

Abstract

This paper takes a historical perspective on the role of resource endowment in economic development, examining the leading economies of the early modern era, the Netherlands and England; the first case largely dependent on imports for raw materials, while the second enjoyed the boon of much larger indigenous energy reserves. It argues that locational advantages were an essential part of the story of early modern growth: in the Dutch case, access to factor markets and trade routes; in the English, these combined with natural resources. There is little evidence that the benefits of growth were spread to the periphery, but neither did inequities in growth patterns contribute significantly to institutional backwardness and rent-seeking in the periphery.

Keywords: Resources, Energy, History, Growth, Netherlands, Britain

Dr Paul Warde is a reader in Early Modern History at the University of East Anglia. He works on the environmental, economic and social history of early modern Europe.