

Leader without Followers?

A Network Analysis Study on the Formation of the Mailberger Bund

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Abstract. In 1451/52, an opposition of the estates formed in the Duchy of Austria under the leadership of Ulrich von Eitzing against the ruling prince, King Frederick III. The aim of this so-called “Mailberger Bund” was to end Frederick’s guardianship over his cousin Ladislaus Postumus and transfer power to the latter. Although it was Ulrich von Eitzing who motivated a large part of the estates to participate in the Mailberger Bund, he was soon ousted from his leadership position by his allies. Using historical network analysis, this case study examines the extent to which Ulrich von Eitzing’s “social capital” that he brought to the league contributed to this loss of power. The study also contributes to the discussion of network analysis as a method in historical studies.

Keywords: network analysis, conflict, Mailberger Bund, Ulrich von Eitzing, social capital, Frederick III, loss of power

In 1456, Emperor Frederick III had a list of charters compiled, which he carried with him in a double-locked chest.¹ In it, he deposited important charters of the Habsburg dynasty. However, he also kept in the chest *vil scheltprieff* (several scolding letters) of the man who, since his accession to power, had become one of the most unpredictable political figures in the Habsburg hereditary lands: Ulrich von Eitzing. The following investigation is devoted to him.²

- 1 Lhotsky, “AEIOV,” 205. I would like to thank Jörg Feuchter, Paul Heinicker, Johannes Preiser-Kapeller, Christina Lutter, Sebastian Kolditz, and Alexander Watzinger for stimulating discussion and multifaceted support during the preparation of this essay.
- 2 For Ulrich von Eitzing, see Heinig, *Friedrich III*, 264–67; Gutkas, “Lebensjahre,” 149–60; Gutkas, “Mailberger Bund, Part 2,” 358–62; Lorenz, *Eyczing*, passim; Seidl, *Eizinger*, 9–64. Seidl’s source-based study provides a large amount of valid data for our purposes and is therefore indispensable. However, it should be expressly noted here that Siegfried Seidl (1911–1947) received his doctorate from the University of Vienna in 1941 with this work, but had his

Ulrich's name is inextricably linked to the renowned aristocratic opposition in the Duchy of Austria, which formed the Mailberger Bund in 1451 and, within a few months, violently ended Frederick's guardianship over his cousin Ladislaus.³ This conflict not only disrupted Frederick III's relationship with the Austrians for years. His attempt to reunite the Habsburg hereditary lands, which had been divided since 1379, also failed at the time. In 1452, the Mailberger Bund, together with the Bohemian and Hungarian estates, forced the enthronement of Albrecht II's son Ladislaus Postumus.⁴ However, even before this political success, Ulrich von Eitzing had been ousted from his leadership position within the Mailberger Bund by his own allies. The question of why this happened is explored in the following case study, which was developed as part of the MEDCON – Mapping Medieval Conflicts project.⁵ The project investigated the extent to which the concepts of social and geographical network analysis can be used to study political conflicts in the Middle Ages.

Ulrich von Eitzing was a social climber.⁶ He came to Austria poor and insignificant, writes Eneas Silvius Piccolomini in his *Historia Austriacalis*.⁷ Born into a family of knights from Bavaria around 1398, Ulrich rose to become one of the most economically and politically influential men in the Duchy of Austria by the end of the 1430s. Having come into wealth through marriage, he acquired strategic real estate holdings in Lower and Upper Austria and Moravia, apparently with the aim of consolidating at least part of his possessions into a dominion.⁸

At the same time, Ulrich invested in his social and political advancement, provoking suspicion and criticism from his contemporaries.⁹ His era was that of

academic title revoked in 1947 after he was convicted of crimes committed during the Nazi era by the Vienna Regional Court and hanged. In 1941, Siegfried Seidl was commissioned by Adolf Eichmann to establish the Theresienstadt ghetto, which he headed as camp commander until 1943. Fedorovič, "Siegfried Seidl," 162–209.

3 Gutkas, "Mailberger Bund, Part 1," 51–94; Gutkas, "Mailberger Bund, Part 2," 347–92.

4 Alliance document of the Hungarian and Austrian estates and the Counts of Cilli for the liberation of Ladislaus, 5 March 1452, printed in: Chmel, *Materialien* 1, 374–76, no. 188; cp. Gutkas, "Mailberger Bund, Part 1," 85f.

5 <https://www.oeaw.ac.at/imafo/das-institut/detail/mapping-medieval-conflicts> (Accessed: 7 August 2025).

6 Ulrich's career, outlined below, is typical of a social climber in the Late Middle Ages, as is the reaction of those around him; cp. Rabeler, *Lebensformen*, 279, cp. Rabeler the example of Wilwolts von Schaumburg, Rabeler, *Lebensformen*, 250–67, as well as Sigmund and Heinrich Prüschenk, Probszt, "Prueschenk," 115–27.

7 Piccolomini, *Historia Austriacalis*, 448.

8 On Ulrich von Eitzing's acquisitions up to 1450, see Seidl, *Eizinger*, 9–44. On the nature of his actions, see the examples of Retz and Gars, see Seidl, *Eizinger*, 17, 35.

9 Piccolomini, *Historia Austriacalis*, 448.

the reign of Albrecht II (V). The duke relied on the financially powerful knight, whom he promoted to the best of his ability in return. In 1437, he made him his *Hubmeister* (fiscal administrator) in Austria.¹⁰ This marked the zenith of Ulrich's political career at court. Formal social advancement followed shortly thereafter when Albrecht elevated him to the *Herrenstand* (rank of lord) after his election as Roman-German king.

When Albrecht II was succeeded in Austria and the empire in 1439/40 by Frederick III, who came from the Styrian line of the Habsburgs, “war dies einem Wechsel der Dynastie und ihrer Herrschaftsgrundlagen näher als dynastischer Kontinuität” (this was closer to a change of dynasty and its foundations of power than to dynastic continuity).¹¹ Like most of the Austrian nobility, Ulrich von Eitzing did not consider the Styrian to be the legitimate successor to Albrecht II and mobilised the Austrian estates against the king. Karl Gutkas, who has produced the most authoritative study of the Mailberger Bund to date, emphasises that Ulrich von Eitzing, in addition to his powers of persuasion and talent for political theatre, clearly had numerous personal contacts whom he was able to activate for participation in the Mailberger Bund.¹² Although the formation of the alliance was not the sole work of Eitzinger, according to Gutkas, he can be regarded as the leader of the opposition of the estates in the early stages.¹³ Nevertheless, Ulrich von Eitzing was soon ousted from the top by his most important ally, Ulrich von Cilli.¹⁴ Gutkas sees the influential Count as the real winner of the guardianship conflict, who only allowed the *Provinzpolitiker* (provincial politician) Ulrich von Eitzing to take the lead as long as it was necessary to convince the Austrian estates.¹⁵

But why was Ulrich von Eitzing's position within the Mailberger Bund so fragile, even though he was supposedly able to mobilise so many of his personal contacts for it? Obviously, the nature of his social networks was not conducive to permanently stabilising his leadership position within the alliance and exposed him to particular risk in the event of a crisis—in this case, the threat posed by Count Ulrich von Cilli. This thesis, which will be examined below, is based on the concept of “social capital” established in the social sciences.¹⁶ The concept emphasises that individuals can use personal resources to their advantage for specific goals because of their

10 Lorenz, *Eyczing*, 5 and 15; Seidl, *Eizinger*, 13.

11 Heinig, *Friedrich III*, 32.

12 Gutkas, “Mailberger Bund, Part 1,” 74f. and Gutkas, “Mailberger Bund, Part 2,” 369.

13 Gutkas, “Mailberger Bund, Part 1,” 68.

14 See Heinig, *Friedrich III*, 219f.

15 Gutkas, “Mailberger Bund, Part 1,” 84, 92, 94; Gutkas, “Mailberger Bund, Part 2,” 362.

16 Roth, “Soziales Kapital,” 205–18; Jansen, *Netzwerkanalyse*, 105–10.

embeddedness in social networks.¹⁷ At the same time, however, it has been observed that social networks have different effects depending on the goal pursued, i.e., they can also have negative effects.¹⁸ Network analysis will be used to examine Ulrich von Eitzing's social connections within the Mailberger Bund, which comprised more than 250 people, in order to better understand the reasons for his loss of power.

The use of network analysis is so well established in (German-language) historical studies that the accumulated knowledge on the subject has already found its way into handbooks.¹⁹ Broad-based and methodologically well-considered studies are also available.²⁰ At the same time, there is criticism questioning the validity of the method imported into historical studies, as well as wrangling over the definition of the term “network” and criticising its inflationary use.²¹ Within the framework of this discussion, the present case study is intended as a further methodological attempt.

When historical science conducts network research, it often uses various approaches and selected methods of social science network analysis, employing certain lines of argumentation and basic assumptions of network theory, but does not always carry out network analysis in the strict social science sense.²² The present study pursues a mixed methods approach: network analysis is used to structure the data and, as Robert Gramsch-Stehfest recently succinctly put it, as a *Hypothesengenerator* (hypothesis generator).²³ The visualised results are then interpreted using conventional historical methods.²⁴

Network analysis is often used to examine social interdependencies and dynamics in order to draw conclusions about groups.²⁵ With this focus, the method has been used in historical research to study political structures and economic phenomena, as well as in conflict research.²⁶ In the following, Ulrich von Eitzing, an

17 Roth, “Soziales Kapital,” 208, 210f.

18 Roth, “Soziales Kapital,” 210f.

19 See Düring et al., eds., *Netzwerkforschung*, as well as Reitmayer and Marx, “Netzwerkansätze.”

20 Such as the works of Robert Gramsch-Stehfest, here, e.g., Gramsch-Stehfest, *Netzwerk der Fürsten*, or the works of Johannes Preiser-Kapeller.

21 Hitzbleck and Hübner, eds., *Grenzen des Netzwerks*, especially the introductory remarks, 7–40. Gramsch-Stehfest, “Metapher,” 7–12, provides a concise overview of the common points of criticism.

22 Reitmayer and Marx, “Netzwerkansätze,” 869.

23 Gramsch-Stehfest, “Metapher,” 28.

24 Gramsch-Stehfest, “Metapher,” 28.

25 See, for example, Jansen, *Netzwerkanalyse*, 71.

26 See, for example, Fouquet and Gilomen, eds, *Netzwerke*, for the economic sphere; Gramsch, *Netzwerk der Fürsten*, for the analysis of political structures in medieval Europe; Habermann, *Niederadel*, for the investigation of social structures and feuding practices of the late medieval lower nobility.

individual in the context of his social relationships, takes centre stage. The study of personal “networks” is not new in medieval studies, but network analysis has not necessarily been used for this purpose.²⁷ In the present study, the ego network model established in social science is adapted and tested for its suitability to investigate the social connections of Eitzinger within the Mailberger Bund.²⁸ Social science defines an ego-centred network as “die Beziehungen einer fokalen Person (Ego) zu anderen Personen (Alteri), mit denen sie im direkten Kontakt steht, sowie die Beziehungen zwischen den Alteri” (the relationships of a focal person (ego) to other persons (alters) with whom they are in direct contact, as well as the relationships between the alters).²⁹ The quality of a network is not a constitutive feature in the sense of the social science method.³⁰ The quality of a network is only described in a second step on the basis of various characteristics such as size, structure, composition, and reach.³¹ The characteristic of size is the sum of all contacts, while the characteristic of structure is density. Density is “das Verhältnis der vorhandenen Beziehungen im Netzwerk zur Zahl der möglichen Beziehungen” (the quotient of the number of existing relationships and the number of possible relationships between the alters).³² Size and density are usually considered the decisive characteristics.³³ However, as we will see, the composition of Ulrich von Eitzing’s ego network is of crucial importance in explaining his loss of power. This raises the question of the degree of similarity between ego and alters, the so-called *Grad der Homophilie* (degree of homophily).³⁴

It is well known that an ego network represents only “einen minimalen netzwerkanalytischen Zugang zur Realität” (a minimal network-analytical approach to reality)³⁵ since data is collected only about one actor and not about groups or entire networks, which is why it is not possible to analyse positions and role interdependencies. The insight gained from analysing the ego network can therefore only be realised through comparison. To enable this, Ulrich von Eitzing’s ego network is generated from several subnetworks in accordance with the context in which his relationships developed, in order to define its composition more clearly and place it in the context of the Mailberg confederation as a higher-level social phenomenon, with a view to

27 See, for example, Märtl, “Frühhumanisten,” 122–28; Konzen, “Rechberg,” 221–48; Schwarz, “Johann Waldner,” 113–36.

28 On this point, see Wolf and Repke, “Egozentrierte Netzwerke,” 507–18; Jansen, *Netzwerkanalyse*, 65, 79–81, 105–110.

29 Wolf and Repke, “Egozentrierte Netzwerke,” 507; see also Jansen, *Netzwerkanalyse*, 65.

30 Jansen, *Netzwerkanalyse*, 108, cp. Gilomen, “Netzwerke,” 349.

31 Wolf and Repke, “Egozentrierte Netzwerke,” 512.

32 Wolf and Repke, “Egozentrierte Netzwerke,” 513.

33 Jansen, *Netzwerkanalyse*, 108.

34 Wolf and Repke, “Egozentrierte Netzwerke,” 515.

35 Jansen, *Netzwerkanalyse*, 79.

identifying the strengths and weaknesses of Ulrich von Eitzing's social ties. As usual, the network data will be examined both at the network level and at selected points at the level of individual relationships between ego and alters, known as dyads.³⁶

In a first step, the Mailberger Bund is reconstructed as a social structure. The pool of individuals identified forms the starting point as well as the reference point for all further steps of the investigation. All personal data collected was entered into the OpenAtlas database along with the corresponding source references and structured. OpenAtlas has been designed to meet the needs of historical research.³⁷ The database offers the possibility to record different entities (actors, places, and events) and to establish any number of user-defined relations (social, geographical, functional, etc.) between them. The data from this case study are publicly available.³⁸ The visualisations generated from them in this case study represent only a selection of the possible data modelling options.

The source material is favourable, as the Mailberger Bund drew up two alliance charters in October 1451, the lists of signatories of which have been edited.³⁹ A total of 257 different individuals or "legal entities" (monasteries, towns, etc.) affixed their seals to the first and/or second copy of the Mailberger Bund charter. In addition, several other individuals known from the research literature who sided with the allies during the guardianship conflict but are not named as signatories were also included.⁴⁰ This resulted in a group of 266 individuals. According to the alliance charters, "prelaten, graven, herrn, ritter unndt knecht und die vonn stetn, die in dem landt ze Osterreich gesessen und wannhaft sind" (clergy, counts, lords, knights, and squires who resided in the land of Austria) participated in the Mailberger Bund.⁴¹ With Ulrich von Eitzing, about 15 percent of the participants in the Mailberger Bund can be classed as lords (*Herren*), around 71 percent were knights (*Ritter*) or noble squires (*Edelknechte*), another 9 percent were clergy, and 5 percent were cities.⁴² Like Ulrich von Eitzing, most of the allies had their main possessions in Austria below the Enns River.⁴³

36 Wolf and Repke, "Egozentrierte Netzwerke," 515.

37 See <https://demo.openatlas.eu/> (Accessed: 7 August 2025).

38 https://arche.acdh.oeaw.ac.at/browser/oeaw_detail/66765 (Accessed: 5 August 2025).

39 Chmel, *Geschichte Kaiser Friedrichs*, 644–48.

40 See, for example, Gutkas, "Mailberger Bund, Part 1," 71.

41 Printed text of the document according to the second version of 14 October 1451, in: Gutkas, "Mailberger Bund, Part 2," 389–92, here 389.

42 Of the knights and noble squires, about 21 percent can be identified relatively clearly as knights and 22 percent as noble squires. For another 28 percent, this distinction cannot be made with certainty. The identification was made primarily according to Turba, *Ritterstand*; for the other participants, see also Zernatto, *Herrenstand* and Gutkas, "Mailberger Bund, Part 1" and Gutkas, "Mailberger Bund, Part 2."

43 Ulrich's main residence was Schrottenthal in the Weinviertel region. Lorenz, *Eyczing*, 11.

The central question underlying the modelling of Ulrich von Eitzing's ego network is which of these approximately 270 individuals the head of the Mailberger Bund had already been in contact with prior to the fall of 1451, and in what context these contacts can be documented. Social science usually generates the basic personnel structure of an ego network by surveying the individuals concerned. Medieval research must address these questions, known as *Namensgeneratoren* (name generators),⁴⁴ to relevant written sources or research literature.

First, it was investigated whether there were any individuals among the participants of the Mailberger Bund who had previously supported Ulrich von Eitzing in conflicts. The question behind this is whether Ulrich was possibly involved in feuding networks that enabled him to quickly recruit supporters for the opposition.⁴⁵ Due to their nearness in time to the Mailberger Bund, two feud letters by Ulrich von Eitzing from 1441 and 1450 were analysed. In 1441, Eitzinger quarrelled with Frederick III over debts dating back to his time as a *Hubmeister*.⁴⁶ Ulrich had guaranteed a large sum of money, and since Frederick III did not hold him harmless as promised for claims from his time under Albrecht II, Eitzinger declared a feud against him.⁴⁷

Ulrich's feud letter to the city of Nuremberg in May 1450, which has been largely ignored by researchers to date, took place in the context of the disputes between Margrave Albrecht Achilles of Brandenburg and the city of Nuremberg in 1449/50.⁴⁸ Ulrich probably supported the margrave because he had been administrator of the Brandenburg fiefs in Austria since 1449.⁴⁹

As usual for lists of feudal supporters, those from 1441 and 1450 mainly name members of the lower nobility.⁵⁰ The relevant comparison group among Mailberg's allies are therefore the approximately 190 knights and noble squires. For the conflict of 1441, the names of 156 feudal supporters who refused to support the king alongside Ulrich von Eitzing have been handed down.⁵¹ In 1450, Ulrich von Eitzing

44 Wolf and Repke, "Egozentrierte Netzwerke," 507f.

45 Such a network was maintained, for example, by the feudal entrepreneur Hans von Rechberg, see Konzen, "Rechberg," 221–48.

46 The conflict is mentioned by Heinig, *Friedrich III*, 265; Gutkas, "Mailberger Bund, Part 1," 58 and Brunner, *Land*, 49, among others.

47 On the original agreement of 1440, see Regesten Kaiser Friedrichs III. H. 12 no. 32; for a conciliation between Frederick III and Ulrich von Eitzing in October 1441, see Regesten Kaiser Friedrichs III. H. 12 no. 82.

48 Zeilinger, "Städtekrieg."

49 Lorenz, *Eyczing*, 56; Seidl, *Eizinger*, 41.

50 Schäfer, "Fehdeführer," 207.

51 Feud letters from Ulrich and Sigmund von Eitzing, Ulrich Laindecker, and Erhard Eibeck dated 24 May 1441, in: Kollár, *Analecta*, col. 878–887 no. XX; col. 890 no. XXII; col. 891 no. XXIII, and col. 892f. no. XX.

recruited a total of seventy-six *ritter und knecht* for his “Austrian party” to support Brandenburg against Nuremberg, fifty-nine of whom are known by name.⁵² It is assumed that they came mainly from the Austrian–Moravian border region.⁵³ The most prominent supporters were the Boskovics, who were related to the Eitzingers and lived in Moravia. Lords with estates mainly in Austria, on the other hand, did not participate in Ulrich’s feud against Frederick III in 1441 or in the conflict with the city of Nuremberg. Ulrich von Cilli, on the other hand, supported the margrave with his own feud letter to Nuremberg.⁵⁴

Figures 1 and 2 both show a comparison of the supporters of the three feuds. Two visualisations of the same data are deliberately provided in order to raise awareness that data visualisation is a methodically controlled endeavour that can vary depending on the problem or phenomenon to be illustrated, as well as the aesthetic preferences of the data designer.⁵⁵ Both figures clearly show that the overlap between the people who were involved in several of Ulrich von Eitzing’s feuds is remarkably small. Figure 2 additionally provides detailed information about the few individuals who participated in all three conflicts. These could be examined in more detail in further investigations. The result of comparing the three feuds suggests that there was no pool of feud supporters among Mailberg’s allies who were ready to act on Ulrich von Eitzing’s behalf in the background. It is clear that no feuding networks that could be activated when needed had formed among his former supporters, such as those established by professional feud entrepreneurs, such as Ulrich’s contemporary, Hans von Rechberg (1410–1464), who deployed them in the service of third parties when necessary.⁵⁶

This finding also calls into question Gutkas’ previously not properly sourced assumption that a large number of the signatories of the Mailberg charters were dependent on Ulrich von Eitzing and that the large group of knights he had at his

52 Two lists of feudal supporters have been preserved in the various editions of the report on the Margrave War attributed to Erhard Schürstab. The so-called “small” list shows the total number of Ulrich’s supporters; the so-called “large” list names fifty-nine supporters, see *Chroniken Nürnberg*, 475–78. The manuscripts are described *Chroniken Nürnberg*, 118f. and 113f.

53 *Chroniken Nürnberg*, 475.

54 *Chroniken Nürnberg*, 476ff. The extent to which, as Lorenz, *Eyczing*, 59 believes, “the leaders of the 1452 uprising” had already united here remains unclear.

55 Special thanks are due to Johannes Preiser-Kapeller and Paul Heinicker, who created the visualisations. The former with the experienced eye of a historian, skilled in historical network analysis, the latter with the eye of a media designer and a focus on contemporary, differentiated data presentation. The accompanying interdisciplinary exchange was enriching, as it opened a media studies perspective on the challenges of data visualisation, based on Paul Heinicker’s own intensive engagement with the topic, see Heinicker, *Anderes Visualisieren*.

56 Konzen, “Rechberg,” 223 and 235.

disposal to administer his many castles was his recruitment pool.⁵⁷ If this had been the case, one would have expected a much larger number of names to appear in the earlier conflicts, especially due to the proximity in time, in the feud against the city of Nuremberg.

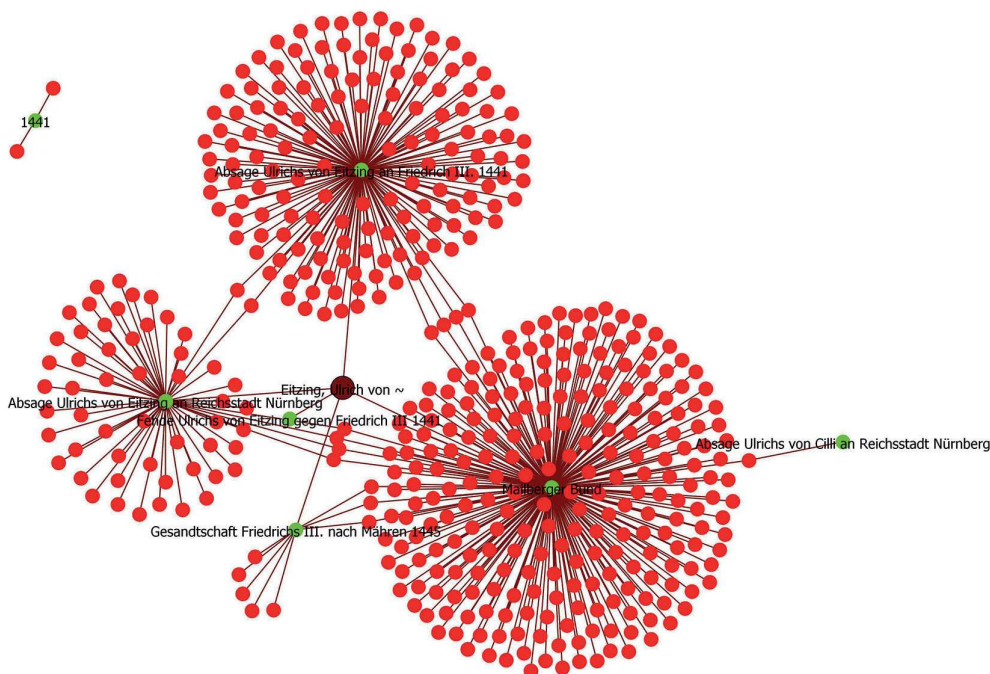


Figure 1 Supporters of the feuds of 1441 and 1450 compared with the participants in the Mailberger Bund (visualisation: Johannes Preiser-Kapeller)

Current research assumes that servants and subjects were obliged to participate in their lord's feud⁵⁸ and so far sees the feudal bond between helper and feud leader as the most important recruitment base for feuds.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, despite exemplary investigations, it is still difficult to unequivocally categorise participants in feuds.⁶⁰

In the case of the Mailberger Bund, there are doubts that dependence on the leader was a decisive factor for many supporters to join. So far, this can only

⁵⁷ Gutkas, "Mailberger Bund, Part 2," 361.

⁵⁸ Brunner, *Land*, 76.

⁵⁹ Schäfer, "Fehdeführer," 207.

⁶⁰ Schäfer, "Fehdeführer," 203 and her conclusion on 219f. Schäfer emphasises that the term "helper" should be understood as a functional designation and does not say anything about the hierarchical stratification or legal classification of the feud participants into patrons, helpers, and servants.

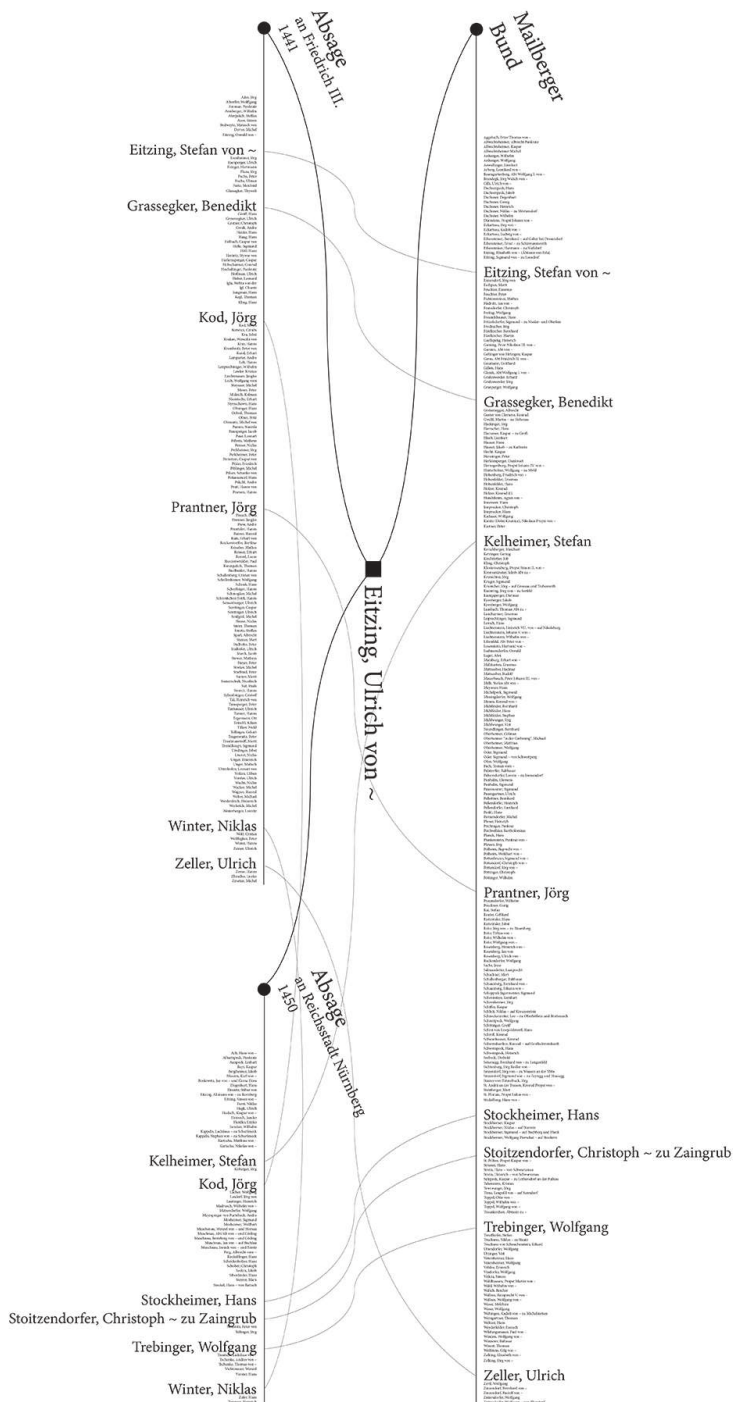


Figure 2 Supporters of the feuds of 1441 and 1450 compared with the participants in the Mailberger Bund (visualisation: Paul Heinicker)

be reasonably assumed in a few individual cases, such as those identified by Karl Gutkas: the noble squires Wolfgang Trebinger, Christoph Stoitzendorfer, and Hans Meyreser.⁶¹ Stoitzendorfer had presumably placed himself under Eitzinger's authority by selling him his seat in 1446.⁶² He had already been involved in Ulrich's feud against Nuremberg, took part in the preparatory meeting for the Mailberger Bund in Wullersdorf a year and a half later, and sealed both Mailberg charters. A similar pattern can be seen with Trebinger.⁶³ The noble squires Benedikt Grassegger and Stefan Kelheimer, as well as Hans Stockheimer, had already supported Eitzinger in earlier conflicts.⁶⁴ The Herzogenburg monastery, which had placed itself under the protection of Ulrich von Eitzing and his brothers for fifteen years in 1444, was certainly unable to avoid participating in the alliance.⁶⁵

Due to their diverse nature, the three conflicts probably required different groups of supporters from Eitzinger's perspective, who were likely to have had their own interests. The feud in 1441 was a legal remedy imposed by Eitzinger out of economic necessity and was not particularly a political measure.⁶⁶ Ulrich's supporters probably also had financial claims of their own.⁶⁷ In the case of the Margrave war, Ulrich himself was a feudal supporter and, as Brandenburg's administrator, was certainly obliged to participate in the feud. Geographical considerations were obviously decisive for him in recruiting his supporters.

Next, three subnetworks will be used to investigate who from Ulrich von Eitzing's immediate social circle was involved in the Mailberger Bund. To this end, the *Diplomatarium* of the Eitzinger family, published by Joseph Chmel⁶⁸—with a focus on the period from the 1430s onwards—and relevant research literature is evaluated with regard to Ulrich von Eitzing's known relationships with participants in the Mailberger Bund prior to 1451. This includes biographical and genealogical literature as well as the aforementioned study by Karl Gutkas.⁶⁹ This source and lit-

61 Gutkas, "Mailberger Bund, Part 2," 369 with note 61; see also Gutkas, "Mailberger Bund, Part 1," 71.

62 Chmel, "Eizinger 1," 42 no. 77; see also the earlier sales to the Eitzinger, Chmel, "Eizinger 1," 38 no. 69.

63 Chmel, "Eizinger 1," 35 no. 64 and 41 no. 76; see also Seidl, *Eizinger*, 32 and Gutkas, "Mailberger Bund, Part 2," 369.

64 See Figure 2 and Gutkas, "Mailberger Bund, Part 1," 70f.

65 Chmel, "Eizinger 1," 38 no. 68, see also Seidl, *Eizinger*, 33.

66 See also Georg von Puchheim's financially motivated feud against Frederick III: Brunner, "Fehdewesen," 435–59.

67 In his feud letter, Eitzinger states that Albrecht had appointed him *mitsambt andern ... unverschaidenlich* as guarantors. Kollár, *Analecta*, col. 879, no. XX.

68 Chmel, "Adels-Geschichte"; Chmel, "Eizinger 1"; Chmel, "Eizinger 2."

69 These are essentially Zernatto, *Herrenstand*; Turba, *Ritterstand*; Gutkas, "Mailberger Bund,

erature base only provides initial access to Ulrich von Eitzing's network of relationships. It would need to be supplemented by more comprehensive research through systematic archive and literature searches.

Qualified relationships are established between the data sets of the individual actors and the data set of Ulrich von Eitzing in the OpenAtlas database using the categories of "kinship," "economic," and "social," resulting in three subnetworks. Figure 3 shows a visualisation of the relevant relational data structured in the database. The three subnetworks, which are interpreted in more detail below, are coloured differently for better differentiation. Together with a fourth "political" subnetwork generated from other sources, these form the core of Ulrich von Eitzing's ego network (Figure 4). Like Figure 3, Figure 4 does not show the final research result. Visualisation of the relational data is rather an intermediate methodological step. The modelled subnetworks are now being examined in greater detail using conventional methods.

The first subnetwork comprises Eitzinger's family ties to members of the Mailberger Bund. Family is the most clearly identifiable group in Ulrich's ego network. Family was not only a constitutive element of his economic and social rise, but also an essential stabilising factor in his conflicts. Ulrich had three brothers and six sisters. The systematic social advancement of his generation demanded viable strategies for risk reduction. The Eitzinger brothers realised this by acting as a family association in economic and legal matters.⁷⁰ This strategy was also observed among other members of the rising knightly class in the fifteenth century,⁷¹ making it easier to compensate for possible personnel losses. Together with his brothers, Ulrich had acquired most of the central Eitzinger possessions, initially with Martin and, after his death, with his younger brothers Oswald and Stephan.⁷² Ulrich had been elevated to the rank of lord with the latter. Oswald became Ulrich's most important partner within the family.

While Oswald and Stephan strengthened the family's ties to Moravia through their marriages, the sisters were socially anchored above and below the Enns River in Austria through marriage into knightly families.⁷³ Ulrich's sister Elisabeth, in turn, had been abbess of the Benedictine convent of Erla since 1437, which she led to

Part 1"; Gutkas, "Mailberger Bund, Part 2," and Seidl, *Eizinger*. There is some overlap between the sources cited and the literature, as some of the works are based on the same source material.

70 Gutkas, "Mailberger Bund, Part 2," 358f., Heinig, *Friedrich III*, 267, note 526.

71 See the brothers Prüschenk; Probszt, "Prueschenk," 115–27.

72 Gutkas, "Mailberger Bund, Part 2," 359, on Martin see also Seidl, *Eizinger*, 10f.

73 Oswald was first married to Katharina von Gaiditz and then to Johanna von Boskovic, while Stephan was married to Katharina von Boskovic Černohorský; see Seidl, *Eizinger*, 65, 74, and 78. For Ulrich's sisters, see the family tree at the end of the same work.

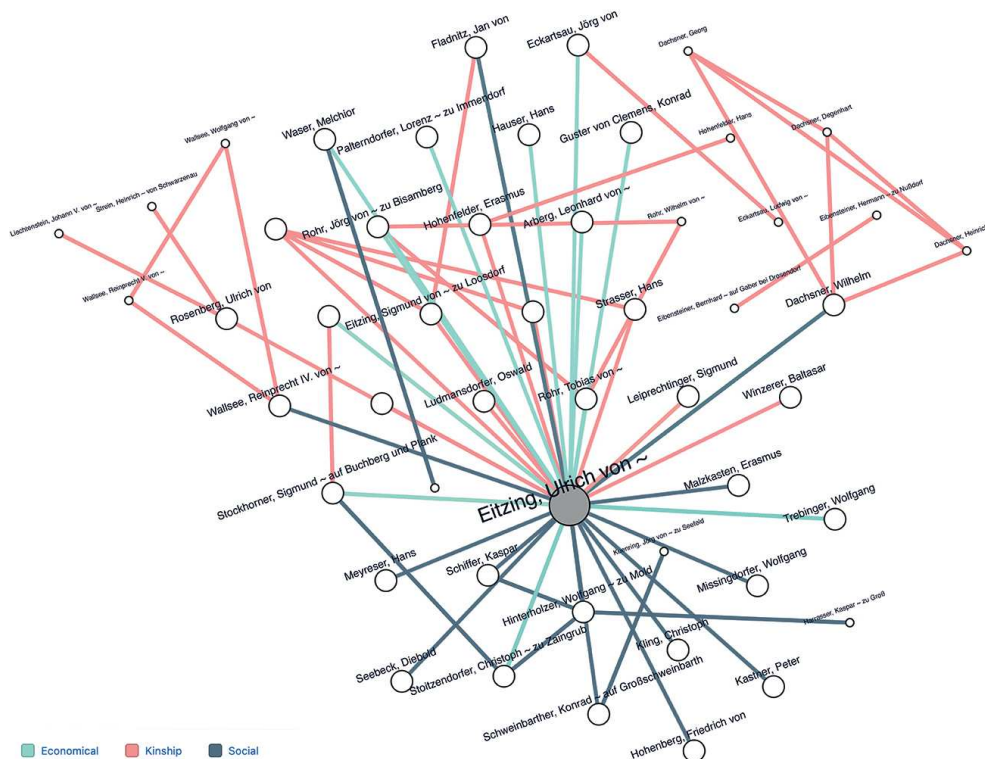


Figure 3 “Kinship,” “economic,” and “social” subnetwork (visualisation: Paul Heinicker)

economic prosperity during her thirty-year tenure.⁷⁴ By marrying Barbara Kraft, Ulrich acquired the foundation of his fortune and, at the same time, established family ties to Berthold von Mangen, the long-serving *Hubmeister* under Albrecht II.⁷⁵ Without this contact, Ulrich’s rise at court would have been almost inconceivable.

About a quarter of Ulrich von Eitzing’s ego network was family (see the connections marked in red in Figures 3 and 4 originating from Ulrich von Eitzing). Most of his siblings and their families were involved in the Mailberger Bund. In the early stages, it was primarily Stephan who took part in the preparatory meetings in Mailberg and Wullersdorf and sealed the first charter.⁷⁶ The second charter bears the seal of Elisabeth Eitzinger. Their sister Anna is represented by her husband Hans Strasser, and Margareta Eitzinger by her son Oswald Ludmansdorfer.⁷⁷ Katharina

74 *Dehio Niederösterreich*, 1950.

75 Lorenz, *Eyczing*, 4f.

76 However, he did not participate in Ulrich’s feud against the city of Nuremberg.

77 He sealed the second Mailberg charter and participated in the alliance for the liberation of Ladislaus on 5 March 1452.

Eitzinger's family by marriage is represented by Erasmus Hohenfelder.⁷⁸ However, the families of Dorothea and Afra Eitzinger, the Stadlers and the Apfentalers did not participate in the alliance. Afra's lack of support is likely due to the fact that she had lost a dispute over inheritance with her brothers a few years earlier.⁷⁹

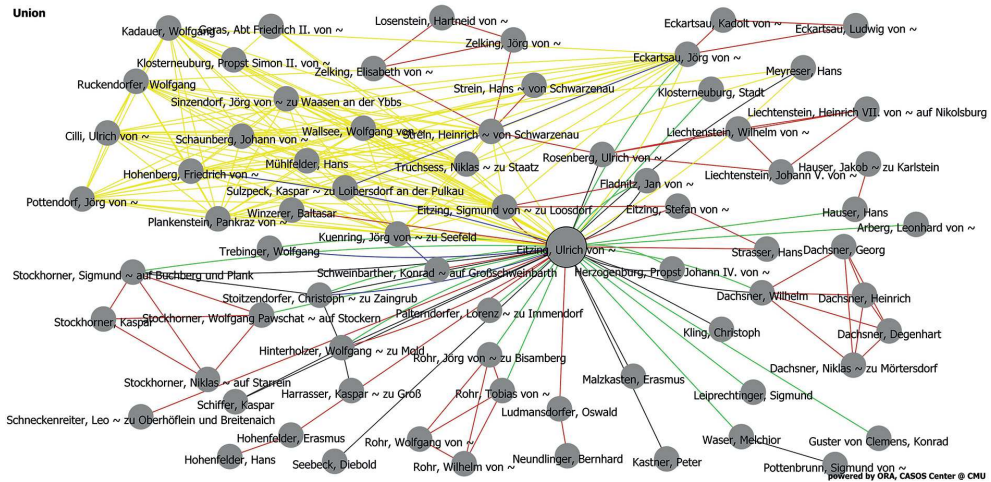


Figure 4 Ulrich von Eitzing's ego network including "political" subnetwork (visualisation: Johannes Preiser-Kapeller)

Instead, some of Ulrich's more distant relatives joined the Mailberger Bund, such as the Schneckenreiter, the Stockhorner, the Winczer, and the Wildungsmauer families.⁸⁰ However, the most committed member of the family was the knight Sigmund Eitzinger zu Loosdorf, a cousin of Ulrich's from a collateral line. He had already taken part in Ulrich's feud with Frederick III in 1441.⁸¹ From the first meeting in Mailberg in 1451 until the Göllersdorfer Bund against Frederick III in 1460, with whom Ulrich attempted to reactivate the opposition of the estates against the emperor, he stood at his cousin's side.⁸²

Various family members had already been involved in Ulrich's feuds, examined above. In 1441, these included Ulrich's brothers Stephan and Oswald, as well as a relative from a collateral line.⁸³ In 1450, they were a member of the Kornberger

78 For information on Katharina's relationship with Erasmus Hohenfelder, see Turba, *Ritterstand*, 63f.

79 Chmel, "Eizinger 1," 28–32, nos 57–59.

80 For details of the individual family relationships, see Gutkas, "Mailberger Bund, Part 1," 69; Chmel, "Adels-Geschichte," 239; Seidl, *Eizinger*, 12f.; Gutkas, "Mailberger Bund, Part 2," 358.

81 Kollár, *Analecta*, col. 890, no. XXII.

82 Chmel, *Materialien* 2, 211–14, no. 166; on the Göllersdorfer Bund, see Heinig, *Friedrich III*, 267.

83 Ulrich von Eitzing zu Starein, see Seidl, *Eizinger*, 28.

Eitzinger family⁸⁴ and a member of the Boskovic Černohorský family. The respective motives are likely to be found between family loyalty and self-interest. Ulrich's declaration of feud in 1441 is to be understood as having been made on behalf of all three Eitzinger brothers,⁸⁵ as the economic existence of the entire family was at stake. The repeated joint appearances of the Eitzinger brothers make it all the more clear that Oswald Eitzinger's name does not appear at any point during the Mailberger Bund.⁸⁶ Oswald, who financed Frederick III for a long time, did not always agree with his brother's attitude towards the sovereign,⁸⁷ and may have distanced himself from Ulrich during this time.

In summary, it can be said that Ulrich von Eitzing relied heavily on family support in times of conflict. This is generally considered a characteristic feature of feuds among knights⁸⁸ and is an initial indication that Ulrich von Eitzing, although now a lord, remained socially attached to his class of origin.

Compared to the family subnetwork, the two subnetworks "economic" and "social" have much less distinct contours. The relationships are more difficult to qualify. The relationships recorded in both subnetworks of Ulrich von Eitzing have in common that their origins largely overlap, but the individuals had different functions. The connections marked in green in Figures 3 and 4, originating from Ulrich von Eitzing, can be traced back to economic transactions. These relate almost exclusively to Ulrich's numerous property purchases in Austria. The contacts are Ulrich's respective transaction partners. This "economic" subnetwork is therefore not a trade network that would have emerged through recurring interaction with the same individuals. The contacts were established on a case-by-case basis. The next subnetwork (Figures 3 and 4—grey lines) comprises contacts with individuals who, according to the sources, were known to Ulrich in some form, but without it being possible to define the nature of the relationship in each individual case. For this reason, the neutral term "social" was chosen to describe this subnetwork. These are predominantly individuals who had acted as witnesses in the business dealings of the Eitzinger.⁸⁹ However, it is not always clear from the sources for which of the business parties they had acted as witnesses.

84 Altmann von Eitzing zu Kornberg. Simon von Eitzing also took part.

85 To settle the conflict, Frederick III negotiated with all three, see Regesten Kaiser Friedrichs III. H. 12 no. 58.

86 Gutkas, "Mailberger Bund, Part 2," 363, on Oswald, see Seidl, *Eizinger*, 65–76.

87 Heinig, *Friedrich III*, 267, note 526.

88 Schäfer, "Fehdeführer," 220 with note 119.

89 These were, for example, Jan von Fladnitz, Wolfgang Hinterholzer zu Mold, Peter Kastner, Jörg Kunigsperger, Konrad Kunigsperger, Erasmus Malzkasten, Hans Meyreser, Kaspar Schiffer, Diebold Seebeck, Hans Walich, see Chmel, "Eizinger 1," 25f. no. 50; 26f. no. 52; 59 no. 111; 38f. no. 70; 6 no. 5; 15 no. 21; 46 no. 87; 60f. no. 115; 45 no. 87; 33 no. 60; 48 no. 90 and 33 no. 60.

The “economic” and “social” subnetworks together comprise around twenty-five people, which corresponds to just under one-tenth of the Mailberg’s allies. These include connections to some important parties, such as the Commander of the eponymous Mailberg commandery, Wilhelm Dachsner, from whom Ulrich von Eitzing purchased some estates in 1445 during times of economic hardship.⁹⁰ Dachsner not only opened the doors of the commandery to the allies but also brought a prominent part of his family into the alliance (Figure 4, right).⁹¹ A second look at the sources reveals that a significant number of those who had done business with Eitzinger or attested to his business dealings in the previous two decades were members of the Mailberg alliance.⁹² Ulrich von Eitzing seems to have exerted a certain influence on these circles. Some of the men in Ulrich’s ego network, such as the Dachsners, Stockhorners, Hohenfelders, and von Rohrs, also mobilised other family members (Figure 4).

However, one-off business contacts do not necessarily indicate a close personal relationship with Ulrich von Eitzing. The same applies to the witnesses to the charters, although a certain degree of group affiliation is certainly possible in this case.⁹³ In the case of a group of individuals, however, the increased network density as seen in the visualisation suggests a stronger social bond between them. This is the Eitzinger–Stockhorner–Stoitzendorfer–Hinterholzer–Trebinger group (Figure 4, left). The Eitzingers and Stockhorners form the centre of this circle. They were distantly related,⁹⁴ and there were repeated economic contacts, most recently in 1450.⁹⁵ With Hans Stockhorner, who did not participate in the alliance himself,⁹⁶ Ulrich had belonged to the administrators of Albrecht II and Friedrich III.⁹⁷ His brothers Kaspar and Wolfgang,⁹⁸ as well as Niklas Stockhorner of Starrein and Sigmund Stockhorner of Buchberg and Plank, who came from other lines, were

90 Chmel, “Eizinger 1,” 39f. no. 73, see also Seidl, *Eizinger*, 34 and 43. Further transactions followed in 1448 and 1450, Chmel, “Eizinger 1,” 58 no. 109 and Chmel, “Eizinger 2,” 21 no. 137. Wilhelm Dachsner also attested to several transactions by Ulrich von Eitzing, Chmel, “Eizinger 1,” 42 no. 78 and 57 no. 108.

91 For more on the Dachsners, see Gutkas, “Mailberger Bund, Part 2,” 367.

92 The Pielacher family, for example, did not participate in the alliance. Chmel, “Eizinger 1,” 21 no. 42, and 28 no. 55.

93 See Habermann, *Niederadel*, 93, who critically examines the concept of “Vergesellung.”

94 Anna Eitzinger zu Kornberg was married to Christian Stockhorner, Turba, *Ritterstand*, 126.

95 On the connections between the Eitzingers and the Stockhorners, see Chmel, “Eizinger 1,” 4f. no. 2; 39 no. 72; 43 no. 79; 68f. nos. 133–135, as well as Seidl, *Eizinger*, 15, 34, 52, and Gutkas, “Mailberger Bund, Part 1,” 69, as well as Gutkas, “Mailberger Bund, Part 2,” 369.

96 He may already have been deceased.

97 Zernatto, *Herrenstand*, 241.

98 Turba, *Ritterstand*, 126.

active supporters of the alliance. In the second half of the 1440s, Eitzinger's servant Stoitzendorfer became involved in the business activities of the circle around Ulrich von Eitzing, the Stockhorners, and Wolfgang Hinterholzer⁹⁹ and was also counted among the *frunden* (friends) of Christian Stockhorer.¹⁰⁰ The group was also united by the fact that they mostly came from the same area around Horn and Mold.¹⁰¹ In addition to his family, this circle of people is likely to have been among Ulrich von Eitzing's closest social connections.

Ulrich von Eitzing's ego network within the Mailberger Bund is finally rounded off by a final subnetwork, for which sources have been evaluated that prove or suggest contacts between Ulrich and members of the confederation that had been established in a political context prior to the formation of the Mailberger Bund (Figure 5 and Figure 4 left—yellow lines). The focus is on the decade beginning with the reign of Albrecht II, as the years 1438 to 1448 saw both the height of Ulrich's political career and the decline of his political influence at the court of Frederick III.

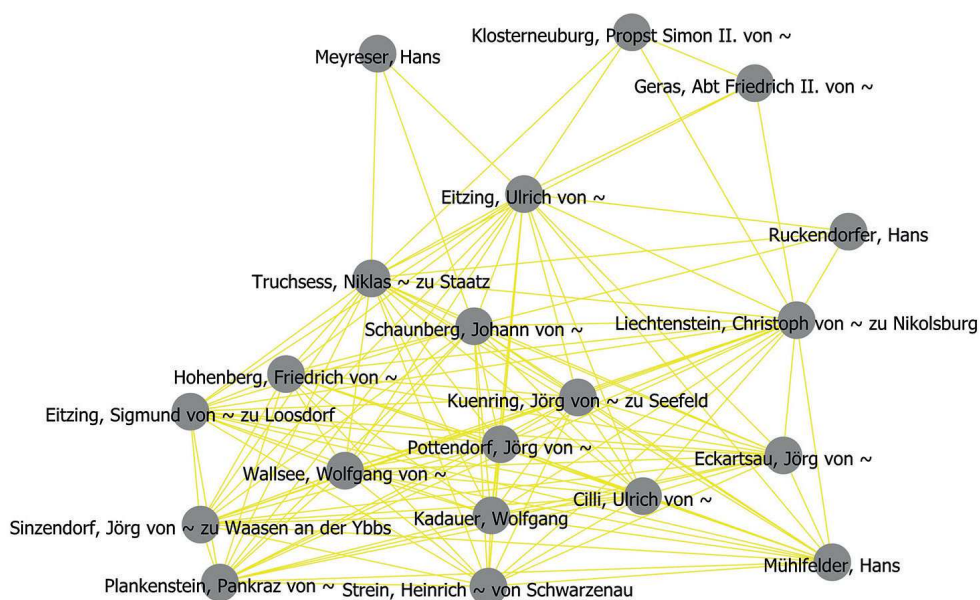


Figure 5 “Political” subnetwork (visualisation: Johannes Preiser-Kapeller)

When modelling this “political” subnetwork, it becomes particularly clear that network analysis is only as good as the quantity and quality of the sources on which it is based, and that a lack of source criticism can easily lead to misinterpretations.

99 Chmel, “Eizinger 1,” 59 no. 111; 63 no. 119.

100 Chmel, “Eizinger 1,” 38 no. 69; 43 no. 79; 51 no. 95; 61f. no. 117; 63 no. 119.

101 Gutkas already refers to this group from the Horner area in “Mailberger Bund, Part 1,” 69.

Here, too, the network can only provide an initial indication of Ulrich von Eitzing's connections with the Austrian political elites involved in the Mailberger Bund.¹⁰² For a more differentiated presentation, further sources would have to be evaluated, which is not possible within the scope of this short study. For the methodological attempt pursued here, sources were selected that cover as many of the men who served under Albrecht II and Frederick III in Austria as possible. The men appointed as *Landesverweser* (administrators) in Austria by Albrecht II in 1438 and then by Friedrich III in 1442, who included Ulrich von Eitzing, were taken into account.¹⁰³ In addition, a group of men are examined who, like him, performed council services or diplomatic functions for Friedrich III in the 1440s.¹⁰⁴

First, a methodological problem must be addressed: it is not certain that the administrators appointed by Frederick III in 1442 actually took office, i.e., the relationships with Ulrich von Eitzing and among themselves are likely but not certain.¹⁰⁵ The tools used here to structure the data and the visualisation based on it only allow yes/no statements. Contingencies that can be described narratively in a few strokes cannot be depicted, or only with considerable effort. It should also be remembered that the ego network model alone cannot be used to make any definitive statements about the political relationships between ego and alters, or between alter and alter. It only shows the context in which the contacts were established. Thus, Ulrich von Cilli, Ulrich von Eitzing's greatest opponent in the Mailberger Bund, also appears in this subnetwork.

Despite these weaknesses, the "political" subnetwork can be used for our purposes in terms of hypothesis formation. First, it is striking that it does not really matter whether the administrators appointed in 1442 actually took office. Of these twenty-four, only three participated in the Mailberger Bund alongside Ulrich von Eitzing, namely Johann von Schauberg, Niklas Truchsess zu Staatz, and Wolfgang Ruckendorfer. By transferring political responsibility at the beginning of his reign in Austria, Frederick III thus achieved a remarkable feat of integration.

The "political" subnetwork gains further depth when compared to the inner core, i.e., the leadership of the Mailberger Bund. According to Karl Gutkas, this consisted of Ulrich von Eitzing, Wilhelm von Liechtenstein, Georg von Kuenring, Kadolt von Wehingen, Wilhelm Dachsner, Niklas Truchsess zu Staatz, Sigmund Fritzensdorfer,

102 See also the presentation of the participants in Gutkas, "Mailberger Bund, Part 2," 357–82.

103 The list of administrators in 1438 is provided by Zernatto, *Herrenstand*, 241, on those *reten in Österreich* appointed by Frederick III, see Regesten Kaiser Friedrichs III. H. 12 no. 99.

104 For Frederick III's delegations to Moravia in 1445 and 1448, see Seidl, *Eizinger*, 33 and Regesten Kaiser Friedrichs III. H. 13 no. 66.

105 This is pointed out by Gutkas, "Mailberger Bund, Part 1," 59.

Wolfgang Ruckendorfer, and Wolfgang Stockhorner.¹⁰⁶ Gutkas' findings are largely confirmed by examining the data structured in the OpenAtlas database to determine which individuals participated in which actions of the Mailberg allies (Figure 6).¹⁰⁷ A comparison between this leadership group of the Mailberger Bund and Eitzinger's ego network shows that Eitzinger had been in close contact with about half of the men or their families before the Mailberger Bund was formed. These were Wilhelm Dachsner, Wolfgang Ruckendorfer, Wolfgang Stockhorner, and Niklas Truchsess zu Staatz. A comparison of this excerpt from Ulrich's ego network with the leadership of the Mailberger Bund suggests that there were two parties within this core group, one around Ulrich von Eitzing and another around the influential Georg von Kuenring.¹⁰⁸ This hypothesis could be a starting point for further investigation.

It is also clear that some of Ulrich's most important relationships from his "political" subnetwork can be traced back to his time at the court of Albrecht II. These include men such as the noble squire Hans Meyreser, Johann von Schaunberg, and Reinprecht V von Wallsee,¹⁰⁹ although they were not part of the leadership circle.¹¹⁰ Ulrich von Eitzing's closest ally from the core group was probably Niklas Truchsess von Staatz.¹¹¹ The political careers of the two men had run parallel for years: when Ulrich was Albrecht II's *Hubmeister*, Niklas held the office of court marshal. Both were among Albrecht II's administrators. Later, both were sent on diplomatic missions on behalf of Frederick III.¹¹² At the time of the Mailberg uprising, Niklas took over the office of *Hubmeister*.¹¹³ Unlike most of the other Mailberg allies, he still stood alongside Ulrich von Eitzing against Frederick III in the Göllerdorfer Bund in 1460. However, it cannot be clarified at this point whether Ulrich von Eitzing was integrated into the court networks under Albrecht II beyond these individual contacts or whether he remained isolated, as was often the case with social climbers

106 Gutkas, "Mailberger Bund, Part 1," 72. Fritzelsdorfer was Albrecht V's Truchsess, see Turba, *Ritterstand*, 48. On the noble squire Wolfgang Ruckendorfer see Heinig, *Friedrich III*, 290 and Gutkas, "Mailberger Bund, Part 2," 366.

107 Meeting in Mailberg on 14 October 1451, assembly in Wullersdorf on 31/31 October 1451, sealing of the first alliance charters, sealing of the second alliance charter, delegation of the Mailberg allies to Frederick III on 31 October 1451, (written) message to Frederick III on 18 November 1451, alliance for the liberation of Ladislaus on 5 March 1452, see Gutkas, "Mailberger Bund, Part 1," 66, 69–72, Chmel, *Geschichte Kaiser Friedrichs*, 644–48.

108 For Kuenring, see Gutkas, "Mailberger Bund, Part 2," 364.

109 Zernatto, *Herrenstand*, 241.

110 Gutkas, "Mailberger Bund, Part 1," 80f.

111 For him, see Turba, *Ritterstand*, 38f.; Gutkas, "Mailberger Bund, Part 2," 368.

112 On Frederick III's delegations to Moravia in 1445 and 1448, see Seidl, *Eizinger*, 33 and Regesten Kaiser Friedrichs III. H. 13 no. 66.

113 Gutkas, "Mailberger Bund, Part 1," 78.

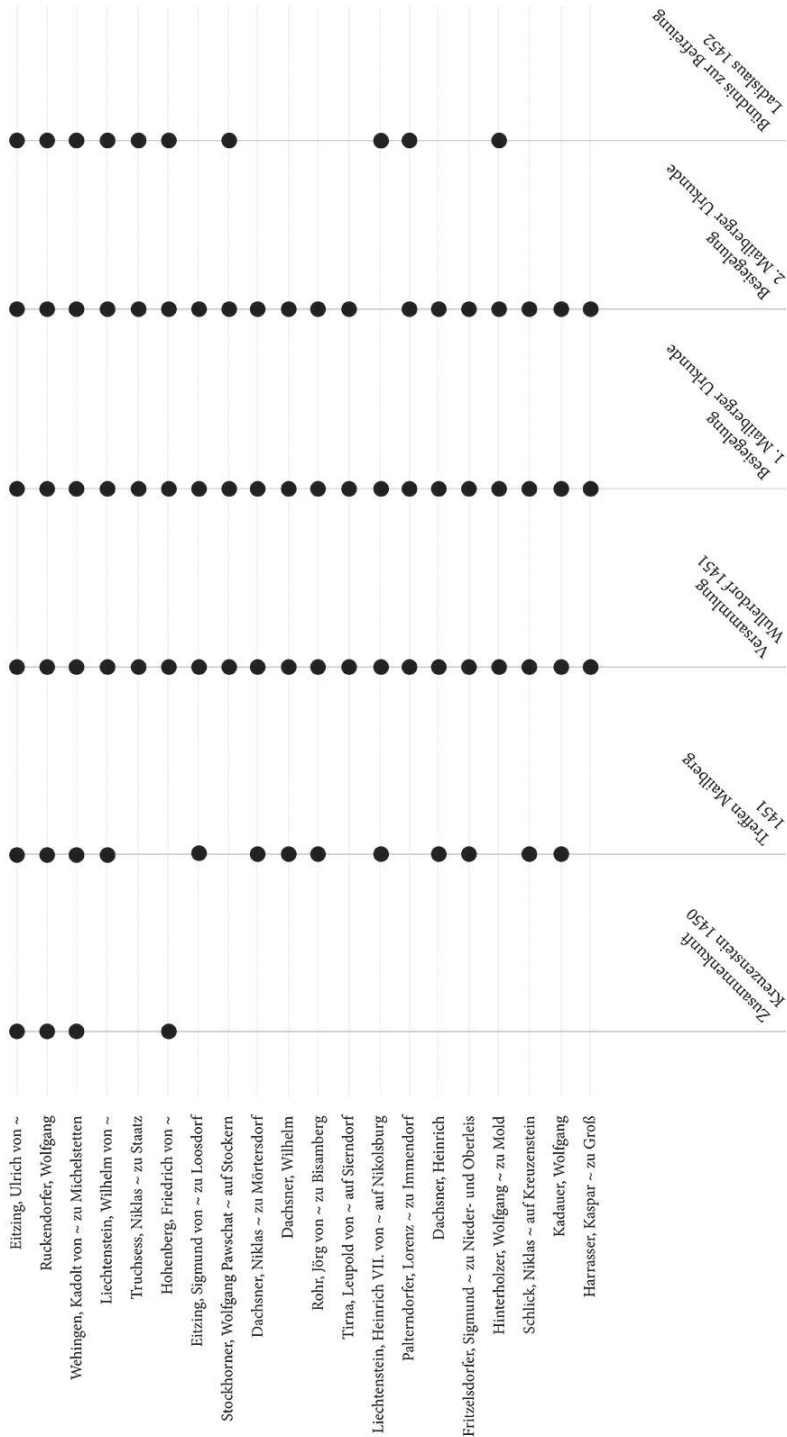


Figure 6 Participation intensity of the Mailberg allies (visualisation: Paul Heinicker)

whose careers depended heavily on the patronage of a prince.¹¹⁴ Accordingly, the visibly higher density of the “political” subnetwork should also be interpreted with caution.¹¹⁵ Unlike in the “economic” and “social” subnetworks, the “political” contacts do not predominantly radiate outwards towards the ego. Intuitively, one would associate this high density with qualities such as loyalty, intensity, and stability with regard to the ego. In the conflict case examined here, however, it is likely to have represented an increased social risk for Ulrich von Eitzing. This is because the high density would also have made it easier for people to switch sides. Such a conceivable social dynamic could have contributed to Ulrich von Eitzing, who was already closely connected to only part of the inner leadership circle, being isolated more quickly when Ulrich von Cilli joined the alliance.

Let us summarise. The present case study on the Mailberger Bund has shown that the ego network model can be used for historical conflict research. At the same time, the study makes it clear that network analysis generally requires methodological supplementation if it is to deliver reliable results. With the help of the ego network model, the case study was able to identify striking characteristics of Ulrich von Eitzing’s social capital, which provide indicative clues as to his loss of power within the Mailberger Bund. One of the great strengths of network analysis is the ability to visualise structured data. Some phenomena, especially when examining large groups of people, become much clearer through visualisation than they would in a purely narrative presentation. An example is Figures 1 and 2, which show at a glance that there was hardly any overlap between Ulrich von Eitzing’s groups of supporters in the three conflict scenarios examined. As a rule, visualisations must be interpreted with caution. First of all, the purpose of a visualisation should be clear, which in most cases is to form hypotheses (Gramsch-Stehfest). Then, it should be borne in mind that the interpretation of the visualisation may vary depending on the question being asked. This became clear in the interpretation of the density of Ulrich von Eitzing’s “political” network.

Nevertheless, the ego network remains limited. It alone cannot be used to illustrate the relative size, density, and reach of Ulrich von Eitzing’s social network in comparison to the networks of other alliance members. Nevertheless, the methodological approach could be expanded. As part of a more comprehensive study, it would be useful to compare Ulrich’s ego network with the ego networks of other protagonists of the Mailberger Bund, especially with that of his opponent, Ulrich von Cilli. A potential future study could examine the extent to which the quality of the social

114 Rabeler, *Lebensformen*, 279, 281.

115 This is not determined mathematically, as is usual in network analysis, but merely established as a finding generated by visualisation; for the calculation of density, see Wolf and Repke, “Egozentrierte Netzwerke,” 513.

capital of an established prince, such as Ulrich von Cilli, differed from that of a social climber, such as Ulrich von Eitzing, within the opposition of the estates. However, the relatively high time and technical effort required for network analysis must be taken into account before the first results can be seen after manual data extraction, structuring, and visualisation. However, given the current state of AI development, automated data extraction is expected to make this process much easier.¹¹⁶

The network analysis carried out here shows that Ulrich von Eitzing had contacts with around one-fifth of the Mailberg alliance partners prior to 1451. Ulrich's ego network, and thus his social capital within the Mailberger Bund, proves to be heterogeneous in many respects, both in terms of its composition and its structure. It is composed of individuals from various, largely independent spheres of Ulrich von Eitzing's life. While the subnetworks "kinship", "economic," and "social" overlap in some areas, the "political" subnetwork remains largely isolated. The most stable elements of the network are Ulrich von Eitzing's family and the group of men who lived close to the Eitzing family seat in Lower Austria. Neither did a significant number of Ulrich's servants participate in the Mailberg league, nor had Ulrich established any feuding networks in earlier conflicts that he could have brought into the Mailberger Bund. The Eitzingers' "political" contacts can be divided into a close circle of men who can be identified as his party within the alliance's leadership, and relationships that can be described as rather distant to unstable. The high density of the "political" subnetwork is interpreted as a predisposition for Eitzinger's social isolation towards the end of the guardianship conflict.

In general, an ego network is considered to be more effective the more alters it contains who do not know each other and the more diverse they are in terms of their other characteristics.¹¹⁷ However, the performance of the network depends on the respective target. A heterogeneous network may be effective in terms of career advancement, but ineffective in terms of social security in the event of conflict. Ulrich von Eitzing's ego network, modelled in this case study, reflects the social capital of a social climber. If a network analysis were to be carried out specifically focusing on Ulrich's career and evaluating relevant sources, this heterogeneity would likely become even more apparent. Ulrich's relationships could be described as those of a typical *Cutpoint-Akteur* (cut-point actor): he is connected to groups from different social circles, but does not really belong to any of them and is "der typische Abweichler, Modernisierer und Innovateur" (the typical deviant, moderniser, and innovator).¹¹⁸ However, given his fragile position within the Mailberger Bund, this heterogeneous structure of his social capital seems to have been disadvantageous for Ulrich von Eitzing.

116 Gramsch-Stehfest, "Metapher," 10.

117 Jansen, *Netzwerkanalyse*, 107.

118 Jansen, *Netzwerkanalyse*, 106.

It is clear that he attempted to win over people loyal to him for the major political upheaval in Austria. However, this circle remained small in comparison to the almost 270 supporters of the alliance. It consisted of his family and the small group around him and the Stockhorners.¹¹⁹ As Gutkas already points out, the property of Ulrich von Eitzing's relatives and acquaintances who participated in the alliance was rather insignificant, and their influence was limited.¹²⁰ They did not offer sufficient potential to serve as social backup for Eitzinger.

Furthermore, it is striking that Ulrich von Eitzing, who had formally belonged to the estate of lords (*Herrenstand*) since 1439, still had close contacts mainly with knights and noble squires. This was probably another weak point in his social capital. The fifteenth century was a time of great social mobility in Austria.¹²¹ The formal rise from knighthood to estate of lords was increasingly possible,¹²² and the Eitzingers were among the first families in Austria to take this social step.¹²³ The late medieval lords formed a legal but not a social unit; there were social differences within the class, and it was difficult to reach the top positions.¹²⁴ There was a great need for social distinction.¹²⁵ The formal legal admission of the Eitzingers to the estate of lords was consolidated in stages under Albrecht II and Friedrich III.¹²⁶ Social acceptance towards the newcomers probably took correspondingly longer.¹²⁷ According to the results of network analysis, Ulrich von Eitzing was in close contact with only a few of the approximately forty members of the Mailberger Bund who can be classified as lords (*Herren*) and were distributed among about twenty families residing in Austria.¹²⁸ These included the von Rohr family,¹²⁹ who were themselves

119 Gutkas, "Mailberger Bund, Part 1," 69.

120 Gutkas, "Mailberger Bund, Part 2," 369.

121 Feldbauer, "Rangprobleme," 582.

122 See Feldbauer, "Rangprobleme," 582, and Schneider, *Niederadel*, 270. Spieß, on the other hand, describes social advancement in the Duchy of Austria around 1500 as an exception, Spieß, "Abgrenzung," 194.

123 Schneider, *Niederadel*, 264 with reference to Zernatto, *Herrenstand*, 232–35; see also Seidl, *Eizinger*, 23 with note 1.

124 See Feldbauer, "Rangprobleme," 578, and Spieß, "Abgrenzung," 204f.

125 Spieß, "Abgrenzung," 204.

126 See Koller, *Reichsregister*, 146–49 nos. 206f., Chmel, *Regesta*, no. 178, Chmel, "Eizinger 1," 39 no. 71.

127 Cp. the contemptuous description of Ulrich by the anonymous accuser, behind whom Gutkas suspects Georg von Kuenring, see Böhm, "Beschuldigungen" and Gutkas, "Lebensjahre", 154f.

128 These were the Arberg, Eckartsau, Hohenberg, Kuenring, Liechtenstein, Losenstein, Mainburg, Plankenstein, Polheim, Pottendorf, Rohr, Rosenberg, Schaunberg, Schlick, Strein, Toppel, Wald, Wallsee, Wehingen, Winden, and Zelking families.

129 For the Rohr family, see Gutkas, "Mailberger Bund, Part 2," 365f. For Ulrich's contacts with the Rohr family, see Seidl, *Eizinger*, 31; Chmel, "Eizinger 1," 22 no. 60, Regesten Kaiser Friedrichs III. H. 12 no. 58.

social climbers, and the Arberger family,¹³⁰ who were related to them, as well as Ulrich von Rosenberg, who resided in Moravia.¹³¹ In order to establish a leading position among the lords, it would have been necessary for the Eitzingers to enter into appropriate marriages, which they had not done.¹³²

This social divide also ran through the leadership of the Mailberger Bund. The party around Eitzinger consisted mainly of knights and noble squires, while the presumed second party around Georg von Kuenring with Wilhelm von Liechtenstein and Kadolt von Wehingen was made up of members of the Austrian Herrenstand. Ulrich lacked a significant family that could have earned him recognition among the influential Austrian lords beyond their shared political goal. The upstart Ulrich von Eitzing remained an outsider.

Ulrich von Eitzing's fragile social capital probably made it easier for the influential Count Ulrich von Cilli, who was also closely related to the pretender to the throne Ladislaus Postumus, to claim the leading role within the Mailberger Bund for himself. Karl Gutkas' assessment that Ulrich von Eitzing was a *Provinzpolitiker* is thus confirmed by the present network analysis and can be supplemented by the fact that Ulrich was not only limited in terms of his political motives, but also remained restricted in his social circle. In a sense, Ulrich von Eitzing, one of the most important social climbers of the fifteenth century in Austria, continued to act like a knight.

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130 Seidl, *Eizinger*, 23; Chmel, "Eizinger 1," 9–11 no. 10.

131 Eitzinger and Ulrich von Rosenberg had been engaged in lively correspondence since 1450, Gutkas, "Mailberger Bund, Part 1," 63.

132 Feldbauer, "Rangprobleme," 578.

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