

Living Standards in Brazil: Bahia, 1572–1920

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Introduction I

- ▶ To this day there are no prices and wages series for Brazil that extends from colonial times to the 20th century.
- ▶ Previous seminal work, while laying the foundation, focus only on short periods, for example: Buesco (1973); Queirós Mattoso (1986) and Alden (1990); Lobo (1971) and Harold Junior (1973).
- ▶ Current work also look only at specific time periods: e.g. Carriello and Pereira (2022) for the 19th century and Pereira (2020) for the early 20th century, Djenderedjian and Martirén (2020) for Rio Grande 1772–1823, Ball (2018) for São Paulo 1891–1930.
- ▶ This paper is the first to build prices, wages, and welfare ratios series for more than three centuries for two cities in Brazil (Salvador and São Francisco do Conde).

Introduction II

- ▶ We mainly use primary sources from novel archival research in Brazil and Portugal.
- ▶ Compare the Salvador region with cities across the world.
- ▶ Living standards for unskilled workers were initially high, but then end up lower than most of the world.
- ▶ Living standards for skilled workers were initially much above Lisbon levels, but then fall and do not recover as quickly in the 19th century.
- ▶ Contrary to conventional wisdom, welfare ratios did not fall in the nineteenth century, but the skill premium diminished.

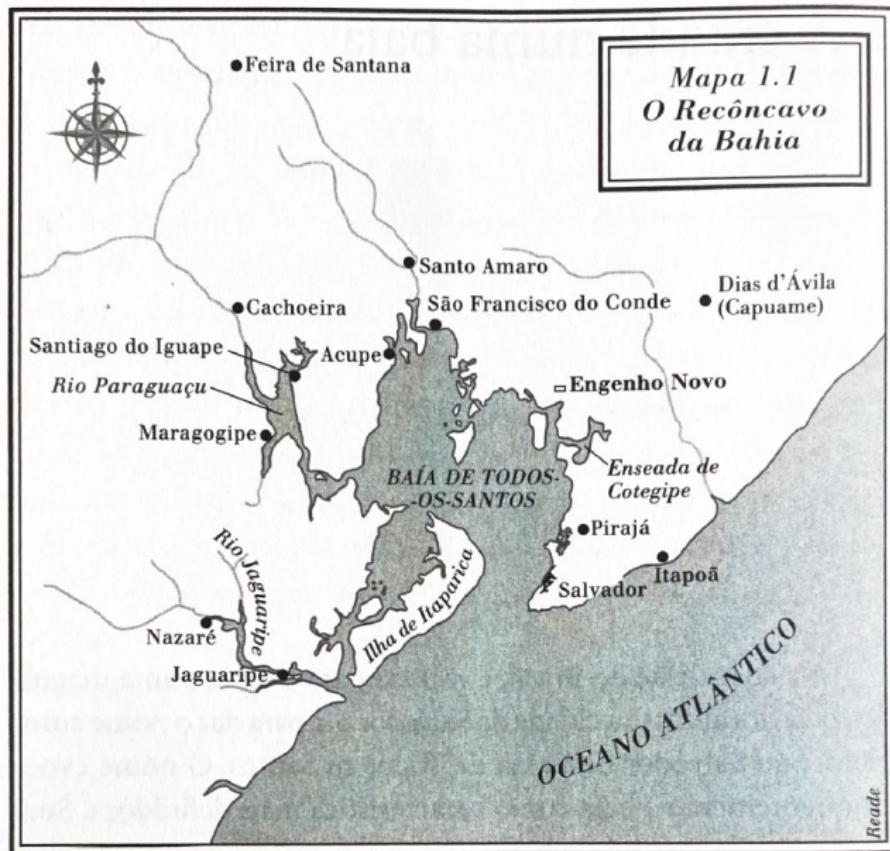
Introduction III

- ▶ Results contrast with most of the literature on historical development in Brazil (Leff 1972, Coatsworth 1978, Engerman and Sokoloff 1997, Maddison 2006).
- ▶ But can be reconcile with e.g. Engerman and Sokoloff (1997) and Summerhill (2005).

Bahia



All Saints Bay



Population in Salvador, 1835 (Source: Reis, 2003).

	N	%
African Enslaved	17,325	26.5
African Free	4,615	7.1
Brazilian Enslave	10,175	15.5
Mulatos Free	14,885	22.7
White Free	18,500	28.2
Total	65,000	100.0

Data and Methodology

- ▶ We compare skilled and unskilled wages and "barebones" baskets around the world (Allen 2001, Allen et al. 2011, 2012, Abad et al 2012, Frankema and van Waijenburg 2012, etc).
- ▶ Salvador's basket adapted from Mattoso 1986, 1992.
- ▶ Wages in the construction sector.

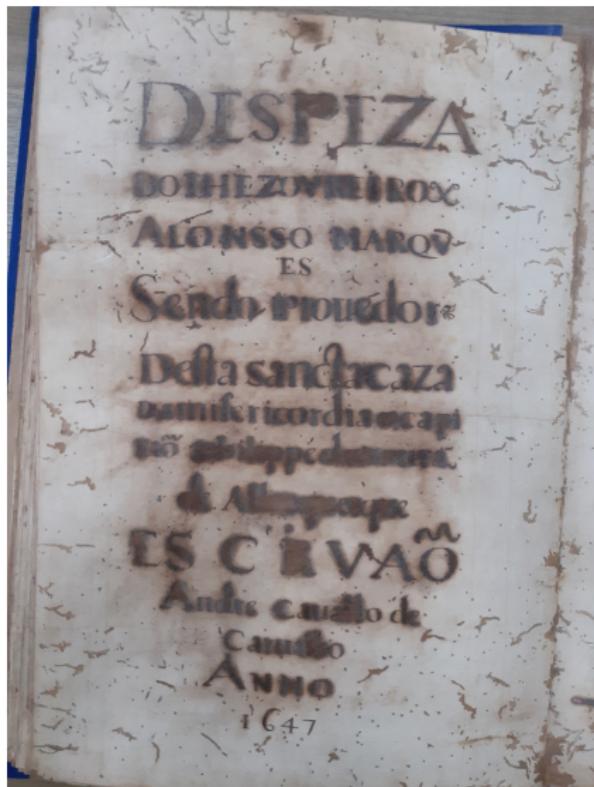
Barebones baskets in global perspective

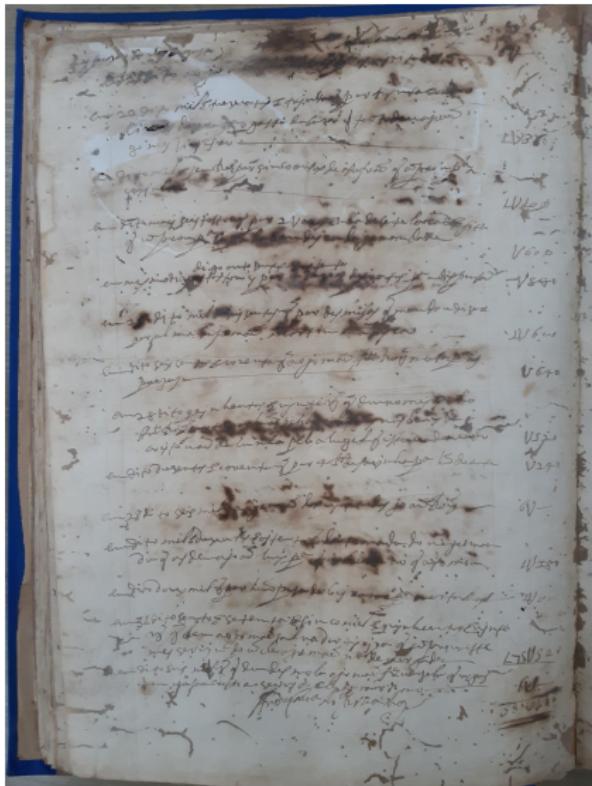
Good (per person per year)	Bahia, Brazil	Europe	USA	South America	Argentina Chile	S. China, Japan	North China	West Africa
Cassava flour (kg)	120							
Meat (kg)	70	5	5	35	105	3	3	3
Beans/peas (kg)	70		20	45		20	20	
Wheat/oats (kg)		155			132			
Maize (kg)			165	165				185
Sorghum (kg)							179	
Butter (kg)		3	3					
Rice (kg)						171		
Oil (kg)						3		3
Soap (kg)	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3
Linen/cotton (m)	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0
Candles (kg)	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3
Lamp oil (kg)	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3
Fuel (M BTU)	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	2
Total daily calories	1926	1936	1936	1943	1938	1939	1942	1939
Total daily protein	58	60	60	60	89	63	71	43

Sources: For Bahia, foodstuffs adapted from Mattoso 1992, for Europe Allen 2001 and Palma and Reis 2019, for South America Abad et al. 2012, for North America Allen et al. 2012, for Asia Allen et al. 2011, and for Africa Frankema and van Waijenburg 2012.

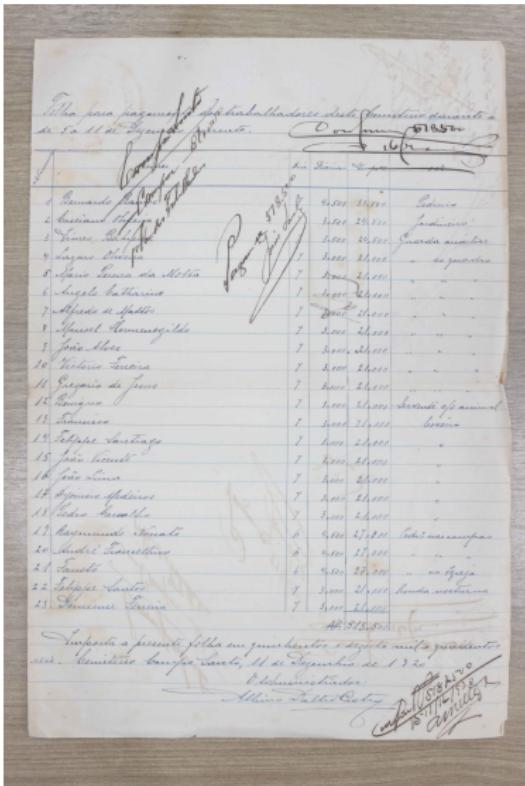
From the archives to the database

- ▶ New world problems...
- ▶ Inventory of Mem de Sá (1569–1579) and the account book of the Engenho Sergipe do Conde (1622–1653) in São Francisco do Conde: ANTT, Cartório dos Jesuítas, transcribed.
- ▶ Random post-mortem inventories in Salvador and São Francisco do Conde.
- ▶ Account books from the Santa Casa de Misericórdia da Bahia in Salvador.
- ▶ Convento São Francisco de Salvador 1790–1825 (new, found in Recife!)
- ▶ Secondary data from Mattoso (1986) and Alden (1990), which are based on the Santa Casa de Salvador and Câmara Municipal de Salvador.

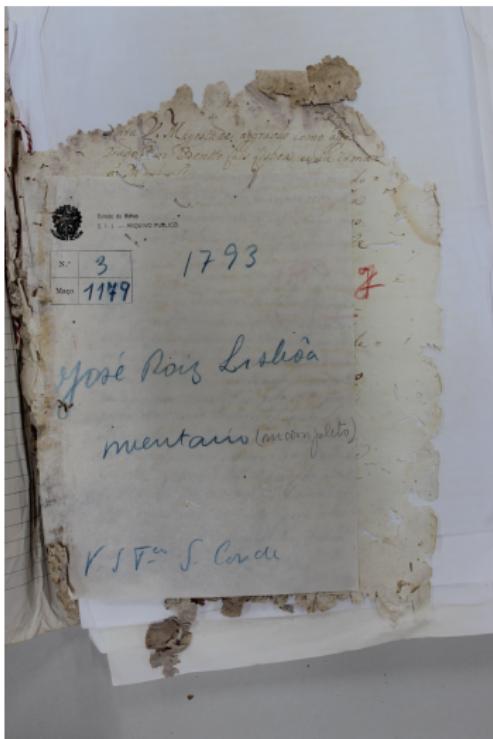


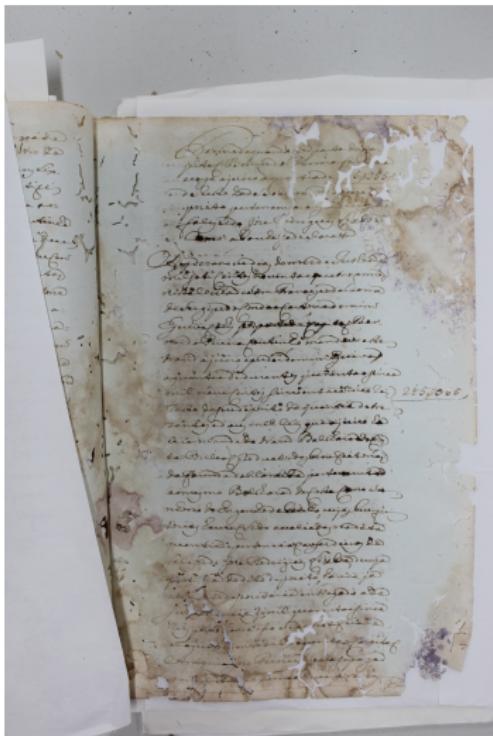


		Transporte	
Ped.	251. Doutor F. de Castro	35	550
Araújo	252. Bernardo de Britto	35	500
Joséina	253. Joana Soárez dos S. 2 mgs	35	500
Carmo	254. Maria Soárez dos S. 2 mgs	35	500
Felismino	255. Cândido Soárez	35	500
João	256. Lourenço Soárez	35	500
Palmeira	257. Maria Soárez	35	500
Juliano	258. Armando A. de Souza	35	500
José Soárez	259. Maria, Conchinha	35	500
Carolina	260. Joaquim da Cunha 2 mgs	35	500
Justino	261. Ana Soárez	35	500
Bathilda	262. Maria Joana	35	500
Coimbra	263. Maria Soárez	35	500
Lamartine	264. Cândido A. de Souza	35	500
Clara	265. Maria Soárez	35	500
Ezequiel	266. Cândido Soárez	35	500
Antônio R.	267. Joaquim Soárez 2 mgs	35	500
Zonta	268. Cândido Soárez	35	500
Augusto	269. Maria Joana	35	500
Patrícia	270. Maria Soárez	35	500
Seahol	271. Maria de Oliva	35	500
Priscila	272. Maria Soárez	35	500
Guilherme	273. Rosário Soárez	35	500
Coimbra	274. Cândido Soárez	35	500
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Frederico	276. Cândido Soárez	35	500
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		480	550



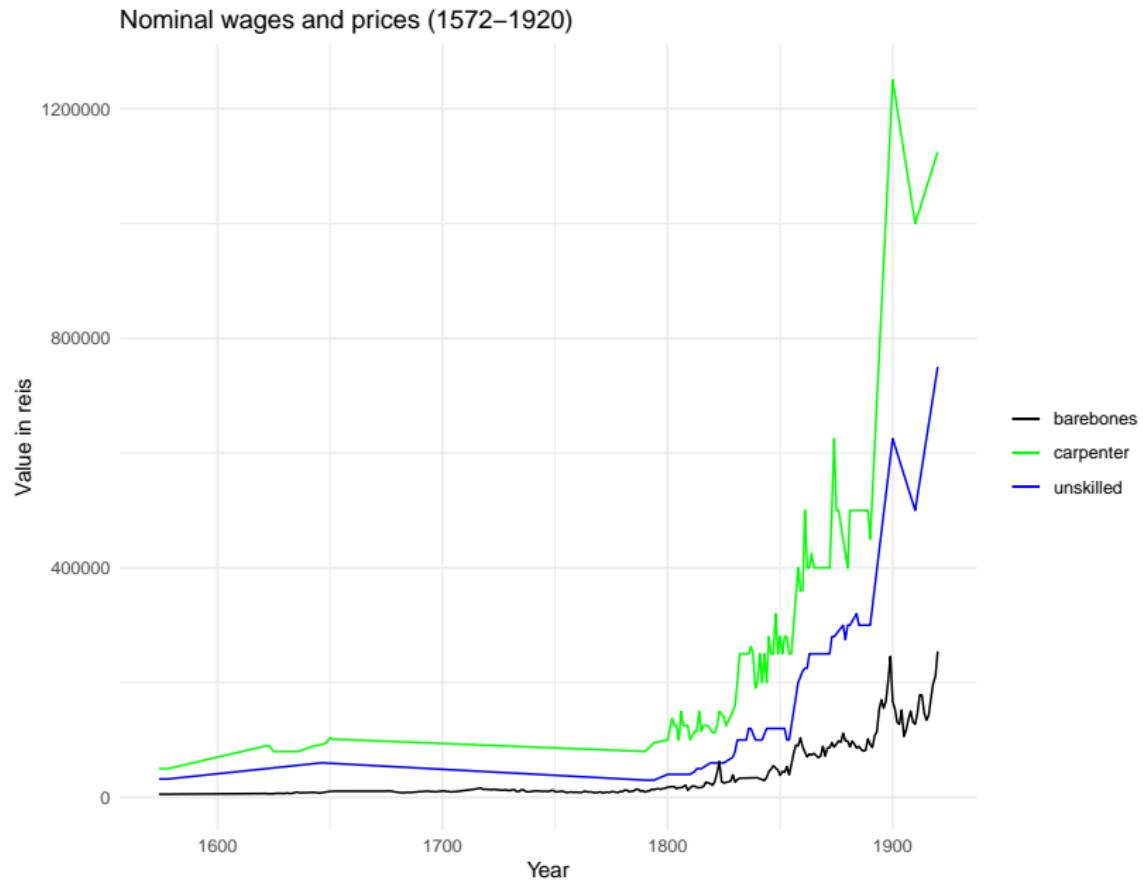
APEB, 1793



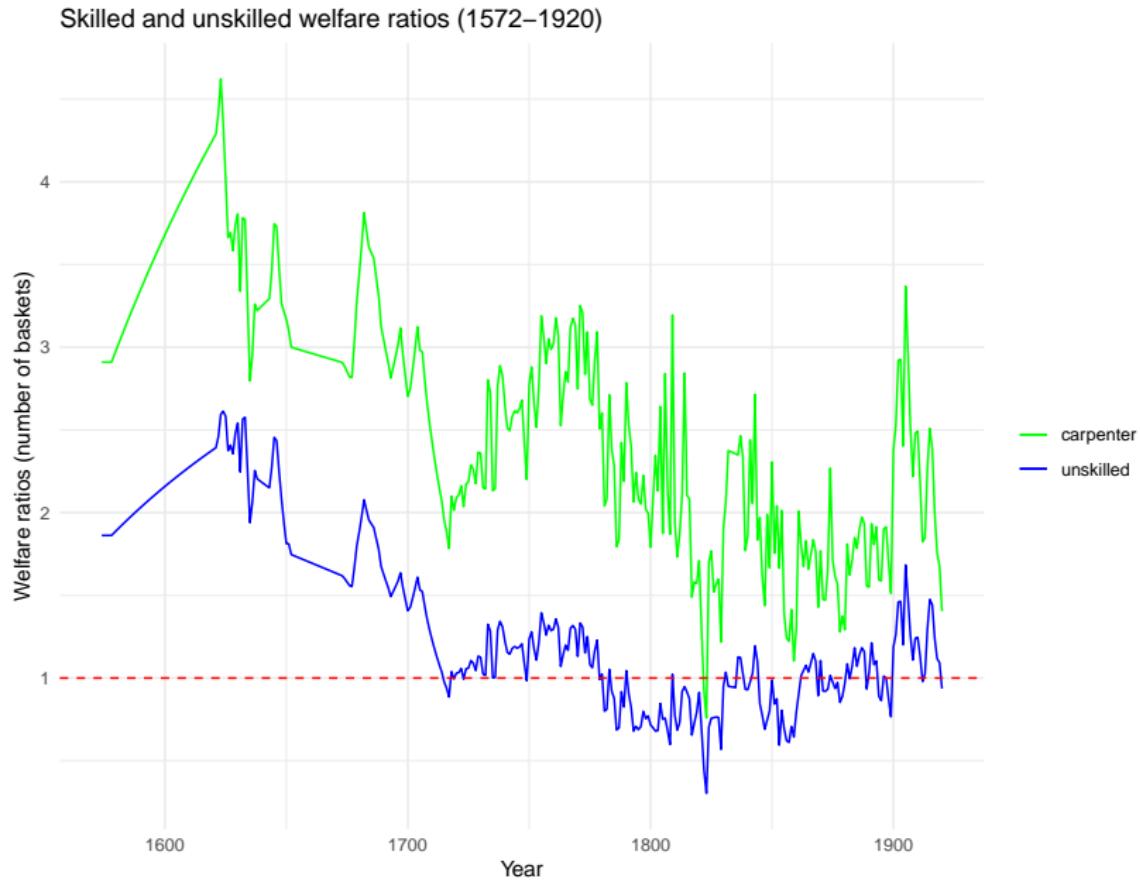


Convento São Francisco, 1796

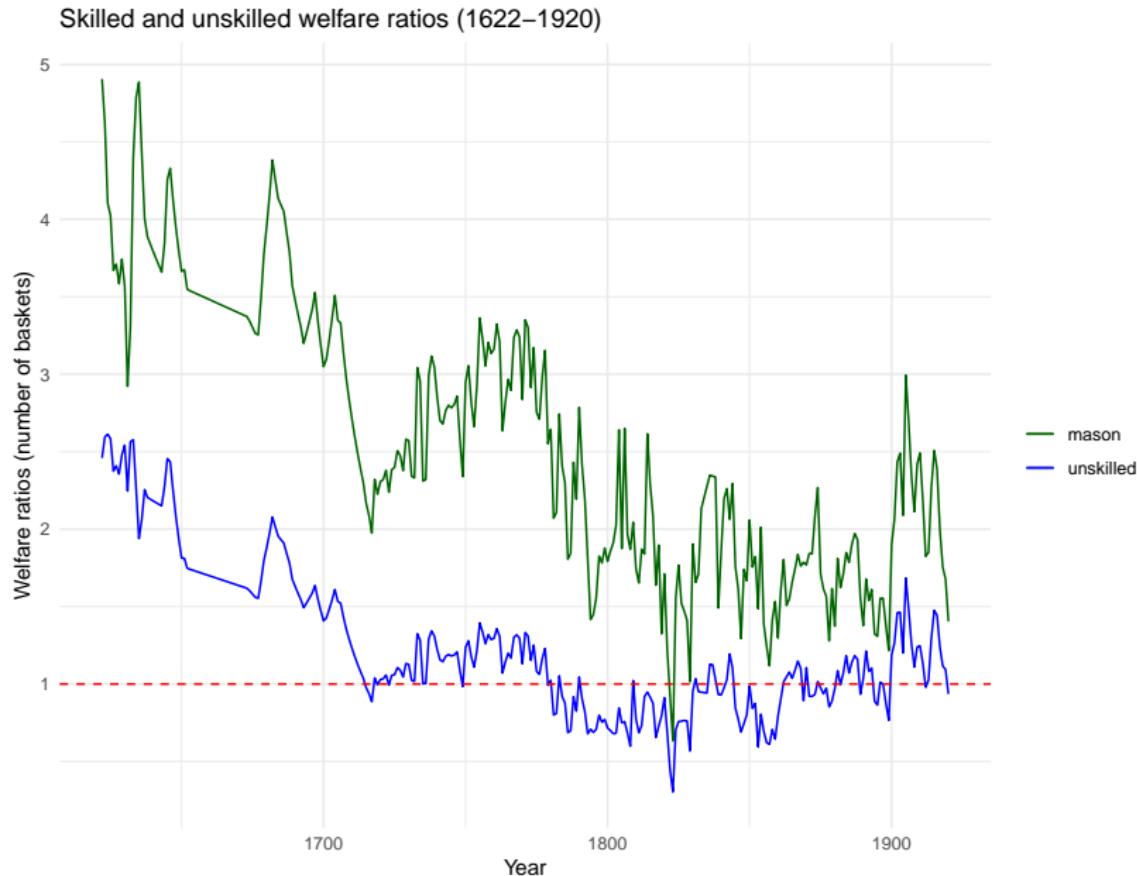
Prices and wages



Skilled and unskilled welfare ratios



Skilled and unskilled welfare ratios

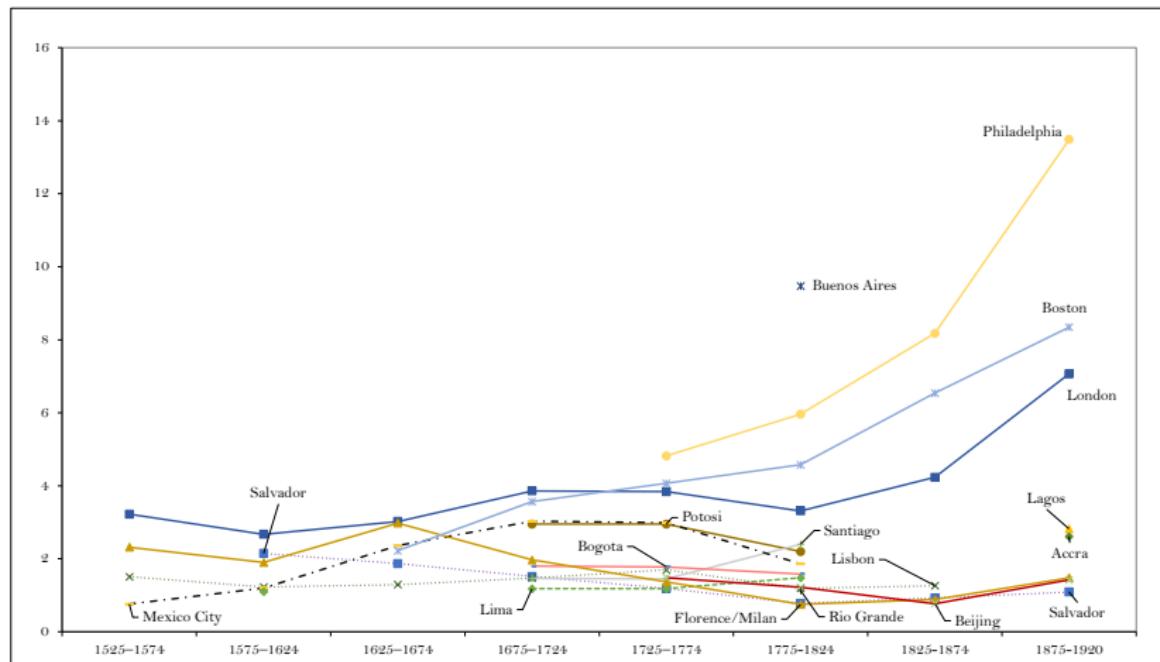


Skill premium

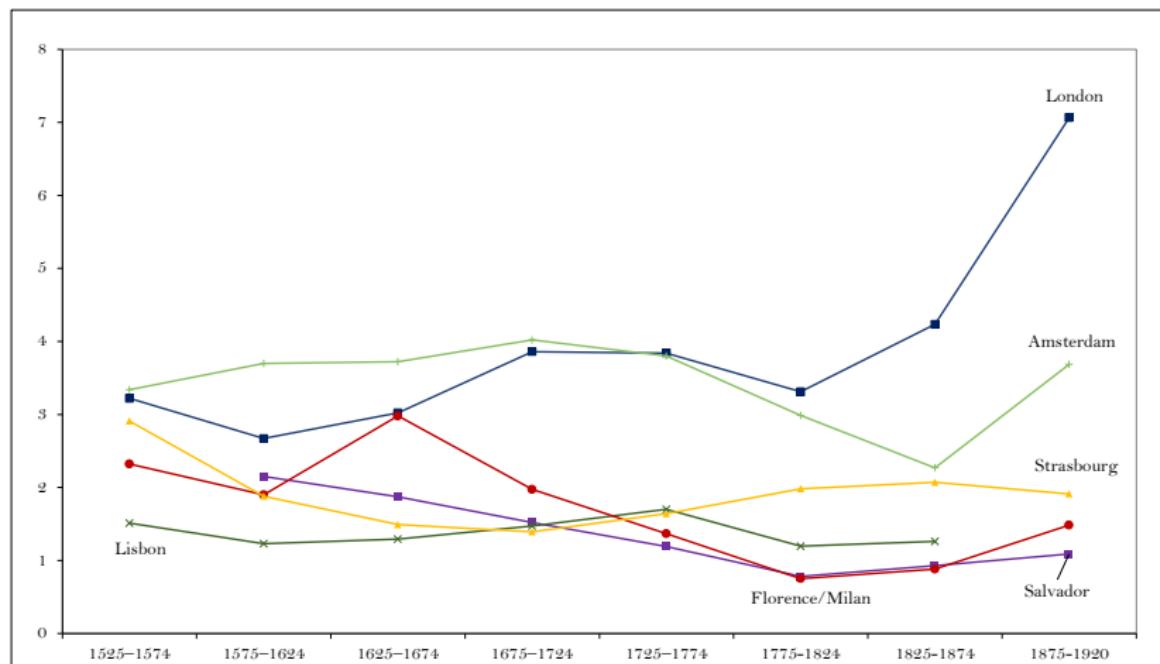
Skill premium of carpenters (1572–1920)



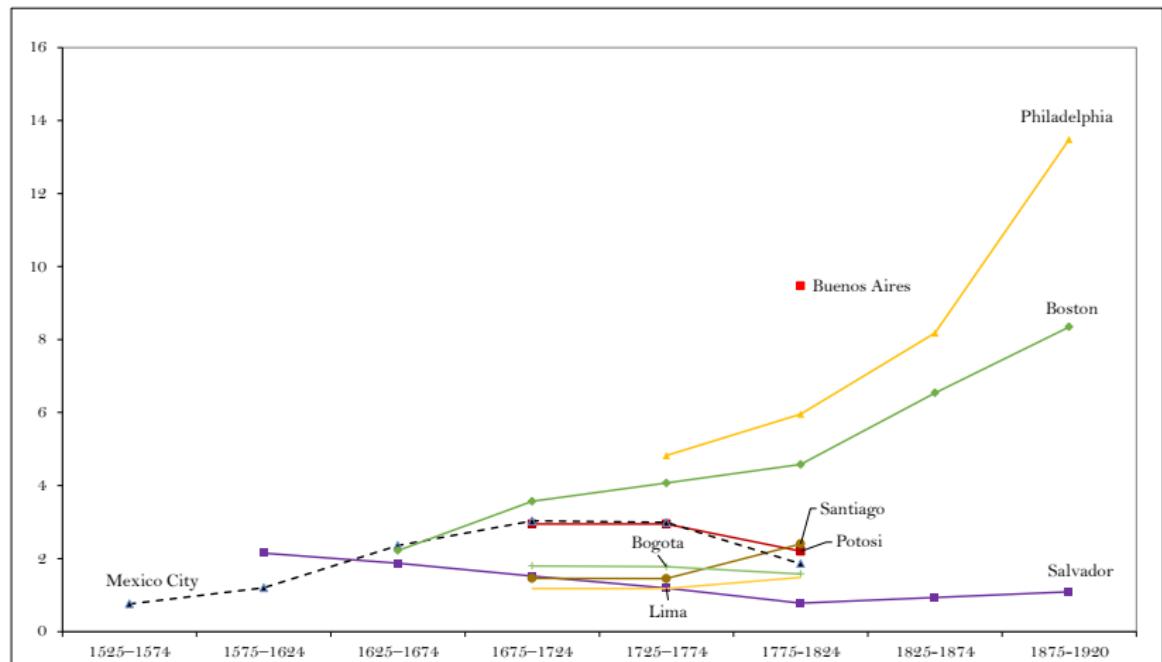
Salvador in global perspective



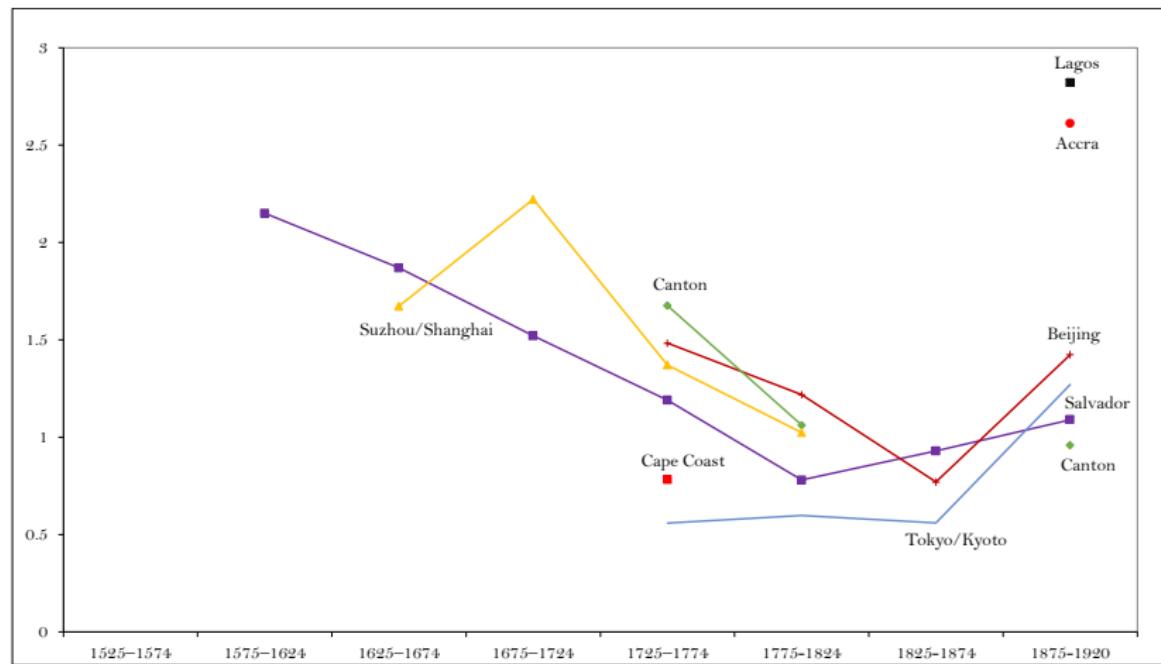
Salvador in global perspective: Europe



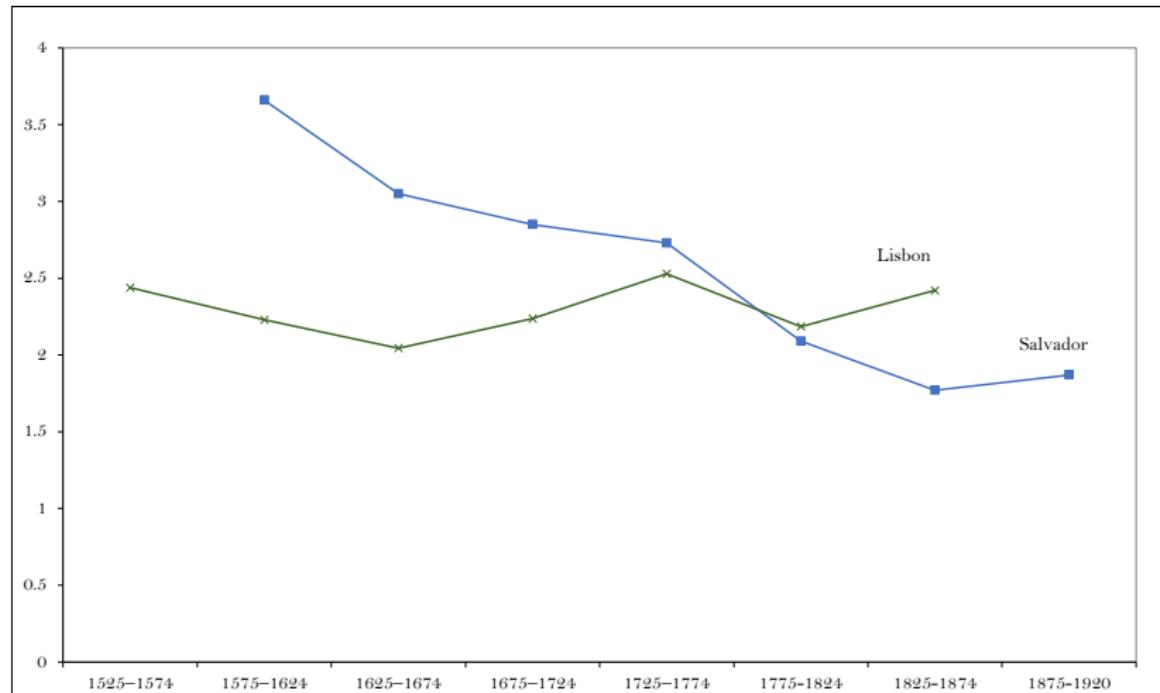
Salvador in global perspective: Americas



Salvador in global perspective: Asia and Africa



Skilled workers in Salvador and Lisbon



Conclusion

- ▶ Welfare ratios start high but never fully recover from previous booms and busts.
- ▶ Unskilled welfare ratios end up among the lowest in the world.
- ▶ Skilled welfare ratios were initially much higher than in Lisbon, but then converge and fall behind.
- ▶ Skill premium most of the time above two. Doesn't fully recover in the 19th century.
- ▶ Can Salvador explain Brazil's failure to take off despite a "rich" initial condition?