HINDU THEORIES OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

In Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

In

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND DIPLOMACY

By

GOVINDA KUMAR SHAH

Ph.D. Reg. No. 72/075 Magh

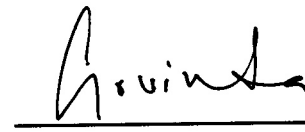
Tribhuvan University

Kathmandu, Nepal

December 2025

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this PhD dissertation titled 'Hindu Theories of International Relations' is my original work and has not been presented previously, in full or in part, for the award of any other degree or diploma, either in my name or in the name of any other person, at this university or at any other institution or university. Except where otherwise specified, the content of this dissertation is the product of my own research and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, does not include material published or written by another person without proper citation. I have conducted my research and prepared this dissertation in fulfilment of the requirements of Tribhuvan University (TU) and in accordance with its guidelines for ethical scholarship. The information contained in this dissertation, including any errors, whether arising from my own oversight or from the use of technology, is entirely my responsibility. Any fabrication of information or plagiarism will be regarded as a major academic misconduct and may lead to disciplinary action, including the revocation of my degree and the withdrawal of this dissertation.



Name: Govinda Kumar Shah

Date: 16 December 2025

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

We hereby certify that this dissertation entitled **'Hindu Theories of International Relations'** was prepared by Govinda Kumar Shah under our guidance. We, therefore, recommend this dissertation for the final examinations by the Research Committee of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University, in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** in **International Relations and Diplomacy**.

Dissertation Committee

Prof. Dr. Khadga K.C.

Supervisor

Dr. Govinda Sharan Upadhayaya

Co-supervisor

Date: 16 December 2025

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES

Office of the Dean

Kirtipur, Kathmadu

APPROVAL LETTER

The dissertation entitled **"Hindus Theories of International Relations"** was submitted by **Mr. Govinda Kumar Shah** for final examination to the Research Committee of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University, in fulfillment of the requirements for the **Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in International Relations and Diplomacy.** I hereby certify that the Research Committee of this Faculty has found the dissertation satisfactory in scope and quality and has therefore accepted it for the degree.

.....

Prof. Dubi Nanda Dhakal, PhD
Dean, and Chairperson
Research Committee
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Tribhuvan University, Nepal

Date: 31 January 2026

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Prof. Dr. Khadga K.C., and my co-supervisor, Dr. Govinda Sharan Upadhyaya, for their mentoring and support throughout this study. Their profound expertise, guidance, and commitment to my academic journey were instrumental in the completion of this dissertation. I am also indebted to Prof. Dr. Dubi Nanda Dhakal, Dean, and Dr. Khom Raj Kharel, Assistant Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, whose institutional backing was vital to the realisation of this research.

This study would not have achieved its objectives without the invaluable contributions of several distinguished figures from academia, diplomacy, and the Hindu polity. I first express my sincere gratitude to Prof. Dr. Nirmal Mani Adhikari for his inspiration in undertaking this study, and to Mr. Arun Kumar Subedi for granting access to his personal library of Vedic texts and for his valuable guidance in interpreting these sources. I extend my gratitude to Shankar Bhandari, Member of Parliament of Nepal, whose insights provided critical context and vigour to my work. I am similarly grateful to Dr. Deepak Adhikari, Chief of the Publicity Department of the Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh Nepal, for his intellectual generosity.

In addition, I sincerely thank Dr. Rajendra Bimal, Professor at Tribhuvan University, whose intellectual input and experience strengthened the academic quality of this research. I also acknowledge Dr. Aswari Bapat, Director of the Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre, Kathmandu, whose perspectives contributed to the philosophical dimensions of this study. The completion of this work was made possible through the expert guidance provided by these esteemed individuals.

ABSTRACT

The academic discipline of international relations (IR) has historically been dominated by West-centric materialist paradigms, marginalising non-Western epistemologies and normative frameworks. The dissertation addresses the epistemological gap by constructing structurally coherent Hindu theories of international relations, ontologically grounded in the foundational texts of the ancient Vedic Saṁhitās. Utilising a qualitative theory-building research design, the study synthesises Gadamerian philosophical hermeneutics with the indigenous Hindu exegetical science of Mīmāṃsā to systematically extract macro-political principles from the Ṛgveda, Yajurveda, and Atharvaveda. The textual analysis is further triangulated with qualitative interviews conducted with elite diplomatic and philosophical experts. The research initiates a fundamental ontological shift within the discipline, replacing the concept of a competitive and anarchic void with Ṛta (Cosmic order) as the primary ordering principle of the international system. From this cosmocentric baseline, the study formulates three distinct, interrelated theories. First, the Ṛta Rāṣṭra (Righteous State) theory redefines the sovereign state as a conditionally legitimate and functional vessel mandated to execute cosmic justice, structurally constrained by epistemic councils and collective civic duty. Second, the Sahakārya Mitratā (Coaction Alliance) theory conceptualises international partnerships not as fragile and threat-balancing marriages of convenience, but as enduring collaborations driven by ideational convergence and the equitable sharing of global resources. Third, the Anṛta Yuddha (Chaos War) theory reframes armed conflict as a highly regulated and restorative intervention against systemic entropy (Anṛta), rejecting the normalisation of warfare as a rational policy instrument. A comparative analysis demonstrates that while the Vedic framework converges with Western theories on certain institutional mechanisms, it diverges by operating on a logic of appropriateness and cosmic determinism rather than strict

rational egoism. Ultimately, the dissertation concludes that Hindu IR theories advance the "Global IR" agenda, offering a normative framework uniquely equipped to address twenty-first-century existential crises through the institutionalisation of collective cosmic duty.

Keywords: Global IR, Vedic Saṁhitās, Ṛta, Anṛta, Sahakārya Mitratā, Hindu philosophy, international relations

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

IR	International Relations
RV	Ṛgveda
YV	Yajurveda
SV	Sāmaveda
AV	Atharvaveda
SKM	Sahakārya Mitratā
AY	Anṛta Yuddha

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

This dissertation is dedicated to the systematic formulation of Hindu theories of international relations (IR), epistemologically grounded in ancient Hindu scriptures, with a precise focus on the Vedic Saṁhitās. It builds on Acharya and Buzan's (2010) call to move beyond West-centric foundations in IR by analysing selected parts of the Hindu scriptures as primary sources for IR theory.

The ancient Hindu scriptures encompass a temporally expansive corpus, including the Vedas, the Purāṇas, the Smṛtis, the Sūtras, the Rāmāyaṇa, and the Mahābhārata. Within this corpus, the Vedas are the earliest and foundational texts of Hindu tradition.

The Vedas comprise four texts: the Ṛgveda, Yajurveda, Sāmaveda, and Atharvaveda, each consisting of four layers: Saṁhitās, Brāhmaṇas, Āraṇyakas, and Upaniṣads. This study focuses exclusively on the Saṁhitās because they are the earliest textual layer. Among them, the Ṛgveda, Yajurveda, and Atharvaveda were examined in detail, while the Sāmaveda was excluded because it primarily preserves existing material rather than extending the conceptual framework. The Saṁhitās of the RV, YV, and AV, therefore, provide the epistemic base and the normative framework for the theoretical constructions in the field of IR.

This study is confined to the Vedic Saṁhitās for two main methodological reasons. First, a full study of the Hindu canon was not feasible within the scope of a single doctoral dissertation. Second, the Saṁhitās are the most foundational layer of the tradition and therefore provide the clearest basis for theory construction. The Saṁhitās were selected not only for their chronological primacy but also for their conceptual abstraction, which enables

the extraction of systemic principles applicable to IR theory. Hermeneutic engagement with this foundational corpus permitted an interpretation of the metaphysical and normative bases of Hindu thought in its original and unmediated form. This provided a basis for formulating Hindu theories of international relations.

At its core, this dissertation is situated within a broader structural critique of the IR discipline, which has historically privileged Western political thought and historical experiences in the construction of its theoretical canon (Shilliam, 2010). Although the dominant theories of IR claim universal explanatory power, the processes through which these theories have been constructed historically privilege the experiences, interactions, and strategic practices of Western states (Schmidt, 2010).

As a result, non-Western intellectual traditions, including the Hindu tradition, have remained marginal to the mainstream IR canon despite their long-standing engagement with questions of power, order, diplomacy, and warfare. Over the past two and a half decades, this West-centric orientation has been increasingly challenged by scholars calling for greater epistemological diversity and theoretical pluralism within the discipline (Acharya & Buzan, 2010). Despite this attempt at a paradigm shift towards a "Global IR", significant theoretical gaps have persisted in formulating formal IR models from indigenous or scriptural traditions such as the Hindu tradition.

To address this historical exclusion of non-Western scholarship from the IR mainstream, the dissertation contributes to debates on decolonising IR by theorising international relations through the Vedic Saṁhitās. It treats these texts as serious intellectual sources rather than as historical curiosities.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

As a discipline, IR seeks to explain how states preserve sovereignty, establish diplomatic structures, form alliances, confront adversaries, manage balances of power, maintain economic interdependence, and prevent systemic conflict. IR theories function as analytical and normative tools for states, shaping their interactions within the international system and interpreting global events. Accordingly, the discipline aspires to develop theories that operate simultaneously as analytical mechanisms and normative guides.

The IR discipline explicitly concerns itself with the global arena, but its theoretical architecture remains conditioned by historical experiences and philosophical understandings from the West. This narrow epistemological orientation has produced IR theories that overlook alternative ontologies, ethical systems, and civilisational perspectives originating from non-Western intellectual traditions. While the dominant IR theories, such as realism and liberalism, claim universal applicability, their theoretical construction has disproportionately privileged Western historical experiences, particularly European state formation, the Westphalian system of sovereignty, and the dynamics of great power politics. This methodological bias has relegated non-Western intellectual traditions to the margins of the mainstream IR canon. Therefore, the West-centric orientation of IR faces sustained critique from scholars who demand greater theoretical inclusiveness and argue that a discipline tasked with explaining international interactions must draw its conceptual resources globally.

Consequently, there have been scholarly attempts to explore non-Western contributions, including engagement with Confucian political thought, Islamic political philosophy, and classical Indian strategic traditions. However, most existing work focuses on critique, historical recovery, or selective incorporation rather than on building distinct

theories grounded in non-Western traditions. In the specific context of Hindu political thought, existing studies prioritised texts such as Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra and the Mahābhārata, interpreting them through established Western theoretical lenses such as structural realism and strategic rationalism. As a result, the broader and normatively significant scriptural foundations of the Hindu tradition remained analytically marginalised within IR scholarship.

This situation presented a significant research problem. While ancient Hindu scriptures encompass a vast and sophisticated corpus, scholarly engagement rarely extends to systematic theorisation based on the Vedic Saṁhitās, the earliest layer of the Hindu intellectual tradition. This limited engagement resulted in fragmented conceptual discussions rather than coherent theory-building. Concurrently, contemporary global challenges, including transnational ecological crises, technological transformations, and evolving forms of asymmetric warfare, have exposed the philosophical limitations of strictly materialist and power-oriented IR theories. The exclusion of normative dimensions resulted in a structural limitation within the discipline, particularly when addressing complex global problems that transcend material power calculations.

While the Vedic texts contain systematic reflections on the rāṣṭra (state), diplomacy, war, justice, and cosmic order, these concepts were not systematically theorised into theories of international relations. This problem was twofold: first, a methodological gap existed in engaging with the Vedic Saṁhitās as authoritative sources of IR theory; second, insufficient effort had been made to translate Vedic philosophical insights into core IR categories, such as sovereignty, collective security, and systemic order. Consequently, the existing body of IR knowledge remained constrained, lacking frameworks that integrate ethical, ecological, and civilisational dimensions.

Therefore, this study identifies, interprets, and synthesises concepts from the Vedic Saṁhitās to formulate Hindu theories of international relations

1.3 Research Questions

To systematically address the identified epistemological gap and guide the hermeneutic interpretation of the Vedic Saṁhitās in the formulation of original theories of international relations, this dissertation is structured to answer the following research questions:

1. What original Hindu theories of international relations can be formally constructed from the foundational concepts contained in the Vedic Saṁhitās?
2. How do these formulated Hindu theories of international relations analytically converge with, or theoretically diverge from, the established mainstream Western paradigms of international relations?
3. How do these formulated Hindu theories of international relations constitute a viable normative framework for addressing contemporary international challenges?

1.4 Research Objectives

The broad objective of this study was to challenge the Western boundaries of the discipline by developing theories of international relations formulated and grounded in Vedic ontology and epistemology. The specific objectives of the research were as follows:

1. To formulate three distinct Hindu theories of international relations by extracting and systematising the foundational concepts of the Vedic Saṁhitās.

2. To evaluate the theoretical intersections between newly formed Hindu theories and the dominant Western IR theories, specifically realism and liberalism.
3. To analyse the normative utility and explanatory value of Hindu theories of international relations in addressing contemporary international affairs.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study contributes to IR theory by addressing the structural limitations of existing frameworks overwhelmingly shaped by Western historical and philosophical contingencies (Acharya & Buzan, 2010). By conceptualising international relations through Hindu philosophical concepts, it challenges the hegemony of Western theoretical frameworks. Through this approach, the findings of this study contribute to the ongoing "Global IR" movement, which seeks to broaden the epistemic foundations of the discipline and to institutionalise non-Western traditions as primary sources of international political thought.

In particular, the study advances theory-building by formally introducing Vedic concepts that have remained overlooked within conventional IR discourse. The study integrates ethical, philosophical, and normative dimensions directly into the structural analysis of international relations by undertaking a systematic hermeneutic engagement with the Vedic Saṁhitās. This shift in foundational axioms enables a more holistic understanding of international phenomena, moving the discipline beyond the constraints of materialist, rationalist, and power-oriented IR theories.

The study also enhances the relevance and applicability of IR theories in non-Western contexts. As global power becomes increasingly multipolar and states from the Global South assume more prominent roles in shaping international affairs, it is strategically and academically essential to engage with diverse ontological perspectives on international order.

Therefore, the study is conducted to support a more culturally context-sensitive understanding of interstate interactions by incorporating Indigenous Hindu philosophical insights.

In conclusion, the findings of this study offer a systematic theoretical framework for IR scholars, foreign policy analysts, and diplomats, providing the intellectual groundwork for subsequent research seeking to validate alternative non-Western perspectives in IR theory.

1.6 Delimitations of the Study

The conceptualisation of Hindu theories of international relations as a normative framework is a complex scholarly undertaking. Therefore, this study required specific boundaries to ensure analytical depth and methodological rigour. The Hindu corpus of texts is expansive, encompassing a multitude of ancient texts ranging from the Vedas to the Purāṇas, the Śāstras, the Smṛtis, the Rāmāyaṇa, and the Mahābhārata. While several of these texts contain valuable reflections on foreign policy, diplomacy, and normative conduct, examining the entirety of the corpus is methodologically unfeasible within the scope of a single doctoral dissertation. Consequently, this study is delimited exclusively to the Vedas. In particular, the research focused exclusively on the Saṁhitās of the Ṛgveda, the Yajurveda, and the Atharvaveda to formulate and explain Hindu theories of international relations, excluding later extensions of the Vedic texts from the primary textual analysis.

Methodologically, the study was delimited to qualitative research approaches. It relied on the hermeneutic interpretation of relevant Vedic verses drawn from the Saṁhitās, triangulated with in-depth qualitative interviews conducted with selected stakeholders in Hindu philosophy and diplomacy. The study does not employ quantitative methodologies, as the theorisation of international relations from a cosmological and philosophical foundation is

primarily concerned with conceptual extraction, theory framing, and normative analysis, rather than empirical measurement or statistical correlation.

1.7 Operational Definitions

To ensure analytical clarity and academic precision throughout the dissertation, the following key terms and concepts have been operationally defined:

1. **Hindu:** Within the context of this dissertation, 'Hindu' denotes the highly varied intellectual, philosophical, and scriptural traditions originating from the Indian subcontinent. Rather than denoting a narrow religious dogma, the term represents a civilisational and intellectual heritage encompassing political, ethical, and social viewpoints directly applicable to international relations.
2. **Ṛta:** Ṛta is defined as the cosmic and moral order that regulates both the universe and human behaviour. In IR terms, it embodies a global, systemic principle of equilibrium, equity, and natural justice that functions as a prerequisite for legitimate governance, sustainable international relations, and planetary welfare.
3. **Anṛta:** Anṛta is defined as the systemic condition of disorder and normative breakdown in the international system, characterised by injustice, disequilibrium, illegitimacy, and the erosion of ethical constraints governing state behaviour.
4. **Rāṣṭra:** Rāṣṭra is delineated as a sovereign political entity characterised by a defined administrative authority. While historically referring to ancient kingdoms and empires, in this study, it is operationally defined as the equivalent of the modern state operating within the international system.

1.8 Organisation of the Study

This dissertation is systematically structured into seven chapters to provide a logical progression from the identification of the problem to the formulation and comparative analysis of the new theories. Chapter One serves as the introduction, presenting the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the research questions and objectives, the significance, and the delimitations. Chapter Two comprises the literature review, critically examining Western IR theories and the existing groundwork for Hindu IR frameworks. Chapter Three outlines the research methodology and hermeneutic procedures. Chapters Four, Five, and Six constitute the core analytical chapters. Chapter Four formally establishes the three original Hindu theories of international relations. Chapter Five provides a theoretical intersection between the Hindu and Western theories of IR. Chapter Six discusses the normative applications and contributions of the theories to contemporary global challenges. Finally, Chapter Seven synthesises the findings, offering concluding observations and identifying avenues for future scholarly research.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theories of international relations (IR) provide the lenses through which international political events can be interpreted, predicted, or even governed. These theories offer normative and analytical frameworks for explaining the behaviour of states, the nature of leadership, and the dynamics within global politics. An understanding of IR theories becomes essential for perceiving the cognitive orientations of policymakers, the structural constraints of states, and the foundational assumptions of foreign policy.

Waltz (1979) defines IR theory as a tool for explaining the laws of international politics and for understanding the recurrent patterns of national behaviour driven by structural constraints on states. From the perspective of the English School, Wight (1991) explains IR theory as a tradition of speculation regarding the relations among sovereign states. Wight emphasises the struggle for material power, the socio-structural nature of international society, and the normative possibility of a cohesive world community. Building on this, Hollis and Smith (1991) interpret IR theory as an attempt to explain the systemic structural outcomes of global politics from the outside, while simultaneously understanding the cognitive workings of domestic actors from the inside.

IR as an academic discipline can be categorised into two central paradigms: realism and liberalism (Gold & McGlinchey, 2017). Although these classical paradigms have been challenged by many critical interventions, such as constructivism, Marxism, post-structuralism, and feminism, they remain the prominent theoretical traditions in both academic discourse and foreign policy practice. Realism is recognised as a theory of power that underscores structural competition, insecurity, and zero-sum calculations among states.

Liberalism is regarded as a theory of institutionalised cooperation, economic gains, and mutually beneficial outcomes.

The two contrasting theories provide distinct lenses for understanding the mechanics of IR. Realism emphasises conflict, the survival of the state, and military security. Liberalism emphasises the positive effects of international institutions, democratic norms, and mutual economic interdependence. Despite their differences, both theories shape debates within IR academia and establish the boundaries of systematic enquiry. As a result, an examination of both realism and liberalism remains a prerequisite for understanding dominant approaches to IR and justifying the necessity of alternative theoretical frameworks, alongside exposure to their West-centric limitations.

2.1 Realism

The theory of realism remains the most widely utilised theoretical lens within the discipline of IR. It asserts that the maximisation of material power is the primary mechanism required to ensure the security and survival of a state. Realism positions the defence of a state's existence as the foremost priority of leadership, often subordinating universal ethical or humanitarian concerns. The paradigm rests upon the conception that international politics is anarchic. Anarchy does not imply a chaotic disorder in the realist lens; rather, it signifies the absence of a central authority capable of regulating the behaviour of states, enforcing agreements, or dispensing justice within the international system (Waltz, 1979).

The international system is considered structurally anarchic. Unlike hierarchically arranged domestic governments with a monopoly on the legitimate use of force, no global authority exists to regulate any of the sovereign states. This is the structural distinction that differentiates international politics from domestic politics. In the absence of a global

sovereign capable of enforcing international law, the international system operates as a self-help system (Waltz, 1979). As a result, each state remains responsible for protecting its population, resources, and territorial integrity against any adversaries.

Within this anarchic structure of the international system, states are treated as the central, unitary, and rational actors in international politics. Waltz (1979) argues that states are the only entities capable of exercising sovereign authority over a defined territory that possesses the material capacity to project military force. Consequently, the central actors within a state, such as political executives, military leaders, and strategic elites, play a decisive role in shaping international outcomes. Their strategic decisions influence global events, international engagements, and the distribution of capabilities. Therefore, classical realists reduce the complexities of international politics to the actions, reactions, and power calculations of sovereign states (Morgenthau, 1948).

Power occupies a central position in realist thought. Drawing upon classical English political philosophy, Hobbes (1651/2004) asserts that coercive power is the only certainty in a world devoid of overarching authority. International organisations and international laws lack independent enforcement capabilities and exist only when powerful states consent to them (Waltz, 1979; Mearsheimer, 2001). Other realist theorists concur that states pursue their national interests primarily through the maximisation of relative power for self-defence (Mearsheimer, 2001). In this Hobbesian worldview, survival becomes the primary objective of all political action. Accordingly, Kaarbo and Ray (2011) explain foreign policy as an expression of the state's rational desire to maintain, safeguard, or augment its material power relative to competing states.

Realist theory has evolved through several variations that seek to pinpoint the sources of power and the causes of conflict in international relations. Classical realism traces international conflict directly to human nature and the inherent desire for dominance. Its main contributors include Carr (1939), Morgenthau (1948), Kennan (1951), Niebuhr (1932), and Herz (1950). According to classical realists, human behaviour is flawed, insecure, and driven by an egoistic pursuit of power, leading to a pessimistic view of interactions among sovereign states. Morgenthau (1948) outlines six principles of classical realism, which are as follows:

1. Politics is governed by objective laws inherent in human nature: since rules cannot change, one must understand them.
2. International politics is fundamentally driven by the pursuit of power.
3. The power of the state can vary, but the concept of interest is universally valid.
4. Political realism is aware of the moral significance of political action.
5. Political realism does not identify the moral aspirations of a particular state.
6. The policy must strictly derive from political analysis.

Subsequent developments in realism shifted its attention away from human nature towards the macro-structure of the international system. Waltz (1959) categorises the causes of conflict into three images: the individual, the state, and the international system. The third image was later expanded to formalise structural realism, which was referred to as neorealism. This approach emphasises the decisive role of structural constraints of the international system in shaping outcomes and downplays the role of domestic and individual-level variables. Waltz (1979) asserts that anarchy in the international system functions as a systemic ordering principle rather than merely a permissive cause of war. These arguments laid the foundation for neorealism by focusing on the distribution of material capabilities

across the system, minimising human behaviour or domestic political ideologies as secondary variables.

Mearsheimer (2001) further develops offensive realism within structural realism. Mearsheimer argues that the uncertainty of an adversary's intentions in an anarchic system compels great powers to maximise their relative power continuously, with the goal of achieving regional hegemony. In contrast to defensive realists, who argue that states merely seek sufficient power to maintain the status quo, offensive realists posit that the structure of the system encourages aggressive expansion as the best guarantee of survival.

Neoclassical realism emerged as a response to the rigidity of neorealism. Rose (1998) highlights the role of agency, elite perception, and domestic politics in shaping state behaviour. While accepting the constraints imposed by the anarchic international system, neoclassical realists argue that domestic political structures, leadership perceptions, and bureaucratic decision-making processes mediate how states respond to structural constraints. States seek to maximise power within the international system, but their specific foreign policy actions are shaped by internal interpretations of external realities (Mearsheimer, 2001). As a result, specific foreign policy outcomes cannot be solely explained by macro-structural factors. The explanations require a multi-level analytical approach.

Neoclassical realism challenges the assumption of objective, rational behaviour that underpinned Waltzian neorealism. Scholars emphasise the cognitive limitations of human judgment in decision-making. Miscalculations of an adversary's intentions, capabilities, and systemic threats frequently escalate conflicts unnecessarily, creating security dilemmas (Jervis, 1976). Domestic political organisations, social pressures, and leadership styles also influence how states interpret and respond to global or regional developments. Therefore,

decision-making in international relations is influenced by domestic political dynamics, acting as an intervening variable between systemic pressures and state behaviour (Walt, 1987). This perspective broadens the explanatory scope of realism by integrating structural constraints with domestic variables.

Despite its prominence, realism has been subject to substantial academic criticism from many theoretical traditions. Critics argue that realism exhibits myopia by overemphasising anarchy as the primary cause of war while overlooking other political, economic, normative, and sociological factors (Lebow, 2003; Wendt, 1992) . Realism strictly treats the state as the primary actor in IR, disregarding the influence of non-state actors such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs), multinational corporations, and transnational communities (Keohane & Nye, 1977). This rigid, state-centric focus limits realism's analytical ability to explain the complex, interdependent realities of contemporary international relations.

Further critiques target the ontological assumptions underlying realist theory. Realists assume that states behave as rational egoists (Waltz, 1979; Mearsheimer, 2001); however, domestic political complexity and chaotic policy-making processes often produce sub-optimal outcomes. Constructivists challenge the neorealist assumption that anarchy automatically dictates self-help and competition. Wendt (1992, p. 395) argued that 'anarchy is what states make of it', suggesting that state identities and interests are socially constructed rather than structurally predetermined. Realism is also criticised for presenting a pessimistic view of the international system by emphasising conflict and relative gains while neglecting opportunities for institutionalised cooperation (Bull, 1977). These limitations have generated sustained debate within IR scholarship.

Realism has also been criticised for its materialist conception of power and its limited engagement with ethical concerns. Critics argue that realism privileges military power and economic coercion while overlooking the soft power derived from cultural attraction, diplomatic legitimacy, and normative influence (Nye, 2008). Methodological difficulties further challenge realist propositions, as realism often lacks adequate empirical tools to test complex ideational variables (Lebow, 2003). Moreover, realism tends to legitimise militarism in the name of state survival while remaining silent on human rights and the violence inflicted upon marginalised populations (Lebow, 2003). Realists also struggle to explain peaceful structural changes in the international system, such as the end of the Cold War and the acceleration of complex economic interdependence, highlighting the limitations of addressing emerging global trends (Ruggie, 1993).

To summarise, realism remains an influential IR theory for understanding strategic practices in IR. However, its conceptual, ethical, and empirical limitations necessitate engagement with alternative theoretical perspectives capable of providing a more ethically grounded worldview.

2.2 Liberalism

In contrast to the structural determinism of realism, the IR theory of liberalism is predicated upon rational individualism, the expansion of freedom, and the potential for achieving global harmony. Hamowy (2008) notes that the philosophical core of liberalism lies in ensuring the rights to life, liberty, and property for every individual. This emphasis prioritises the state as an administrative unit accountable for individual well-being, rather than viewing the individual as collateral for the survival of the state. Another tenet among liberal theorists is that a political system characterised by unchecked, concentrated power is

structurally incapable of protecting the liberties of its citizens and is naturally prone to external belligerence (Meiser, 2017). As a result, proponents of liberalism advocate the establishment of an international system capable of exerting normative pressure on states where individual rights are violated. Liberal theorists also support the establishment of international mechanisms, institutions, and legal frameworks to constrain sovereign domestic powers when they become tyrannical. In this way, modern liberalism prioritises the defence of individual human rights over absolute state sovereignty.

Writing from a realist perspective, Mearsheimer (1995) argues that liberals measure power not by relative military strength, but rather by macroeconomic vitality, the presence of democratic peace, and the extent of political freedom enjoyed by citizens. Accordingly, states are expected to cooperate through multilateral organisations and foster economic interdependence while imposing collective sanctions on states that violate international agreements. Keohane (1984) highlights the crucial role of international organisations in ensuring liberal efficacy. These institutions are considered vital because they reduce interstate transaction costs, increase transparency, and decrease uncertainty regarding future behaviour. Liberalism also has many variations, evolving differently across various geographic regions and historical contexts.

Classical liberalism in Europe has historically been associated with economic freedom, rapid deregulation, and the advancement of laissez-faire economic policies (Locke, 1689/1988; Smith, 1776/2007). In contrast, liberalism in North America evolved to focus more on state welfare policies, social liberalism, and broader normative notions of socioeconomic equality (Rawls, 1971). In the North American context, state policies were

introduced to address contemporary social concerns such as universal education, public health, infrastructure development, and poverty alleviation (Rawls, 1971).

Despite these variations, a unifying belief among liberal theorists is that the concentration of coercive power poses a threat to individual freedom and systemic stability, and therefore must be structurally checked (Locke, 1689/1988). International institutions are viewed as global mechanisms for implementing such structural control measures and for providing stable platforms for continuous intergovernmental cooperation (Keohane & Nye, 1977).

Over time, liberalism evolved into multiple theoretical threads that reflected changing social, macroeconomic, and geopolitical conditions. The philosophical influence of liberalism expanded across America and Europe during the Enlightenment in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It became established in the global political architecture by the nineteenth century. During this period, Western societies were burdened with entrenched social hierarchies alongside closed mercantilist economic systems (van de Haar, 2009).

Liberalism emerged as an intellectual response to these conditions by championing individual autonomy, economic freedom, and reduced government intervention in private economic activities (Freeden, 2015). By offering a distinct perspective on individual freedom and mutually beneficial state cooperation, early liberalism contributed to the historical development of rule-based political orders. As liberal thought evolved, it gave rise to economic liberalism, which placed theoretical emphasis on market freedom, globalised trade, and minimal state control. Economic liberalism lobbied for the removal of trade tariffs and the protection of private property. It advanced individual choice on the premise that such freedom served the broader macroeconomic interests of global society.

Proponents argue that a competitive free market enhances global production and exchange, urging governments to limit their roles exclusively to providing internal security and enforcing legal contracts. In support of these views, Hayek (1948) places freedom of association, contract, and private property ownership at the centre of economic liberalism, arguing that these freedoms enable individuals to pursue their economic interests effectively and peacefully. Similarly, Smith (1776/2007) contends that free markets drive economic growth through the mechanism of prices shaped naturally by supply and demand, rather than through government intervention.

Within this framework, global competition promotes technological innovation and efficient resource allocation, acting as a pacifying force between nations. Friedman (1962) reinforced this position in the twentieth century by advocating limited government involvement, concluding that excessive state intervention undermines market competition and represses human economic progress. In more recent developments, liberalism has increasingly relied on the architecture of international institutions to promote a predictable and cooperative international order. This specific strand of thought, universally associated with neoliberal institutionalism, concedes the realist point that the international system is anarchic. However, it argues that rational state actors operating under conditions of complex economic interdependence are likely to cooperate within institutional frameworks to maximise absolute gains (Keohane, 1984). While recognising states as the primary actors in IR, this perspective assumes that rational self-interest and global interdependence create economic incentives for cooperation rather than costly military conflict. International institutions are, therefore, critical independent variables that reshape state preferences,

monitor compliance, and facilitate mutually beneficial outcomes for participating states (Keohane & Nye, 1977).

Despite the rising influence of liberal ideas on post-Cold War global governance, the theory also became subject to substantial criticism within critical IR scholarship. Critics argue that liberal theories suffer from a philosophical bias. They overemphasise human rationality and the pacifying effects of commerce while underestimating the enduring salience of hard-power politics, nationalism, and structural constraints within the international system (Waltz, 1979). Wendt (1992) contends that liberalism, much like realism, adopts a materialist and rationalist view of the state, overlooking the role of shared cultural values and socially constructed identities in shaping state behaviour.

From a critical political economy perspective, Cox (1981) criticises liberal theory for neglecting structural inequalities and global power imbalances that favour dominant Western states. These critics argue that liberal institutions often perpetuate core-periphery dependency under the guise of free trade. Said (1978) reinforces this critique by drawing attention to the legacy of Western colonialism, demonstrating how the universal language of liberal rights, civilisation, and free markets has historically been used to legitimise imperial expansion and the subjugation of the Global South. These critiques conclude that universal norms of liberalism are often exclusionary in practice.

2.3 The "Global IR" Debate

The contribution of Western theories to shaping the epistemological boundaries of the IR discipline is significant. They provide the foundational vocabulary of global politics. However, a critical review of these West-centric models suggests that alternative IR frameworks must be explored and formalised. The publication of *Non-Western International*

Relations Theory: Perspectives on and Beyond Asia by Acharya and Buzan (2010) serves as a critical intellectual intervention, shaping the contemporary debate on the importance of theoretical diversification in IR. This seminal work exposes the West-centric confines of the discipline and outlines concepts of IR from non-Western perspectives, including Asian, African, and Islamic values.

Tickner and Wæver (2009) further expand this discourse, highlighting the structural inequalities in global knowledge production that prioritise Anglo-American theoretical frameworks. Kang (2003) emphasises the need for analytical ideas that emerge organically outside the traditional Greco-Roman views of history. These scholars argue that IR theories based exclusively on the historical experiences of European state formation frequently encounter analytical limitations when applied to Asian political contexts. Herbst (2000) and Katzenstein (1997) similarly argue that international theories derived from isolated case studies of European states may fail to fully account for the historical richness, cultural particularity, and political trajectories of Asian and African politics. These perspectives underscore the necessity of integrating ontological diversity into the field. For this purpose, this dissertation engages with Hindu texts, particularly the Vedic texts, to offer a distinct non-Western approach to theorising IR.

Although the formal academic connection between modern IR theory and Hindu texts remains nascent in the mainstream, some works explaining a classical Hindu approach to IR have been undertaken earlier. A journal article titled “Hindu Theory of International Relations” by Sarkar (1919) is regarded as an intellectual impetus in this connection between IR and Hindu texts. In this piece, Sarkar investigates classical Indian texts such as Kauṭilya’s

Arthaśāstra, Kāmandaka's Nītisāra, the Matsya Purāṇa, the Manu Smṛti, the Śukranīti, the Rāmāyaṇa, and the Mahābhārata to formally develop an operational theory of IR.

Following that work, most subsequent scholarship remains situated within Sarkar's original analytical parameters, focusing on Kauṭilya's contribution to pragmatic statecraft and the Mahābhārata's rules of war. Existing modern literature primarily covers the political influence of religion on contemporary Indian foreign policy. Several contemporary studies also examine the cultural influence on Nepal's foreign policy. Yet, these studies predominantly focus on domestic political identity and state branding rather than on formalised IR theory. The following sections briefly explain the foundational contributions of major works undertaken to connect IR and Hindu texts.

2.4 Sarkar's Hindu Theory of IR

Sarkar (1919) extracts five core operational doctrines of IR from classical Indian texts: Independence, Daṇḍa, Maṇḍala, Vijigīṣu, and Sārvabhauma, referred to collectively as 'Hindu Theory of International Relations'.

The doctrine of Independence asserts the absolute sovereignty and autonomy of states within a competitive international system. This doctrine considers the state a free dominion not subject to external interference. Thus, the primary duty of rulers remains to preserve the territorial sovereignty of their states. Sarkar (1919) argues that sovereignty is incomplete unless it is both external and internal. This doctrine is drawn from Śukranīti, which states that no greater political happiness exists than that which comes from self-rule, advocating unyielding freedom for the state, its land, and its people.

As per the doctrine, states are also required to uphold justice, as the non-state condition is equivalent to anarchy. The absence of states signifies the absence of justice. This

argument is supported by the concept of matsya-nyāya (the law of the fishes, analogous to the Hobbesian state of nature). It asserts that the strong would inevitably devour the weak if society were to experience a reversion to the non-state condition. The child, the elderly, the sick, and the ascetic would be preyed upon in the absence of a coercive sovereign state.

The doctrine of Daṇḍa posits that the absence of daṇḍa is equivalent to the absence of a state. Daṇḍa literally translates to punishment, restraint, or a coercive sanction. According to this doctrine, the state functions as a coercive institution through which inherent vices are regulated by the credible threat of sanction. Thereby, the state is an effective tool for the maintenance of law and order in society. The doctrine also supports the monopolised use of force by states to maintain law and order. Through this formulation, Sarkar (1919) emphasises a coercive framework for state systems within a competitive international order.

The doctrine of Maṇḍala is built upon the ancient geopolitical concept of the Maṇḍala. Maṇḍala is a concentric geometrical pattern, which represents the interconnections, geographical proximity, and rivalry among states. Drawing from Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra and Kāmandaka's Nītisāra, the doctrine posits that states exist within a complex, shifting web of relationships. They occupy positions in the Maṇḍala based on their material strength, geopolitical influence, and tactical alliances. The positions of the states shift with changing geopolitical power dynamics. In this way, states maintain a vigilant balance of power within the Maṇḍala system to ensure survival and stability.

The doctrine of Vijigīṣu (the aspiring conqueror) assumes that tension between states arises from the desire of rulers to expand their material power. It is characterised by expansionist tendencies, which are inherently embedded within the political impulses of

states. Though this doctrine necessitates ethical restraint during the process of conquest, it posits that the primary motivation of states remains realist expansionism.

The doctrine of Sārvabhauma is derived from the ancient concept of universal sovereignty and represents the conceptual culmination of Hindu international theory. This doctrine reflects Sarkar's (1919) vision of global governance based on principles of universal solidarity, though it is fundamentally achieved through the pacification of rivals by a supreme ruler. It advocates for the recognition of the shared heritage of humanity and envisions a state of global co-existence. Within this framework, the inherent anarchy of the Maṇḍala is resolved into a unified "World-State," where a single sovereign authority ensures systemic stability and the protection of common human values.

While this work by Sarkar suggests that non-Western societies also internally developed concepts of statecraft, power politics, and relations between states, the framework remains heavily shaped by realist assumptions. In this way, this approach validates Indian statecraft to Western scholars but does not challenge the assumptions of mainstream IR theories.

2.5 Kautilya's Contribution to IR

The ancient text Arthaśāstra, authored by the political strategist Kauṭilya and dated to the fourth century BCE, provides pragmatic guidance for understanding the complexities of IR. This detailed treatise encompasses the precise mechanics of statecraft, centralized governance, economic administration, foreign policy, covert diplomacy, and military defence. Through its systematic treatment of these domains, the Arthaśāstra remains a significant resource for contemporary scholars seeking non-Western insights into political conduct.

The realist framework of the Maṇḍala constitutes the central conceptual structure of international relations in the Arthaśāstra. Kauṭilya (1992) explains this framework as a concentric circle of states revolving around a central aspiring conqueror (vijigīṣu). Each geographical ring of the circle corresponds to predictable degrees of friendship, neutrality, or enmity towards the central power based on territorial proximity. The core idea is that an immediate neighbour is a natural enemy, and a neighbour's neighbour is a natural ally. Highlighting the relational and dynamic nature of interstate interactions, this structural framework anticipates the logic of modern structural realism by emphasising power dynamics and fluidity in an anarchic international system.

The framework also describes the continual interplay of friendships, rivalries, and rapid shifts in power balances among competing states. It devotes detailed attention to covert diplomacy, outlining a range of diplomatic tools for fulfilling the interests of states. Kauṭilya underscores the importance of understanding the interests, military capabilities, and domestic vulnerabilities of adversaries. The treatise also recommends the use of envoys (dūtas), intelligence networks, economic subversion, and psychological operations as legitimate components of grand strategy.

Consistent with modern offensive realist thought, the Arthaśāstra urges rulers to prioritise the national interest and to seek centrality within international power dynamics. The text conceptualises national power comprehensively, incorporating military capability, economic vitality, resource control, and diplomatic acumen (Boesche, 2003). Boesche suggests that the Arthaśāstra emphasises practical statecraft by integrating these various dimensions into a coherent framework. The text, with respect to intelligence gathering and economic warfare, parallels modern Western formulations of grand strategy.

Although the Arthaśāstra was composed centuries before the formal emergence of IR as an academic discipline, its insights remain analytically relevant to this day. Its emphasis on pragmatic statecraft and strategic calculation continues to inform contemporary debates. As an IR theory, it represents an indigenous manifestation of political realism, offering an ontological alternative to the assumption of an anarchic world. Nonetheless, while it guides the mechanics of survival to states, it also does not cover the structural harmony and norms-building in IR proposed by the earlier Vedic texts.

2.6 IR Concepts in Kāmandaka's Nītisāra

Scholars also examine Kāmandaka's Nītisāra to assess its integrated concepts of state survival and relations among states. Sarkar (1919) introduced the Nītisāra into the academic discipline of IR. The Nītisāra, explicitly influenced by Kauṭilya, offers a pragmatic approach for the state, prioritising existential survival and eventual territorial expansion within a competitive international system (Siṃha, 1992). The central concept of the Nītisāra encourages the strategic deployment of various instruments, including fluid alliances, espionage, and overt warfare, to fulfil national interests. This focus of the Nītisāra on national interest closely aligns with the Western realist paradigm.

Kāmandaka in the Nītisāra urges sovereigns to maintain a favourable balance of power in the international system to prevent subjugation. The text recommends adopting the strategic policy of forming defensive alliances with weaker states to counter and contain powerful, expansionist rivals (Siṃha, 1992). This recommendation resonates with the modern notion of the "balance of power" and external balancing behaviour. The core strategic premise is that any rising power should be prevented from achieving hegemonic dominance to maintain international stability and ensure the survival of smaller states. The Nītisāra

provides actionable frameworks for national defence, covert diplomacy, and the execution of military missions. The text recommends timely strategic preparation and proactive measures to ensure an unbreachable national defence against external aggression.

While the Nītisāra provides guidance for a pragmatic approach to statecraft, it also does not include the normative framework of IR inherent in the Vedic texts. However, it occasionally advocates for the integration of righteousness (dharma) into diplomacy to uphold normative values and maintain domestic legitimacy (Majumdar, 1962). With its understanding of statecraft, coercive diplomacy, and the balance of power, the Nītisāra remains a foundational historical resource for IR scholars exploring classical Hindu strategic thought.

2.7 Rules of War

Hindu intellectual traditions possess a normative discourse concerning the ethics of violence and the rules of war. The ancient regulations of warfare are delineated extensively across several foundational texts, most notably the Mahābhārata, the Rāmāyaṇa, and Dharmaśāstra. While these normative treatises were composed within specific socio-cultural and political contexts, the ethical dimensions of warfare articulated therein, particularly within the epic Mahābhārata, continue to engage contemporary legal and political scholars. Recent scholarship critically interrogates the ancient conception of the “just war” to systematically evaluate its philosophical underpinnings and to demonstrate its pertinence to modern deliberations on international humanitarian law and global ethics.

The concept of the just war in classical Hindu thought is rooted mainly in the great epic Mahābhārata. The Battle of Kurukṣetra, wherein the Pāṇḍavas waged a necessary campaign against the Kauravas to restore justice, is taken as the fundamental basis for

drawing these rules of war (Badrinath, 2007). The rules are codified as a central notion of Dharma Yuddha.

According to the rules, Dharma Yuddha, which denotes a righteous or just war, can be waged only as an absolute last resort. It has to be undertaken only after diplomatic negotiations, the dispatch of emissaries, and attempts at compromise prove futile. War must be prosecuted for the preservation of righteousness and the restoration of justice, rather than for territorial expansion (Saraswati, 1995). Furthermore, it requires warriors to maintain ethical conduct and moral restraint even amidst the volatility of combat. The classical texts prescribe non-negotiable principles governing the ethical conduct of hostilities, drawing philosophical parallels with the Western *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello* traditions.

Firstly, war must be waged only for a just cause, such as legitimate self-defence, the protection of the vulnerable from tyranny, or the preservation of peace. Secondly, the use of force should be proportionate to minimise unnecessary suffering to combatants. Thirdly, a definitive distinction must be maintained between armed combatants and non-combatants, granting immunity to civilians, the elderly, women, and surrendered prisoners of war.

Likewise, the Manu Smṛti, as translated by Olivelle (2005), also details strict legal codes that reinforce the rules of war. Combatants are expected to exercise compassion and restraint, as the inhumane treatment of enemies is regarded as a moral violation that degrades the victor. Finally, the possibility of peace through ceasefires, renewed negotiations, and diplomatic arbitration should be continually pursued by emissaries even during active conflict, to terminate hostilities as soon as possible.

To conclude, moral and ethical values constitute the normative foundation for these ancient rules of war. These rules guide rulers and warriors to engage in warfare only for a just

cause and to conduct hostilities with proportionality, restraint, and humanity. By prioritising justice and ethical responsibility over mere strategic victory, these norms aspire to limit global violence and to promote a more balanced international world order.

2.8 Hindu Identity and Foreign Policy in South Asia

It is analytically reductionist to attribute the foreign policy of a modern state to its ancient religious tradition, as multiple variables, such as historical legacy, geopolitics, economic imperatives, and domestic electoral politics, play significant roles in shaping foreign policy outcomes. However, the civilisational influence of classical Hindu norms on shaping the foreign policies of South Asian countries, specifically Nepal and India, which have majority Hindu populations, has been studied extensively.

Ganguly (2010) traces the historical roots of modern Indian foreign policy to ancient philosophical ideals, such as ahiṃsā (non-violence) and peaceful coexistence, which influenced the founding architects of India's post-colonial Non-Aligned Movement. Similarly, Mohan (2003) examines how overarching notions of righteousness (dharma) and Vasudhaiva Kuṭumbakam (the concept that the world is one interconnected family) subtly influence India's normative approach to international relations and multilateral diplomacy. These studies suggest that ancient civilisational values have shaped the frameworks for engagement with other states across different historical periods.

Other scholars emphasise the dialectical interaction between ancient ideas and modern structural factors in shaping foreign policy. Alden and Brummer (2019) argue that sophisticated analytical approaches are required to fully understand how domestic political ideologies, changing systemic circumstances, and historical legacies interact in the formulation of foreign policy. While scholars like Malone (2011) and Sinha and Mohta (2007)

primarily highlight rapid economic growth, strategic regional partnerships, and great-power global aspirations as the material drivers of India's foreign policy, their analyses also acknowledge the interaction between civilisational identity and these broader structural and strategic factors. These works conclude that civilisational identity operates alongside material and strategic considerations, rather than functioning as an isolated determinant.

More recent scholarship examines the growing visibility of nationalist ideologies in contemporary foreign-policy discourse. Hall (2019) argues that nationalist ideology increasingly influences strategic engagement with regional rivals, global partners, and the diaspora, as the state asserts aspects of cultural identity on the global stage while pursuing national interests. However, Rajagopalan (2020) cautions against ideologically focused interpretations. He contends that despite rhetorical shifts, foreign policy remains driven by pragmatism, structural security concerns, and realist strategic calculations rather than ideology alone. This scholarly debate underscores the complexity of modern foreign relations, in which historical identity and realist strategic interests intersect in nuanced ways.

Scholars argue that Nepal's foreign policy is also shaped by its rich cultural and religious heritage, which has historically been part of its national identity and diplomatic practice. Shared traditions have historically influenced Nepal's complex relations with neighbouring countries, particularly India, through common civilisational values and open borders (Siyech, 2024). These cultural linkages are reflected in Nepal's broader geopolitical dynamics and delicate regional balancing acts between rising powers. At the same time, Nepal's foreign policy encompasses complex transnational identities, strategic regional interactions, and engagement with its own growing diaspora. Sharma (2021) notes that Nepal's external relations are shaped by the interplay of domestic nationalism, shared history,

and the harsh realities of Himalayan geopolitics. The emerging pattern in Nepal's regional diplomacy reflects the continued relevance of cultural identity alongside hard strategic, economic, and political survival considerations. Taken together, both cases illustrate how ancient heritage functions as an influential but non-exclusive factor within the broader matrix of modern foreign policy decision-making.

2.9 Theoretical Discussions

A critical synthesis of the Western IR literature reveals that the discipline is currently engaged in a theoretical impasse. Scholars consistently grapple with two structural challenges posed by the anarchic international system. First is the constant existential threat facing every state from external competitors (Weber, 1920/2018). Second is the inherent tendency of powerful states to continuously seek territorial expansion and regional hegemony to guarantee their own survival (Mearsheimer, 2001). Realists and liberals differ both in their epistemological explanations of these systemic challenges and in the policy solutions they prescribe.

Realists argue from a pessimistic premise that no overarching sovereign authority exists beyond the state itself to protect its people, resources, and territory from predation (Waltz, 1979). Consequently, states are structurally compelled to maximise their military capabilities to deter external invasion. The irony of this paradigm is that the maximisation of military power by one state produces imbalances and fear among other states within the international system. It is structurally impossible for all states to possess equal levels of power. Therefore, power accumulated for the defensive security of one state is perceived as an offensive threat by others, creating the inescapable "security dilemma".

In contrast, liberal theorists emphasise the need for greater multilateral cooperation through global institutional structures capable of legally constraining unprovoked aggression and preventing invasion by one state against another (Nye, 2008). Accordingly, liberal thought promotes the ideas of free markets, trade cooperation, and the pursuit of universal peace through international institutions such as the United Nations. Global efforts to institutionalise these liberal principles are reflected in the establishment of the World Trade Organization, various United Nations bodies, and major regional organisations formed particularly after the Second World War (Keohane, 1984).

Nevertheless, empirical history reveals that these liberal institutional efforts often fail to prevent acts of aggression, hegemonic expansion, and territorial conquest. States that possess significant military power continue to invade, coerce, and subjugate weaker states even long after the creation of multiple international organisations explicitly designed to prevent such behaviours (Mearsheimer, 1995). Recent empirical examples that validate the realist critique include conflicts in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and tensions in the Asia-Pacific.

In summary, while the grand theories of Western realism and liberalism provide sophisticated analytical vocabularies for understanding and interpreting international relations phenomena, they frequently struggle to offer durable solutions to the persistent challenges faced by states in the international system. This theoretical and practical limitation necessitates a fundamental re-examination of the existing epistemological foundations of IR theories. A clearer non-Western conceptual understanding of the inception, evolution, and continuity of the state is required to foster a more stable, cooperative, and war-free international system.

2.10 Research Gap

A critical review of the literature reveals a significant epistemological gap within the IR discipline. In critical IR scholarship, it is widely agreed that mainstream IR theories are constructed exclusively within Western academic settings, extracting grand theories from Western historical data sets such as the Peloponnesian War, the Peace of Westphalia, the Concert of Europe, and the Cold War (Acharya & Buzan, 2010; Shilliam, 2010). IR theories remain West-centric, attempting to address global phenomena through a parochial Western lens and offering policy solutions that invariably seek to structure the political systems of the Global South (Schmidt, 2010). Thus, these theories face challenges in adequately addressing the complex political questions of the entire world, especially those arising from the unique historical experiences of the non-Western world.

It is precisely this disconnect between the dominant IR theories and global reality that provides the catalyst for a broader shift towards "Global IR". The intellectual impetus for initiating the modern academic discourse on non-Western IR concepts is primarily attributed to the groundbreaking work of Acharya and Buzan (2010). They identified compelling empirical reasons for adopting a non-Western approach to IR. First, the contemporary international system is now primarily composed of non-Western, post-colonial countries. Second, the vast majority of interstate and intrastate conflicts have occurred predominantly in non-Western regions since the end of the Second World War. Third, many conflicts in the international system have unique historical origins distinct from European history. These unique origins necessitate an examination through localised epistemological lenses rather than a sole reliance on imported Western IR theories, which have frequently failed to explain

or provide viable solutions to global problems in the non-Western world (Acharya & Buzan, 2010).

Within the non-Western intellectual field, the philosophical underpinnings of Hindu traditions also remain an overlooked domain for understanding and conducting IR. Although Sarkar (1919) conceptualised a "Hindu Theory of IR", the work is heavily influenced by Western realist theory. A critical analysis reveals that this work constitutes a materialist reinterpretation of the Arthaśāstra and the Nītisāra and aligns selective notions of classical thought within the pre-existing Western realist framework rather than offering an ontologically independent framework.

Subsequent scholarship also remained situated within the realist paradigm, limited to exploring the Arthaśāstra. They either support or mildly critique existing realist ideas. They do not offer a fundamental shift in basic assumptions. Systematic academic efforts to formally theorise or conceptualise IR notions from the ancient Hindu framework remain absent.

Moreover, the ancient Vedic Saṁhitās, which are the primary sources of ontological and epistemological knowledge in the Hindu intellectual tradition, have not been explored at all for the definite purpose of formulating a set of Hindu IR theories. Indologists and Sanskrit scholars, including Gonda (1966), Jamison and Brereton (2014), Witzel (2003), Staal (2008), and Parpola (2015), provide extensive philological and historical analyses of the Vedic texts. Notwithstanding this scholarly depth, the existing IR literature has not, prior to this investigation, adequately engaged with these foundational texts as legitimate primary sources of IR theories. Therefore, this study has been undertaken to address this epistemological gap and initiate a new theoretical discourse of IR based on the original Vedic framework.

2.11 Theoretical Framework

This dissertation critically examines the structural limitations of Western IR theories and develops Hindu theories of IR as part of the "Global IR" movement led by Acharya and Buzan (2010). The main intellectual approach is to deconstruct the Western epistemological biases inherently embedded within mainstream IR theories and to formally construct alternative theoretical models based on the ontology of Vedic philosophy. The architecture of this dissertation consists of two pillars: the Global IR movement and postcolonial theory.

The Global IR movement structurally contests Western epistemological dominance within the academic discipline of IR. Rather than merely appending non-Western case studies to existing models, the movement seeks to integrate diverse perspectives originating from various civilisations into the core of IR theory. This call for a more inclusive discipline asserts that global knowledge production must transcend its singular European intellectual inheritance, which has historically claimed a monopoly on universalism. This movement is further reinforced by post-Western IR scholars, such as Tickner and Wæver (2009) and Suzuki (2009), who argue that the future of the discipline lies in articulating new theoretical frameworks derived directly from non-Western contexts and indigenous intellectual traditions. Global IR does not necessarily advocate the total rejection of Western thought, but rather challenges its claim to exclusive universality. It posits that a truly "international" theory must be capable of accounting for the diverse ontologies and agency of the Global South.

This idea is central to diagnosing the flaws within mainstream IR, particularly in identifying the historical exclusion and marginalisation of non-Western political thought. The movement provides the intellectual justification for exploring Vedic texts as legitimate

sources of formal IR theory, positioning this study within the broader academic movement for epistemological diversification of IR theories.

Said's (1978) postcolonial theory critically examines the intellectual consequences of Western colonialism and imperialism, particularly in the contested realm of global knowledge production. It argues that Western academic discourse has historically constructed and continuously perpetuated global power imbalances by artificially creating exotic "others" through distorted representations and by systematically marginalising or suppressing non-Western epistemologies, histories, and indigenous political thought. This intellectual hegemony serves primarily to reinforce physical global power structures and to maintain a Eurocentric worldview.

Postcolonial theory provides a crucial lens for understanding why Vedic concepts have historically been overlooked, ignored, or dismissed by Western academia as irrelevant to modern international relations. The Vedic texts are relegated to the realm of mystical religion or anthropological culture rather than being recognised as legitimate sources of political science. By utilising postcolonial theory, this dissertation not only exposes the past academic neglect of the Vedic texts but also argues that these ancient texts are instrumental and necessary for formulating globally applicable IR theories. The theory underscores that the very act of theorising from a non-Western perspective challenges established power structures within global academia.

Consequently, grounded in these theoretical foundations and advancing the 'Global IR' movement, this intervention fosters a more balanced and representative landscape within the discipline by foregrounding the analytical richness and explanatory potential of the Vedic tradition.

2.12 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is based on the premise that the Vedic Saṁhitās provide an underused ontological foundation for theorising modern IR. This framework systematically delineates an academic progression from the hermeneutic interpretation of related Vedic verses to the formal derivation of core IR principles. By positioning the Vedic principle of Ṛta as the primary ontological foundation, the study facilitates a shift from materialist power-balancing towards a more systemic and normative worldview. This analytical transition ensures that the resulting Vedic framework works not merely as a historical survey, but as a theoretical model with explanatory power.

2.12.1 Vedas: Ontological and Epistemological Foundations

The Vedas serve as the ontological and epistemological foundation for this study. Primarily composed in a poetic manner with precise hymns and verses, the Sanskrit term Veda literally translates to “knowledge”. The texts are widely recognised as a primary source of knowledge within the Hindu intellectual tradition. They contain cosmological wisdom and metaphysical philosophy. The texts are preserved mainly through a meticulous oral tradition, known as Śruti in the Hindu tradition, which ensured their transmission across generations through mathematically precise and systematic chanting, thereby preventing textual corruption (Olivelle, 1997).

From an ontological perspective, the Vedas offer a systemic understanding of the cosmos and the inescapable interconnectedness of all existence. They present a holistic worldview in which the cosmological and spiritual realms are interwoven dimensions of a singular reality. This specific ontological foundation is crucial for understanding the structural principles that govern international relations from a Vedic perspective. According

to the Vedas, the cosmic order is inherently lawful; therefore, human beings are rationally obligated to establish political societies and international systems that reflect this intrinsic property of the cosmic order. The dissertation constructs the theories of IR upon this Vedic premise.

From an epistemological perspective, the Vedas are classified as "śruti", meaning "that which is heard". This classification serves as the foundational justification for their authority as a source of unmediated knowledge. It positions them as a distinct alternative to the human-centric observations of Western social science. From a secular social-science perspective, the authority of the Vedas in this study is argued not from divine provenance, but from their internal logical coherence, hermeneutic richness, and analytical utility for political theory. The doctrine of apauruṣeyatva is noted as a foundational epistemological assumption within the Hindu tradition, not as a universally valid claim. Therefore, the methodologies for deriving knowledge from these ancient texts are rigorous and systematic. Through the application of indigenous hermeneutics and the logical framework of the Mīmāṃsā school, this dissertation carries out precise textual analysis and contextual interpretation to extract objective meanings. Upon this epistemological foundation, this dissertation asserts that valid knowledge regarding universal order (Ṛta) and human political conduct can be directly derived from these texts.

The Vedas are categorised into four primary collections: the Ṛgveda, Yajurveda, Sāmaveda, and Atharvaveda, each offering insights into macrocosmology, ritual precision, and practical statecraft (Jamison & Brereton, 2014; Witzel, 2003). This study concentrates on the conceptual architecture of the Vedas as it pertains to modern IR discourse. For contemporary scholars whose frameworks are grounded in post-Enlightenment conceptions

of power and sovereignty, the Vedas provide a distinct civilisational perspective that expands the theoretical horizon of the discipline. This dissertation engages the four Vedas with the following understandings:

1. The Ṛgveda explains macro-natural phenomena and provides viewpoints for understanding human interaction with the natural world and its impact on the international political order. Specifically, its cosmological premise of Ṛta provides insights into the origins of the Rāṣṭras.
2. The Yajurveda emphasises process precision and institutional design, understanding which is essential for forging durable treaties. Its reflections on social and political dynamics highlight the significance of shared values and collective global responsibilities.
3. The Sāmaveda underscores the structural role of precise communication in human action. Its liturgical precision guides the formulation of effective communication strategies to build trust in diplomatic affairs.
4. The Atharvaveda covers domestic law and statecraft, offering a framework for understanding political thought and institutional structures.

Building upon this fourfold Vedic structure, the study constructs its conceptual framework primarily on the foundational principle of Ṛta, synthesising the political pragmatism of the Atharvaveda with the institutional and conceptual depth of the Yajurveda. While the theosophical dimensions of these texts frequently characterise cosmic forces as divine powers, their analytical utility for modern IR lies in the structural logic of Ṛta as a regulatory and harmonising mechanism. By framing Ṛta not as a religious dogma but as a normative imperative, this dissertation demonstrates how the Vedic worldview incentivises

states to align their sovereign conduct with universal law to preserve systemic equilibrium. Ultimately, this exploration provides the necessary framework for distinct Hindu theories of IR, offering a non-Western alternative for contemporary IR practice.

2.12.2 Ṛta: The foundation of the IR Principle

This dissertation examines the Vedic notion of Ṛta as the foundational principle for theorising international relations. It is a central component of Vedic traditions, expressed most thoroughly in the Ṛgveda. Its appearance in almost 390 instances throughout the texts underscores its significance in early cosmology. The first mention of Ṛta appears in the Ṛgveda (1.2.8), which identifies Ṛta as the cosmic order.

Ṛta is the configuration of the cosmos that regulates the motion of celestial bodies in the spacetime fabric, determining the processes of the creation, expansion, and destruction of the universe. This cosmic arrangement is regarded in Vedic philosophy as the ultimate truth, constituting the eternal rule that governs existence. The concept of Ṛta can be translated as "fixed or settled order, immutable rule, divine law, or ultimate truth". It implies a dynamic spirit, an evolving but self-regulating process that embodies an active rhythm. The underlying drive of the universe is evident in its depictions of cosmic order and interconnectivity. Thus, the meaning of Ṛta includes law, order, truth, and process. Ṛta operates in three interconnected dimensions: the ritual, the cosmic, and the moral, illustrating a holistic worldview.

In structured ritual practice, Ṛta manifests as the energy that facilitates the effective execution of Vedic rites, playing a role in the conduct of ancient Vedic sacrifices (Ṛgveda, 1.1.1). The effectiveness of these rites depends on their execution in alignment with Ṛta. For instance, "Agni" (meaning fire) acts in the ritual as the celestial priest and divine envoy, who

correctly connects the process to the cosmic order, guaranteeing the fulfilment of the objectives of the rite. In the cosmos, Ṛta operates as the force that governs the regular characteristics of nature, acting as the rhythm that maintains universal harmony and prevents entropy. Its manifestations are evident in the cycles of the natural environment, including the rising and setting of the sun, the phases of the moon, and the cycle of the seasons (Ṛgveda, 10.190.1–3). The verses further describe Ṛta as the fundamental principle that ensures the predictability and balance of the natural universe. Beyond the physical world, Ṛta acts as a normative force, exerting its influence within the human realm and providing a principle for moral order and guidelines for good conduct in society. It encapsulates the moral law that regulates existence, promoting social equity, systemic tranquillity, and virtuous political behaviour (Ṛgveda, 10.133.6).

In summary, the principle of Ṛta not only holds human beings accountable for maintaining the ecological balance of the physical cosmos but also compels them morally and politically to create law, order, and truth within human political society, reflecting the cosmic order. It is characterised as the basis of existence and the manifestation of the intrinsic dynamism present in all entities. Ṛta compels political leadership to uphold a social order reflective of the cosmic order dictated by natural law, establishing the basis for a legal and moral framework within human society. This, in turn, facilitates the development of the sovereign state system and the broader international order. This notion articulates the deep interrelationship between biological life forms and macrocosmic principles.

2.12.3 Operationalising the Conceptual Framework

Building systematically upon the foundational understanding of the ancient Vedas and the core principle of Ṛta, this conceptual framework delineates the specific operational steps of the dissertation study.

Hermeneutics and Mīmāṃsā function as the methodological framework for interpreting the relevant Vedic verses in this operationalisation. This framework rejects the conception that the meaning of ancient texts is statically fixed or frozen in time; instead, it posits that meaning is actively constructed through a dialectical linkage between the original historical context of the text and the contemporary pre-understandings of the modern interpreter (Gadamer, 1975). This approach moves beyond a simplistic literal reading, acknowledging the layers of meaning embedded within complex ancient linguistic and cultural artefacts. Accordingly, this dissertation involves the following six methodological steps in order:

1. **Textual selection:** The initial stage involves the identification of primary verses from the Ṛgveda, Yajurveda, and Atharvaveda that possess clear socio-political resonance. The selection prioritises verses addressing governance, the ethics of warfare, the formation of alliances, and the foundational concept of cosmic duty (dharma).
2. **Verse interpretation:** The second and most critical stage involves the application of the Mīmāṃsā school's hermeneutical principles. To avoid modern subjective bias, the study utilises the traditional hierarchy of interpretation to ensure rigorous exegesis.

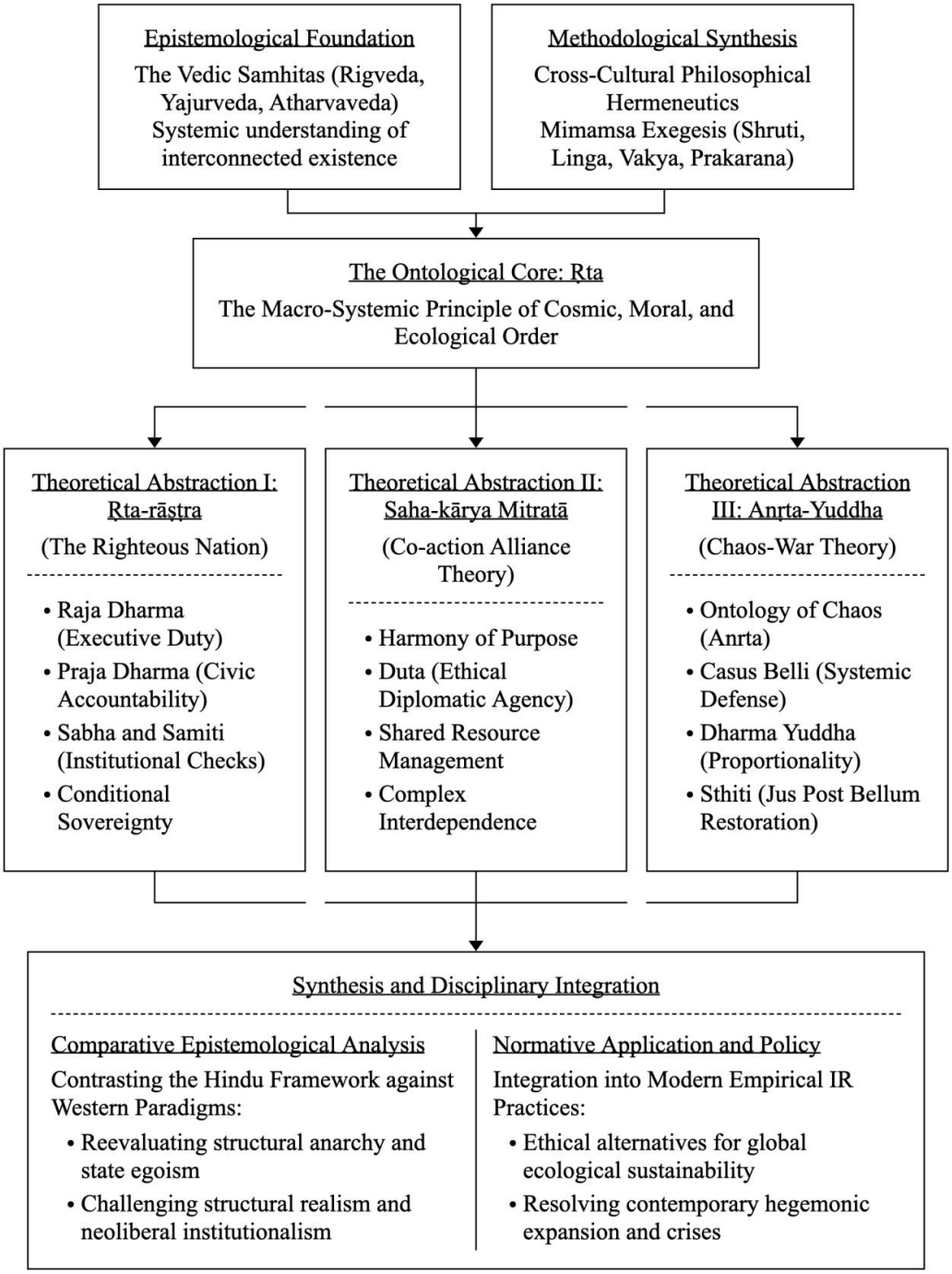
3. **Conceptual extraction:** Once interpreted, the relevant data are distilled into core IR-related concepts. This stage bridges the gap between ancient Sanskrit terminology and contemporary political science.
4. **Theoretical abstraction:** This stage involves the formal abstraction of these extracted concepts into a cohesive theoretical framework. The study moves beyond historical analysis to construct a normative IR theory that offers explanatory power for modern global interactions.
5. **Comparative evaluation:** This stage facilitates a critical evaluation of the convergences and ontological divergences between the newly formulated Hindu IR theories and established Western IR theories, specifically Realism and Liberalism.
6. **Normative contribution:** Finally, the conceptual framework extends to an in-depth analysis of the contemporary relevance and normative contribution of these theories. This stage evaluates how a Vedic perspective on systemic harmony and universal law can address 21st-century challenges, such as global governance, environmental ethics, and conflict resolution. It provides the ultimate justification for the study by demonstrating the practical utility of non-Western theoretical alternatives.

Ultimately, the conceptual framework functions as a bridge, spanning the vast temporal distance between ancient Vedic ontology and the requirements of contemporary IR. By synthesising the primordial principle of Ṛta with a disciplined six-stage methodological progression, the study moves beyond antiquarian interest. It transforms the Vedas from static objects of veneration into dynamic instruments of political theory.

This structured approach provides the necessary conceptual framework to challenge the prevailing hegemony of Western materialist paradigms, offering instead an alternative paradigm rooted in harmony and universal order. By operationalising Vedic insights, the dissertation seeks to "de-parochialise" the IR discipline. This transition ensures that the move from the metaphysical to the political is not a speculative leap into mysticism, but rather a methodologically grounded process. This approach allows for reclaiming the Vedas as a living source of global political thought. Through this framework, the study asserts that the ancient past does not merely remain a relic in the present, but actively informs it as a foundational premise for a more ethical and sustainable international order. The figure below visually encapsulates this conceptual framework, illustrating the transition from Vedic ontology, through the rigour of Mīmāṃsā and Gadamerian interpretation, to the final formulation of a non-Western IR theory.

Figure 2.1

Conceptual Framework



Source: Self-prepared

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology of a doctoral dissertation functions as the structural engine that translates raw data into formalised findings. Within the discipline of international relations (IR), where the extraction of political theory from ancient non-Western texts is a complex and nascent task, the design must be transparent and systematically executable. This chapter delineates the research design, methodological frameworks, data collection strategies, and analytical procedures used to formally translate the metaphysical and cosmological principles of the Vedic Saṁhitās into an explanatory "Global IR" theory.

3.1 Research Design

To execute the primary objective of extracting modern IR theory from ancient scriptures, this study employed a qualitative theory-building research design. Theory-building in IR, particularly when bridging temporal and cultural epochs, requires a high degree of conceptual abstraction and analytical structuring. To fulfil this requirement, this design was specifically constructed to move sequentially from the descriptive (the literal translation of Vedic texts), to the analytical (the contextual meaning of these texts for political and systemic order), and finally to the theoretical (how these meanings constitute formal IR theories).

The research design was constructed on a structured deductive-inductive loop. It is deductive because it commenced with the foundational premise of Ṛta as an underlying ordering principle of the universe, evaluating how this macro-concept can be applied to the behaviour of states. It is simultaneously inductive because the specific theoretical mechanisms of statecraft (Ṛta Rāṣṭra), alliance formation (Sahakārya Mitratā), and warfare (Anṛta Yuddha) are synthesised upwards from the qualitative interpretation of specific Vedic

hymns. This qualitative design deliberately eschews quantitative and statistical methods, as the objective of this examination was not to measure the frequency of state behaviours within a pre-existing West-centric framework, but to construct an indigenous non-Western theoretical architecture for the discipline of IR.

To ensure maximum analytical rigour, this methodology utilised Gadamer's (1975) hermeneutic tradition. Gadamer argues against the objectivist illusion that an interpreter can abandon their contemporary historical context to understand an ancient text exactly as its original author intended. This tradition proposes the operational concept of the "fusion of horizons", the dialectical process in which the historical horizon of the ancient text meets and critically engages with the contemporary horizon of the modern researcher. In the context of this study, the methodology was infused with the ancient Vedic horizon of cosmic order and the contemporary theoretical scope of systemic global crises, multipolarity, and modern IR theory.

To prevent the Gadamerian fusion of horizons from resulting in subjective distortion or the artificial imposition of Western cognitive biases onto Eastern texts, this study simultaneously deployed Mīmāṃsā, the classical Hindu science of textual interpretation and exegesis. Relying on Western interpretive methods to decode the Vedas would have constituted a methodological contradiction for a "Global IR project". Mīmāṃsā provided indigenous structural rules for resolving textual ambiguities and extracting objective meaning from the Saṁhitās (Bhatt, 1989). The methodology systematically utilised the following four key Mīmāṃsā principles as coding tools:

1. **Śruti (Direct Statement):** prioritising the explicit primary meaning of the verses regarding governance and cosmic order before seeking metaphorical interpretations.
2. **Liṅga (Indicative Power):** allowing for the understanding of the inherent structural meaning of specific Sanskrit words (e.g., the precise geopolitical connotations of Dūta or Mitra) to imply broader strategic concepts.
3. **Vākya (Syntactical Context):** ensuring the semantic integrity of the texts strictly based on their grammatical relationship within the sentence, preventing the "cherry-picking" of concepts out of their immediate context.
4. **Prakaraṇa (Interdependent Context):** facilitating a comprehensive analysis of the verses regarding warfare or diplomacy within the broader cosmological narrative of the specific hymn, ensuring that political interpretations do not violate the text's underlying metaphysical logic.

3.2 Methodological Framework

The core methodological framework guiding the data analysis in this dissertation is hermeneutics. Given that the primary data consist of ancient Sanskrit Saṃhitās composed millennia prior to the advent of the modern Westphalian state system, a purely literalist or strictly historical reading would risk anachronism. To mitigate this, hermeneutics offeres the necessary interpretive rigour to translate ancient cosmological metaphors into modern political logic without compromising their original ontological essence. This approach allowed the study to move beyond a simplistic recovery of the past, facilitating a constructive dialogue in which Vedic principles can be recontextualised as foundational premises for

contemporary “Global IR” theory. This hermeneutic approach is operationalised in this study through a detailed methodological progression, delineated in the following section.

3.3 Data Sources and Corpus Selection

The research utilised Vedic texts as a primary textual corpus and triangulated them with qualitative elite interviews. Specifically, the primary data for this research were derived directly from the Saṁhitās (the core mantra texts) of the Vedas. The broader Vedic corpus is expansive, encompassing the Brāhmaṇas, the Āraṇyakas, and the Upaniṣads. However, to maintain analytical precision and ensure that the theory is built upon the foundational bedrock of the tradition, the study was strictly delimited to its primary textual data collection, specifically the following three Saṁhitās:

1. **Ṛgveda Saṁhitā:** Utilised as the primary data source for the ontological conceptualisation of Ṛta (cosmic order), the nature of sovereignty, the origins of the organic state, and the foundational ethics of systemic geopolitical balance.
2. **Yajurveda Saṁhitā:** Examined specifically for data regarding the procedural execution of state duties (Rāja Dharma), diplomatic protocols, the qualifications of the diplomatic corps, and the criteria for righteous leadership and collective action.
3. **Atharvaveda Saṁhitā:** Analysed extensively for its pragmatic hymns related to statecraft (rāṣṭra-building), internal security, warfare strategy, the management of socio-political harmony, and the distribution of resources.

The Sāmaveda Saṁhitā was excluded from the primary textual corpus because its content is liturgical and musical, rearranging verses from the Ṛgveda for ritual chanting, thereby offering limited independent theoretical material for political science.

3.4 Data Collection Procedures

Data collection was executed in two distinct complementary phases: systematic textual data extraction and qualitative in-depth interviews.

3.4.1 Textual Data Extraction

The extraction of data from the Saṃhitās was operationalised through an investigative protocol driven by keywords and designed to bridge the lexical gap between ancient Sanskrit and modern political science. To facilitate this process, an initial conceptual matrix was constructed to align core IR concepts such as state formation, sovereignty, and strategic alliances with their primary Sanskrit counterparts: rāṣṭra, dharma, mitra, dūta, yuddha, daṇḍa, and Ṛta. The selected corpus was interrogated for these lexical markers to identify the specific loci of political thought within the hymns. Crucially, when relevant verses were located, the study did not merely extract atomised lines; instead, the entire prakaraṇa (contextual unit) was retrieved to form the raw textual dataset. This holistic extraction method was essential to preserve the structural integrity of the findings and ensured that political concepts were never bifurcated from their foundational cosmological and metaphysical narratives. The textual data were primarily utilised to fulfil the first and second objectives of the dissertation.

3.4.2 In-Depth Interviews

To bridge the temporal gap between ancient philosophy and contemporary diplomatic practice, this study incorporated primary data collected through in-depth, semi-structured elite interviews. A purposive sampling strategy was employed to identify participants whose expertise reflected the epistemic diversity necessary for this inquiry. Rather than pursuing statistical representativeness, the sampling logic prioritised analytically relevant and

conceptually rich perspectives situated at the intersection of Hindu philosophy, statecraft, and international relations.

The selection process was designed to include complementary domains of knowledge. A specialist in Vedic cosmology provided a rigorous account of the metaphysical foundations of Ṛta and its ontological significance as a principle of universal order. A former Indian diplomat contributed practitioner-oriented insights into the applicability of classical Hindu ideas within contemporary diplomatic norms and interstate conduct. A representative of a Hindu organisation engaged in the preservation of scriptural traditions ensured interpretive fidelity by reflecting on textual authenticity, hermeneutic transmission, and the continuity of Vedic knowledge systems. Finally, a Hindu political actor from Nepal offered a perspective on the translation of Vedic principles into modern governance and their implications for both domestic political structures and international relations.

Collectively, these participants constitute a purposively constructed epistemic cohort, enabling a multidimensional engagement with the research problem and ensuring that the resulting theoretical formulations are grounded across metaphysical, textual, diplomatic, and political dimensions. A total of four elite participants were interviewed using a semi-structured protocol, with each interview lasting approximately 30 to 60 minutes. This format ensured consistency in addressing key theoretical themes while allowing sufficient flexibility for participants to introduce novel insights derived from their professional experience. Data from the interviews have been utilised to fulfil the third objective of the dissertation.

The sample size is methodologically justified within the framework of purposive elite sampling, which emphasises depth of insight and interpretive authority over numerical breadth in theory-building research (Tansey, 2007). The selected participants collectively

represent a coherent epistemic community with demonstrated engagement in Hindu philosophy, diplomacy, and political thought. Furthermore, the adequacy of the sample is supported by the principle of theoretical saturation, defined as the point at which additional data cease to generate new conceptual insights (Guest et al., 2006). During the data collection process, recurring patterns and conceptual convergence across interviews indicated that saturation had been achieved. Accordingly, the sample size is appropriate to the analytical objectives of the study and consistent with established qualitative research standards.

3.5 Data Analysis and Theoretical Synthesis

The transformation of raw Vedic verses and qualitative interview transcripts into formalised IR theories adopted a three-stage qualitative coding and theory-building procedure, which is explained below.

3.5.1 Stage 1: Thematic Extraction

The initial phase involved a thematic reading of the extracted verses of the Saṁhitās and the interview transcripts. Utilising qualitative data analysis techniques, verses and interview responses were assigned primary codes related to governance, cosmic order, alliances, war, justice, and diplomacy. Applying the Mīmāṃsā principle of Prakaraṇa, these coded segments were grouped into larger thematic clusters. For example, verses detailing the destruction of fortresses, the ethical treatment of captives, and reliance on intelligence networks were clustered under the macro-theme of "Vedic Conflict Execution".

3.5.2 Stage 2: Conceptual Translation

The second phase operationalised the Gadamerian 'fusion of horizons' (Gadamer, 1975). The thematic clusters of Vedic concepts were systematically translated into the standardised vocabulary of modern IR. This required analytical bridging. For example, the

Vedic mandate for the ruler to be checked by the Sabhā (expert council) and Samiti (popular assembly) was translated into modern IR concepts such as institutional accountability, domestic checks and balances, and conditional sovereignty. Similarly, the cosmological imperative to share resources was explicitly mapped onto the modern liberal institutionalist theory of complex interdependence (Keohane & Nye, 1977).

3.5.3 Stage 3: Theory Building

In the final phase, the translated concepts were synthesised and structured to formulate the three core theories: the Ṛta Rāṣṭra Theory, the Sahakārya Mitratā Theory, and the Anṛta Yuddha Theory. For each proposed theory, the analysis formally defined the core concept, the ontological assumptions, the primary units of analysis, the causal mechanisms, and applicable theoretical propositions.

During this crucial phase, the empirical insights gathered from senior diplomats and scholars were used to triangulate the theoretical propositions derived from the texts. This triangulation ensured the contemporary relevance and structural durability of the final Hindu IR framework.

3.6 Methodological Validity

In qualitative, interpretivist, theory-building research, the traditional positivist metrics of quantitative validity, statistical reliability, and replicability are deemed epistemologically inappropriate. Instead, methodological rigour is evaluated through established qualitative criteria of trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To ensure that the resulting theoretical architecture is both robust and transparent, the study operationalised the following pillars for the validity of the findings detailed in the subsequent sections.

3.6.1 Credibility

Credibility addresses the degree of confidence warranted by a study's findings. In this study, it was established by grounding all interpretations in the primary Vedic corpus and adhering to both Gadamerian hermeneutic principles and the indigenous Mīmāṃsā rules of exegesis. This adherence ensured that the interpretations were rooted in the structural logic and cultural authenticity of the source material, preventing interpretative overreach.

3.6.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to the extent to which qualitative findings can be applied to other contexts. While the theories generated in this dissertation are derived exclusively from indigenous Vedic texts originating in the Indian subcontinent, their transferability to the broader discipline of Global IR is achieved through a high degree of theoretical abstraction. By formalising specific Vedic concepts into universally recognisable IR categories, such as alliance logic and warfare ethics, the study ensured that the Vedic framework can be applied to global case studies beyond the geographical and cultural confines of the Indian subcontinent.

3.6.3 Dependability and Confirmability

To mitigate researcher bias and prevent the anachronistic forcing of data to fit preconceived conclusions, the methodology requires a transparent chain of evidence. Every theoretical proposition advanced in the subsequent analytical chapters is explicitly tethered to the cited verses within the Saṁhitās or to specific interview transcripts, fulfilling the institutional guidelines of Tribhuvan University. This explicit citation protocol allows subsequent scholars to audit the research methodology, tracing the exact hermeneutic

pathway from the ancient Sanskrit text, through conceptual translation, and directly to the formalised modern political theory.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to the ethical guidelines of Tribhuvan University that govern academic research at the doctoral level. While the hermeneutical analysis of millennia-old public scriptures did not invoke human-subject concerns, the elite interview phase required a strict ethical protocol. The right of all participants to privacy and to withdraw from the study at any juncture without prejudice was explicitly guaranteed. All interview transcripts and audio recordings are securely stored on encrypted drives, anonymised where requested, and utilised exclusively for the analytical purposes of this doctoral dissertation.

In summary, the research methodology detailed in this chapter adopted a multi-layered framework to legitimise the extraction of modern political theory from ancient non-Western texts. By deliberately not relying on positivist limitations and embracing cross-cultural hermeneutics, this research design integrated the interpretive depth of Gadamer (1975) with the structural precision of indigenous Mīmāṃsā exegesis.

CHAPTER IV

HINDU THEORIES OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

4.1 Abstracting Ṛta as an IR Principle

The theoretical architecture of international relations (IR) is built upon the basic assumption of systemic anarchy. Systemic anarchy is the structural absence of a sovereign authority within the international system. This condition serves as the primary ordering principle that compels states to prioritise survival, dictating their behaviour, the logic of alliance formation, and the persistent likelihood of conflict. Western IR traditions take this anarchic baseline as an inescapable empirical reality. From the austere pessimism of classical realists, who view IR as a perpetual struggle for power and survival, to the cautious optimism of liberal institutionalists, who believe that regimes can mitigate the adverse effects of this vacuum, the baseline remains unchallenged. Formulating a distinct set of Hindu theories of international relations therefore requires a fundamental ontological departure from this baseline of anarchy. Ancient Vedic terminology cannot be simply grafted onto Western structural models of IR. The systematic abstraction of IR theory from the Vedic Saṁhitās, specifically the Ṛgveda, Yajurveda, and Atharvaveda, demands the conceptualisation of an alternative principle of Ṛta.

As established through hermeneutic exegesis, the Vedic texts do not conceive of the international system as a chaotic void or a dark forest in which states are compelled to act as predatory entities merely to ensure their own survival. Ṛta, an omnipresent, intersubjective, and immutable cosmic and moral order, governs the system. For the purposes of theory building in IR, Ṛta is not understood merely as a theological doctrine or a mystical abstraction; it is operationalised as a firm structural variable. In the Vedic theoretical

framework, Ṛta functions as the defining systemic constraint and enabling structure that dictates the parameters of legitimate state agency. It replaces the materialist determinism of anarchy with a cosmological determinism in which the survival, prosperity, and longevity of the state are causally linked to its strict adherence to Ṛta.

When the broader implications of this ontological shift are examined, it is found that the Vedic framework also anticipates many of the critical interventions made by modern constructivist scholars. Constructivists argue that the material world does not dictate state behaviour; rather, shared ideas, cultures, and norms shape how states perceive their interests and their environment. However, the Vedic concept of Ṛta pushes this ideational argument further. It suggests that Ṛta provides a baseline universal norm and fabric of reality that rewards cooperative, ethical behaviour and penalises deceit and exploitation. States that recognise this baseline do not operate in an anarchic international system but constantly navigate a dense web of moral and cosmic obligations. As per this baseline, the international system is not an empty container; it is a moral ecology.

This epistemological divergence from Western models is fundamental, but Western political thought, particularly following the Enlightenment, separated the political realm from the cosmic and moral spheres. Thinkers such as Machiavelli (1532/1998) and Hobbes (1651/2004) detach statecraft from universal ethics, arguing that the survival of the state justifies any necessary means. The Vedic Saṁhitās reject this justification. In the Vedic theoretical framework, the political domain is merely a microcosm of the larger cosmic domain. Therefore, a state that attempts to operate outside the boundaries of cosmic morality is not being pragmatic; it is being structurally self-destructive. The laws of physics and the

laws of morality are viewed as emanating from the same source, and violating either carries inevitable systemic consequences.

This approach also challenges the English concept of an anarchic society. Bull (1977) acknowledges that states can form a society based on shared norms and mutual interests (Ṛgveda 10.191.2-4) but still maintains that the baseline of the system is anarchic. The Vedic principle of Ṛta goes beyond the concept of an anarchic society. It posits that order is not something states artificially invent to avoid destruction; rather, order is a pre-existing metaphysical reality with which states are required to align themselves. The society of states does not create Ṛta; rather, Ṛta facilitates the possibility of a society of states. This ontological baseline shifts the entire burden of statecraft from the creation of artificial security architectures to the active realisation of universal truth.

The crisis being faced by modern IR theories also necessitates the conceptual intervention of Ṛta in the field of IR. The relentless pursuit of material power and the elevation of rational egoism as the highest form of political logic have produced a global system plagued by ecological devastation, gross inequality, and the perpetual threat of systemic conflict. By reintroducing a cosmological dimension to state behaviour, the Hindu framework offers a vital corrective. It demands that political science expand its analytical horizons beyond the mere distribution of capabilities to encompass the moral responsibilities that attend the exercise of sovereign power.

The building of Hindu IR theories is not merely an exercise in historical retrieval; it is an act of epistemic intervention. Mainstream IR is critiqued for its parochialism, presenting a specific European historical experience as a universal law of IR. By abstracting Ṛta as a principle, this research provides a theoretical alternative that accounts for the normative

structures of non-Western civilisations. Nevertheless, this decolonial approach does not seek to replace Western hegemony with another form of parochialism, but rather to contribute to a truly "Global IR" where multiple epistemologies can coexist and inform our understanding of global governance.

The Vedic Saṁhitās offer a distinctive analytical framework precisely because they predate the Enlightenment's conceptual separation between the secular and the sacred. This separation entailed the progressive exclusion of moral cosmology from Western statecraft. The abstraction of Ṛta reintroduces the notion of systemic accountability, where the state is seen as part of a larger organic whole. This holistic view is relevant in the Anthropocene as well (Crutzen & Stoermer, 2000), where the distinction between human political actions and natural systemic outcomes becomes blurred.

This chapter undertakes the formal construction of three distinct, yet interrelated macro theories of international relations derived from the Vedic Saṁhitās. First, the Ṛta Rāṣṭra theory conceptualises the ontology of the state, defining sovereign agency not as the monopolisation of coercive violence but as the institutionalisation of cosmic order at the unit level. Second, the Sahakārya Mitratā theory provides a causal framework for interstate cooperation, theorising how ideational convergence mitigates the rationalist problem of sovereign defection and fosters complex interdependence. Third, the Anṛta Yuddha theory presents a structural explanation for systemic conflict, positing that warfare is an entropic outcome of internal moral decay and external ideational divergence.

By employing theoretical abstraction, this chapter moves beyond descriptive historical theology and tactical detail. Instead, it translates ancient Vedic epistemology into an explanatory, causal, and structurally coherent framework for contemporary IR scholarship.

This undertaking bridges the gap between ancient philosophy and modern political science, offering scholars and practitioners a fresh lens through which to analyse the complex dynamics of global governance, diplomacy, and warfare in an interdependent world. The objective is not to romanticise the past but to extract universally applicable principles that can guide state behaviour in an era of systemic fragility.

4.2 The Ṛta Rāṣṭra (Righteous State) Theory

The Ṛta Rāṣṭra theory provides the foundational unit-level analysis for the Hindu framework of IR. Before analysing how states interact within a broad international system, it is necessary to define the ontological nature of the state itself. Mainstream theories frequently treat the state as a black box: a unitary rational actor driven inherently by self-preservation and the relentless maximisation of power (Mearsheimer, 2001). This assumption simplifies the mathematics of strategic interaction, but it strips the state of its sociological and ethical dimensions. The Ṛta Rāṣṭra theory challenges this materialist assumption by proposing that the state, or rāṣṭra is an organic entity whose primary teleological purpose is the terrestrial manifestation of cosmic order.

4.2.1 Ontology of Ṛta Rāṣṭra

The abstraction of the Ṛta Rāṣṭra begins with the premise that human political organisation is not a random accident or a mere social contract forged out of desperation for mutual preservation against a violent Hobbesian state of nature. According to the Atharvaveda (12.1.1), the terrestrial domain is sustained by truth known as satyam, rigorous moral duty, and an overarching cosmic order known as Ṛta. Therefore, the state emerges as a necessary institutional apparatus designed specifically to align human agency with these

macro-systemic imperatives. The state is born out of a positive desire to mirror the harmony of the universe, not merely out of a negative fear of violent death.

In this theoretical formulation, the state is not an independent variable that can choose its own arbitrary goals. It is an intervening variable positioned squarely between the immutable cosmic structure of Ṛta and the dynamic realm of human action. The legitimacy of the rāṣṭra is conditional upon its capacity to maintain domestic equilibrium that perfectly mirrors systemic cosmic harmony (Ṛgveda, 4.23.9). Consequently, sovereignty in the Ṛta Rāṣṭra framework is not absolute, territorial, or Westphalian in nature. Sovereignty is functional and constrained by cosmic mandates. A state possesses legitimate authority only insofar as it actively enforces and upholds the dictates of Ṛta.

If a state deviates from this foundational principle, it does not merely face diplomatic isolation; it suffers an existential crisis. By abandoning Ṛta, the state loses its structural legitimacy and invites both internal collapse and external intervention. The citizens and neighbouring states alike recognise that a rogue state severs its connection to the universal order, making it a hazard to the entire system. This perspective introduces a limitation on state behaviour, replacing the notion of unchecked absolute sovereignty with a model of structural accountability.

To grasp this concept, the model must be contrasted directly with the *Leviathan* envisioned by Hobbes (1651/2004). For Hobbes, the sovereign is an artificial construct granted absolute power to prevent the war of all against all. The Hobbesian sovereign is the source of all law and is therefore above the law. In contrast, Ṛta Rāṣṭra asserts that the state is never the source of the law. The actual source of law exists prior to the state. The state is merely a functional vessel designed to draw and administer law from the cosmic order that it

did not create and cannot alter. This negates the Western concept of absolute state sovereignty. The state is a servant of Ṛta, and the moment it attempts to become the master of Ṛta, it forfeits its right to exist.

This ontological positioning alters the rational payoff matrix of the state. In a materialist theory, the state seeks to maximise relative power to ensure security, based on the assumption that more weapons and more territory equate to safety. In the Ṛta Rāṣṭra theory, the state seeks to maximise cosmic compliance and righteousness. The systemic structure dictates that power acquired through Anṛta, which encompasses disorder, deception, and exploitation, inherently generates systemic entropy. This entropy acts as a corrosive force that will turn inward and destroy the acquiring state from the inside out. True security, therefore, is found only in perfect alignment with universal laws. Power decoupled from morality is viewed not as an asset, but as a fatal liability.

At its core, the universe operates on a principle of interconnectedness where every action generates a corresponding reaction. Therefore, a state that builds its power upon the suffering of others, whether through domestic tyranny or aggressive foreign conquest, is planting the seeds of its own inevitable destruction. The cosmic order cannot tolerate imbalances indefinitely. This is not a matter of divine retribution in an anthropocentric sense, but rather the mechanical operation of universal law. Just as an organism cannot survive if its internal organs wage war against one another, a state cannot survive if it subverts the moral ecology of the international system. This realisation forces the state to redefine its core interests, prioritising sustainable harmony over fleeting dominance.

4.2.2 Executive Agency

Within the boundaries of the Ṛta Rāṣṭra, executive agency is conceptualised through the paradigm of Rāja Dharma, the duty of the sovereign. Abstracted into modern political science terminology, the Vedic ruler is the primary agent of cosmic compliance. The Ṛgveda (8.25.5) positions the executive not as the supreme creator of arbitrary law, but as the relentless pursuer and terrestrial protector of pre-existing natural law. The ruler does not invent justice; the ruler discovers justice and enforces it on behalf of the cosmic order.

This theoretical framework drastically limits executive autonomy in a manner that pre-empts modern constitutionalism by millennia. The ruler is expected to exhibit impartiality, strategic wisdom, and an unwavering commitment to public welfare (Yajurveda, 10.4). However, such attributes must not be read merely as normative prescriptions for a virtuous ruler. In the Vedic theoretical model, these are rigid structural requirements for state survival. An executive is tasked with leading the state through a complex and interdependent international system. If the executive relies on arbitrary coercion, cronyism, or exploitative behaviour rather than policy aligned with Ṛta, the state is effectively severed from the stabilising forces of the international system.

The psychological burden placed upon the executive in this framework is immense. The ruler is constantly under the surveillance of both the terrestrial populace and the cosmic forces. Every decision regarding taxation, diplomacy, or warfare is weighed against the scales of universal justice. There is no room for the Machiavellian prince who deceives the people for the greater good of the state. In the Vedic framework, deception is a manifestation of Anṛta, and reliance on Anṛta inevitably infects the state apparatus with chaos, leading to

eventual collapse. The executive must operate with total transparency and unwavering dedication to truth.

Therefore, executive decision-making in foreign policy cannot be driven by zero-sum opportunism or the pursuit of short-term territorial gains. The sovereign is structurally compelled to evaluate every diplomatic and military action against the strict metric of systemic equilibrium. The question of whether a treaty promotes harmony, or whether a war restores justice or breeds further chaos, is central. The failure of the executive to maintain this compliance does not merely result in poor policy outcomes, such as economic deterioration or reputational degradation in the international arena. It invalidates the mandate of the sovereign, triggering endogenous mechanisms for leadership replacement (Atharvaveda, 3.4.2). The ruler who abandons Ṛta becomes an enemy of the state itself, stripping away any presumption of sovereign immunity and inviting immediate removal.

Furthermore, the ruler in the Vedic tradition is not merely an administrator; they are an exemplar. The personal moral conduct of the executive serves as a template for the entire society. If the ruler displays greed, cowardice, or cruelty, these qualities will rapidly cascade downwards, infecting the bureaucracy, the military, and the general populace. This phenomenon highlights the importance of virtue in leadership. A ruler must possess the intellectual clarity to understand the complex dictates of Ṛta and the moral courage to implement them, even when such actions run counter to their own immediate personal interests or the desires of powerful factions within the state. The ultimate test of Rāja Dharma is the willingness of the sovereign to sacrifice their own comfort, power, or even their life for the preservation of cosmic order.

4.2.3 Institutional Constraints

Ṛta Rāṣṭra theory incorporates an indigenous mechanism of institutional constraint to ensure that the executive does not slowly deviate into despotic Anṛta. These are primarily articulated through the ancient concepts of the Sabhā and the Samiti.

The Sabhā, as delineated in the Ṛgveda (1.167.3), functions as an elite epistemic community. Comprising scholars, revered elders, and individuals with epistemological authority, the Sabhā serves as a constant institutional check on executive impulsivity and hubris. Its role is to continuously interpret the complex dictates of Ṛta and carefully translate them into actionable state policy (Ṛgveda, 4.2.5). In theoretical terms, the Sabhā ensures that the strategic calculations of the state remain bound by long-term systemic rationality rather than being swayed by short-term expediency or the personal ambitions of the executive. It represents the long memory and the wisdom of the civilisation, filtering raw executive power through the refining lens of cosmic law.

The necessity of the Sabhā highlights scepticism regarding unchecked individual power. The Vedic texts recognise that even the most righteous ruler is susceptible to cognitive biases, emotional reactions, and the corrupting influence of authority. The Sabhā acts as an institutionalised cognitive safeguard. It forces the executive to justify every policy decision before a council of individuals dedicated to the pursuit of truth and cosmic order rather than personal political gain. This epistemic constraint ensures that the state's foreign policy is always rooted in philosophical and ethical deliberation, preventing rash military adventures or deceitful diplomatic manoeuvres.

Conversely, the Samiti represents a much broader mechanism of societal accountability. The Samiti aggregates the diverse and widespread interests of the general

populace, functioning as a structural feedback loop (Atharvaveda 7.12.1). While the Sabhā ensures epistemological alignment with Ṛta from the top down, the Samiti ensures that state policies do not generate domestic entropy or internal Anṛta from the bottom up. The Ṛgveda (10.166.4) formally grants the Samiti regulatory authority over the executive, establishing a clear paradigm of conditional sovereignty.

If the executive violates the normative structure of the Rāṣṭra, pushing society towards suffering and chaos, the Samiti acts as the institutional trigger for sovereign replacement, preventing the Rāṣṭra from collapsing into systemic disorder. The voice of the people, acting in defence of Ṛta, is absolute and serves as the ultimate terrestrial failsafe against tyranny. This dual mechanism of constraint, where the Sabhā provides intellectual oversight and the Samiti provides popular accountability, creates a resilient institutional architecture that ensures the state remains anchored to its foundational moral principles.

4.2.4 Resilience as State Security

Ṛta Rāṣṭra theory asserts that the resilience of a state is the foundation of its security. In neorealist theory, the strength of a state is often equated with material capabilities; yet history is replete with examples of materially powerful states collapsing due to internal fragmentation. The Vedic framework posits that the true security of states is based on their resilience rather than mere physical force. A state should align its internal and external actions with cosmic order to ensure its long-term survival. By prioritising this alignment, the state builds a structure that can withstand shocks that would otherwise shatter a purely material power. This shift in focus emphasises that a state is only as strong as its connection to the universal principles of Ṛta, which provide a stable core during times of global or domestic crisis.

A Ṛta Rāṣṭra possesses an internal coherence that allows it to project power without fear of domestic subversion. When citizens perceive the state as the legitimate guardian of Ṛta, they provide a level of voluntary support that cannot be matched by any coercive regime. This generates a form of normative power that allows the state to influence others not through threats but through the sheer legitimacy of its example. In this sense, the Ṛta Rāṣṭra is the ultimate practitioner of soft power, yet this power is rooted in cosmological duties rather than modern cultural products. By embodying the cosmic order, the state acts as a beacon that draws others towards its model. This legitimacy creates an international presence based on duty and ethical leadership, which remains far more stable than influence gained through economic or military pressure alone.

4.2.5 Civic Accountability

Ṛta Rāṣṭra theory extends the burden of accountability far beyond the executive branch and elite councils to reach into the social base through the concept of Prajā Dharma, which signifies civic duty. In this framework, the general populace is not viewed as a passive variable or a helpless resource to be managed for state mobilisation and warfare. Citizens are fully active agents who are structurally required to maintain internal cohesion and uphold the moral framework of the nation. Atharvaveda (3.16.4) and Ṛgveda (8.25.17) outline a rigid social contract in which civic compliance is framed not as slavish subservience to the state apparatus but as an ontological necessity for the preservation of cosmic and social order. The state relies on the civic body for material extraction and mobilisation during times of crisis, yet this extraction is strictly and undeniably legitimised by the adherence of the state to Ṛta. This ensures that the security of the nation is built upon a foundation of mutual duty and cosmic alignment.

This concept of Prajā Dharma differs from modern Western notions of civic duty, which are often based on the protection of individual negative liberties or compliance with legally enacted statutes. In the Vedic framework, civic duty is linked to spiritual and cosmic responsibility, where the citizen obeys the righteous laws of the state because those laws are reflections of universal truth. Consequently, internal stability is not achieved through a Weberian monopoly on legitimate violence or the threat of a police state. It is achieved through the socialisation of the populace into the ideational structure of Ṛta. When the state and society are perfectly aligned in their mutual pursuit of cosmic order, the Ṛta Rāṣṭra achieves maximal structural cohesion. This internal unity immunises the state against internal fractionalisation and subversion while rendering it resilient to external geopolitical shocks and foreign interference. The strength of a state is therefore not measured by the size of its standing army but by the moral fortitude and civic engagement of its citizens.

Having established the internal ontology and domestic obligations of the Ṛta Rāṣṭra at the unit level, the analytical lens must now shift to the systemic dynamics of the broader international environment. The findings of the previous section demonstrate that a state's legitimacy and internal resilience are anchored in conditional sovereignty and civic duty that require the institutionalisation of cosmic order within national boundaries. However, because the harmony of the cosmos is an integrated whole, a righteous state cannot fulfill its ontological purpose in isolation; its internal stability must be extended into the global sphere through ethical partnerships. The following section develops the Sahakārya Mitratā (Coaction Alliance) theory to explain how shared commitments to Ṛta provide a causal logic for enduring alliances, moving the international system beyond the transactional fragility of materialist power-balancing.

4.3 The Sahakārya Mitratā (Coaction Alliance) Theory

The establishment of the internal ontology of the Ṛta Rāṣṭra further necessitates an exploration of how these cohesive units interact within the broader international system. SKM, or Coaction Alliance theory, provides a causal explanation for alliance formation and the relentless pursuit of systemic equilibrium. The term Sahakārya derives from the Sanskrit prefix saha (together/with) and kārya (action/function), denoting collaborative agency. Offensive realism, as described by Waltz (1979), views alliances as inherently fragile and temporary marriages of convenience driven by external threat balancing, whereas the Vedic framework posits that alliances are the natural structural culmination of shared commitments to Ṛta. This theoretical shift suggests that international security is not merely a product of shifting power dynamics but instead is a reflection of a collective order. By grounding external relations in a shared cosmic goal, states extend their internal stability to the global stage.

Security within this international context is defined by the stability of partnerships rooted in a shared moral and cosmic purpose. These alliances function as an extension of the internal resilience of the state into the global sphere creating a predictable environment. Collective adherence to Ṛta transforms the international system from an anarchic space into a coordinated community of righteous actors, where the resilience of each unit contributes to the security of the whole. Resilience serves as a shared global asset that protects the entire system from the chaos of unaligned power. Because these partnerships are rooted in a shared purpose, they possess a level of durability that exceeds the transactional alliances described in modern neorealism. The foundations of the SKM framework are articulated in the following analysis to clarify the structural logic of international alignment and systemic security. These

core assumptions delineate how states move beyond mere survival towards a state of collective resilience rooted in the cosmic order. By establishing these conceptual pillars, the theory provides an alternative to the transactional and fragile nature of modern realism.

4.3.1 Causal Logic of Alliance

The SKM theory posits that states socialised within the normative structure of Ṛta are predisposed towards functional and institutional integration with other similarly aligned units. Within this framework, causal logic constitutes the primary explanatory mechanism for alliance formation. As articulated in the Ṛgveda (10.191.2–4), inter-state engagement is directed towards the articulation of a unified and harmonious purpose, wherein alignment is not merely strategic but anchored in shared commitments.

Alliances in this ancient framework do not form merely to aggregate military capabilities against a rising regional hegemon or to secure favourable trade monopolies. They form because the preservation of Ṛta is a macro-systemic imperative that simply cannot be achieved by an isolated state, no matter how powerful it might be. Maintaining ecological balance, ensuring transnational justice, eradicating poverty, and preventing systemic entropy require coordinated multilateral action.

To explicate this causal logic, the theory must be contrasted with the balance of threat theory as advanced by Walt (1987), which argues that states ally to balance against the most imminent material threat. In the Vedic framework, threat is not defined by material capability or geographical proximity. Instead, threat is defined by a state's alignment with Anṛta. A powerful neighbouring state that strictly adheres to Ṛta is not perceived as a threat at all, but rather as a natural and necessary partner in upholding cosmic order. Conversely, a weak distant state that embraces Anṛta is recognised as a systemic threat that must be contained.

Therefore, the convergence of states towards Ṛta acts as the primary independent variable of the alliance. When states recognise a mutual commitment to cosmic and moral order, the transaction costs of cooperation are substantially lowered. This reduces the need for extensive espionage, continuous monitoring, and coercive bargaining. This shared understanding enables a transformation from an anarchic self-help order, characterised by pervasive mutual distrust, to an institutionalised society of states collectively oriented towards a shared civilisational objective. The shared ontology of Ṛta provides a foundational basis for international unity, allowing states to move beyond the security dilemmas that characterise materialist frameworks.

4.3.2 Institutional constraints on defection

A central challenge in IR theory, particularly within neoliberal institutionalism, is the persistent problem of sovereign defection and the free-rider dilemma (Keohane, 1984). If states are rational egoists constantly calculating their own advantage, the question arises as to what prevents a state within an alliance from cheating, breaking its promises, or hoarding resources once its immediate security needs have been met by its partners.

The SKM theory addresses this challenge through the powerful mechanism of cosmic determinism. In a Vedic alliance, defection is not merely a legal breach of a diplomatic contract; it is an act of Anṛta, a direct and severe violation of the cosmic order. The theory posits that leaders of Ṛta Rāṣṭras operate under an internalised intersubjective belief that violating an alliance for short-term material gain inherently destabilises the entire system. Because they understand that their state is part of an interconnected system, they know that defecting will guarantee long-term catastrophic consequences for their own state. The cosmos punishes deceit through inescapable systemic blowback.

This theory solves the classic prisoner's dilemma that obsesses modern IR. Within a materialist framework, rational actors operating under conditions of anarchy face incentives to defect pre-emptively, anticipating possible defection by others, which leads to collectively suboptimal outcomes (Waltz, 1979). In contrast, the payoff matrix is rewritten by the presence of cosmic law in the Vedic framework. Betrayal is never the rational choice because the unseen costs of generating Anṛta outweigh any temporary material advantage gained through deception. The socialisation of leaders into this reality eliminates the incentive to defect.

Furthermore, the stringent protocols of diplomatic transparency and ethical negotiation embedded in Vedic statecraft (Atharvaveda, 3.15.2–3) function as effective structural monitoring mechanisms. By institutionalising truthfulness in trade treaties and diplomatic exchanges, the SKM framework systematically eliminates the informational asymmetries that typically breed mistrust and facilitate defection in materialist alliance structures. When states speak the truth and honour their word, the structural incentive to cheat evaporates, paving the way for elevated levels of trust and constructive collaboration.

4.3.3 Diplomatic Agency in the Coaction Framework

The operationalisation of this theory relies on the structural role of diplomatic agency, which is conceptualised in the ancient Vedic texts through the figure of the dūta, the envoy or ambassador. Moving beyond simplistic descriptive analyses of an envoy possessing good personal traits, the dūta must be theorised as a critical node of intersubjective communication and norm entrepreneurship in the international system. In the Ṛgveda (1.36.5) and Yajurveda (22.16), the dūta is not merely a messenger or an undercover agent who operates covertly. The dūta is an agent of Ṛta tasked directly with harmonising state interests and building

bridges of mutual understanding. In the SKM framework, diplomatic agents are responsible for constructing shared realities and shared vocabularies between diverse states.

The dūta functions as an intermediary agent, transmitting the specific cultural and political context of the home state into the universal normative framework of Ṛta for articulation within the host state. They do not engage in cynical manipulation or deceptive posturing in modern realpolitik diplomacy. Instead, their primary tool remains truth-telling with strategic empathy. They must possess the intellectual capacity to identify areas of mutual convergence and the rhetorical skill to articulate how cooperation serves the higher cosmic order.

Through refined rhetorical precision, cultural understanding, and strategic empathy (Ṛgveda, 5.43.8), the dūta actively mitigates cognitive biases, misperceptions, and affect-driven fears that systematically recur and sustain the security dilemma between states. By ensuring that the strategic intentions of the Ṛta Rāṣṭra are accurately communicated, transparently explained, and anchored in universal ethical principles, the diplomatic corps effectively constructs the vital infrastructure necessary for lasting alliances. They function as agents of peace, tasked with reducing the uncertainty and mistrust that characterise anarchy and fostering institutionalised trust in place of fear.

4.3.4 Cognitive Synchronicity for Coaction Alliance

SKM theory emphasises the critical importance of shared experiences in building cognitive synchronicity between states. Rituals and festive gatherings within the Vedic tradition function as primary tools for integration by enabling leaders and citizens from various nations to participate in unmediated social interaction. This sociopolitical process directly parallels the constructivist assertion of Adler (2008) that communities of practice are

fundamental to the emergence of security communities. Through these collective engagements, actors cultivate the shared meanings and intersubjective trust required to foster a stable international order. Such interactions ensure that the resulting alliance is anchored in a deep social fabric rather than a fragile and temporary strategic arrangement.

Collective efforts in modern terms, such as environmental protection, disaster relief, and scientific discovery, represent the performance of modern rituals of Ṛta. These shared activities generate a sense of collective identity that transcends national boundaries. SKM theory posits that these social and cultural exchanges are not just low politics but are the essential foundations of high politics. A state that neglects cultural and social diplomacy builds its alliances on sand because true strategic partnership requires the alignment of hearts and minds. This alignment can only be achieved through sustained intersubjective engagement. By institutionalising these moments of shared experience, the Ṛta Rāṣṭra transforms international relations from a series of cold calculations into a lived reality of mutual respect and cooperation.

4.3.5 Interdependence for Systemic Equilibrium

SKM theory maintains a progressive approach to material economics and complex interdependence by drawing from the Atharvaveda (3.30.6). This scripture establishes a clear imperative for the equitable and generous sharing of resources between entities. Applying this mandate to the realm of the international system necessitates the deliberate construction of economic interdependence as a primary mechanism for long-term conflict prevention. Righteous states do not seek absolute autarky or total self-reliance because isolation breeds suspicion and alienates them from the secure and cooperative network of Ṛta. Instead, these states actively intertwine their economic destinies through the intentional pooling of

resources and shared technological development. This strategic entanglement serves as a structural deterrent that ensures the stability of the global order and prevents the fragmentation that leads to war.

Wealth accumulation in this framework is governed by the principle of saha bhakṣa, which ensures that resources flow freely across borders to elevate the baseline prosperity of the entire international community (Ṛgveda 10.191.2-4). This approach provides a critique of mercantilism and zero-sum economic theories that view the gain of one state as a loss for another (Keohane & Nye, 1977). Vedic theory recognises that the hoarding of resources causes systemic blockages and generates dangerous inequalities, which eventually lead to resentment and conflict. When the domestic prosperity of one state is linked to the stability of its neighbour, the utility of military aggression is structurally and logically negated. To attack a partner in such a system is to destroy the internal economy of the aggressor. This widespread distribution of material wealth acts as a self-regulating equilibrium that prevents any single rogue state from achieving destabilising hegemony. Peace is therefore sustained by shared abundance and the mutual recognition that collective survival depends on the health of the entire economic network.

4.3.6 Mandate of Collective Custodianship

The SKM theory conceptualises the alliance not as a transient geopolitical instrument to be discarded at convenience, but as the permanent foundation of a collective security architecture. Within this framework, the security of the international system is viewed as inherently indivisible because the harmony of the broader cosmos is an integrated whole. Therefore, the security of the human realm must be treated with equal indivisibility. This reflects a vision in which peace and stability are not localised assets but universal conditions

that permeate all borders. This unity finds its scriptural resonance in the Ṛgveda (10.66.6), which articulates a world where prosperity and order are sustained through collective adherence to Ṛta, ultimately manifesting the spirit of Vasudhaiva Kuṭumbakam - the world as a single interconnected family.

In a system governed by Ṛta, neutrality in the face of rampant injustice or systemic aggression is categorised as a fundamental moral and structural failure. If an alliance is anchored in the preservation of universal order, then a localised threat to that order constitutes an existential challenge to the entire global fabric. States bound by SKM do not merely safeguard their own territorial boundaries; they function as the active custodians of the entire macrosystemic structure. They are obliged by their commitment to cosmic law to intervene when the stability of reality is threatened by the forces of Anṛta. This shift moves the international paradigm away from the competitive, "ruthlessly adversarial" logic of power balancing and towards an integrated, values-based collective security regime in which an injury to one is recognised as an injury to all.

As a result, an attack on a Ṛta-abiding state is perceived not as a bilateral dispute but as a systemic threat to the international system, requiring a swift and unified response. This collective resilience renders offensive warfare an act of absolute futility, as any potential aggressor faces the resolute strength of the entire international system. The moral and material weight of the alliance serves as the ultimate deterrent against those who would seek to destabilise the cosmic equilibrium for egoistic gain.

While the SKM theory establishes the structural foundations for systemic stability and economic cooperation through collective custodianship and shared prosperity, a comprehensive IR framework must also account for the unavoidable reality of violent conflict.

The following section develops the AY (Chaos War) theory to analyse how organised violence is conceptualised within the Vedic framework as a surgical and ethical instrument for neutralising entropy and returning the international system to cosmic harmony.

4.4 The Anṛta Yuddha (Chaos War) Theory

Theories of Ṛta Rāṣṭra and SKM establish the structural foundations for systemic stability and economic cooperation; yet a comprehensive IR framework necessitates accounting for violent conflict. Vedic scriptural foundations acknowledge a dualistic existential reality in which Ṛta is relentlessly opposed by Anṛta. Anṛta constitutes the entropic force of deception and lawlessness that fundamentally subverts the structural integrity of the cosmic and international order. AY theory formalises this adversarial dynamic by providing a structural explanation for the eruption of hostilities, the mechanics of mobilisation, and the ethics of post-conflict stabilisation.

War, within this framework, is not a tool for territorial expansion but a systemic reaction to the accumulation of disorder that threatens the Ṛta-based international system. By identifying war as a necessary response to the proliferation of Anṛta, the theory offers a lens for examining the ethical use of force and the restoration of equilibrium. This theoretical evolution allows for the identification of conflict as a corrective mechanism intended to restore cosmic harmony when diplomatic alignment fails.

4.4.1 Ontology of Anṛta Yuddha

In contrast to structural realism, which posits that war is a natural, cyclical, and mechanical outcome of power-balance shifts under conditions of anarchy (Waltz, 1979), the AY theory defines conflict as a systemic anomaly resulting from a catastrophic ideational collapse. Within this framework, Anṛta serves as the primary independent variable that drives

the international system away from equilibrium and towards violent rupture. It operates as a force of systemic entropy that subverts established order. When a state diverges from the normative constraints of Ṛta by engaging in diplomatic duplicity, domestic oppression, or revisionist expansionism, it introduces destabilising entropy into the international system (Ṛgveda, 7.84.4). This disruption severs the bonds of mutual trust fostered by SKM, replacing transparent cooperation with informational asymmetry and geopolitical paranoia.

To contextualise this theory within modern strategic thought, it must be contrasted with the Clausewitzian dictum that war is the "continuation of policy by other means" (Clausewitz, 1832/1976). In the Vedic framework, war is not an extension of rational statecraft but rather a systemic collapse representing a fundamental ontological failure. A Ṛta Rāṣṭra never initiates a war of conquest because violence inherently generates entropy, undermining the cosmic harmony which the state is mandated to preserve. Therefore, the outbreak of hostilities signifies that the forces of Anṛta have compromised a sovereign entity, triggering a breakdown in the shared reality of the international community.

Consequently, war is never viewed as a rational or surgical policy instrument for achieving marginal strategic gains. It is not politics by other means, but the ultimate tragic consequence of a state deliberately eroding the structures that sustain humanity. In this framework, war represents the triumph of destructive entropy over order, demanding immediate containment and eradication. The occurrence of war necessitates a period of collective introspection among all systemic actors to evaluate the moral and structural failures that allowed the degradation of the global ecology.

4.4.2 Internal-External Nexus of Anṛta

The AY theory provides an analysis of the internal-external nexus of Anṛta, challenging classical theories that treat the domestic composition of a state as irrelevant to its foreign policy behaviour (Waltz, 1979). The Vedic texts establish a direct causal link between domestic moral decay and international military aggression.

According to Ṛgveda (4.5.5) and Atharvaveda (5.19.6), the embrace of Anṛta initially manifests within the borders of the state as domestic tyranny, widespread corruption, the abuse of the vulnerable, and the deliberate subversion of epistemic wisdom. This internal moral decay fractures the structural cohesion of the state apparatus. To maintain their tenuous grip on power over a fracturing populace, the despotic executive is often compelled to project aggression outwardly. They invent foreign enemies, break international treaties, and engage in deceptive diplomacy to distract their citizens (Ṛgveda, 7.104.8).

This conceptualisation shares a thematic alignment with Levy's (1989) diversionary theory of war, yet it departs significantly by characterising conflict as a structural inevitability rather than a strategic elective. The primary divergence lies in the operationalisation of agency: in the diversionary model, war functions as a calculated instrument of statecraft, utilised by embattled elites to secure political survival. Conversely, the AY framework posits that a regime predicated on internal deception and systemic coercion fundamentally forfeits the cognitive and institutional architecture required for authentic diplomacy. Domestic unrighteousness inevitably spills over into the international arena.

A sovereign entity that engages in systemic domestic coercion or fails to maintain the fundamental security of its populace demonstrates normative erosion that precludes international reliability. Such a state lacks the institutional integrity required to uphold

multilateral obligations or respect the territorial integrity of neighbouring states. Within this framework, the erosion of the domestic social contract is viewed as a precursor to external aggression, suggesting that internal human rights violations are not matters of exclusive domestic jurisdiction but are instead immediate threats to global stability. This interconnectedness identifies domestic Anṛta as the reliable explanatory metric for systemic conflict.

4.4.3 Causal Variables of Anṛta Yuddha

The etiology of conflict within the AY framework identifies specific independent variables that cause the transition from systemic peace to organised violence. Unlike the materialist focus of neorealism, which prioritises the distribution of capabilities, this Vedic model emphasises the degradation of ideational and moral structures as the primary drivers of war. These factors operate as systemic stressors that, when left unaddressed, render the maintenance of Ṛta impossible.

Epistemic erosion serves as the foundational catalyst for conflict. This occurs when the deliberate use of deception destroys the transparency required for the SKM to function. While neorealism views uncertainty as an inherent feature of an anarchic system, the Vedic framework identifies it as a manufactured pathology (Walzer, 1977). When a state consciously subverts shared reality through bad-faith diplomacy or propaganda, it severs the communicative bonds of the international order, making force the only remaining medium for resolving disputes.

Domestic fragmentation constitutes another critical factor. Internal collapse of a state, manifested through systemic injustice, tyranny, or the breakdown of the social contract, creates an unavoidable structural impulse towards external aggression. This “internal

entropy" acts as a structural necessity; the state must externalise its domestic failures to prevent total internal dissolution. Consequently, the lack of internal Ṛta makes the state a natural antagonist to the global system, as it seeks to export its chaos to neighbouring entities.

Material hoarding and the pursuit of unchecked hegemony act as the final systemic disruption. When a state seeks to obstruct the free flow of resources (the principle of Saha bhakṣa) or attempts to achieve a position of absolute dominance, it creates systemic blockages. These blockages generate inequalities and resentment, eventually triggering the collective security mechanisms of the righteous international community. Within this paradigm, the pursuit of "absolute security" by one state is recognised as an act of systemic theft that mandates a corrective response to restore equilibrium. These variables, when combined, create a deterministic path towards conflict, where the accumulation of Anṛta necessitates surgical military intervention to preserve the integrity of the whole.

4.4.4 Operational Mechanics of Systemic Correction

Strategic differentiation stands as the primary cognitive requirement for any Ṛta-abiding coalition. Before a single kinetic action is taken, the intervening states must use their collective intelligence to distinguish between the leadership that has embraced Anṛta and the civilian populace that remains part of the cosmic order. This process ensures that the focus of the conflict remains on the removal of the specific agents of Anṛta rather than the destruction of the state itself. The coalition maintains the moral high ground and prepares the ground for smoother post-conflict restoration by isolating the rogue regime through superior information and psychological operations.

Precision in the application of force is the physical manifestation of the principle of proportionality. In the Vedic framework, every act of violence is recognised as a temporary

increase in entropy. To minimise this disorder, the coalition utilises its material capacity to target only the essential infrastructure of the Anṛta-driven regime. This surgical approach prevents the "spillover" of chaos into neighbouring regions and protects the global economy from unnecessary disruption. The use of force is therefore not measured by its total volume, but by its ability to achieve the specific systemic goal of stabilisation with the least amount of collateral damage.

Temporal ethics dictates that the duration of a conflict is a direct reflection of its righteousness. A war that lingers is seen as a failure of both strategy and morality, as it allows for the accumulation of resentment and the breakdown of social norms. The mandate for speed is designed to shock the Anṛta-led system into a state of paralysis, forcing a rapid conclusion to hostilities. The Ṛta Rāṣṭra fulfils its duty to protect the "global ecology" of peace, ensuring that the transition back to diplomatic cooperation can begin before the scars of war become permanent by ending the war as soon as possible.

4.4.5 Ethics of War

Restraint functions as the essential cornerstone of the AY framework, necessitating that the righteous coalition remains bound by the dictates of Ṛta even within the maximum intensity of kinetic war. This principle dictates a total prohibition on the targeting of non-combatants, specifically including women, children, and the elderly. Furthermore, the deliberate destruction of vital civilian infrastructure, such as potable water sources, sacred temples, and productive agricultural land, is strictly forbidden. While these regulations mirror modern international humanitarian law, the Vedic texts present them as cosmic imperatives rather than mere legal conventions, suggesting that the violation of these norms causes a permanent rupture in the moral fabric of the universe.

Prohibitions within this framework are not merely restrictive but are designed to preserve the underlying global ecology that must survive the conflict. The protection of agricultural resources and water reflects a deep understanding that the objective of war is the restoration of life and order, not the creation of a wasteland. Consequently, a Ṛta Rāṣṭra recognises that any victory achieved through the starvation of civilians or the desecration of sacred spaces is a hollow triumph that merely replaces one form of Anṛta with another. This ontological commitment to restraint ensures that the military means remain aligned with the moral ends of the intervention.

Psychological operations within this framework are directed exclusively towards the rapid restoration of systemic order. The primary goal is to shatter the resolve of the opponent by demonstrating the total futility of their cause alongside the overwhelming legitimacy of the righteous coalition. This approach aligns with the concepts used by modern strategists who focus on effects-based operations; yet the Vedic framework ensures that such effects serve the restoration of systemic harmony rather than the achievement of total annihilation.

The objectives of these operations remain focused on the “de-escalation of the spirit”, encouraging the adversary to recognise the catastrophic nature of their alignment with Anṛta. A Ṛta Rāṣṭra conducts its operations with the precision of a surgeon, actively avoiding the indiscriminate and entropic violence associated with disordered actors. This surgical methodology ensures that the seeds of future peace are not destroyed during the process of military correction, allowing for a more stable transition to post-conflict reconstruction. By prioritising the preservation of the civilian social fabric, the theory provides an ethical foundation for the use of force in the pursuit of lasting Ṛta.

4.4.6 Restoration of Ṛta

Post-conflict transition constitutes the final and most critical phase of the AY, representing the movement from coercive military action back to a peaceful systemic equilibrium governed by the strict laws of Ṛta. A war initiated to restore Ṛta becomes irrevocably invalidated if the victorious coalition subsequently engages in post-war economic exploitation, territorial annexation, or punitive vengeance against the defeated population. This final stage ensures that the use of force remains a corrective instrument rather than a means for material gain.

Recognition of the moral hazard of victory is pervasive within the Vedic texts, as the intoxication of military triumph carries the risk of transforming a righteous liberator into a new agent of oppression, restarting the cycle of Anṛta. Abstracted from the Ṛgveda (1.103.1 - 13), the sole legitimate objective of this phase is complete restoration of order. Within this framework, the victorious military coalition assumes a temporary and solemn custodial responsibility for the defeated territory, acting as a guardian of the transition.

The mandate for custodial power involves the systematic dismantling of the oppressive apparatus of Anṛta while simultaneously protecting the vulnerable civilian populace from post-collapse anarchy, looting, and starvation. This structural duty requires the rapid reestablishment of autonomous and Ṛta-aligned domestic infrastructure. Prohibitions against draining the wealth of the conquered land or enslaving its people are absolute, as the victors must act as healers operating on a diseased body politic. Furthermore, the coalition bears the significant financial and administrative burden of reconstructing the society it was forced to dismantle.

By prioritising the rapid reinstatement of just domestic laws, the equitable distribution of resources, and the installation of ethical local leadership, the framework ensures that the poisonous roots of Anṛta are permanently eradicated. Systemic stabilisation is achieved only when the defeated state is fully rehabilitated, economically viable, and peacefully reintegrated into the cooperative network of the SKM. This reintegration closes the theoretical loop of the Vedic international relations framework, proving that order can conclusively triumph over chaos and return the system to cosmic harmony. Ultimate victory within this paradigm lies not in the destruction of the adversary, but in their transformation back into a partner for peace.

Collectively, the theoretical abstractions developed throughout this chapter demonstrate that the ancient Vedic Saṁhitās contain a structurally coherent and relevant apparatus for navigating the complexities of international relations. By identifying Ṛta as the fundamental systemic ordering principle, this Hindu framework offers an alternative to the materialist theories of eternal anarchy that have dominated Western discourse for centuries. This ontological departure challenges foundational West-centric assumptions by asserting that non-Western civilisations possess advanced explanatory models of statecraft and conflict resolution millennia before the Westphalian era.

The extraction of these principles reveals that the Vedic framework is not merely a historical relic but a potent living system capable of analysing modern geopolitical crises through a lens of universal ethics. Accordingly, Ṛta Rāṣṭra theory redefines the modern state as a morally constrained agent responsible for maintaining cosmic and domestic equilibrium rather than a machine for violence. This model dismantles the illusion of absolute sovereignty and binds leadership to accountability through the institutions of the Sabhā and Samiti.

Similarly, SKM theory provides a causal explanation for the formation of enduring alliances driven by ideational convergence and the structural imperative to share prosperity through the principle of saha bhakṣa (Ṛgveda 10.191.2-4). Finally, AY theory further elucidates the tragic mechanics of systemic conflict by defining war as a regulated structural necessity for neutralising entropy and restoring global order.

Thus, these three theories provide a distinct non-Western epistemological lens through which the dynamics of state behaviour and cooperative diplomacy can be explained by scholars worldwide. Ultimately, the incorporation of Ṛta into IR offers a pathway towards a more stable and just global society where the pursuit of power is finally harmonised with the preservation of universal truth.

CHAPTER V

CONVERGENCES AND DIVERGENCES

Having formally constructed the three Hindu IR theories in the preceding chapter, this chapter undertakes a systematic comparative analysis. The objective is not to rank these theories against their Western counterparts but to map precise points of theoretical convergence and divergence across ontological assumptions, causal mechanisms, and normative implications. This comparative exercise serves the second research objective and illuminates the distinct contribution of the Vedic framework to the discipline. In particular, it evaluates Western assumptions of state-building and IR theories of realism and liberalism in comparison with the Hindu theories of Ṛta Rāṣṭra, SKM, and AY. The primary objective is to highlight the distinctive contributions of Hindu IR theories and to assess how they converge with, or diverge from, conventional Western understandings of nation-building, cooperation, and conflict.

5.1 Ṛta Rāṣṭra Theories and Western Theories of State Building and Sovereignty

Theoretical intersections emerge when the Ṛta Rāṣṭra framework is positioned alongside Western theories of nation-building. To ensure a cohesive and structured analysis, the following section organises these Western models into thematic dialectical encounters. This methodology facilitates an evaluation of foundational logic, highlighting both critical convergences and fundamental departures between the two traditions. Specifically, these encounters prioritise theoretical models that have exerted a definitive impact on the development of realism and liberalism within international relations. A notable point of comparative analysis between these traditions is their respective conceptualisations of the contract between the sovereign and the citizenry, wherein individuals accept specific

constraints in exchange for a guarantee of justice, peace, and security. The core themes are evaluated below.

5.1.1 Ontological Foundation

Social contract theory assumes that people decide to limit some of their freedoms in exchange for collective benefits voluntarily and decide to create states (Buchanan & Tullock, 2000). This concept is coherent with the Ṛta Rāṣṭra framework, which emphasises the moral and legal obligations of people to preserve Ṛta. Realists within Western philosophy employ this concept to offer a justification for the existence of a sovereign nation acting as a defence against anarchy (Hobbes, 1651/2004). This perspective is similar to Ṛta Rāṣṭra theory, which encourages maintaining law and order to prevent Anṛta. Similarly, liberals view nations as entities within an international framework for cooperation (Locke, 1689/1988), reflecting the emphasis on harmony among Ṛta-abiding nations found in the SKM theory.

Classical republicanism prioritises civic virtue, active citizen engagement in government, and protection of people from tyranny (Pocock, 1975). This concept conforms with Ṛta Rāṣṭra theory. Realists like Machiavelli (1532/1998) accord leadership and the power of a society based on public involvement major importance. This approach is similar to the Vedic stress on righteous conduct and fair governance. Liberals like Arendt (1958) stress the significance of public discourse and international institutions in safeguarding republican norms. This also aligns with the focus on harmony and cooperation among governments in Ṛta Rāṣṭra.

An ontological divergence occurs regarding the source of sovereign legitimacy and the broader cosmic context. Western theories often focus on human actions and interactions as the basis for understanding the evolution of states, considering people as independent

variables within a human-centric framework (Buchanan & Tullock, 2000). These definitions frequently overlook the broader cosmic context in which human existence is interconnected. Unlike these ideas, the Ṛta Rāṣṭra theory rests on the concept of Ṛta, the cosmic order that governs both the universe and human society. Ṛta guarantees a comprehensive approach to statecraft by highlighting the importance of cosmic interconnectivity in forming governance paradigms.

Structural differences remain prominent, as Western social contract theory and classical republicanism rely on human-centric voluntarism and the fear of punishment under an anarchic state of nature. In this view, sovereignty is an artificial construct created by humans to escape chaos. The Ṛta Rāṣṭra framework, conversely, relies on cosmic determinism. The state is not an artificial leviathan created by fearful humans, but a functional vessel mandated to uphold a pre-existing universal truth. If the Hobbesian sovereign provides physical security, they fulfil their contract even if they act tyrannically. In contrast, if the Ṛta Rāṣṭra provides security at the expense of cosmic justice, it fails its ontological purpose and loses its legitimacy.

5.1.2 Source of Law

Natural law theory holds that universal moral principles or natural impulses influence human behaviour and form the basis for laws (Grotius, 1625/2005). Realists use the concept of natural law to support wars and critique authoritarian governments, much as the AY theory addresses issues involving states that embrace Anṛta. Liberals such as Kant (1795/2006) regard natural law as the basis for human rights and a harmonious society. This aligns with the theory of a society run on moral norms and honesty within the Ṛta Rāṣṭra ideology. The

rule of law within the Vedic framework is rooted in cosmic order and aligns with natural law theory by emphasising that laws are grounded in logical principles.

Communitarianism emphasises the necessity of engaging with a community where individuals collectively uphold shared ideals and standards (Etzioni, 1993). This perspective aligns with the Vedic focus on enhancing social cohesion through communal adherence to Ṛta. In contrast to the liberal conception of personal freedom, communitarians place greater importance on historical events and cultural standards in shaping the world order (Ruggie, 2003). To foster social harmony, the Ṛta Rāṣṭra theory underscores the importance of communal obedience to cosmic principles in the same way.

Utilitarianism asserts that an action is morally good if it leads to overall well-being or enjoyment (Mill, 1863/2001). Realists like Morgenthau (1948) utilise utilitarianism to justify realpolitik actions driven by national interests. While utilitarianism gives emphasis to social welfare, a critical categorical distinction must be drawn to prevent theoretical inconsistency. In Western ideas shaped by utilitarianism, ethical considerations can take second place to pragmatic results (Mill, 1863/2001). Ethical concessions for the sake of strategic benefit or short-term success can result in further clashes between nations.

Righteousness or Dharma stands as the absolute foundation of the Vedic model. The role of righteousness in ethical administration contrasts sharply with utilitarian points of view common in Western nation-building. While utilitarianism operates strictly on a consequentialist logic, the Ṛta Rāṣṭra operates on a strict deontological logic of appropriateness. Actions are not judged merely by their strategic outcomes or utility, but by their alignment with cosmic duty. A nation arises not to serve strategic or material objectives,

but to preserve moral standards. The laws of the Ṛta Rāṣṭra are absolute moral imperatives, not flexible utilitarian guidelines.

5.1.3 Institutional Constraints and Collective Responsibility

Democratic theory posits that participation in the decision-making process provides political emancipation (Held, 2006). This aligns well with the Vedic idea of Ṛta, which holds that just governance should involve the active participation of the people for their well-being. Liberal IR theorists assert that democratic governments are driven to avoid war because the public holds them responsible. With the intent of fostering a peaceful international environment, the SKM theory emphasises cooperation and mutual benefit among Ṛta-abiding nations. The checks and balances in the Ṛta Rāṣṭra model, supported by institutions like the Sabhā and Samiti, mirror how classical republicanism promotes limited government to protect against tyranny.

Constitutionalism involves respect for, and loyalty to, the basic law of a country to establish the power of the government and protect individual rights (Dahl, 1998). This concept is similar to the Vedic system in which Ṛta acts as a guiding concept for governance, ensuring the creation of justice and order. As Doyle (1997) states, liberal thinkers see constitutionalism as a component influencing harmonious international relations. Conversely, as Mearsheimer (2001) argues, realists see it as a constraint on the behaviour of nations within the global system. The idea of the Ṛta Rāṣṭra balances the need for structure derived from Ṛta with the challenges posed by Anṛta.

Theoretical divergence between the two frameworks remains prominent regarding the nature of citizenship and governance. Mainstream Western paradigms frequently conceptualise citizens either as passive subjects or as actors primarily concerned with

individual rights rather than social obligations (Held, 2006). This perspective runs counter to the Ṛta Rāṣṭra focus on active civic involvement. Unlike certain Western democracy models in which people are mostly considered voters, periodically engaged in elections, Ṛta Rāṣṭra mandates continuous civic involvement through a shared duty to preserve cosmic balance. Ṛta Rāṣṭra prioritises moral responsibility and communal obligation, with an emphasis on the requirement for active civic involvement.

Individualism versus collectivism highlights another fundamental difference between the two frameworks. Rooted in the Vedic tradition, the Ṛta theory underlines the preservation of order, with an emphasis on collective welfare and social cohesiveness. This concept results in a curtailment of personal liberties to a certain extent, in contrast to liberal ideals that prioritise individual rights and liberties above all else. The Vedas stress the need for obligations and responsibilities over personal rights. All human beings must carry out their assigned roles to maintain peace and stability. Modern liberalism, championed by intellectuals like Locke and Mill, argues that personal development and social progress are driven primarily by human freedom (Locke, 1689/1988; Mill, 1863/2001). However, the Ṛta Rāṣṭra theory holds that the assessment of specific actions is always based on their effect on the larger social and cosmic configuration. Selfish actions that disturb Ṛta are viewed as precursors to anarchy.

5.1.4 National Identity

The Westphalian model provides a territorial architecture for nation-building predicated on cultural homogeneity. Within this paradigm, shared markers such as language, religion, or history serve as the primary rationale for the state's inception (Spruyt, 2020). This framework is frequently supported by a communitarian lens, which permits variations in

national ideals to ensure they remain “comfortable” for particular identity groups (Brown, 2000). However, this homogeneity-based framework is theoretically and practically problematic for two reasons. First, the maintenance of a sovereign territory occupied by a perfectly uniform group is a sociological impossibility, as plurality is an intrinsic human trait. There remains an ever-present trajectory toward internal differentiation, where distinct linguistic or religious nuances inevitably emerge within even the most cohesive groups. Second, the collective ideals of a specific identity group may be detrimental to the agency of its individual members; such frameworks often risk normalising internal hierarchies or systemic discrimination based on gender and social stratification.

Within the Ṛta Rāṣṭra theory, the concept of a universal identity provides a structural alternative to Westphalian nation-building, predicated on cultural homogeneity. Instead of building nations on common traits like language or religion, it advances the concept of a nation built on cosmic order, transcending personal and national identities. The difference results from the knowledge that human groups are naturally varied and always evolving. Ṛta Rāṣṭra emphasises ideals grounded in cosmic order rather than ideals rooted in any homogeneous group because cosmic order remains the same for all identities at all times. The Vedic recognition of plurality as a cosmic trait directly critiques the modern crisis of the homogeneous nation-state, offering a model that manages diversity through universal law rather than cultural assimilation.

5.1.5 Ecological Integration and Sustainability

Green theory posits that humans and nature are interconnected; therefore, prioritising environmental sustainability is crucial for human survival (Eckersley, 1992). This perspective aligns with the SKM theory, which also promotes global cooperation in addressing

environmental issues and maintaining equilibrium. This approach resonates with the Vedic principle of preserving harmony with nature as a means of upholding the well-being of both the planet and humanity. While Green theorists align with the Ṛta Rāṣṭra theory on the issue of environmental security, this concern is largely absent in traditional Western theories of nation-building (Swanson, 2015).

The unique contributions of the Vedic paradigm resolve the ecological exigency of classical Western state-building theories (Dryzek, 2013). Where liberalism often treats the environment as an external resource to be managed or exploited for economic interdependence, the Ṛta Rāṣṭra integrates environmental sustainability as a core ontological requirement for state survival. The natural world is not a passive backdrop, but an active participant in the moral ecology of the international system. Ṛta Rāṣṭra theory asserts that a more responsible and sustainable relationship should be fostered with the environment, ensuring that future generations inherit a thriving ecosystem.

In summary, Ṛta Rāṣṭra theory provides a foundational understanding of the evolution of rāṣṭras and establishes a basis for understanding the dynamics of international relations. A comparative analysis of prominent Western theories and Hindu IR theories reveals a convergence of ideas regarding civic engagement and the rule of law, alongside crucial divergences regarding the source of legitimacy and the priority of collective duty. The unique ideals of the Ṛta Rāṣṭra, such as ethical leadership, civic engagement, and the interconnectedness of humanity with the natural world, demand a fundamental review of modern practices of nation-building based on Western theories.

5.2 Realism and Sahakārya Mitratā Theory

To evaluate the SKM theory, it must be juxtaposed with realism, the dominant paradigm in IR. A comparative analysis of these two frameworks reveals significant differences in how they conceptualise the international system, state behaviour, and the pursuit of security. While realism is anchored in the belief that states operate in an anarchic void driven by self-interest, fear, and power politics, the SKM theory posits a universe guided by cosmic order (Ṛta) and ethical cooperation. The following subsections systematically deconstruct these contrasts, exploring their convergent and divergent foundations, their approaches to the security dilemma, and their visions for national security and global economic development.

5.2.1 Anarchy versus Ṛta

Within the discipline of IR, realism is universally recognised as a dominant paradigm of interpretation. Its foundational premise rests on the anarchic nature of the international system: a landscape devoid of overarching sovereign authority. This perspective asserts that states function as rational and autonomous actors, motivated primarily by survival and the accumulation of power (Morgenthau, 1948; Waltz, 1979). However, the ontological and structural novelty of the SKM theory lies in its fundamental rejection of this "chaotic void" as the baseline for interstate interaction.

Instead of anarchy, SKM introduces Ṛta as a universal systemic ordering principle based on cosmic patterns, fundamentally redefining the nature of the international system. It sets itself apart from the understanding of the state as merely a sovereign and territorially bound entity competing for survival. Rather, it presents the state as an integrated functional unit of a larger cosmos. Under this definition, each state adopts the value of Ṛta in its national

life and frames local laws in alignment with it. This approach transcends contemporary IR practices, which are often confined to geopolitical dynamics guided by rational, short-term self-interest, and instead positions states as harmonious participants in a naturally ordered universe.

By placing emphasis on alliances founded on Ṛta, providing mutual benefits, and establishing dependable partnerships, the SKM theory provides a unique perspective on global ethics. In contrast to realism, which posits human nature as inherently selfish or fearful, this theory proposes that states can actively improve the stability of their connections through the cultivation of ethical behaviour, righteousness, fairness, and shared accountability.

5.2.2 Reinterpreting the Security Dilemma

Realism and the SKM theory agree on the baseline necessity of developing alliances to preserve the security of the state. However, their structural approaches to achieving this security diverge significantly. Morgenthau (1948) claims that coalitions in realism are inherently transient and flexible, viewed merely as tactical demands for balancing power against immediate threats. On the other hand, the SKM theory encourages the formation of coaction coalitions based on the values and ethical standards generated by Ṛta that go far beyond conventional military agreements created for short-term interests. It views these coalitions as permanent tools for worldwide cooperation, holding that the security of every single state depends on broader global security.

The most significant divergence lies in how these theories address the “security dilemma,” a scenario in which defensive actions by one state are perceived as aggressive by another, leading to an arms race. Relationships analysed through the realist paradigm are strictly framed by pragmatic self-interest and driven by fear, wherein trust is considered a

vulnerability to be periodically sacrificed for strategic advantage. As Waltz (1979) points out, the anarchic nature of the global system essentially compels governments to choose survival over ethical considerations. By contrast, the SKM theory counters the zero-sum-game perspective advanced by realist thinkers (Keohane & Nye, 1977). It addresses the security dilemma not through deterrence, but by establishing inherently reliable relationships founded on Ṛta. This introduces a mechanism of "cosmic determinism", arguing that shared ethical frameworks can permanently resolve mutual suspicion and aid in the creation of a harmonious and predictable environment.

5.2.3 Power Politics Versus Ethical Cooperation

The emphasis placed on the nature of competition in realism also stands in contrast to the emphasis on global cooperation in the SKM theory. The realist approach, particularly offensive realism as articulated by Mearsheimer (2001), contends that the relentless pursuit of relative power is an inescapable component of state conduct. The SKM theory subverts this position, holding that the pursuit of relative power at the expense of others is not a fundamental component of state behaviour, but rather a dangerous deviation from cosmic order. It argues that adherence to this natural order promotes long-term peace.

When it comes to issues that affect the entire world, the SKM theory provides a comprehensive solution since it incorporates universal ethics, urging governments to consider how their decisions affect the globe as a whole, which realism often neglects in favour of state survival. The contributions of this theory to the development of a cooperative international order expose the causal limitations and theoretical blind spots of realist pessimism.

5.2.4 National Security and Ethical Leadership

The theories of realism and SKM both agree that the primary concern of the state should be ensuring state security. Realists like Morgenthau (1948) and Waltz (1979) stress the need for strong and pragmatic leadership driven by self-preservation goals, utilising military and economic power as the primary tools of statecraft. Conversely, the SKM theory supports moral leadership, extending the definition of security beyond the conventional military focus.

It incorporates elements that require collective responsibility by including environmental, economic, and social security as indistinguishable parts of state security. This inclusive approach questions the highly limited emphasis on military security underlying in realist views and aligns closely with the human security paradigm. True security, therefore, comes not from heavily fortified borders, but from a basis of worldwide security anchored in Ṛta, where ethical leadership ensures that national actions inherently support world stability rather than destabilise it.

5.2.5 Economic Development and Global Challenges

Although both theories stress the importance of economic growth, their approaches to achieving it are fundamentally different. Realism advances economic agendas to serve the national interest, viewing global trade, supply chains, and financial systems as another front for relative power gains. In this zero-sum environment, economic interdependence is often treated with suspicion. Realist thinkers argue that reliance on other states for critical resources, energy, or technologies creates strategic vulnerabilities that adversaries can ultimately exploit. Consequently, states are driven towards economic nationalism, protectionism, and the weaponisation of trade, utilising tools such as tariffs, embargoes, and

sanctions to ensure that they accumulate wealth and capabilities faster than their rivals. The underlying fear is that the economic rise of a competitor inevitably translates into military and geopolitical dominance.

Unlike the zero-sum approach, SKM conceptualises shared resources for shared prosperity, viewing the global economy through the lens of cosmic order (Ṛta) as an interconnected ecosystem. It fundamentally rejects the notion that one nation's economic success must inherently come at the expense of another's. Instead, it posits that only absolute world peace and equitable development can enable truly sustainable economic growth. In a world fraught with transnational crises such as environmental degradation, public health emergencies, and resource scarcity, the hoarding of wealth and innovation for singular geopolitical leverage is seen as a dangerous disruption of the natural order.

Hence, the partners in a coaction alliance distribute their resources, economic surplus, and technological advancements to collaboratively address these global challenges. By shifting the focus from a relentless struggle for scarce resources to the cooperative stewardship of the global commons, states pool their intellectual and material capital to solve problems that no single state can overcome alone. This presents a paradigm demonstrating that prioritising global peace and collective progress inherently benefits the individual nation. Under the SKM framework, ensuring the economic stability and prosperity of other states is not viewed as an act of mere charity, but as a structural imperative. It secures a state's own long-term survival, stabilises markets, and maintains systemic harmony, prioritising enduring collective security over fleeting tactical advantages.

5.3 Liberalism and Sahakārya Mitratā Theory

While realism stands in contrast to the cooperative ideals of the SKM framework, liberalism appears to share a closer foundational alignment. Both theories advocate international collaboration, collective problem-solving, and the mitigation of global conflicts through mutual agreements. However, a comparative assessment reveals significant structural and philosophical differences. This section engages with liberal thought to highlight how the SKM theory's emphasis on cosmic interdependence, collective welfare, and moral appropriateness fundamentally diverges from liberalism's reliance on individual rights, market dynamics, and the logic of consequences.

5.3.1 Consequences versus Appropriateness

The SKM theory offers a viewpoint on IR that partially corresponds to liberalism by emphasising cooperation grounded in common values and institutions. Both frameworks conceive of the international system as a field in which cooperation, rather than violent competition, constitutes the primary organising principle. The coaction model is aimed at mutual economic well-being through a strategy of collective resource pooling. Emphasising the requirement for ethical behaviour in contacts between states, both the SKM theory and liberalism support collaboration as a reliable method of attaining mutual advantages and building a safe, prosperous global system.

Nonetheless, a deeper analytical examination reveals philosophical differences between the SKM theory and Western liberalism. Liberalism primarily stresses the need for individual rights, democratic peace, and a free-market economy, relying on the "logic of consequences" (where actors behave based on calculated outcomes and institutional punishments). Conversely, the SKM theory distinguishes itself from the highly individualistic

goals of liberalism by integrating social interests into a common cosmic interest. It operates on a “logic of appropriateness”, combining ethical standards derived from the Vedic tradition, where states cooperate because it is inherently the right and harmonious thing to do. According to the SKM theory, which prioritises overall social well-being and balance, unchecked individual liberties or unregulated market freedoms can and should be constrained to support broader social peace and cosmic order.

5.3.2 Comprehensive Cooperation and Global Governance

Emphasising the interdependence of many spheres of life, the coaction policy, as guided by the SKM framework, offers a complete and holistic approach to cooperation. Unlike neoliberalism’s limited focus on political change, which usually revolves around creating formal, often fragile international institutions to artificially constrain the selfish behaviour of states, this ontological approach offers a complete theoretical contrast.

While liberalism supports cooperation strictly for shared material gains and economic interdependence, the SKM theory emphasizes a comprehensive view of prosperity that inherently includes moral, spiritual, and ethical elements. In the SKM theory, the combination of conventional cosmic values fundamentally improves the debate on global governance. It adds a much-needed ontological diversity to the liberal emphasis on fragile legal institutions, suggesting that governance should be rooted in shared human ethics rather than just legal treaties.

5.3.3 Collective Action and Universal Welfare

Both liberalism and the SKM theories underline the critical importance of economic and political cooperation in achieving lasting peace. Recognising that no state can be left untouched by problems arising elsewhere, both theories encourage collective efforts to

address global challenges. Emphasising the interlinked, transnational character of modern existential threats such as pandemics, financial crises, and climate change, there is an undeniable need for worldwide cooperation in solving them.

Moreover, the SKM theory uniquely emphasises the need for resource sharing as a mandatory structural foundation for joint action, transcending geographical and cultural divides. It supports a comprehensive approach to world welfare based on the Vedic principle of Ṛta, which stands for a harmonious universal order that promotes deep equality and the foundational belief in Vasudhaiva Kuṭumbakam (the world is one family). This reflects liberal concepts of global cooperation but adds a philosophical and cultural component that makes the rationale for cooperation far more resilient to political shocks.

5.3.4 Collectivism Over Individualism

Liberalism and SKM approach common global goals in diverse ways. Liberalism values personal, individual rights above all else, considering them the absolute primary foundation for the general welfare of a society, and contends that attaining global prosperity depends entirely on protecting these individual rights globally.

In contrast, SKM places the collective welfare of humanity above isolated individual or national benefits because it operates on the belief that true individual well-being is impossible without global prosperity and stability. While liberalism focuses on empowering the individual against the state, SKM presents a fresh analytical perspective to modern IR research by emphasising the inescapable interdependence of all people, presenting states and individuals alike as integrated and inseparable units of the cosmos.

5.3.5 Value-Based Alliances and Institutional Resilience

Both theories support the creation of value-based alliances between states to foster cooperation. However, the roots of these values differ immensely. SKM derives its ideas strictly from Ṛta, the cosmic order seen as universally applicable to all living beings. Liberals, on the other hand, limit their universality by basing their ideas on European historical interactions, Enlightenment philosophies, and Western democratic norms, which can create friction in non-Western contexts.

In a globally linked society, joint efforts are vital for properly addressing transnational issues. For the goal of achieving sustainable development, both paradigms argue that countries must transcend short-term personal interests. However, the need for cross-civilisational frameworks to foster global cooperation fits SKM's emphasis on universal ideals produced by Ṛta far better than liberal institutionalism. These models provide a foundation for promoting peace among states with different political histories. Based on ancient knowledge, these ideas give enduring value to modern challenges by stressing structural equality and cosmic duty rather than relying solely on the expansion of free trade.

Ultimately, liberalism and SKM differ in their foundational philosophical approaches to achieving a peaceful society. While liberalism emphasises the rights of individuals and the constraints of international law, SKM advances the welfare of society based on universal principles generated by Ṛta. The SKM framework underscores the pressing need for a universal moral code in the global system, seamlessly integrating its unique features into the constraints of the coaction alliance. With this framework, states can increase their cooperation and help create a more united global society by drawing inspiration from enduring cosmic harmony rather than relying solely on fragile economic treaties.

5.4 Realism and Anṛta Yuddha Theory

The quest for a scientifically grounded explanation of the emergence of disputes, confrontations, and systematic warfare within the global system has remained a perennial pursuit among academics in the discipline of IR. To address this, both the Realism tradition and AY theory offer distinct conceptual tools for analysing the dynamics of interstate disputes. However, while they share an interest in the phenomenon of conflict, they diverge fundamentally in their core understandings of what war is, why it occurs, and how it relates to the wider existence of the state.

By introducing the concept of Anṛta, defined as disorder, falsehood, and unrighteousness, as the primary causal driver of war, it challenges the materialist orthodoxy of the twentieth century. While conventional IR theories, particularly realism, focus on material elements such as military capabilities, geopolitical imperatives, or economic competitiveness, the AY framework shifts the analytical direction towards a cosmic dimension. The following section provides a detailed dialectical encounter between realism and AY theory.

5.4.1 Anarchic Void versus Cosmic Equilibrium

The most striking divergence between these two frameworks lies in their foundational assumptions regarding the nature of the international environment. Realism is defined by the concept of "anarchy". In the IR context, anarchy does not necessarily imply total chaos, but rather the absence of a central, overarching sovereign authority capable of enforcing order among states. This systemic condition compels states to function as rational, autonomous units, primarily motivated by the imperatives of survival and self-help. According to Waltz (1979), the structural architecture of the international system forces states to prioritise their

own security, often leading to a competitive environment in which power is the only reliable currency.

In contrast, AY theory rejects the "anarchic void" as the baseline for interstate interaction. Instead, it posits that the international system is governed by Ṛta. In this Vedic framework, the world is not a lawless field of competing egoistic units; it is a manifestation of an underlying equilibrium. Therefore, the "anarchy" perceived by realism is viewed by the AY theory not as a permanent structural feature, but as a symptom of Anṛta, a temporary deviation from the natural order caused by unrighteous human and state actions.

While realists like Morgenthau (1948) argue that conflict is a natural and constant element of world events due to the inherent drive for power in human nature, the AY theory suggests that conflict is an aberration. It is the tragic result of Anṛta, which manifests as injustice, inequity, or deliberate falsehood. Consequently, the objective of statecraft in the AY framework is not merely the management of power in a void, but the alignment of national policy with the universal patterns of Ṛta to ensure peace and stability.

5.4.2 Causal Mechanisms

The causal explanations for war provided by these theories reveal an opposition between materialist and ideational determinants. Realism provides a materialist interpretation of conflict, linking it to the competitive nature of states within an anarchic order. For offensive realists like Mearsheimer (2001), the pursuit of power is not a choice but a rational necessity. States seek to maximise their relative power to ensure that no rival can threaten their survival. In this view, war is frequently seen as a continuation of policy by other means, a rational tool utilised by states to resolve disputes that cannot be settled through diplomacy.

The AY theory, however, offers a comprehensive moral and cosmic view of causality. It suggests that war results from acts of Anṛta that throw off the cosmic equilibrium. These acts include, but are not limited to, tyrannical governance, the exploitation of resources without regard for sustainability, or aggressive expansionism that violates the integrity of other units. These specific behaviours are seen as forms of entropy. When a state practices Anṛta, it creates a domestic environment of imbalance that inevitably spills over into the international system.

This leads to the concept of the "Internal-External Nexus". Classical realism treats the state as a "black box", focusing on its external interactions while neglecting its domestic ethical character (Waltz, 1979). The AY theory, conversely, holds that internal governance problems, such as domestic injustice or ethical degradation, directly cause a state's vulnerability. Tyrannical leadership or unfair domestic policies lead to internal turmoil that acts as a leading indicator of international aggression. Essentially, a state that is at war with its own values or its own people will eventually draw external threats, as it has already disrupted the harmony of Ṛta.

5.4.3 Fear-Driven Realism versus Cosmic Determinism

One of the most celebrated concepts in realist thought is the "security dilemma", where one state's attempt to increase its own security is perceived by others as a threat, leading to a spiral of escalation and arms racing. This dilemma is driven by the lack of trust inherent in an anarchic system. Realists argue that even if two states are status quo-oriented and seek peace, their inability to verify each other's long-term intentions compels them to prepare for the worst-case scenario (Jervis, 1976). In the realist world, trust is a dangerous luxury that is periodically sacrificed at the altar of strategic advantage.

The AY theory addresses the security dilemma through a mechanism of "cosmic determinism". It suggests that if states were to anchor their diplomacy in the universal principles of Ṛta, the foundational cause of the security dilemma, mistrust and fear, would be structurally mitigated. In this framework, security is not found through the accumulation of relative power, but through mutual adherence to a shared moral code. When states commit to righteousness and systemic justice, they create a predictable environment that renders the security dilemma obsolete.

Unlike the realist view that the "tragedy of great power politics" is unavoidable (Mearsheimer, 2001), the AY theory posits that peace is attainable through the conscious alignment of human activities with global principles of justice. This moves the debate beyond material deterrence and toward a transformation of state identity, in which state security is seen as linked to the security of the cosmic whole.

5.4.4 Nature and Justification of War

The justification for waging war represents another significant analytical departure. Realism views war as a rational instrument of statecraft. Whether it is used for defensive purposes to maintain the balance of power or for offensive purposes to gain hegemony, war is evaluated based on its utility and its ability to secure national interests. While realists acknowledge the tragedy of war, they maintain that, in a world of competing sovereigns, it is a necessary and legitimate option (Waltz, 1979).

In contrast, the AY theory presents war exclusively as a righteous response to Anṛta. It is never seen as a tool for gain, expansion, or prestige. Instead, war is conceptualised as a "last resort" undertaken strictly to restore the cosmic equilibrium that has been violated by an unrighteous actor. This aligns functionally with the Western "Just War" tradition (Walzer,

1977), yet it elevates the justification to a cosmic level. The reason a war is fought is not merely to restore the status quo ante, but to uphold Ṛta at both terrestrial and cosmic levels.

Under this framework, war is a moral duty. It is the "Yuddha" (battle) against "Anṛta" (unrighteousness). Therefore, the criteria for a "just" war in this theory are far more stringent than in realism. A leader must be certain that all other avenues of conflict resolution, such as dialogue, mediation, and information exchange, have been exhausted. The objective is never the destruction of the enemy for the sake of power, but the correction of deviation and the restoration of systemic justice.

5.4.5 Leadership and Statecraft

The role of leadership is central to both theories; yet their expectations of leaders are diametrically opposed. Realism emphasises the need for a leader to be pragmatic, separating private morality from public duty. A realist leader must be prepared to be "not good" when the survival of the state is at stake, utilising cunning, deception, and force to navigate the treacherous waters of international politics (Machiavelli, 1532/1998). Leadership in realism is about the effective management of power within a flawed system.

The AY theory, drawing from Vedic traditions, supports the choice of leaders who respect and embody Ṛta. It promotes the ideal of the "Rajarshi", the sage-king who understands that their primary duty is to uphold the cosmic order. National stability and security are seen as the direct results of the high quality of internal administration and the ethical integrity of leadership.

The AY framework suggests that a leader who induces chaos, inequality, or falsehood domestically will inevitably project that same destructive entropy into the international system. Thus, ethical leadership is not a secondary concern but the very foundation of foreign

policy. This opposes the realist idea of "instrumental rationality", where any means is justified if it serves the state's interest. In AY view, a leader's devotion to truth and justice is the ultimate guarantee of long-term peace and prosperity.

5.4.6 Resolution of Conflict

Finally, the two theories offer different visions for the resolution of conflict and the establishment of peace. Realism relies on the "balance of power" to prevent large-scale war. Peace is seen as a fragile and temporary state maintained by the mutual deterrence of powerful actors. When the balance shifts, conflict inevitably ensues until a new equilibrium is reached (Waltz, 1979).

The AY theory offers a more comprehensive approach to resolving wars, transcending the conventional focus on military tactics and balance. It argues for "transformative justice", which emphasises the need for deep healing, reconciliation, and the restoration of truth. This method underlines the relevance of spiritual unity and shared cosmic goals. By promoting constant information exchange and creative problem-solving within a moral framework, the AY paradigm helps diverse parties discover common interests.

Resolution in this framework is not about signing a treaty that reflects the current distribution of power; it is about realigning the parties with the values of Ṛta. This emphasis on ethical behaviour and spiritual union aims to establish a closer link between communities, fostering an enduring peace that is grounded in a psychological and moral shift rather than a mere cessation of hostilities.

Concluding this comparative analysis, it can be stated that the theories of Realism and AY offer fundamentally contrasting philosophical approaches to the true nature and causes of war. While both theories acknowledge the inherent challenges of the international system and

the key role of leadership in shaping outcomes, their analytical lenses are fundamentally divergent. Realism presents an exclusively pragmatic, materialist, and power-oriented analysis suited for a world perceived as a competitive void. The AY theory, however, combines ethical and spiritual elements to offer a holistic understanding of conflict, positioning it as a deviation from a natural order that must be restored through righteous action.

5.5 Liberalism and Anṛta Yuddha Theory

While realism is often defined by its pessimistic view of the international system as a competitive void, liberalism represents a tradition of optimism, asserting that through institutional design, economic interdependence, and democratic norms, the "tragedy" of great-power politics can be mitigated. At first glance, the AY theory appears to share a philosophical kinship with liberalism. Both paradigms reject the inevitability of war and advocate for a world order defined by cooperation rather than conflict. However, an analytical investigation reveals that while their ultimate objectives of peace and stability converge, their foundational premises, causal explanations, and proposed routes to global harmony are fundamentally distinct.

The AY theory moves beyond the legalistic and materialist constraints of liberal thought. By anchoring its analysis in the Vedic concepts of Ṛta and Anṛta, it offers a holistic dimension to IR that prioritises internal moral transformation over external structural arrangements. This comparison explores the dialectical tension between a theory of institutional management and a theory of cosmic alignment.

5.5.1 Individual Rights versus Collective Interdependence

The most fundamental divergence lies in the starting point of each theory. Liberalism is a product of the European Enlightenment, deeply rooted in the principles of individual liberty, the social contract, and the inherent rights of the person. In the liberal worldview, the state exists primarily to protect these individual rights, and the international system is a secondary construction designed to facilitate cooperation between these autonomous units. The liberal path to peace is therefore grounded in the empowerment of the individual and the protection of private interests (Doyle, 1986).

In contrast, AY theory is founded on the principle of collective cosmic interdependence. It does not view the individual or the state as atomised, self-interested units, but as an integrated cell within the larger body of the cosmos. Drawing from the Vedic ideal of Vasudhaiva Kuṭumbakam (the world is one family), the theory posits that true individual well-being is impossible without the prosperity and harmony of the whole. Whereas liberalism focuses on "rights" as the primary foundation of society, the AY framework emphasises righteousness as the structural pillar of order. Peace is not merely the absence of war or the protection of liberties; it is the active maintenance of cosmic equilibrium. Consequently, while liberalism seeks to protect the individual from the collective, AY theory seeks to harmonise the individual with the collective through adherence to universal laws.

5.5.2 Causal Mechanisms of War

Liberalism and AY theory offer different explanations for why conflicts emerge despite the shared interest in peace. Liberal theorists attribute the occurrence of war to systemic failures, such as the presence of non-democratic regimes, economic inequalities, or the lack of international institutions. For liberals, war is often the tragic result of

misperceptions, failed diplomacy, or the irrationality of autocratic leaders who are not constrained by the domestic checks and balances of a democratic system (Doyle, 1986, 1997). The cause of war is essentially structural and can be corrected through political reform and institutional development.

However, under the AY framework, war is seen as the inevitable outcome of a loss of ethics and universal values within a society. It argues that deviations from Ṛta, such as tyrannical governance, social injustice, or environmental exploitation, create a domestic climate of disorder that eventually manifests as external conflict. Unlike the liberal focus on political structures, AY theory prioritises the moral character of the state. It suggests that a nation practising Anṛta internally will structurally invite conflict. Thus, war is not just a failure of diplomacy; it is a necessary reaction to a violation of cosmic justice. This places the burden of peace not on the design of international organisations, but on the ethical integrity of the individual nation.

5.5.3 Routes to Peace

The routes proposed for achieving enduring peace reveal a contrast between the "logic of consequences" and the "logic of appropriateness". Modern liberalism relies on the logic of consequences, where states are incentivised to cooperate through material rewards and institutional constraints. Economic interdependence is a primary tool in this regard. Keohane and Nye (1977) argue that the high costs of severing profitable trade links discourage states from engaging in military aggression. Peace is maintained because the material consequences of war are too severe to be rational.

The AY theory, conversely, operates on a logic of appropriateness rooted in Vedic tradition. It argues that peace is attained when states and their leaders act out of a sense of

moral duty and cosmic alignment, rather than by a mere calculation of material gain. It advocates the transformation of societies into Ṛta-adherent units, where ethical behaviour is seen as the inherently "right" and "appropriate" mode of existence. While liberalism uses international law and trade to artificially constrain the selfish impulses of states, the AY framework seeks to naturally dissolve those impulses through spiritual and moral self-transformation. Under this framework, a state prioritises global peace because it recognises its duty to the cosmic order, acknowledging that prioritising the whole is the only way to ensure the long-term stability of the individual unit.

5.5.4 Global Governance

Liberalism advocates for a global order governed by multilateralism and the rule of law. It supports the creation of international organisations, such as the United Nations or the World Trade Organisation, to formalise cooperation, mediate disputes, and enforce common standards. These institutions are designed to act as a "third party" that can resolve conflicts and manage the complexities of a globally linked society (Keohane, 1984; Keohane, 1998). Liberal governance is legalistic, relying on treaties, protocols, and formal structural arrangements.

The AY theory offers a different vision of global governance based on an ethical and spiritual union. While it does not reject the utility of institutions, it argues that they are "fragile" if not grounded in a shared moral code derived from Ṛta. The coaction alliance proposed by the theory is not merely a collection of states bound by a treaty; it is a community of states united by shared cosmic goals and a mutual commitment to righteousness.

Unlike the liberal emphasis on formal legalism, the AY paradigm promotes constant information exchange, creative problem-solving, and spiritual unity as the foundations of governance. It suggests that a global community, characterised by strict ethical standards and fair leadership, is inherently less prone to conflict. By anchoring diplomacy in cosmic law, it provides diversity to the debate on global governance, suggesting that true order comes from the interior alignment of states rather than the exterior imposition of rules.

5.5.5 Dispute Resolution

The methods for resolving conflicts further distinguish the two paradigms. Liberalism relies on formal arbitration, legal mediation, and institutional diplomacy to resolve disputes. The focus is on reaching a settlement that adheres to international law and maintains the material interests of the parties involved (Keohane & Nye, 1977).

The AY theory supports the approach of "transformative justice". This method goes beyond the pragmatic material needs of the parties to address the underlying moral and spiritual causes of the dispute. It emphasises the need for healing, reconciliation, and the restoration of truth to the relationship. By promoting the Vedic idea of the world as a single family, the theory encourages parties to discover common interests through the lens of spiritual unity. Resolution in this framework is not about who wins in a legal sense; it is about realigning the parties with the values of Ṛta. This emphasis on ethical behaviour and social integration aims to establish a closer link between communities, fostering an enduring peace grounded in a psychological and moral shift rather than a mere cessation of hostilities or a fragile treaty.

Concluding this comprehensive comparative analysis, it can be stated that while liberalism and the AY theory share a common aspiration for a peaceful global society, they

diverge in their foundational logic. Liberalism prioritises outward structural changes, formal democratic setups, and complex international collaboration as the primary routes to peace (Russett & Oneal, 2001). It seeks to build a global order through the management of material interests and the formalisation of rules. Conversely, the AY theory places emphasis on interior ethical development and righteous governance. It argues that devastating war results from internal moral conflict and that the only route to enduring peace is the renewal of spiritual and moral ideals within civilisations. By matching human activities with the cosmic values of Ṛta, the theory offers an integrated strategy for tackling the complexities of twenty-first-century international relations. The AY theory provides a sophisticated comprehension of the essence of warfare by stressing that internal moral transformation is not a secondary concern, but a crucial and necessary contribution to international stability. Ultimately, both theories acknowledge the significance of values and collaboration; however, the AY framework offers a holistic and cross-culturally resilient strategy by focusing on the alignment of human societies with the enduring harmony of the cosmic order.

CHAPTER VI

NORMATIVE FRAMEWORK

The formulation of the Hindu theories of international relations (IR), specifically Ṛta Rāṣṭra, SKM, and AY theories along with the evaluation of their theoretical intersections with Western paradigms, allows this chapter to shift the analytical focus from ontological formation to applied normative utility. The fulfilment of the final research objective of this dissertation requires demonstrating how these formulated theories constitute a viable normative framework for addressing contemporary global challenges. Rectifying a persistent epistemological gap in IR studies arising from the dominance of Western materialist theoretical frameworks remains the primary goal of this endeavour.

The significance of these theories is grounded in the foundational concept of Ṛta, which represents the cosmic order governing both the universe and human society. The application of Ṛta functions not merely as a theological abstraction but as a normative guideline and an ontological reality embodying ideals of cosmic balance, equality, and righteousness. Ṛta operates as an unobstructed cosmic order that inherently fosters equality because Mother Nature treats everyone equally, applying the same rules and regulations across all social divides (A. Bapat, personal communication, March 2024). The transformation of the discipline from a power-centric and interest-driven field into one structurally infused with ethical obligation and collective duty occurs through the application of this universal baseline to IR.

The historical application of these principles across various civilisations serves as empirical proof of their viability, allowing for the projection of these proven standards onto contemporary global crises. However, the incorporation of newly formed Hindu IR theories

into the modern Westphalian international system raises specific conceptual and practical frictions. Demonstrating the explanatory leverage of the Vedic framework relies on structuring this chapter to address three primary challenges:

1. **Integration within Pluralistic Governance Frameworks:** Associating these theories with the Vedic tradition historically presents difficulties in secular and religiously diverse global contexts. Resolving this issue illustrates how the universal ethical principles of Ṛta function as natural laws of duty rather than sectarian dogma, enabling their relevance across diverse secular socio-political landscapes.
2. **Reconciliation of Cooperative Norms with Realist Security Frameworks:** The focus on collective welfare and ethical collaboration inherent in the SKM theory frequently faces opposition from realist viewpoints that emphasise the state's self-interest and power accumulation within an anarchic system. Evidence demonstrates the capacity of these theories to provide a more durable route to existential security and prosperity through the institutionalisation of complex interdependence.
3. **Conflict between Normative Intervention and State Sovereignty:** The rationale for intervention against Anṛta (unrighteousness and chaos), as proposed in the AY theory, inherently contradicts modern rigid interpretations of state sovereignty and the non-intervention doctrine. Conceptualising such corrective interventions outlines their implementation within a framework that honours legitimate autonomy while maintaining universal justice and cosmic order.

Challenges of this nature do not serve as theoretical obstacles but rather as the precise domains requiring conceptual integration to realise the complete potential of these non-Western contributions. The application of the Ṛta Rāṣṭra, SKM, and AY frameworks to these modern geopolitical dilemmas provides a cross-civilizational roadmap for a harmonious, equitable, and sustainable international order.

6.1 Ṛta Rāṣṭra: Operationalising Cosmic Order in Domestic and Foreign Policy

The righteous state model is centred on resolving modern structural crises of governance, institutional legitimacy, and accelerating ecological collapse. The Ṛta Rāṣṭra theory asserts that the creation, evolution, and ultimate purpose of the sovereign state remain linked to the maintenance and terrestrial expression of Ṛta within human society. This theoretical framework dictates that a sovereign entity attains its true ontological validity and sustained political stability not merely through the ruthless application of coercive authority or the monopolisation of violence, but through a structural commitment to universal values of justice, equity, and systemic harmony.

The Ṛta Rāṣṭra theory challenges the core Westphalian assumption that the state exists purely as a functional monopoly on violence, designed primarily to mitigate an inherently anarchic international system. In classical Western political philosophy, thinkers constructed the state as an entirely artificial entity. Hobbes (1651/2004) conceptualised the *Leviathan* as a necessary political construction, created through a desperate social contract to prevent a perpetual war of all against all. Within this dominant materialist paradigm, the state of nature is viewed as inherently brutal, chaotic, and devoid of pre-existing morality. Consequently, Westphalian sovereignty remains absolute and entirely separate from cosmic morality. The

state acts as the ultimate and unquestionable arbiter of domestic law, pursuing its own immediate survival, power accumulation, and security above all other ethical considerations.

Conversely, the Vedic ontological framework positions the state not as the ultimate creator of arbitrary law, but as the humble terrestrial administrator of a preexisting and immutable cosmic law. The state emerges organically as a vital institutional apparatus designed specifically to align human agency with macroscopic systemic imperatives. Human society is not viewed as an artificial escape from a brutal state of nature, but rather as a conscious reflection of the ordered cosmic system. Therefore, the state does not possess the authority to invent morality; it only possesses the duty to enforce the morality already inherent in the universe.

Sovereignty within the Ṛta Rāṣṭra framework therefore remains fundamentally conditional and universally accountable. It is tethered strictly to the demonstrable capacity of the state to uphold justice, actively prevent systemic entropy, and maintain delicate social and ecological equilibrium. When a state deliberately deviates from this foundational principle, abandoning the strict dictates of Ṛta in favour of deceptive diplomatic practices, domestic tyranny, or unchecked power accumulation, it inevitably invites internal structural collapse and permanently forfeits its fundamental political legitimacy. This theoretical model effectively replaces the bleak materialist determinism of structural realism with cosmic determinism. Within this specific framework, the survival, prosperity, and longevity of the sovereign entity are causally linked to its strict adherence to universal ethical standards. By elevating governance from a mere administrative or bureaucratic function to a cosmic responsibility, the righteous state model requires that executive leadership evaluate every diplomatic, economic, and social policy against the absolute metric of systemic harmony.

6.1.1 Translating Vedic Ethics into Secular Pluralism

Addressing the contemporary intellectual challenge of secularism requires careful conceptual integration. Because the foundational concept of Ṛta originates from the ancient Vedic corpus, modern political critics and Western theorists may initially perceive it as sectarian religious dogma, entirely incompatible with the requirements of modern secular governance. The Western model of secularisation emerged historically as a direct response to the devastating religious wars that ravaged the European continent. To achieve peace, Western political thought demanded a strict, uncompromising separation between church and state. However, while this separation curtailed religious warfare, it created a moral vacuum in statecraft. When the state is entirely stripped of transcendent ethical obligations, political administration descends into cynical, amoral pragmatism, where the pursuit of national interest justifies any action.

The Vedic framework resolves this moral vacuum through the principle of Samabhāva, which translates to religious impartiality rather than aggressive secularism. This principle promotes mutual trust, peaceful coexistence, and equal regard for all avenues to truth, providing a normative foundation for inclusive domestic and foreign policymaking without stripping the state of its ethical core. The foundational principles of the Vedas encompass highly comprehensive policies for the entire human welfare, the protection of the animal kingdom, and the optimal operation of the earth itself (S. Bhandari, personal communication, March 2024). Bhandari, therefore, suggests that Ṛta must be regarded universally as a principle of natural justice rather than a narrow religious construct isolated to the Indian subcontinent.

Adhikari similarly argues that the English term “religion” fails to accurately translate the immense philosophical depth of the Vedic tradition. He posits that Ṛta represents the immutable rules of nature, functioning much like the physical laws governing the gravitational pull of the solar system. Consequently, adherence to Ṛta equates strictly to civic and moral duty rather than ritualistic worship or blind faith (D. Adhikari, personal communication, 2024). By providing the poignant analogy of a father educating a child, Adhikari illustrates that fulfilling one’s designated societal role constitutes a fundamental duty absolutely required to maintain systemic balance. Therefore, a state operating under the principles of Ṛta simply mandates that citizens and leaders fulfil their respective duties to maintain social equilibrium without requiring allegiance to a specific deity. This universality transcends geographical limitations, modern national borders, and historical epochs.

Furthermore, the ancient Vedic tradition provides clear historical evidence of democratic accountability mechanisms that served as epistemic checks on executive power, proving that the Ṛta Rāṣṭra is not a blueprint for theological despotism. The ancient assemblies known as the Sabha and the Samiti functioned as sophisticated bodies. The Samiti represented the general assembly of the people, expressing the popular will and ensuring that the ruler remained intimately connected to the needs of the populace. The Sabha functioned as a council of elders and learned scholars, providing expert counsel and ensuring that the decisions of the rulers strictly aligned with the dictates of Ṛta. These institutional structures demonstrate that ancient Hindu governance embedded epistemic checks on executive power, ensuring that sovereignty remained a shared custodial duty rather than an absolute right.

Empirical proof of this universal governance impulse becomes strikingly evident across diverse global civilisations, demonstrating that the pursuit of cosmic alignment is a

shared and enduring human endeavour. The ancient Greco-Roman civilisation espoused governance by natural law, conceptually known as Dike or justice, which dictated that arbitrary human laws must constantly reflect a higher universal truth to remain valid. Furthermore, Plato conceptualised an ideal society governed by universal principles of virtue, where philosopher-kings ruled not through brute force but through an educated understanding of the absolute good (Nussbaum, 1998). Similarly, the ancient Egyptian civilisation adhered to the concept of Maat, which embodied universal harmony, fairness, and truth. This framework required the pharaoh to preserve cosmic equilibrium through equitable governance, viewing any deviation from justice as a literal threat to the fabric of reality itself, capable of bringing about massive social ruin and ecological disaster (Assmann, 2001; Dodson, 2010). In ancient China, the political philosophy of Tianming, or the Mandate of Heaven, asserted that leaders obtained and maintained their sovereign legitimacy only through just governance and the careful preservation of universal equilibrium (Eno, 2010). Should an emperor become corrupt or neglect the welfare of the people, the mandate would be withdrawn, justifying popular rebellion. These highly varied cross-civilisational historical expressions validate the pursuit of Ṛta not as an isolated Indian phenomenon but as a fundamental and enduring human pursuit of ethical administration.

Bapat reinforces this conceptual transition by emphasising the egalitarian nature of Ṛta. The unobstructed cosmic order never differentiates between the rich and the poor, the regal and the sacerdotal, the educated and the uneducated, or between different castes and creeds. Because Mother Nature treats everyone equally with absolute impartiality, the rules and regulations of this cosmic order remain identical for all inhabitants of the Earth. (A. Bapat, personal communication, March 2024). Hence, the Ṛta Rāṣṭra framework provides a

secular and universally applicable ethical baseline for modern pluralistic states. It conclusively suggests that cosmic law and secular governance are not mutually exclusive constructs, but rather complementary forces that prevent the descent of the state into violent religious extremism or cynical, amoral pragmatism.

6.1.2 Institutionalising Ecological Stewardship and Collective Welfare

Extending the analytical focus from domestic political governance to transnational ecological crises allows for a reconceptualisation of the modern global approach to environmental sustainability through the Ṛta Rāṣṭra framework. The current geological epoch, widely designated as the Anthropocene, is characterised by the overwhelming and frequently destructive impact of human activity on the planetary ecosystem (Crutzen & Stoermer, 2000). Within classical Western models of state building and liberal capitalist economics, the natural environment frequently remains relegated to the status of an external resource. It is viewed purely as inert material to be managed, aggressively commodified, or exploited for maximum short-term economic gain. This fundamentally anthropocentric worldview has directly precipitated the current existential crises of climate change, rapid biodiversity loss, and resource depletion, in which the relentless and unchecked pursuit of material accumulation severely threatens the very biosphere that sustains human life.

The international community attempts to address these crises through various frameworks for sustainable development. However, these Western approaches fall short because they remain philosophically anthropocentric. A primary example is the Brundtland Report. The report defines sustainable development as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). While politically significant,

this definition still measures the value of the environment exclusively through the lens of human consumption and utility.

In contrast, the Vedic framework positions ecological stewardship not as a fringe political issue or an economic calculation, but as a strict ontological requirement for state survival. It acknowledges the natural world as an active, sacred, and inseparable participant in the moral ecology of the international system. Bimal provides a philosophical expansion on this interconnectivity, tracing the deep origins of systemic order back to the macroscopic formation of the universe itself. Just as the cosmos transitioned from an indeterminate, explosive state into a highly structured, predictable, and harmonious system following the Big Bang, human society must actively reflect this precise cosmic organisation to survive its own technological advancements (R. Bimal, personal communication, March 2024). As per Bimal, every biological and physical process, from the rhythmic beating of a human heart to the cyclical rotation of agricultural seasons, operates within an interconnected systemic rhythm.

Crucially, Bimal asserts that internal human consciousness directly impacts the external physical environment. When internal human environments become severely polluted by unchecked desires, unbridled greed, and individualistic ego, this internal entropy inevitably manifests in the external physical world as devastating ecological destruction, severe climate anomalies, and violent military warfare (R. Bimal, personal communication, March 2024). The hoarding of surplus wealth, driven by a fundamental deviation from its assigned cosmic duty, introduces deep corruption and systemic blockages that ultimately destroy all social harmony. Therefore, resolving the global ecological crisis requires far more than superficial technological fixes, carbon trading markets, or temporary political pacts; it

demands a structural transformation of human consciousness and a complete return to the principles of Ṛta.

Bapat expands on the practical application of this cosmic interconnectedness through the foundational Vedic concept of Vasudhāiva Kuṭumbakam, which translates directly to “the entire earth is one family,” and Viśwam ekam nīdam, meaning “this entire world is one nest”. These concepts develop a psychological bond of belonging and affinity that transcends artificial political borders and aggressive nationalist sentiments. When states truly internalise the absolute reality that the Earth functions as a singular interconnected nest, the exploitation of shared natural resources for short-term nationalistic gain becomes both logically absurd and morally indefensible (A. Bapat, personal communication, March 2024).

Historical implementations of ethical resource stewardship demonstrate the practical, real-world viability of this approach across different historical epochs. The Mauryan Empire under Emperor Ashoka exemplifies a historical state that integrated cosmic order into its vast administrative apparatus. Following his psychological realisation of the absolute horrors of war at Kalinga, Ashoka instituted a radical policy that explicitly prioritised the physical well-being of all sentient creatures. The Rock Edicts of Ashoka mandated provisions such as medical care for humans and animals, the cultivation of medicinal herbs, the construction of wells along trade routes, and the protection of animal species from unnecessary slaughter (Ashoka, 1997). Ashoka promoted environmental harmony rather than military expansion and territorial conquest (Thapar, 1987). Similarly, the Chola Empire demonstrated a sophisticated administrative approach to resource management through decentralised governance and the institutionalised stewardship of complex irrigation systems. Local village assemblies (sabha and ur) were entrusted with the management of irrigation tanks, water

distribution, and agricultural lands, reflecting a high degree of participatory governance. This system contributed to sustained agricultural productivity and regional prosperity, illustrating the capacity of pre-modern polities to integrate economic development with ecological management (Stein, 1980; Karashima, 2009).

In the modern era, Nepal retains the traditional Guthi system as a community-oriented model of resource governance rooted in religious endowment practices. This indigenous institution operates beyond the conventional dichotomy of state ownership and privatisation by embedding land and resources within a framework of collective trusteeship. From a normative perspective, the Guthi system can be interpreted as a socio-institutional expression of Ṛta inasmuch as it emphasises communal responsibility, continuity, and the ethical stewardship of resources. Guthi lands are held in trust to support cultural preservation, social welfare, and public infrastructure, ensuring that economic assets serve the collective good rather than enabling unchecked private accumulation (Regmi, 1976). The Guthi system provides empirical evidence that economic systems designed around cosmic duty and collective welfare remain highly resilient and sustainable even in the modern era.

Projecting these verified historical successes onto contemporary global imperatives reveals the normative utility of the Ṛta Rāṣṭra model in addressing existential planetary threats. Contemporary global frameworks such as the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) reflect an emerging recognition of collective ecological responsibility; however, the Ṛta Rāṣṭra model advances this further by grounding environmental governance in an ontological commitment to cosmic order. Global challenges such as anthropogenic climate change, rapid ocean acidification, and severe resource

depletion necessitate an immediate paradigm shift from realist exploitation to cosmic stewardship.

The Ṛta Rāṣṭra theory provides the precise philosophical weight and ecological dimension required to intellectually and morally anchor modern international environmental initiatives. By framing environmental protection not merely as a regulatory compliance issue but as a sacred and non-negotiable cosmic duty, the theory compels sovereign states to act with reverence for the natural world. Therefore, aligning state policies with the cosmic order represents an existential imperative rather than a mere political elective dictated by volatile election cycles. It ensures that contemporary states finally institutionalise collective welfare and ecological balance as the core pillars of their continued sovereignty, guaranteeing the long-term survival of both the human species and the wider planetary ecosystem upon which all international politics ultimately depend.

6.2 Sahakārya Mitratā: Restructuring Global Governance and Collective Security

The application of the co-action alliance model aims to repair broken diplomatic practices, transcend the limitations of Western alliance theories, and effectively manage the accelerating tide of transnational existential threats. The SKM theory redefines the structural mechanics and purpose of international alliances. Within dominant Western paradigms, particularly structural realism and neorealism, alliance formation remains a reactionary, cynical, and highly transactional phenomenon. Scholars operating within these materialist traditions conceptualise alliances as temporary marriages of convenience. According to the balance of power and balance of threat theories, states forge alliances exclusively to balance against a rising hegemon or to mitigate a specific proximate military threat (Walt, 1987; Waltz, 1979).

Consequently, these traditional Western alliances are inherently fragile, perpetually plagued by fears of abandonment or entrapment, and driven by the self-help imperative of an anarchic international system in which no state can truly trust another. In this paradigm, an ally is merely an instrument of state survival, utilised only as long as the external threat persists. Once the threat diminishes, the alliance loses its utility and inevitably dissolves, returning the international system to a baseline of mutual suspicion and latent hostility. This structural cynicism prevents the formation of enduring global governance structures capable of addressing issues that transcend immediate military survival.

Conversely, the SKM framework shifts the ontological baseline of diplomatic partnerships from mutual fear and suspicion to mutual upliftment and systemic duty. Rooted in the Vedic principles of Ṛta, this theory argues that true security cannot be achieved through the perpetual balancing of military capabilities, the stockpiling of nuclear arsenals, or the establishment of deterrence. Instead, true security emerges through the deep institutionalisation of ethical collaboration and the conscious recognition of cosmic interdependence. Within the Vedic framework, the state does not seek allies merely to survive a chaotic and hostile environment; rather, it seeks partners to construct and maintain a harmonious global order that benefits all participants equally.

This theoretical framework demands the restructuring of global governance, moving the international community away from destructive zero-sum rivalries and towards a positive-sum architecture. In this diplomatic framework, the economic and physical prosperity of one sovereign entity is linked to the prosperity of the entire planetary system. The SKM theory asserts that true diplomatic strength lies not in the capacity to destroy adversaries, but in the

capacity to integrate them into a mutually beneficial framework of shared cosmic responsibility.

6.2.1 Ethical Diplomacy and the Mitigation of Zero-sum Alliances

Demonstrating the real-world utility of this framework requires an analysis of how SKM transforms fragile, fear-driven transactional diplomacy into resilient ethical collaboration. The realist reliance on zero-sum diplomacy guarantees perpetual systemic instability and conflict. When sovereign states operate under the pessimistic assumption that the accumulation of power or wealth by one nation directly diminishes the security of another, IR inevitably devolves into an exhausting cycle of arms races, proxy conflicts, and mutual suspicion. This phenomenon, widely known as the “security dilemma”, traps states in a spiral where actions taken to enhance absolute security inadvertently decrease relative security. The SKM model mitigates this dilemma by fundamentally altering the logic of appropriateness that dictates and governs state behaviour. Within this Vedic framework, diplomatic interaction is removed from a struggle for dominance and recast as a collaborative endeavour to maintain universal equilibrium.

Bimal provides an ontological critique of the Western diplomatic paradigm, rejecting the application of Darwinian evolutionary theory to the realm of IR. He argues that the concept of survival of the fittest is fundamentally incompatible with the true systemic reality of the universe. Drawing a parallel to the origins of the cosmos, Bimal notes that, following the Big Bang, chaotic birth of the universe, everything eventually settled into a highly structured, predictable, and cooperative system. The solar system does not operate on the destructive principle of planetary competition; rather, it functions through a delicate, interconnected balance in which the gravitational pull of one celestial body sustains the stable

orbit of another. If the planets engaged in a Darwinian struggle for dominance, the entire system would collapse into widespread destruction. Similarly, human society and international politics must reflect this systemic cooperation to avoid total annihilation (R. Bimal, personal communication, March 2024). When states actively mimic the cooperative mechanisms observed in the natural world, alliances cease to be temporary, cynical military pacts and transform into enduring structures of mutual preservation and shared destiny.

Historical analysis suggests that punitive and exclusionary diplomatic settlements often generate long-term instability rather than durable peace. The Treaty of Versailles, concluded after the First World War, imposed significant reparations and territorial adjustments on Germany, reflecting a settlement shaped in part by coercive and security-driven considerations. Rather than ensuring stability, the treaty contributed to economic strain, political resentment, and systemic fragility within interwar Europe, conditions that facilitated the rise of revisionist forces and the eventual outbreak of the Second World War (Keynes, 1919; MacMillan, 2001). From a normative perspective, this episode may be interpreted as illustrating the consequences of diplomatic frameworks that lack principles of balance, justice, and mutual accommodation, conceptually resonant with the absence of Ṛta in international order.

In contrast, the vast Achaemenid Empire, particularly under the leadership of Cyrus the Great, exemplifies an early historical manifestation of effective ethical diplomacy. Rather than enforcing rigid cultural assimilation or relying on brutal military subjugation to maintain control, the Achaemenid administrative model deliberately institutionalised religious tolerance, local cultural autonomy, and mutual respect among its incredibly diverse vassal states (Curtis & Simpson, 2010). This approach generated a stable and prosperous regional

order built on cooperative integration rather than mere fear of the imperial army. Similarly, the ancient Chinese tributary system, despite its overtly hierarchical nature, functioned primarily as an effective mechanism for vast economic interdependence, dispute resolution, and peaceful cultural exchange rather than as a strict military alliance designed solely to counter external threats (Kauz & Rossabi, 2022). In the modern European context, the Concert of Europe represented an early, albeit imperfect, and ultimately flawed, attempt to replace unrestrained military competition with a system of collective consultation and shared responsibility for continental stability following the devastation of the Napoleonic Wars.

Transitioning these vital historical lessons to contemporary global governance requires recognition that modern international collaboration must be culturally attuned and contextually informed. Adhikari emphasises that the forced imposition of alien political structures onto diverse populations often generates severe friction rather than harmony. Ṛta represents the immutable laws of nature, meaning that true diplomatic cooperation must align organically with the natural civic and moral duties of the participating states rather than forcing them into artificial Western constraints (D. Adhikari, personal communication, March 2024). By actively abandoning the pessimistic demands of zero-sum realism, states can foster genuine intersubjective trust. This trust is not based on naive, utopian idealism, but on the mutually acknowledged reality that all states are ultimately bound by identical cosmic determinism and face identical systemic consequences for violating it. Through the SKM framework, diplomacy transforms from a battlefield of wits and deception into a transparent mechanism for identifying shared vulnerabilities and addressing them through collective action.

6.2.2 Global Resource Equity and Existential Threat Management

Applying the SKM framework to modern transnational crises illustrates its explanatory power and normative utility compared with traditional Western models of global governance. The twenty-first century is uniquely defined by massive existential threats that categorically transcend rigid Westphalian borders, most notably anthropogenic climate change, rapid global resource depletion, and highly contagious biological pandemics. Realist statecraft is ill-equipped to manage these crises because it structurally incentivises diplomatic defection, resource hoarding, and the strict prioritisation of immediate national interest over long-term planetary survival. In an anarchic system, where states only care about relative gains, cooperation on global environmental or health issues becomes nearly impossible. To manage and survive these existential threats, the international system requires the immediate application of Saha bhakṣa, the ancient Vedic principle of shared resources and collective consumption (Ṛgveda 10.191.2-4).

Adhikari provides a philosophical basis for this cooperative approach by invoking ancient scriptural wisdom regarding resource consumption and wealth distribution. He cites the principle that one should only take from the earth what is strictly necessary to fill one's stomach; accumulating more than what is essential constitutes literal theft against the natural order and warrants severe punitive correction from the cosmos (D. Adhikari, personal communication, March 2024). This ancient moral mandate directly diagnoses the root cause of the modern ecological and economic crisis: the relentless, unregulated accumulation of wealth and natural resources by dominant global powers at the expense of the developing world.

Large-scale international efforts such as the United Nations Climate Change Conference, including the Copenhagen summit and subsequent negotiations, reflect ongoing global attempts to address environmental degradation and restore ecological balance. Contemporary global frameworks such as the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) reflect an emerging recognition of collective ecological responsibility; however, the SKM framework advances this further by grounding environmental governance in an ontological commitment to Ṛta. However, scholars argue that the effectiveness of such frameworks is often constrained by the persistence of state-centric interests and strategic economic calculations. Agreements such as the Paris Agreement rely heavily on voluntary nationally determined contributions, which can result in uneven commitments and implementation gaps (Falkner, 2016; Keohane & Oppenheimer, 2016). Moreover, tensions between developed and developing countries over historical responsibility and burden-sharing continue to shape climate negotiations, often complicating collective action (Roberts & Parks, 2007). From a normative perspective, this dynamic may be interpreted as reflecting the absence of a SKM-oriented framework, which emphasises balance, order, and collective responsibility in sustaining natural systems. Therefore, strict adherence to climate accords is a non-negotiable requirement for collective survival, transforming environmental protection into the ultimate expression of modern alliances.

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed limitations in unilateral and isolationist responses, highlighting the importance of coordinated international action in addressing global health crises. While measures such as border controls and export restrictions were widely adopted, this also revealed vulnerabilities in global supply chains and the risks associated with fragmented policy responses. In particular, the early distribution of vaccines illustrated

pronounced inequalities within the international system, as high-income countries secured advance purchase agreements that concentrated initial supplies within their own populations (World Health Organization, 2021; Bollyky et al., 2022). These dynamics underscored broader structural disparities in access to medical resources and reinforced calls for more equitable and cooperative frameworks in global health governance. In contrast to this self-interested behaviour, Bapat provides empirical evidence of the SKM framework in active operation during this unprecedented global crisis. She highlights how the concept of Vasudhaiva Kuṭumbakam directly informed international crisis response, demonstrating that a state truly grounded in Ṛta acts to protect not only its own domestic citizens but also the broader, highly vulnerable global family.

During the height of the pandemic, vaccine diplomacy emerged as a critical, life-saving manifestation of this ethical cooperation. Bapat notes, with specific logistical detail, that essential vaccines were provided by India not merely to immediate geographic neighbours for strategic geopolitical leverage, but to a vast array of developing states left behind by Western pharmaceutical monopolies. These beneficiary states included Bhutan, Nepal, Afghanistan, Mauritius, and numerous vulnerable Caribbean nations, practically fulfilling the old diplomatic proverb that a friend in need is a friend indeed (A. Bapat, personal communication, March 2024). Furthermore, this cooperative ethos extended far beyond vaccine distribution to complex logistical operations, where massive diplomatic evacuation missions rescued stranded nationals from numerous countries. Bapat recalls that these rescue operations extracted citizens from the Maldives, Myanmar, Bangladesh, China, the United States, Madagascar, Sri Lanka, Peru, and South Africa, regardless of their nationality or political alignment. These humanitarian actions suggest that alliances based on

mutual welfare and shared humanity are more resilient, rapid, and effective during existential crises than rigid pacts based on military deterrence or economic leverage.

This framework invites a re-examination of the normative foundations of global institutions and humanitarian doctrines. The Charter of the United Nations codifies the principles of collective security and the promotion of international peace and cooperation (United Nations, 1945). However, its institutional design, particularly the veto authority vested in the permanent members of the Security Council, has been widely critiqued for constraining collective action in situations involving the strategic interests of major powers (Hurd, 2007; Luck, 2006). From an analytical perspective, the veto can be understood as an institutional accommodation of power asymmetry within international law, reflecting the persistence of realist dynamics even within formally cooperative frameworks (Hurd, 2007). These tensions underscore the gap between normative commitments to collective welfare and the political realities of great-power influence in global governance. The SKM theory provides the philosophical weight necessary to transcend this institutional gridlock. It demands the radical democratisation of international institutions, framing contemporary multilateralism not as a convenient venue for power projection or diplomatic grandstanding by the victors of the Second World War, but as the modern institutional embodiment of sacred global custodianship, where all states have an equal voice in maintaining Ṛta.

Furthermore, the international doctrine of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) can be reconceptualised through this theory. Originally articulated to prevent mass atrocities, R2P has also been subject to sustained critique, with some scholars arguing that its application risks selective enforcement and potential instrumentalisation by powerful states (Bellamy, 2009; Chandler, 2010). At the same time, proponents maintain that it represents an important

normative shift toward the protection of populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity (International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, 2001). Reframed through the SKM perspective, humanitarian intervention must be interpreted not as an ad hoc or legally ambiguous breach of sovereignty, but as a conditional and collectively sanctioned responsibility to restore moral and social order in instances of extreme harm. In this sense, the framework aligns intervention with a broader ethical obligation while remaining attentive to the need for legitimacy, restraint, and multilateral authorisation in practice.

Bhandari reinforces this perspective by arguing that IR must evolve rapidly beyond mere economic exploitation and political subjugation. He asserts that globalising the original, highly inclusive policies of Sanatan Dharma would directly result in financial prosperity and deep political self-respect for all nations, actively eradicating the structural inequalities that currently plague the international system (S. Bhandari, personal communication, March 2024). By internalising the reality that the world is one interconnected nest, the international community must transition from an era of destructive, exhausting competition into a sustainable epoch of ethical, cooperative global governance, ensuring that the wealth and security of the planet are shared equitably among all members of the global family.

6.3 Anṛta Yuddha: The Ethics of Force and Transformative Justice

The application of AY theory provides a framework for ethical intervention and post-conflict healing within the international system. The AY theory explicitly addresses the most severe and dangerous rupture of cosmic order, which involves the necessity and subsequent execution of organised military violence. Within dominant Western realist and neorealist paradigms, war frequently appears as a natural, albeit tragic, consequence of international

anarchy. Prominent Western military theorists, most notably Clausewitz (1832/1976), codified the normalisation of violence by defining war as the continuation of political intercourse with the addition of other means. This conceptualisation normalises war as a rational and standard instrument of state-craft utilised by ambitious sovereigns to resolve structural imbalances of power, project geopolitical dominance, or secure national economic interests. By reducing the horrific reality of armed conflict to a calculated policy option, the Clausewitzian paradigm strips warfare of any transcendent moral gravity, viewing the expenditure of human life as a strategic cost necessary for state survival or territorial expansion.

Conversely, the AY framework rejects the normalisation of war as a standard political tool or a legitimate continuation of diplomatic policy. It decouples the justification for violence from territorial ambition, resource acquisition, regime change, or nationalistic pride. Instead, the Vedic framework positions legitimate warfare, formally defined as "Dharma Yuddha", strictly as a systemic and restorative correction against Anṛta. In this context, Anṛta encompasses unrighteousness, deliberate chaos, and deep systemic disorder that threaten the fabric of existence. War becomes permissible only when a state or powerful entity violates the immutable cosmic order, threatening the survival, basic dignity, and equilibrium of the broader human family.

This framework transforms the underlying calculus of international conflict. It removes warfare from the realm of a political right held by the Westphalian sovereign and elevates it into a restrictive cosmic duty. It demands that any application of kinetic force serve solely to heal the disordered body politic of the international system and reinstate the order of Ṛta. Consequently, the decision to engage in warfare is never a choice based on cost-

benefit analysis regarding national power; rather, it is a moral imperative forced upon the righteous state when all peaceful avenues for maintaining cosmic equilibrium have been fully exhausted through the persistence of Anṛta.

6.3.1 The Moral Calculus of Conflict and the Sovereignty Dilemma

Establishing the moral calculus for armed conflict requires resolving the inherent tension between the necessity of systemic correction and the modern international norm of state sovereignty. The entire Westphalian system is predicated on the strict legal principle of non-intervention, asserting that sovereign states have exclusive political authority over their own domestic affairs. However, this rigid interpretation paralyses the international community when rogue states commit egregious human rights violations, actively harbour transnational terrorist networks, or initiate massive ecological destruction that extends destructively across international borders.

Western Just War theory, codified in the legal doctrines of *jus ad bellum*, struggles to navigate these modern, borderless existential threats because its moral justifications for violence rely on the defence of political sovereignty and established territorial integrity. The AY theory fundamentally challenges this archaic sanctity of absolute sovereignty. It argues that sovereignty is never an inherent right, but a conditional privilege entirely dependent on the maintenance of cosmic order. Therefore, when a state actively propagates Anṛta and inflicts massive suffering, it forfeits its sovereign immunity and becomes a legitimate target for cosmic correction.

Historical and textual traditions indicate that pre-modern conceptions of warfare were embedded within broader moral and cosmological frameworks rather than understood solely as contests for material power. The Mahabharata, particularly in its depiction of the

Kurukṣetra War, presents the idea of a righteous war in which armed conflict is framed as a last resort undertaken to restore moral and social order following the breakdown of just governance (Hiltebeitel, 2001; Johnson, 1999). The conflict between the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas is thus portrayed not merely as a dynastic struggle but as a normative crisis requiring resolution within an ethical and cosmological order. This presents a set of ethical constraints on warfare that, in principle, parallels later developments in the laws of armed conflict. These include injunctions against attacking unarmed or incapacitated opponents, prohibitions on striking those who surrender or retreat, and expectations of proportionality and fairness in combat (Johnson, 1999; Kane, 1973). Such norms suggest an early recognition of restraint and humanitarian considerations in warfare, even within the context of violent conflict.

The demand for moral justification in warfare is not confined to Hindu civilisation but appears across diverse historical contexts. In the ancient Near East, diplomatic agreements such as the Hittite–Mitanni treaty invoked divine witnesses, including deities such as Mitra and Varuna, to sanction and guarantee interstate obligations, embedding treaties within a broader cosmic and moral order (Thieme, 1960). The invocation of such deities implied that violations were not merely political breaches but transgressions with wider moral and religious implications.

Similarly, in Roman political discourse, representations of Carthage during the Punic Wars frequently drew upon the notion of Punica fides, portraying the Carthaginians as unreliable and oath-breaking, and providing a moralised justification for conflict (Hoyos, 2015). Taken together, these examples suggest that the justification of warfare extends

beyond material or strategic considerations and incorporates moral, religious, or normative claims that resonate with broader conceptions of order and legitimacy.

To practically resolve the modern sovereignty dilemma regarding intervention, Bapat highlights the severe, borderless crises of the modern globalised world, such as global terrorism, sophisticated cyber threats, catastrophic climate change, and deep economic vulnerabilities. These issues directly affect the daily lives of common citizens worldwide, creating awe, fear, and anxiety. This ultimately disturbs the peace, security, and socio-economic progress of all states simultaneously (A. Bapat, personal communication, March 2024). According to this perspective, states that intentionally create chaos and disorder, either within their own sovereign borders or internationally, are manifesting Anṛta.

In such global conditions, adherence to diplomatic non-intervention becomes a moral failure of cosmic duty. Bapat argues that, to solve these interconnected issues, all states must carry the spiritual conviction of oneness and possess a genuine family bond. When the world is truly and practically viewed as Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, it becomes the mandatory duty of the Ṛta Rāṣṭra to actively safeguard the security and peace of the entire globe. This moral framework thereby fully authorises ethical intervention against the dark forces of Anṛta, regardless of human-made political boundaries or outdated Westphalian legal constraints.

However, Bimal offers a pragmatic caveat to prevent this framework from devolving into a convenient justification for imperialistic crusades or Western neo-colonialism. Any corrective military or diplomatic action must be genuinely motivated by a selfless desire to restore Ṛta, not by the pursuit of geopolitical power, as universal justice. Bimal critiques the current global system, arguing that powerful states claiming to fight for lofty ideals like democracy, human rights, or communism are hypocritical. These superpowers routinely use

these noble ideologies merely to assert regional dominance, secure lucrative natural resources, and subjugate weaker states (R. Bimal, personal communication, March 2024). Therefore, the AY framework requires that the intervening party itself must be firmly and demonstrably grounded in Ṛta. The righteous state must act as a selfless and reluctant custodian of the cosmic order rather than a self-interested, opportunistic hegemon seeking to expand its sphere of influence under the false guise of humanitarian intervention.

6.3.2 Non-kinetic Correction and Post-Conflict Restoration

A closer examination of "Dharma Yuddha" reveals the potential contemporary relevance of this framework for informing international law and conflict regulation. Within this tradition, the objective of conflict is understood as the restoration of moral and social order, which necessitates that the conduct of war remain ethically constrained and proportionate (Johnson, 1999; Kane, 1973). This perspective bears comparison with modern legal doctrines of *jus in bello*, which emphasise principles such as proportionality, distinction between combatants and non-combatants, and the minimisation of unnecessary suffering (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2005).

At the same time, the Hindu tradition articulate additional normative expectations regarding restraint, including injunctions against the destruction of livelihoods and social infrastructure, which can be interpreted as extending ethical concern beyond immediate battlefield conduct (Kane, 1973). While such principles should not be equated directly with contemporary legal regimes, they suggest a broader moral framework in which the preservation of social and ecological stability forms part of the ethical evaluation of conflict. Crucially, the AY framework structurally prioritises non-kinetic correction over physical military violence. Physical violence involving the loss of human life is strictly the final resort

when all other diplomatic, economic, and social mechanisms have failed to halt the spread of chaos.

In the contemporary international system, analogous principles can be observed in the development of legal and institutional mechanisms aimed at addressing grave violations without resorting to large-scale armed conflict. Instruments such as targeted economic sanctions and international criminal accountability seek to constrain individual perpetrators rather than entire populations. Institutions such as the International Criminal Court (ICC) play a central role in this regard by prosecuting individuals responsible for genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity, thereby reinforcing norms of accountability at the leadership level (Akhavan, 2001; Bosco, 2014).

From a comparative normative perspective, such mechanisms may be interpreted as functionally analogous to the ethical logic underlying “Dharma Yuddha”, insofar as they aim to address injustice through targeted and proportionate means while minimising broader societal harm. By focusing on individual criminal responsibility, international legal processes seek to isolate the sources of systemic violence without necessitating widespread destruction of state infrastructure or civilian life. While these mechanisms are subject to political and practical limitations, they nevertheless represent an important evolution towards more restrained and legally mediated forms of conflict resolution within the international system.

Furthermore, examining the structural distinctions between retributive and restorative conceptions of justice is important for situating the AY framework. In the aftermath of the Second World War, legal responses such as the Nuremberg Trials played a foundational role in the development of modern international criminal law and human rights norms (Bassiouni, 1999; Bass, 2000). These proceedings are often associated with a retributive model of justice,

emphasising accountability, punishment, and the establishment of legal precedent. At the same time, scholars have debated the extent to which such tribunals reflected elements of "victor's justice", given their asymmetrical application and the political context in which they were conducted (Bass, 2000).

While retributive justice remains a central component of contemporary legal systems, the AY framework emphasises restorative and reconciliatory approaches that seek to address the underlying causes of conflict and repair social relations (Zehr, 2002). From a comparative perspective, the framework may be interpreted as aligning more closely with such restorative logics, insofar as it prioritises the re-establishment of systemic balance and ethical order rather than punishment alone. This perspective suggests that accountability mechanisms, while necessary, may be insufficient in isolation to resolve deeper structural and normative disruptions within the international system.

Bimal emphasises that true systemic correction requires addressing the root causes of Anṛta, rather than merely treating the external symptoms through blunt military force or legal tribunals. The proliferation of global chaos is closely linked to entrenched poverty, gross economic inequality, and social injustice. Genuine social transformation can never occur solely from the outside through foreign military imposition; it requires an internal awakening of collective consciousness and the complete eradication of the structural violence that breeds extremism. Until this internal transformation occurs, no external political ideology, military intervention, or punitive legal sentence will ever succeed in creating durable peace (R. Bimal, personal communication, March 2024). This insight necessitates a fundamental restructuring of modern post-conflict resolution strategies and international aid programmes.

Within the AY framework, the final cessation of military hostilities does not mark the end of the intervener's moral duty; rather, it marks the immediate beginning of the restorative phase. A victorious state acting in strict accordance with Ṛta is forbidden from engaging in any form of punitive vengeance, economic subjugation, resource extraction, or prolonged military occupation of the defeated populace. Instead, the victor assumes custodial responsibility for healing the destabilised body politic that they have just engaged in combat.

This normative perspective invites renewed consideration of contemporary United Nations peacekeeping operations and transitional justice mechanisms. Existing peacebuilding strategies have often been criticised for prioritising short-term stabilisation measures, such as ceasefire monitoring and the rapid organisation of elections, without sufficiently addressing underlying social, economic, and institutional fragilities (Paris, 2004; Richmond, 2006). As a result, post-conflict environments may remain vulnerable to renewed instability despite formal political transitions.

A more comprehensive approach to peacebuilding emphasises the importance of addressing structural inequalities, rebuilding social trust, and promoting long-term economic recovery alongside political reform (Lambourne, 2009). Transitional justice processes, when combined with inclusive development and reconciliation efforts, can contribute to more durable peace by engaging both accountability and social repair. From a comparative perspective, the AY framework may be interpreted as aligning with these broader restorative approaches, insofar as it prioritises the re-establishment of systemic balance and the reintegration of conflict-affected societies into a stable and cooperative international order. While such an approach does not displace existing institutional mechanisms, it highlights the

importance of integrating justice, development, and reconciliation in order to reduce the recurrence of violence.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The contemporary discipline of international relations (IR) finds itself at an epistemological crossroads. For over a century, the theoretical architecture governing the understanding of state behaviour, systemic conflict, and diplomatic cooperation has largely been shaped by Western intellectual traditions. While the dominant paradigms, most notably structural realism and neoliberal institutionalism, have provided sophisticated analytical vocabularies for interpreting the mechanics of global politics, their fundamental reliance on the historical experiences of European state formation has constrained the discipline's universal explanatory power. This dissertation was conceived and executed as a direct response to this sustained epistemological limitation. By answering the call of the "Global IR" movement (Acharya & Buzan, 2010), this research ventured beyond the traditional boundaries of post-Enlightenment Western political thought to systematically construct original theories of international relations grounded in the ancient Vedic Saṁhitās.

The preceding chapters of this dissertation have navigated the complex terrain between ancient Sanskrit philology and modern political science. Through hermeneutic exegesis, the research has demonstrated that the Hindu intellectual tradition is not merely a repository of mystical theology or antiquarian socio-cultural practices, but a coherent source of IR theory. By elevating the Vedic concept of Ṛta from a metaphysical abstraction to a primary systemic variable, this study has challenged the foundational assumption of Westphalian anarchy.

This final chapter serves as the analytical culmination of the doctoral research. It is systematically structured to provide a comprehensive summary of the research, followed by a

conclusion that synthesises the theoretical findings and directly addresses the primary research questions. Furthermore, this chapter delineates the precise knowledge contributions that this dissertation makes to the broader academic discipline, illustrating the normative viability of the Vedic framework in addressing twenty-first-century existential crises. Finally, it outlines strategic avenues for future scholarly inquiry, establishing a roadmap for subsequent researchers seeking to expand the horizons of non-Western international relations theory.

7.1 Summary

The fundamental trajectory of this study was driven by a critical diagnosis of the structural limitations inherent in mainstream IR theory. The research problem was premised on the observation that the field remains limited by its West-centric ontological baseline. Western realism posits an international system defined by structural anarchy in which sovereign states operate as rational, egoistic actors driven by the pursuit of material power and the fear of existential destruction (Waltz, 1979; Mearsheimer, 2001). Conversely, Western liberalism attempts to mitigate this anarchic void through the construction of international institutions and the promotion of economic interdependence, relying on a consequentialist logic of rational self-interest (Keohane, 1984). Neither paradigm, however, adequately accounts for the normative structures, civilisational ethics, and alternative ontologies originating from the Global South. Consequently, non-Western intellectual traditions, particularly the foundational texts of the Hindu civilisation, have been historically marginalised, relegated to the periphery of anthropological curiosity rather than recognised as legitimate wellsprings of macro-political theory.

To rectify this epistemological imbalance, the study adopted a qualitative research design strictly delimited to the earliest and most authoritative layer of the Hindu intellectual corpus: the Vedic Saṁhitās (specifically the Ṛgveda, Yajurveda, and Atharvaveda). Recognising the methodological risks of anachronism and subjective bias when interpreting millennia-old scriptures, the research operationalised a dual-layered methodological framework. It synthesised Gadamer's (1975) philosophical hermeneutics, specifically the "fusion of horizons", with the indigenous exegetical rules of the classical Hindu Mīmāṃsā school (Śruti, Liṅga, Vākya, and Prakaraṇa). This methodology ensured that the extraction of political concepts remained structurally faithful to the original cosmic logic of the Vedas while simultaneously acquiring analytical legibility for modern political scientists. To bridge the temporal divide between ancient philosophy and contemporary diplomatic practice, this textual analysis was carefully triangulated with in-depth qualitative interviews conducted with elite subject-matter experts, including senior diplomats, practitioners, and scholars of Hindu philosophy.

The primary methodological output was the formal abstraction of the principle of Ṛta. Rather than viewing the international system as an anarchic void, the Vedic framework posits that the universe, and by necessary extension the human political realm, is governed by Ṛta, an omnipresent, interconnected cosmic and moral order. From this ontological baseline, the dissertation formulated three distinct, interrelated Hindu theories of international relations:

First, the Ṛta Rāṣṭra (Righteous State) theory redefines the ontological nature of the sovereign unit. It challenges the Hobbesian conception of the state as an artificial Leviathan, created solely to monopolise violence and ensure physical survival. Instead, the Ṛta Rāṣṭra theory conceptualises the state as a functional vessel, organically mandated to execute and

uphold cosmic order upon the terrestrial plane. Within this framework, state sovereignty is divested of its absolute, Westphalian character; it is strictly conditional and functionally tethered to the state's capacity to maintain domestic and systemic justice. The theory introduces sophisticated mechanisms of domestic constraint, demonstrating how ancient institutions such as the Sabhā (epistemic council of elders) and Samiti (popular assembly) functioned as checks against executive tyranny, ensuring that the ruler (Rāja Dharma) remained accountable to both the populace and the cosmos.

Second, the SKM (Coaction Alliance) theory provides a reconceptualisation of international cooperation. In contrast to realist alliance theories, which view international partnerships as fragile, temporary marriages of convenience driven purely by the balancing of proximate material threats (Walt, 1987), the Vedic framework posits that alliances are the natural structural culmination of a shared commitment to cosmic duty. The theory introduces the causal mechanism of ideational convergence, arguing that states socialised within the normative structure of Ṛta are structurally predisposed toward deep institutional integration. Furthermore, it incorporates the economic principle of Saha bhakṣa (shared resource consumption), arguing that complex economic interdependence and the equitable distribution of planetary wealth are prerequisites for preventing systemic entropy and maintaining long-term global stability.

Third, the AY (Chaos War) theory provides a structural explanation for the outbreak of systemic violence, rejecting the Clausewitzian normalisation of war as a legitimate continuation of political policy. The theory identifies Anṛta, defined as deliberate moral decay, falsehood, and systemic disorder, as the primary independent variable that drives the international system toward violent rupture. It establishes an internal-external nexus, arguing

that domestic tyranny and the violation of civic duty inevitably spill over into the international system as external aggression. Furthermore, warfare is justified only as an absolute last resort, executed not for territorial expansion or nationalistic glory, but as a restorative intervention designed to cure the international system of its entropic disease. The theory mandates strict ethical regulations governing the conduct of hostilities ("Dharma Yuddha") and demands a post-conflict phase dedicated entirely to restorative justice and the rehabilitation of the defeated populace, forbidding punitive economic exploitation or retaliatory vengeance.

7.2 Conclusion

The synthesis of the research findings facilitates a resolution to the core inquiry of this dissertation: whether ancient Hindu scriptures can provide a structurally coherent and normatively viable theoretical framework for contemporary international relations. The conclusion of this investigation is that the Vedic Saṁhitās offer a logically coherent paradigm that challenges, complements, and, in many respects, extends beyond the analytical leverage of dominant Western theories, providing a normatively richer and cosmologically grounded alternative. The findings necessitate a fundamental ontological shift in how the discipline conceptualises the international system, moving from the assumption of structural anarchy to the conceptualisation of cosmic equilibrium. This conclusion is substantiated by directly addressing the three specific research questions that guided this doctoral study:

7.2.1 Theory Construction

The first research question sought to determine what original Hindu theories of international relations could be systematically derived from the ontological concepts contained within the Vedic Saṁhitās. The dissertation concludes that ancient metaphysical

concepts can be translated into modern structural theories. The formulation of the Ṛta Rāṣṭra, SKM, and AY theories suggests that the Hindu intellectual tradition possesses an indigenous political vocabulary capable of explaining unit-level state behaviour, systemic alliance formation, and the origins of international conflict. The research demonstrates that the Vedas are not pre-political texts; rather, they present a sophisticated model of macro-systemic governance in which political science and cosmic ecology are closely integrated. The formulation of these three theories fulfils the primary objective of constructing Hindu theories of international relations.

7.2.2 Convergences and Divergences

The second research question was to evaluate how these newly formulated Hindu theories theoretically intersect with established Western paradigms, specifically realism and liberalism. The study found points of convergence between the Ṛta Rāṣṭra framework and Western social contract theory and classical republicanism, particularly regarding the necessity of civic engagement, the rule of law, and institutional checks on executive power. Similarly, the SKM theory shares an operational alignment with neoliberal institutionalism, as both frameworks advocate for complex interdependence, the lowering of transaction costs through transparent diplomacy, and the mitigation of the security dilemma through sustained cooperation. Furthermore, the AY theory conceptually intersects with the Western "Just War" tradition, mirroring its strict regulations regarding proportionality and the absolute protection of non-combatants.

However, the dissertation concludes that these convergences are superseded by structural divergences. Western theories, regardless of their realist or liberal orientation, remain anthropocentric and consequentialist. They view the state as an artificial construct

designed to maximise human utility, protect individual liberties, or accumulate material power. In contrast, the Hindu IR theories are cosmocentric and deontological. The state does not exist to serve the desires of its citizens or its sovereign; it exists to serve the absolute dictates of Ṛta.

While realism operates on a logic of fear and survival, and liberalism operates on a logic of material incentive and institutional constraint, the Hindu theories operate on a "logic of appropriateness" rooted in universal duty. The dissertation concludes that Western theories view cooperation as an artificial imposition upon a naturally competitive world, whereas the Vedic framework views cooperation as the baseline fabric of reality, treating conflict and competition as unnatural deviations. This represents a fundamental paradigm shift from individualism to collectivism, and from the relentless pursuit of relative power to the collective preservation of harmony.

7.2.3 Normative Viability

The third research question was to assess whether the formulated Hindu theories constitute a viable normative framework for addressing contemporary international challenges. The conclusion of this research is that the Vedic paradigm offers explanatory power and normative utility when confronting the borderless existential crises that define the twenty-first century.

Traditional Westphalian models, inherently constrained by their focus on rigid territorial sovereignty and zero-sum power accumulation, have proven inadequate for managing transnational threats such as anthropogenic climate change, severe resource depletion, and global biological pandemics. The dissertation concludes that the Ṛta Rāṣṭra theory's integration of ecological stewardship as a core requirement for state survival

resolves the ecological blindness of Western state-building theories. By conceptualising the Earth as a single, interconnected family (Vasudhaiva Kuṭumbakam), the SKM framework provides the philosophical mandate necessary to enforce global climate accords and facilitate equitable resource sharing during global crises.

Furthermore, the AY theory provides a relevant moral compass for modern interventions. By defining sovereignty as conditional upon righteous behaviour, the theory provides justification for the international community to intervene against rogue regimes perpetrating mass atrocities or severe ecological destruction, while challenging rigid interpretations of international legal constraints, such as the United Nations Security Council veto system. Ultimately, the dissertation concludes that the normative application of Ṛta has universal applicability, capable of transcending religious, cultural, and political divides, offering a secularised, natural-law approach to global governance that is critically needed in an era of multipolar fragility.

7.3 Knowledge Contribution

The intellectual value of a doctoral dissertation is ultimately measured by the depth and originality of its contribution to the broader academic discipline. This research makes several contributions to the field of IR, reshaping its epistemological boundaries and enriching its theoretical vocabulary. The contributions of this study operate simultaneously at the theoretical, methodological, and normative levels.

7.3.1 Advancing the "Global IR" Discourse and Epistemological Decolonisation

This dissertation contributes directly to advancing the "Global IR" movement. For decades, scholars from the Global South have consistently critiqued the structural inequalities inherent in global knowledge production, arguing that theories derived exclusively from the

Peloponnesian War, the Peace of Westphalia, or the European Cold War cannot legitimately claim universal explanatory power (Acharya & Buzan, 2010; Tickner & Wæver, 2009). However, much of the postcolonial critique has remained deconstructive, challenging Western hegemony without formally constructing indigenous theoretical alternatives.

This dissertation transcends critique by offering a coherent theoretical architecture built entirely on non-Western ontological foundations. By formalising the Ṛta Rāṣṭra, SKM, and AY theories, this research de-parochialises the discipline of IR. It provides evidence that ancient non-Western civilisations possessed explanatory models of statecraft, alliance formation, and conflict resolution millennia before the emergence of the European nation-state. This act of theoretical formalisation decolonises the academic canon, demonstrating that the intellectual heritage of the Hindu civilisation is not a peripheral historical curiosity, but a central, indispensable component of global political thought. It equips scholars, particularly those studying the international relations of South Asia, with an authentic, indigenous theoretical lens, freeing them from the intellectual dependency of retrofitting their regional analyses into inadequate Western frameworks. This study therefore contributes not only to theoretical diversification but also to the reconstitution of IR as a genuinely global discipline.

7.3.2 Redefining the Systemic Baseline: From Anarchy to Cosmic Equilibrium

A critical theoretical contribution of this research is its subversion of the core ordering principle of mainstream IR: systemic anarchy. The assumption that the international system is a chaotic, ungoverned void has served as the unquestioned axiom upon which virtually all modern IR theory has been constructed. By systematically abstracting the Vedic principle of

Ṛta and deploying it as an independent structural variable, this dissertation fundamentally redefines the nature of the international system.

The introduction of "Cosmic Equilibrium" as an alternative ordering principle provides the discipline with an entirely new theoretical vocabulary. It allows scholars to theoretically model state behaviour not merely as a reaction to external material threats, but as an alignment with a pre-existing normative ecology. This ontological shift resolves the persistent theoretical impasse created by the classic "security dilemma". The research demonstrates that when the baseline of the system is conceptualised as an interconnected moral order rather than a competitive vacuum, the rational incentive for sovereign defection, deception, and the relentless accumulation of relative military power is logically negated. This contribution revitalises the theoretical landscape of the discipline, offering a structural mechanism for achieving permanent peace that does not rely on the fragile construct of a global hegemon or a world government.

7.3.3 Methodological Innovation: Bridging Ancient Philology and Modern Political Science

Methodologically, this dissertation makes a significant contribution by constructing an analytical bridge between ancient religious/philosophical texts and modern secular social science. Engaging with ancient scriptures for the purpose of modern theory-building is inherently fraught with methodological perils of anachronism, literalist fundamentalism, and subjective cultural bias.

By engineering a unique conceptual framework that synthesises the modern philosophical hermeneutics of Gadamer with the ancient, indigenous exegetical science of the Mīmāṃsā school, this research establishes a highly replicable, transparent methodological

protocol for extracting political theory from ancient texts. The application of Śruti (direct statement), Liṅga (indicative power), Vākya (syntactical context), and Prakaraṇa (interdependent context) ensured that the resulting IR theories were neither Western concepts dressed in Sanskrit terminology nor mystical dogmas masquerading as political science. This methodological innovation provides a vital template for future researchers seeking to extract political theories from other ancient corpora, such as the Islamic Hadiths, the Chinese classical texts, or the indigenous oral traditions of Africa and the Americas.

7.3.4 Normative Policy Applications for the Anthropocene

Beyond the realms of abstract theory and epistemology, this dissertation makes a normative contribution to contemporary foreign policy formulation. The current geological epoch is characterised by existential crises that are entirely the product of human activity driven by a flawed, anthropocentric, and materialist worldview. Western models of sustainable development fail because they continue to view the natural environment merely as a resource to be managed for maximum human utility.

The formalisation of the Hindu IR framework provides the international community with an eco-centric normative paradigm. By elevating ecological stewardship from a mere regulatory issue to an absolute ontological requirement for state survival (Ṛta Rāṣṭra), and by mandating the equitable sharing of global resources as a cosmic duty rather than an economic charity (Saha bhakṣa), this research provides a blueprint for sustainable global governance. It proves that ancient wisdom is uniquely equipped to address the failures of modern theoretical paradigms. Furthermore, the framework's emphasis on universal kinship (Vasudhaiva Kuṭumbakam) provides a normative basis for combating the tide of isolationist nationalism, offering an argument for global solidarity in the face of biological pandemics, artificial

intelligence proliferation, and transnational terrorism. Ultimately, the knowledge contribution of this research lies in its capacity to offer a more just, equitable, and sustainable vision for the future of IR. Taken together, these contributions reposition international relations as a genuinely pluralistic discipline, capable of integrating diverse ontological foundations into a unified analytical framework.

7.4 Areas for Further Research

While this dissertation has established the foundational architecture of Hindu theories of international relations, it simultaneously opens new territories for future scholarly investigation. The extraction of formal IR theory from non-Western intellectual traditions is a nascent academic endeavour. Consequently, the findings and theoretical constructs developed within this study should be viewed not as the final conclusion of Hindu political thought, but rather as the essential starting point for a broader, multi-generational academic research agenda. To fully realise the potential of the "Global IR" paradigm and to continue testing the robustness of the Vedic framework, several critical areas for further research are recommended.

7.4.1 Expansion of the Hindu Textual Corpus

The most immediate and necessary avenue for future research involves the systematic expansion of the primary textual corpus. To ensure analytical precision and maintain focus on the ontological bedrock of the tradition, this current study delimited its primary data extraction strictly to the Saṁhitās of the Ṛgveda, Yajurveda, and Atharvaveda. However, the Hindu intellectual tradition is exceptionally vast and temporally expansive.

Future doctoral and post-doctoral research must sequentially apply the hermeneutic methodology developed in this study to subsequent layers of the corpus. Crucial

investigations should include the Brāhmaṇas and Upaniṣads to further refine the metaphysical dimensions of state identity and non-violent statecraft. Furthermore, an exhaustive IR analysis of the Smṛtis (particularly the Manu Smṛti and Yājñavalkya Smṛti) is required to formalise specific legal mechanisms for international trade, treaties, and the treatment of refugees. The Mahābhārata (particularly the Śānti Parva) and the Rāmāyaṇa, must be subjected to structural analysis to expand upon the AY theory, particularly focusing on the ethics of asymmetric warfare, modern deterrence analogies, and the psychological dimensions of strategic leadership. Finally, future research must seek to actively integrate the pragmatic, realist statecraft of Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra and Kāmandaka's Nītisāra with the overarching normative framework of Ṛta established in this study, thereby achieving a grand synthesis of classical Indian strategic thought and Vedic cosmic ethics.

7.4.2 Empirical Application to Modern Statecraft and Foreign Policy

A theory, regardless of its philosophical elegance, must ultimately demonstrate its empirical utility in explaining real-world phenomena. While this dissertation has established the theoretical and normative foundations, future research must pivot towards empirical testing and case-study application.

Scholars should undertake qualitative and mixed-methods research to evaluate how the principles of Ṛta Rāṣṭra and SKM influence the contemporary foreign policies of states within the Indian subcontinent. Specific, highly targeted case studies should be conducted on the diplomatic behaviour of India and Nepal. For instance, researchers could analyse India's historical commitment to the Non-Aligned Movement, its contemporary diplomatic posture in multilateral forums regarding climate justice, or its execution of "Vaccine Maitri" (vaccine diplomacy) during the COVID-19 pandemic, measuring these specific historical events

against the theoretical metrics of the SKM framework. Similarly, Nepal's complex balancing acts between regional hegemons and its reliance on soft-power diplomacy could be evaluated through the lens of preserving regional Ṛta. Furthermore, researchers should investigate how these Vedic principles can be explicitly operationalised within the institutional frameworks of regional organisations such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) or the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) to overcome current diplomatic gridlocks.

7.4.3 Cross-Civilisational Comparative Studies

To fully realise the ambitions of the "Global IR" movement, theoretical development must not remain siloed within specific regional or religious traditions. The third major trajectory for future research involves cross-civilisational comparative studies. The findings of this dissertation suggest that the pursuit of cosmic alignment and ethical governance is a universal human impulse, not an exclusive phenomenon of the Indian subcontinent.

Future scholars must engage in comparative analyses, juxtaposing the Vedic concept of Ṛta with analogous ordering principles from other major non-Western civilisations. Significant scholarly potential exists for comparing the Ṛta Rāṣṭra theory with the ancient Chinese political philosophy of Tianming (the Mandate of Heaven) and the Confucian emphasis on relational harmony (guanxi). Similarly, comparative studies should be launched to examine the Vedic framework alongside the ancient Egyptian concept of Maat (universal truth and balance), the Islamic concepts of Ummah (universal community) and Adl (justice), and the African indigenous philosophy of Ubuntu (interconnected humanity). By identifying the structural commonalities and nuanced differences across these diverse Indigenous

ontologies, scholars can collaboratively construct a truly universal, synthesised meta-theory of international relations that transcends the parochial limitations of the Westphalian model.

In conclusion, the academic discipline of international relations can no longer afford the luxury of intellectual parochialism. The existential crises of the modern era demand theoretical frameworks that are inclusive, ecologically conscious, and grounded in universal ethics. By abstracting the ancient wisdom of the Vedic Saṁhitās, this dissertation has demonstrated that the conceptual foundations for a more just and sustainable international order exist within the intellectual heritage of humanity. The transition from a global system defined by the zero-sum pursuit of power to one informed by shared ethical responsibilities (Ṛta) is not merely a normative aspiration; it represents a plausible analytical alternative for rethinking global order.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Q1. How do you interpret Ṛta as a principle of order in the world?

- To what extent can Ṛta be understood in secular or philosophical terms rather than strictly religious ones?
- Can Ṛta be framed as a universal natural law or value system?

Q2. What challenges might arise when applying Ṛta within a modern secular international system?

- How can such concepts be presented in inclusive, non-sectarian language?

Q3. How should state behavior be guided under a Ṛta-based framework?

- How does this differ from conventional power-political approaches?
- How should a ruler (Rāṣṭra) derive legitimacy under Ṛta?

Q4. How do Vedic ideas like Sahakārya Mitratā inform cooperation among states?

- Should alliances be based on shared values or mutual interests?
- Under what conditions can ethical cooperation be sustained?
- How is equitable resource-sharing envisioned in these concepts?

Q5. How should states respond to power asymmetry or external threats under Ṛta?

- Can understanding and friendship be alternatives to conflict?
- What role does honesty about intentions play in state relations?

Q6. How do you define Anṛta (disorder or injustice) in the context of world politics?

- What kinds of behavior by states or actors would you call Anṛta?
- Is Anṛta a result of moral failure, structural issues, or both?

Q7. How should the international community respond to states characterized by Anṛta?

- Can intervention ever be justified under Vedic principles?
- If so, on what normative basis and who decides?

Q8. How should sovereignty be treated under a framework of Ṛta and Rāṣṭra?

- How can one address violations of universal order without violating non-intervention norms?

Q9. To what extent do you think these Vedic principles can be applied in today's international relations?

- In which diplomatic or policy areas might they be most relevant?

Q10. What are the main challenges in implementing these ideas in real-world policy?

- Can these principles be promoted incrementally, or do they require systemic change?
- Which policy domains (environment, conflict resolution, economics) seem most amenable?

Closing: "Is there any other insight you would like to share about the relevance of Vedic philosophy to contemporary international relations?"

REFERENCES

Acharya, A., & Buzan, B. (2010). *Non-Western international relations theory: Perspectives on and beyond Asia*. Routledge.

Adler, E. (2008). The spread of security communities: Communities of practice, self-restraint, and NATO's post–Cold War transformation. *European Journal of International Relations, 14*(2), 195–230. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066108089241

Akhavan, P. (2001). Beyond impunity: Can international criminal justice prevent future atrocities? *American Journal of International Law, 95*(1), 7–31. https://doi.org/10.2307/2642034

Alden, C., & Brummer, K. (2019). Foreign policy analysis and the study of Indian foreign policy: A pathway for theoretical innovation? *India Review, 18*(5), 471–484. https://doi.org/10.1080/14736489.2019.1703360

Arendt, H. (1958). *The human condition*. University of Chicago Press.

Ashoka. (1997). *The edicts of King Ashoka* (N. A. Nikam & R. McKeon, Trans.). University of Chicago Press. (Original work published c. 3rd century BCE)

Assmann, J. (2001). *The search for God in ancient Egypt*. Cornell University Press.

Atharvaveda: Shaunaka Samhita. (n.d.). *Vedic Heritage Portal*. Retrieved July 25, 2023, from https://vedicheritage.gov.in/samhitas/atharvaveda-samhitas/

Badrinath, C. (2007). *The Mahabharata: An inquiry in the human condition*. Orient Blackswan.

Bassiouni, M. C. (1999). *Crimes against humanity in international criminal law* (2nd ed.). Kluwer Law International.

Bass, G. J. (2000). *Stay the hand of vengeance: The politics of war crimes tribunals.* Princeton University Press.

Bellamy, A. J. (2009). *Responsibility to protect: The global effort to end mass atrocities.* Polity Press.

Bhatt, G. H. (1989). *The basic way of Mīmāṃsā*. Motilal Banarsidass.

Boesche, R. (2003). Kautilya's Arthaśāstra on war and diplomacy in ancient India. *Journal of Military History, 67*(1), 9–37.

Bollyky, T. J., Joshi, M. J., & Dieleman, J. L. (2022). Pandemic preparedness and COVID-19: An exploratory analysis of infection and fatality rates, and contextual factors associated with preparedness. *The Lancet, 399*(10334), 1489–1512. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(22)00172-6

Bosco, D. (2014). *Rough justice: The International Criminal Court in a world of power politics.* Oxford University Press.

Brown, D. (2000). *Contemporary Nationalism: Civic, Ethnocultural and Multicultural Politics.* Routledge.

Bull, H. (1977). *The anarchical society: A study of order in world politics*. Columbia University Press.

Buchanan, J. M., & Tullock, G. (2000). *The calculus of consent: Logical foundations of constitutional democracy*. Liberty Fund. (Original work published 1962)

Carr, E. H. (1939). *The twenty years' crisis, 1919–1939*. Macmillan.

Chandler, D. (2010). *International statebuilding: The rise of post-liberal governance.* Routledge.

Clausewitz, C. von. (1976). *On war* (M. Howard & P. Paret, Trans.). Princeton University Press. (Original work published 1832)

Cox, R. W. (1981). Social forces, states and world orders: Beyond international relations theory. *Millennium, 10*(2), 126–155. https://doi.org/10.1177/03058298810100020501

Crutzen, P. J., & Stoermer, E. F. (2000). The Anthropocene. *Global Change Newsletter, 41*, 17–18.

Curtis, J., & Simpson, S. J. (2010). *The world of Achaemenid Persia*. I.B. Tauris.

Dahl, R. A. (1998). *On democracy*. Yale University Press.

Dodson, A. (2010). *Egyptian chronology and pharaonic kingship*. American University in Cairo Press.

Doyle, M. W. (1986). Liberalism and world politics. *American Political Science Review, 80*(4), 1151–1169. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055400185041

Doyle, M. W. (1997). *Ways of war and peace*. W. W. Norton.

Dryzek, J. S. (2013). *The politics of the earth* (3rd ed.). Oxford University Press.

Eckersley, R. (1992). *Environmentalism and political theory*. UCL Press.

Eno, R. (2010). *The Zhou dynasty and the Mandate of Heaven*. Indiana University. https://hdl.handle.net/2022/23489

Etzioni, A. (1993). *The spirit of community*. Crown.

Falkner, R. (2016). The Paris Agreement and the new logic of international climate politics. *International Affairs,* 92(5), 1107–1125. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2346.12708

Freeden, M. (2015). *Liberalism: A very short introduction*. Oxford University Press.

Friedman, M. (1962). *Capitalism and freedom*. University of Chicago Press.

Gadamer, H.-G. (1975). *Truth and method*. Continuum.

Ganguly, S. (2010). *India's foreign policy: Retrospect and prospect.* Oxford University Press.

Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough? An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field Methods, 18*(1), 59–82. https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822X05279903

Gold, D., & McGlinchey, S. (2017). *International relations theory.* E-International Relations.

Gonda, J. (1966). *Ancient Indian kingship from the religious point of view.* Brill.

Grotius, H. (2005). *On the law of war and peace.* Liberty Fund. (Original work published 1625)

Hall, I. (2019). *Modi and the Reinvention of Indian Foreign Policy: Strategic Visions and Regional Challenges.* Bristol University Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvfc524v

Hamowy, R. (2008). *The encyclopedia of libertarianism.* Sage.

Hayek, F. A. (1948). *Individualism and economic order.* University of Chicago Press.

Held, D. (2006). *Models of democracy* (3rd ed.). Polity.

Herbst, J. (2000). *States and power in Africa.* Princeton University Press.

Herz, J. H. (1950). Idealist internationalism and the security dilemma. *World Politics, 2*(2), 157–180. https://doi.org/10.2307/2009187

Hiltebeitel, A. (2001). *Rethinking the Mahābhārata: A reader's guide to the education of the dharma king.* University of Chicago Press.

Hobbes, T. (2004). *Leviathan.* Penguin. (Original work published 1651)

Hollis, M., & Smith, S. (1991). *Explaining and understanding international relations.* Oxford University Press.

Hoyos, D. (2015). *Mastering the West: Rome and Carthage at war.* Oxford University Press.

Hurd, I. (2007). *After anarchy: Legitimacy and power in the United Nations Security Council.* Princeton University Press.

International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty. (2001). *The responsibility to protect.* International Development Research Centre.

International Committee of the Red Cross. (2005). *Customary international humanitarian law* (Vol. 1: Rules). Cambridge University Press.

Jamison, S. W., & Brereton, J. P. (2014). *The Rigveda* (Vols. 1–3). Oxford University Press.

Jervis, R. (1976). *Perception and misperception in international politics*. Princeton University Press.

Johnson, J. T. (1999). *Morality and contemporary warfare.* Yale University Press.

Kaarbo, J., & Ray, J. L. (2011). *Global politics*. Cengage.

Kane, P. V. (1973). *History of Dharmaśāstra (Vol. 3).* Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute.

Kang, D. C. (2003). Getting Asia wrong: The need for new analytical frameworks. *International Security, 27*(4), 57–85. https://doi.org/10.1162/016228803321951090

Kant, I. (2006). *Perpetual peace*. Dover. (Original work published 1795)

Karashima, N. (2009). *South Indian history and society: Studies from inscriptions, AD 850–1800.* Oxford University Press.

Katzenstein, P. J. (1997). *Tamed power*. Cornell University Press.

Kauṭilya. (1992). *The Arthashastra* (L. N. Rangarajan, Ed. & Trans.). Penguin Books.

Kauz, R., & Rossabi, M. (2022). *The Mongols and global history.* Routledge.

Keohane, R. O. (1984). *After hegemony: Cooperation and discord in the world political economy*. Princeton University Press.

Keohane, R. O. (1998). International institutions: Can interdependence work? *Foreign Policy, 110*, 82–96. https://doi.org/10.2307/1149278

Keohane, R. O., & Nye, J. S. (1977). *Power and interdependence: World politics in transition.* Little, Brown and Company.

Keohane, R. O., & Oppenheimer, M. (2016). Paris: Beyond the climate dead end through pledge and review? *Politics and Governance,* 4(3), 142–151. https://doi.org/10.17645/pag.v4i3.634

Kennan, G. F. (1951). *American diplomacy.* University of Chicago Press.

Keynes, J. M. (1919). *The economic consequences of the peace.* Macmillan.

Lambourne, W. (2009). Transitional justice and peacebuilding after mass violence. *International Journal of Transitional Justice, 3*(1), 28–48. https://doi.org/10.1093/ijtj/ijn037

Lebow, R. N. (2003). *The tragic vision of politics.* Cambridge University Press.

Levy, J. S. (1989). The causes of war: A review of theories and evidence. In P. E. Tetlock, J. L. Husbands, R. Jervis, P. C. Stern, & C. Tilly (Eds.), *Behavior, Society, and Nuclear War* (Vol. 1, pp. 209–333). Oxford University Press.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry.* Sage.

Locke, J. (1988). *Two treatises of government.* Cambridge University Press. (Original work published 1689)

Luck, E. C. (2006). *UN Security Council: Practice and promise.* Routledge.

Machiavelli, N. (1998). *The prince.* Oxford University Press. (Original work published 1532)

MacMillan, M. (2001). *Paris 1919: Six months that changed the world.* Random House.

Majumdar, R. C. (1962). *Ancient India.* Motilal Banarsidass.

Malone, D. M. (2011). *Does the elephant dance?* Oxford University Press.

Meiser, J. W. (2017). *Introduction to international relations theory*. Oxford University Press.

Mearsheimer, J. J. (1995). The false promise of international institutions. *International Security, 19*(3), 5–49. https://doi.org/10.2307/2539078

Mearsheimer, J. J. (2001). *The tragedy of great power politics*. W. W. Norton.

Mohan, C. R. (2003). *Crossing the Rubicon: The shaping of India's new foreign policy*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Mill, J. S. (2001). *On liberty*. Batoche Books. (Original work published 1859)

Mill, J. S. (2001). *Utilitarianism*. Batoche Books. (Original work published 1863)

Morgenthau, H. J. (1948). *Politics among nations*. Knopf.

Niebuhr, R. (1932). *Moral man and immoral society*. Scribner.

Nussbaum, M. (1998). *Cultivating humanity*. Harvard University Press.

Nye, J. S. (2008). *The powers to lead*. Oxford University Press.

Olivelle, P. (1997). *The early Upanishads*. Oxford University Press.

Olivelle, P. (2005). *Manu's code of law*. Oxford University Press.

Paris, R. (2004). *At war's end: Building peace after civil conflict*. Cambridge University Press.

Parpola, A. (2015). *The roots of Hinduism*. Oxford University Press.

Pocock, J. G. A. (1975). *The Machiavellian moment*. Princeton University Press.

Rajagopalan, R. (2020). *Evasive Powers: India in the Twenty-First Century*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108921442

Rawls, J. (1971). *A theory of justice*. Harvard University Press.

Regmi, M. C. (1976). *Landownership in Nepal*. University of California Press.

Richmond, O. P. (2006). *The transformation of peace*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Rigveda: Shakala Samhita. (n.d.). *Vedic Heritage Portal*. Retrieved July 25, 2023, from https://vedicheritage.gov.in/samhitas/rigveda/shakala-samhita/

Rose, G. (1998). Neoclassical realism. *World Politics, 51*(1), 144–172.

Roberts, J. T., & Parks, B. C. (2007). *A climate of injustice: Global inequality, North –South politics, and climate policy*. MIT Press.

Ruggie, J. G. (1993). Territoriality and beyond: Problematizing modernity in international relations. International Organization, 47(1), 139–174. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818300004732

Ruggie, J. G. (2003). *Taking embedded liberalism global*. Princeton University Press.

Russett, B., & Oneal, J. (2001). *Triangulating peace*. Norton.

Said, E. W. (1978). *Orientalism*. Pantheon.

Saraswati, S. (1995). *The Vedic tradition*. Motilal Banarsidass.

Sarkar, B. K. (1919). Hindu theory of international relations. *American Political Science Review, 13*(3), 400–414. https://doi.org/10.2307/1945958

Schmidt, B. C. (2010). International relations theory. In C. Reus-Smit & D. Snidal (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of international relations* (pp. 3–20). Oxford University Press.

Sharma, P. (2021). Diaspora diplomacy: Emerging priority of Nepal's foreign policy. *Journal of Political Science, 21*, 86–99. https://doi.org/10.3126/jps.v21i0.35267

Shilliam, R. (2010). *International relations and non-Western thought*. Routledge.

Siṃha, H. N. (1992). *Ancient Indian polity*. Motilal Banarsidass.

Sinha, A., & Mohta, S. (2007). *Indian political thought*. Pearson.

Siyech, M. S. (2024, November 25). *Situating the impact of Hindutva in Nepal.* Berkley Center for Religion, Peace & World Affairs. https://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/posts/situating-the-impact-of-hindutva-in-nepal

Smith, A. (2007). *An inquiry into the nature and causes of the wealth of nations.* MetaLibri. (Original work published 1776)

Spruyt, H. (2020). *The World Imagined: Collective Beliefs and Political Order in the Sinocentric, Islamic and Southeast Asian International Societies.* Cambridge University Press.

Staal, F. (2008). *Discovering the Vedas.* Penguin.

Stein, B. (1980). *Peasant state and society in medieval South India.* Oxford University Press.

Swanson, T. (2015). *Environmental policy and governance.* Routledge.

Suzuki, S. (2009). *Civilization and empire.* Routledge.

Tansey, O. (2007). Process tracing and elite interviewing: A case for non-probability sampling. *Political Science and Politics, 40*(4), 765–772. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096507071211

Thapar, R. (1987). *Ashoka and the decline of the Mauryas.* Oxford University Press.

Thieme, P. (1960). The Aryan gods of the Mitanni treaties. *Journal of the American Oriental Society, 80*(4), 301–317.

Tickner, A. B., & Wæver, O. (2009). *International relations scholarship around the world.* Routledge.

United Nations. (1945). *Charter of the United Nations.* https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter

van de Haar, E. (2009). *Classical liberalism and international relations theory.* Palgrave.

Walt, S. M. (1987). *The origins of alliances*. Cornell University Press.

Waltz, K. N. (1959). *Man, the state, and war*. Columbia University Press.

Waltz, K. N. (1979). *Theory of international politics*. Addison-Wesley.

Walzer, M. (1977). *Just and unjust wars*. Basic Books.

Weber, M. (2018). *Economy and society*. University of California Press. (Original work published 1920)

Wendt, A. (1992). Anarchy is what states make of it: The social construction of power politics. *International Organization*, 46(2), 391–425. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818300027764

Wight, M. (1991). *International theory*. Leicester University Press.

Witzel, M. (2003). Vedas and Upanishads. In G. Flood (Ed.), *The Blackwell companion to Hinduism* (pp. 68–101). Wiley-Blackwell.

World Commission on Environment and Development. (1987). *Our common future*. Oxford University Press.

World Health Organization. (2021). *COVID-19 weekly epidemiological update*. https://www.who.int

Yajurveda: Vajasneyi Madhyandina Samhita. (n.d.). *Vedic Heritage Portal*. Retrieved July 25, 2023, from https://vedicheritage.gov.in/samhitas/yajurveda/vajasneyi-madhyandina-samhita/

Zehr, H. (2002). *The little book of restorative justice*. Good Books.