

Collaborative research between:

Historians, economists, demographers

Archivists

Experts in machine learning









With the contribution of local French Archives, départementales and municipales

Lionel Kesztenbaum



Archivdag VLA
Dudelange, Luxembourg
06/10/2022

SocFace:

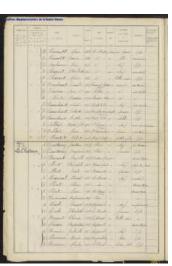
The local face of social change: one century of French social structure seen from the ground, 1836–1936

Collecting, processing, transcribing, and organizing all French individual census lists from 1836 to 1936 (20 censuses, metropolitan France only).

SocFace aims at producing a complete microdatabase of all individuals who lived in France between 1836 and 1936 and at using it to study social change in the long run.







Why Socface?

- Microdata are increasingly important for research in quantitative social sciences: economics, history, sociology, demography...
- Explosion in quality of automated writing recognition (especially manual writing) and treatment of images.

Mass production of microdata at the national level

Develop new methods to extract individual-level data from a very large set of archival document images

Disseminate individual information produced to the general public, genealogists, and researchers

Roadmap

- > Preamble: listes nominatives du recensement.
- > Processing images and extracting information.
- > A social and economic microhistory at the national level.
- > Dissemination and valuation of the data and the archives.

Liste nominative:

Saint-Vincent-sur-Jabron, Alpes-de-Haute-Provence 1936

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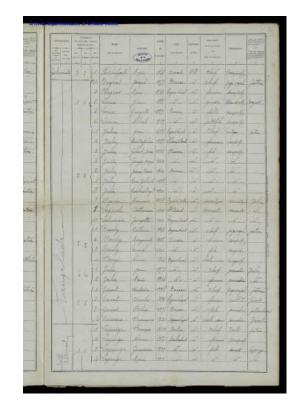
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Why using *listes nominatives*?

- > A standard, numerous and quite simple source.
- A source (relatively) stable over time.
- > Already digitalized by many archival depositories.
- > A national, uniform source.
- > Allows to build a database of France as a whole (almost...).

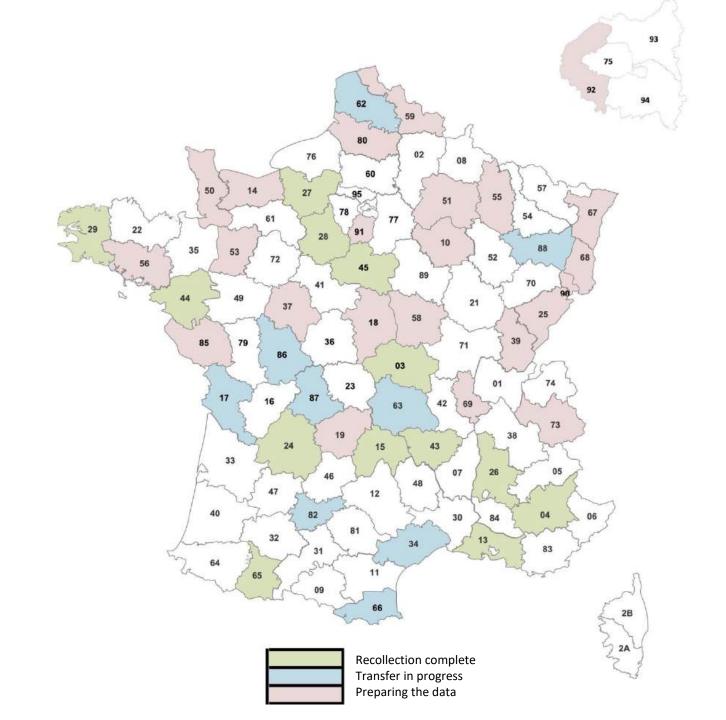
- → An ideal source for scaling up HTR.
- → A source that matters only at a (very) large scale.



Recollection of the data in the *Archives départementales*

 \approx 2,5M images, 5To

(13 ADs completed, 8 in progress, out of 95)





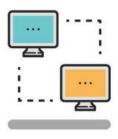
Social Science

Studies in economics, history, and demography: cause and consequences of long-term evolution of labor market, inequality, social structure and mobility.



Technology

Handwritten text transcription, table layout analysis, extracting individuallevel data from millions of images.



Diffusion

Disseminating in Open Access the data extracted, through the Archives, to the general public and the researchers



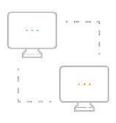
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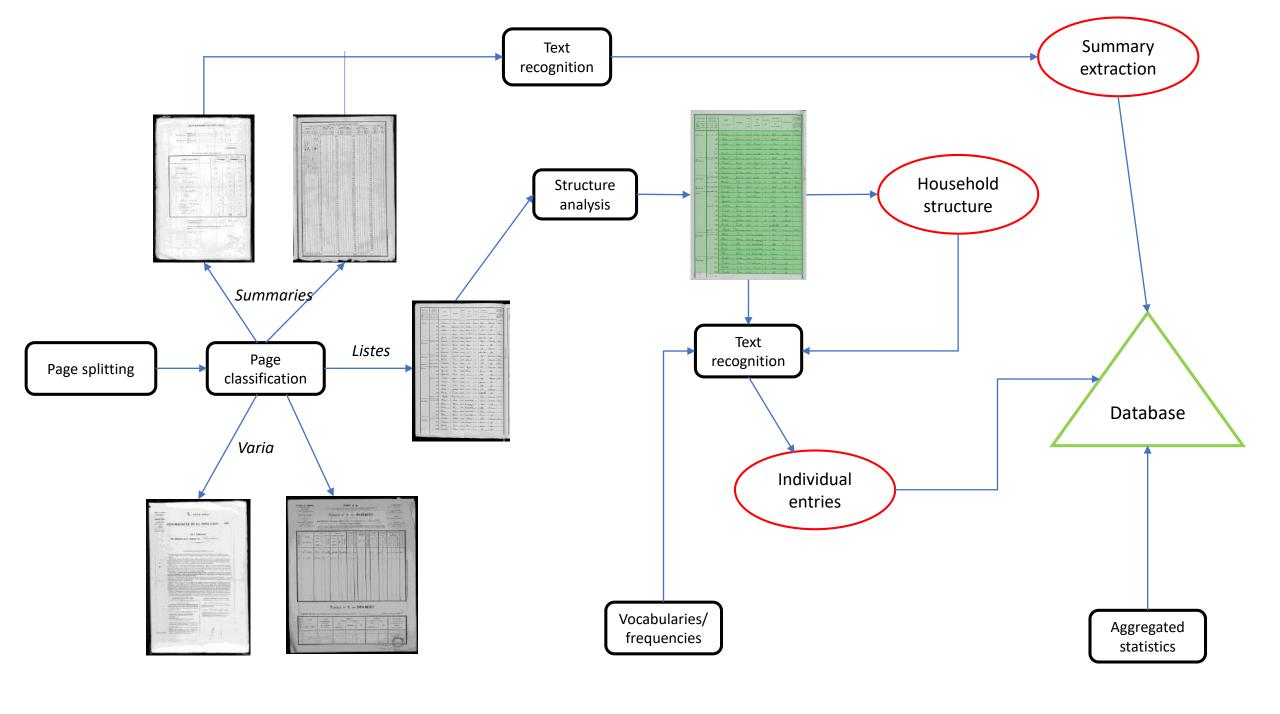
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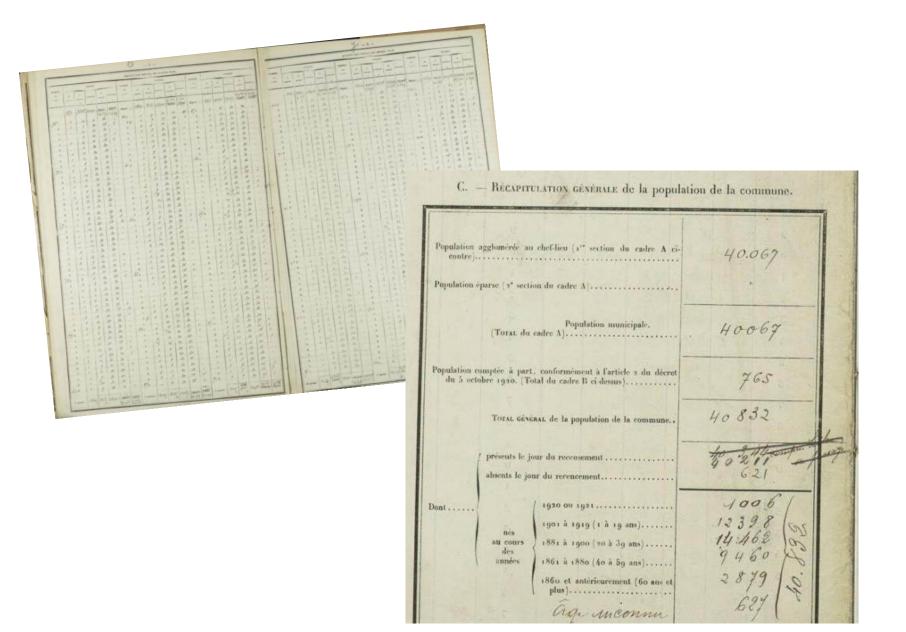
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Liste nominative:

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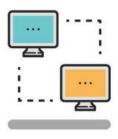
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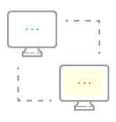
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Microdata at the national level

- > An economic and social history at both individual and national levels
 - * To fill the gap between national studies from aggregated statistics and local monographies.
 - * A very important moment in the history of France: industrialization, urbanization, deep social transformations.
- Different ways to organize research: one cross-section (a year, with spatial variation); repeated cross-section (up until 20 years); linked individuals (trajectories between censuses).
- > And in the future?
 - * The basis for future historical studies as a platform for contemporary quantitative history.
 - ❖ Link with other sources (civil registers, military registers, ...) and databases (e.g., genealogical records).
 - Connection with the contemporary period.

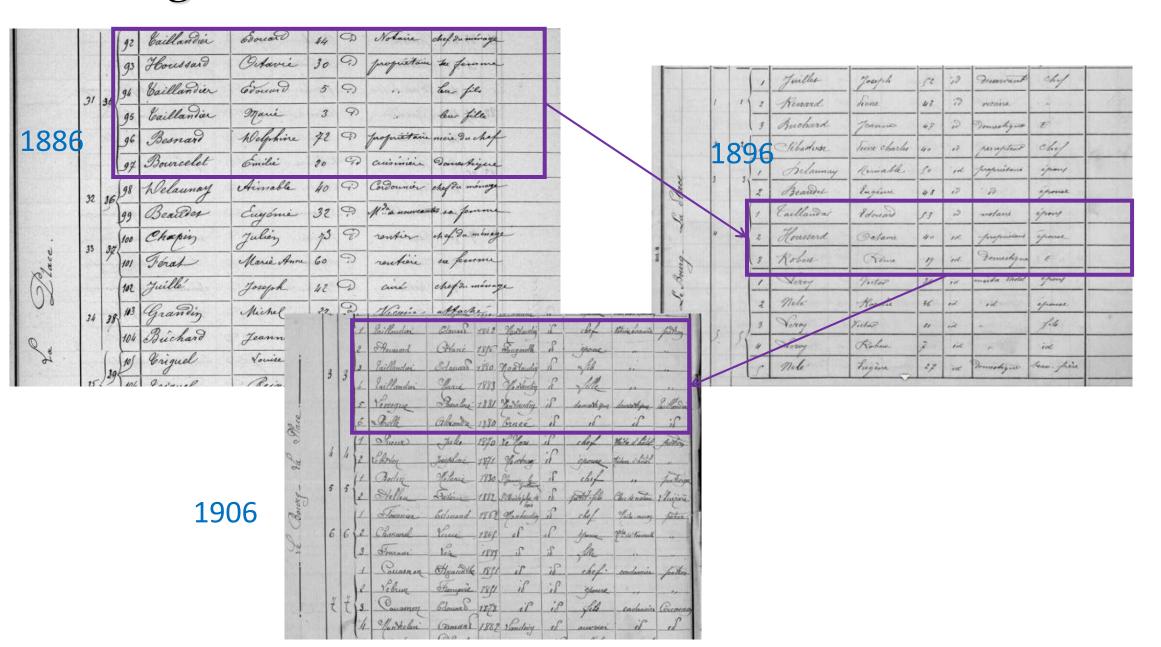
Analyzing social change

- > Structural change in the long run
 - * Transformation of the labor market: spatial variations, gender inequality, ...
 - * Evolution of transport systems: effects on the spatial distribution of the population...
- > Shocks
- Short-, medium- and long-term consequences.
- e.g., phylloxera crisis; World War One, Courrières (1906).
- > Spatial organization of economic activities
 - * Linking individual information with spatial database.
 - * Consequences of the transition from agriculture to industry at the very local level.

Linking individuals: building trajectories to study mobility

- Life-cycle trajectories
 - * Following individuals all their life, through time and space.
 - * As children and in adulthood.
 - * Transition between the two.
- > Study geographic and social mobility...
- > ... and how it changed over time.

Linking individuals between censuses





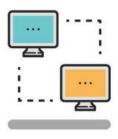
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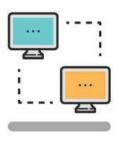
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Dissemination: back to Archival deposits, and beyond

- Raw database to be distributed by the Archives
 - On a national database (France Archives), with a search engine.
 - Sur les bases des Archives Départementales.
 - Direct links with the image.
- > Encoded database to be distributed for research
 - * A database where various information are organized and encoded (occupation, place of birth, etc.).
 - ❖ A database with probabilistic linkage between individuals.
- > Opening on other sources: a model for disseminating French national archives?

Thank you!

https://socface.site.ined.fr/

http://socface.org

contact@socface.org