



War and State Formation in Ancient China and Early Modern Europe

Victoria Tin-bor Hui

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The Eurocentric conventional wisdom holds that the West is unique in having a multi-state system in international relations and liberal democracy in state-society relations. At the same time, the Sinocentric perspective believes that China is destined to have authoritarian rule under a unified empire. In fact, China in the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods (656–221 BC) was once a system of sovereign territorial states similar to Europe in the early modern period. Both cases witnessed the prevalence of war, formation of alliances, development of the centralized bureaucracy, emergence of citizenship rights, and expansion of international trade. This book, first published in 2005, examines why China and Europe shared similar processes but experienced opposite outcomes. This historical comparison of China and Europe challenges the presumption that Europe was destined to enjoy checks and balances while China was preordained to suffer under a coercive universal status.

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