

## Conference Theme: Other Topics

### THE DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF TWINS : TEMPTATION OF MIMETISM OR DISSIMILARITY AMONG CO-TWINS ?

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The question of the similarity or dissimilarity of twins concerning demographic and social behaviours has been discussed in field of psychology, sometimes sociology, but has been also largely exploited with a more «sensational» approach in ordinary literature or press. There is no doubt that, in our societies, twins evaluate under some «external» representations of twinning fact, representations that they can integrate and appropriate, or reject. Social pressure can be exercised on them at different level : from the family, friends, society in general.

This paper aims at evaluating twin's behaviours in demographic and social field by studying very basic facts as studies' and professional orientation, fertility, nuptiality, and other. On this purpose we will compare discrepancies between twin's pairs to those observed among ordinary couples of brothers and sisters of approximatively the same age, by controlling mainly for age, sex and familial composition, and other factors if necessary. Are twins more eager to follow same studies or to orientate themselves toward same types of profession, than an ordinary couple of brother and sister? Will they marry at closer dates, with women that present closer characteristics? Will they have closer familial achievement concerning fertility (temporality, number of children)?

Moreover this study will represent an occasion for estimating differences in behavioural patterns among twins themselves and for identifying special situations and risk's factors. Are the tentations of mimetism or dissimilarity stronger oder weaker between twins from a two children family and twins bred up in larger families? And even, can we notice differences between identical twins (of very close appearance) and fraternal ones (as different as two brother and sister)? Different strategies can be envisaged as they are not exposed to the same level of differentiation inside the family circle.

#### Data sources:

The frequency in twin births has experienced a spectacular increase in nearly all the industrialised countries during the last thirty years, under the joined effects of postponement of maternities and infertility treatments. In France, for example, the frequency of twin births increased from 8.9 out of 1,000 in 1972 to 15.0 in 2000 (a 70% increase) (Insee).

Our work will be based on the exploitation of the French *Longitudinal Study* (EDP<sup>1</sup> or Permanent Demographic Sample) that is a source of informations about twins. It gathers since 1968 in a single folder the statistic bills – census, civil registration - of all persons resident in metropolitan France and born during the first four days of october of each year, which represents a little more than 1% of births and of population. Considering the way the sample is constituted, it systematically includes twins of a same pair (and triplets of a same groupe of triplets, and so on) since they are born the same day. For example, in 2000, we so expect the EDP to include 8,500 deliveries, and among them 126 twin ones (that means 252 twins). As the twinning rate was lower thirty years ago (about 9 per 1,000), but the annual number of deliveries higher, EDP should gather at least 100 twin's pair each year at this period (that means at least 200 twins by annual cohort).

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<sup>1</sup> Echantillon Démographique Permanent

The systematic collect of statistical bills – census and civil registration – will allow us to study carefully basic demographic behaviours as studies' and professional orientation, fertility, nuptiality, and other. EDP doesn't permit us to distinguish identical (monozygotic) from fraternal (dizygotic) twins, but it will be possible to estimate indirectly differences among the two types of twins by comparing twin's pairs of same sex ( which gather all monozogothic twins and a part of dizygotic twins) to twin's pairs of different sex (which gather remaining dizygotic twins).