Identifying Themes of
Right-Wing Extremism in Hindutva Discourse
on Twitter

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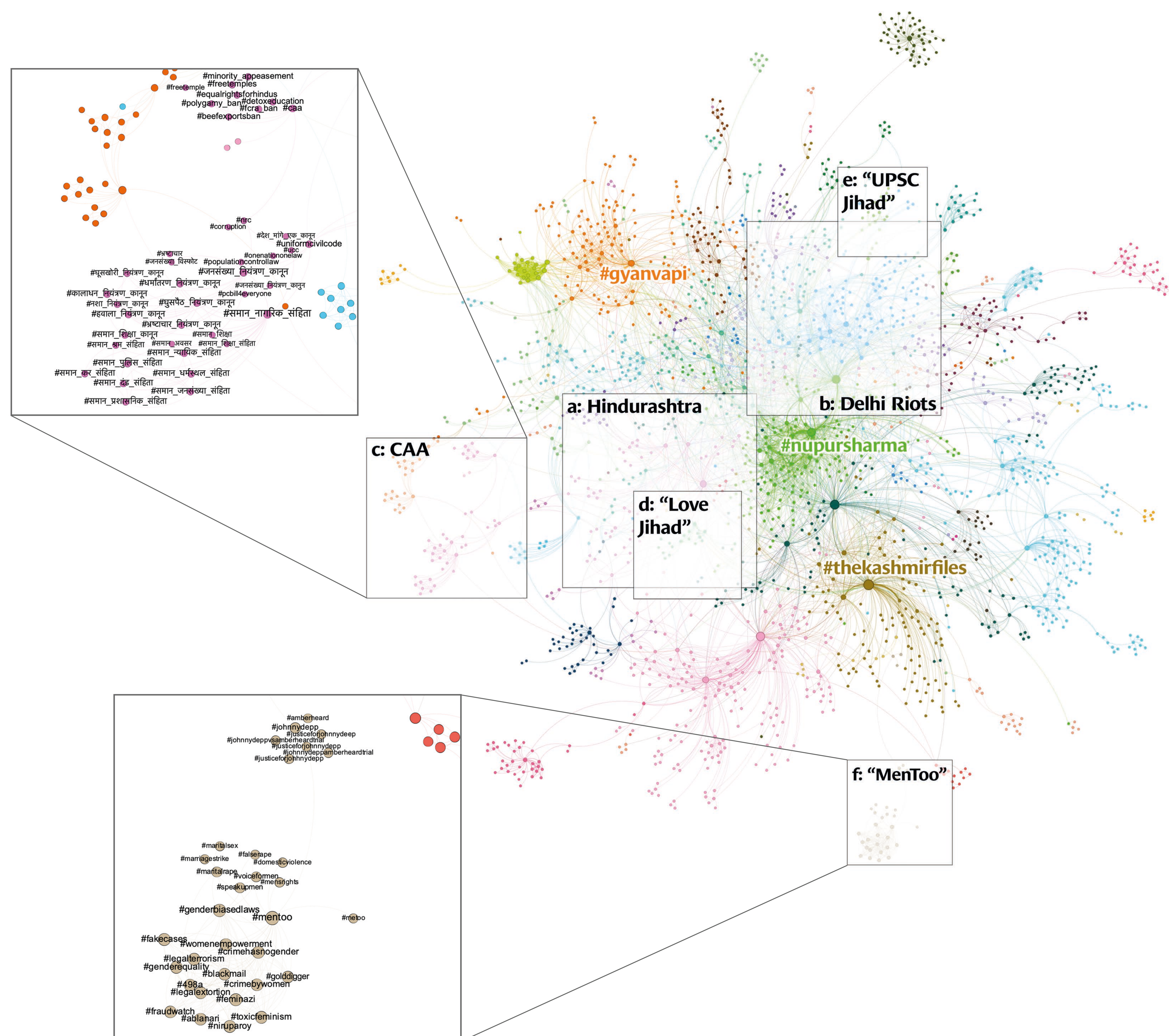RWTH Aachen University

Kazutoshi Sasahara
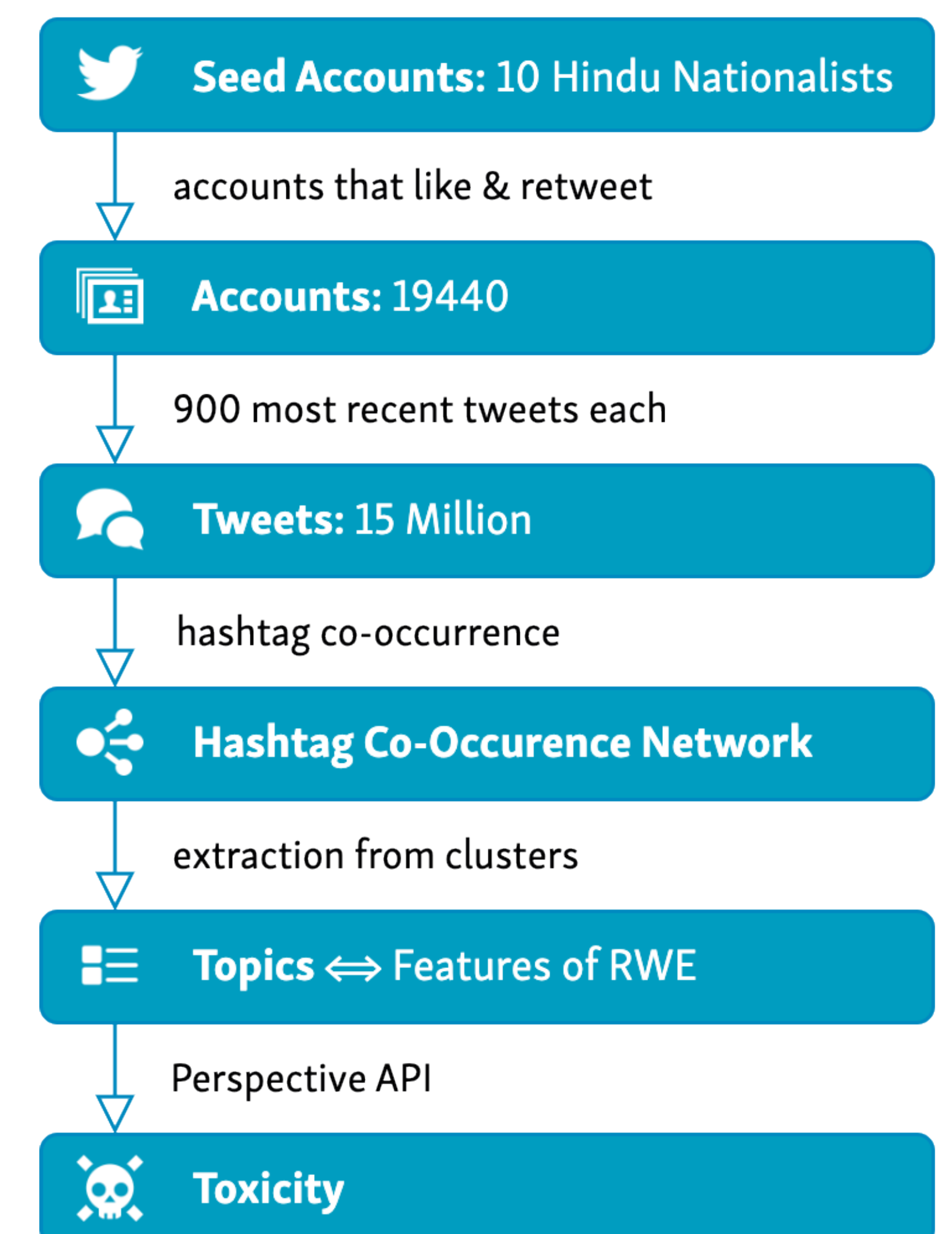Tokyo Institute of Technology

Introduction

Hindutva ('Hinduness') is the core ideology of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) – the present ruling party in India – and according to this ideology, Hindu identity is a combination of sacred territory, language, and race. Researchers to date have **categorized Hindutva as religious nationalism instead of ethnonationalism** and this is the main contributing factor for the continued **absence of Hindutva from Right-Wing Extremism (RWE)** literature. Against that trend and building on Leidig's (2020) argument, we advocate that discourse on RWE, as a global problem, should include Hindutva as an ideology of RWE, for it indeed has all of RWE's key features.

RQ1: How does the Hindutva discourse on Twitter propound the relationship between right-wing extremism and Hindutva?
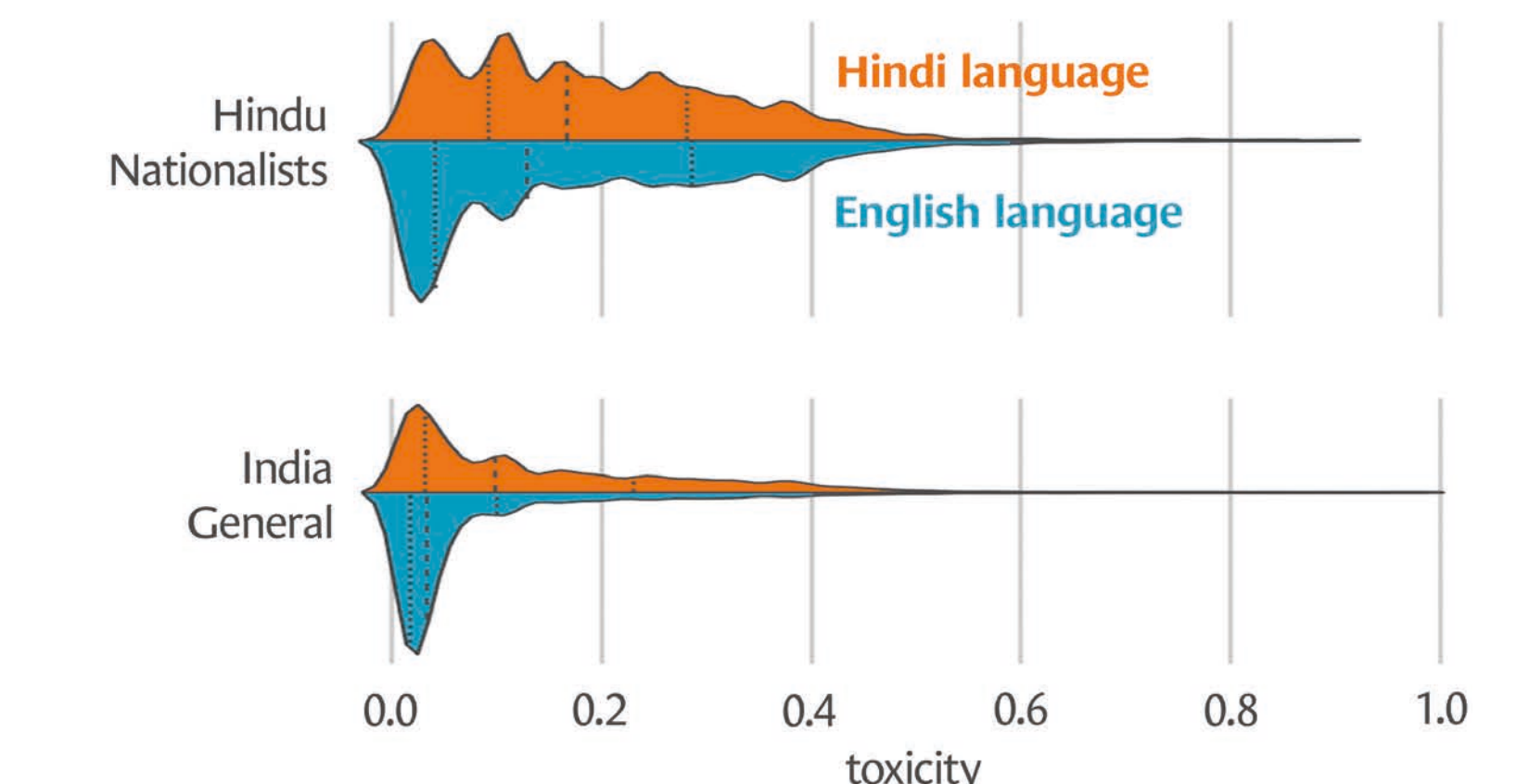
RQ2: Are there differences in toxic behavior between Hindi- and English-speaking Twitter users who support Hindutva?
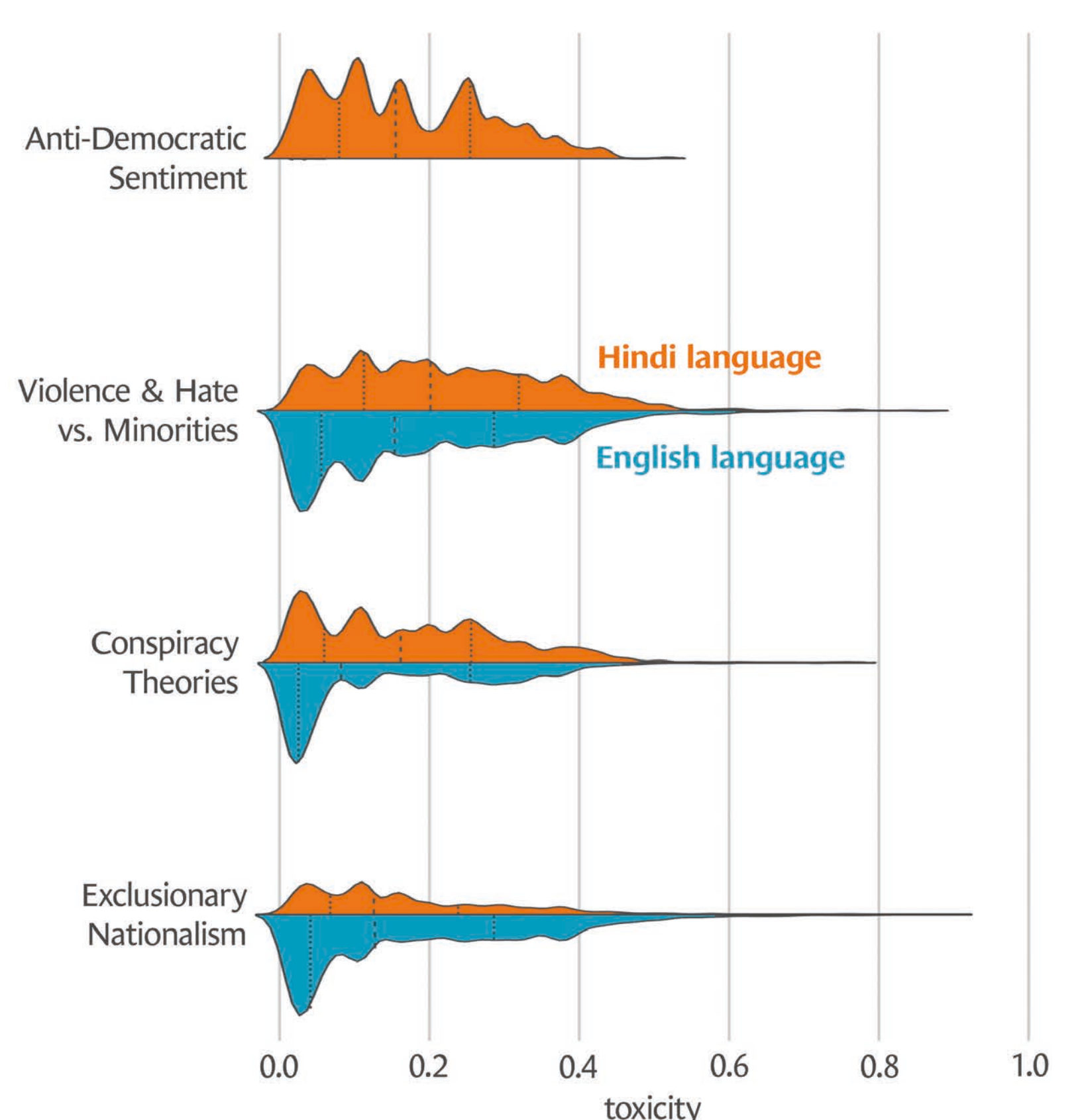
Setup

- **Seed Accounts:** 10 Hindu Nationalists — accounts that like & retweet
- **Accounts:** 19440 — 900 most recent tweets each
- **Tweets:** 15 Million — hashtag co-occurrence
- **Hashtag Co-Occurence Network** — extraction from clusters
- **Topics ⟺ Features of RWE** — Perspective API
- **Toxicity**

Toxicity of Hindu Nationalists

Toxicity by Feature of Right-Wing Extremism

Conclusions

Using community detection on the network of hashtag co-occurrence, we identify topics related to the four most common features of RWE: **exclusionary nationalism** (cluster a), **conspiracy theories** (clusters d, e), **violence and hate against minorities** (clusters b, f) and **anti-democratic sentiment** (cluster c). We conclude that Hindutva should be categorized as an ideology of RWE. Toxicity analysis shows **significantly higher toxicity in Hindi language** for conspiracy-related and anti-minority tweets.

Against that global rise of RWE, it is crucial to study Hindutva from the RWE perspective, for it stands to not only bring global awareness about the ideology but also diversify the existing narrative about RWE and, in turn, make it global instead of Eurocentric.