

When Renewal Repeats: Politics of Change and Stability in the Ottoman and Russian Empires during the 'Century of Europe'

Greatly affected by external revolutionary and internal political and social pressures, at different degrees, the Ottoman and Russian empires were the two Eastern imperial orders, which engaged at length with the language of change (internal reforms and new alliances abroad) during the 'Century of Europe.' Thus, to avoid revolutions at home and increase chances of their survival, these imperial houses, through their respective governments, at times opted for an 'evolutionary' path to change, driven by the belief that they could master and control the future of their empires - yet tormented also by the dilemma that these changes could undermine the very stability. This monograph, then, engages with this dilemma by re-examining a number of prominent Ottoman and Russian rulers and statesmen' role and their political projects, by asking how come with all the efforts, these empires collapsed. More specifically and importantly, it explores the ascendancy of vocabularies of law, religion, economic liberalisation and political representation as discourses of change and their fragility in these multi-ethnic and multi-religious empires, as alternative, historical illustrations for the 'European political project,' equally obsessed by this 'evolutionary' path.