Subversive Networks:
Agents of Change in International Organizations, 1920-1960

International Workshop at the Cluster of Excellence “Asia and Europe in a Global Context”
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Keynote lecture by Corinna Unger (Jacobs University Bremen)

Integrating International Organizations into International History: Opportunities and Challenges

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Abstract

Many scholars and political observers agree that international organizations have steadily increased in importance and visibility in international relations and global affairs in the last few decades. Historians have discovered international organizations somewhat belatedly as a research topic. This is also true of the field of international history, which, for a long time, was predominantly concerned with bilateral relations among nation states and did not consider international organizations political actors en par with national governments. By now, however, a large number of histories of international organizations have been published, and more are being written. With a substantial body of scholarly literature available on the topic, it seems worthwhile to assess the ‘state of the art’ of the field and to think about conceptual opportunities and challenges in studying international organizations.