



Indian = Hindu?

The Development of Nationalist Attitudes among Hindu and Muslim Children in India

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Introduction

- Many political movements equate nationality with individuals of a certain ethnicity or religion (e.g., Americans are White, Indians are Hindu)
- Adults internalize these associations,¹ which in turn relates to their support of exclusionary social policies²
- Exclusionary nationalist associations have negative consequences for minority individuals' national identification³ & psychological well-being⁴
- India has been a site of religious conflict, with government leaders sometimes equating being Indian with being Hindu⁵

Research Questions

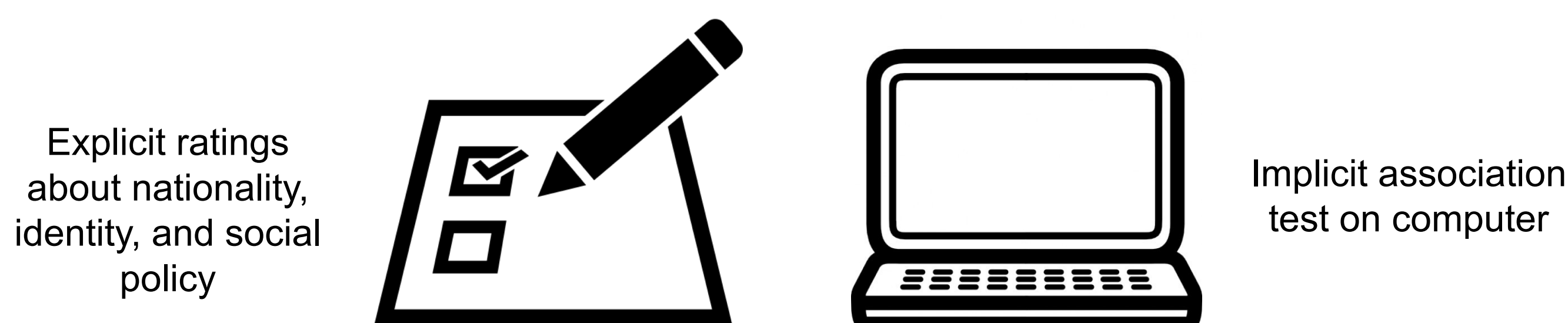
- 1) Emergence of religious nationalism**
How early do children develop religious nationalist associations? Does this change across adolescence?
- 2) Internal construal: identity & concept of nationality**
How do children incorporate religious nationalist associations with their group identities & beliefs about what it means to be a "true" citizen of their country?
- 3) External attitudes: social policy**
Do children's religious nationalist associations relate to their views on social policy and donation choices?

Participants

160 Hindu and Muslim children (9-16) at a school in Gujarat, India

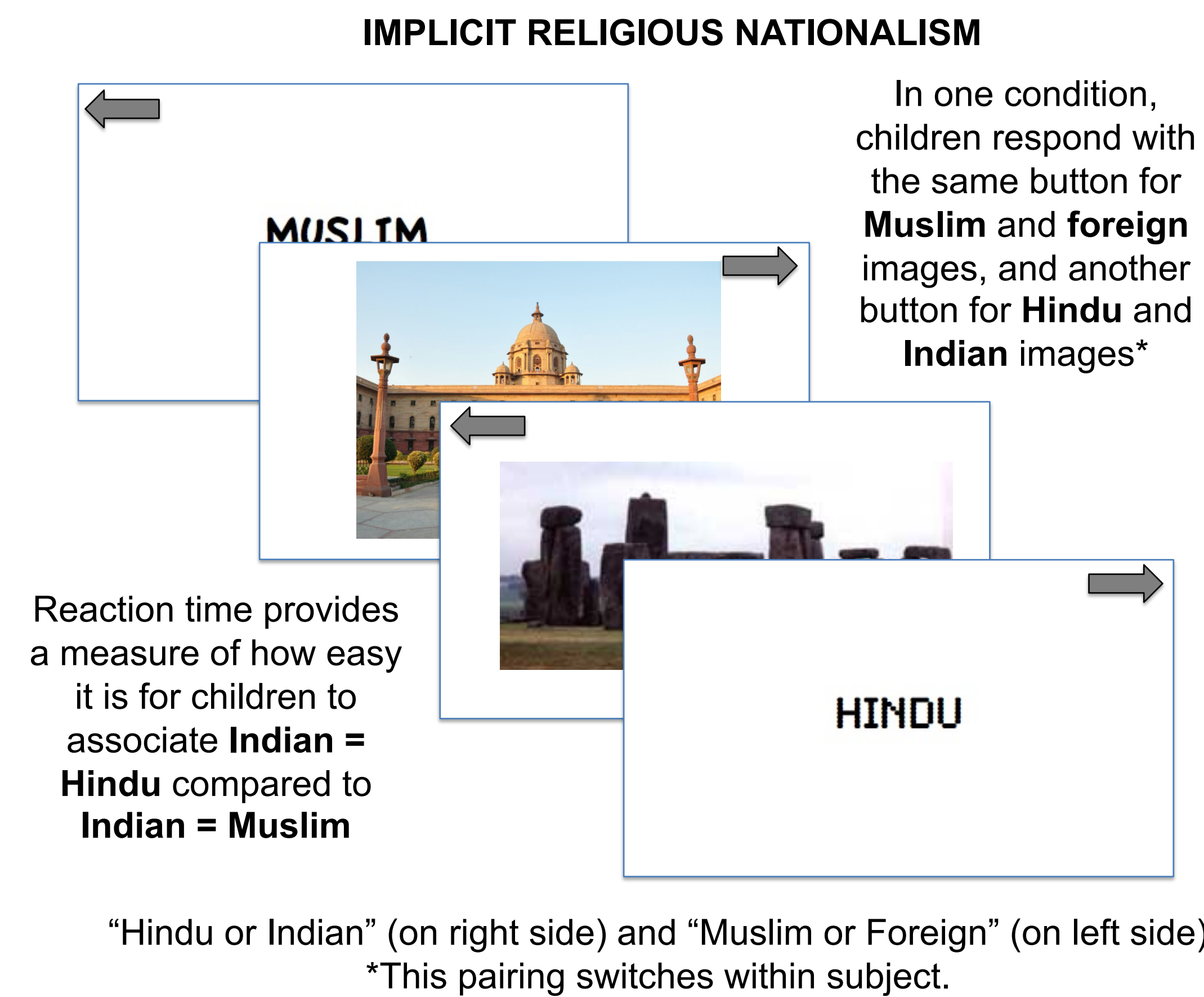
	Hindu (n=80)	Muslim (n=81)	
Age in years (SD)	12.43 (1.74)	12.38 (1.91)	p = 0.864
Age group			p = 0.873
younger (4 th /5 th grade)	38 (48%)	41 (51%)	
other (8 th /9 th grade)	41 (52%)	40 (49%)	
Gender			p = 0.876
female	39 (49%)	42 (48%)	
male	40 (51%)	39 (52%)	

Procedure



*order counterbalanced

Measures



EXPLICIT RELIGIOUS NATIONALISM

	Very Indian	Indian	A little Indian	Not very Indian	Not at all Indian
Hindu Indians	✓	✓			
Muslim Indians		✓			

The difference between these ratings measures whether children show an **Indian = Hindu** (positive) or **Indian = Muslim** (negative) bias

CONCEPT OF NATIONALITY

Children rate how much they agree with statements about what makes a "True" Indian, including...

- Treating people of all religions equally
- Following India's laws
- Being born in India
- Being patriotic
- Celebrating Ramzan

BELIEFS ABOUT SOCIAL POLICY

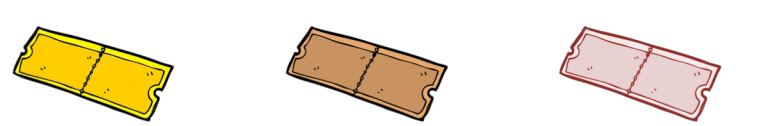
Children rate how much they agree with **social policy** statements, including...

- No laws should prevent Hindus [Muslims] from following their customs
- Leaders in the Indian government should be Hindu [Muslim]
- Hindu [Muslim] prayers should be taught in school

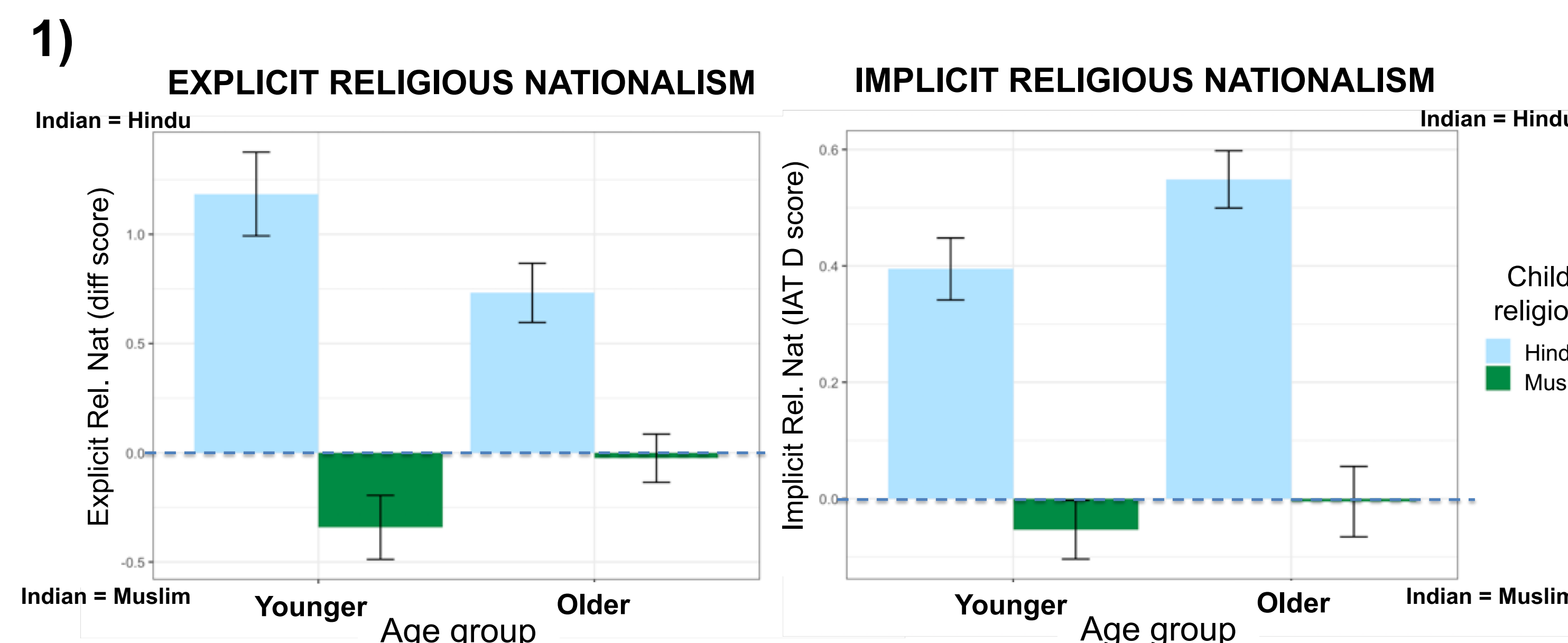
ORGANIZATION SUPPORT

Children cast 10 votes for money to be donated to one of three organizations:

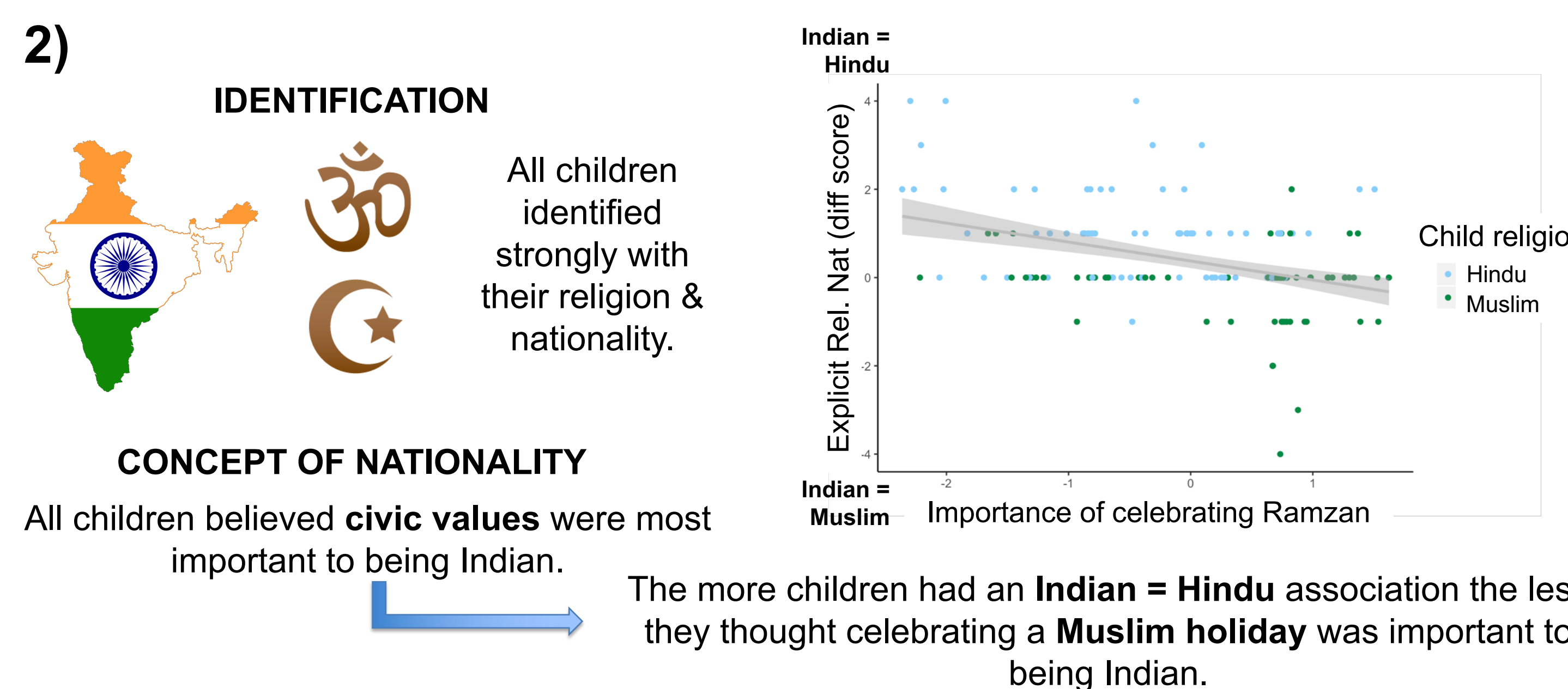
- Islam-focused
- Hindu-focused
- Secular-focused



Results

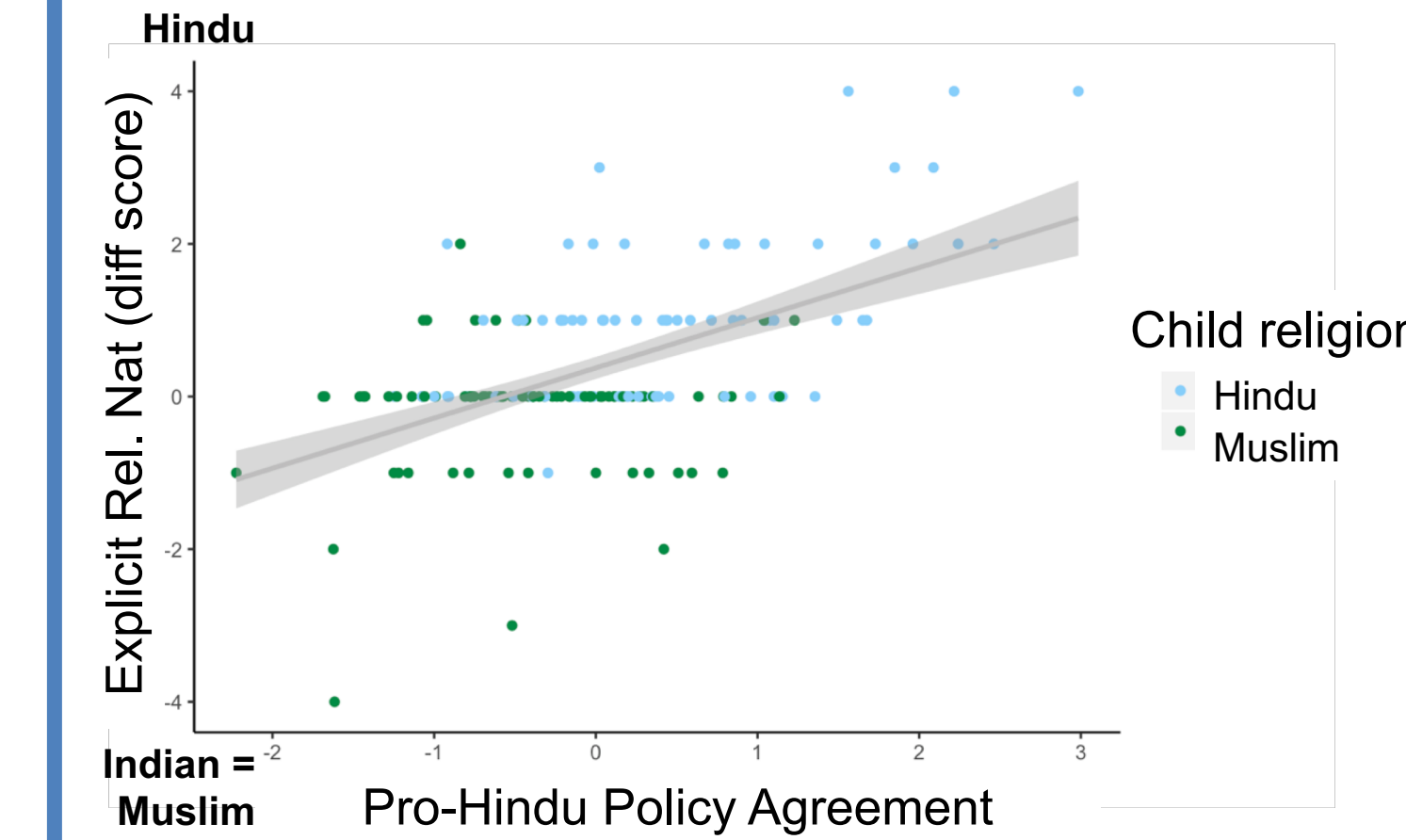


Hindu children show an Indian = Hindu association, but Muslim children do not. Hindu children's bias decreases with age for explicit—but not implicit—associations. Children's religion predicts their religious nationalism above and beyond their in-group attitudes.



All children identified strongly with their religion & nationality. All children believed **civic values** were most important to being Indian. The more children had an **Indian = Hindu** association the less they thought celebrating a **Muslim holiday** was important to being Indian.

3) BELIEFS ABOUT SOCIAL POLICY



Hindu and Muslim children with more of an **Indian = Hindu** association agreed more with **Pro-Hindu policy**:

- Leaders in the Indian government should be Hindu
- Hindus are the most powerful group in India
- The government should provide more benefits to Hindus
- Hindu songs should be performed on Independence day

★ Endorsement of Pro-Hindu and Pro-Muslim factors uniquely predicted children's allocation of votes to Hindu and Islam-focused organizations.

Conclusions

- By elementary school, children may internalize exclusionary nationalist associations
- Data from Muslim children provides evidence for resilience against this larger national rhetoric
- Religious nationalist associations uniquely predict concepts of nationality, beliefs about social policy, and donation choices
- Future work should explore how these associations develop

References

1. Devos & Banaji (2005). *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 2. Verkuyten (2009). *Social Justice Research*. 3. Sidanius, Feshback, Levin, & Pratto (1997). *The Public Opinion Quarterly*. 4. Phinney, Horenczyk, & Vedder (2001). *Journal of Social Issues*. 5. Jha (2017). *Aljazeera*.

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