

Title: "Harbors and the deep history of democracy" (co-authored with John Gerring, Brendan Apfeld and Andreas Forø Tollefsen)

Abstract:

Although geography is widely viewed as an important factor in long-term development, far too little attention has been paid to its role in democratization. This study focuses on the possible impact of a feature of littoral geography: natural harbors with access to the sea. By virtue of enhancing connections to the wider world, we argue that harbors foster (a) development, (b) mobility, (c) naval-based defense forces, and (d) diffusion. Through these pathways, operative over secular-historical time, areas blessed by natural harbors are more likely to develop democratic forms of government. This argument is tested with a unique database measuring distance to natural harbors throughout the world. We show that there is a robust negative association between this measure and democracy in country and grid-cell analyses.