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**How to measure individual's religious affiliation in sub-Saharan Africa?
Lessons from a longitudinal survey in rural Mali.**

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Projet Slam – Suivi longitudinal au Mali

Projet ANR-DyPE – Dynamiques de la parentalité et de l'enfance en milieu rural africain - (ANR-12-BSH1-0005-01)



- Religion pluralism and co-religious affiliation
 - Conversion steps from traditional to Christian religion (Horton, Fisher, Peel...)
 - Multiple religious affiliations (Barbier) with syncretism practice
 - Flexibility and pragmatism of religious practice (Dubresson, Lasseur and Mayrague)
 - Reversible conversion (Langewiesche)

Approach of religious affiliation in censuses and surveys

- Data set and religious modality variables

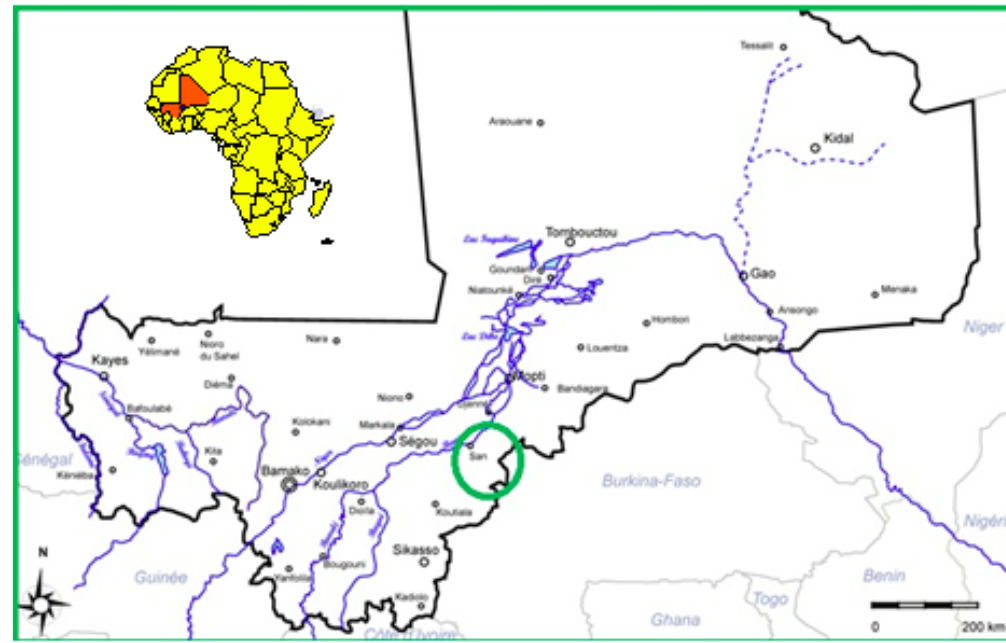
- Information from national surveys (DHS) and census data
- Religion at the time of the survey
- Religious affiliations are collected with strict modalities : Catholics, Protestants, Muslims, Animists
- Used as explanatory variables in statistical analysis and models (like education attainment, or residence status)
- However, some datasets and surveys include other religious questions like religiosity (Malawi project, Pewforum dataset)

- For which results?

- Differences are observed between religious affiliations, but they usually lose significance when included in statistical models
- Correlations vary from one study to another (McQuillan, Cau, Sevoyan, Agadjanian)
- Results from specific project suggest that other characteristics (context, intensity) could matter more than religion itself

Population and dataset

- SLAM project dataset
- South-East Mali
- Life event survey implemented in 1988-89 with waves every 5 years (last one in 2009-10)
- A rural population living from agricultural subsistence activities
- 3165 biographies



Religious itinerary in the life event survey

- Approaching religious affiliation complexity :
 - Religious itinerary, with religious affiliation changes during the life course

Rang	Religion	Année de l'adoption	Durée	Engagement chrétien
1		Naissance		

- Level of involvement in Christian religion : baptism, communion...
- Proximity to traditional religion : initiation among Christian children

Bwa religious context

- Religious pluralism:
 - Traditional cults (villages, lineages, individuals)
 - Catholic and Protestant religions
 - No Muslims
- Establishment of Christian religion:
 - Catholics: 1922 (Mandiakuy mission)
 - Protestants: 1936 (Sanekuy mission)
 - Diffusion of Christian religion since the middle of the XX's century

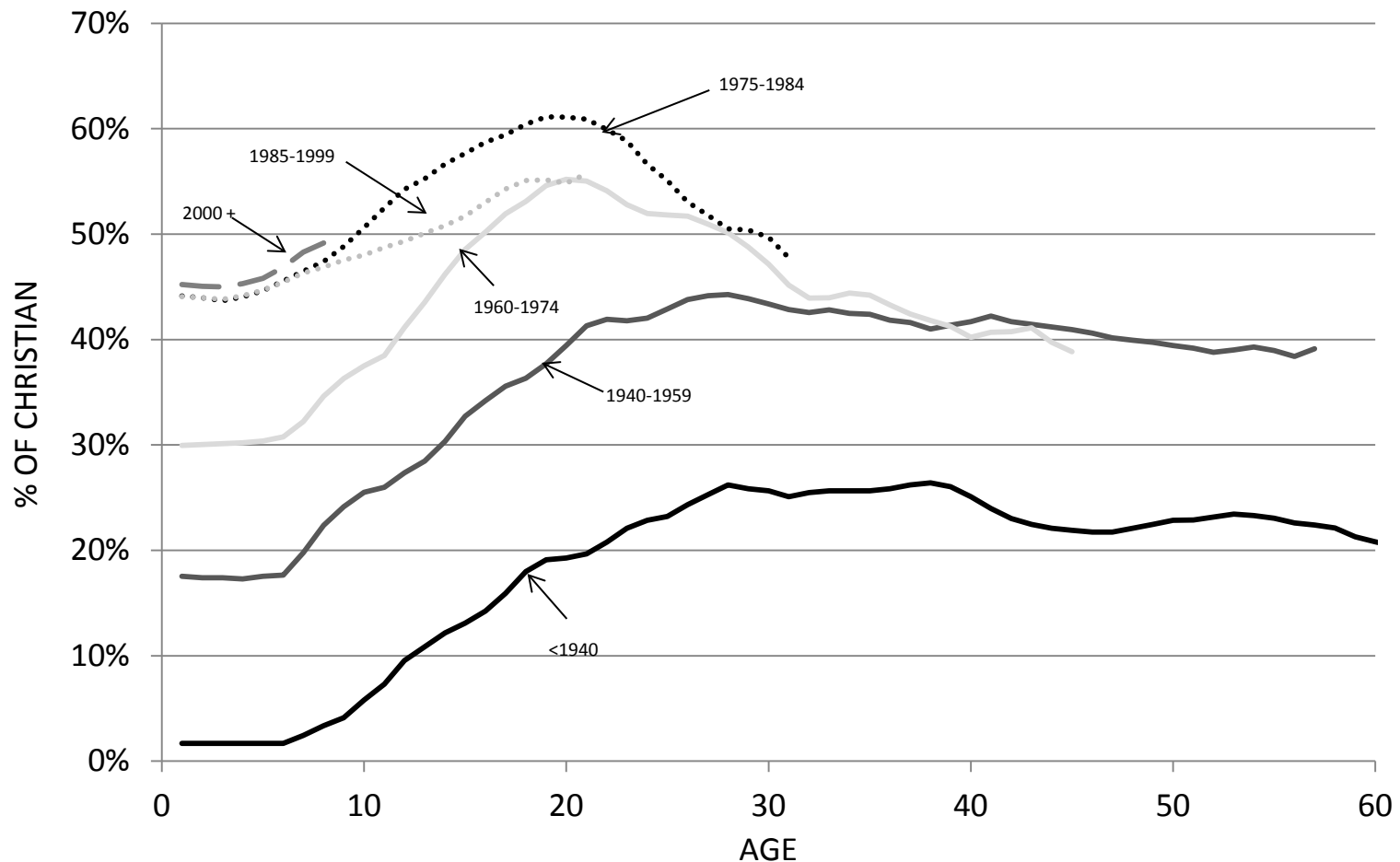
Religion in the survey : plurality of religions

Population (%) by religion at the time of the last survey

	Men	Women	Total
Catholic	28	36	32
Protestant	14	16	15
Christian	42	52	47
Traditional	58	48	53

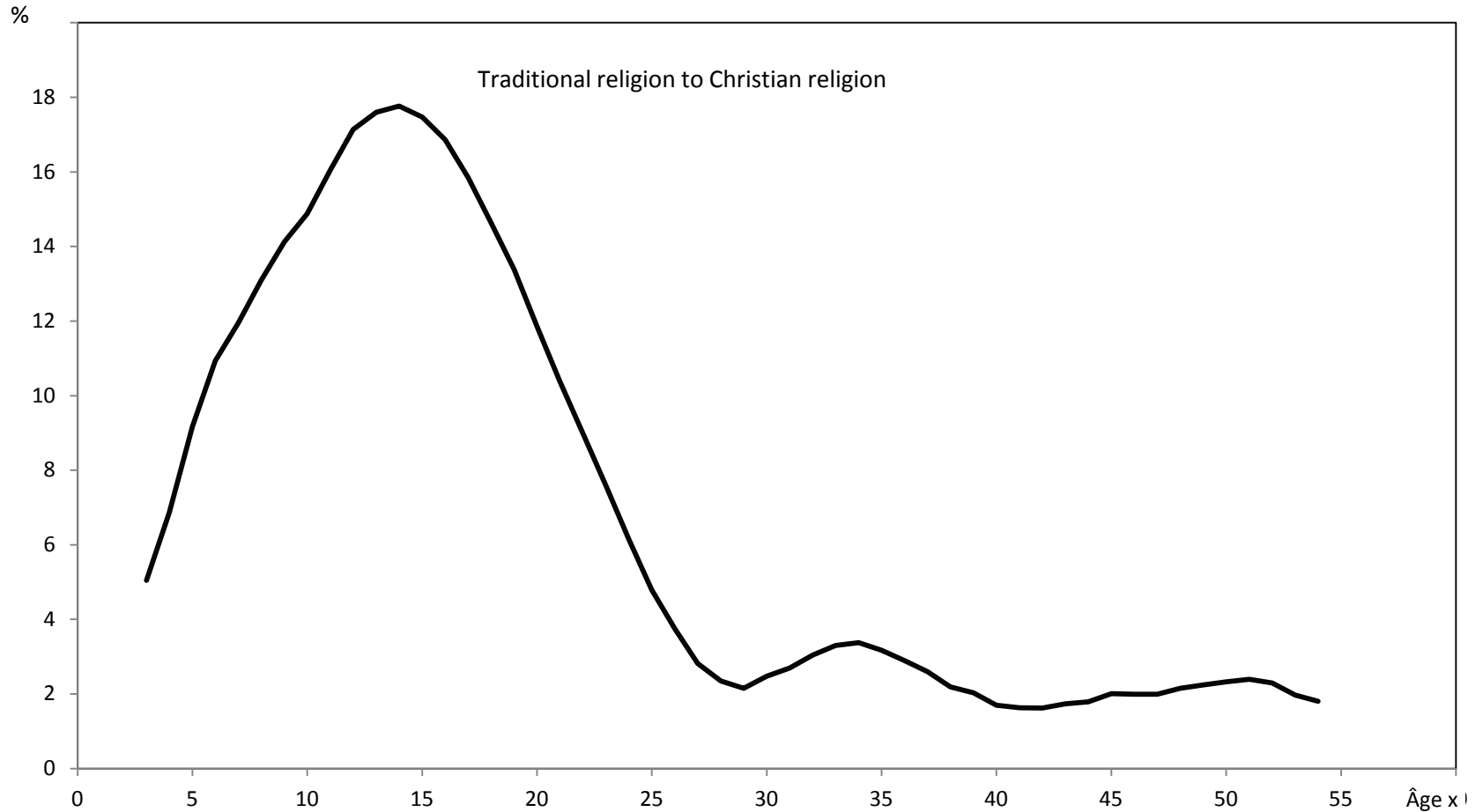
Practice of Christian religion : cohort effect and age effect

Proportion (%) of Christians by age and birth cohort



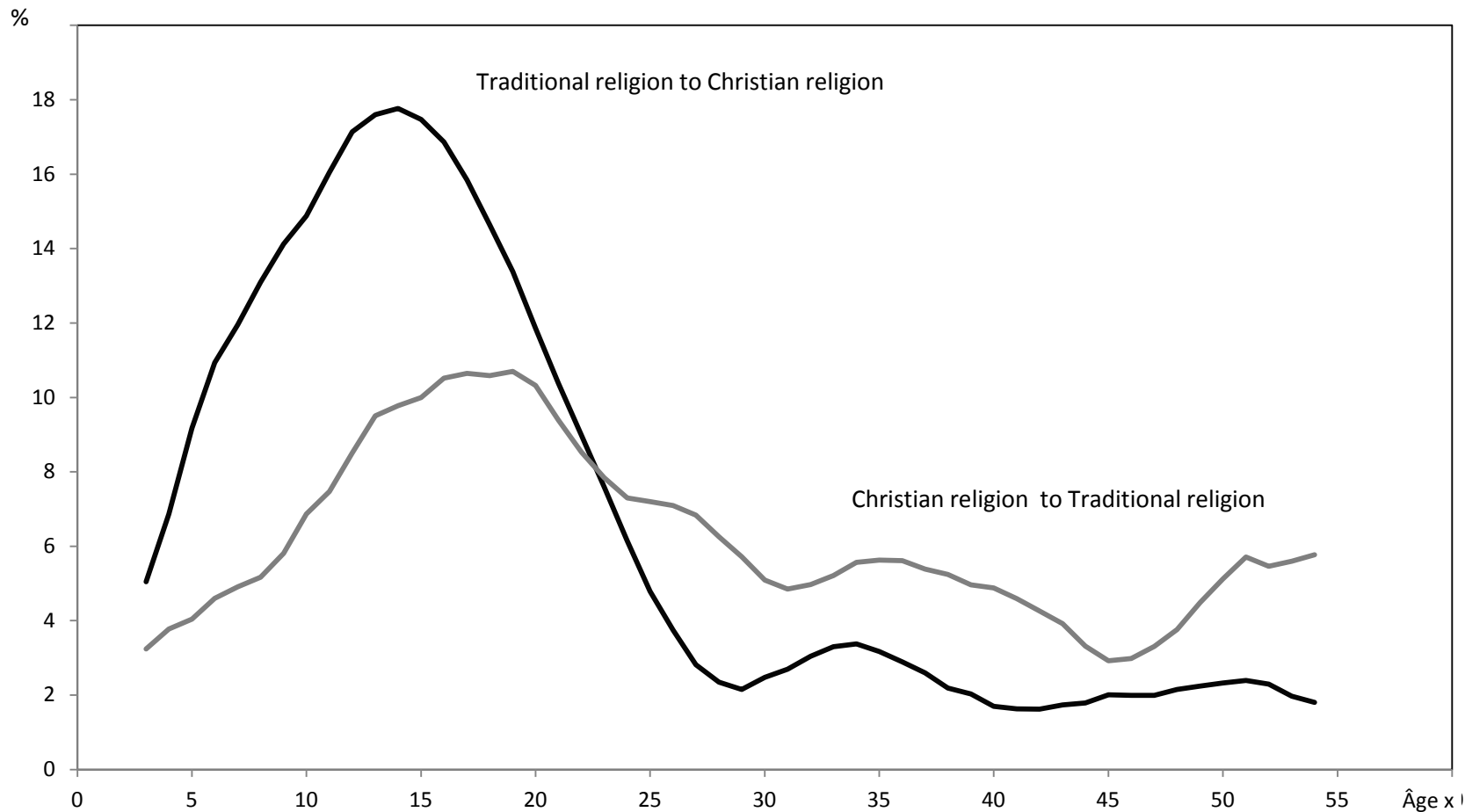
Religious mobility: a youth behaviour?

Religion switching probabilities over the next five years by age

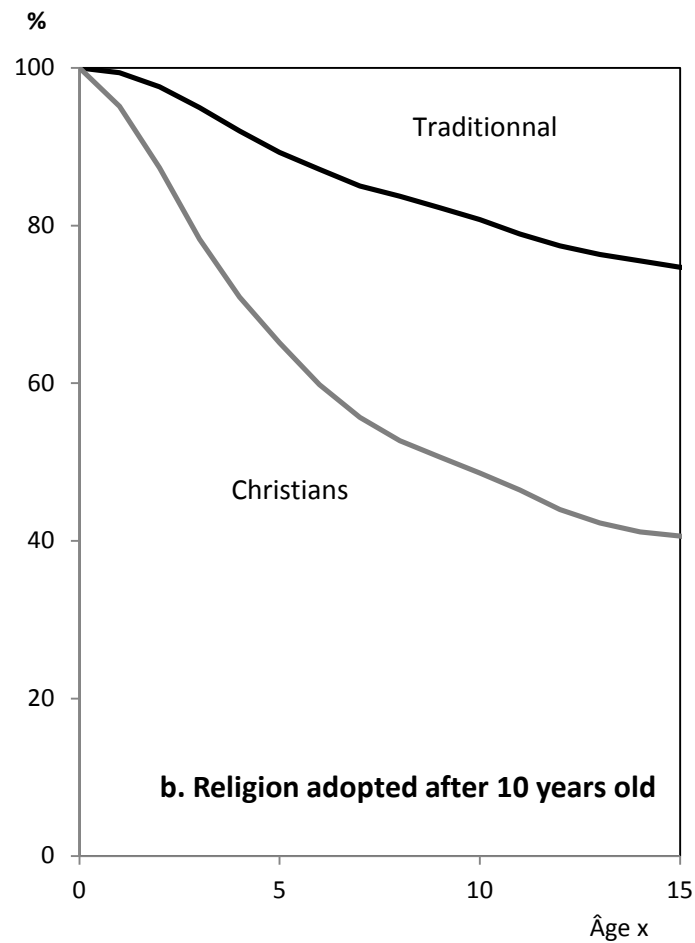
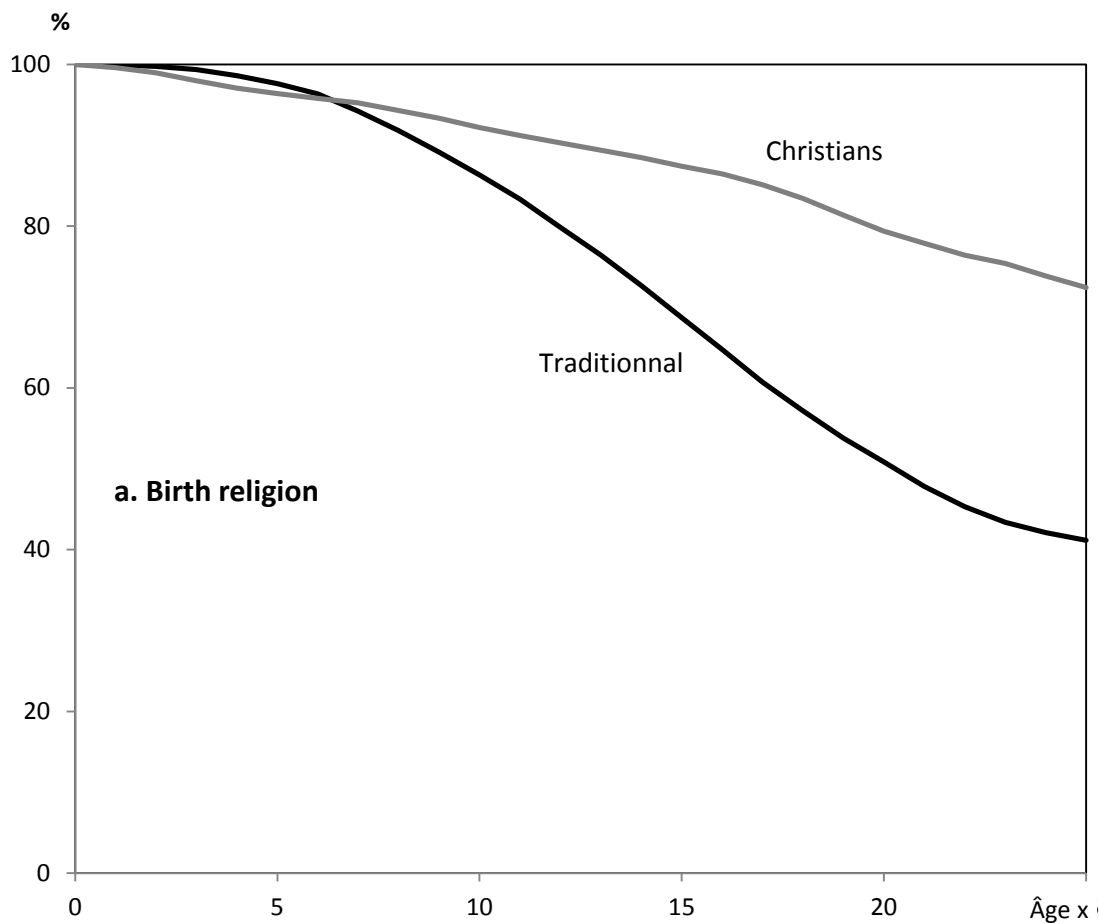


Religious mobility: a youth behaviour?

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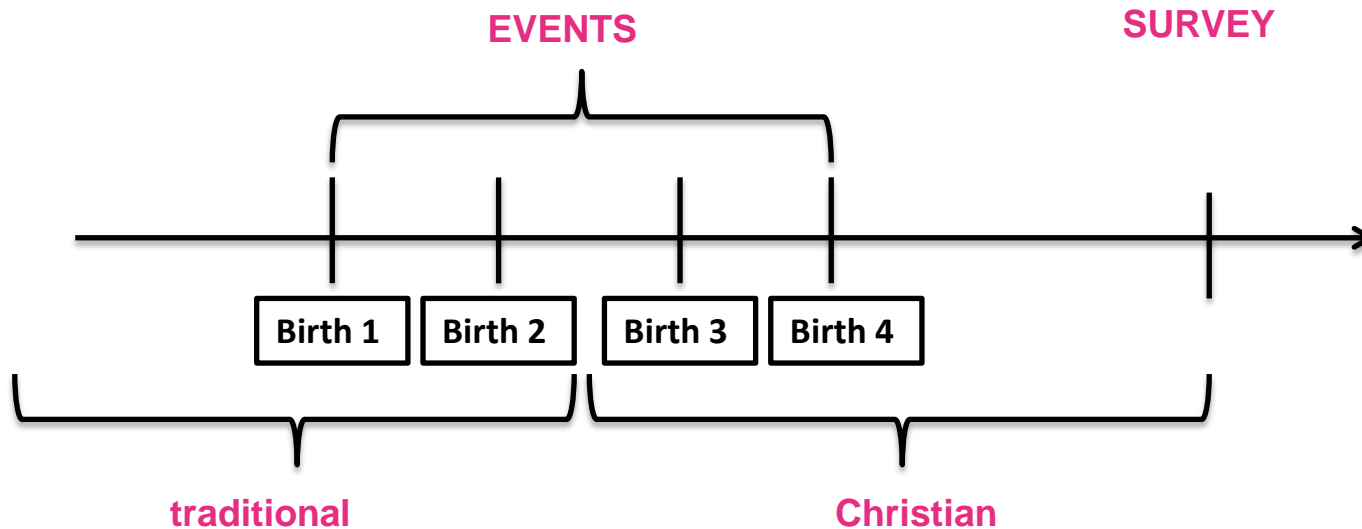
Reversible practices



Prevalence (%) of traditional and Christian religions according to different definitions of religious affiliation. 1940-1959 birth cohort

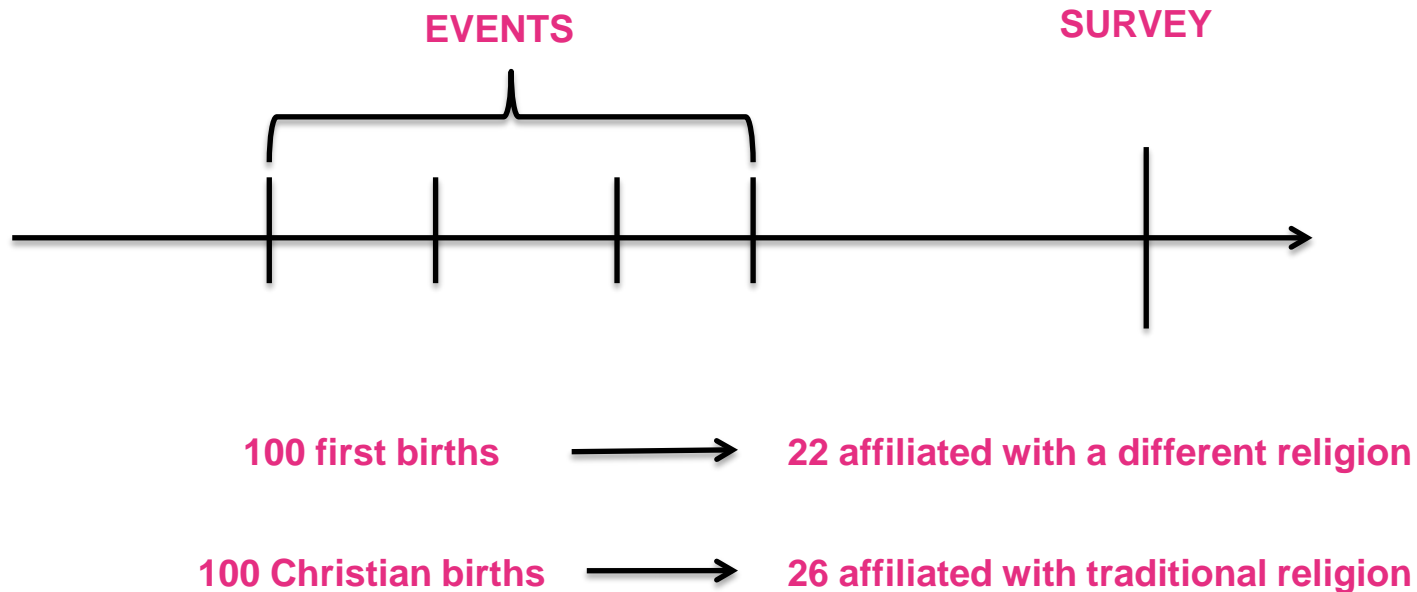
Definition	Proportion (%) of individuals who are affiliated to:	
	a Christian religion (Catholic or Protestant)	a traditional religion
Only religion practised since birth	11	25
Birth religion	18	82
Religion at age 20	40	60
Religion at the time of the survey (or at the end of the observation period)	40	60
Has practised this religion at some point in their life (regardless of duration)	72	88

Religion at the event vs. religion at the time of the survey: measurement of discrepancies



Religion at the event vs. religion at the time of the survey: measurement of discrepancies

Average proportion (%) of cases of discrepancies, by religion at the time of the survey and by event date



Conclusion

- Religious itineraries can be recorded through quantitative survey
- The complexity of religious itineraries is confirmed in our dataset
- A large majority of people experience multiple religious affiliations during their life
- This complexity is ignored by standardized surveys, limited to the religion at the time of the survey
- With probable biases in terms of results: religions' prevalence, impact on behaviors...



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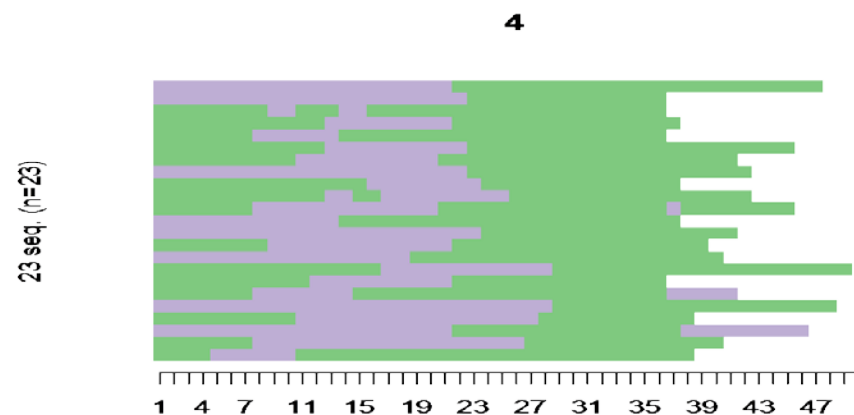
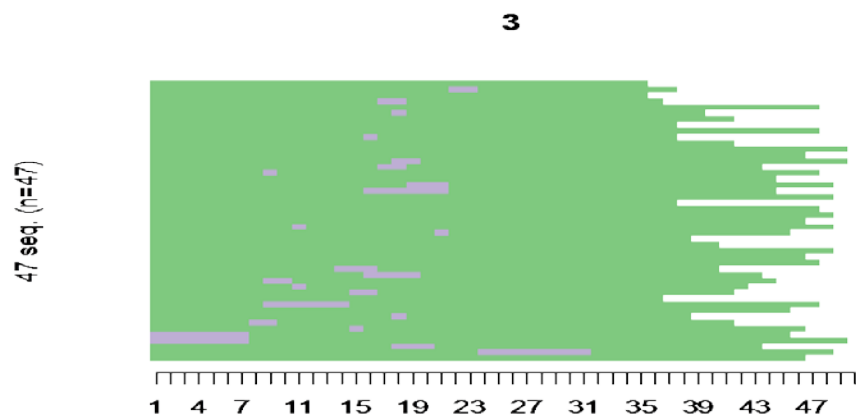
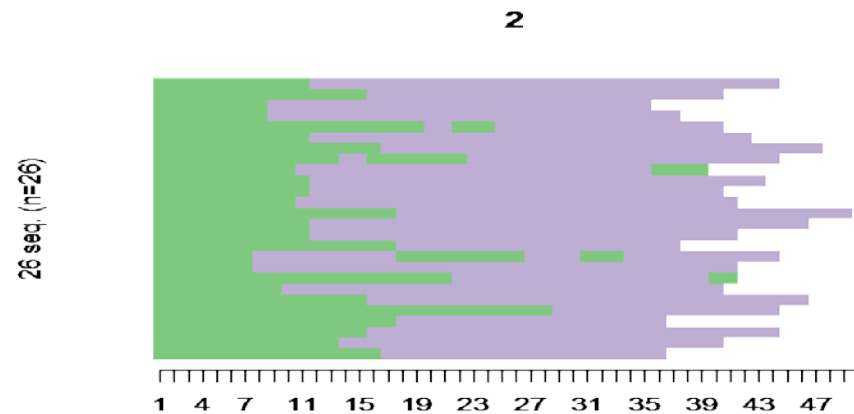
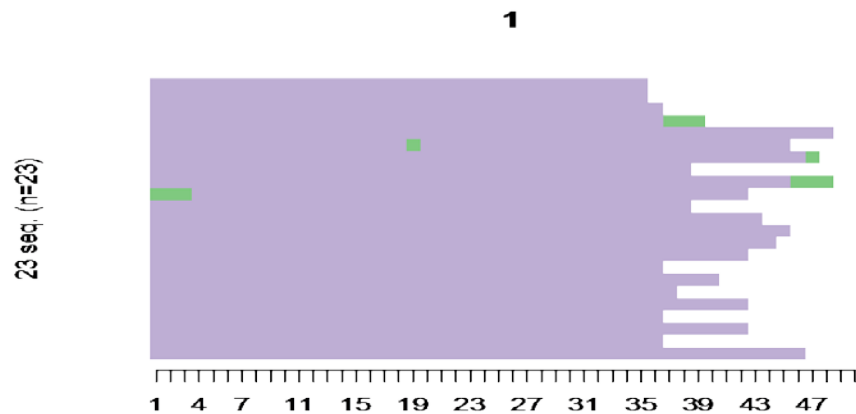
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A majority of people experience multiple religious sequences during their life

Itineraries	<1940	1940-1959	1960-1974	total	
C	1%	9%	18%	11%	} 38%
P	0%	1%	3%	2%	
T	37%	25%	19%	25%	
T->C	13%	13%	7%	10%	} 17%
T->P	4%	6%	8%	7%	
T->C->T	25%	15%	11%	15%	} 24%
T->P->T	6%	7%	12%	9%	
C->T	0%	4%	3%	3%	
Other	14%	21%	19%	19%	

Religious itineraries



La question de la religion chez les Bwa

(% Women of 15-49 years, EDS-DHS surveys)

	% Muslims	% Christians
Bénin (2006)	21	55
Côte d'Ivoire (2005)	37	46
Burkina Faso (2010)	62	30
Guinée (2005)	85	11
Mali (2006)	92	3
Sénégal (2010)	95	4
Niger (2006)	99	1