

Institutional Toxicity in Sticky Polarities

Ajeet N. Mathur

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Peace and prosperity elude parts of the world for indefinite periods. When market solutions for economic cooperation and political solutions for international relations both fail, residual agenda wrapped in institutional toxicities can persist indefinitely. This paper focuses on why institutional toxicities arise, and how they evolve to fuel intractable conflicts that become wicked problems with no expiry date. Such conflicts are characterized by sticky polarities-sticky in the sense that the bundles of toxicities become like glue as intrinsic parts of group identities. Then, 'being the other' and engaging with 'otherness' are both problematic and sticky polarities continue accumulating more toxicity through overt and covert processes. This paper enquires into the covert dynamics of some of the well-known sticky polarities to examine how passions have been unconsciously contained, released, transacted, transformed or passed on inter-generationally. The paper discusses why healing of injured group psyche is more complex than individual narcissistic injuries. The paper explores patterns of responses affecting national groups and concludes that attention to unconscious resonances in our inner worlds can trigger processes enabling engagement with disowned loss and denied grief. Thereby, we may re-discover creative ways of mourning and reparation through courage and compassion.

Keywords: Institutional Toxicity, Sticky Polarities, Group Identities, Inter-generational trauma and residues.

Introduction

Inhabitants of regions where peace and prosperity are lacking for long periods are deprived of a quality of life with safety and security that comes from law and order, opportunities for education and livelihoods, stable community governance for civil society, architecture for efficient markets, fostering representative institutions, and economic, social and cultural exchanges for collective human well-being. The international relations discourse attributes this to residues of colonial trauma, post-colonial backlogs, unresolved claims, nascent nation-hoods, human freedom deficits, cold-war patronage and its eventual evaporation, political vacuum due to deficits in democratic governance, unfulfilled economic aspirations, and historical injustices from class-caste-gender-ethnic inequities and exclusions. These were sought to be "treated" through a peace and development agenda internationally mandated with the United Nations and its associated agencies under a multilateral framework of international economic and political relations. The United Nations turned 75 in 2020. It is hard to seriously assert that 75 years is too short a period that so many festering problems of the collective human condition

noticeable in 1945 remain unresolved. This paper is a search for why intractable conflicts become wicked problems with no expiry date.

There are many unresolved intractable conflicts of long standing. Let's recall a few. Consider the Arab-Israel conflict over Palestinian rights to a homeland, refusal of reunifying Germany to accept the borders of Austria, continuing hostilities from bifurcation of the Korean Peninsula, the China-Taiwan dispute over territory ever since Mao and Chang Kai Shek went their separate ways, the Chinese annexation of Tibet and inability of Tibetan refugees in India to return home, expulsions of Rohingyas from Myanmar as part of ethnic/religious cleansing, the India-Pakistan partition and in its aftermath the dispute over Pakistan-occupied territory in Kashmir, the never-ending 'Great Game' in Afghanistan, continuing acts of inter-religious terrorism around the world, recurring inter-racial violence in U.S.A. and inter-caste tensions in South Asia. The Judeau-Christian-Islamic antagonisms that date back to the crusades were transitionally parked in Arabian containments and mandates after World-war II with creation of Sheikdoms such as Kuwait, the two invasions of Iraq and wars in Syria. There can always be specific local causes cited. However, common to them is the lurking of 'beneath the surface' phenomena with unhealed ruptures, complex fractures and residual agenda as potential flashpoints that ignite every now and then. The UN blue books offer a rich descriptive account of problems where the UN intervened but do not examine covert processes involving unconscious dynamics of groups.

Conflicts that produce ruptures and upheavals that defy healing are typically characterized by sticky polarities-sticky in the sense that bundles of institutional toxicities stick like glue as intrinsic parts of stigmatized identities of groups, comparable to mitochondrial DNA in living cells. The dictionary meanings of the word 'other' as 'one of two', 'second, alternate, different', 'remaining' (Chambers Dictionary) and 'distinct from, different from, or opposite to something or oneself' (Oxford Dictionary) provide clues to polarities of 'otherness'. 'Being the other' and engaging with 'otherness' are both problematic because stigmatized identities continue producing and accumulating toxicity through overt and covert processes with sticky polarities. The attention to overt processes in graphic detail can become a cover up if covert processes remain unexamined.

For practical reasons, in order to inquire deeply beneath the surface, and demonstrate the value of inquiries into covert unconscious dynamics, this paper focuses on institutional toxicities coalesced in sticky polarities of national groups in South Asia. About two billion people of South Asia are chronic victims whose agency has been reduced to naught by conflicts characterized by sticky polarities. The paper enquires into the covert dynamics of India's partition in 1947, the trajectory of how spoiled national identities produced spillovers for all of South Asia, and how the India-Pakistan residues

and passions have been unconsciously contained, released, transacted, transformed or passed on inter-generationally.

The structure of this paper is as follows. This introductory section is followed by a multi-disciplinary thematic literature review of concepts proposed by psychologists, psychoanalysts, socio-analysts, political scientists, sociologists, cultural anthropologists and security analysts. Then, a set of sticky polarities is examined in the succeeding sections using socio-analytic lenses. In the discussion section, an attempt is made to formulate a series of working hypotheses. The paper concludes that attention to covert dynamics by engaging in process work may enable identification of the toxic elements otherwise inseparable from collective identities of groups that perpetuate 'us versus them' dynamics. However, this is impossible unless those examining unconsciously held institutional toxicities can become aware of these and nurture the conscious wish to mobilise authority to scrape off sticky polarities. For that, leaders have to perceive themselves as moral agents in a stream of institutional immortality and continuity and be willing to take responsibility for what the poet T.S. Eliot (1934) called "*the ill that was done by those who have gone before you*" (in Choruses from the Rock).

Theoretical Discussion and Concepts

The myth of international order (Chowdhury, 2018) is part of the illusion that prevents alternatives to international governance from being seriously taken up. This is also one of the factors underpinning the preponderance of weak States. Chomsky (2007) in his analysis of failed States, cites abuse of power and assault on democracy but has no solutions.. In the 1990s, there was a surge of complex humanitarian emergencies characterised by civil-war like conditions in many countries-Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Somalia, Honduras, Afghanistan. Angola, Mozambique to mention a few. The cold war ended, USSR ceased to exist as a patron of socialist states and USA withdrew from supporting 'anti-communist' regimes. The vacuum was akin to a Grotsteinian 'beam of intense darkness' (Grotstein, 2007) because trade union countervailing power also weakened. A new world order was being created without treating residues of sticky polarities. The reified notion of leadership and the deification of heroes and villains continued as before as if it was a game with its own rules, one of which was to pretend to not see the patterns that were repeating. When pathology is encountered, there is search for what Sievers (1994) called "a convincing empiricism": for an infallible early warning signalling system as if psychic and social life are non-existent. Proving psychic existence requires recognizing what can be brought to consciousness. The personal and private side of psychic life is discernible from what Jung called 'feeling-toned complexes' and the collective unconscious discoverable through archetypes (Jung, 1933). According to Jung, "tribal lore is always sacred and dangerous" because it claims authority.

This kind of claimed authority can be applied to all imagined 'otherness'. According to Edward Said, the West created an image of the East as the 'Other' and every time a partition or split or demarcation is effected, images are created of 'others' by us and these 'others' of 'us'. (Said, 1978). Such images held as 'pictures-in-the-mind' are known to be associated with projections, introjections, transferences and counter-transferences when threats are experienced to large group identities (Turquet, 1975). For instance, the classification of tribal identities as 'Hutus' and 'Tutsis' (on the basis of cattle ownership) by colonial administrators in Belgian Congo was a mirror-image of the bi-polar French-Flemish divide between Flanders and Wallonia. When the Indian sub-continent was politically carved over the course of the twentieth century, the series of events unconsciously produced a replica of the UK in South Asia with India (like England), Pakistan (like Scotland), Bengal (like Wales), Sri Lanka (like Ireland) with even a Northern Sri Lanka problem akin to the Northern Ireland problem.

When there is something strange and bad about the identity status of a signifier, there are always signs that expose what Goffman (1963) labelled as 'stigma' of a spoiled identity. These signs may take the form of abominations, aberrations, blemishes that remind holders of spoiled identities of wrongs, injustices, forced destinies. These phenomena can be encountered in literary characters like Victor Hugo's Quasimodo or Charlotte Bronte's Heathcliff or Shrupnakha in the Indian epic Ramayana whose nose was cut off. These phenomena can also be experienced by a group, as a group and in a group where the group functions as a container and is in turn contained (Zinkin, 1989). The change from elementary forms of thinking about stigmatized individual identity to more complex forms of working with group identities requires a container. Social defences against anxiety and other emotions can provoke strong reactions (Armstrong and Rustin, 1970) and the extent to which these reactions are part of internal emotional underworlds they may be borne silently. The other side of silence is the suffering which can have a collective dimension. Leaders of movements were contained by their followers with the establishment of institutions. Jesus was contained by Christianity and Buddha (who preached self-realisation, not salvation as a blessing) is worshipped in statues. The challenge for any group is to not lose new insights nor be immediately disrupted by emergence of new insights that are yet to be processed and internalized. Containment of the new insights is important because uncontained reactions can cause new insights to be prematurely rejected if regressive spirals arise, especially when the discourse is hijacked by the need to rationally counter regressive spirals with controls. Discontinuous change with new structures of greater complexity arises when a system is far from equilibrium (Prigogine and Stengers, 1984). The capacity to proactively work with such change requires safe containment.

There are numerous ways stigmatized identities cope with or defend against anxieties and other emotions inherent in stigma. Stigmatized identities can suffer from perennial victimhood and strive for special protection and treatment (as evidenced in persecutory anxieties experienced collectively by the Jews). Another way is accepting limitations imposed by the lack, but defy its consequences (for example, Laos, vulnerable like all landlocked countries buys submarines and locates them in dams as floating restaurants). A third way is to live with the discrepancy between the actual identity and an imagined one by inventing an identity around a marker (for example, having been part of both Sweden and Russia, Finns coalesced their national identity around the Finnish language). Whereas the first of these is a social defence, the other two are collectively executed coping responses. This raises the question whether differences in responses to spoiled identities are due to the nature of emotional residues or valencies of bundles of emotional residues or both. Related to this are questions that concern why institutional toxicities and sticky polarities persist over long periods.

The Inquiry Frame and Methodology

From the foregoing discussion, here are eight questions to inquire into the phenomena of institutional toxicity in sticky polarities:

- Q.1 What dynamics of ‘otherness’ produce sticky polarities?
- Q.2 Why are sticky polarities magnets for toxicity?
- Q.3 How do institutional toxicities become susceptible to perverse incentives?
- Q.4 When does large scale ‘organized irresponsibility’ border on the criminal?
- Q.5 Why do groups that profess rational choice and a calculable future not do much to mitigate institutional toxicity that harms them?
- Q.6 Why do poor countries incur huge defence expenditures when investing a fraction for peace could avoid the need for that?
- Q.7 Why are toxic residues so easily communicated inter-generationally?
- Q.8 Are passions around spoiled group identities pathological or evil?

Since we are concerned with covert phenomena which does not show up as data, we can rely on hermeneutic methodologies by interrogating the set of actors involved through their own narratives available in the public domain socio-analytic lenses to discern patterns and raise working hypotheses (Long, 2013). Groups experiencing threats to their identities also regress into noticeable “basic assumption” functioning (Bion, 1961; 1977).

More basic assumption states, any of which can be symptomatic of non-task behaviour in a group, were discovered later (Mathur, 2009;2020; Chattopadhyay, 2018). Information is drawn from historical narratives, published records by those who participated in various events including historians, political scientists, educators, political leaders, journalists, intelligence specialists, scholars, diplomats, civil servants, military officials and the media.

South Asia's Toxic Residues and Sticky Polarities

One of the most dangerous simmering hotspots in the world is South Asia. Two nuclear powers, India and Pakistan, have been unabatedly engaged in an intractable conflict for about 75 years. In Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, internal strife around vengeance and leadership contestations recurs with alarming regularity while unsettled residues from their civil wars linger. In Nepal, after a decade of armed insurgency, many group identities have been legitimized as governance authorities but costs of implementing the world's newest Constitution are yet to be resourced and a fresh crisis erupted in 2021. The Rohingya refugee crisis from Myanmar expelling muslims, violence against beef-eaters by fanatics in the name of cow protection and discrimination against women entering places of worship in India are poignant reminders how politics of exclusion and hatred can be perpetrated against group identities. The Himalayan kingdoms of Tibet, Bhutan, Sikkim and Nepal were principalities known for peace, pilgrimage, trade and travel became hotbeds of cross-border interest and intrigue mainly after the emergence of India in 1947 and Red China in 1949. Afghanistan became part of 'the Great Game' in the 18th Century and yet another civil war broke out in 2021. North-East frontiers of India inhabited by tribes, never part of any empire spawned their own animosities into polarities (such as Kuki versus Meitei etc). In the East, beyond Bengal were Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam with their own governance systems and cultural contact with India. To the South, Sri Lanka, then known as Ceylon received attention from the Portugese, the Danish, the Dutch, the French and the British as had South India. All have post-colonial residues.

The most important sticky polarities of South Asia concern India and Pakistan. Neither country existed as a political entity in its present form until 1947. Nehru titled his book 'Discovery of India' but 'India' as a nation-state was an invention which cost lives and bloodshed when formed. The further partition of Pakistan in 1971 reinforced the continuing saga of hating the 'otherness' sought to be split off. That remains ingrained over generations. India and Pakistan fought four major wars (1947, 1965, 1971, 1999) besides border skirmishes almost all the time. The historical genesis of this pair of sticky polarities requires understanding.

Pakistan traces its history to the Arab invasion of Sindh in 712 CE. India as 'Bharat', the real name of India, had been around since the time of the epic Ramayana and Mahabharata and the Indus Valley Civilization. Winston Churchill famously noted that "*India was no more a single country than the Equator*". The word 'Hindu' was coined to refer to people inhabiting a territory by the Sindhu river (with 's' being pronounced as 'h'). 'Hindu' is not a religious term. Until Islam's first brush with India in the 8th Century CE, faiths in the 'Indian' sub-continent were Jainism, Buddhism, Christianity and the strands of what we now call 'Hinduism' represented atheism, agnosticism, devi worship. Theistic strands of Shaivites originated from Kashmiri Shaivism formalized in monastic traditions by Adi Shankaracharya, and of Vaishnavites from the Adi Sampradaya in the Eastern Himalayas. Islam was different from the philosophical basis of pluralist doctrines and diversity of faiths it competed with.. Muslims ridiculed pantheistic beliefs and questioned the social structure (the 4 'varnas' later ossified into castes). With the arrival of Muslims assimilated into India, conservatives developed a storyline that 'foreigners invaded a place of unparalleled glory' (Tharoor, 2018). In contrast, Christians, Jews and Parsis who arrived earlier were welcomed as guests, business professionals, traders. Yet, syncretism, remained the dominant ethic in India.

Following Disraeli's '*divide et impera*' speech, Bengal was the first to be partitioned into East Bengal and West Bengal. The Muslim League was created to protect muslim religious and cultural identity. Yet Jinnah (hardly a devout muslim) advised Gandhiji not to encourage the fanaticism of muslim religious leaders. The demand for self-government submitted to the British in 1916 was a joint action of the Muslim League and the Congress parties. The demand for beef by the British living in India during the colonial period required British patronage of Muslim butchers making 'cow-slaughter' a divisive issue.

Northwest India was strategically important for British interests in the Persian Gulf and West Asia. The British colonial theorist James Mill proposed demographic partition of Hindus and Muslims. The idea of splitting off a territorial partitioning of Pakistan from India did not arise until 1940 at the Lahore Convention of the Muslim League, two years after Nehru rejected Jinnah's proposal for a coalition of Muslim League and Congress. Some historians claim that Jinnah raised 'partition' only as a bargaining ploy. Jinnah's 1947 speech talked of a plural society. The transfer of power documents released by UK in 1983 show that Jinnah was against partition and it was the Congress that insisted on the partition (Jalal, 1994; Seervai, 2016). A game with a pretence of Hindu-Muslim polarities was played by the political leadership (Lohia, 1960). In the secret part of his journal posthumously published in 1983, Maulana Azad confirmed this. Naqvi (2016) raises the pertinent question why Maulana Azad did not protest and resign from the

Congress party and remained the token Muslim fig-leaf for the Congress to claim secularism in an imagined Hindu-Muslim divide. In 1907, the British had sown the seeds of distrust by operating electoral constituencies on the basis of a political divide along religious lines with Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs being allowed to contest elections for seats assigned within their religious groups. Until 1916, the Lucknow Pact signified national unity cutting across religious divides but the possibility of secular national identity was jeopardized when religion, language and ethnicity became the incendiary tools around which political mobilization layered over weak and fractured social identities. In a curious omission of the 'other', Nehru made no reference to partition or to Pakistan in his famous 'tryst with destiny' speech when the Union Jack was replaced by the Indian flag on 15th August 1947. The splitting of the other was pushed to the deep recesses of the unconscious.

A widely published photograph of the period shows Viceroy Mountbatten seated around a table with Indian leaders Nehru, Patel, Jinnah with a fifth figure wrongly captioned as one of the Maharajas representing the Chamber of Princes. The fifth person is actually Impey who became the Founding Head of NATO. Since the military was headed by British Generals on both sides of the Indo-Pak border, there is reason to wonder what made the new border so insecure? Secret deals of the kind Peretti (2017) revealed have a long history of betrayals on the Indian sub-continent going back to Mir Jafar in the Battle of Plassey. The Jungian collective archetypes are vividly narrated in the roles of Shakuni and Duryodhana in the Mahabharata even before that. The first working hypothesis can be formulated as:

Working Hypothesis 1

Playing the game that 'polarities exist and are naturally sticky' protects personal interests and reinforces the belief of progress from mythos to logos somewhere in the distant past that is to be left behind with only steps forward considered.

The creation of the Hindu-Muslim sticky polarity in its territorial 'avatar' as an India-Pakistan polarity fuelled mistrust. There was police action in Junagadh and military intervention in Hyderabad to persuade Muslim rulers to join the Union of India. In Hyderabad, where the Nizam desired autonomy, the justification offered was that Hyderabad was a Hindu majority State. In Kashmir, a Muslim majority state, the Hindu Ruler retained his independence until Pakistan tried to forcibly occupy Kashmir. The third grievous matter was the violence that erupted because of the delay in announcing the Radcliffe Boundary Demarcation Award that compelled populations to cross borders at short notice under conditions of panic when anxieties had already begun to coalesce as hatred of the 'other'. Naqvi (2016) notes that the Government did not make adequate

arrangements for protection of Muslims in Delhi. The myths that bringing forward the date for Indian independence from June 1948 to 15th August 1947 was welcome, and that partition was desired only by the 'muslim others' or ambitious Hindu politicians like Nehru have remained alive. Since the first Hindu-Muslim riots following partition, there have been many such riots and they all show up common sequential features (from enquiry reports): rumours about impending attack from the "other"; defensive mobilization of weapons; fake news based on rumours that people or their religious sentiments have been attacked; mob fury.

Tomes have been written on Kashmir on what made it ungovernable (Wani, 2019). The festering Kashmir problem has its origins in the juxtaposition of three strands. First, the unconscious wishes of a minority's hatred targeting Muslims from Jammu and Poonch. Secondly, the invasion on 26th October 1947 by a non-uniformed militia of Pathan tribesmen (supported by Pakistan) to take Jammu & Kashmir by force in retaliation after rumours about muslim killings in Jammu and Poonch when the Hindu Ruler lacked a defence force except for ceremonial guards. Third, the accession by the Ruler of Kashmir to India after a third of Kashmir had already been lost to the invaders to secure Indian defence forces to push out the invaders. All sides committed to a plebiscite after troops would vacate occupied territories. The stalemate persists. In India's view, the Kashmir dispute can only be bilaterally discussed and resolved as enshrined in the India-Pakistan Simla agreement of 1972. The pre-1972 question of a plebiscite had Pakistani forces withdrawn from the ceasefire-set line of control in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK) to the international border is moot. The myth of Pakistan is that the word Pakistan already has 'K' in it which stands for Kashmir and that this is the main or only dispute with India. The myth of India is that Jammu & Kashmir is an integral part of India because the Ruler acceded the whole of it to India and that Kashmiris have been pampered by being granted special status with rights and prerogatives only available to Kashmiris. The removal of Articles 370 and 35A in India's Constitution that accorded special status to Jammu & Kashmir in August 2019 was welcomed across the political spectrum in India. Hindu minorities have residual issues because Kashmiri pandits had been driven out of Kashmir Valley and there is a perception that the local populace harbours terrorists because of the ease and alarming frequency with which attacks targeting security forces occur. Meanwhile, China built a road through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir to connect China with Pakistan. So there is also a contestable Chinese myth that China has a stake in Gilgit because Buddhist Ladakh is culturally similar to Tibet!

More myths got created. When Pakistan refused to honour election results that required appointing an East Pakistani Leader Mujibur Rehman of the Awami League, with the largest number of seats in Parliament as Prime Minister, people of East Pakistan

revolted. They recalled social, economic and political injustices including attempt to impose Urdu as Pakistan's national language on Bengalis (Hindus and Muslims) in East Pakistan whose primary identity was as Bengali first. This sparked a secessionist insurgency, military atrocities and ten million people crossed the border into India as refugees. India supported the guerilla force 'Mukti Bahini' in its armed struggle that created Bangladesh. Pakistan tried to pay back India in the same coin by supporting the Khalistan insurgency in the Punjab in the 1980s. And a few years later, when the Balochis in Pakistan's Balochistan revolted, Pakistan blamed the Indian intelligence agencies for fomenting the unrest. The mutual suspicion that the 'Deep State' comprising intelligence agencies and the military industrial complex can scuttle political dialogues for bilateral peace is one of the enduring myths in the India-Pakistan interface that refuses to wash away. This leads us to the second working hypothesis.

Working Hypothesis 2

To enable followership to remain committed to myths and fueling of institutional toxicities for preserving a sense of 'us' in relating to feared and hated 'otherness', leaders dutifully reinforce sticky polarities.

The destruction of Babri Masjid on 6th December 1993 by fanatics demanding a Rama Temple there on grounds that a temple predated the mosque there made muslims wonder whether they were safe and reflect on injustices, under-representations, inequities, and exclusions. What the crusades under Saladin had achieved became a quest for militant muslim groups to rally around and infiltrate weapons and armed insurgents in a spirit of retaliation. 'Tit-for-tat' moves by Pakistan followed in Kashmir, Siachen, Kargil, Delhi and Mumbai. Within five years, both India and Pakistan had accumulated nuclear arsenals and carried out nuclear weapons testing. There was an arms drop in Purulia and the perpetrator escaped and found sanctuary in Denmark. Then came the hijacking of an Indian Airlines aircraft IC-814 on a flight from Kathmandu to Delhi where the pilot was forced to fly the aircraft to Kandahar in Afghanistan in December 1999 which marked a turning point. India's capitulation to the demand of terrorist groups enjoying Pakistani patronage led to release from prison of five terrorists including Masood Azhar (eventually declared a terrorist by the UN in May 2019) in exchange for passengers who were hostages on the hijacked aircraft. The US Sky Marshals could have intervened when the hijacked plane stopped for refuelling but didn't. These released terrorists remained safely in Pakistan and continued their terrorist acts far and wide magnifying India-Pakistan toxicities and strengthening the sticky polarities. Masood Azhar was one of the leaders who plotted and executed 9/11 in U.S.A. within two years of being so released. Organized irresponsibility had escalated which enables us formulate the third working hypothesis:

Working Hypothesis 3

Organised irresponsibility can collectively generate streams of actions and consequences that are unconsciously wished which nobody would admit to desiring consciously.

Pakistan's role in promoting the Taliban Mujahideen in Afghanistan with American support to push back Soviet troops eventually boomeranged. Ten years after Operation Desert Storm of 1991, the humiliated muslim world retaliated against USA in the 9/11 attacks. The Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters harboured the 9/11 mastermind Osama Bin Laden in Afghanistan and later in the Pakistani Army Cantonment of Abbotabad where he was eventually found. Pakistan was pushed by the anglo-american coalition of the willing to join the second war against Iraq in 2003 (the chase for weapons of mass destruction never found). But Pakistan didn't withdraw its support to terrorist groups that were engaged in cross-border terrorist acts in India since 1989 when the Mujahideen drove out Soviet troops from Kabul and became available for other misadventures.

In 2001, the attacks on the Indian Parliament and in 2008, the attacks in Mumbai by an armed group that arrived from Karachi added to the India-Pakistan toxicities and showed up the sticky polarities as unrelenting. Polarised groups can lose the desire for healthy engagement with other groups because they have lost so much that there doesn't seem much more to lose and they also have so much repeated experience of dealing with hatred that they unconsciously underestimate new horizons of hope while placing reliance on what they consider rational choices for calculable futures. These two phenomena are connected. There is a paradox here which can be presented as a working hypothesis:

Working Hypothesis 4

For a group to unconsciously underestimate its wishes, hopes and fears it must consciously foster belief in rational choice and a calculable future

By so doing, a group may unconsciously render dialogue between the voices in sticky polarities impossible or formalize it as a ritual 'dialogue of the deaf' acting out the basic assumption of Emptiness (Mathur, 2009). There is no dearth of attempts by the political leadership in India and Pakistan to reach out to each other through official dialogues and Track-II diplomacy. There have also been bold unilateral and bilateral initiatives. But defence expenditures continue to rise.

It is strange that the unending spiral of toxicities, animosities and sticky polarities in the India-Pakistan interface has not come in the way of continuing engagement akin to the love and hate that co-exist in estranged couple relationships rendering reconciliation unlikely but separation, disentanglement and parting also difficult. Whenever Indians and Pakistanis come across each other they generally relate warmly, not as enemies. There

is angst about the state of bilateral relations because it is intriguing that lurking toxicities defy dissolving and polarities are sticky. Peaceniks exchange messages on social media; diplomats and politicians converse with their counterparts; sportspersons share informal chats; government officials adopt improvements in bureaucratic procedures of the other side without reservations; and the military commanders and spy-chiefs also meet and talk and even co-author books together (Dulat, Durrani and Sinha, 2018). These interactions reveal the covert dynamics beneath the surface.

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan, a former sportsman invited contemporaries from his cricketing years to his inauguration function. Navjot Singh Sidhu, an Indian batsman to whom Imran had bowled on numerous occasions turned up. For this, Siddhu was criticized in India. But Siddhu's going there and the Pakistan Army Chief General Bajwa warmly hugging him led to a conversation whereby one of the Sikh shrines a few kilometres inside Pakistan got opened to visitors from India by creating a special visa-free corridor. That all this was happening alongside news of border skirmishes and casualties of Indian army personnel in Pakistani bombardments would make anyone shudder in dismay at the contradictions encountered in India-Pakistan interfaces.

To quote Dulat, former Spy-Chief of India's Research and Analysis Wing (RAW):

"Who knows, if a madman was in control we could all still be blown to kingdom come, in revenge for 1971 or even 1947" (Dulat, Durrani and Sinha, 2018).

The above remark brings to mind the adage that cannons should not be used to shoot squirrels. According to Durrani, former Spy-Chief of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), chain reactions out of proportion can get triggered if the choice of force is wrong or if the means used are inappropriate (Durrani in Dulat, Durrani and Sinha, 2018, p.27). Durrani cites the example of dealing with a hostage crisis in the Lal Masjid episode in Pakistan. The elite special forces, Rangers were sent in. The Rangers burnt down the place and hundreds of women and children were killed along with the terrorists that were holed up. A couple of weeks later a police officer whom Durrani met in the marketplace chided him and said: '*General Saheb, ek SHO da kaam si, tussi saari fauj lekar utthe pahunch gaye?*' (Respected General, the local Police Officer could have handled it tactfully, why did you take the army there?). The risk is that when trained military and para-military forces exist with modern weaponry, the temptation to deploy them is high. The more the weaponry and higher the expenditure, greater is the false sense of security from the willingness to deploy it. This aspect of defence against thanatos anxiety can be expressed as the fifth working hypothesis.

Working Hypothesis 5

Defence expenditures can feed institutional toxicities and ignite sticky polarities as symbols of power in a denial of death and the promise of immortality

Discussion

We now revisit the questions with the aid of these five working hypotheses, for consolidating the insights. From Working Hypothesis 1, it seems that ‘otherness’ can be discovered but also invented and nurtured as baggage. Since unconscious group transferences play a part, it is impossible to resolve this through rational inter-personal problem-solving discussions because basic mistrust is not dissolved. The intuitive ‘contact hypothesis’ that mistrust reduces when parties harbouring sticky polarities meet and talk, is belied by the counter-intuitive finding that polarities are not mitigated by contact and inter-group mistrust has a high propensity to turn violent (Mathur, 2007). Once ‘otherness’ has been castigated, derided and contrasted with fantasies of glorified spoiled identities, there is no limit to what injuries and insults can be heaped on the polarities because unconsciously the group justification is anchored in a basic assumption ‘ba Purity’ where the belief ‘we are pure, the other is rotten to the core’ provides fuel for more toxicity. The British ‘divide and rule’ policy found the taboos against beef and pork convenient but the illusory divisions kept producing new sources of divisions, disagreements and conflicts without the possibility to reflect on how an unconscious basic assumption was driving the polarities to remain adversarial. Once defence expenditures, budgets for large secret services, patriotic rhetoric for winning elections have been mobilized around destructive envy and hatred, there are too many perverse incentives that keep such a circus in motion. Recall Working Hypothesis 2. Large scale ‘organized irresponsibility’ is produced by the basic assumption ba Bravado (Mathur, 2009). The same sense of bravado that drove Don Quixote (with support from Sancho Panza) has afflicted military dictators and elected political leaders alike. Surgical strikes are rationalisations for the bravado while acts out of envy and hatred to harm the other continue unabated. Recall Working Hypothesis 3.

It is noteworthy that every political leader, be they elected leaders like Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Nawaz Sharif, Asif Zardari or Benazir Bhutto or Imran Khan or military dictators, attempted rational bilateral dialogue with India and failed. Every political leader from Nehru (who “almost” reached an agreement with Pakistan in 1964 when he sent Sheikh Abdullah as his emissary), to Shastri (who signed the Tashkent Accord in 1965) to Indira Gandhi (who negotiated the Simla Agreement in 1972) to Vajpayee (who “almost” undid the partition with Musharraf at the Agra summit in 2002) to Manmohan Singh (who wanted to make borders irrelevant) have consciously tried rational initiatives including

confidence building measures like starting a bus service, restarting train services, opening up trade etc. But conscious intent is insufficient to counter unconscious processes. The missing piece is the attention required to the unconscious processes. Working Hypothesis 4 comes to mind.

The trauma of 18 million lives lost in the forced partition of India and Pakistan in 1947 was so severe that it keeps resonating. The territorial boundary was drawn by Radcliffe who admitted in a 1971 interview with Journalist Kuldip Nayyar that the boundary on the West of India should have been the Chenab river but political compulsions made him divide the Punjab and give Lahore to Pakistan by drawing the boundary at the Ravi River on grounds that without Lahore in Pakistan, there wouldn't be any city in West Pakistan except for the port town of Karachi. It is remarkable that Jinnah, Pakistan's political leader of that time had urged Radcliffe not to divide the Punjab and Bengal regardless of whether these went to India or Pakistan. Radcliffe's Boundary Award was not made known by the Viceroy before the partition and created confusion as to where the boundary had been drawn until several days after 14th August 1947. Residents of Gurdaspur raised the Pakistan flag in the genuine belief that Gurdaspur district was in Pakistan but it had been given to India because without Gurdaspur, India would not have had any contiguous territory with Kashmir. Members that identify with large groups maintain, protect, and repair their group identity through a 'chosen trauma' as one component of this identity (Volkan, 2001). When a large group regresses, its chosen trauma gets reactivated to support the group's threatened identity.

Working Hypothesis 5 is worth recapitulating here. It seems that traumatised groups have stigmatized identities and have suffered narcissistic injuries that are not easily repaired because they are inter-generationally transmitted to keep alive hopes for revenge, and associated fears of retribution as 'pictures-in-the-mind' on both sides of the divide accentuating the stickiness of polarities. Once toxic residues are part of stories, legends and myths they infiltrate the belief systems that drive national agendas and uphold national identities. They are easily transmitted inter-generationally because there is living memory of trauma, pains, losses in every generation and children grow up exposed to what burdens they would carry as adults from imprints and inclusions in education systems, folklore and media bombardments. The pains of partition could not be dealt with even when the generation that experienced the partition is almost gone. The basket of animosities is continuously replenished. It would require a conscious effort on the part of policy-makers, educators and parents to withhold reinforcing hatred. Communist China has been able to do that. The school history books in China make no mention of China's war with India in 1962. In contrast, heroism in the India-Pakistan encounters is ceremoniously immortalized by media and in films and there are constant

reminders of how invasions have occurred, how injustices have been suffered; finding reasons to continue hating each other.

Three basic assumptions that nurture spoiled group identities in the India-Pakistan interface have been identified: *ba Purity* (Chattopadhyay, 2018), *ba Emptiness* and *ba Bravado* (Mathur, 2009). These need attention before healing processes would have a chance to succeed. Getting around *ba Purity* would entail high tolerance for differences between people who adhere to different faiths without considering the other as dirty/filthy because of different taste for foods, and different cultural and spiritual sources of nourishment. Escaping from *ba Bravado* would require resisting the urge to fight windmills, and develop capacities to move from 'us' versus 'them' to a new horizon of 'we' together. Combating *ba Emptiness* would entail co-creating jointly reflections and actions within action-research frames for interpretations and containment.

Conclusions

It would be pretentious to claim that any overarching conceptual framework can explain institutional toxicity in sticky polarities in our current state of understanding. Large group relations are not social relations and political related-ness cannot be understood when 'splitting', 'projective identification', 'stigmatized identities', 'perennial victimhood' and 'persecutory anxieties' are inter-generationally reinforced by chosen trauma. The psychic reality of large-group relations requires more emphasis on 'psyche' than 'psycho' and the attempt to simplify complex phenomena through psycho-analytic notions will fail when socio-analysis and political related-ness represent two missing dimensions of the trine. Particularity is always about the unique amalgam specific to polarities, place, and processes. The particular and the universal can speak to each other in myriad ways. The work on psycho-social frameworks is in its infancy and there is a need for introducing Olsonian notions into socio-analytic frameworks for understanding why Volkanian (Volcan 2001) concepts have not produced solutions. Rather, we can hardly speak from successes and would be better informed if we try to understand failures and persisting toxicities that have become sticky polarities. It is the depressive position we should seek to work from than to make claims that governance innovations are booming. The pretense of knowing needs substituting by deeper inquiries into institutional toxicity in sticky polarities. Apartheid and its dismantling processes provide important clues.

In the South Asian experience, the currents and cross-currents lurk beneath the surface in four ways: (1) as enactments of unconscious national group transferences and counter-transferences; (2) as wishes and fantasies for conversations about untreated trauma, unmourned grief, unresolved envy, and splitting around *ba Purity*, *ba Emptiness* and *ba Bravado*; (3) in paralyzing actions for healing fractured and fragile identities for

want of containment; and, (4) by reinforcements to unconsciously held 'pictures-in-the-mind' that followers project into their leadership in support of psychopathic behavior. This leaves gaps between what is wished and what is espoused, and also between what is espoused and what is enacted. The insights into how fractures in group identities originated in flashpoints and critical turning points that preceded decolonization and which got accentuated by the partition in 1947 show how values, beliefs, norms and attitudes have played a part in adding to the toxicity and sticky polarities.

The healing of injured group psyches bubbling and overflowing with toxicity is more complex than individual narcissistic injuries because sticky polarities serve to highlight existential imperatives. The attention to unconscious resonances in our inner worlds is necessary to trigger processes that could enable engagement with acceptance of disowned loss and denied grief and thereby re-discover creative ways of mourning and reparation through courage and compassion. If rational choices for military, political, social and economic agendas could lead international political discourses, the pursuit of the peace and prosperity dividend in South Asia would be driving the agenda. Despite limited resources (even to fight a conventional war) and the immanent risk of nuclear war, neither the political leadership nor the followership has the wherewithal to mitigate residual toxicities because sticky polarities are anchored in historically spoiled identities.

The working hypotheses discussed point to psychic processes that have disabled the capacities of India and Pakistan to free themselves from institutional toxicities and sticky polarities that keep them destructively interlocked with each other. Based on the theory of the aesthetic experience (Gadamer, 1960), the ability to let knowledge be affected by a process requires acknowledgement that aesthetic experience is a form of knowing and what Priel (2006) called "the transitional and paradoxical character of aesthetic authority within a transformational dialogue" can produce inter-subjectively generated meaning that can exist in its own realm. Whether it would do so as powerful temporary fiction or as an enduring reality that establishes new equilibria for inter-group encounters depends on how 'transitional authority' (Winnicott, 1953) is used. The Good Friday Agreement in Ireland represented one such moment to celebrate a victory over mistrust but the elusive search for an acceptable Irish backstop after Brexit is a reminder of the institutional toxicities and sticky polarities there. The President Musharaf-Prime Minister Vajpayee summit fiasco at Agra represented another such moment of lost opportunities that made both leaders look like Don Quixotes being manipulated by puppeteers. The two leaders had actually agreed on how to undo the partition and make borders irrelevant by establishing a Joint Commission on Economic and Political Governance to work out the details. Yet, hardliners on both sides failed to agree on a common "text" for the Agra Declaration which left both leaders non-plussed and embarrassed when a summit failure had to be witnessed instead.

The explored patterns of how phenomenal dualities affect national groups point to the need for deepening further studies to enrich the psyche-analytic and socio-analytic study of institutions with more process work and attention to unconscious resonances in our inner worlds. Attention to such resonances can trigger new processes. If these processes can be contained they could enable us re-discover what has been lost or misplaced and grieve over it, and with courage and compassion find ways of reparation. But the capacity to proactively work for such change requires safe containment of toxicities and their mitigation. Inspiring belief that a bridge can exist at a time when no bridge exists can be the first step. One might say in the words of Saadat Hasan Manto, who pointed to the horizon where the sea and sky are joined, and remarked, “It is only an illusion because they can’t really meet, but isn’t it beautiful, this union which isn’t really there”. Liddell-Hart’s strategy of expanding torrents is worth recapitulating. If we start little streams and others join in, the whole thing expands. But if the belief is that only the paranoid survive, everyone may die prematurely.

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End notes

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3. Address for correspondence: Email: anmathur@iima.ac.in

Biographical Note

Ajeet N. Mathur, Ph.D., is a member of the Board of the International Society for the Psychoanalytic Study of Organisations with many years of experience in academia, with businesses, governments, international organisations, not-for-profit organisations and the policy research community. He consults to leaders and their teams on strategy, transformative leadership, and creative collaboration for change management. He is Professor Emeritus, NDIM and was Professor at IIMs Ahmedabad and Calcutta, and the EU-Tempus Professor of European Integration and Internationalisation. He received his Ph.D. Degree from Indian Institute of Science Bangalore and has held visiting academic appointments at K.U.Leuven, University of California at Berkeley, Aalto University and Tampere University, among others. His publications include more than thirty books and over one hundred and sixty papers in scientific journals and anthologies. He is one of the authors of the International Encyclopaedia of Laws. He is an Affiliate Life Member of the Indian Psychoanalytic Society, and an accredited Yoga Shikshak and Karma Sannyasin of the Bihar School of Yoga. He chaired the Centre for Gender Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity for five years. He is on the Staff of Group Relations Conferences since 1983 and has directed Group Relations Conferences in Europe and India. He also hosts harmony sensing matrices for social dreaming. He was a Senior Fulbright Fellow and a Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Scholar. He has been a member of the Board of Directors with Corporates in India and Europe. He served as Director and CEO of the Institute of Applied Manpower Research with the rank of Secretary to the Government of India. He has been on the Board of Directors with Corporates in India and Europe and with the School of Inter-disciplinary Studies, IGNOU. He is recipient of several national and international honours and awards. He can be reached at: anmathur@iima.ac.in.