

Employing Digital Prosopography in the Study of Mid- and Upper Social Strata in Transylvania (Mid-Eighteenth to Mid-Twentieth Centuries): Tools and Approaches

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Abstract:

The paper explores the possibility of employing an Entity - Attribute - Value (EAV) database in relation with the historical sources and the digital tools in use for prosopographical research of the mid- and upper social strata in Transylvania, from early modernity to the interwar period. The massive digitization projects and the emergence of several historical databases, both taking place mainly during the last decade and still on-going, have provided the scholars of Transylvania with a wealth of information, but the development of proper tools for extracting and structuring it has hardly started. By transferring the digitized narratives from the primary sources into a structured database, which allows automated verification, linkage and comparisons, and approaching the data as "factoids", and not as given historical facts, historians should be able to improve the selection of the prosopographical samples in view of further analyses, keep track of conflicting information provided by different sources, and revisit any piece of data when required. In view of the above, the paper illustrates the application of digital prosopography on one of the historical databases focusing on the upper social layers of Transylvania during late modernity: "Historical Data Grinder".

Keywords: *digital prosopography, factoids, Intermediate Data Structure, Transylvania, historical databases, EAV databases*