 'secret conduct'. He writes, "those treasonable officers, who cause harm to the kingdom and who being favourites or being united cannot be suppressed openly should be given silent punishment. In doing so the King/officers should find pleasure, as it is similar to doing ones duty" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 5.1.3:292).

To maintain these functions three objectives were identified with the state. These were wealth, justice, expansion (Rangarajan 1987:43; Bisht 2016:23–24). It is interesting to note that justice was the "via media as wealth and expansion followed Dharma. Thus, according to Kautilyan thought, material wellbeing was only a part of the larger idea of a state. Kautilya also believed that a stable and prosperous state could only be secured through just administration and that stability and justice were the antecedent conditions for expansion" (Bisht 2014).

Thus, there was an element of virtuosity guiding state action more appropriately framed through the concept of dharma. Dharma in Indian political thought emerges as a central conceptual hook. It defined the boundaries of political in terms of the societal glue which each individual and group internalized by doing his or her specific duty.

The idea of statecraft and the desirable aspects

The normative nuances that emerge from domestic/internal analyses of the Kautilyan state are useful in highlighting the braided role of ethics and politics in Kautilyan statecraft too. The mandala theory, which epitomized Kautilyan statecraft, was not divorced from the state and activities related to war merit attention in this context. While tactics introduced by Kautilya were indeed bereft of any moral element, discussions on righteousness in war or the virtuosity of action was a topic of much strategic deliberation.

The righteousness of warfare becomes explicit in treatment given to the defeated adversary. Also, specifics on treatment of diplomatic envoys are suggestive of adopting a moral code of conduct. The appeal for dharma or reminding one of appropriate duty was an accepted cultural norm and was underlined by *Arthashastra* as a persuasive communication tool to be used in diplomatic speeches, which were to be undertaken. Significantly, then instances where an appeal to morality has been made need to be taken into account, and not dismissed while understanding the import of the text. This is important because while the nature and the style of the text does not permit an exposition of morality and ethics in a detailed manner, it has been flagged off as one of the most desirable aspects in conducting marching activities and initiating wars. A close look at the idea of mandala makes some of these arguments explicit.

Mandala and its conceptualization

The word mandala imaginatively evokes an image of concentric circles. It has multiple meanings indicative of a distinct spatial imagination. Thapar writes,

> mandala could mean representing a pan Indian spatial vision which Kautilya had in his conceptualisation. It also means a geometrical design involving a circle enclosing squares and triangles in infinite patterns said to be conducive to meditation. In an administrative analogy it referred to a group of villages and subsequently to a larger part of territory.
>
> (Thapar 2013:520)

In the *Arthashastra*, the concept of mandala comes across as a circle of territories held by independent rulers. Facing him in the front and the back were distinct categories of actors belonging to a group of friends and allies. Scholars have termed the mandala as a "checker board model" (Modeslski 1964:555), a strategic and tactical space which could be manoeuvred through 'danda', 'maya' and 'indrajaal' (Bozeman 1960:123) and deploying strategems in an actor centric space vis à vis two negotiators 'Madhayama' (actor close to both the king desirous of victory and the enemy) and 'Udasina' (one who was distant from both the king and the enemy and therefore could be considered a neutral) (Thapar 2013:520).

While much of the discussion on mandala has been on the nature of spatial delimitation, instrumental tools of sadgunya theory and the four upayas unfolds its teleological nature. In Book Six of Chapter Two Kautilya identifies the broad instruments of state's foreign policy, 'peace' and 'activity'. Kautilya defines peace as "that which brings about security of enjoyment of the fruits of work" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 6.2.3:317), and activity as "that which brings about the accomplishment of the works undertaken" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 6.2.3:317). The purpose of both peace and activity was to minimize threats and vulnerability (enhance security) and secure economic prosperity (enhance acquisition). Kautilya specifies the cognitive aspects of these policies through the concept of good policy (fortune) and bad policy (misfortune). When one attained desired objectives Kautilya defined it as good fortune and a failure to achieve them was considered misfortune. Recognizing that fortune and misfortune cannot be measured quantitatively, for Kautilya, acts done through human agency (considering the benchmark of dharma) determined good policy and bad policy. Given the backdrop of dharma, Kautilya determined the definition of good policies. Good policies, he wrote, can be achieved when the king and the other six constituent elements are in possession of excellencies or the virtues. He notes, "the king endowed with personal excellences and those of his material constituents, is the seat of good policy, and would be the conqueror" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 6.2.13:318).

Mandala thus was the guidepost through which states could route their policy choices and exercise flexibility. Graphically depicted in a circular form, where the territories immediately circling the vigigishu was the enemy and the territory separated with that of the enemy was the ally, the term Kautilya uses for identifying the set of friends and enemies is constituents. Kautilya's categorization in terms of identifying a set of constituents as enemies and friends went deeper as he sub-classified them into types of allies and enemies.

For instance, on the classification of enemies he demarcates the enemy as foe which was characterized through the variants of a vulnerable foe, a weak foe, natural foe, a foe by birth and a foe by interests. A foe was an actor who possessed the excellences of all the constituent elements. A foe was considered to be vulnerable if there was a specific calamity or weakness in terms of the lacunae in the seven constituent elements. A weak enemy had weak support or no potential allies. A natural enemy was one with immediately conjoined territory, an enemy of equal birth was an enemy by blood and an enemy for the time being and made in this lifetime, was the enemy due to material interests.

Similarly, while classifying an ally, Kautilya had neat typologies. These were natural allies, ally by birth and ally with interests. Natural allies were those with a linked territory, was ally by birth one related due to birth, related through either the mother or father and an ally made in this lifetime due to material needs was an ally of interests.

Apart from two categories of the set of enemies and allies, there was the middle king or the madhayama. The middle king, as Kautilya describes, was the one whose territory was "immediately proximate to those of the enemy and the conqueror capable of helping them and of supressing them when they are disunited" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 6.2.21:318). The Madhayama appears as the mediator, who had the capacity and the reach to access both the conqueror and the enemy. The second independent category apart from the madhayama was the Udasina or the neutral king. Kautilya describes the neutral king as, "one outside the sphere of the conqueror, enemy and the middle king, stronger than their constituents, capable of helping the enemy, the conqueror and the middle king, when they are united or disunited and of supressing them when they are disunited" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 6.2.22:318).

Thus, in Kautilyan analyses, along with the vigigishu, there were five primary categories of actors who regulated order in the mandala. These actors were important indicators to measure the success of diplomacy. Kautilyan emphasis on 'intent' is significant for understanding the types of methods which had to be employed. An important pointer in identifying the intent was the 'motivation' of the actor and its 'internal cohesiveness' – which could be cognitively gauged from the seven constituent elements. This meaningful definition of the other or the robust competitor at the external level determined the direction of the political strategy.

To understand the techniques (sadgunya theory) of foreign policy in *Arthashastra*, the mandala needs to be mapped through four sub-circles (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 6.2.24:319). Sub-circle One constituted of the aspiring conqueror, enemy (in between) and the ally. The game of mandala was meant for ambitious, able and aspiring kings who were perceptually aware of the nature of allies and foes. The more proximate a king's state was to the six constituent elements the more susceptible and aware was one to become of the motivation of competitor king (state). The indicators for six constituent elements were king, councillors, territory and population, forts, treasury and army (6 + 6 + 6). Sub-circle Two constituted an aspiring conqueror, enemy and enemy's ally. Kautilya's categorization of types of foes offers insightful analysis here as foes could range from weak, vulnerable to strong. The indicators for six constituent elements were king, councillors, territory and population, forts, treasury and army (6 + 6 + 6). Sub-circle 3 constituted of aspiring conqueror, enemy and neutral power. Thus, the neutral power was not just a neutral negotiator but had to be gauged from the perspective of its respective strengths and weaknesses. The indicators for six constituent elements for all these actors were king, councillors, territory and population, forts, treasury and army (6 + 6 + 6). Subcircle four constituted of aspiring conqueror, enemy and middle power. As in the aforementioned case the middle power had to be gauged from the perspective of its own strength and weaknesses. The indicators for six constituent elements were king, councillors, territory and population, forts, treasury and army (6 + 6 + 6). It is interesting to note that according to Kautilya the mandala constituted of a total of 'seventy two elements' (18 + 18 + 18 + 18), which was numerically arrived at by taking these four sub-circles into consideration. Kautilya writes, "there are twelve constituents who are the king, sixty material constituents, a total of seventy-two in all. Each of these has its own peculiar excellences" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 6.2.28:319). The Kautilyan diplomacy was therefore about managing, regulating and balancing these 72 constituent elements through farsighted tactics and stratagems.

Apart from identifying the set of superior, equal and inferior states in the mandala and scrutinizing their relative weaknesses and strengths, Kautilya explains the meaning of 'success' and 'power'. He explains that power is the possession of strength and both together determine the meaning of happiness. Thus, the meaning of success and power was closely intertwined as they determined whether the king would succeed or fail to maintain a dominant position in the mandala. Kautilya writes, "Thriving with these (seven constituent elements), he (king) becomes superior; reduced in these, inferior; with equal powers equal. Therefore, he should endeavour to endow himself with power and success, the material constituents in accordance with their immediate proximity and integrity. Or he should endeavour to detract (these) from treasonable persons and enemies" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 6.2.35–37:319–20). This is a very important argument in terms of understanding the teleology embedded in Kautilyan statecraft. Its significance stems from three principles or the essential rules of the system.

First, the meaning of success and power were not limited to one's own individual interest, but in syncronizing one's strategy with the entire gamut of actors and becoming aware of ones' and others' constituent elements. The parameters of success and power were not limited towards strengthening one's own position in the mandala but of formulating alliances and checkmating enemies so that the mandala could be regulated. Second, while the allies should be strengthened, efforts should be directed towards reducing power (energy) of constituent elements in the case of enemy states in the mandala. Third, the status of the dominant power was not to be seen in isolated terms but in relation to other territories in the mandala.

The definition of power further qualified the three-fold meaning of success. The three essential characteristics associated with power were – power of knowledge or council i.e. power of wise deliberation, power of treasury and army – i.e. power of strength or capability, and power of valour or energy, i.e. power of courage or leadership/charisma. Depending on these powers, success became threefold – one attained by deliberation, one attained by strength and one attained by leadership. Modelski's analysis of success in terms of improvement and deterioration of position is appropriate in this context. He writes:

> a king prevents a deterioration in his position and secures an improvement (in two ways- by attention to the elements of his power, and through external action). Kautilya enjoins the ruler to pursue what we might describe as power investment: a wise king adopts policies that add to the resources of his country. Status is also obviously affected by successes in military and other fields, but the king is cautioned to rely on strengthening his own power before embarking upon foreign adventures.
>
> (Modelski 1964:552)

The essential rules of the system become significant in terms of identifying the categories of enemies, allies, neutral king and middle king. The capability variables are the seven constituent elements of the state, which is not only symbolic of the internal strength of the state but also helps in classifying the range of enemies and allies that exist in the mandala. Kautilyan analysis of taking enemies and allies as clusters and not as individual actors is instructive in this regard. These are also important in terms of enumeration, collecting information and having a cognitive sense of gauging the nature of potential enemies and allies. This also directs one to understand a perceptive and networked nature of diplomacy.

The range of strategems and tactics that a state could take in order to ally with neutral and middle power or to balance and suffocate the enemy through allies is indicative of flexibility of actions or adaptable moves that could be employed amongst the circle of states. The six measures of foreign policy and the four upayas are instrumental in this regard, and therefore

have to be understood in terms of the purpose they intended to serve, which was maintaining a favourable balance in the mandala.

Given the classification of actors and foregrounding the rules for engaging with them in the mandala, it needs to be contemplated on the desirability of morality in statecraft. What was the role of morality? How did it fit into the frames of diplomacy? The concept of 'framing' for communicating one's objectives would shed some light on this aspect.

Framing has been understood as "providing meaning through filtering perceptions so as to provide direction and vision as it is tied to information processing, message patterns and socially constructed meanings" (Putnam and Holmer 1992:125–28). Transposing this understanding to the Kautilyan context and the invocation of morality provided the moral high ground or legitimacy to the vigigeeso (aspiring conqueror) for establishing his authority and expanding his territory. It was also an important tool for persuasive communication. The explicit mention of envoys attests to this fact. Book One Chapter Sixteen of *Arthashastra* is exclusively focused on the appointment and rules of envoys. Kautilya notes, "one endowed with the excellences of a minister (see chapter five on the excellences of the minister) is the plenipotentiary, one lacking in quarter of qualities is the envoy with limited mission, one lacking in half of the qualities is the bearer of the message" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 1.16.2–4:36). Thus, the plenipotentiary envoy had the full powers to negotiate and was perceived as a possessor of moral power. The duties of the envoy included "sending information to his king, guarding the terms of the treaty, upholding his king's honour, acquiring allies, instigating dissension among the friends of the enemy, conveying secret agents, troops, bribes into the enemy's territory" (Rangarajan 1992:539–40). The detailed role and qualification of plenipotentiary/envoy specifies the important role that moral power played in statecraft.

Another instance where the notion of dharma played an important role was the king's conduct during war. Kautilya writes, "there are three kings who attack: the righteous conqueror, the greedy conqueror and the demoniacal conqueror" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 12.10–11:460). Further at another instance "On proper conduct of kings when using Force" he writes, "he should subjugate the weak by means of conciliation and gifts, the strong by means of dissension and force" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 7.3:373). Just behaviour thus was specifically mentioned in activities related to war. While there are multiple instances of guided advice sprinkled in the text, the notion of ally and process of formulating pacts can be considered the cornerstone for understanding the Kautilyan vision on statecraft, an aspect which has been discussed in feasible aspects of diplomacy. Since these factors draw their strength from the *saptanga theory*, notion of power hinged on morality and order cannot be divorced from the Kautilyan understanding of statecraft. It would be appropriate to cast a look at the interface between dharma and diplomacy in ancient India.

Dharma and diplomacy

An important theme underlining the interaction of ethics and politics is the dialectics between dharma and adharma in the Hindu philosophical thought. Dharma as has been understood was geared towards the removal of chaos and confusion (adharma). This world view attempted to draw a relationship between dandaniti (secular) and Dharma (transsecular) understanding of order. The King often embodied a moral conduct and was perceived to be the upholder of order (Roy 1981:29). The notion of dharma has been elaborated in Upanishads. Translating from the *Brihadaranyak Upanishad*, V. P. Verma notes:

> Brahma was not enough. So he created the most excellent Dharma. Dharma is the force of force and the power of power. There is nothing higher than dharma. Hence even a weak man rules the stronger person with the help of dharma, as with the help of the king this dharma is equivalent to truth. Hence if a man speaks the truth, they say, he speaks the dharma and if he speaks the dharma, they say, he speaks the truth.
> (Verma 1953:29)

The notion of approximating truth with dharma, social and administrative order and morality has also been emphasized by multiple philosophical traditions in India, namely the Upanishads, Buddhism, Yoga philosophy of Patanjali and the Puranas amongst others (Verma 1953; Roy 1981). Kautilya's specific invocation of Samkhya/Yoga philosophy in the enumeration of sciences is significant in understanding the role of dharma and the parallels it establishes between secular and trans-secular affairs.

The antonym of dharma was 'apadharma' which implied chaos, disturbance and calamities. Kautilya captures this meaning through 'vyasanas' or 'calamities' (weaknesses), which could foment trouble for the state. It was the duty of the king to minimize the possibilities of calamities. While some scholars recognize that *Athashastra* responds to ways and means for overcoming calamities, they argue that the text does not address in detail moral issues pertaining to duties of the king (Chousalkar 1986:117). One could argue that there are reflections of a sage king in *Arthashastra*, emphasizing the moral philosophy of kingship. Kautilya contended that:

> if the king does not adhere to moral conduct, he is bound to suffer and collapse. The welfare of his subjects should be uppermost in his mind and unmindful of his personal likes and dislikes, he should rejoice at the welfare of the people and be pained at their suffering. Satisfactory discharge of his duties and performance of sacrifice, not only make for his worldly prosperity but also enable him to attain heaven.
> (Verma 1953:33)

Consider some of these norms directed to the king in conducting his foreign policy. There were instructions in *Arthashastra* that an envoy cannot be killed or imprisoned. A diplomatic envoy was considered to be inviolable, as long as he discharged his functions properly (Verma 1953:37). Rangarajan notes that "in the territories acquired by the (king), the conqueror should continue the practice of all customs which are in accordance with dharma, and shall introduce those which had not been introduced before. He shall stop the practice of any custom not in accordance with dharma and shall also refrain from introducing them" (Rangarajan 1992:635). An interesting appeal to dharma has also been made while discussing strategies to be employed by a weak king, who was on the brink of losing a war. Kautilya suggests that in this case the weak king should make an appeal to dharma. Rangarajan notes:

> The envoy speaking for the weak king should point out that in past kings had perished because they fell prey to six vices (lust, anger, greed, conceit, arrogance and foolhardiness) and that the aggressor was in danger of following these kings who had no self control. It was better to pay heed to material and spiritual well-being.
>
> (Rangarajan 1992:629)

This illustrates the importance of invoking dharma particularly in the diplomatic speeches, which were to be given by the envoys in order to safeguard their king's interest. Specific insights on the importance of dharma/morality/ethics can be gauged from detailed instructions given by Kautilya in Book Nine and Ten, which pertain to activities related to advancement (marching) and war. Both these Books become important because they operationalize the understanding morality in *Arthashastra* mediating the meaning of order and power. On the dharma of war, for instance, in Book Ten Kautilya writes, "Öpen warfare in which place and time for the fighting are indicated is the most righteous" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 10.3.26:440). Similarly, in Book Nine on the behaviour of king who has been victorious in war, Kautilya writes, "the gain being obtained by a righteous king become pleasing to his own people and to others. The reverse rouses anger" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 9.4.10–11:418). It would be appropriate to study some of these issues as appearing in advancement and war in a detailed manner.

Dharma and war

Marching, i.e. advancement and waging wars has a special place in *Arthashastra*, primarily because it was related to augmenting the power of state, thus also enhancing the welfare of the people. It is for this reason that right in the opening verse of Book Nine, Kautilya writes, "after ascertaining the relative strength or weakness of powers, place, time, season for marching, time for raising armies, revolts in the rear, losses, expenses, gains and

troubles, of himself and of the enemy, the conqueror should march if superior in strength, otherwise stay quiet" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 9.1.1:406). These lines are instructive, because undertaking an advancement could also entail initiating wars and expansionist designs which was accompanied with responsibility. Only when the king was assured that the expansionist design would not be detrimental to the welfare of the state, was he advised to initiate war (acquisition).

A central task in front of the king before marching ahead was to have an appropriate understanding of the enemies' situation and an estimation of how the power would be translated into concrete objective. Thus, war in many ways was an ordered activity. This can be deduced from the emphasis laid upon, the three essential variables that had to be taken into account, which were power, place and time. Kautilya considered the power of deliberation the most important ingredient of power, rather than that of physical capability or courage. Kautilya writes, "the power of council is superior, for, the king with the eyes of intelligence and science, is able to take counsel, even with a small effort and to overreach enemies possessed of energy and might" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 9.1.13:407). These suggestions are instructive as they underline the importance of a king trained in sciences – which essentially sought to balance material with spiritual gains.

The role of four upayas, which were important strategems in terms of offering gifts and rewards to create alliances at the external level are significant to understand multiple channels of power. Power in terms of rewards thus played an important role. For instance, the exercise of the four upayas is specifically revoked in the case of a revolt in an immediate territory. Kautilya writes, "In case of revolt in the rear, he should make use of conciliation, gifts, dissension and force" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 9.3.6:414). Note that, force was but one of the four options. Superiority of wisdom, and limits of force have been acknowledged as prerequisites for a successful king. The linkage between the internal and external policies also becomes important in this context given the caution that Kautilya places (through the four tests) on the selection of councillors and ministers. The ministers and the councillors played an important role in deliberation or the power of council.

The fact that war was considered an 'ordered activity' is reflected in the suggestions to be adopted while undertaking any marching activity. As an important part of deliberation, Kautilya considers place and time most important. He writes, "that in which there is terrain suitable for operation of ones own army and unsuitable for those of the enemy, is the best region, the opposite kind is the worst, alike to both is middling" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 9.1.21:407). Regarding time he writes, "time is of the nature of cold, heat and rain. Its various parts are night day, fortnight, month, season, half year, year and yuga. In them he should start work, which should augment his own strength. That in which the season is suitable for the operations of one's own army, unsuitable for those of the enemy, is the best time, the opposite kind is the worst, alike to both is middling" (The Kautilya

Arthashastra 9.1.22–25:407). Thus, in undertaking any activity Kautilya considered power, time and place beneficial.

The understanding of power as a tool to achieve desired ends can also be seen in the stratagems suggested by Kautilya while undertaking advancement. The order and balance he seeks to establish between physical bodies and natural processes is important for him to augment power. Kautilya writes,

> at a time when excessive heat is over, he should march with elephant divisions for the most part. For elephants sweating inside become leprous, and not getting a plunge of water or a drink of water, they become blind through internal secretion. Hence in a region with plenty of water and when it is raining he should march with elephant divisions for the most part. In the reverse case, he should march with troops consisting mostly of donkeys, camels and horses in a region with little rain and mud. In a region mostly desert, he should march with a fourfold army when it is raining. He should regulate the expedition in accordance with the evenness and unevenness of the road, the presence of water or land in it, or the shortness or the length of the march.
>
> (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 9.2.45–51:409)

These suggestions are instructive of the adaptability that one required in not only meeting the dynamics of war, but also being flexible in terms of adapting oneself to the natural environment.

Similarly, the use of force was not considered the only method in initiating war against the enemy. Kautilya considered four types of wars as important and depicts the varying dimensions of power in operation. The first was *mantrayuddha* – war by council. This meant the exercise of diplomacy in situations where the king found himself in a weaker position and considered it unwise to engage in battle. The second, *Prakasayuddha*, which was open warfare specifying time and place. The third, *Kutayuddha*, which was concealed warfare and referred primarily to psychological warfare including instigation of treachery in the enemy camp. The fourth, *Gudayuddha* was clandestine war and meant to achieve objective without actually waging a battle, usually by assassinating the enemy. In waging this war the king not only used his own agents and double agents but also allies, vassal kings, tribal chiefs and the bribed friends and supporters of the enemy (Rangarajan 1992:636).

The strategy of Mantrayuddha was to be adopted by a weaker king (weak states). While the predecessors of Kautilya believed that the weak king should remain perpetually submissive or fight with the mobilization of all troops, Kautilya suggested the strategy of taking shelter and the superior King's morality played an important role in determining the policy choices available to the weaker king. Kautilya suggests, in a situation, where one is inferior one should submit to the righteous one, yield money to the greedy

one and in the case of a demoniacal conqueror, while yielding land and goods to him, the weaker king should take counter steps, remaining out of reach himself. The second option to be exercised by the weaker king was to make a countermove through peace and diplomatic war or psychological warfare. This meant winning over the part inimical to him with conciliation and gifts. Rewards thus had an important place in garnering support for one self in terms of adversity. The third option available to a weaker king was to secretly destroy and weaken the enemy from all sides and after undertaking various hostile acts, offering a treaty with the king. Thus, the range of choices in *Arthashastra* went beyond the physical use of brute force.

Prakasayuddha was considered the most righteous of warfare. Fairness played an important role in motivating the soldiers for the righteous cause. In such a case, Kautilya writes, "the king should make troops that are possessed of bravery, skill, nobility of birth and loyalty and that are not cheated in the matter of money and honour, the centre of ranks" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 10.3.38:441). Rewards played an important element in earning the loyalty. Kautilya writes, "The commander in chief should address the ranks after they are carefully made well-disposed with money and honour. One hundred thousand shall be the price for killing the enemy king, fifty thousand for killing the commander in chief or a prince, ten thousand for killing a foremost warrior, five thousand for killing an elephant or a chariot warrior, one thousand for killing a horsemen, one hundred for killing a chief of infantrymen, twenty per head of infantrymen killed, besides double the wage for whatever one seizes" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 10.3.45:441). Incentives for all categories of warriors were therefore present. On applying caution after victory, Kautilya suggests that after victory has been achieved peace should be offered with one who is equal in strength. He writes, "while one should strike an army, which is inferior in strength, the king should not harass a broken enemy, since waging a war against an enemy who has lost everything in war could be expensive" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 10.3.57:442).

While various stratagems and tactics have been suggested by Kautilya for winning over enemy primarily through the use of concealed and clandestine warfare, there are specific instruction for king on conducting himself after the victory has been gained. Kautilya writes, "after gaining new territory the king should cover the enemy's faults with his own virtues and double virtues. He should carry out what is agreeable and beneficial to the subjects by doing his own duty as laid down granting favours, giving exemption, making gifts and showing honour. He should grant the enemy's party to be favoured as promised and more so if they had exerted themselves. For he who does not keep his promise becomes unworthy of trust for his own and other people" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 13.5.3–6:491).

While these are just select examples on the limitations of power, they are also instructive of how power was understood. It is interesting to note here that Torkel Brekke engages with just war tradition in classical/ancient India.

Comparing the just war tradition in Christianity with other cultural/philosophical traditions, he narrows his approach to find the differences and similarities between jus ad bellum (just war) and jus in bello (just warfare). While considering *Arthashastra* and Kamandaki Niti-shastra, he concludes that justice in warfare was more inclined to the latter than the former. He also prioritizes Neetishastra over *Arthashastra*, as a text which offer lessons for just warfare (Brekke 2006:127). Such interpretations need to be revisited and Kautilya's *Arthashastra* needs to be looked at from the frames of a grand strategic design where both state and statecraft were intertwined with each other and much deliberation (mantrashakti) went behind the decision to undertake war. While Brekke compares the views on war in Mahabharata and *Arthashastra*, the comparison is misplaced as *Arthashastra* was a text on strategy, and the grand strategic design was hinged on the relativist understanding.

7 The Kautilyan state and statecraft
Conceptualizing feasibility

Given the discussion on the systems theory undertaken in the previous chapter, and the desirable elements associated with *Arthashastra*, it will be interesting to engage with the role of values and ethics in foreign policy. How did Kautilya untie the gordian knot associated with desirable and feasible in politics? This chapter underlines the nature of the Kautilyan state, which was hierarchical and directive in design. In terms of discussing the elements that were important to maintaining the stability of the state, three variables are highlighted. The *first* pertains to "essential" and "transformational rules" of the system, which specified "role functions" and endowed an element of predictability in the way the state functioned. The concept of saptanga theory is discussed in this regard, since it is indicative of measures undertaken to minimize unpredictables. The *second* relates to regulatory mechanisms, where the concept of covert and overt operations in *Arthashastra* becomes significant. It is broadly related to enhancing the predictability of the behaviour of another actor. The *third* relates to coordination of task and meta-task activity, where the responses to calamities or emergencies are discussed, as they were related to the overall stability of the political system. These in Kaplan's terminology can also be translated as capability variables as they specified the type of actions and the conditions under which the action is taken. This understanding is also relevant to understanding the "strategies of connection", which was typified through hub and spoke model (Slaughter 2017). The hub-spoke model was both centralized as well as focused on increasing the resilience. The resilience in Kautilyan strategic model was allowed by adopting flexible strategies (sadgunya), and the holding power was cemented by communication strategies (upayas), which were both verbal and non-verbal (Crothers 2016:208).

Thus, the reason for selecting these factors stems from the central place they occupied in regulating the understanding of the political system that Kautilya envisaged. These factors are also considered elemental towards studying the nature of a web-based political system because a lack of functioning in any of these would have meant instability and weakening of the political order at the domestic level.

R. P. Kangle writes, ensuring yogakshema (welfare) of the subjects was one of the foremost duties of the state. Yogakshema, for the subjects implied that the people enjoyed security of person and property. Kangle further writes that since security could have potentially been disturbed by criminals like thieves, robbers and other antisocial elements like corrupt officials, deceitful merchants, the yogakshema of the people could be disturbed (Kangle 1992:232). Kautilya used the terminology kantakas or thorns to refer to the anti-social elements and considered eliminating these thorns (kantakasodhana). This was identified as the solution for suppressing criminal activity and was the most important function of the state (Kangle 1992:232). An interesting parallel to these arguments can be made to Morton Kaplan's description on systems. Kaplan writes,

> Systems can maintain themselves if they satisfy their needs. Under unfavourable conditions that is conditions that prevent the satisfaction of some need, the system may be maintained by pathological mechanisms of regulation. Such systems protect themselves by focusing attention on given classes of information and by screening out and distorting other classes of information.

> (Kaplan 1957:225)

The above lines echo similarities between systems theory and Kautilya's *Arthashastra*. To juxtapose these thoughts within a common frame of analyses – the *need* of the political system in *Arthashastra* was articulated through the concept of yogakshema, and in order to ensure the balance (status quo), monitoring and regulation of these essential needs was important. This regulation was surveyed closely by the state through the emphasis laid on duties of state and people and employing covert actions, which were necessary to pull out the appropriate information and employ remedial measures to meet out the emergencies or irregularities which could potentially infest or weaken the system. There was also an attempt to closely monitor both meta level and individual level activities, which could be detrimental to the overall stability of the system. Any deviances were indicative of calamities or weakening of state.

Essential rules of the system

While highlighting the essential rules of the system in Kautilya's *Arthashastra* through laws would be misplaced as the normative framework was well established by the socio-cultural milieu of the period, 'the rule of law' chapter finds a special place in *Arthashastra*. This is one topic, which has received a rigorous methodological treatment in the text. The rule of law was an important means to uphold dharma, as implementing it meant that people were following their svadharma (righteous duty). The importance of dharma can be gauged from Book Three, where Kautilya writes, "the judges

shall be learned in dharma and have the qualification of the minister" (Rangarajan 1992:352) Kangle writes that the judge was called *dharmastha* – the enforcer of law (dharma) and that this was an addition in Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, as this name was unknown to the Smirtis (Kangle 1992:190). Kautilya notes, "In this way the judge should look into the affairs, without resorting to deceit, being impartial to all beings, worthy of trust and beloved of people" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 3.20.24:253). This statement by Kautilya is indicative of the high pedestal that the rule of law found in *Arthashastra*. The rules of law as mentioned by Kautilya can be associated with the transformational rules, which were as Kaplan notes related to the set of essential rules of "parametric" value. The transformational rules can be considered as programming rules, for the entities to manifest behaviour corresponding to sets of essential rules.

They were thus laws of change meant to monitor the dynamism of the political system. This can be gauged from the emphasis on the sources mentioned explicitly in Book Three of the Law chapter. Kautilya mentions, Any matter in dispute shall be judged according to the four basis of justice. These in order of increasing importance are: (a) law – which is based on truth; (b) transaction, which is based on witnesses, (c) custom, i.e. the tradition accepted by the people, the commonly held view of men and (d) royal edicts, i.e. command of the King (Kangle 1992:195). Kaultilya notes that the later one supersedes the earlier one, viz. the command of the king is supreme. It is further stipulated that a just king takes all factors into account. However, a caveat is added which perhaps needs to be noted. Chapter One of Book Three, paragraph 44, reads, "[The King] shall decide, with the help of law, a matter in which a settled custom or a matter based transaction contradicts the science of law". Also, "whenever there is disagreement between the custom and dharma or between the evidence and the law, the matter shall be decided in accordance with dharma".[1]

The king thus was considered to be the guardian of the right conduct. However, this does not mean that all interpretive laws were subject to King's personal wishes and that the king was supreme and over the law itself. The primary duty of the king was to uphold social order and this would only happen when the king followed his rajadharma. The concept of rajadharma thus becomes an important concept, which needs to be understood in context to the saptanga theory. The importance of discipline, knowledge of the sciences, etc., were therefore considered the essential markers for an able king.

Saptang theory and the relevance of Rajadharma

The saptanga theory, as mentioned in an earlier chapter is one of the central pillars of *Arthashastra*. It appears in Book Six of *Arthashastra*, and Kautilya devotes, one chapter to it, followed by the tactics and strategies, which a state needs to employ in its interactions. However, while the theory

is revealed much later in Book Six of *Arthashastra*, the chapters preceding Book Six give a detailed analysis of the attributes identified with saptanga theory.

The Excellences (outstanding features) of the constituent elements was the central objective propounded by the saptanga theory. The excellences, as termed by Kautilya himself, specified the primary parameters of each of the elements which constituted the state. Thus, the excellencies of the king was exercising charismatic leadership, which included character, intellect, courage and wisdom. The excellencies of the king was the first important prerequisite, as at another place, Kautilya writes,

> one should seek service with a king, endowed with personal excellencies and with excellencies of material constituents . . . but never one lacking in personal excellencies. For one lacking in qualities of the self, comes to an end even after receiving mighty sovereignty, as a result of contempt for the political science or as a result of association with harmful persons.
>
> (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 5.4.1:305)

The council of ministers, as mentioned before, had to clear the test of piety, fearlessness, greed and lust. Only when the minister cleared these tests could he qualify to become a minister. Being trained in all arts and sciences and having the logical ability to foresee things and being neither haughty nor fickle were the qualities of the minister. Having an amicable nature that neither excited hatred nor enmity in others was another qualification expected from the minister. These attributes are also defined as non-verbal communication (Crothers 2016:209).

These were ensured by the secret tests. Some specific qualities which have been mentioned apropos the minister were intelligent, persevering, dexterous, eloquent, energetic, bold, brave, who is able to endure adversities and firm in loyalty (Rangarajan 1992:78) The council of ministers was important because according to Kautilya it played an important role in ensuring sovereignty of the state. For instance, when there was a pending situation of emergency, Kautilya's stipulation for the minister were,

> even before there is fear of the danger of the king's death, the minister should by winning the support of those dear and beneficial to the king, establish audience with the king at intervals of one month or two. He should cause treasury and army to be collected at one place in the fortified city or the frontier in charge or trustworthy men and bring together the members of the royal family, princes and principal officers under some pretext. Incase any principal officer was to rise in revolt, he should be killed and incase some trouble has inflicted the king who is in enemy's territory; he should secure a treaty with an enemy through an ally posing as a foe.
>
> (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 5.6.2–8:310–11)

The excellencies of the population and territory was considered the most important element as it was the basic edifice on which the prosperity of the king and state rested. Thus, on the importance of territory and people, Kautilya notes,

> possessed of a strong position in the centre and the frontiers, capable of sustaining itself and others in times of distress, easy to protect, providing excellent means of livelihood, malevolent towards enemies, with weak neighbouring princes, devoid of mud, stones, salty ground, uneven land, thorns, bands, wild animals, deer and forest tribes, charming, endowed with agricultural lands, mines, material forests, and elephant forests, beneficial to cattle, beneficial to men, with protected pastures, rich with animals, not depending on rain and water, provided with water routes and land routes with valuable, manifold and plenty commodities, capable of bearing fines and taxes, with farmers devoted to work, with a wise master, inhabited mostly by the lower varnas, with men loyal and honest.
>
> (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 6.1.8:315)

The details provided by Kautilya are indicative to the importance given to physical, economic, natural and social capital, also reflective of the factors that informed the capability of the state.

The excellencies of the treasury was one which had been acquired lawfully and was large enough to sustain the country in times of calamities or long adversarial days. It is most interesting that the notion of lawful acquisition has been specified to be one of the excellencies of the territory. Kautilya writes, "acquired lawfully by the ancestors or by himself, consisting mostly of gold and silver . . . that will withstand a calamity even of a long duration in which there is no income" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 6.1.10:315). Kautilya advises that a "king without treasury should collect a treasury, when difficulties concerning money have arisen" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 6.1.10:315). In times of calamities or emergencies the king thus had the right to make demands on the people. However, in normal times, as Trautmann writes, the state was only one among the many shareholders. Gurcharan Das finds this instructive, as it is indicative of a 'separation of the individual from the king's property'. He notes, "Trautmann rightly calls the concept of bhaga 'entrepreneurial'. For the focus was not on the ownership of the resource but of a share of what was produced" (Das cited in Trautmann 2012:71).

The excellencies of the army were that it should mostly be constituted of Kshatriyas who were to be men of tested loyalty. Kautilya notes, "inherited from father and grandfather, they should be skilled in science of all types of war and weapons, not having a separate interest because of prosperity and adversity shared with the king" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 6.1.11:316).

On the excellencies of the allies Kautilya writes that, "Allied from the days of the father and the grandfather, constant, under control, not having a

separate interest, great, able to mobilize quickly" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 6.1.12:316). It is important to note here that allies are one of the constituent elements of the state, which is reflective of the fact that the external and the internal were intertwined. It also gives an understanding of how the identification of the 'other' constituted an important definition of identifying the political[2] (Schmitt 1996).

Importance of the leadership has been emphasized, which is reflective of the fact that the Kautilyan state had a hierarchical structure. The hierarchical nature of the Kautilyan state is revealed from the following verse. Kautilya notes, "these seven constituent elements have been described with each ones excellencies manifest; these when they operate, become subordinate to the excellencies of the king" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 6.1.15:316). Given the nature of this hierarchical system, where the king occupied the central position, it was important that the king took utmost care for maintaining his qualities. Kautilya notes that "the king not endowed with personal qualities, with defective constituent elements, is either killed by the subjects or subjugated by the enemies; even if he be the ruler upto the four ends of the earth" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 6.1.17:317).

The description of the constituent elements and the respective characteristics were then the essential rules of the system, where each part had a specific role to play, thus contributing to the larger grand design.

While the excellencies were clearly stipulated by Kautilya, the importance of role functions also come to the fore and an important tool for regulating these excellencies was the secret services. Weakness in any of these elements could disturb the system's balance, and therefore regulation of tasks became important. While spies played an important role in assessing and collecting information on external threats internally spies were considered effective tools. Their instrumental value as 'trusted deceivers' has already been mentioned in the integrity tests which were done on various ministers.

An important task of the secret agents was to provide information about deviances from the system in order to eliminate criminal activities. Comparison between Book Four and Five in *Arthashastra* is interesting in this regard. While Book Four primarily relates to civil matters, and details the fines and punishments to be levied on common people, Book Five relates to criminal matters, and primarily details issues that were a direct threat to the state. The relevance of these fines and punishments can be gauged from the importance that Kautilya gave to role functions.

"Keeping a close watch on Artisans" this is the title of Chapter One of Book One, where the roles and identity have been explicitly articulated. For instance, on the work done by artisans, Kautilya writes,

> they shall carry out the work with the place, time and nature of work stipulated. For exceeding the time limit, there shall be a reduction in the wage by one quarter and double that as fine. They shall be liable for what is lost or destroyed except in case of deterioration or a sudden

calamity. For carrying out a work otherwise than as ordered, there shall be loss of wage and double that as fine.

On the input of the work by weavers, he writes,

> the weavers shall increase the yarn to the extent of eleven (unit of currency) from ten. For diminution in increase, there shall be fined double the diminution.
>
> (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 4.1.26:256)

On the role of washermen, Kautilya stipulates,

> Washermen shall wash garments on wooden boards or smooth slabs of stone. Those washing on anything else shall pay for damage to garments and a fine of six panas.
>
> (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 4.1.26:256)

Also,

> washermen wearing a garment other than one marked with sign of a club, shall pay a fine of three panas. For selling hiring out or pledging the garments of others, the fine shall be of twelve panas, for change of garments (the fine shall be double the price) and the return of the garment. On the role of goldsmith, Kautilya notes, "for goldsmiths purchasing silver or gold in the same form from the hands of disreputable persons without informing state officers, the fine is twelve panas, if in a changed form twenty-four panas, if from the hands of a thief forty eight panas.
>
> (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 4.1.26:256)

On circulation of illegal money, he writes,

> for one causing a counterfeit coin to be made or receiving it or sending it into circulation the fine is one thousand panas, for inserting it in the treasury, the penalty is death.
>
> (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 4.1.48:257)

On gold and valuable material found by attendants and dust washers, it is stipulated that they be given one third and the king two-thirds of the valuable material found. Stealing a gem would be met with a high fine. It is significant that any deviance of behaviour on the part of artisans, physicians, traders and merchants' fines have been stipulated and through monetary penalization regulated. The overwhelming role of the state in dictating matters which could indirectly threaten the state in the long term is very much visible and it can be identified with task level activities. This authoritarian

directive nature of Kautilyan state should not be surprising enough as the cultural context gave an overwhelming emphasis to duties.

   People with secret means of income, what in contemporary parlance would mean corrupt activities have also received attention. In Chapter Four, rules for the administrator have been described. Kautilya specifically mentioned two types of agents – those who stayed at one place and those sent to places wherever they were required, Rangarajan writes,

> as per the former category, the agents were generally of two types – the intelligence officer, operating under the cover of a monk, or a householder or a merchant, who was generally in charge of the intelligence station and the other, who adopted the disguise of an ascetic – both of Brahmanical and non-Brahaminical sects. Of the latter type, the most popular was the secret agent – who undertook ambush attacks. Next in importance were assassins, who were used mainly to kill the enemy chieftains and kings secretly, and the poisoners and wondering nuns were the other categories.
>
> (Rangarajan 1987:464–65)

On the first category of agents, Kautilya writes, the secret agent should "find out the integrity or otherwise of village officers and heads of department. And whomsoever among these he suspects of deriving a secret income, he should cause to be spied upon by a secret agent" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 4.4.4–5:315). In the case of judges, who harbor corrupt practices, Kautilya writes, "A secret agent should say to a judge in whom confidence is inspired by him, such and such a relation of mine is accused before you; save him in this misfortune and accept this amount. If he were to do so, he should be exiled as one given to receiving bribes" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 4.4.6:265). Similar methods have been advocated towards judging the character of a village chief or a departmental head, superintendents of prison house, clerks, false witnesses, imposters, specially pertaining to black magic and sorcery, inappropriate conduct by people who sell poisons, medicines or food, amongst other (Kangle 1992:265–68). Given the detailed monitoring of both the citizens and those holding important positions, Kautilya writes that, "In this manner the king should first correct those officers who deal in money matters by means of punishment; and they, being corrected, should correct the citizens and the country people by means of punishment" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 4.9.28:281).

   Attacking criminals by attracting them through charming activities or inducing them in sleep was another method suggested by Kautilya. Kautilya writes, "the secret agents shall entice criminals by means of lores favorite with criminals" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 4.5.1:315). He writes, "they should get them to do their work in homes in which gods have been marked. Or they should get them caught in one place after winning their confidence. They should get them arrested while engaged in purchasing, selling or

pledging articles that are marked or when they are intoxicated with drugged liquor" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 4.5.8–10:267).

Torture used against criminals was a method employed for restricting people from doing unlawful activities. Kautilya notes, "Incase of corroboration by persons proving his innocence, he shall be cleared of guilt; otherwise, he shall be put to torture" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 4.8.4:274). He further adds that, "that after three nights, the suspect shall not be liable to arrest, because of the inadmissibility of interrogation (after that interval), except when tools (of the crime) are found with him" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 4.8.5:275). On torture Kautilya has also cautioned that, "he shall not put to torture a person, whose offence is trifling, or who is a minor or aged or sick or intoxicated or insane or overcome by hunger, thirst or travel, or who has overeaten or whose meal is indigested or who is weak" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 4.8.14:275). There were also certain exceptions to torture. Kautilya writes, "under no circumstances a pregnant woman or a woman within one month of delivery. For a woman, however, there was to be only half the torture or only examination by interrogators" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 4.8.17:276). Brahmins were other classes of exceptions. Kautilya writes, "for a Brahmin there is to be the use of secret agents if he is learned in the Veda, also for an ascetic. Incase of transgression of this rule the highest fine shall be imposed on one who gives and who causes him to give the torture, also for causing death by torture" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 4.8.19–20:276). However, Kautilya notes, "if a Brahmin is found to be an offender, on his forehead shall be a branded mark of the guilty to exclude him from all dealings – (the mark of) a dog in case of theft, a headless trunk in case of murder of a human being, the female organ incase of violation of an elder's bed, the vintner's flag incase of liquor drinking. Further he should be exiled and settled in a mine" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 4.9.27:277). The degrees of torture were further specified.

> The ordinary torture consisted of – six strokes with a stick, seven lashes with a whip, two suspensions from above and the water tube. In case of grave offences, the torture included – nine strokes with a cane, twelve whip lashes, two thigh encircling, twenty strokes with a natkamala stick, thirty-two slaps, two scorpion bindings and two hangings up, needle in the hand, burning one joint of a finger of one who has drunk gruel, heating in the sun for one day for one who has drunk fat, and a bed of balbaja points on a winter night.
>
> (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 4.8.22:276)

Torture also included cutting the limbs (fingers, nose, hands, foot, blindness) and giving death penalties.[3] The offences included pickpocketing, theft of pets, wild animals, killing the animals, entering prohibited places such as forts or city walls, stealing, aiding thieves or adulterers, transgressing ones varna dharma, sale of human flesh, killing a person, striking another with

weapon, killing a person by accident, breaking dam holding water, stealing weapons and armoury, raping, breaking marriages (Kangle 1992:286–88).

As one can understand from the description above, personal life was also regulated, according to Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, though limited to those aspects, which could have a long-term ramification for societal environment. While these were public punishments creating an environment of fear and restraint amongst the general public at large and limiting transgression from the essential rules of the system, there were certain covert operations, which generally were not exposed to the public eye. Kautilya preferred calling them "strategems". Amongst the strategems, included targeting those who were a danger to the throne, the country or the sovereignty of the kingdom. As mentioned earlier these were called silent punishments. These included assassinations, killing by deceit, craft and enticing treasonable persons into traps. Kautilya notes the rationale for such activities by stating that, "in this way, the kingdom continues in the succession of the (king's) son and grandsons, free from dangers caused by men. He should employ silent punishment towards his own party or that of enemy, without hesitation, being possessed of forbearance in respect of the future and present" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 5.1:296). Thus, secret measures and punishments were regulatory measures which ensure that role functions were taken seriously. They also helped in coordinating task and metatask activities.

Managing calamities was another important activity which was considered important for managing the equilibrium of the political system. Kaplan has been emphatic on the fact of the regulatory mechanisms and its relationship to the capacity of the system and writes a cautionary note on the conditions that could lead to a system collapse. Some of them, as mentioned, are the ability to sustain pressures, disturbances and multiple intrusive elements. Juxtaposing this with the Kautilyan thought, Kautilya writes, "Incase of simultaneity of calamities, the question arises, should one march or guard oneself" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 8.1.1:385).

The classic dilemma is between domestic focus or external ambitions, an aspect which also reveals that idea of the state was central to that of understanding statecraft. In Book Eight, Kautilya analyses the priorities of the seven constituent elements, in terms of assessing their relevance for determining the stability of the state.

Of the seven constituent elements in the state, Kautilya unlike earlier teachers of *arthashastra* considered the king the most important. While one of his predecessors, Bharadvaja considers the calamity on ministers more serious, because they were primarily responsible for advising the King, Kautilya differs from his point of view. According to him,

> it is the king alone who appoints the group of servants like the councilor, the chaplain and others, directs the activity of the departmental heads, take counter measures against the calamities of the constituents, whether human or material and secure their advancement. If the

ministers are suffering from calamities, he appoints others who are not in calamities. And when the king is possessed of excellencies his makes the constituents perfect with their respective constituencies.

(The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 8.1.12:386)

Of the calamities inflicting ministers and the country, Kautilya's predecessors argue that the calamities of the country are more serious as is the means of safeguarding treasury, army, forest produce, labourers, means of transport etc. Kautilya on the other hand differs by arguing that "all undertakings have their origins in the ministers, which includes successful execution of works in the country, bringing about its well-being and security from ones own and from the enemy's people, taking counter measures against calamities, settlements of new lands and their development and bringing in the benefit of fines and taxes" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 8.1.22:387).

Similarly, on calamities inflicting country and the fort, where his predecessors argue that protecting the fort is necessary, primarily because it can support both the treasury and the army, Kautilya differs by arguing that,

> the undertakings of the fort, the treasury, the army, water works and occupations for livelihood have their sources in the country. Bravery, firmness, cleverness and large numbers are found among the country people, and mountains forts and island forts are not inhabited because of the absence of territory.
>
> (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 8.1.28:387)

However, Kautilya adds that,

> if the country is inhabited by agriculturalists then the calamity of the fort is more serious, while in a country inhabited mostly be martial people, the calamity of the country is more serious.
>
> (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 8.1.31:387)

Of prioritizing between fort and treasury, while Kautilya's predecessors believe that the calamity of the treasury is more serious because in adversity while one might get away with the treasury but not with the fort, Kautilya differs arguing that,

> dependent on the fort are the treasury, the army, silent war, restraint of ones own party, use of armed forces, receiving allied troops, and warding off enemy troops and forest tribes. In the absence of fort, the treasury will fall into the hands of enemies.
>
> (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 8.1.37:387)

On a choice between treasury and army while Kautilya's predecessors give importance to the army arguing that calamity of the army is more serious as with the weakening of army, loss of treasury is certain, Kautilya argues

that treasury is more important. He writes, "the army indeed is rooted in treasury. In the absence of treasury, the army goes over to the enemy or kills the king. The treasury ensuring the success of all endeavours is the means of deeds of piety and sensual pleasures" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 8.1.41:388). However, as an exception Kautilya writes that depending on the place, time and work, both become important.

Given a choice between army and ally, some of the Kautilyan predecessors had argued that the calamity of the ally is more serious, as the ally does the work without being paid and repels the enemy in the rear. Kautilya on the other hand argues that

> when one has army, ones ally remain friendly, or even the enemy becomes friendly. An ally looks to the securing of his interests in the event of simultaneity of calamities and in the event of growth of the enemy's power.
>
> (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 8.1.55:389)

Having prioritized the seven constituent elements in accordance with the importance they hold to protecting the interests of the state, Kautilya adds,

> in accordance with the peculiar nature of the calamity, the numerousness or loyalty or strength of parts of the constituents leads to the accomplishment of a work. But when the calamity of two (constituents) is equal, the difference arises from a decline in qualities. But where the destruction of the rest of the constituents is likely to follow from the calamity of one, that calamity would be more serious, whether of the principal or of some other constituent.
>
> (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 8.1.61–63:390)

The intricate link between the constituents and its elements and the relationship between the whole and the parts, as it comes across from the above description, does qualify Kautilya as a systems thinker.

The feasible at the international level

The primary departure point for taking the analyses of systems perspective at the external level is the framework of the mandala offered by *Arthashastra*. The key yardsticks for taking the discussion forward are the four upayas and the six measures of foreign policy as elicited by Kautilya. While Kaplan considers the international system a null political system, he does lay out the six distinct international systems, which can exist and the range of choices which national actors can exercise at the external level. A critical issue that Kaplan underlines is the important role of the nature of political systems in shaping the range of choices which various actors can employ. While Kautilya's *Arthashastra* does not provide detailed conceptualization

of international system per se, as mentioned in previous pages, the idea of mandala is very much discussed. Kautilya, in introducing the concept of mandala, writes, "making the king separated by one intervening territory, the felly and those immediately proximate the spokes, the leader should stretch himself out as the hub in the circle of constituents. For the enemy situated between the two, the leader and ally, becomes easy to exterminate or to harass, even if strong" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 6.2.40:320). One can thus perceive the awareness and the necessity of maintaining this order through the circle of states (mandala), in Kautilya's *Arthashastra*. It has also been mentioned that the superiority and inferiority of state within the mandala was determined not only by the alliances but also through the other six constituent elements defining the state – which were categorical in giving meaning and substance to Kautilya's political system. The mandala was known as prakritimandalam, i.e. the 12 kings and their constituent elements and this constituted the ideational source for the six methods of foreign policy.

Six measures of the foreign policy – the Sadgunya theory[4]

The six measures or the range of choices, which have been mentioned by Kautilya are Peace, War, Staying Quiet, Marching, Seeking Shelter and Dual Policy. The definitions of all these become important in order to understand the essence of sadgunya theory. The sadgunya theory was a guide to the king who finds himself in a different situation, given the dynamics of the political environment, which was susceptible to change.

Peace according to Kautilya is entering into a treaty or making a pact. Kangle has translated peace as panabandhan – the framing of terms and conditions, i.e. entering into a formal treaty with specific clauses. Georg Buhler translates this term as alliance (Olivelle 2011:1). Olivelle, rejecting the interpolations such as samdhi meaning a formal peace treaty, argues that the term samdhi implied "a temporary and focused contract between two parties, aimed at achieving a specific goals, such as attacking a common enemy" (Olivelle 2011).

War was injury or hostilities. This was translated from the word vigraha. This could mean two things. First, war essentially did not mean literally fighting it, but weakening the enemy through various stratagems and tactics, or it could mean the types of war that Kautilya mentions (Rangarajan 1987). Olivelle on the other hand argues that "vigraha meant either a formal declaration of the war against another kingdom or the initiation of hostilities against it, and that it was a political strategy rather than actual warfare" (Olivelle 2011:134). For Olivelle vigraha was just an instrument of foreign policy and outsmarting the opponent was a better option in the battle than defeating him.

"Remaining indifferent" meant staying quiet or doing nothing. This was called asana. Yana on the other hand meant augmentation of power or

preparing for war. Augmentation of power meant undertaking an activity or marching for expansionist design. Yana was an important activity, as it involved that king had to take the army out of the territory. This involved careful deliberation as, "the march meant heavy expenses on the mobilisation and transport of the troops as well as long absence from the capital. A king could mobilise but not set out on a campaign" (Rangarajan 1987:513). Rangarajan also considers asana and yana as stages in the transition from peace to war.

Submitting to another meant seeking shelter. This was resorted to when threatened from a stronger king. This was samsraya. Dual policy implied employing peace with one and war with another. This was dvadhibhava. Rangarajan points out "this was the policy of making peace with a neighbouring king in order to pursue, with his help, a policy of hostility towards the other" (Rangarajan 1987:514). Dvadhibhava has been understood by Kangle as samdhi vigraho padnam – peace with one and war with another. He writes the word dvadhibhava is translated as duplicity, which meant, "making peace for the time-being with a view to making better preparations for war against the same enemy" (Kangle 1992:318). However, according to him the text does not support this explanation (Kangle 1992:318). Olivelle on the other hand argues that samdhi or peace in this case was "a tactical strategy, seeking tactical advantage over other kings" (Olivelle 2011:136). The sadgunya theory is also relevant as it offers varied techniques of communication ranging of verbal to non-verbal.

Given these measures, Kangle writes, "when in decline compared to the enemy, he should make peace, when prospering he should make war" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 7.1.13–14). Thus, there were two main policy options which a king could make keeping these yardsticks in mind. First, when in decline compared to the enemy, the policy should be directed towards making pacts and entering into treaties. This is important, as the nature of allies have been stipulated by Kautilya. It did not essentially mean mitra which was an essential constituent element of the state. Kautilya permits short-term alliances for tactical purposes. Patrick Olivelle's explanation therefore seems appropriate in this regard. The second policy option, which has been considered as war, appears to be proximate to options of asana and yana. Kautilya argues that when prospering, the king should undertake to augment his power through marching and when there is equality in terms of capabilities, the king should stay indifferent or quiet. While Kangle interprets this second activity as that of war or vigraha, it is doubtful that Kautilya suggests that. This is because Kautilya stipulates clearly the parameters of advancement which need to be deliberated by the king.

Kautilya writes, "of them he (king) should follow that policy by resorting to which he may be able to see, by resorting to this, I shall be able to promote my own undertaking concerning forts, water works, trade routes, settling on waste lands, mines, material forests and elephant forests, and to injure these undertakings of the enemy" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 7.1.13–14).

[At another instance he writes], "if the king were to think, the ruin of the enemy's undertaking can be brought about by marching and I have taken steps to secure the protection of my own undertakings, he should secure advancement by marching" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 7.1.34:325). At another instance, he writes, "perceiving, I shall decline after a longer time, or to a lesser extent, or in such a way that I shall make great advancement, the enemy will do so in an opposite way, he should remain indifferent to his stable condition" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 7.1.28:322).

These stipulations and dialectics, even on the behaviour of the king, suggest that the primary goal was not waging wars, but was more focused towards advancing and enhancing one's position in the mandala by strengthening one's seven constituent elements. This is an important point to understand as Kautilya, rather than preferring a direct confrontation with the enemy, suggests various indirect confrontations. He notes,

> remaining at peace, I shall ruin the enemy's undertakings by my own undertakings bearing abundant fruits or I shall enjoy my own undertakings bearing abundant fruits or the undertakings of the enemy; or by creating confidence by means of peace, I shall ruin the enemy's undertakings by the employment of secret remedies and occult practices; or I shall entice the persons capable of carrying out the enemy's undertakings, by offering a greater remuneration, from my own undertakings, with facilities and favours and exemptions, or the enemy in alliance with a stronger king, will suffer the ruin of his own undertakings; or I shall keep prolonged his war with the king, being at war with whom he is making peace with me; or he will harass the country of the king, who is in alliance with me, so that I shall achieve advancement in my undertakings; or by making peace with the enemy, I shall divide from him the circle of kings which is attached to the enemy (and when divided), I shall secure it for myself, or by giving support to the enemy by favouring him with troops when he seeks to seize the circle, I shall create hostility towards him, and when he faces hostility, I shall get him destroyed by that same circle, he should secure advancement through peace.
>
> (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 7.1.32:323)

The six measures of foreign policy become important tool for analysing Kautilyan's foreign policy, as it details the methods one needs employ when engaging a group of inferior, superior or equal states. It not only reflects the flexibility which a state should adopt in maintaining one's position in the mandala but also underlines it as an essential tool which makes diplomacy a dynamic activity. Status-quoism is rejected. Neither is the mandala a stationary framework, which assumes a presence of a single hegemon. It a continuous effort towards improving one's own advancement. Advancement, here primarily being referred to as improving one's internal strength and enhancing prosperity. This was important as it improved and leveraged the relative

bargaining power of a state in the mandala. Kautilya notes, "situated in the circle of constituent elements, he should, in this manner, with these six measures of foreign policy, seek to progress from decline to stable condition and from stable condition to advancement in his own undertakings" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 7.1.38:324).

The Kautilyan approach to six methods or tools adopted to suit one's objectives can be studied from the perspective of weak, equal and strong actors, who choose amongst the six measures of foreign policy as per their needs and advancement strategies. A key point that emerges from studying the six measures of foreign policy are bargaining strategies which are followed by various superior and inferior powers. In order to understand these, it is important to understand how allies, pacts and treaties are articulated in the text per se. These are also instructive in understanding the meaning of power as elicited in *Arthashastra*.

Allies and pacts

Importance of alliances and treaties has been underlined by Kautilya in the context of the seven constituent elements, as strengthening them was the primary goal identified for statecraft. External engagement, as one can infer from the text, was thus considered an extension to the progress of the state. Kangle notes, "the six methods of foreign policy are related to the promotion of the interest of the state."

Kautilya stipulates that the aim of an alliance is either to consolidate acquisition (remain a dominant power) or to undertake enlargement (expansion) of his kingdom. In order to fulfill the aim, an appropriate method needed to be employed which had to be based on the insights from his state and then choosing appropriately a passive or an active approach. Significantly, while approaches were primarily dictated from six methods of foreign policy, – as pointed out earlier, they can be broadly narrowed down into two broad types – samdhi and vigraha which were part of an effective means for explicit coordination between allies.

Recognition and understanding of one's situation, i.e. how did a state stand relative to that of the enemy state was instrumental in determining the "strategic method" which a state could well adopt and adapt to ignored to inform its policy. Thus, based on this analysis, methods and characteristics of alliance building and treaty making have been elicited. Significantly Kautilya also specified four further methods for perpetuating the power of a conqueror. These are sana, dana, bheda and danda or the four upayas as they were called. The former two were to be employed for engaging the friend and the latter two were meant for the enemy.

Coalition building – the significance of allies

Coalitions were a central tenet of in Kautilya's Arthahastra, as *mitra* forms one of the seven constituent elements of the state. Alliances or coalitions

had a special place in the *Arthashastra*, as it contemplates extensively on the principles of building alliances and the costs of maintaining them. Once the aim is established and the methods identified as per the need and interest of the king (read state), the principles on how one should choose an ally has been determined.

While geography is one of the primary elements in identifying a friend and an enemy (given the contiguity/discontinuity of territory), it was however not a pre-dominant criteria, and therefore this criteria should not be exaggerated or confined to just geographical proximity. Rangarajan's own insights into this are most appropriate. He writes, "it must however be emphasized that the circle of kings is not meant to be imagined geographically, as a series of concentric circles, though they may be symbolically represented as such" (Rangarajan 1987:511–12). Intent of the enemy/friend is important and the wisdom to identify one's *natural* ally is critical. Who are the actors and what is the intent is therefore the first principle, which should guide the methods for alliance building.

Actors and intent

While there are 12 actors that have been identified, for clarity five independent actors existed. The five nodal actors that therefore need to be reckoned with are: the conqueror, the enemy, the ally, the middle king and the neutral king. The rest of the categories are classified as per the sequence established for identifying enemies and allies and are inclusive within the circle of states. The four actors were actors that were particularly important as they acted as facilitators to forward the interest of the aspirant state through the tool of diplomacy. The intent of these actors classified them into a further typology of allies and friends. An important pointer in identifying the intent was the motivation of the actor and its internal cohesiveness – which was gauged from the coherence and the excellent condition of seven constituent elements. The more proximate a particular state was to the saptanga theory, the more susceptible and aware was it expected to be about its motivation.

As indicated before, augmenting one's success, which essentially meant increasing one's own happiness was the objective of using power. Actors who increased one's power were therefore advised to be allied with. The importance of allies appealed as they augmented relative power in the mandala. In the negotiation literature relevance of coalitions have been highlighted. Coalitions can "increase the actors ability to withstand pressure and they can also tie an actor's hand rendering concessions difficult to make the agreements more elusive" (Narlekar 2014:8). The treaties without conditions and suggestions offered to the weak king by Kautilya are instructive of the role and place of coalitions in *Arthashastra*. For instance Kautilya notes, "Wishing to overreach the enemy, who is vicious, hasty, contemptuous, slothful or ignorant, he should create confidence with treaty, saying, we are in alliance,' without the fixing of place, time or object, and after finding the enemy's weak points, strike at him" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 7.6.13:339).

At another instance, towards the policy of seeking shelter, against a stronger king who was unwilling to enter a treaty, Kautilya suggests, "he (the weak king) should behave like one submitting with troops. And when he sees that the enemy is inflicted by a fatal disease or is facing an internal revolt or a growth of power of his enemy or a calamity of his ally and sees thereby his own advancement, he should go away on a possible pretext of illness or the performance of the religious duty. Or if he is on his own territory, he should not go to him. Or if near him, he should strike in his weak points" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 7.2, 9–12:325). Note that in both cases, only when there are lack of options or the intention of the adversary are questionable, has the bluffing tactic has been advised.

Characteristics of an ally: common interest was the first principle for choosing an ally. Ability to help at times of need was considered an important characteristic of an ally. Offering help through land, money or troops emerges as the second characteristic. Kautilya notes, "when there is a choice between two allies one who is constant but not under control and one insconstant but not under control and one inconstant but under control, 'the one under control though insconstant is preferable. As long as he helps, he becomes an ally; for the charaterstics of an ally is conferring benefit" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 9.9.11:549). The third characteristic of an ally was an ally with excellent qualities (internal coherence) or an ally who has been witnessing troubled times. Kautilya writes, "troubles produce firmness in friendship" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 7.9.8:349). Desirable qualities of an ally according to Kautilya were: controllablity, constancy, ability to mobilize quietly and having troops concentrated at one place. The latter two can be read as one who has internal control and power, i.e. has all six constituents of the state in place. Of controllablity and constancy, the former was always preferred, as it increased the conqueror's relative power. On a choice between two allies under control when there is a choice between one rendering abundant help but inconsistent and one rendering small help but consistent, Kautilya preferred the ally who gave small help, but was more consistent. He notes, "the inconsistent, though capable of great help deserts through fear of (having to render) help or after giving help strives to take it back. The constant one, giving small help, but rendering the small help continously renders greater help over a period of time" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 7.9.18–21:350). How short- and long-term interests are also reconciled in the choice of choosing an ally is insightful. Kautilya suggested actors need not be chosen on the basis of mono-dimensional criteria, but actors need to be matched with their strengths, interest and readiness of support they can provide to the conqueror.

Typology of allies: Allies were divided into dangerous allies, worthy allies, best allies. While intent and motivation were the key criteria, the best ally was one who possessed the following qualities – an ally of the family for a long time, constant, amenable to control, powerful in his support, sharing a common interest, able to mobilize his forces and not a man who betrays.

Kautilya notes, "one that is protected and that protects out of love, without consideration of money, with relationship grown through old times is called the constant ally" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 7.9.39:351). The utility of the ally was also a key criterion. There were allies of diverse utility – which helped in many ways with the products. An ally with greater utility who is supposed to be the one who gave substantial help with forces/treasury. An ally with all round help was the one who helped with troops, treasury, land. Reconciling typology with characteristics is indeed an interesting insight which emerges from *Arthashastra*.[5]

If one casts a brief look, the principle of alliance building in the literature available in international diplomacy and the principles reflected in Arthashastra bears resonance. Alliances and coalitions have been defined "as set of governments that defend a common position in negotiation, through explicit coordination" (Odell cited in Narlekar 2005:3) Two types of alliances have broadly found their place in negotiation literature – bloc type versus issue based and balance versus bandwagons. How these calculations are played out by Kautilya can well be made out, by his extensive elaboration of typologies and stipulations on the principle of alliance building.

Treaty making

Agreements are broadly defined as efforts to sustain cooperation. While there is much available literature on the process of Treaty Making, some of the main elements which have been emphasized by various authors are pre-negotiation, negotiation, ratification, implementation and renegotiation. While neat phases as these are difficult to find in *Arthashastra*, some of these do find an interesting reflection in the text. Treaty making was an auxiliary of alliance building.

Treaty making, as existing in the Kautilyan text, is an extension for sustaining allies and maintaining the balance of interests which was necessary for advancing one's own interest in the mandala. Treaties also enhanced one's relative power. The basic criteria for signing treaties was determined by the nature of trade-offs. The purpose of entering into pacts of formulating treaties, which has been specified by Kautilya, was to create confidence between the two kings. Non-intervention, negotiating a peace treaty and making peace by giving a hostage – all meant the same thing for Kautilya, since the aim of all three was to create confidence between all kings.

Ethics of the king played an important role in determining whether the peace would be stable or not. Rangarajan writes, "Kautilya preferred agreement based solely on honor. While many contemporaries of Kautilya believed that agreements made on the word of honor could be unstable, Kautilya argued that an agreement made on oath or on word of honour is stable in this world and in the next" (Rangarajan 1987:543). He reasons out, "an agreement which depends on the surety or a hostage is valid only in this world since its observance depends on the relative strength of the

parties making it" (Rangarajan 1987:544). However, he further adds if any doubt about the swearer being true to his oath, was discerned, the pact was to be made in presence of great men, ascetics or the chiefs standing as surety (Rangarajan 1987:544). The notion of good offices being used and the notion of ethics acting as a restraint on behaviour are underlined.

Types of treaties have been articulated by Kautilya. These were treaties with obligation and treaties without conditions. Treaties without conditions were meant for enemies, whose intent was susceptible and one could easily breach agreements. These were most suitable for operationalizing dual policy, so that a sense of confidence could be created. The primary objective, as it appears was to neutralize them, but nevertheless, wait for the opportune time to exploit them. Treaty without conditions, therefore emphasize the point that allies were important and valued, but nevertheless had to be filtered by the typologies mentioned above.

Renegotiating the treaty

Aspects of renegotiation are an important point that emerges in *Arthashastra*, as it was embedded in the notion of fairness and equity. Since sustaining allies was an important parameter of foreign policy, it was advised that treaties were just. Motives were to be taken into account for renegotiation. Intent and motivation of the opposing party were critical parameters, which needed to be evaluated against the virtues of the party which had put in the demand for renegotiation. Bargaining power has a special place in renegotiating treaties. A king's bargaining power was dependent on its internal coherence and strength of the state.

Unequal treaties

"Unequal Treaties" find a special mention in Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, where Kautilya stipulates when to negotiate an unequal treaty. While he does talk about payment based on pure bargaining power, Kautilya seemed to be aware that in politics mathematical calculations often did not work, and therefore suggested that "one should take into account the overall benefit which includes the immediate gain as well as the potential future gain. Sometimes, it may even be advisable to forego any apparent benefits" (Rangarajan 1987:550).

The small benefit, as against the large future benefit, is captured well in the notion of diffused vis à vis specific reciprocity. Robert Keohane (1986) specifies there are two ways to understand reciprocity: the first is through the concept of *specific reciprocity* and the second is through the concept of *diffuse reciprocity*. While the former implies situations in which partners exchange items of equivalence value in a defined sequence, the latter term implies a situation in which definition of equivalence is less precise and the sequence of events is much more narrowly bounded. The latter is much

more dependent on expected benefits which can be reaped in the future and evolves over a period of time from sustained cooperation between actors. In other words diffuse reciprocity takes place under the assumption of trust. Since the primary purpose of Kautilyan foreign policy was maintenance of allies, diffused reciprocity is recommended as a justification for entering into unequal treaties.

The understanding of power in Kautilya's *Arthashastra* is therefore indicative of increasing one's relative power and securing the best bargaining option available for one self in the circle of states. The fine details on subcategories of allies and enemies and the adaptability in terms of choosing one's policies vis à vis one's own strength is an instructive method.

The four upayas were specifically instructed by Kautilya to overcome adversarial relationships. These were the cases, where alliances and treaties need to be supplemented and were aimed towards potential troubles and dangers created by enemies and dissenting officers. The upayas or the four methods were relevant to both the internal and external domain. As noted before, the four methods prescribed were reconciliation, gifts, diving and ruling and force.

At the internal level, force was considered to be the last resort and used only sparingly. Even when used at the internal level, Kautilya insists that it be done secretly. He notes, "in the case of unmixed danger from treasonable, he should against citizens and country people the various means, excepting force. For force cannot be used against a multitude of people. Even if used, it might not achieve its object and at the same time might bring on another disaster. But against the leaders among them, he should act as in 'the infliction of (secret) punishment'" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 9.5.2:422).

When the treasonable and the treasonable have joined hands, Kautilya advises that support should be sought from the non-treasonable. He notes, "because the treasonable and non-treasonable have joined hands it is mixed danger. In the case of mixed danger success should be sought through the non-treasonable. For in the absence of the support, the support does not exist" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 9.5.8:423). While Kautilya has used this in a different context, this is instructive of situations, when internal dissension has occurred or in modern parlance, a threat to internal security is in the offing.

In this case, when the ally was not to desire peace, Kautilya suggests one should employ four upayas. He suggests, the king "should constantly instigate him secretly. Then dividing him from the enemy through secret agents, he should win the ally. Or he should win over the king situated on the border of the confederacy with the ally. When one situated on the border is won over, those situated in the centre become divided. Or he should win over the one who is situated in the centre. When one situated in the centre won over, those situated in the border do not remain united" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 9.5.14:423). These suggestions are instructive for identifying the pivots and peripheries related to foreign policy issues.

The four upayas are therefore meant to be auxiliaries of the six methods of foreign policy. They are suggestive to situations, when the six measures of foreign policy fail and underline the use of force as the last resort. These suggestions are indicative of the multifarious understanding of power. In the four methods, espionage comes up as the most significant element as spies had a special role to play in creating dissension. George Modelski presents as interesting analysis of the contemporary relevance of the four upayas. He argues what Kautilya describes as gifts (dana) is relevant to domestic politics in the planned redistribution of income and resources, and in international politics can be interpreted in terms of foreign aid (Modelski 1964:553). Modelski considers upayas to be more relevant to relationships, which are between equal powers. He writes, "the doctrine of upayas is one of application of political influence techniques pure and simple" (Modelski 1964:554). It is interesting that while upayas have received less attention in *Arthashastra* (as Modelski also acknowledges), these have, however, been extensively used as tenets for morality in strategy in later texts such as Pancatantra and Hitopdesha. Crothers, however, terms the sadgunyas and upayas as repertoires of behaviour directed at managing the networks of relationships. She even considers the upayas as symbolizing modes of dialogues, where *sama* and dana denote friendship and relationship building, *bheda* and danda denote rift in relationship. The latter as Crothers argues are dialogues of 'nefarious sorts which alienate one from another' (Crothers 2016:212–13).

This extremely descriptive analysis of the Kautilyan state indeed reflects its centralized and even authoritarian character. As should be evident in the preceding discussion relationality dominates in defining objects of study. An analytical value which comes out of this descriptive analysis is the process through which the regulatory and monitoring web is operationalized to serve the identified grand objective. Kautilyan approach has distant resemblance to network analysis which studies pattern of connections, who is connected to who, what is connected to what and how it is connected (Slaughter 2017:43). However, hierarchy was the defining principle, where directives and commands had to be respected.

The next chapter makes sense of some of these elements drawing upon diplomatic and strategic insights they have to offer. It places some of these concepts within the larger debate on understanding conceptual categories that had emerged from *Arthashastra* and could play a fundamental role in raising certain metatheoretical questions related to theorizing. Thus, any attempt towards theorizing non-western concepts in international relations should keep this important caveat in mind.

Notes

1 See footnote – 39, 43, 44 and 45. R. P. Kangle, *The Kautilya Arthashastra*, Part II, Delhi: Motilal Banarsi Das, 2014, pp. 195–96. Dharma has been understood as

a matter of law or eternal truth – that is supposed to be the basis of dharma and King the deliverer of the law.

2 Carl Schmitt has discussed the concept of political in detail. He relates it to the definition of the friend and enemy, where the latter is the stranger and conflict is therefore a possibility.

3 See Chapter Ten and Eleven of Book Four, *The Kautilya Arthashastra*, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1992 (translated by R.P. Kangle).

4 Sections of this chapter have been drawn from Medha Bisht, "Revisiting the *Arthashastra*: Back to Understanding IR", in Gautam et al., *Indigenous Historical Knowledge* (Vol. II), New Delhi, Pentagon Press, 2016.

5 A more detailed analysis can be seen in L.N. Rangarajan, *Kautilya: The Arthashastra*, London, Penguin Books, 1987.

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Part III

Learnings from *Arthashastra*

Reflections on philosophy,
statecraft and theory

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8 State and statecraft

Reflections on non-western vocabularies

This concluding chapter, while a recapitulation of most of the points discussed before, is anchored on three questions. First, what is the relevance of highlighting philosophical underpinning towards understanding strategy, second, how do they direct the discourse on International Relations theory and third, in what ways can concepts and vocabularies be useful and helpful in illuminating nuances and insights from non-western sources on statecraft. The reason for taking this conclusive analysis is the impoverished nature of historiography of diplomacy which stems from the lack of engagement with the non-western ideas on statecraft. It would not be an exaggeration to state that sources for diplomatic thought and practice remain highly Euro-centric and draw inspiration and vocabulary from European experiences. It is for this reason that the 'tradition of diplomacy' needs to be problemitized and pluralized to 'traditions of diplomacy', thus taking note of distinct Asian traditions. This has direct consequence for the vocabulary or meta-theoretical frameworks we use to understand international relations practice (statecraft) and international relations theory.

It has been claimed by scholars that the phenomenon of colonialism not only made non-west lose its agency but inevitably made the non-west, a "norm taker" for many concepts as theorized in the discipline of international relations. The findings from this book agree with the argument, that "non core, non-western readings of international relations being essentially different needs to be thought through" in terms of the ontological inquiries related to power, state, morality etc. (Tickner and Blaney 2012:3). It agrees with them that 'local flavour' of state and statecraft resonated in *Arthashastra*. However, it argues that emphasizing "epistemic practices nuances" in the production of knowledge which defined the limits of the political (state) and external (statecraft), needs to be thought through. The pre-colonial thought and the pre-westphalian period becomes significant as it offers insights on the diffusion of political ideas (Liebig and Mishra 2017; Singh 2017; Bozeman 1960). Thus, while transcultural perspective on the movement of ideas from East to West merits attention, the interaction of subject and object and the ontological and epistemological leanings towards concepts warrants that one liberates oneself from cognitive and pedagogical biases. This also

offers a possibility to inform the layered "conceptual thicket" of vocabularies and draw insights on ideas and norms which define the political. The understanding of the 'other' in the political and international is significantly important. The urgency stems from not only the growing threats and challenges posed by non-state actors, but also the rise of Asia in this context. "This is both a challenge and opportunity to test not only the resilience of diplomatic practices but also on how international relations scholarship and praxis responds to understanding what Asia and its philosophies stand for" (Bisht 2016:13) While this is a tall order, it demands that to move from confrontation to cooperation and dialogue crafting a philosophical basis to strategic interaction needs attention (Black and Patton 2016).

This chapter argues that statecraft can be influenced, shaped and informed by philosophical leanings of a given society. Asian statecraft thus represents a distinct dialectics of its own where terms such as power, order and law amongst others, were greatly influenced by the context they were used in, and where political not only treated state in an objective-scientistic manner but also included socio-psychological elements to cultivate an inter-subjective understanding towards the political. It is in this sense that one needs to be sensitive of how concepts are illuminative of the contexts. This chapter lays out the relevance of indigenous vocabularies in strategic studies. The reason for this discussion is three-fold. First, it helps one to explore the pre-westphalian thinking on statecraft, second, it helps identifying patterns of diplomatic interaction, which were different from the post westphalia world of modern nation states. Third, it helps establish the critical linkage between strategy and philosophy. Without understanding the philosophical undertones, which were adapted to strategic thinking, one fails to understand the rules that govern the specific system.

In this backdrop the chapter is divided into three broad sections. The first section looks at the importance of strategic ontologies in light of the philosophical traditions and their larger relevance to the field of non-western IR. The second section explores the theoretical ramification of these to the larger discipline of IR and critically engages with the prospects of a non-western ideas emerging in distinct geo-cultural spaces. This question is important as distinct epistemic practices are found in *Arthashastra*, between object-subject interaction, which is used in International Relations theory. In this backdrop negating philosophy behind non-western vocabularies also needs course correction. It is for this reason that the section offers a detailed examination of the differences and similarities around the concept of order in *Arthashastra* and the English school in particular. The third section highlights specific epistemic insights to the general understanding of order, state and statecraft in international relations.

Strategic ontologies

Why do strategic ontologies matter in international relations? This question needs serious examination because it unfolds cultural-cognitive

nuances through which one understands the meaning of concepts. A good starting point is Adda Bozeman who would be uncomfortable in understanding the west and non-west as binaries. For Bozeman while ideas migrate and get accepted in different cultures they are often adopted in select manner. For Bozeman (1979) there are cultural boundaries between states and understanding the mental constitution is therefore important. Bozeman's intervention needs to be reckoned with as she considers terms such as law, diplomacy and peace, as 'systems of thought', which became the marker for a morally unified world in the twentieth century. Concepts for Bozeman become important as she argues terms like law, diplomacy and peace have a history of their own which needs investigation. For Bozeman why some ideas flourish and some do not, requires critical attention. In her own words,

> how do concepts arise, change, and die? Can the beginnings or transformations of an idea be dated? Just when did a long familiar notion shed its meaning, and just what happened to the word that carried this idea?
>
> (Bozeman 2010:5–6)

In this regard, her call for understanding cultural infrastructure of nations and political systems become important (Bozeman 2010:5–6). In a similar vein, Shogo Suzuki, Yongjia Zhang and Joel Quirk negate the linear understanding of international history which remains European and underline the role of non-European agency and institutions in highlighting cultural pluralism. This work on comparative histories, which makes an important contribution to historical sociology merits attention as it rejects the dualism between the rest vis à vis the west. Arguing for heterogeneity in international orders they note,

> while English school and constructivism have challenged the neo-neo theories in important ways, (they) have continued to reproduce the Western meta-narratives about the fundamentally European nature of international relations and the fundamentally European nature of central IR concepts, including sovereignty, modernity and development.
>
> (Suzuki, Zhang and Quirk 2014:253)

Since most theorizing in International Relations is based on the post-westphalian world, the historical periods, which were defined by non-European dominance have got lost. The agency of the non-west has been highlighted by Sugata Bose in his book, 'Indian Ocean: A Hundred Horizons'. Bose describes the Indian Ocean as an 'inter-regional arena of human interaction' and argues that this arena was marked by a web of cultural and economic relationships, even after the region was colonized (Bose 2006:20). Focusing on continuities in transitions and connected histories, he notes that "while port cities were nodes of interaction, and had flexible external/

internal boundaries" and this organic unity was ruptured with the advent of Dutch and Portuguese, when the notion of colonial frontiers were introduced, the movement of ideas, goods and people continued as late as 1930 (Bose 2006:34). Bose, unlike some other historians like K.N. Choudhury and M.N. Pearson, considers the early period of colonial interaction as the 'age of partnerships'. Quoting Asin Das Gupta, he writes, the "Europeans were settled within the structure and were in a way, swallowed by it" and that "the English and the Dutch in the seventeenth century worked to a certain extent within the indigenous structure" (Bose 2006:34). Focusing on non-linear histories Bose focuses on continuities across temporal and spatial scales and highlights the agency of the non-west, which in a way "deprovincializes" the European history. Along with this was also lost the indigenous meanings and vocabularies as conceptualized in the non-west. Leigh Jenco's work seems pertinent in this regard. He contemplates on the challenges of "sharing meaning as opposed to merely forging mutual commensurability, in which the terms of the other are rendered intelligible by translating them into familiar vocabulary" (Jenco 2012:92–113).

Such discussion becomes significant for understanding strategic ontologies as they have an implication for informing statecraft and even theorizing concepts in international relations. A good example is the work of Mott and Kim (in context of Sun Tsu's Art of War), Aruna and Amrita Narlikar (in context of Mahabharata). Both scholars highlight the relevance and history of ideas to explain contemporary state behaviour of China and India respectively (Mott and Kim 2006; Narlekar and Narlekar 2014).

Mott and Kim elaborate on the Chinese understanding of war, which according to the ancient Chinese classics is an activity undertaken to maintain order (universal harmony). The authors resort to vocabularies such as Tao, Shih, Hsing and Li, to explain a more holistic and comprehensive understanding of power and its relationship between order and morality. Meaning of war being embedded in order finds in a particular socio-historical moment. The context was marked by chaos and anarchy and the philosophical traditions that emerged in China were looking for a solution to create some order within disorder. It is in this context that philosophical strands of Confucianism, Legalism and Daoism in China merit attention. While an elaborate analysis of these Chinese vocabularies is not needed here, scholarship is indeed available in drawing parallels to Chinese behaviour in its foreign policy practices (Mott and Kim 2006; Lai 2004). Similarly, the work of Amrita and Aruna Narlikar on India's bargaining strategy in international negotiations merits attention. The Narlikars respond to a question posed by Stephen Cohen, why India seems to relish to getting to No? (Narlekar and Narlekar 2014:2). Focusing on two bargaining strategies – integrative and distributive, the authors argue that India has chosen the latter over the former, concluding that Indians are tough negotiators. They argue that, "rich classical India scholarship that refers directly or indirectly to bargaining remains sparingly utilized", and their book aims to fill the gap (Narlekar and Narlekar 2014:2).

While isolated efforts like these do exist, strategic ontologies offer ways of understanding the 'other' spaces in international relations and can contribute to a plural understanding of the "conceptual thicket" through which can go beyond a empiricist epistemologies of international relations theories which often treats knowledge trapped in value/fact dichotomy. When one looks at *Arthashastra* and interprets the relative meaning of the concepts keeping the grand strategic design of the intertwined nature of state and statecraft, it appears that values and norms were a composite whole which gave meaning to these concepts. While it focused on material gain and there are definite homologies existing between concepts the latter was redefined keeping the cultural-cognitive context in mind. Paradoxes that stem from such an understanding were responding to desirable and feasible questions in politics. In this regard there are signs of both centralized and resilient polities and the Kautilyan mandala emerges as a strategic web.

Different strategies of sadgunya policy (six strategies) and upayas (four methods) offer strategems and techniques for avoiding rigidity and softening positions. The purpose of wellbeing of the state was very important. The networked understanding of Kautilyan strategy also took care of both the micro and macro concerns. The inside/outside; universalistic/particularistic; domestic/international dichotomy which came to mark the identity of international relations in initial years is absent in *Arthashastra* (Brown, Nardin and Reneger 2002:7).

A reason why this networked strategy of Kautilya has been overlooked in contemporary scholarship is because of "generic eurocentricism" of international relations theory and imposition of 'universal concepts' to understand world politics (Hobson 2012). While there are similarities between theoretical explanations, which Classical Realism and Wendtian Constructivism have to offer for explaining the behaviour of Kautilyan, a lack of discussion on meta-narratives swallow the nuances of strategic/holistic/composite wisdom that the text promises to offer.[1]

Strategic ontologies, employed in *Arthashastra*, get objectified by mainstream schools in international relations and lead to a misrepresentation of ideas and concepts.

An interesting way to understand this is to compare how 'order' has been treated in International Relations vis à vis its understanding in *Arthashastra* and whether the latter offers any epistemic value to the concept of order as employed by the former.

Theoretical ramification and the concept of order[2]

Order is the most conceptually animated term in international relations. Broadly understood as a 'purposive arrangement' of actors, it is often interpreted within a normative framework. There are five categories which can illuminate a conceptual understanding of order in international relations. The first is descriptive – normative, the second is analytical-descriptive, the third is strategic-structural, the fourth is cognitive-cultural and the fifth is

a critical approach. These terms broadly convey the meanings associated with the concept of order, as has been understood in the discipline of international relations.

While the first category termed as descriptive-normative describes order as a purposive arrangement, the second category analytically elaborates on the nature of order specifying its constitutive elements. The third category conveys the strategic dimension of means and ends debate which is associated with the structural dimensions employed for ordering of relations between state actors, the fourth relates to the cultural, ideational and cognitive frames which have endowed meaning to the concept of order not as a universal term but with more cultural specific connotations. The fifth is a critical turn to the understanding of order, considering it as an "essentially contested concept". This understanding of order not only problemitizes the dominant accounts, but argues for a conceptual relationship between spatiality and order, which is "sensitive both to marginalized spaces and to diverse forms and centres of power" (Chaturvedi and Painter 2007).

Since there are overlapping strands in all these categorizations of order, it would be appropriate to understand these various typologies separately. It also perhaps need be mentioned that the section does not aim to illuminate the concept of order as a non-western–western binaries, but aims to pull out the similarities and differences between the two.

The understanding of order

Descriptive-Normative: In 1965, at a conference on conditions of world order, held at Bellagio, Italy, Raymond Aron distinguished five meanings of order (Hoffman 1965:455). While the first two meanings were descriptive, broadly defining order as any arrangement of or order as relations between two parts. The other two were partly descriptive and partly normative, which primarily meant identifying minimum conditions for order to exist or minimum conditions for coexistence. The fifth was concerned with a normative understanding as conditions needed for sustaining good life. The first four variants of the definition of order fit into the category of descriptive-normative.

Bull initiated the debate on the descriptive-normative elements and defined it as a relative concept-conceptualizing it broadly as a perceptual toolkit to understand the objective world outside. Thus, for Bull the idea of order was not any pattern or regularity in the relations of human individuals and groups, but a pattern that leads to a particular result. This particular result was conditionally shaped by an arrangement of social life which specifically promoted certain goals and values. According to Bull, order was therefore defined by the purpose it served. In his words, a different set of values or ends endowed meaning to the concept of order. Bull went on to operationalize this broad definition to the societal (domestic) and international realm, where the common, overlapping concern at the domestic and

the international front was the idea of 'obedience' or conformity to a certain set of rules of conduct. It is from this perspective that Bull arrived at his definition of order as a pattern of behaviour, which underwrites the fundamental goals of social life. He wrote, "order in this sense is maintained by a sense of common purpose . . . by rules, which prescribe the patterns of behaviour that sustain them and by institutions, which make these rules effective" (Bull 1977:4). Order thus was an arrangement which facilitated purposive engagement.

Analytical-Descriptive: Having established the definition of order and its recurring significance to the study of international relations, the constitutive elements and the attributes characterizing order were elaborated upon. The operative principle, which illuminated the nature of order was deliberated upon and essential to this definition of order was the element of socialization, which gave meaning to the society of states. The emphasis on socialization as Bull pointed out was the key element which enabled the transition from an 'international system' to an 'international society'. International society as Bull argued denoted group of states, who, conscious of certain common international values, also conceived themselves to be bound by a general set of rules in their relations with each other. Institutionalization of diplomatic activity thus gave coherence to the co-existing society of states. Bull delineated four functions of diplomatic activity: 1) to facilitate communication, 2) to help negotiate agreements, 3) to enable the gathering of intelligence and information, 4) and to minimize the effects of friction in international relations (Bull 1977:3). Thus, order within the analytical frame, through an operative principle of 'socialisation' was understood through the lens of international society, which was associated with a sociologically infused concept expressing the analytical principles which society of state follow at the international level. In order to go beyond the statist understanding, Bull also offered the concept of world society. World society, following the Kantian tradition, took individuals, non-state organizations and global population, as the referent point. Being cosmopolitan in nature, world society was embedded in international normative political theory. Through this distinction, Bull not only attempted to differentiate the system from society but also expanded and investigated the limits embedded in the concept of society of states. Some scholars have critiqued this understanding for its Euro-centric underpinnings where the 'standards of civilizations have been privileged' (Hobson 2012; Suzuki, Zhang and Quirk 2014).

Strategic-Structural: The understanding of order within this frame largely stems from the idea of war and conflict at the international level. As Hobbes once wrote, this conceptualization formulated order "in its purest form" and hence any definition of order in normative terms was an artificial virtue (Harris 1993:26). The primary argument that everything is war marked a definition of a structure based on an ends means debate, where states sought and sustained their survival through the augmentation of power (Hoffman 1987 cited in Orsi 2012). This definition went beyond the normative

interpretive paradigm, perceiving order more in instrumental terms. The assumption that strategic–structuralists made was that while common norms are fragile, temporary to the quantity of power that supports them, they were also dependent on a momentary convergence of interests (Hoffman 1987:83 cited in Orsi 2012). This according to Hoffman then defined the broad parameters of order, which were dependent on the broad structural conditions, manifest during a particular time period.

Cognitive-Cultural: The cognitive-cultural conceptualization of order, depends on the distinct epistemological foundations of order. McKinlay and Little for instance argue that, "there are then as many orders, each dependent on its own epistemology, and since any epistemology can only be understood interms of its own rules, the possibility of different orders cannot be underestimated" (McKinlay and Little 1986:14 cited in Orsi 2012). Supporting this line of analysis, John Hall and TV Paul, define order, as carrying normative connotation, which inform how social, political and economic systems are formulated (Hall and Paul 1999:3–4).

The critical understanding of order draws attention to the objects and subjects of an emerging world order, which is also marked by the history of resistance by the excluded, marginalized and silenced groups, which is as old as "the history of imperial domination" (Chaturvedi and Painter 2007). The critical understanding problemitizes the dominant understanding of spatiality of world order, which has restricted or diminished the multiplicity and plurality of spaces. It highlights the voice of the marginalized, who bear the brunt of the global order, but lack an agency to contribute to it. This has the authors convey no sign of order but disorder.

Nicholas Rengger (2000) places order central to the treatment given to theories in international relations. According to him causal, constitutive and critical positions have offered explanatory accounts on concept of order. His primary thrust of analysis is on how realists have broadly engaged with 'balancing' and liberals have privileged 'institutions' in international relations. Similarly, the focus of English SCHOOL on ideas and of Constructivists on the role of norms in creating inter-subjective understanding was directed towards enhancing order and mitigating anarchy. While these scholars resort to second order questions, the critical turn in international relations made scholars raise certain first order questions whereby the discourse shifted to questions such as whose ideas, whose norms and whose order?

The different understandings of order are important because "order and peace to one group of nations may be perceived differently by another" (Hall and Paul 1999:3–4). Differences, as the authors argue also arise due to the normative concerns as to whether order implied a minimum condition of co-existence. In this backdrop, cognitive–ideological frames contribute to the varying interpretations of order as conceptualized in other cultural milieus or spaces. Thus, with these distinct categorizations of order, there is acknowledgement of plural epistemologies for defining the concept of order in international relations. A better way to move towards a more coherent

understanding of order is to analyse it within a framework most proximate to the analytical framework visible in *Arthashastra*. In terms of the rise of Asia and contemporary debate on the threat to world order, a question which deserves attention is the nature of shared norms that have a cognitive appeal to all the actors.

The analytical pillars of order

With the illumination of meanings of order within distinct frames, it can be argued that the limitations of a universalistic understanding of order can be overcome. Given the alternative spaces and discourses on conceptualization of order, a more contextual, cultural and particularistic understanding is now getting endorsed. It would be appropriate therefore to go beyond, the western and non-western binaries and investigate the cultural and contextual relevance of orders across time and space.

Does the Kautilyan understanding offer a distinct frame of analyses for understanding the concept of order or does it belong to one of the four templates discussed above, is a question that is explored in the following pages. It is argued that rather than getting into the binary divisions of western and non-western, the templates mentioned above can be effectively employed and refined to advance or represent voices from the non-west.

A good starting point would be to revisit some works which have analysed alternative orders of the international system from the lens of mainstream theories. Shogo Suzuki, Yongjin Zhang and Joel Quirk (2014:2) argue that "international orders have never been as cohesive or culturally homogenous as the literature of IR would have us to believe." The authors investigate how cross regional international orders were contested, conceded, compromised, mediated and negotiated in the historical period when the rise of the west was a historical novel event. In this context this interesting compendium through a series of regional case studies on East Asia, Middle East, Africa, Latin America and Russia explores patterns of cross cultural exchange and civilizational encounters, placing a particular emphasis on historical contexts. The authors critiquing the absence of non-western norms argue that international and cosmopolitan norms shared amongst humankind originate in the west and that non-Europeans hardly play a role in the production of international norms and they are nothing but takers of norms (Suzuki, Zhang and Quirk 2014:2).

The idea of mandala thus becomes the departure point for illuminating the concept of order in *Arthashastra*. It can also be argued that methods on foreign policy were the operative principles for this order and more importantly, the role of agents provided the normative underpinnings to this order.[3] While the circle of states has generally been equated with the organizing principles as enunciated by the structural assumptions of the realist and neo-realist tradition, where Kautilya departs from the primary realist understanding is his emphasis on the constituent elements and factors

(values relating to dharma), which legitimized and informed state power in the circle of states. It is this distinct feature and constitutive understanding of the state, which introduces an element of normative influences in giving meaning to the concept of order as elaborated in Kautilya's *Arthashastra*. The mandala had the purpose of defining and delivering order unlike neo-realism, which is a more descriptive theory identifying patterns of arrangement through institutions in the international system. Significantly, one must add here that in this context, mandala bears close resemblance to classical realism where the centrality of balance played an important role in thinking about international order (Rengger 2000:37–38).

However, before a more definitive argument can be made on this account, it would be appropriate to investigate the meaning of order as enunciated by the English School of International Relations. While at the outset a precedent of English school to *Arthashastra* might look abrupt, primarily because, *Arthashastra* is a text of statecraft, generally understood to advance an understanding of realpolitik, the primary assumptions which direct such an inquiry is to unravel the emphasis of ideas, norms and conventions, which formed an important element in the conceptualization of the Kautilyan idea of state and statecraft. Thus, it is some of these questions that need to be addressed, significantly because they underline the import of strategic and intellectual tradition, which *Arthashastra*, as a text endorses.

The English school: a disciplinary primer

The disciplinary history of the English school reveals, that the tradition started in the late 1950s. Where the first decade established the British committee, and scholars focused on conceptualizing international society as an instrumental framework to theorize international relations. The second phase which spanned the decade of the 1970s, investigated and explored the nature of western international society and its relevance to the world historical context. The third phase was the consolidation phase, when major texts were identified with the English school tradition. The fourth phase started in the mid-1990s and introduced a generation of writers, who started looking at theoretical conversations between the ideas promulgated by the English school and sought to link them to the wider context of developments in IR theory (Murray 2013).

While all these four phases broadly characterize the evolution of the English school, a semantic distinction between international society and international system becomes significant. To begin with, international relations was primarily understood in terms of an international system, which implied a group of states which had no perception of common interest. The states were not bound by a common structure, and neither were directed by commonly agreed rules, which stipulated their rights and duties in relation to one another, hence the need for crafting common international institutions was not felt. In Bull's (1977) understanding often this interaction of

states was governed by the idea between a suzerain and a vassal and it was later that diplomatic activity between states flourished and the concept of international society started gaining prominence.

Common international institutions were born coterminous with international society, when states started becoming conscious of certain common values. Barry Buzan tries to juxtapose this understanding along with international system and world society (unlike Bull's international society), a typology, which offers interesting insights. According to Buzan, an international system following the Hobbesian and Machiavellian strand, is about power politics amongst the states, and puts the structures and process of international anarchy at the centre of IR theory. This position is central to mainstream realism and neorealism and is well developed and understood by the 'mainstream' analysts. International society, following the Grotian tradition, is about institutionalization of shared interest and identity among states and puts the creation of shared norms, rules and institutions at the centre of IR theory. While having more proximity to regime theory, it has more constitutive rather instrumental implications. World society, following the Kantian tradition, takes individuals, non-state organizations, and global population, as the whole focus of global societies, identities and arrangement. Being cosmopolitan in nature, it is embedded in international normative political theory (Buzan 2001:474; Buzan 2014; Wight 2006). This is an interesting analysis, as it not only attempts to differentiate the system from society but also expands and investigates the limits of society, by including non-state actors.

In an interesting analysis Cornelia Navari lays down the important thematic focuses of the English school approach. The first is the focus on *institutions*, which primarily concerns itself with operative principles, such as diplomacy, international law, balance of power and state sovereignty. The second is *normative*, broadly associated with the code of conduct, which one practices towards a particular purpose. While the focus is not directly on institutions, it is with the practices of state persons to discern the normative content, which holds meaning for them and the third thematic focus is the specific *environments* of action. These are different social realities, within which the actors find themselves in. The categorization thus broadly emphasizes institutions, agents and structures (Navari 2013:16–17).

These three-dimensional frames are an interesting entry point for conceptualizing order. This also becomes a key departure point to contrast and compare key strands of giving a resemblance to order as identified in Kautilya's *Arthashastra*. This focus on a pre-westphalian tradition in many ways challenges the historicity behind the claim that Europe diffused norms on socialization and co-existence to the rest of the world. What comes across from the description is a composite treatment to values, which helped reconcile the meaning of 'political' in terms of its desirable and feasible elements in a particular socio-historical context. How these were emancipated in the grand schema of society, politics and statecraft is reminiscent

of sophisticated thinking. Kautilya offered holism to social and political phenomenon and is a competing voice against other traditions (such as Buddhism, Sufism etc.), which are a part of contemporary Indian identity. To essentialize it as the foundation of strategic thought and to marginalize it on account of its Brahmanical origins are misplaced approaches. However, before one ruminates on the epistemic value that stems from *Arthashastra*, the following points need reiteration.

Arthashastra on order

Arthashastra, a text written around the fourth century B.C. was a detailed assessment of the internal and external engagement of the state. The text had both feasible and desirable elements. While the aspects of desirability were broadly related to the state and its constituent elements; the feasible elements were broadly related to the operational aspects of foreign policy. The central tenet that comes out by undertaking a constitutive analysis of *Arthashastra* was that the state and its wellbeing were the essential nodal points. This is evident through the mandala theory, where the most dominant state was termed as the vigigeesoo (dominant power). This dominance was sustained through the maintenance of central pillars – the *saptanga theory*,[4] which formed the constituent elements of the state. Another critical element of the state was that the state exercised both sovereignty and enjoyed autonomy at the domestic level. Sovereignty, because states did not generally interfere in the domestic issues of another states, and autonomy because states were distinct from the society, autonomous and above from the societal institutions and influence. However, the fact that eight-tenths of the book is devoted to internal issues related to the state rather to external engagements indicates the importance that Kautilya gave to state power. In fact, the text can be useful from the point of view of good governance (Ilhan 2008:2).

Three objectives identified with the state were: wealth, justice, expansion. It is interesting to note that justice formed the central referent point, as Kautilya wrote artha (wealth) followed dharma. According to Kautilyan thought, material wellbeing was only a part of the larger idea of a state. Kautilya also believed that a stable and prosperous state could only be secured through just administration and that stability and justice preceded (or in other words) were the pre-conditions/or prerequisites for accumulation of wealth, which is then used to augment the territory (Rangarajan 1987:20). Thus, a significant factor which becomes conspicuous and which guided state action was the idea of political virtue, inspired primarily from dharma. Following the dharma was the precondition for laying out a just order.

Dharma has been described as an essential component of Hindu political thought. It comes from the Sanskrit word dhairya, meaning to hold (Parekh 2010:109). Broadly understood as the concept which holds society together,

dharma had a special place in ancient state systems, as the society was held together by each individual and group doing his or her specific duty. Danda or the power of rod was needed to regulate dharma.

As mentioned before for the Hindu political thinkers, the universe was understood an ordered whole governed by fixed laws. It was characterised by Rta, the inviolable order of things. While society becomes an ordered whole when held together by dharma, what ordered the societal dharma-is the karma of the individual (Parekh 2010). It is important to note that the idea of dharma and karma are deeply related. An individual's karma not only determined his caste but also his dharma. Karma also defined the rightful dharma of the individual. In this context, the dharma of King directed the broad contours of political virtue, the qualities broadly identified with that of a just King. The idea of morality as duty, thus is present in *Arthashastra* in different degrees, and is primarily operationalized through the concept of dharma.

One can say that the concept of dharma captured the idea of morality in *Arthashastra* and the concept of political morality balanced pragmatism with virtue. One can also say that political morality was about thinking strategies or crafting policies, which minimized harm to one's own citizens (duty) and Kautilya was very categorical in stating that the interest of the state or the population or subjects in general should be prioritized. The idea of advancing larger good or just cause is central to Kautilyan analysis of order at the domestic level.

When transposed to the external level, order does find an important place in the Kautilya's mandala theory: the circle of states. The operative principles of order – practices, agents and structures can be understood as frames, which give meaning to the understanding of order in Kautilya's *Arthashastra*.

Practices

By practices are meant the 'six methods of foreign policy', which were foreign policy. The six methods of foreign policy are important, as they are indicative of an arrangement, which was directed towards ordering the relationships between states, thus constraining and disciplining state behaviour. Kautilya writes the broad principles or the six methods on which the foreign policy should be based is on making pacts, initiating war, staying quiet or being indifferent, undertaking advancement taking shelter and adopting a dual policy. These have been termed as samdhi, vigraha, asana, yana, samaraya and dvaidibhava.

As also mentioned before, Patrick Olivelle has summed up these broad tenets of foreign policy, under the categories of avoiding war and facilitating peace (Olivelle 2011). According to Olivelle, war and peace are political strategies and do not literally mean war and peace. So, while vigraha, would

mean being in a state of war, it did not mean actual fighting. Samdhi, on the other hand were tactics and strategies used to weaken the opponent. Likewise a state of vigraha may not result in actual fighting, but would rather make use of strategies to weaken the enemy by one's ability to resist his attacks and by destroying his sources of income. Samdhi was also an extension of this indirect method, aiming to overcome and outwit another king rather than the actual conclusion of the peace award. Thus, samdhi was a strategy seeking tactical advantage over other kings. Vigraha, as Olivelle argues, was a strategic move on part of the King, either because he was in a difficult position and wanted to buy time or because he thought that such a pact could ensure victory either over the king with whom he was entering into a pact or over another king with whom he wanted to attack with the support of his new ally (Olivelle 2011:138). Thus, methods foreign policy had to be given the changing environmental conditions and the purpose was to counter-balance once position vis à vis the other. One can also say that these methods aimed at avoiding the state of anarchy or matsyanyaya. George Modelski, on the other hand, considers these six methods of foreign policy, as being a tool kit or the primary reference framework, which a king could choose, depending on its inferior or superior status (Modelski 1964:551–53). The primary end goal was specified as augmenting one's success and power, where power was defined as improving one's strength and success was defined as obtaining happiness. If one studies these concepts from the systems theory perspective, success and power were related to the excellences of the constituent elements, where there was an element of equilibrium or balance existing between the political system, and the policies/practices which were adopted to balance the other at the external level.

Agent

State has a special place in *Arthashastra*, as it gave meaning to the operative principles of foreign policy, and established the normative underpinnings of interaction. Guided by dharma, the state (lead by the king) was expected to follow certain codes of conduct. The prescriptive norms as stated in *Arthashastra* were purely recommendary, trying to set a standard for the ideal king, hence state. The state was described as being constituted of seven pillars. One can describe these core pillars as the capacity of the state to enforce and implement its decisions. Kautilya writes, "before a king actually sets out an expedition or conquest, he has to take steps to guard himself (read the state) against the dangers, which might weaken any constituents of his own state" (Rangarajan 1987:43). The first duty of the king (read national interest) therefore was to protect the people in times of natural disaster and from enemies, both internal and external. Regarding the ministers, Kautilya wrote that the power of council is superior to military strength and with good judgement a king can overwhelm even kings who were mighty and energetic. Kautilya considered weakness in intellectual

judgement a disadvantage and weakness in moral resources. Some of the examples in Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, which broadly relate to the idea of morality or political virtue are:

Yogakshema (wellbeing): Kautilya placed great importance on the welfare of the people and his practical advice to the king on facilitating the happiness of the people was rooted in dharma. The advice for the wellbeing of the people is rooted in pragmatism, as he writes, "if people become impoverished, they become greedy and rebellious" (Rangarajan 1987:133). Kaultilya further pointed out that internal rebellion is more dangerous than the external one and therefore the interest of people should always be the priority of the king.

Artha: Wealth was the means and not the ends. This is what *Arthashastra* tells us. A good example of this is Kautilya's discussion on 'promotion of economic activity'. Kautilya writes that the king should augment his power by promoting the welfare of the people, for power comes from the countryside, which is the source of all economic activity. Rangarajan 1987:156). Natural calamities, disasters and epidemic: Kautilya's response to unforeseen calamities is also a pointer to how issues of human and socio-economic welfare were prioritized by the state. Kautilya writes, 'in times of calamities, the land should not only be capable of sustaining population, but also outsiders, when they come into the kingdom, in times of calamities' (Sinha 1971:11). Kautilya did foresee the linkage between natural disasters and potential conflicts and epidemics and environmental security came under the ambit of state security.

Thus, welfare of the people also included taking adequate health safety measures, as it was directly linked to the prosperity, stability and security of the state. Similarly, during famines, grains from royal stores were distributed, exemption of taxes was made, public works like road constructions were started for the unemployed, rich were heavily taxed and help for foreign countries was also sought. A common theme which runs across all the aforementioned points was that state interest was defined broadly in terms of the welfare of the population and justification of national interest was based on the fact that it was an extension of the interests of the people at large and the strength of the state is directly contingent on the welfare of the population.

In order to follow this framework, the king was advised to uphold certain codes of conduct. Following this code of conduct was essential to maintaining one's dominant status in the circle of states: the mandala. For instance on waging war, Kautilya wrote, "even in waging war, it is better to attack a unrighteous king than a righteous one" (Rangarajan 1987:548). Just behaviour also means that the king shall not take land that belonged to his ally, even if it is given to him by somebody else (Rangarajan 1987:548). On behaviour in warfare Kautilya wrote, "A king shall also behave in a just manner, towards a king that he has subjugated" (Rangarajan 1987:548).

Structures

If one moves on to the mandala theory one finds that the capacity of the state is important as it constituted the cornerstone of regulating order, which was contemplated for the external level. To read mandala theory without the state (in terms of its capacity and strength) is misplaced given the Kautilyan emphasis on the state. Mandala theory consisted of the circle of states, consisting of allies, enemies and neutrals. While there were 12 actors that have been identified, for clarity and broad relevance five independent actors existed. The five independent actors, which therefore need to be reckoned with are: the conqueror, (dominant state at the centre), the enemy, the ally the middle king and the neutral king. The rest of the categories were classified as per the sequence established for identifying enemies and allies. These actors were important as they acted as facilitators to measure the success of diplomacy. The intent of these actors determined the method to be employed. An important pointer in identifying the intent was the motivation of the actor and its internal cohesiveness – which is embodied in the seven constituent elements. The more proximate a particular state was to the saptanga theory, the more susceptible and aware was one to become of its motivation.

Power: Increasing one's power and increasing one's own happiness were outlined as the objectives of using power. Actors who increased one's power were therefore advised to become ones' allies. Intellectual, physical and morale power were three kinds of power. Kautilya also talked about relative power, for the relative power increased the bargaining power of the conqueror. Allies helped increase the relative power of the conqueror. Power also played an important role in choosing the six methods. The six methods were supposed to increase relative power.

Characteristics of an ally: common interest was the first principle for choosing an ally. Ability to help at times of need either through land, money or troops was the second characteristic. Desirable qualities of an ally according to Kautilyawere: controllability, constancy, ability to mobilize quietly and having troops concentrated in one place. The latter two could be read as one who has internal control and power, i.e. has all the six constituents of a state in place. Of controllability and constancy, the former was always preferred, as it increased the conqueror's relative power. However, between two allies, with one promising constancy but little help but the other controllable with little help, the former had to be preferred, as it was more sustainable.

Anarchy and order in IR theory

If one was to give a primary disciplinary primer in International Relations – anarchy as a concept would stand out in all its prominence. Kenneth Waltz, a neo-realist theorized anarchy as the central structural feature of

the international system. The anarchical nature of the international system, with no superior authority, thus made states fend for their own security and survival. The primary contribution of Kenneth Waltz (1979) was theorizing the international system, and Waltz successfully did so, by laying out three 'ordering principles' of the international system – anarchy, undifferentiated nature of states and distribution of power between states, making the character of the discipline strictly scientistic. The international system for Waltz was an independent variable, characterized by anarchy and self help. It gave rise to competition between states, often seeking to augment their power and enhance their security. One can therefore say Waltzian analysis leans more towards a descriptive-explanatory understanding of the international system.

Anarchy, as a concept, finds an important place in *Arthashastra* too. Known as matsyanyaya, it is central to the understanding of the idea behind the evolution of the state. However, the difference between the Waltzian and the Kautilyan notion of anarchy stems from an understanding of anarchy and order, where anarchy forms the starting point for the former; order was the starting point for the latter and a more composite, systemic and holistic treatment was given to it to illuminate the meaning of political at the internal and eternal level.

While the neorealistic understanding of anarchy forms a deterministic structure within which states operate and their political interests and identities (through a self-help mode) are primarily shaped up in such an anarchical environment, in *Arthashastra* the deterministic thrust is not placed so much on anarchy as it is on regulating and maintaining a order. Statecraft, strategy and diplomacy therefore get an emphatic thrust. This is an important departure point where *Arthashastra* differs from the neo-realist understanding. An appropriate example for arriving at this understanding is the spoke and hub analogy which Kautilya uses in Chapter 6. He writes, "Making the king separated by one intervening territory, the felly and those immediately proximate the spokes, the leader should stretch himself out as the hub in the circle of constituents. For the enemy situated between the two, the leader and ally, becomes easy to exterminate or to harass, even if strong" (Kangle 1999:320) One can sense the necessity of maintaining this order through the circle of states (mandala), in Kautilya's *Arthashastra*. The superiority and inferiority of state within the mandala was determined by not only alliances but also the other six constituent elements defining the state – where maintaining and preserving the constituent elements was the dharma (duty) of the state per se.

The aforementioned argument can be qualified by the evolutionary rationale which Hindu political thought offers for the existence of the state (an organizing unit), which as stated before primarily can be traced to the beginning of the Mauryan period. In this respect, the distinction, which scholars have made between the state and non-state become significant. As Sarkar writes, "this method was logical and well a historical. That is

in the first place, they (ancient thinkers) tried to investigate in what par-
ticulars the state analytically differs from the non-state; and in the second
place, they tried to picture to themselves, as to how the pre-statal condition
could be developed into the statal condition, i.e. how the state grew out of
the non-state" (Sarkar 1921:75). This understanding as Sarkar points out
was reflected in the concept of the *matsyanyaya* (the rule of the fishes –
the natural order where the big fish eats the small fish). The concept of
dharma, thus was precisely introduced as an antidote to avoid anarchy (or
matsyanyaya).[5] In this respect one can argue that dharma, rendered in the
terminology of order, thus becomes a natural corollary to understand how
the concept of anarchy or matsyanyaya in *Arthashastra* was addressed.
Order and therefore not anarchy is more instructive of understanding
Arthashastra.

As evident through the discussion above, the details provided by Kau-
tilya on sustaining order are significant. Order thus was not an arrange-
ment, which was fragile. The norms of order in *Arthashastra* were reflective
more as an instrument of grand philosophy (from the cosmic to the secular
domain) seeking to reconcile the desirable elements with the most feasi-
ble ones. The broad strategic objective was to augment and strengthen the
power of the state in the long term. The reflection of dharma, which becomes
preponderant to the maintenance of order within the circle of states, seems
to be particularly relevant in these terms.

Thus, the definition of morality, which emerges from *Arthashastra* is gov-
erned by upholding a certain form of order, which is duty based. This order
differentiates between the right and wrong and posits a specific argument
on what ought to be. The ought in this context is intertwined with the social
norms of behaviour, which in the political domain need to be preserved for
the regulation of society and polity. The primary objective of both statecraft
and governance was to advance this objective, the former was done by the
mandala theory, the latter was done by seven constituent elements of state.

Thus, when analysed from the frames of anarchy and order, Kautilya's
Arthashastra tilts towards the latter than the former. The primary reason
for this is the importance of dharma in *Arthashastra*, which becomes elicit
through details on the respective duties of the actors involved. Its outreach
ranged from the macro affairs to the everyday life. When it came to the
affairs of the state, these norms were reflective more as an instrument of
grand-strategy seeking to augment and strengthen the power of the state in
the long term. The invocation of 'dharma' for seeking legitimacy for one's
actions in the circle of states is also particularly relevant. Meanwhile the
importance of regulating order through an adaptive and a flexible approach
to strategy is suggestive of the grand strategic thought. The overarching
frame of dharma thus became a broad reference point for facilitating the
dialectical interaction with the relative idea of morality, power, state and
order in *Arthashastra*.

Epistemic value of dharma-based order

The epistemic value which order offers becomes significant because of three specific reasons: (a) it highlights a "different way of thinking" through which strategy was conceptualized, (b) it helps one to engage how the political was defined and judged and what critical lessons does it have to offer us and (c) it helps one to engage with the larger debate on dharma and order as discussed by some key thinkers during the anti-colonial movement.

Ways of thinking

A different way of thinking has inevitably been a motivation to explore the agency of non-western ideas. Bilkin notes,

> One explanation as to why 'Western' IR has produced relatively little about 'non-Western' ways of thinking about and doing world politics has to do with the disciplinary straitjacket imposed by IR as a social science, in that students of world politics have not been socialised into being curious about the 'non-West' but have been encouraged to explain away 'non-Western' dynamics by superimposing 'Western' categories.
>
> (Bilkin 2008:11)

The case of *Arthashastra* reifies this approach, as there is a general tendency amongst scholars to anchor the text to paradigms or mainstream IR or to trace the relevance of the text to contemporary settings. As has been argued above, the understanding of order bears a similarity to precepts enunciated by English school, where it is similar but is also different. In order to unpack the meaning of order in *Arthashastra* the concept of dharma becomes important as it was not only a disciplining concept, but also a primary precondition through which strategy could be operationalized and the meaning of duty, morality, power relativized. The system and dynamic approach to strategy resembling adaptability, outreach and flexibility were measures to ensure state survival and wellbeing. While the system approach ensured that information and communication was effectively communicated and not compartmentalized, it also considered the divide between the nature of state and statecraft artificial when it came to making sense of the international (external); the dynamic approach demanded flexibility and minimized rigidity in foreign policy as against a very stagnant diplomatic culture. It needs to be noted here that the mandala model was relevant to big states as it was to small ones. It needs to be noted that while Kautilyan mandala and techniques such as sadgunya policy and upayas are often invoked by scholars not much attention is given to the grand strategic design, which was hinged on systems approach and the method through which Kautilya's *Arthashastra* defined the political. Understanding this becomes important

for not only emancipating the secular approach embodied in *Arthashastra* but also highlighting the epistemic value of the text.

Definition of political

The definition of political emerges as a significant concept in *Arthashastra*, as it was stipulated a treatise on 'science of politics'. It would be appropriate to invoke here a lecture delivered by Professor Imtiaz Ahmed at South Asian University in 2015 as he reminded me of Kautilya's *Anviksiki*. In his words,

> I always say it is easy to be a Bangladeshi, Nepali, Pakistani or Sri Lankan but it is always difficult to be a South Asian. This is because you have to decontexualize yourself first. This is a challenge for this university, and you must challenge your mind.
>
> (Ahmed 2015)

This reference becomes significant because of the value it places on logical reasoning and more importantly on the methodology of reasoning. In a later work Ahmed (2017) revisited and elaborated on this theme by resorting to comparative techniques whereby highlighting the difference between Western and Asian dialectics. Arguing for a "serious appreciation of the diversity in dialectics including the contributions of the Chinese and Indian dialectics", he focused on the 'prasangika' method of Esther Solomon. According to Solomon, "*prasangika* method is the method of examining all possible alternative interpretations of the opponent's proposition, showing the absurdity of the respective consequences and thus refuting it" (Solomon cited in Ahmed 2017:158). He went further and discussed the nature of Indian and Chinese dialectics, and notes (quoting Solomon) that prasangika was used by Kautilya in *Arthashastra*. Solomon further writes, "this is precisely the reason why Kautilya comes up with manifold, often contradictory, strategies to secure the power of the *vijigisu*. *Danda* or coercion on the part of the latter *alone* will not do. At the same time, if the King "cannot wield power at all he gives rise to a situation in which Might is Right. He can command awe only by the discriminating use of power" (Solomon cited in Ahmed 2017:159). While Ahmed significantly contributes towards foregrounding the vocabulary of Indian dialectics as prasangika, the term 'anviksiki' as Kautilya himself defined it should be recognized. It was through the method of Anvikshiki that Kautilya defined the 'political' of his time, which was important for determining the limits and legitimizing and qualifying the actions of state and statecraft in a composite manner. The idea of a state was a response to cultural context of its time, where duties were underlined. These duties became the qualifier for rights. It is significant to remember that the objective of the state was rakshana (security from external aggression), palana (maintaining law and order) and yogakshema (welfare of the people), and techniques of statecraft

(six methods of foreign policy) were to facilitate and augment the objectives and capacity of the state. Kautilya arrives at these objectives not through ideological parochialism but through the means of dialectictical reasoning. In this regard, Kautilya's words need reiteration, when he says, "Anviksiki (philosophy) confers benefits on the people. It keeps the mind steady in adversity and prosperity and brings about proficiency in thought, speech and action" (The Kautilya *Arthashastra* 1.2.7:7). Thus, it was through the integrative analysis of philosophical schools (darshanas), guided by the lamp of anviksiki (philosophy) in Hindu political thought that Kautilya arrives at a holistic approach for defining the science of politics. The science of politics determined and delimited the objectives, ambition and legitimacy of the state.

This standpoint understanding of an anviksiki and its relationship with political is significant because it throws light on how strategy and philosophy naturalized the varna-karma dyad, considered to be twin pillars of dharmashastra tradition. However, given the plurality of traditions in contemporary India, any inspiration from Kautilyan understanding of state and statecraft would also demand that one resorts to the methodology of anviksiki which underlined the need of critical engagement for defining the political and the different interpretations that scholars have offered to the concept of dharma itself. Nanda's words become relevant as she calls out for the need of scientific temper which ancient India was identified with. In her words, "we in India cannot turn to our dominant religious (Hindu) traditions in search for an anchor for modern ideas. We have no option but to create new traditions on the foundation of minority, anti-brahamanical traditions which have been silenced for centuries" (Nanda 2001:25–55).

Dharma in *Arthashastra* and beyond

As would be evident from the discussion above, dharma assumed a relativist understanding in Kautilya's *Arthashastra*. It was a moralizing agency which underlined the responsibility and welfare policies, which a state was expected to deliver. S Radhakrishnan defines dharma as right action. In his words,

> in the Rig Veda, *rta* is the highest order of the universe. It stands for both the *satya* or the truth of things, as well as the *dharma* or the law of evolution. Dharma formed by the root *dhr*, to hold, means that which holds a thing and maintains it in being.
>
> (Radhakrishnan 1927:53–54)

The meaning of dharma has always been treated in a relative/interpretive manner, and has often been contextualized across temporal thresholds (precolonial and anti-colonial). Rabindranath Tagore's invocation of dharma

in most of his lectures and poems has conveyed the humanistic spirit which dharma is associated with. In the *Religion of Man*, Tagore writes,

> In the Sanskrit language, religion goes by the name of dharma, which in the deriative meaning implies the principle of relationship that holds us firm, and in its technical sense it means a virtue of a thing, the essential quality of it.
>
> (Tagore 1931:1178)

Tagore's invocation of dharma becomes significant because Tagore helps us to engage with the epistemic/civilizational value embedded in the term itself. Considering dharma as a 'natural property of Indian civilization and a path which India should follow', Tagore developed a critique of 'orthodox ritualism of Hindu religion and the oppressive discrimination through caste system' (Chatterjee 2011:275). Tagore's understanding of dharma was inspired from medieval Vaishnava poets and Bhakti-Sufi saints which emphasized the "revelation of human spirit" (Chatterjee 2011:273). This distinction comes out strongly in conversations between Tagore and Gandhi, where both are contemplating on the 'idea of state'.[6] This conversation, which was taking place in a special socio-historical moment of anti-colonialism, becomes significant because the post-westphalian notion of nation state was the dominant paradigm and both the thinkers were trying to reconcile forces of modernity and tradition. The disagreement on critical issues between Gandhi and Tagore is also reflective of the different epistemic traditions they were relying on. Kautilyan understanding of state can be a significant entry point of how material and spiritual were emphasized, an aspect amiss from the 'modular version' of European nation state. Thus, given the relevance of the topics discussed one needs to aware of the fact that Kautilyan state and statecraft was a pre-westphalian tradition and helps one to tease out nuances bereft of the European burden. In this context how Kautilya balances the pursuit of material interests by keeping the wellbeing of the people central to his grand-schema merits attention.

   While examples from the philosophical and intellectual traditions of South Asia can be numerous and also valuable in giving direction to the understanding of civilizations and regions, the value of the text lies in the interface between domestic and external policies and the central argument that the text brings forth is in terms of the purposive direction that the state needs to adorn itself with. Statecraft is but one element of the state and needs to be adaptive in response to domestic compulsions and external developments. A definition of political is established but comes with a qualification. The constitutive nature of concepts like power, state and order, merit attention in this context. What should be the logic of the state, and how should the definition of political be arrived at, particularly when contemporary South Asian states and societal forces are equally strong, are questions that need attention, and shall be discussed later. While the project of an imported

'nation-state' has complicated some of these questions, demanding that careful distinctions should be made between ethnic and civic nationalism, *Arthashastra*'s value as a text embedded in third century B.C., lies in emphasizing the continuities between state and statecraft and suggests that the two are not divorced from each other.

The definition of the political and a different way of thinking about order (inspired from the notion of dharma/duty) is indicative of how the feasibility and desirability of state and state craft was reconciled. It is also reminiscent of the fact that 'dharma' as the foundation has not been restricted to *Arthashastra*, but has been adapted, adopted and discussed to give a distinct meaning to the idea of state in anti-colonial times. Kautilyan's view of statecraft also highlights the consequences of the action of state to the 'well-being of people'. Without this holistic view, it was pointed out that the state will not be able to qualify as a superior state. While Tagore during the anti-colonial period developed a strong position against the nation, his call for 'dharma', which was the lynchpin of an ideal community needs to be taken into account while thinking about state and statecraft in an Indian context.

The question of 'culture of positivism' was raised in Chapter 1. Given the tradition of dharma in the Indian tradition, can a composite treatment to values generate a 'discourse that acknowledges the relationship between cognitive, institutional and social processes' (Hamati-Ataya 2011:261), which in a way was reconciled by Kautilya in a specific socio-historical moment?[7] This question is important, as it not only necessitates a critical engagement with traditions, to which Meera Nanda refers, but also tickles our imagination of state and statecraft.

Notes

1 It would be a mistake to restrict *Arthashastra* to a paradigm driven debate in international relations. In fact, an inter-paradigmatic treatment to the test would help understand the meaning of certain concepts and ideas articulated in the text. Xianglong Zhang's work is most appropriate here, who notes that general comparisions cannot be made at the level of ideas and concepts but can only be achieved through interparadigmatic conditions, where one has sharp awareness of boundaries from which one can attempt to achieve a situational communication with other paradigms (Bisht 2017:172–73). For a discussion on meta-narratives facilitating the discourse on IR theory, see Inanna Hamati-Ataya (2010).
2 This section has been drawn from my article published in *South Asian Survey*. See, Medha Bisht, "The Concept of 'Order' in *Arthashastra*: Re-engaging the Text", *South Asian Survey*, March 1, 2014, Sage.
3 An interesting parallel for these frames can be found in broad literature, which has emerged around the conceptualization of the English School of International Relations. This has been discussed in detail later.
4 The seven constituents of the state were the swami (effective leader), amatya (council of ministers), janapada (population), durga (forts-as defence), kosha (treasury), danda (military power) and mitra (ally). While the first six were the internal elements, the seventh was an external element, broadly related to diplomacy.

5 For a detailed analyses, see David Slaktor, "On Matsyanayaya: The State of Nature in Indian Thought", *Asian Philosophy: An International Journal of the Philosophical Traditions of the East*, 21(1), 2011.
6 The understanding of dharma and the imagination of the state for both the thinkers were very different. Gandhi talked about swaraj and Tagore of swadesh. Tagore was against the idea of a European nation as he considered it a homogenous/artificial construct. For him, the Indian civilization had always put emphasis on society (samaj), which was guided by dharma (duty towards others), as conceived by the people. His agreement with Gandhi was on 'soul force'-atmashakti and 'where he agreed was to extend the political battle in to the battle of mind and inner powers' (Bhattacharya 1997:25). Tagore also opposed Gandhi's understanding of dharma as duty and wrote that, "we cannot join this struggle by relying on the besotted, entranced, blind force of obedience that is at the root of all miseries and indignities of this country" (Tagore 1960:303 cited in Chatterjee 2011).
7 Innana suggests that reflexivity can help in understanding and analysing the world. According to her reflexivism is a systematic socio-cognitive practice of reflexivity and reflexivity is a scholar's conceptual and methodological response to the acknowledgement of mutual reflexivity of knowledge and reality (Inanna 2010:261).

9   Conclusion

So far, I have argued that it is important to understand the notion of order in *Arthashastra*. The analytical framework of Systems Theory was employed to put into perspective a web-based approach which is used in Kautilyan strategic design. The use of English school as a *via media*[1] avoiding extremes of liberals, revolutionists, or the realist view of international relations, is significant in terms of theorizing concepts available in the text because of its flexibility to engage with the role of ideas and its openness to socio-cultural interaction between different cultures. The agency of non-western ideas, with existing literature around migration and diffusion of ideas and concepts merit attention and open pathways for exploring concepts which emerge in classical texts.

Kautilya's *Arthashastra* underlines an interactionist approach, which can be broadly inferred from the operative principles as mentioned and recognizing the characteristic of "minimum solidarity" to which Modelski refers. The emphasis on the characteristic and role of the ally (Mitra) is significant in determining the nature of the 'other' or defining the nature of the enemy. The identification of the enemy as someone who was a threat to the order of state is significant. Any threat to the order was considered to be ari (enemy) or kantaka (obstacle). The nature and deliberation on 'what is political' again reappears and is tied to the logic of the state, where the welfare of the people (yogakshema) was paramount, as the order of the state was contingent on the loyalty of the people. The critical understanding of order, as discussed before, is significant here, and draws attention to the details of micro perspectives informing the meta narrative. Kautilyan networked approach of specifying and regulating the markers of the seven constituent elements and defining power in terms of state capacity and statecraft in terms of the needs of the state holds significance for revealing the intertwined nature of internal (governance) and external (statecraft).

However, a cautious note needs to be introduced here that in classical India the boundaries were fluid and did not resemble the borders of a modern state. Therefore, while survival was important, interaction between states was also marked by a web of cultural relationships. The reference to

dharmashastras in a Hindu society helped create an inter-subjective under-standing towards a specified code of conduct. What should be the code of conduct for contemporary Indian state? On what lines should an inter-subjective understanding be cultivated? While the Constitution embodies the values for safeguarding the rights and duties of modern Indian society, it becomes the duty of the elected government to safeguard these values by upholding the rule of law. Any deviation will not only reduce the capacity of state, but will also interfere with its external policies.

Significant literature has been written on the espionage system of Arthashatra, however the web-based understanding of mandala (the hub and spoke model) needs elaboration. *Arthashastra* offers a useful entry point for a web-based strategy, focusing on surviving well in the system of states. However, meeting the internal needs and augmenting the capacity of the state was the foremost priority and all strategies of statecraft were directed towards meeting this end. The hub and spoke model underlines the value of strategic connections between important nodes which needed to be engaged with. Kautilya in introducing the concept of mandala writes, "making the king separated by one intervening territory, the felly and those immediately proximate the spokes, the leader should stretch himself out as the hub in the circle of constituents. For the enemy situated between the two, the leader and ally, becomes easy to exterminate or to harass, even if strong."[2] Reflec-tive of the strategy of encirclement, one can thus perceive the awareness and the necessity of maintaining this order through the circle of states (man-dala). While this can be considered as strategies for maintaining hegemony (which is partially true, as Kautilya cautions that rise and fall from domi-nant to inferior status is natural), it should be open for interpretation. The power of encirclement was greatly determined by the alliances and capacity of individual states and the capacity of their constituent elements. This is because it is mentioned in *Arthashastra* that the superiority and inferiority of the state within the mandala was determined not only by the alliances but also through the other six constituent elements defining the state – which were categorical in giving meaning, capacity and substance to the Kautilyan political system. The six measures of foreign policy (relational tactics or rep-ertoire of tactics) were specifically instrumental in this regard, as they had to be utilized vis à vis the superior and the inferior status of the state in the mandala, and gave an actor a relational influence over the adversary. The mandala was therefore known as prakritimandalam, i.e., the 12 kings and their constituent elements and this was the basis of the six measures of for-eign policy. The interrelation between state and statecraft is a useful insight, which needs to be reckoned with. Given the mixed actor world, that marks the twenty-first century, non-state actors and non-traditional threats need to be addressed through a flexible and a networked response and web-craft of Kautilya could offer insights on this account.

An important insight from *Arthashastra* relates to the nature of conversa-tion between western IR and non-western IR. The arguments in the book

cautions one to refrain from a binary understanding, and in fact perceive *Arthashastra* as a strategic text. What the Kautilyan conceptualization of order underlines is the relevance of identifying certain processes, which necessitates interaction between various actors. Kautilya used the Hindu philosophical narrative for defining and extracting the meaning of order, stability and balance. India has been a witness to multiple narratives. It would be interesting to explore how these multiple narratives investigate the meaning of order. Is there a possibility to understand terms such as trust, authority, morality, power in isolation? The dialectical method of *Arthashastra* would caution against any fixity and definitional purity. Compartmentalizing west and non-west therefore appears to be a futile approach as a conversation/dialectics/reasoned argument between the two can be a more enriching exercise for informing the conceptual layers one requires for understanding the constitutive nature of order in international relations.

Systems theory, as the grand design is largely instructive to understand the interdependent relationship that has been emphasized to study the relationship between the parts and the whole, and offers useful insights into the inter-twining of the micro with the macro. The interdependence between the internal and external policies emphasize the holistic approach one needs to keep in mind when crafting the grand objective for the state. The analyses in a literal sense could be useful for small states or well-coordinated policies between the various organs (institutions and actors) within a state. The objective of the state was largely determined as providing security and ensuring the welfare of the subjects, as this was considered to strengthen the capacity of the state in the long term. In order to regulate the role of various actors in the political system, strict regulatory measures were prescribed and punishments stipulated, in case of a deviance. Rules and discipline (be it for the king, the bureaucracy or the common people) were laid down to attain an individual and group synergy in societal cohesion. In many ways the relationship between the self and the other was closely coordinated and regulated. The use of power was thus closely associated to regulate political and social order. The interconnected again emphasizes a networked approach to governance and diplomacy, which are the twin edges of the same sword. A divorce between the two is negating the Kautilyan wisdom on state and statecraft.

The strategic insights of *Arthashastra* are therefore found in the broad framework which reads state and statecraft together. The end goal which defined this strategic design was the stability of the system. The distinct nature of dialectical reasoning being used to give meaning to power, order, state and statecraft by highlighting the concept of dharma (as duty) as an overarching reference point becomes instructive for many reasons. First, it helps in highlighting the core foundational principles that should guide the matters of state and statecraft. In the case of *Arthashastra*, justice did not mean fairness but emphasized doing one's required duty as per stipulated by dharmashastras. The use of dharmashastra was instrumental in creating

an inter-subjective understanding. The distinct cultural and contextual understanding of order needs to be put into perspective. What also merits attention are the variants of power (intellectual, physical and spiritual), which becomes relevant for arriving at a comprehensive and also relativist definition of power. Falling broadly under the cognitive-cultural framework one can point out that the normative underpinnings of order in *Arthashastra* have to be read within the existing contextual philosophical frames of Hindu political thought and tradition. *Arthashastra* also needs to be read as a strategic tradition in its own terms, which stood at the intersection of both philosophy and strategy. The relativist understanding that gives meaning to morality, order and power mediated by the state is indeed important. It is of course a question whether this strategic tradition survived in post-colonial India, given the over bearing impact that colonization had on political ideas.

Arthashastra does offer value for understanding patterns which were employed for defining the political at the internal and external level. Factors which ordered a cohesive society were highlighted but were logically argued while keeping the cultural context of classical India in mind. It also highlighted here that *Arthashastra* is only one such narrative and there were other competing narratives (example Buddhism).[3] These need to be explored as cannons and classics play a useful textual resource for exploring the meanings and vocabularies in which pluralist traditions are embedded.

Notes

1 Barry Buzan, *An Introduction to the English School of International Relations*, Malden: Polity Press, 2014, pp. 5–6.
2 R.P. Kangle, *The Kautilya Arthashastra*, Part II, Delhi: Motilal Banarsi Das, 2014, Book 2, Chapter 6, p. 320.
3 A contrast between Upayas (means) and Sakushal Upayas (skilful means) merits attention in this regard.

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