

Long Term Persistence of Colonial Education?

A Discontinuity Analysis at the Border between French- and English-speaking Cameroon



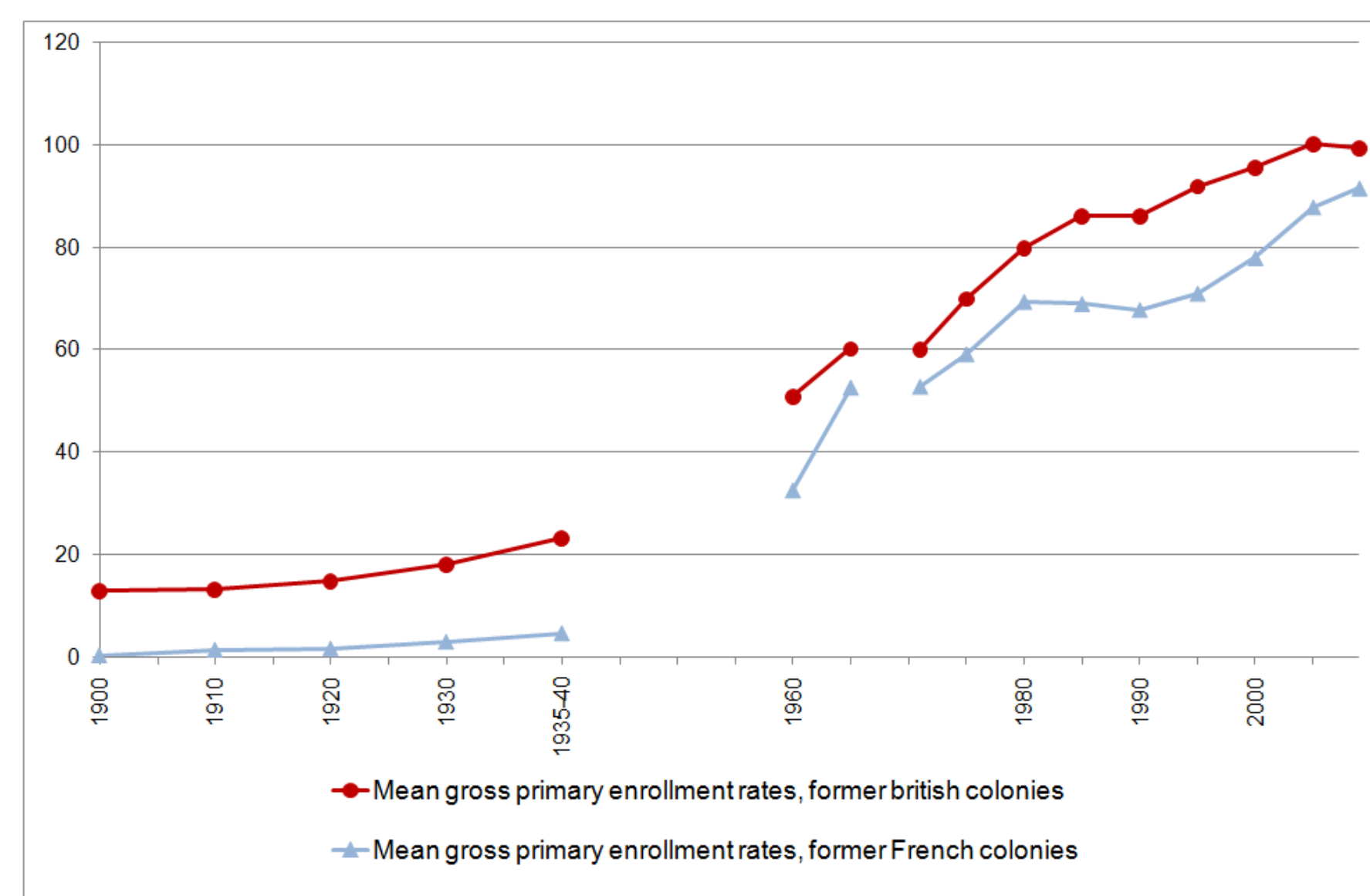
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Motivation

Does colonial history matter for development?

In Africa, British colonial legacy said to be more favorable than others, especially as far as education was concerned.

Figure 1: Mean gross primary enrollment ratios in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1900-2010



Sources: Benavot and Riddle (1988), World Bank (1993 and 2013).

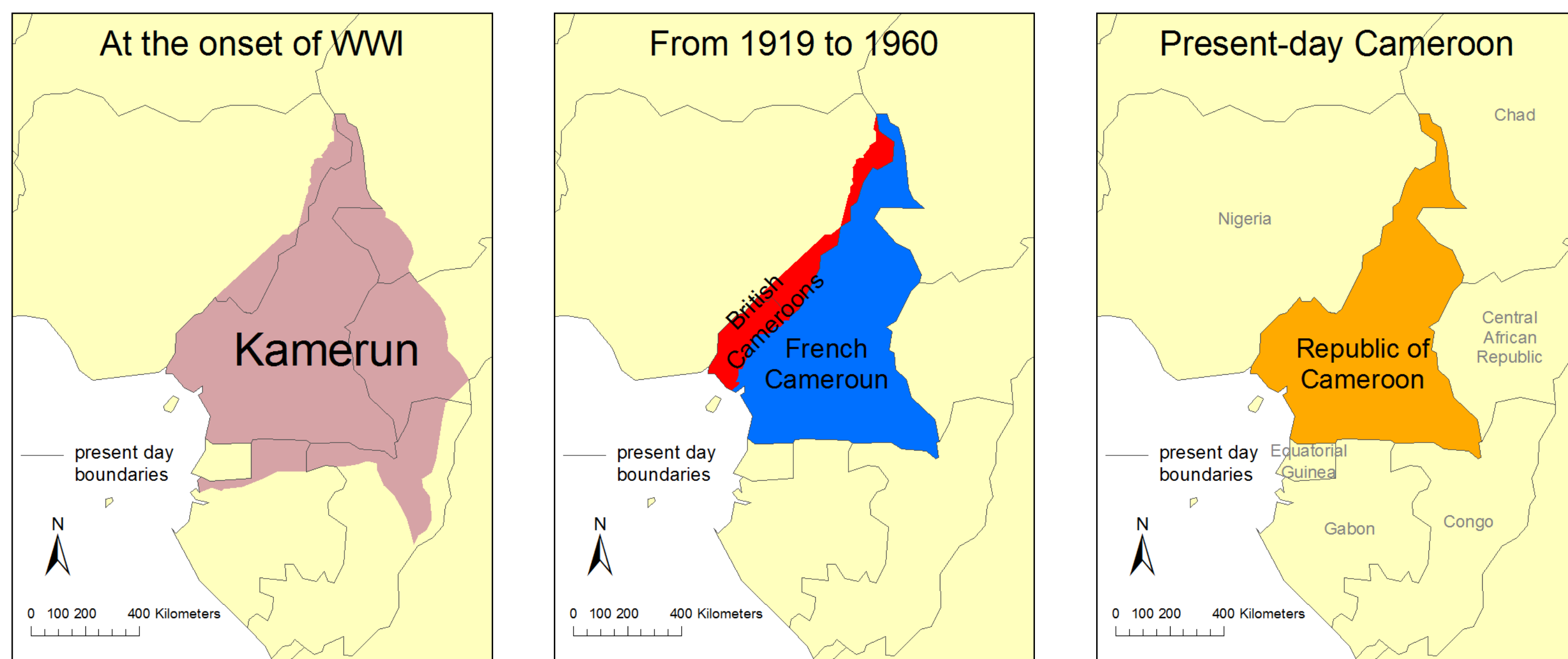
Table 1: Differences between British and French colonial education policies

	British colonial education	French colonial education
Agency	Christian missions financed by grants-in-aid	colonial government
Teachers	few British teachers	a lot of French teachers
Language of instruction	vernacular in first grades	always French
Purpose	conversion reaching a large number of children	training of a small administrative elite

Natural Experiment

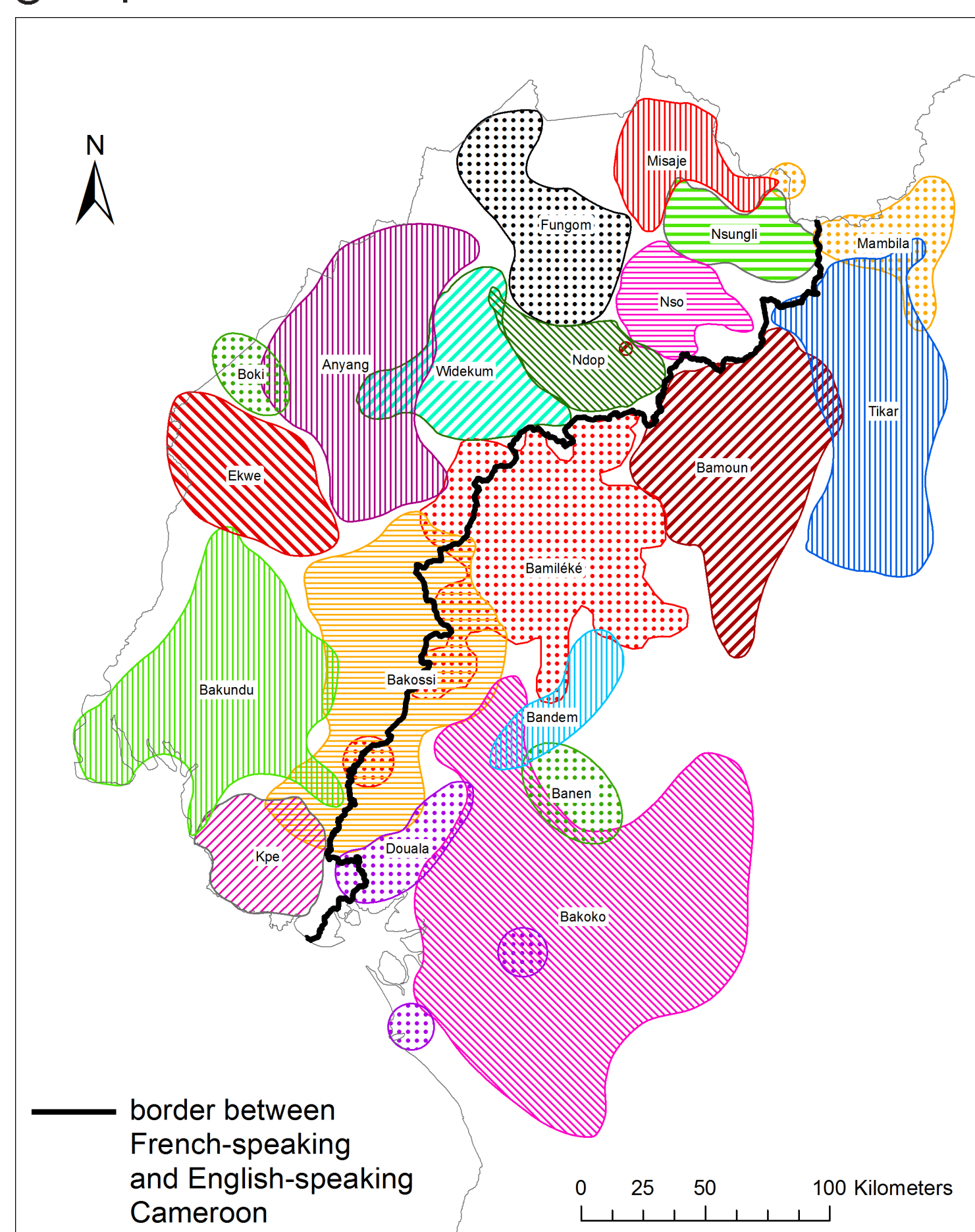
To solve the problem of selection (French and British colonies not necessarily comparable): **border discontinuity analysis**. Comparing regions on both sides of a border. If the border is (locally) random, comparable regions (pre-colonial history, geography, etc.)

Figure 2: The natural experiment: German Kamerun divided between the British and the French



Sources: Gifford and Louis, 1967 and 1971.

Figure 4: A simplified map of ethnic groups in West Cameroon



- Historical documents show that the border was designed without taking into account local conditions.
- The border does cut across ethnic groups (except maybe in the Northern part, therefore excluded from the analysis).
- I also check that there is no discontinuity at the border in exogenous geographical variables (elevation, temperature, precipitations).

Sources: Murdock (1959), Champaud (1973), Franqueville (1973), Courade (1974).

Data

Cameroonian population census data from 1976 and 2005. Education variables give information on the education system during the period when an individual was of schooling age (people rarely go back to primary school in adulthood). This feature of education variables allows me to **decompress history**, identifying the effect of colonizer identity on education outcomes for different periods, using different age groups.

Results

For each 10-year cohort, estimation of the following equation:

$$s_i = \tau BR_i + P(x_i, y_i) + \beta B_i + \varepsilon_i$$

where s_i is the education outcome of individual i , BR_i is a dummy equal to 1 if individual i was born on the anglophone side of the border, $P(x_i, y_i)$ is a polynomial in latitude and longitude, B_i is a border of vector sector dummies. Results shown here estimated on a 10-km bandwidth, using a polynomial of order 2, but results robust to a variety of specifications.

Figure 5: Discontinuity in male school attendance

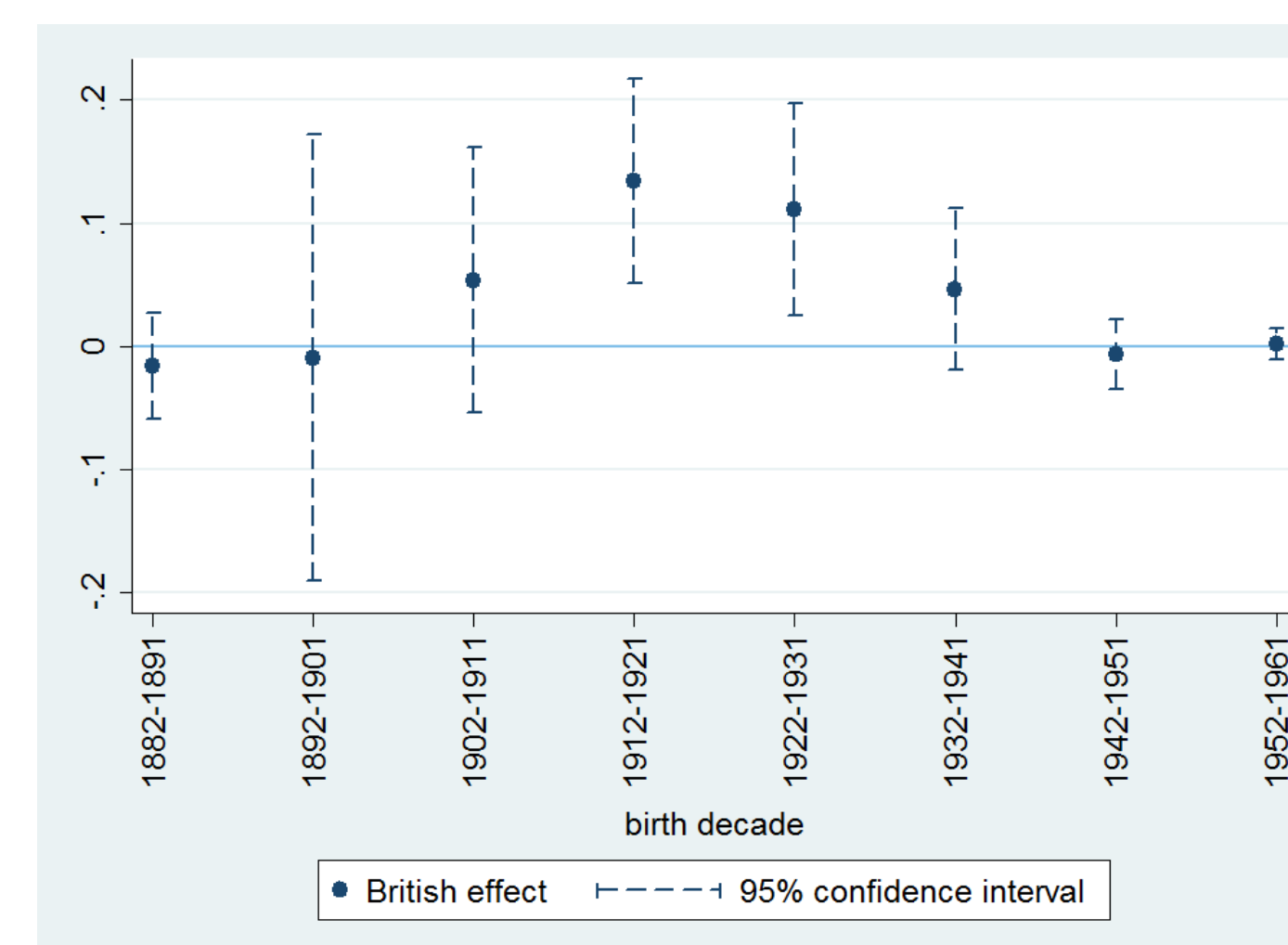
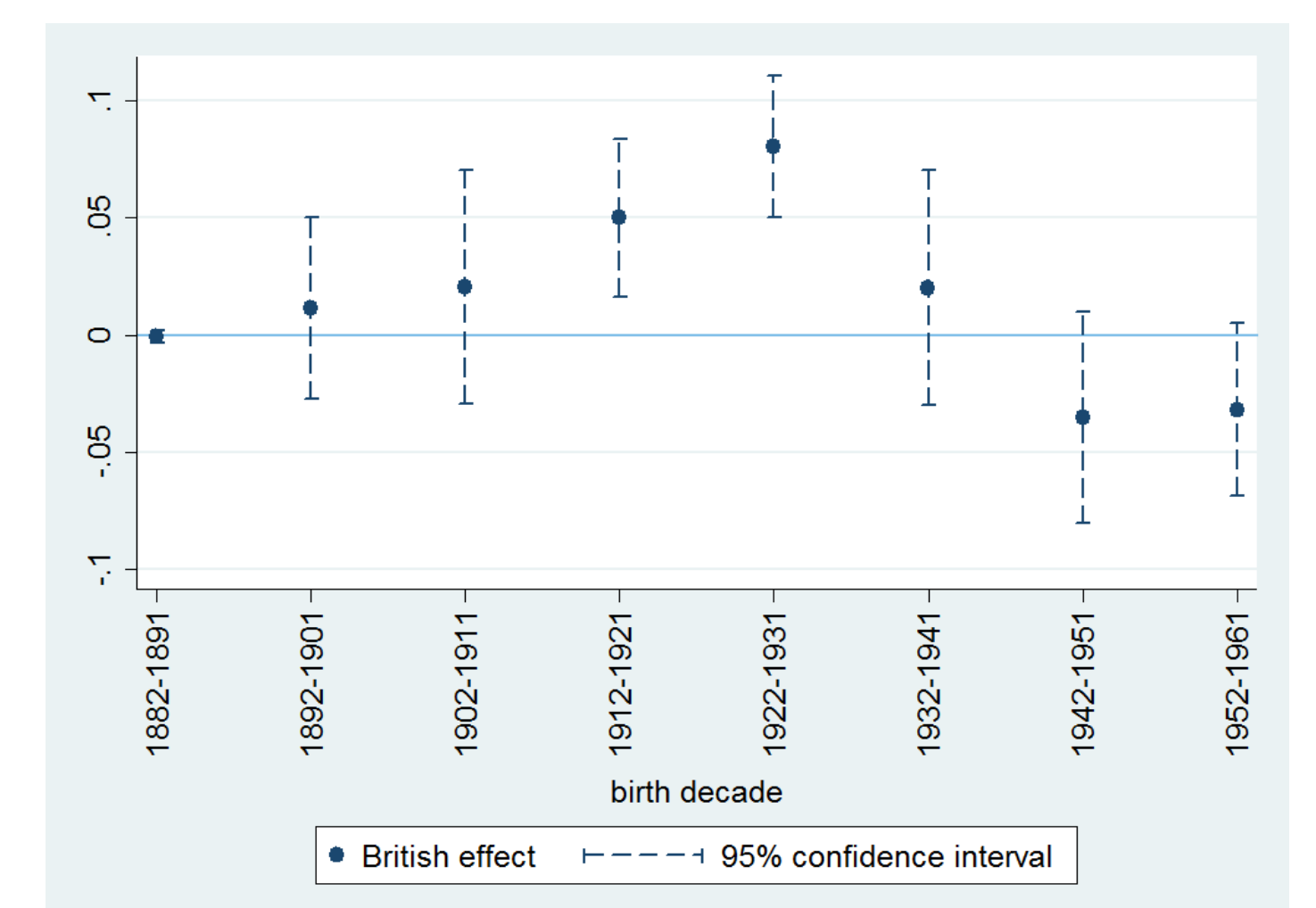


Figure 6: Discontinuity in male primary school completion



Discontinuity favoring the British side for cohorts who were of schooling age in the 1920s and 1930s. Quickly fades away (and even inverts in the case of primary school completion) in the late colonial period/early independence. More recent cohorts (born in the 1970s and 1980s): no discontinuity in school attendance or primary school completion. Discontinuity favoring the anglophone side in **secondary completion** (likely explained by very high repetition rates on francophone side) and the **percentage of Christians**.

Mechanisms

What is identified: effect of being part of British Cameroons rather than French Cameroon. Mechanisms need not go through colonial policies (fact of being attached to a richer market, etc.) However, **the pattern of evolution of the discontinuity is consistent with a mechanism going through education supply**.

- **Interwar period:** the British regulated low quality mission schools (inspected and subsidized on the basis of efficiency) while the French turned a blind eye to the private sector (very small subsidies).
- **After WW2 (Brazzaville Conference):** education expenditure increased radically in French Cameroon. Both private sector subsidies and investment in public sector.

Take home message

- Interwar period: British colonial education more efficient at reaching a large number of students.
- Not *laissez-faire* VS colonial government control but government providing right incentives to missions (Belgian and Portuguese colonies: private education, bad education outcomes).
- Decompressing history: colonial policies evolved during the colonial period. Specific policies seem to matter more than identity of the colonizer *per se*.
- Persistence: hard to argue that the effect on human capital persisted. However, shock on religion was highly persistent.