

Before Colonization: Nonwestern States and Systems in the Nineteenth Century. 2025. Columbia University Press, Series on International Order and Politics (with Charles Butcher).

How many independent states and state systems existed in the 19th century? How were they structured and what was their fate? We make three core contributions in the book. First, we catalogue the number of independent states since 1816, and we detail the regional patterns in state birth and state death. Indeed, we document quantitatively the large number of states that were extinguished as a consequence of European colonialism and the global enclosure. Second, we develop a theoretical and conceptual framework for comparing state systems, and show variation across four regions: East Asia, South Asia, maritime Southeast Asia, and West Africa. Third, we examine the effects that war, trade, and interaction capacity have on state formation.