European Empires with their multi-ethnic societies have long been considered as failures, and their history was often presented as a narrative of mere disintegration and decay. With the ever dominating subject of nation-state formation receding, a new scope for considering empires as the much longer and pervasive alternative in European history opens up. Against this background this volume contributes to a more systematic comparison of the ambivalent and changing relationships between centre and periphery, as well as between colonizers and colonized in the British Empire, the Habsburg Monarchy, Russia and the Ottoman Empire. The spectrum of such relationships reaches from infrastructures and political conflicts to the practice of monarchy and religion and war experiences. A mere addition of case-studies is avoided by interrelating the contributions on the basis of comparative comments by leading specialists in the respective fields.

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