
“Love Jihad” and the stereotypes of Muslims in Hindu nationalism

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Abstract: *This article analyses the recent Hindu nationalist discourse on “Love Jihad”. The primary sources were both of visual form, including posters and photographs posted on the Internet and of textual form, including Internet posts and other Hindu nationalist publications. The main analysed source will be the “Anti Love Jihaad Helpline”, a website of Anti Love Jihaad Front, an organisation that admits its affiliation to the Hindu Mahasabha, India’s oldest Hindu nationalist party. The main argument of the text will be that while the whole issue of Love Jihad fits well within the main ideas and stereotypes of the Hindu nationalist movement, as well as within certain strategies of classical Sanskrit narratives, the recent discourse on Love Jihad introduces certain new elements. Firstly, while through the controversy on Love Jihad Hindu nationalism strikes at two of its enemies: Western “corrupt” ways and Muslim “radical” ways, it deftly blends them together. As it is the Westernised Hindu girls that fall prey to Muslim boys that pretend to be Westernised, it is the threat of corrupt Western culture that opens the way for the threat of radical Muslim culture. Secondly, the same discourse in fact also treats the Western “corrupt” ways as somehow better than Muslim customs, as they Western customs at least give them more freedom, though the same freedom is denied to Hindu girls. Thirdly, Hindu nationalism in fact seeks to create the Hindu copy of Love Jihad, in a strategy once referred to by Ch. Jaffrelot as “stigmatisation and emulation”.*

Key Words: *Love Jihad, Hindu nationalism, Hindu Mahasabha, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh*

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1. Introduction

This article seeks to analyse the recent Hindu nationalist discourse on what came to be called “Love Jihad”. The primary sources were both of visual form, including posters and photographs posted on the Internet and of textual form, including Internet posts and other Hindu nationalist publications. The sources were analysed through the lens of cognitive linguistics. The metaphors recreated with the tools of such methodology should be treated as internal to the discourse of the Anti Love Jihaad Front, that is not necessarily functioning outside of it, unless stated otherwise. I should also add that recreating the metaphors used in the Hindu nationalist discourse is not a new idea, as it was applied by Christiane Brosius (2005). However, as far as I know, the recent discourse on Love Jihad was not approached in such a way. The secondary sources include primarily texts on Hindu nationalism and on portraying of women in Indian politics. These were partially collected during my Hankuk University of Foreign Studies-funded research in Delhi in December 2014 and January 2015. The main analysed source will be the “Anti Love Jihaad Helpline”, a website run mostly in Hindi by the Anti Love Jihaad Front (ALJH), an organisation that admits its affiliation to the Hindu Mahasabha, India’s oldest (though since long politically rather unimportant) Hindu nationalist party. The other Hindu nationalists sources will serve as a comparison, to show whether the same points and rhetoric are used by other Hindu nationalists organisations.

Having analysed these sources, the main argument of the text will be that while the whole issue of Love Jihad fits well within the main ideas

and stereotypes of the Hindu nationalist movement, as well as within the strategies of classical Sanskrit narratives, the recent discourse on Love Jihad introduces certain new elements which are worth consideration. Firstly, the Anti Love Jihaad Front shifts the focus from alleged Muslim bigotry, that is from the ideological aspect, to the image of Muslims as half-wild. In another words, the Muslims are portrayed here not as having wrong, radical culture, but as having no true culture at all. Secondly, through the controversy on Live Jihad Hindu nationalism strikes at two of its enemies: Western “corrupt” ways and Muslim “radical” ways, deftly blending them together. Hence, the title of the article can be read in two ways: the Muslims are said to play a liberal game, that is pretend to be liberal in Western style, to get access to their liberal game, that is their prey that the Westernised Hindu girls are bound to become. This bring to the fore the importance of tradition and a split approach of Hindu nationalists toward it, since on one hand they call for a reform on the society, and on the other present themselves as the keepers of the tradition. To find a typological solution to this puzzle, I follow Gellner’s definition of conservatism as focused on traditions and of nationalism as focused on communities. Thirdly, the same Hindu nationalist discourse reveals also a dichotomy in how it treats the Western “corrupt” ways, as they are a threat to Hindu traditions but for the Muslims they are still considered a better option than autocratic Islamic customs. Fourthly, the whole campaign in fact seeks to create the Hindu copy of Love Jihad, in a strategy once referred to by Ch. Jaffrelot as “stigmatisation and emulation”.

In her work on images created by Hindu nationalism and spread by Jain Studios, Christiane Brosius (2005: 3) refers, among others, to the conclusion of Stuart Hall that “representation does not *re-present* a meaning that is already there and static. [...] representation is a signifying practice within a particular discourse that constitutes reality, and thus identity, in *statu procendi*”. Through such representations, Brosius (2005: 56) later adds, the RSS, the biggest Hindu nationalist organisation “attempted to create images and metaphors or nationality so that a primordial essence would be conveyed”. The same conclusions, in my opinion, can be applied to the ALJF discourse on Love Jihad. They also

partially justify this article’s structure as well. The first part of the article serves the introductory role. It explains the idea of “Love Jihad” and puts it in a broader perspective of Hindu nationalist views of Muslims. The second part quotes from the primary sources to recreate the basic elements and metaphors (or “representations”) that build the image of Muslim “Love Jihadis” and their prey, the Hindu women. The third and concluding section of the article ponders on how this set of images are used in the process of identity building.

I am using the standard IAST transcription to quote from Hindi or Sanskrit. While two spellings of Love Jihad appear in the Hindu nationalist discourse – *lav jihād* or *lav jehād* – I opted for the first one while writing in English (hence Love Jihad, not Jihad). While I write “Jihad”, the spelling changes to “Jihaad” when referring to an established name of an institution or a front (hence Anti Love Jihaad Front and Helpline).

2. Definition of “Love Jihad”

In short, “Love Jihad” is an alleged scheme through which Muslim men, pretending to be liberal, often at first hiding their religion and using contemporary seduction tactics, lure non-Muslim women into marriage and then force them to convert, give birth to many childrenⁱⁱ, educate them according to the precepts of Islam and generally live a wasted life. In India, at present, “Love Jihad” is a term most often uttered by Hindu nationalists, although some other people, including certain representatives of the Christian communities, have also used it. Hindu nationalists regard Love Jihad as a “new tool to islamization of Bharat [India]” (ALJH 27.10.2014).

While the term “Love Jihad” is not a particularly old one, as a part of a more general view of the Muslims it can be traced to the very origins of Hindu nationalism. It may be argued that it partially comes from deep, psychological and sociological sources that may be considered pre-colonial. It has been often argued that Hindu nationalism construes the

Muslim as the Other: the reverse image of a proper human whose activities threaten the mores of humanity. In fact, as we shall see throughout the second section of this article, the way Muslims are shown in this discourse resembles very closely the technique of demonizing other communities in ancient Sanskrit texts. The Muslims, just like Rakshasas and other monsters of the epics, are portrayed as living an animal-like life, refusing to accept the more advanced solutions of the Hindus and all the time trying to attack the civilized society and steal its daughters. These constructions are based on presumptions that are shared not only by the Hindu nationalists and in some cases had been in circulation, in one or other form, before Hindu nationalism even came into being as a political movement. It has been also pointed out that it is often believed by Hindus that a *bhūt*, a ghost that can enter one's body, is a Muslim. While the Hindu nationalists are not referring to this particular beliefⁱⁱⁱ, possibly due to its otherworldly and politically indifferent nature, they have always been drawing upon precolonial images of the Other in India, comparing Muslims to demons (*rākṣas*, *asura*, etc.) or foreigners as described in classical Sanskrit texts (*mleccha*, *yavana*) (Sharma 2009: 155-169).^{iv}

Other sources of the anti-Love Jihad scare bring us to the beginnings of Hindu nationalism. One important factor was certainly the “census mentality” brought about by the spreading census data that greatly influenced and reinforced the political endeavours to unite religious communities. This data was essential to build a threat of a Muslim demographic domination in view of their alleged quicker reproduction. One of the most influential Hindu writers that contributed to this stereotype was Swami Shraddhanand, an Arya Samaj leader in the first decades of the 20th century. Shraddhanand repeated the views of U.N. Mookerjee, described in a series of articles for the *Bengalee* journal. Using the census data, Mookerjee claimed that since Muslim peasants were more virile energetic and richer, the Hindus would disappear after 420 years. Thus he famously declared Hindus to be a “dying race” (Bapu 2013: 15-16). Shraddhanand (no date: 12) repeated Mookerjee's points and used them as a justification of Arya Samaj's actions to proselytise non-Hindu communities (*śuddhi*) as well as reform and unite the Hindu

society (*sangathan*). The preoccupation with demographic data as a proof of a growing Muslim threat is also very visible in the recent anti-Love Jihad campaign (cf., e.g. ALJH 16.05.2013, 6.05.2013, 02.07.2012).^v The fear of an alleged quicker Muslim reproduction always went hand in hand with, and was strengthened by, the fear of conversions, especially forceful ones, of Hindus to Islam. In the Arya Samaj narrative, the issue of forced conversions appears at least as early as 1892, in Lekh Ram’s treatise *Risāla-i-Jihād ya ’ni Dīn-i-Muhammadī kī Bunyād* (“A treatise on holy war, or the basis of the Muhammadan religion”, Jones 2006: 150, cf. also Shraddhanand, no date: 17-34). This is also one of the early cases of defining jihad as a holy war in Hindu reformist circles (Copley 2009: 92). Later, the 1921 Malabar riots served as a particular example of the threat of forceful conversions for Hindu nationalists. The issue of Love Jihad in fact collapses both of these fears into one, as a relationship of a Hindu girl and a Muslim boy allegedly always leads to the conversion of the former and give Muslims a demographic edge. Also, as Charu Gupta (2009: 13-14) has pointed out, the present anti-Love Jihad campaign in many ways resembles the Arya Samaj and Hindu Mahasabha 1920s campaign against the alleged abductions and forceful conversions of Hindu girls by Muslims (cf. also Bapu 2013: 89-90). Moreover, as we shall see later, nowadays Hindu nationalists also call for the reversal of Love Jihad. This idea – of Hindu men bringing Muslim women to the Hindu fold, of course in a benevolent way – was also already popular in 1920s, as Gupta reports elsewhere (2012: 167-168).

While the early campaigns focused on abductions, the spectre of seducing Hindus appears more often in later Hindu nationalists texts. However, the early case of such conviction appears already in Savarkar’s *Six Glorious Epochs of Indian History* (1971: 151, 152) where he claims that for hundreds of years in the times of peace Muslim men “enticed” and “ensnared” Hindu women. Apart from this, however, Savarkar just like other authors, focused on the image of Muslims as rapists and abductors in times of conflict (Savarkar 1971: 131, 134, 144, 148, 150-152, cf. also Chowdhry 2000: 105). In some of the later texts it was in fact claimed that it was certain Muslim women that had abortively tried

to cast their charms on chaste RSS members (Bacchetta 1994b: 205). These charges started to abound after the Meenakshipuram controversy (Bacchetta 1995: 17). They issue highlighted an uneasy for Hindu nationalists fact that a Hindu may become a Muslim voluntarily and that the rigid system of exclusion in the Hindu society may be a factor. As we shall see in this article, the campaign against Love Jihad, as well as similar public moves by the Hindu nationalists, try to reject these facts by claiming that when violence is not used for conversion needs (and they allege it usually is), then there must be some element of treachery on part of the Muslims. The controversy over Love Jihad has been ignited a few times in recent years, especially in 2009 and again particularly in 2012-2014. Perhaps one might try to explain this phenomenon in relation to the 2014 Lok Sabha elections campaign (cf. Gupta 2014a: 510) but this political aspect is beyond the scope of this article.

3. Critics of Love Jihad

In recent years, all major and minor Hindu nationalist organisations spoke against what they call “Love Jihad”. These include the Bharatiya Janata Party-Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (hence BJP and RSS) combine, Shiv Sena, Sri Ram Sene and Hindu Mahasabha. Anti-Love Jihad posters appeared in several places, including the Jhandewalan area of Delhi, where BJP and RSS have a strong presence.^{vi} The posters were also circulated in the Internet and in fact in some cases shared between these organisations. Articles and editorials devoted to the issue were published particularly in 2014, including magazines such as *Samna* (the mouthpiece of Shiv Sena), *Organiser* or *Panchajanya* (two mouthpieces of the RSS, in English and Hindi respectively).^{vii} Hindu Janajagruti Samiti, a small Hindu nationalist organisation (hence HJS) has devoted much of its website’s space to the issue. It has also published a book entitled *Lav Jihād* (“Love Jihad”) and another one on the same issue was being announced by Pramod Muthalik, the leader of Sri Ram Sene although It remains unclear to me whether it was published. New fronts, websites and programs have been launched to counter Love Jihad. Of these, I have particularly focused on the 2012-founded Anti Love Jihaad

Front (hence ALJF). The front runs a Facebook website called the Anti Love Jihaad Helpline (hence ALJH). The reasons for this choice are few. Firstly, the ALJF website presents a view that may be regarded as more comprehensive than the other sources mentioned here. While other ones “simply” criticise Love Jihad and only sometimes focus on some of its aspects, the ALJF seeks to describe all alleged major aims, techniques and achievements of this process (this also largely true about the HJS website, which will be compared in endnotes). Secondly, it is also visible that the main Hindu nationalist organisations usually hesitated from including Love Jihad in their formal agenda in the concerned period. For example, important members of the Bharatiya Janata Party have publicly spoken against Love Jihad, the party has not included the term in any of its official statements, such as a program or a resolution, and after some time even the statements in the media were toned down.^{viii} Typically, it is the front organisations that present a more radical and coherent stance. It is a very comfortable situation for the main political bodies, because the front organisations would help them in spreading their views and address the more radical electorate but without the need of formally endorsing the issue and therefore being able to escape legal responsibility for front’s statements. For a researcher it means that it would not be fair to present the views of a front organisations as identical with the formal ideology of the main political body, or indeed with the views of its followers. For these reasons, the ALJF website will remain a main source throughout this section and other sources have been used in comparison or to introduce facts that provide a broader perceptive (usually in endnotes or references). In another words, the particular aspects of Love Jihad as construed by the ALJF, and the metaphors that describe it might not be always shared by other organisations. The main image, however, remains the same regarding all primary sources in question.

The first aspect of the discourse on Love Jihad is the importance, or even centrality, of the theme of sexuality. As it was observed by other researchers, the sanitized visions created by Hindu nationalism usually show Hindu men and women as devoid of sexuality, or at least lust (Anand, forthcoming: 3). This sexuality is projected on Muslims, who are

in turn portrayed as both lustful and bearing many children (Anand, forthcoming: 11). The same indeed happens in the anti-Love Jihad narrative. There is no sexuality here on the part of Hindu men. The Muslim men perform their “dirty deeds” with Hindu girls after marrying them which leads to birth of progeny (ALJH 06.09.2014). Apparently only sex involving Muslims is “dirty”. One of the ALJF-popularised photos shows a Muslim tailor taking the measurement for a *kamīz* from a girl, his hand close to her breast (ALJH 05.08.2014). The suggestion here is that such situations may have sexual undertones. The appeal below the picture calls for Hindu “brothers” to stop Hindu “sisters” from frequenting Muslim tailors and jewellers. In another case (ALJH 27.01.2014), a warning is issued against Muslim shawl sellers who go from one house to another and use this opportunity to collect information on teenage Hindu girls. It is also often argued that Muslim shopkeepers note down the numbers of attractive girls that share it while paying for a phone recharge (ALJH 10.10.2014, 27.08.2014, 27.01.2014, 6.05.2013, 12.03.2013), for which reason one should also recharge the phone only in a trusted Hindu’s shop (ALJH 12.03.2013). While indeed Muslims are tailors more often than Hindus, a possibility that the same situation involving a Hindu tailor may be also erotically charged is not considered, nor are Hindu vagrant merchants or shopkeepers portrayed as a similar threat. The website is also careful with its choice of reported rape cases, so that the perpetrators would always turn out to be Muslims (cf. ALJH 1.08.2014), thereby ignoring some of the recent and notorious cases in which the culprits were Hindus. Also, once, in an apparent reference to the December 2012 rape in Delhi, the author of ALJH posts claimed, contrary to the established facts, that “the real culprit is said to be a Muslim, whose name is being hidden. I am sure that only a Muslim could do such a thing, because rape is a form of Jihad” (ALJH 22.03.2013)

Moreover, Muslims are depicted here as living an antithesis of civilized life. They follow the “philosophy of demons” (*āsuri siddhānt*, ALJH 3.01.2013). In their houses the scent of cooking mixes with the scent of food on the same veranda (ALJH 06.09.2014), everybody can make love to everybody (ALJH 9.10.2014, 03.02.2014) and they also indulge in lesbian and homosexual sex (ALJH 9.10.2014, 3.02.2014, cf.

also Anand, forthcoming: 12).^{ix} it might be said that the discourse evokes the dichotomy of “culture vs. nature” (*sanskṛ. ti* vs. *prakṛ. ti*) and culture is defined by both spatial separation of biological acts and social separation of roles. In another words, Muslims lack certain signs of civilized life: there is no separation of biological and social functions, and no categorisation of biological and social functions into proper and improper ones. Indeed, one of the anti-Love Jihad posters, used by the ALJF but borrowed from Sri Ram Sene, presents this threat as “perverse love rackets of venomous fanatical animals” (*matāndh zahrīle jantuō kā vikr. t premjāl*, ALJH 27.01.2014). Two aspects collide here. On one hand, Muslims are portrayed as living an animal-like life, and therefore unable to fully control their desires (cf. also ALJH 10.10.2012). On the other, however, their desires are skilfully and deliberately put to use.^x Ultimately, however, a Muslim woman is depicted here as much more lustful than a Muslim man. Her needs are without any deeper purpose, animal-like, while a Muslim man uses his sexuality in a planned way. Once, however, it is argued that Muslim women “agents” take part in Love Jihad as well, but to arouse materialist attachments of Hindu girls whom they befriend, not in a sexual way (ALJH 29.08.2012, cf. also Bacchetta 1994b: 202). It could be argued, however, that in the ALJF discourse, contrary to the classic Hindu nationalist (RSS and BJP) narrative, the Hindu girls are not completely devoid of sexuality.. However, we will also observe that this weakness springs exactly from their being not Hindu enough. Therefore, the “lustful Muslim – asexual Hindu” dichotomy is retained also here.

Not surprisingly, the descriptions of Love Jihad use the metaphor of “seduction is hunting”. The Love Jihadis first build a network or a basis (*nīmv*, ALJH 27.08.2014) around their hunting ground, go in circles around this place (ALJH 27.01.2014), or wait in select locations to attack their targets (ALJH 10.10.2014, 27.08.2014). Hindu girls fell prey (*śikār*) of Muslim men (ALJH 27.08.2014, 02.08.2014, 1.02.2014, 27.01.2014, 3.01.2014, 07.07.2012 cf. also *Panchajanya* 1.09.2014, 4.10.2014, 8.06.2012). The other verb applied here is “to seduce” (*phuslānā*, 3.02.2014, 27.01.2014, 16.05.2013, 07.08.2012) but more commonly “to

ensnare” (*phansānā*, ALJH, 27.10.2014, 21.10.2014, 16.08.2014, 1.02.2014, 16.05.2013, 6.05.2013, 12.03.2013, 09.09.2012, 02.09.2012, 06.07.2012, cf. also *Panchajanya*, 1.09.2014 and Savarkar 1971: 151-152). Love Jihad is very often likened to a web or a net (*jāl*)(ALJH, 9.10.2014, 27.10.2014, 27.08.2014, 1.02.2014, 20.09.2013, 16.05.2013, 22.03.2013, 6.09.2012, 24.06.2012), a “net of love”, or “net of illusion”: (*premjāl, mohjāl*, ALJH, 27.01.2014, 6.05.2013, 12.03.2013, cf. also *Panchajanya*, 4.10.2014, Krishnan 2012).^{xi} These metaphors reinforce the image of Hindu girls being innocent beings that need protection and the perceptions of Muslims as dangerous and constantly plotting against the Hindus.

The other metaphor is “seducing is war”. Using mobile phones and sending text messages is “the first weapon” (*hathiyār*) of Love Jihadis (ALJH 27.08.2014). Expensive gifts are another one (ALJH 16.05.2013). Sex before marriage is their “main weapon” (ALJH 9.09.2014). The Love Jihadis undergo a “training” in sending flirting text messages, skilful use of social media, and the like (ALJH, 27.01.2014, 10.10.2014). Love Jihad is their “mission” (ALJH 22.03.2013, cf. also *Panchajanya* 1.09.2014) or their “special technique of an attack” (ALJH 16.05.2013). Their schemes eventually lead to a formation of an “army” (*fauj*) of Jihadi girls (ALJH 27.08.2014, 22.03.2013). Muslim women “agents” are also involved in this war (ALJH 29.08.2012). “Awareness”, in turn, should be the biggest “weapon” of the Hindus (ALJH 22.08.2014) who should “defend” their women (ALJH 22.08.2014, 16.08.2014). Love Jihad itself is called a weapon (ALJH 16.05.2013, 07.09.2012). The other, more seldom comparison of Love Jihad is to a plague (*mahāmārī* ALJH 22.08.2014) or a cancer (ALJH 16.10.2012). Most commonly, Love Jihad is likened to a new form of terrorism (ALJH 27.10.2014, 10.10.2014, 27.08.2014, 3.02.2014). Broadly speaking, Love Jihad is a new, more sophisticated form of Muslim aggression. One of anti-Love Jihad Front posters, carrying a picture of a fearsome looking Muslim warrior of the old days, says: ‘The mughals would loot and rape Indian women... Then, by force Today with a rose?’ (ALJH 9.10.2014, original spelling and punctuation retained).

Falling in love with a Muslim is falling into a trap. Hindu girls are requested not to “fall in the [vicious] circle of love with Muslim boys” (*muslim larḳō ke pyār ke cakkar mẽ na paṛē*, ALJH 07.09.2012). The metaphor of falling (*paṛna*) is similar to the English metaphor of “being subject to control or force is down” (Lakoff and Johnson 2006: 41). In Hindi, *paṛna* can be often paired with *cakkar*. *Cakkar*, “a wheel”, is very often a symbol of great trouble, a difficult situation, in which people unwisely land themselves. In other examples, the girls can simply fall into a “vicious circle of a Muslim” (*musalmān ke cakkar mẽ paṛnā*, ALJH 16.05.2013, cf. 6.09.2012) or are attracted, that is literally “fall into attraction” (*ākarṣaṇ me paṛ jātī hai*) of Muslim boys (ALJH 06.09.2014). In falling, as in Love Jihad, only the first step is voluntary: later the person finds herself in a situation she cannot control.

While the Muslims are criticised for their beastly behaviour and deception, Hindus are censored for being too frivolous and unaware of the gravity of the threat. The common metaphor – not only in this discourse and indeed not only in Hindi – is “Sleep is Unawareness”. There is a constant call to “wake up” (*jāgo!*) (ALJH 1.02.2014, 13.12.2013, 28.12.2013, 16.10.2012, 10.09.2012, 29.07.2012), and to be aware, conscious (*jāgr t/jāgrūk*) and cause others to also be like this (ALJH 06.09.2014, 03.02.2014, cf. also *Panchajanya*, 7.03.2015). The word *jāgrūktā*, meaning both being awake and awareness, is also used (ALJH 27.10.2014, 22.08.2014, 09.01.2013, cf. also *Panchajanya* 7.03.2015, 8.06.2012).

The state of unawareness is a state of lack of culture and religion. It is being argued that the Hindu girls lack the knowledge of the elements of Hindu culture (*sanskār*) and this makes them immune to the treacherous plots of Love Jihad. The parents are to blame for not imbuing their daughters with religion enough (ALJH 9.9.2014, 27.01.2014, 22.03.2013). Secularism leads to a wrong impression that there is nothing bad in interfaith marriages and that all religions are same (ALJH 27.01.2014, 22.03.2013). As one of the ALJF posts says: “We saw a few such girls who do not know the ABC of their religion, but will say: ‘[in

Hindi] All religions are good! [in English] All are equal and good we should respect each other !! [in Hindi] And these usually end up having [in English] Muslim Boyfriend[s]” (ALJH, 6.09.2014, original punctuation retained). There is a repeated call to strengthen religious education of the girls, but other solutions are also furthered to free them from the clutches of Love Jihad, such as reciting the Gayatri Mantra to them, asking about the contents of *Mahabharata*, *Ramayana*, and other great works, reading *Satyarth Prakash* to them, taking them to temples, feeding with the *prasad*, and the like (ALJH 2.09.2014, 27.01.2014, 28.12.2013, 16.05.2013, 17.06.2012, cf. also Kulkarni 2014).^{xii} Interestingly, it is usually the Hindu daughters, not Hindu sons, that are said not to possess proper religious education and therefore be more vulnerable. Analysing this, we should probably reverse the logic and say that the authors of the campaign regard girls as more immune and therefore claim that they lack religious education more than boys. However, in one post (ALJH 16.10.2012) the Hindu boys are said to be busy playing mobile phone games or studying; they imbue a materialist outlook from their parents and have forgotten the history of Hindus; sometimes they even harass their own Hindu girls, even in temples. This is not only a rare case of a strong critique of Hindu boys but of hinting to a sexual aspect of Hindus. Apart from these more rare cases, the narrative in a way pairs together Hindu and Muslim men and Hindu and Muslim women. In both cases, women are more influenced by their sexuality and generally less able to act above instincts, while men act in a more thoughtful way; one side using its minds to plot against the other community, and the other to defend itself.

One of the ALJF posters portrays not only the threat of “a Jihad of Love”, which it terms a “Religious Terrorism Against Hindu”, but adds a call “Hindu Sisters Beware from Love Jihad!” (ALJH 09.08.2014, original spelling and grammar retained). This last call is written beneath a picture of a *kamiz*-wearing woman putting a *tika* on a man’s forehead (both of them seemingly Hindu). The depiction brings the idea of *Rakshabandhan* to the discourse and indeed the picture was posted on the day of this festival. It is presumably suggested here that tying a *rakhī*, and turning other Hindus into symbolical brothers in the process, can also be

a way to call for new protectors of the besieged Hindu women.^{xiii} The call to “Hindu Sisters” underneath the picture would additionally confirm this assumption, as well as bring out the frequent metaphor of “All Hindus are a family” (cf. also Brosius 2005: 61-64).^{xiv} In this family, one would add, all men are brothers to women and should stand up for their sisters (for often comparisons of Hindu men to brothers and women to sisters, cf. ALJH 22.08.2014, 16.10.2012, 22.08.2012, 29.07.2012, 26.07.2012, 12.07.2012, 06.07.2012, 28.06.2012, etc.).^{xv} The protection of the sisters is protection of the entire society (ALJH 16.08.2014). Not surprisingly, it is the Hindu nationalist organisations (*hindū sangathan vāle*) that are portrayed as best protectors. Hindus are called upon to talk to Hindu girls whom they see meeting with Muslim men, and if that fails, they should talk to their parents, and if that also proves abortive, they should inform a Hindu nationalist organization active in his locality, such as the Arya Samaj, RSS or Shiv Sena (ALJH 27.01.2014). Those “mini skirt or jeans wearing” girls that go for “picnics to Mussoorie or Nainital” criticize those organizations all the time but hide behind their backs when riots happen (ALJH 13.02.2013). Hindu nationalists, therefore, are depicted as the strongest, most active, most responsible and least egoistic defenders of tradition and the Hindu family.

But the Rakshabandhan picture also shows the importance of tradition. The pair in the picture are presumably “good Hindus”. They are not portrayed with any sexual aspects and are shown following a respected tradition rather than, say, hang out riding on a motorcycle. Here, tradition is perceived as a right answer to the threat of Love Jihad. Indeed, the RSS, the other, and much more powerful Hindu nationalist organisation resorted to organising *rakhī*-tying ceremonies in western Uttar Pradesh in August 2014 to counter Love Jihad (Srivastava 2014).^{xvi} In another words, the two metaphors here are: “Hindu religion/culture is awareness of what is good and what is evil” and “Hindu religion/culture is purity of mind and body”.

Following this the other, not surprising comparison is “Western ways are the corruption of moral codes”. It fits well in the general Hindu

nationalist narrative on Westernisation (cf. e.g. Basu et al, 1993: 85). The girls that fall prey of Love Jihad are the ones that frivolously focus on dating and similar things. The profiles of Hindu girls on Facebook reveal that, instead of “religious pages” (*dhārmik pej*), they focus on “love, tv serials, pyar, ishq, bollywood masala, mickel Jackson” and the like (ALJH 27.01.2014, original spelling retained). The same girls have a lot of Muslim boys in their “friend list” (ALJH 27.01.2014). The main weapon of Love Jihadis (by which they seduce big city girls) is having sex before marriage (ALJH 9.09.2014). The Love Jihadis “are trained in how to sweet-talk Hindu girls on mobile phones” (ALJH 10.10.2014). They are said to hunt near colleges, girls colleges, hostels, “computer centres”, coaching institutions, “ladies’ tailors” and shopping malls (ALJH 27.10.2014, 16.05.2013, 6.05.2013, 09.09.2012), not near, say, temples or in the villages. They choose girls that are good-looking, English-speaking and from rich families (ALJH 27.08.2014). The working and educated, or educating-seeking, women are also said to be the target, not the (presumably more decent) housewives (ALJH 10.10.2014). One of the highlighted cases was the one of a woman assistant professor that established a relationship with a Muslim man that had a far less prestigious profession (ALJH 1.08.2014). In one village, a Muslim caught a Hindu woman in a net of love after coming for private lessons (ALJH 22.03.2013). The Love Jihadis ensnare their victims in their traps by buying them mobile phones, perfumes, clothes and expensive cars (ALJH 10.10.2014, 27.10.2014, 27.08.2014, 16.05.2013). This suggests that the girls’ materialist attitude to life is partially to blame. Some of the meetings between unaware Hindu women and Muslim Love Jihadis are described in an environment typical to contemporary Western youth culture. One Love Jahadi invited a girl for a cake (ALJH 16.10.2014). Girls and boys eat popcorn while watching the Jodhaa Akbar movie^{xvii} and then a girl “becomes the Jodha and lays heat to the bed of some Akbar” (ALJH 13.12.2013). It is claimed that it is common for Muslim boys to take girls to picnics where they record obscene videos of the girls and later blackmail them (ALJH 27.08.2014, 29.08.2012 cf. also 1.02.2014). A poster, popularised by the ALJF and used also by the HJS as a cover for its book entitled *Lav Jihād*, shows a Muslim boy taking a Hindu girl for a motorcycle ride after giving her a

Valentine Day’s heart-shaped balloon (ALJH 18.05.2013, 30.07.2012).^{xviii}

The Hindi cinema is also an important factor of spreading Love Jihad. Referred to as the “city of illusion” (*māyānagrī*, ALJH 27.01.2014), the Bollywood industry is replete with instances of Muslim actors marrying Hindu women, such as Shahrukh Khan, Aamir Khan, Fardin Khan, Suhail Khan, Arbaz Khan, Saif Ali Khan and Sajid Khan (ALJH 27.01.2014, 16.05.2013, 6.05.2013, 16.10.2012, 02.09.2012, 11.07.2012, 03.07.2012). “Why do Muslim Bollywood actors always have Hindi wives? Why did not a single of them prefer a Muslim girl?” – the ALJF website asks (ALJH, 27.01.2014). The instances of Muslim actors having Muslim wives are glossed over. So are the numerous cases of Hindu actors marrying Muslim wives, including that of Sanjay Dutt and Dilnawaz Sheikh, who later on converted to Hinduism to become Manyata Dutt.^{xix} Other troubling cases for Hindu nationalists, such as the one of Dharmendra, are explained by stating that the likes of him, that is Hindus who turn to Islam to marry a woman, are “depraved” (*lampat*) because sexual desires are more important for them than traditions (ALJH 28.12.2013). The impact of Bollywood culture is allegedly threatening the society, because the lives of these Muslim actors have become inspirations for Hindu girls (the Hindu boys, again, seem more immune to the threat). The same is alleged to be true about the contents of the movies. It is argued that these deliberately portray love of Muslim men and Hindu women, so that role models for the youth would be created (ALJH 2.08.2014, 27.01.2014, 6.05.2013). It is also once alleged that the Bollywood star Salman Khan is being paid money from unspecified Arabic countries to produce movies with such storylines (ALJH 02.08.2013, cf. also HJS, *History of Love Jihad*). The Arabic countries as a part of a grand, international Muslim conspiracy appear also elsewhere in the discourse, as funders of Love Jihad itself (ALJH 16.05.2013, 09.09.2012, 02.07.2012). Indian Muslims are said to sell their wives to Arabic countries, while these fund scholarships, support bandits, etc. (ALJH 27.01.2014, 27.12.2013) and Love Jihadis allegedly work under the orders coming from those countries (ALJH 1.02.2014, cf. also

Panchajanya, 1.09.2014). The anti-Love Jihad discourse does not, however, call for the boycott of Bollywood as such (while it calls to boycott Muslim shopkeepers, etc.) or elaborate on the Western influences on Bollywood. It does, however, create a difference between the “good” (Hindu) Bollywood actors and the “bad” (Muslim) ones. The latter are the likes of Shahrukh Khan (“Pakistani lover, pakistani jihadi”) and Aamir Khan (“Love jihadi, terror lover, pakistani supporter”), and the former is Akshay Kumar (“Highest Tax Payer of Bollywood, No Controversy”)(ALJH 10.11.2014, original spelling retained).

Only after the wedding the girl is brutally robbed of her freedom that she so far enjoyed with her fiancée. The common metaphor here is “Islam is enslavement of women”. Commonly, pictures spread by anti-Love Jihad organisations show a half of beautiful woman’s uncovered face and the second half (after the marriage) sad, crying and with her face partially covered (cf. ALJH 27.08.2014, 07.08.2012). Durga Vahini, a part of Vishwa Hindu Parishad used the image of Kareena Kapoor, a Hindu actress recently married to a Muslim actor (Saif Ali Khan), in the same way (Pathak 2015) Other images show women crying with her face partially covered, put behind prison bars or attempting to commit a suicide. It is also sometimes alleged that some Hindu women after marrying Muslims will be forced to, or sold for, prostitution (ALJH 16.08.2014, 06.09.2014, 03.02.2014, 27.01.2014, 1.05.2013, 22.03.2013, 29.08.2012).^{xx} This technique is to convince us that it is both impossible that somebody embraces Islam voluntarily, unless being cheated about its true nature, as well as it is impossible that a woman may enjoy any larger degree of freedom after marrying a Muslim and that she would be given an option of retaining her non-Muslim traditions. This shows how the new spectre of Love Jihad fits into the old Hindu nationalists narrative on forceful conversions, as the aspect of violence and force must sooner or later appear in a relationship with a Muslim. The RSS has also used a slogan “love ever, jihad never”, thereby suggesting that the love towards a Muslim one cannot be genuine (Gupta 2014b: 9).

It should be added here that February 2015 Vishwa Hindu Parishad, part of the RSS, has decided to start its campaign against Love Jihad. The

campaign is called “Bahu Lao Beti Bachao” (*bahū lāo, bet ī becāo*, “bring in the daughter-in-law, save the daughter”) and is aimed at attracting the Muslim women to marry Hindu men and introducing them to Hindu traditions (Das 2015). Once again, to prove that such ideas had in certain form actually appeared much earlier, one can point out to Gupta’s (2011: 452) observations that in 1920s the novels that depicted the love of a Hindu man and Muslim woman, which led to her accepting Hindu ways, had become very popular. If one would try to point out here that Hindu nationalists are generally against conversions, and that such campaign would not differ much from a Islamic or Christian conversion drive, the Hindu nationalists would reply that their endeavour is not a conversion but a “reversion” (*parāvartan*) or “home coming” (*ghar vāpsī*) of people that allegedly had Hindu ancestors.^{xxi} The ALJF also claims to welcome all Muslims to the Hindu fold (ALJH 28.12.2013) and elsewhere adds an explanation sprinkled with its own statistics: “There are 200 million Muslims in India nowadays and as of today 40 million are coming off marriage age. We only need 40 million Hindu Love Jihadis to finish Islam in India once and for ever. [...] If you marry a Muslim then it will bring two benefits for the Hindu religion: the Hindus will grow by one [person], and the Muslims will decrease by one..” (ALJH 16.05.2013). The Hindus are then encouraged to marry Muslim girls “not out of feeling of revenge but for the feeling of protection” (ALJH 16.05.2013, 17.06.2012). However, while Muslim women should be converted, one should not believe a Muslim man if he claims to be eager to change his religion, as usually they do it for the sake of Love Jihad only (ALJH 16.05.2013, 17.06.2012); even tying a *rakhī* on their wrists will not stop them (09.07.2012). Marrying Muslim girls will also provide their “salvation” from the wretched Muslim ways (cf. also ALJH 4.01.2014, 09.07.2012).^{xxii} Apparently, what is a treacherous scheme on part of the Muslims, is also a perfectly justified strategy in case of Hindus.

4. Data Analysis

The data from the previous sections bring us to some interesting conclusions. The entire issue of Love Jihad is perceived as a clash of the Muslim and Western ways with the Hindu culture. This is best visible in an already referred to and widely circulated in Hindu nationalists circles picture of a Hindu girl is holding a Valentine's heart-shaped balloon while riding a motorcycle with a Muslim boy (ALJH 18.05.2013, 30.07.2012). The Hindu nationalists' criticism of Valentine's Day is well-known. Even earlier the RSS had applauded "the new Hindu women for resisting Western modernism" (Basu et al 1992: 85, cf. also Bacchetta 1994b: 193 and 1996: 49). It seems, however, that only recently the resistance to Western modernity, including Valentines' Day and the like, has been paired in the Hindu nationalists narrative with the struggle against Islam. Even the hybrid name – Love Jihad – suggests the new, arranged marriage of Western modernism and Muslim radicalism. Love Jihad is possible thanks to the encroachments of new Western ways into India. Dating before marriage, meeting without the control of the parents – all of these solutions are both wanted by some "unaware" Hindu girls but also open new possibilities for "Love Jihadis". A motorcycle, and indeed any motorized vehicle, is a tool and a symbol of sexual freedom, since it makes it possible for young people to travel outside the zone of their immediate society in a short span of time. Another symbol of youth freedom is a mobile phone which a Muslim boy can give to Hindu girl so that they "can communicate with them anytime" (ALJH 9.10.2014, 27.08.2014).^{xxiii} Moreover, "they even use the Internet" (ALJH 27.08.2014, cf. also 16.05.2014). Islamic scholars (*mullā-maulvī*) have allegedly adapted Western solutions, since they organize "personality development courses" (name in English) for the future Love Jihadis to teach them how to pretend to be secular and seduce the girls (ALJH 16.05.2013, 09.09.2012). As the Valentine Day's picture – and indeed the whole Hindu nationalist discourse on Jove Jihad – implies, the Muslim Romeos hide their radicalism, posing as living a free life and then reveal their stress on tradition only after marriage. Hence, Hindu nationalism merged two threats to Hindu traditions into one. The threat of corrupt Western ways opens the way for the threat of radical Muslim customs.

The authors of the campaign obviously do not pose a question whether following Hindu culture could not be a way of restricting one’s liberty, just like following Muslim culture is according to Hindu nationalists. Hindu culture, by default, is always liberal the way it is portrayed by Hindu nationalists. It is perceived to be somehow benevolent and based on one’s choice: while Islam enslaves, the people following Hindu culture seemingly choose it themselves and remain more free in their choices within it (cf. ALJH 06.09.2014). Therefore, calling to educate the unaware and stray women more in the elements of culture (*sanskār*) to counter Love Jihad can not of course be enslavement in any way similar to the ways of Islam. Such rhetoric shows us how the focus on the protection of women can shift the attention away from the issue of their rights.

In this respect, the ALJF narrative closely resembles the symbolical solutions applied by other Hindu nationalist bodies or even in Indian (not only Hindu) nationalism. Some scholars of Hindu nationalism have already some time ago observed that the process of presenting the woman as goddess does not really lead to women empowerment (Rajan 2001: 4-5). Moreover, portraying them as the embodiment of tradition deftly deals away with the question of its reform. The woman as goddess wears decent clothes and is equipped with traditional paraphernalia (Ramaswamy 2010: 55-56).^{xxiv} She is portrayed as powerful, but her energy, even if with sexual undertones (Sarkar 2001: 186), is otherworldly, and in such image there is no place to show the injustices meted out on women. The goddess becomes more a symbol of a country or community but not of reform (Singh 2014: 21). Tanika Sarkar showed how the writings of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, who left a profound influence on Hindu nationalism, went from the early stage, when a call to reform the society, including the introduction of broader women rights, was being made, to the late stage (where *Anandmath* belongs), in which the focus on Hindu militant identity went in pair with praises of tradition and silencing of the talk on reforms (Sarkar 2001: 166, 169, 172, cf. also Bagchi 2008: 131). While Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, the main ideologue of Hindu nationalism, took pains to call India a “fatherland”

rather than a “motherland” (cf. Nandy 2014: 95 and 2009: 3), all other and later Hindu and Indian nationalists, have chosen to, following Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, perceive India as a motherland and indeed the Mother – the goddess Bharat Mata, Mother India (Ramaswamy 2010: 1). The RSS prayer also presents India as another.^{xxv} In fact even most powerful woman symbols in the Hindu nationalist version is usually accompanied by some traditional or domestic aspect.^{xxvi} Lakshmibai, the cherished nationalist ideal of the 1857, is praised both for her bold fight against the British, but all the same for being a perfect mother, as presented in a famous image of her carrying a child while riding a horse (Singh 2014: 149, Dhooria, no date: 25). Shivaji’s mother is shown raising his son to become a good Hindu and a warrior king, Bhagat Singh’s mother is shown “crying after his death, not because she had lost her son, but because she had no other son to be martyred” (Basu 1992: 83). Certain other symbolic traits from Indian traditions, such as Sita’s *swayamvara*, are not evoked. While the RSS strives to introduce inner equality of members against caste affiliations, this equality does not in a way apply to its women members, in the sense that they had to open their separate wing, as it would otherwise threaten the male members celibacy (Anderson and Damle 1987: 39), this is a silent admission that even the RSS members are not completely devoid of sexuality). Even the name of this wing, Rashtra Sevika Samiti, is important, since the women members are *sevikā*, servants, not *swayamsevikā*, voluntary servants, as the men are (Bacchetta 1994a: 136). In the same way Sarkar (2008: 526) observes that the Rashtra Sevika Samiti’s journal, once called *Jagriti* (“Awakening”) was renamed as *Sevika*, “woman servant”. Certainly, the RSS does strengthen women in at least two respects – by providing them physical training (Basu 1992: 84-85)^{xxvii} and organizational frameworks that can render them help in various ways (Bacchetta 1996: 134). But otherwise it does not really focus on progressive women’s reforms and their rights, but rather on daily problems (Sarkar 2008: 527). In the same way, as Sethi (2002: 1545) observes, even the big events of Hindu nationalism, such as the Babri masjid demolition, in which women appeared in the forefront, really “allows them expression of certain kinds of agency – virulent and avenging, seemingly independent and spontaneous and yet not upsetting the traditional hierarchies” and the

focus on the “periods of quietude” reveals even more “subject positions” (cf. also Kumari and Kidwai 1998: 89). This, however, does not mean that Hindu nationalism is essentially and exclusively a conservative movement. Since both conservative and reformist ideas appear in the discourse on the Love Jihad, it is important to analyse the relations between them.

I believe in Gellner’s (1991: 160) short and ample summary of a difference between nationalism and conservatism: the first one is more concerned with the existence of communities, the other one with the existence of institutions. This means that nationalism and conservatism can cooperate or be in conflict depending on particular relations between members of a community and its social institutions in a given time. The same would also be true of Hindu nationalism. We should not simply generalise it as a solely reformist or certainly not a solely conservative movement. Firstly, the views may obviously differ depending on the particular body, and secondly, as for the most important organisations – the RSS and the BJP – their official statements are nearly always put in a more reformist fashion but usually with a claim that the reforms are in agreement with time-honoured traditions. Also, in particular cases, and beyond formal publications, some of their members were found to be protecting certain, even highly criticised traditions.^{xxviii} One hand, the Hindu nationalism was ideology historically build by upper castes, subscribing to their ethos and largely defending Hindu traditions. However, the goals of Hindu nationalists are the reform and unification (*sangat han*) of Hindu society and in these goals organisations like the RSS and Hindu Mahasabha had been considerably influenced by earlier reform movements, like the Arya Samaj.^{xxix} One particular troubling issue of the Hindu nationalists is their relation to the caste system. It is a Hindu tradition, but it is also a hindrance on the way to achieve perfect unity of the Hindu nation. Following Gellner, the caste system can surely be defined as a social institution, hence in this case the conservative goal of defending institutions collides with the nationalist goal to build a uniform society out of a community. This dichotomy was already visible in the writings of V.D. Savarkar, the main theorist of Hindutva and a

long-time leader of Hindu Mahasabha, the party that now runs the ALJF. In *Hindutva. Who is a Hindu?* Savarkar was at pains to one hand try to prove that inter-caste marriages were the order of the day in ancient India but on the other, that defending the caste system was a political necessity and that this institution formed the backbone of Hindu society (Savarkar 2006: 86-87). Outside his political and publishing activity, Savarkar, like Gandhi, also worked for the uplift of untouchables in the Ratnagiri district, for which he was criticised by Hindu conservatives (McKean 1986: 85).^{xxx} His problems of taking a clear stance on the issue spring clearly from the conservative institutions-nationalist community dichotomy and in fact the Hindu nationalists were not able to manouver through the caste system dilemma to the present day.

The anti-Love Jihad campaign also brings out certain aspects of relations between Hindu nationalists and Hindu orthodoxy. Interestingly, the ALJF also claims that Love Jihadis receive monthly salaries and awards for their work (ALJH 27.01.2014, 16.05.2013). The list of the awards is quite telling, as it in fact in part follows to the *varna* hierarchy. The award for seducing a Brahman girl is higher (700 000 rupees), than for seducing a Kshatriya one (600 000), a Vaishya one (500 000) or a Dalit one (200 000)(the list uses the term *dalit*, not untouchable, and there is no mention of Shudras here, ALJH, 27.01.2014). It seems that seducing a Brahman girl is of higher value. Luring a Dalit woman into the Love Jihad trap is also of smallest value, smaller than doing the same with representatives of other communities, such as a “Christian Catholic girl” (350 000), “Christian Protestant girl” (230 000) or a Shia Muslim (400 000) (the last point clearly implies that Love Jihad is a Sunni scheme). Interestingly, however, it is the “Sikh girls” top the list (900 000), followed by “Punjabi Hindu girls” (800 000). This probably is linked to the Hindu nationalist image of Sikhs as part of the Hindu fold and the most robust defenders of the Hindu faith, together with the image of Punjabis as both physically and culturally strong. In earlier parts of the article I have also pointed out that middle-class, college-going or working, English-speaking and rich, liberal, detached from tradition, having certain freedom and access to new technologies and open to Western ways women are the alleged top target for Love Jihadis. By

contrast, we might guess that those least immune to the danger of Love Jihad are the women who work at home, are traditional, less exposed to Western ways, education and English language and not have so much liberty to travel and talk to other men alone. In the same way, it might be silently suggested here that since the “unaware” girls that believe in a free choice in love and in inter-faith relationships are most exposed, those who have their marriage arranged within their society would be least vulnerable. Indeed, the website asks the parents to arrange the marriage of their daughters as soon as possible (ALJH 18.05.2013, 17.06.2012). Accept for the praised case of Muslim actress (see below), nowhere in the discourse a question is poised whether the women should not be given a liberty to choose its partner, even of a different faith. It is the woman’s relation to the community and tradition she was born in that is of concern here. A woman is the mainstay of the community, the repository of its honour and the keeper of the tradition and these roles become more important in the discourse than her personal freedom (cf. ALJH 16.05.2013). The interesting case here is the repeated point of the ALJF that in the earlier stage of their relation, the Muslim boys may record indecent (*aślīl*) movies of Hindu girls and then blackmail them (ALJH 27.08.2014, 1.02.2014). The Front does not publicly ponder on whether the activity considered to be indecent was a deliberate act on the part of a Hindu girl (even if the recording as an undesired effect). The focus is instead on the later blackmailing, that is the fact that if such movies are revealed, women “lose their honour” in respect to their community. Since the ALJF also often stresses that Muslims, after marrying, forcing to convert and having children with a formerly Hindu women abandon her, a question may be raised why in such a situation the Hindus would not be able to accept their women back. However, as the ALJF states, “by this time the Hindu girl has actually already become a Muslim and her relatives out of the fear of the society do not accept her as their own anymore” (ALJH 12.03.2013). This may remind us of the story of Rama banishing Sita. There is no call here to change the mindset of the society in this respect; it is the women’s mindset that must be changed.^{xxxii} However, in another post (ALJH 16.10.2012) it is also claimed that if Kareena Kapoor, an actress criticised here often for her marriage with

Saif Ali Khan, would like to one day come back to the Hindu society, as if she left it, “the door will always open”. In this respect, the front presents a more reformist approach. The ALJF also claims that Love Jihad is successful due to the fact that it leads to losing women’s “self respect in a society” (*samāj mē ātm-sammān*) because of which they may be bound (*bādhy*) to join a different society (ALJH 27.01.2014). That “self respect” comes from the “society” rather than “self” seems evident to the author of this quote.

In another words, the whole Love Jihad campaign can easily serve to reinforce arranged marriages and other conservative community traditions. In the same way, the view that a Hindu woman cannot marry a Muslim man (Love Jihad) but a Hindu man can marry a Muslim woman (Bahu Lao Beti Bachao) is rationalised by focusing on the plight of women in Muslim families and by showing that women, both Hindu and Muslim, follow more their instincts than their mind and are easier detached from their traditions than men (as well as claiming, following Savarkar, that all Indian Muslims were Hindus and should be given a chance to go back to the Hindu fold). What this view really reinforces is the inferior position of a woman in Indian society, in which, if consent for a marriage outside a community is sometimes given, then it is much more possible it would be given to a man, rather than a woman. The focus on Love Jihad might help the Hindu nationalists to escape from an uneasy question about their attitude towards inter-caste marriages. Putting the stress, as they usually do, on the enemy outside the Hindu caste system, on the Muslim Other, makes matters easier for them. Here they can build a front above caste differences against whom they portray to be the common foe of Hindus but can also protect caste customs. In case of the anti-Love Jihad campaign, as long as caste issues are not brought into the fore, the defence of the community works in perfect harmony with the defence of institutions. Thus, nationalism and conservatism can find a common platform.

However, it must be added that while the ALJH website calls to arrange marriages, it also states that in the same places “now you [Hindus] should agree to inter-caste marriages” as “a Hindu of another

caste is thousand times better than a Muslim” (ALJH 16.05.2013, 17.06.2012). In the same place the Hindus are called not to demand dowry, probably because of the Hindu nationalists’ old recognition that dowry is one of the factors that makes marrying Muslims more attractive (cf. Basu et al 1992: 86, Eshwar 2007: 253).^{xxxii} In the same way, widowhood as forced by tradition has long been attacked by Hindu nationalists as it made Hindu widows vulnerable to Muslims, who, contrary to Hindus, held no grudge against marrying them (Bapu 2013: 90). There are, therefore, certain institutions, in the sense of traditions, that are also considered an impediment to the unity and security of the Hindu nation.

If “Islam is enslavement”, then what is the antidote for the Muslims? Some points of the campaign seem to be contradictory on this matter. On one hand, there is the criticism of the freedom of youth in the West. On the other, there is a call for more liberty of Muslim women, a liberty portrayed here in a “Western way” as resisting to marry and living a life of one choice, as in the case of one Muslim actress. Soha Ali Khan is praised by the ALJH for deciding to first live with her boyfriend (and that, too, a person from the Hindu community, Kunal Khemu) under one roof and giving their relationship a try and only later deciding about marriage (ALJH 2.03.2013, the two have later married). This is somehow a good example, while otherwise following Western ways is considered to be immoral. The ALJF position on Soha Ali Khan shows one more contradiction: she is a daughter of Sharmila Tagore and Mansoor Ali Khan Pataudi, one of the many mixed Bollywood couples that the ALJF considers a result of Love Jihad (ALJH 27.01.2014). While the ALJF claims that all children of such unions must be brought up as radicals, it also praises Soha Ali Khan for not being one.

Regarding Hindu nationalists’ stance on new Western customs in India, one can point out here to the RSS’s endeavour to build an alternative to Western ways of celebrating New Years’ Eve and birthday parties^{xxxiii}, Ram Sene’s attacks on pubs, and the opposition of Hindu Mahasabha, Shiv Sena, and some RSS outfits to Valentine Day’s. In the

first two cases, the RSS really tries to invent new traditions: refashion Nava Varsha Pratipada as a Hindu New Year celebration and establish a new form of birthday parties. In case of Love Jihad, however, Hindu traditions (and usually not the recently reinvented ones) that are presented as bulwarks to the frivolous mores of Western culture. While Soha Ali Khan is praised for not living according to her community's traditions, Hindu girls are criticised for the same. It is seemingly suggested here that the "free" Western ways are generally corrupt, but they are still better than the Islamic "enslavement".

The forces of Hindutva have repeatedly stated that Muslims should become less conservative and less radical, the same is never applied to Hindus. Savarkar (2006: 83) claimed that the way for the minorities, including Indian Muslims, to become Hindus, is to devoid them of bigotry. (there is no mention of bigotry on Hindu side, as the Hindu culture is perfectly liberal).^{xxxiv} According to the Savarkarite paradigm, Indian Muslims and Christians do not really have to convert into Hinduism in a strictly religious sense. Since they are Hindus "by race" anyway, shaking of their radicalism and following one, national culture (however different from Hindu religion) would make them Hindus "by culture", and looking to India as their sacred land, instead of other lands, would make them Hindus "by nation" (Savarkar 2006: 84). Now, it would seem that the ALJF claims that Western liberal ways may be a tool of breaking the hardcore Muslim conservatism. Interestingly, in exactly the same discourse they claim that Western liberal ways are a threat to Hindu traditions and a tool of Love Jihad. Eventually, in the anti-Love Jihad campaign Western mores became the tool of both sides.

The another important proof for this is that the alleged Love Jihad campaign found its equivalent in the Bahu Lao Beti Bachao campaign. This reminds us of Ch. Jaffrelot's (1999: 17, 50) observation that Hindu nationalism follows the "stigmatisation and emulation" strategy. The two elements are in fact one. The elements of Christianity and Islam most vehemently criticised by Hindu nationalists are usually the same ones that they want to silently emulate. Christianity, an organised and international force is perceived to be a dangerous antinational element in India, but it is

exactly its organisation, modes of spreading and international cooperation (including charities) that the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh emulates (arguably, the structure of the RSS is modelled, among others, on the Roman Catholic church). The image of a Muslims as militant, traditional and united by strong ties of brotherhood that transgress local communities is build as a main threat to the Hindu nation, but this nation should also have exactly same characteristics to become strong. In case of the campaigns in question, Bahu Lao Beti Bachao is a emulative response to Love Jihad. Also, the idea that male members can marry outside their religious society (to spread the religion) and the female members cannot (as it would threaten the religion) is actually a Hindu nationalist emulation of Muslim conservative views. In the same way, while the ALJF points out that Love Jihadis extensively use social media, it is itself an Internet creation that partially fulfils its work by calling on its readers to share the posts, e-mail their Hindu women friends, etc. It castigates the Muslims for having many children and educating them in radicalism but also calls on the Hindus to give birth to at least 3 children, educate them traditionally and teach about threats of Islam (ALJH 16.05.2013, cf. also Anand, forthcoming: 16). In the ALJF front where this appeal is furthered, the author suddenly uses the term *qaum* for the Hindu society, a word usually reserved for the entire Muslim community, as if betraying that he would like the Hindus to become a similarly arranged *qaum*. In the same way, the above mentioned idea of liberating Muslims through Western liberalism is also both “stigmatisation” and “emulation” The Hindu nationalists are trying to bring in Muslim women to their fold, disregarding traditional marriage arrangements, but also criticise Muslim men for trying to do the same with Hindu women.

5. References

[“Anti Love Jihaad Helpline 8802487767”, that is the Anti Love Jihaad Front’s Facebook page, quoted as ALJH in the text of the article with various dates, appears only once in the references list below, since it is one website with a number of posts.]

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[%85%E0%A4%A8%E0%A4%82%E0%A4%A4%E0%A4%AA%E0%A5%81%E0%A4%B0%E0%A4%AE-%E0%A4%B8%E0%A5%87-%E0%A4%AA%E0%A5%8D%E0%A4%B0%E0%A4%A6%E0%A5%80%E0%A4%AA-%E0%A4%95%E0%A5%83%E0%A4%B7%E0%A5%8D%E0%A4%A3%E0%A4%A8-%EF%BB%BF.aspx?NB=&lang=4&m1=&m2=&p1=&p2=&p3=&p4=](#), accessed 30 March 2015.

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appendices

[Three pictures have been attached with the manuscript file. All of them come from the Anti Love Jihaad Helpline website, have been mentioned in the text and illustrate ideas evoked by Hindu nationalists in the article. Should the manuscript be accepted after all procedures, kindly consider the possibility of publishing these pictures together with the article.]

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to a power, 1857-2013”), the first Polish monograph of the 20th century history of India. His PhD dissertation focused on Vidya Bharati, the Hindu nationalist network of private schools.

ⁱⁱ As we have seen in the case of U.N. Mukherjee and Swami Shraddhanand, the image of Muslim virility and polygamy has a long tradition in Hindu nationalism. It also escapes the clutches of reality. Firstly, Mukherjee’s estimates do not really work as the extremely higher demographic growth of Muslims in India nowadays is not taking place. Also, as certain research data suggests, polygamy is quite rare among Muslims in India and when the Hindu Personal Law acts were passed in 1950s, it was actually higher in the Hindu society. Also, focusing on Muslims as bearing many children shifts the focus away from the fact that they practice sex-selective abortion much more seldom than Hindus (Jeffery 2014: 174).

ⁱⁱⁱ However, one quite similar example in this case is the allegation by the Hindu Janajagruti Samiti (2014b) that Muslims employ hypnosis and cast an evil eye.

^{iv} Dhooria (no date: 21) a former RSS member, recalled how in the RSS the Muslims had been called *mlecchas*. Golwalkar famously described Muslims as “hissing Yavana snakes” (Kanungo 1992: 42). Cf. also Bapu (2013: 90).

^v Cf. for example, Raj Eshwar (2007: 244-254), for contemporary examples of Hindu nationalists’ fear of demographic growth of Muslims and their preoccupation with conversions. This and many other readings are indeed very similar in their arguments to the Arya Samaj and Hindu Mahasabha discourse of early decades of the 20th century.

^{vi} This poster was allegedly placed in BJP headquarters in June 2012 and then promptly removed. It was claimed in the media that the poster bore the name of an outfit called Bhagant Singh Kranti Sena but bore the name of Anti Love Jihaad Front (Ramachandran 2012). The ALJF front, however, claims that it was its poster and was placed by the Akhil Bharat Hindu Yuvak Sabha, not the Bhagat Singh Kranti Sena (ALJH 09.07.2012). This was one of the few instances in the last years when the issue of Love Jihad drew the attention of mainstream media.

Another poster, printed by the HJS, was still found by me on the wall near the entrance to the Suruchi Prakashan bookstore (an RSS publishing house) in Keshav Kunj are of Delhi in January 2015.

^{vii} Cf. these issues of the said journals: *Panchajanya*, 07.03.2015, 4.10.2014, 1.09.2014, 07.09.2014, 30.08.2014, 14.09.2013, 30.07.2012, 8.06.2012, *Organiser*, 2014.09.01, 2014.09.07, 2012.10.15, 2011.10.16, and 2009.12.20 and e.g. *Saamna*, 31.08.2014, 5.01.2014, and others.

^{viii} The BJP did not include the topic of Love Jihad or conversions in its 2014 Lok Sabha election manifesto (no author, 2014). BJP also did not insert the word “Love Jihad” in its executive’s resolution of 2015 in Uttar Pradesh, where it had heated the issue of Love Jihad possibly more than anywhere else. However, in the same document a

question was added: "Is it just a coincidence or a design behind atrocities against women of a particular community and perpetrated by those belonging to a particular community?" (Deccan Chronicle 25.08.2014). The BJP leaders that openly used the term "Love Jihad" and presented it as a real threat included the more radical ones like Laxmikant Bajpai (Gupta 2014b: 9) Subramaniam Swamy (Tyagi 2014) or Uma Bharti (Nai Duniya 22.09.2014). However, the main party leader and the Prime Minister of India as of today, Narendra Modi, did not utter the term "Love Jihad" publicly.

That the RSS also rakes up the issue of Love Jihad is visible in the articles of its two mouthpieces, listed in the previous endnote. The organisation's leader, Mohan Bhagwat, and its general secretary, Bhaiyyaji Joshi, also came out publicly against it (Nai Duniya 10.09.2014, Gupta 2014b: 9). However, the issue is arguably not central to its grand narrative (at least now), but rather serves as temporary role in given circumstances. This can be inferred from the facts that the organization did not bring out any widely popularized publications on Love Jihad and a book printed in 2014 by Suruchi Prakashan, the RSS publishing house, on the issue of Jihad makes no mention of Love Jihad, nor does it describe processes typical to it, such as seducing (Paliwal 2014).

^{ix} Interestingly, sexual depravity as projected on the enemy has been also used in another discourse in India, a one less known in the North, but a very important one, nonetheless. As Ramaswamy (1999: 17) informs us, during the anti-Hindi movement in Tamilnadu, both the Hindi and Tamil language were portrayed as women, and one of the derogatory depictions of Hindi was that of a seductress. The attack of the Hindi north "would destroy the very moral fabric of Tamil society by bringing in the depraved sexual norms of the Aryan and Brahmanical men and women of the North, thus despoiling the chastity and purity of Tamiltaay".

^x The ALJF also throws two allegations at the Muslim that are so strong that they do not find their equivalent in the RSS publications. The first one is that that Muslim women make love with their relatives even before marriage and after it, since Muslims have (of course) four wives, they are unable to satisfy them sexually, because meat-eating arouses sexual passion which forces the insatiable Muslim wives to become lesbian and again seek physical relations with their relatives (ALJH 9.10.2014, cf. also Anand, forthcoming: 13). The other allegation, which sounds like a bad and vulgar joke but is really circulated by the ALJF, is that there are two Jihads: the love Jihad and the "anus Jihad" (*gudā jihād*).^x In the former, the Muslim terrorists are said to first indulge in anal sex (*gudāmaithun*), which makes his broad enough to fit in the explosive device (ALJH 3.02.2014). In this absurd allegation the image of Muslims as terrorists and of sexual perverts are merged into one.

^{xi} Cf. also the expression "ensnared in love-dragnet", used by the HJS (no date, *Sufferings of Hindu women who are victims of 'Love Jihad'*; no date, *Some reasons for the rapid spread of 'Love Jihad'* and 2014b).

^{xii} Cf. also very similar conclusions and suggestions of the Hindu Janajagruti Samiti (2014a and *Precautions to be taken by Hindu girls, women and Hindu parents*).

^{xiii} *Rakhī* in fact has a long tradition of being used not only by Hindu, but also Indian nationalists, for purposes that bring it out from the strictly religious level to the arenas of social and political movements (cf. Sarkar 2001: 263).

^{xiv} Of course these family-based comparisons are not restricted to Hindu nationalist discourse and to an Indian one. For a recent and interesting case of an analysis of such family metaphors in a more general Indian political discourse, see Krishnamurti (2014).

^{xv} In a similar way, a common metaphor both in broadly understood Hindu nationalism and Indian nationalism is that the country is the “mother” and its inhabitants are its “children” (Sarkar 2001: 251, 254). It could be argued that in the Hindu nationalist discourse, whenever the threat to Hindu women is invoked, two metaphors are collapsed into one. All Hindu women are sisters to Hindu men but also the Hindu woman is the country as such, the mother of all that needs to be defended. Some interpretations, such as Bacchetta’s (1994: 216) go even as far as claiming that while entire India is a women’s, the mosques become phallic symbols that rape her body. However, I will believe that a broader scope of source materials should be provided here to elaborate on this issue and establish whether this metaphor is in function.

^{xvi} For the importance of Rakshabandhan celebrations for the RSS – outside and before the issue of Love Jihad – cf. Mathur (2008: 119) and Kanungo (2002: 63).

^{xvii} Here the author of the post obviously criticises *the Jodhaa Akbar* movie for portraying Hindu-Muslim love. For more on how this film tackles both the issues of inter-faith marriages and Hindutva ideology, see Mubarki (2014).

^{xviii} It was this poster that drew attention of the media when it was shortly displayed in the BJP headquarters.

As for the contents of the poster, cf. very similar techniques described by the HJS, together with such an explanation: “Girls who are given unlimited freedom in their house celebrate ‘Valentine’s Day’, ‘Friendship Day’, ‘Rose Day’ etc. along with their friends as per the western culture.” The same source adds a new technique: hypnosis (*vāśīkaraṇ*), which also causes the casting of an evil eye (HJS, 2014b and no date, *Some reasons for the rapid spread of ‘Love Jihad’*).

^{xix} The other examples may be: Manoj Bajpai and Shabana Raza, Sunil Dutt and Nargis, Kamal Jeet and Waheeda Rehman, Kishore Kumar and Madhubala (Mumtaz Jehan), Hrithik Roshan and Suzanne Khan.

^{xx} Cf. also the HJS: *Sufferings of Hindu women who are victims of ‘Love Jihad’ and Love Jihad*. The first source repeats the point about sexual slavery and the second gives three possible finales for a Hindu woman marrying a Muslim man: becoming a prostitute, a terrorist or suicide.

^{xxi} This has been a point traditionally used by the Hindu nationalists and based on Savarkar’s assumptions that all non-Hindus in India following non-Indian religions have

Indian roots and therefore, since they have “Hindu blood”, they need only to accept “Hindu culture” and India as their true motherland. Such a strategy can be likened to an ever earlier Arya Samaj solution which called conversions a *śuddhi*, that is a ritual of purification, as if a foreign religion was a blot of impurity on a Hindu that can be washed away with proper rites.

^{xxii} The word used here is *uddhār* and, as Charu Gupta (2012: 168) has pointed out, the same goal of liberating Muslim women, described with the same word, was advocated already in the 1920s *śuddhi* movement. The RSS writings also sometimes portray certain Muslims as desiring to marry Hindus because of their higher regard for liberal Hindu traditions (Bacchetta 1994b: 212).

^{xxiii} Some recent studies point out that “in many parts of India women’s mobile phone use has been experienced as a threat to the marriage system” although the study from which this quote is taken (Tenhunen 2014: 166-168) proves it does not have to be that way.

^{xxiv} Ramaswamy (2002: 184) has shown us that it was already J. Nehru who showed how the idealised image of the country might be used to cover the problems of its people.

^{xxv} Cf. Madhok (1986) for the Hindi version of the prayer and Dhooria (no date: 42-43) for the English version.

^{xxvi} As an additional reference to the image of women in times of Chatterjee cf. also Roy’s (2002: 489-490) conclusion that in late colonial debates on women franchise both sides in fact wanted to retain women’s traditional role. “Those in favour of the vote argued that women’s maternal role in exercising guidance over their children enabled them to determine the laws guiding an entire population. Those against women’s suffrage turned the argument around, saying that the participation of women in public life would injure family life.”

^{xxvii} The issue of strengthening women physically and equipping them with weapons for self-defence also has a long tradition in Hindu nationalism (cf. Gupta 2012: 164-165, Bapu 2013: 90).

^{xxviii} Cf. some of the BJP’s members’ position on Rup Kanwar’s *sati* (Kanungo 2002: 163, and Kumari and Kidwai 1998: 114).

^{xxix} Some of the most important Arya Samaj leaders, such as Dayananda Saraswati (1984) and Har Bilas Sarda (1935: 5-44, 69-116), advocated important social reforms of their time, such as widow remarriage, women education, right to inheritance and the like, but did their best to try to prove that the advocated changes were based on time-honoured Vedic traditions. For the question of women in these debates, see Sharma (1996). For more on the debates between Arya Samaj and Hindu orthodox bodies, see Jones (2006: 27-42, 109-112). Of course, while Arya Samaj had substantially influenced the RSS, the two were not organizations of the same kind, and therefore it should not be taken for granted that the reformism-orthodoxy debate regarding Arya Samaj would look the same way regarding the RSS. For more deliberations on how to position Arya Samaj between earlier reformist religious sects and later nationalist organizations, see Jaffrelot (2010: 83-94).

^{xxx} There are many other examples of how Hindu nationalists had to find a balance between reformism and nationalism. The RSS always strives to build a unity of the Hindu nation by building, among others, the quality of the Hindu community (Bajpai 2008: 27). However, Golwalkar and Upadhyaya, like Savarkar, strove to prove that the *varna* system is a justifiable tradition, as it divides roles within a society, just like the limbs of the society serve various purposes (Jaffrelot 1998: 23-24). Typically, these arguments gloss over the fact that in the caste and *varna* system the professions should be inherited and one’s profession should not be changed; here the system is rather portrayed as a benevolent division of labour.

Officially, the Bharatiya Jana Sangh party called for the opening of temples to untouchables (just like Gandhi of the Congress and Savarkar of the Hindu Mahasabha) which in 1950s caused the impossibility of it merging with Ram Rajya Parishad, another Hindu right party of a more orthodox character (Baxter, 1971: 142). The other issue, arguably highly conditioned by the contemporary political situation, was the opposition of the three Hindu right parties – Bharatiya Jana Sangh, Hindu Mahasabha and Ram Rajya Parishad – to the progressive Hindu Code Bill in 1950s (Baxter, 1971: 112, 150). Once the bill, after the initial strong opposition, was eventually passed in four separate pieces, the Bharatiya Jana Sangh changed its position (Baxter, 1971: 212-213) and started to call for a Uniform Civil Code that would include the Muslim community. That has been the position of the Hindu nationalists of the RSS/BJS/BJP trend ever since, including the 1980s Shah Bano case. Altogether, this stance is similar to the ALJF position on Love Jihad: Hindu traditions should be kept intact as far as it is possible but Western solutions are still rated higher than Muslim traditions.

^{xxx}ⁱ The HJS, however, does call out to the Hindu society to accept those Hindu women that eventually abandon their Muslim families and are willing to return, and even gives the address of an ashram where one can undergo purification (HJS, no date, *Appeal to Hindu society and measures to restrain the menace of “Love Jihad”*).

^{xxx}ⁱⁱ These ideological claims by the Hindu nationalists are countered by Palriwala, referred to in Jeffery (2014: 181) that since 1980s identity politics, especially of Hindutva kind, were a factor in defending the tradition of dowry. This, however, is beyond the scope of this article and my area of studies and I am unable to verify these claims. I can only say that the Hindu nationalists do claim their opposition to the tradition of dowry.

^{xxx}ⁱⁱⁱ This is for example advocated in one of the textbooks used in the RSS schools (*All India Culture Awareness Examination*, no date: 28).

^{xxx}^{iv} Savarkar’s points on Hindu free culture against the Islamic orthodoxy and bigotry are in one or the other form repeated by Hindu nationalists till this day, cf. e.g. Seshadri et al. (2013: 29, 50). In case faced with a criticism of the dark sides of certain (former and present) Hindu traditions, the Hindu nationalists often reply that the corrupt ones, like child marriage or *pardā*, were in fact necessary, even in unfair, reactions to the

Muslim attacks. These traditions helped to save the Hindu girls from the clutches of Muslims (Basu 1999: 110). Even here, then, Muslims are to blame. This technique also has a long tradition in Hindu nationalism (cf. Gupta 2012:177).