

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.

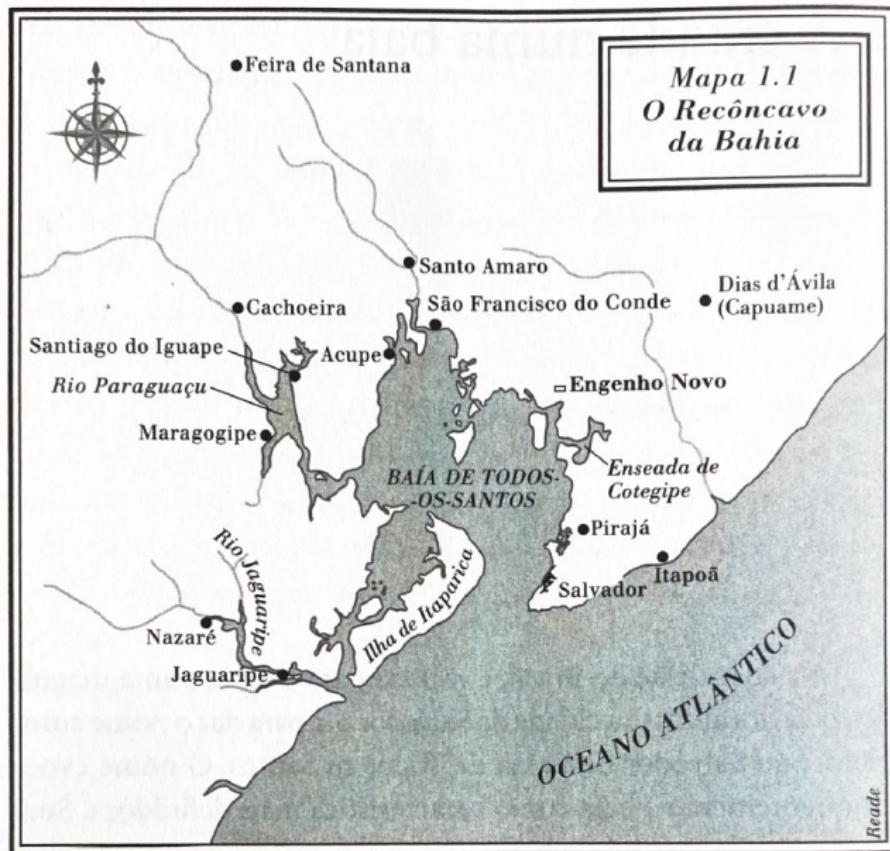
Introduction IV

- ▶ 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.

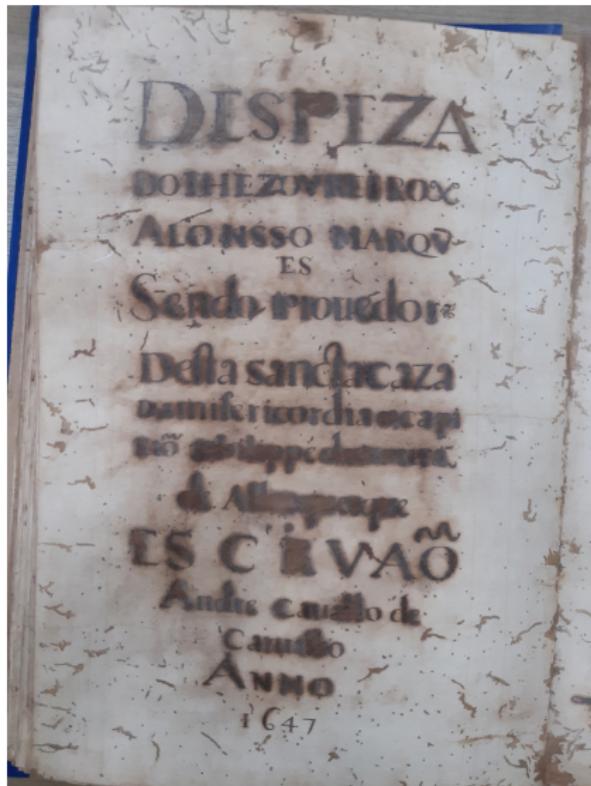
Barebones baskets in global perspective

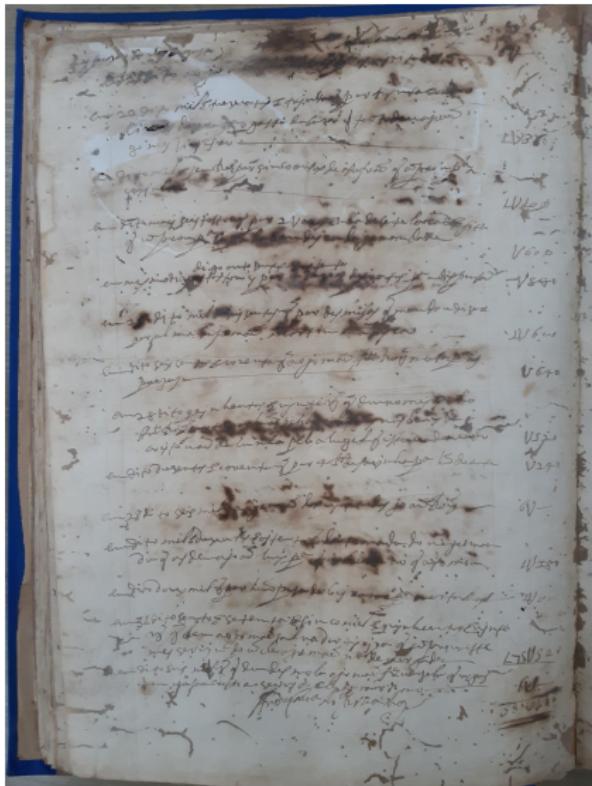
| Good (per person per year) | Bahia, Brazil | Europe | USA | South America | Argentina Chile | S. China, Japan | North China | West Africa |
|-------------------------------|------------------|--------|------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------|----------------|
| 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.

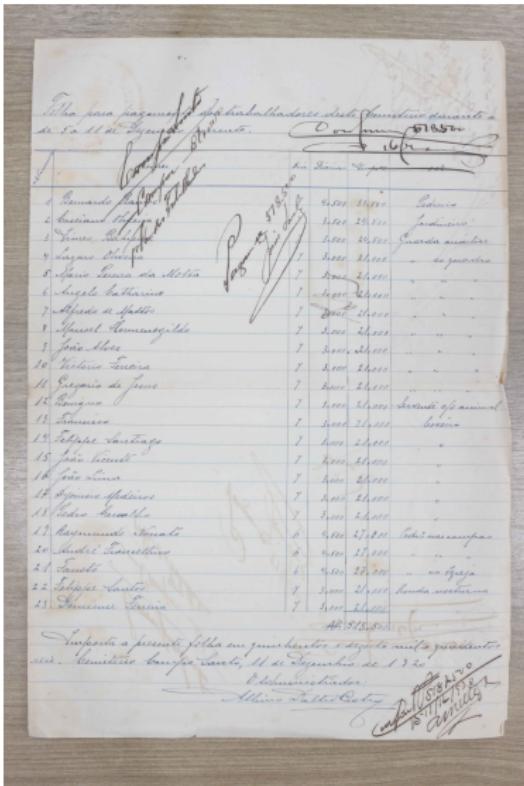
From the archives to a database

- ▶ 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.

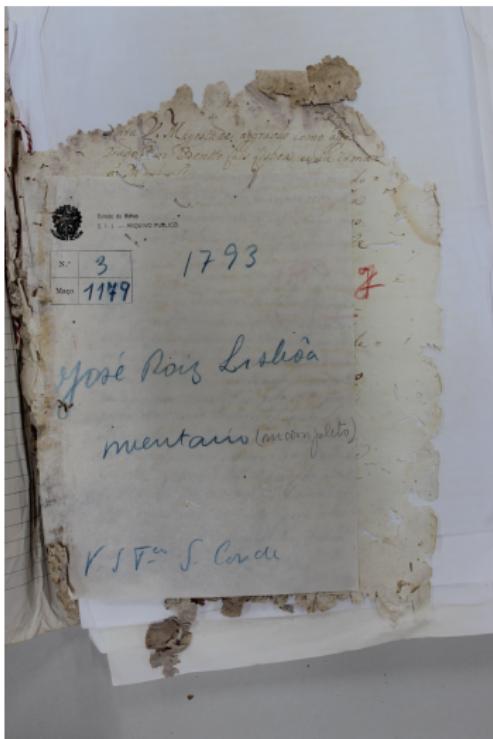


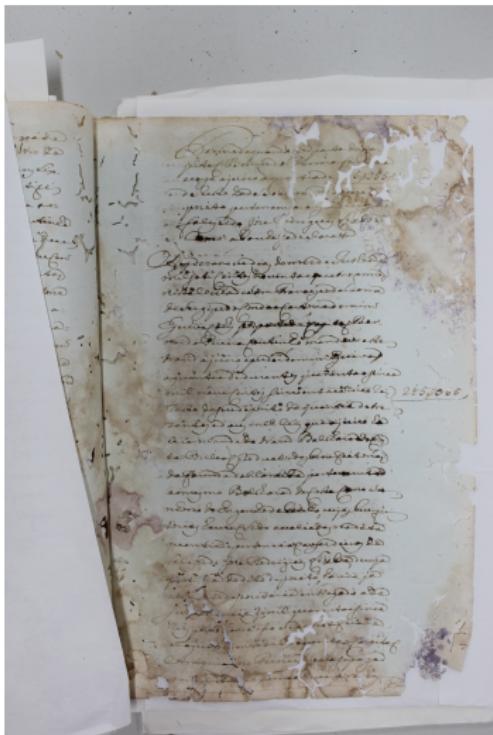


| | | Transporte | |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|------------|-----|
| Ped. | 251. Doutor F. de Castro | 35 | 550 |
| Araújo | 252. Bernardo de Britto | 35 | 500 |
| Joséina | 253. Joana Soárez dos S. 2 mgs | 35 | 500 |
| Carmo | 254. Maria Soárez dos S. 2 mgs | 35 | 500 |
| Felismino | 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 |
| Carmo | 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 |
| Leopoldo | 269. A. dos Santos Soárez | 35 | 500 |
| Patrícia | 270. Cândido A. dos Santos Soárez | 35 | 500 |
| Seahol | 271. Maria de Oliva | 35 | 500 |
| Priscila | 272. Maria Uva | 35 | 500 |
| Orlindo | 273. Ribeiro C. Cardoso | 35 | 500 |
| O. Souza | 274. Maria de Glória | 35 | 500 |
| Germano | 275. Cecília A. da Costa | 35 | 500 |
| Portela | 276. Maria Belita | 35 | 500 |
| Silva | 277. Maria A. S. da Costa | 35 | 500 |
| Roberto | 278. Cecília A. S. da Costa | 35 | 500 |
| Ruybal | 279. Cecília Soárez | 35 | 500 |
| | | 480 | 550 |



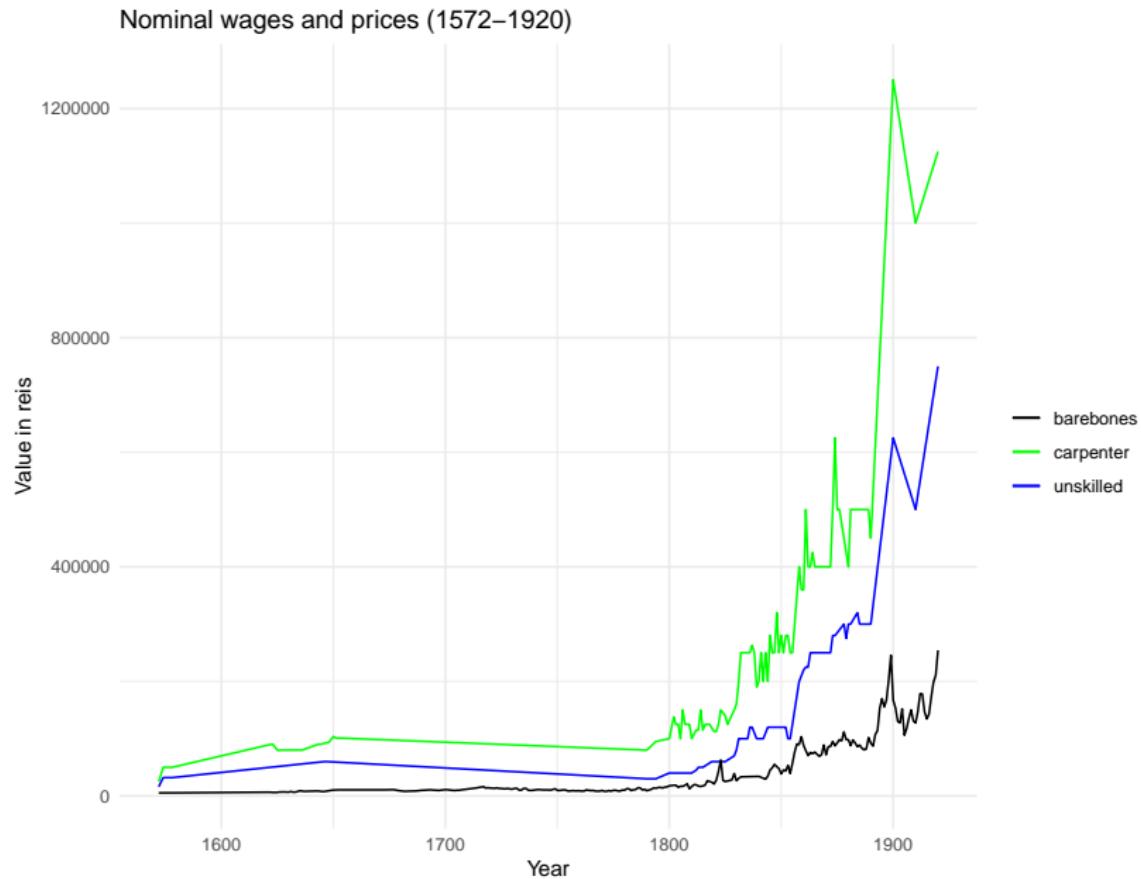
APEB, 1793



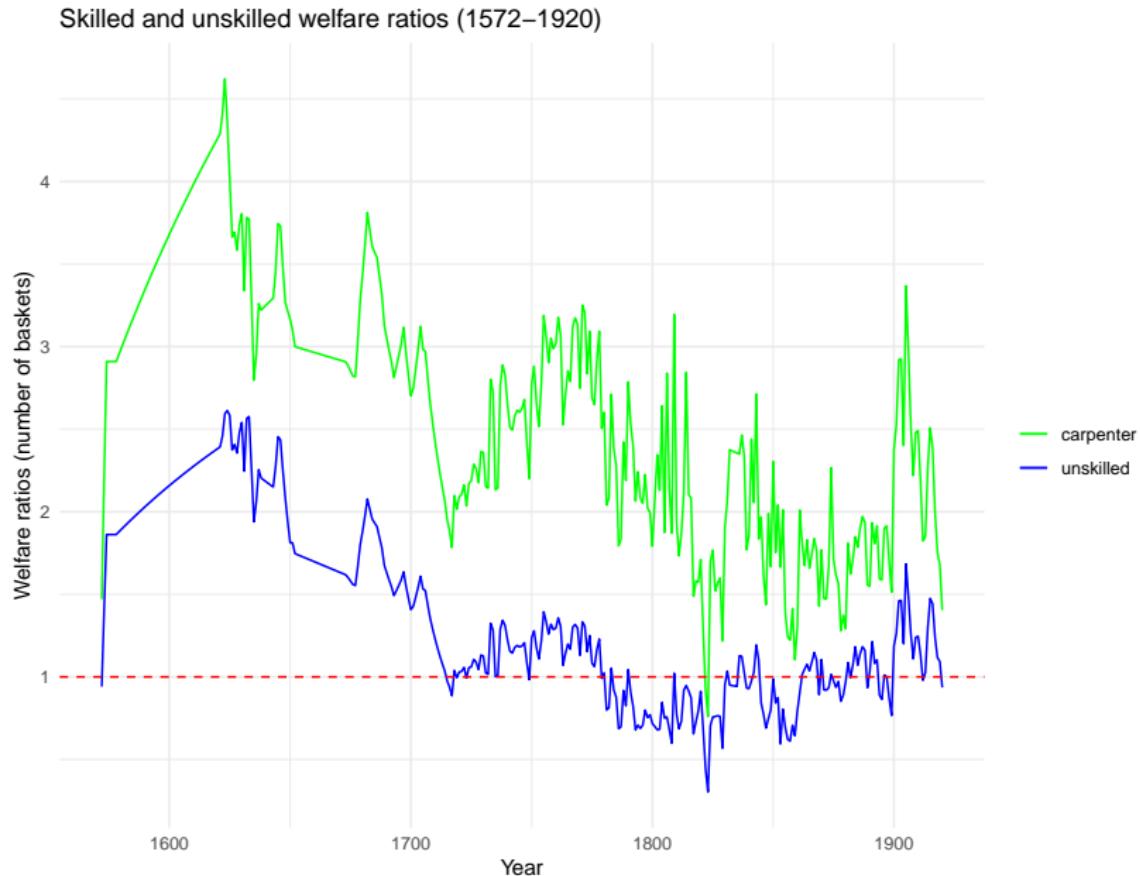


Convento São Francisco, 1796

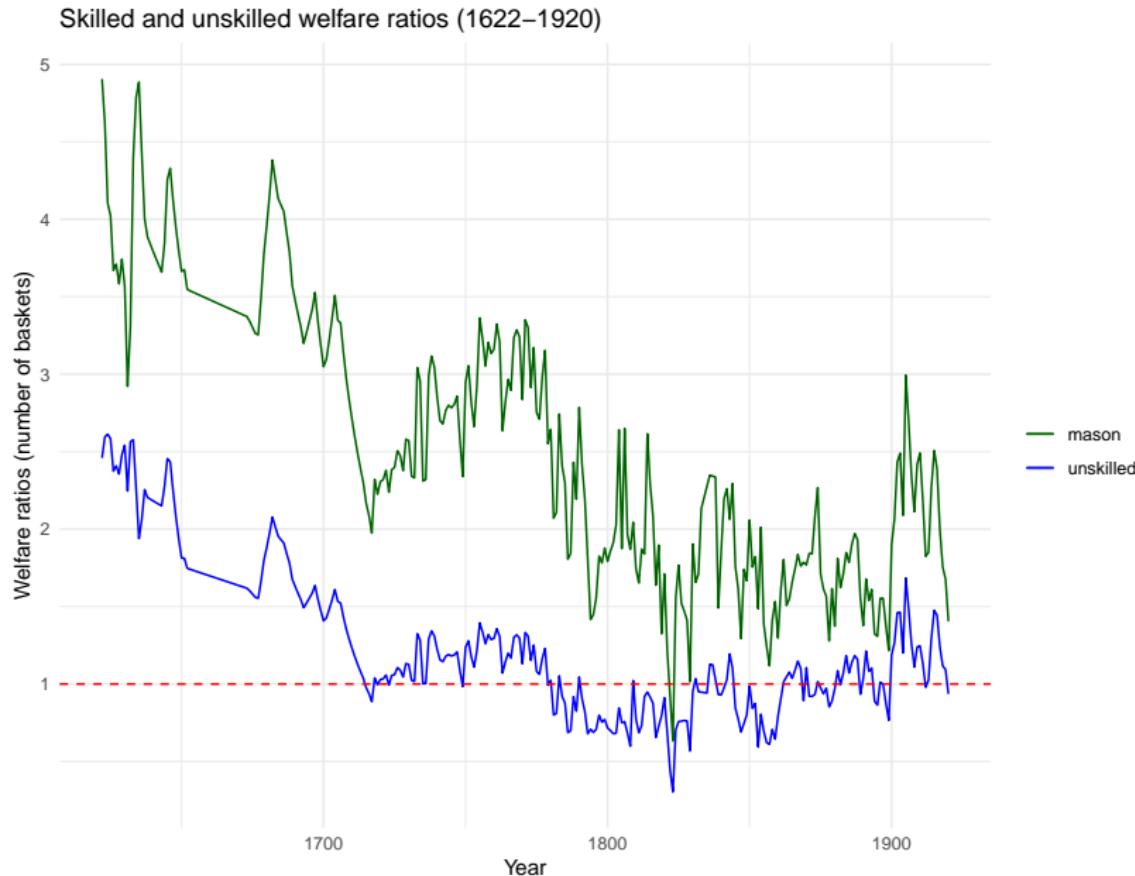
Prices and wages



Skilled and unskilled welfare ratios



Skilled and unskilled welfare ratios

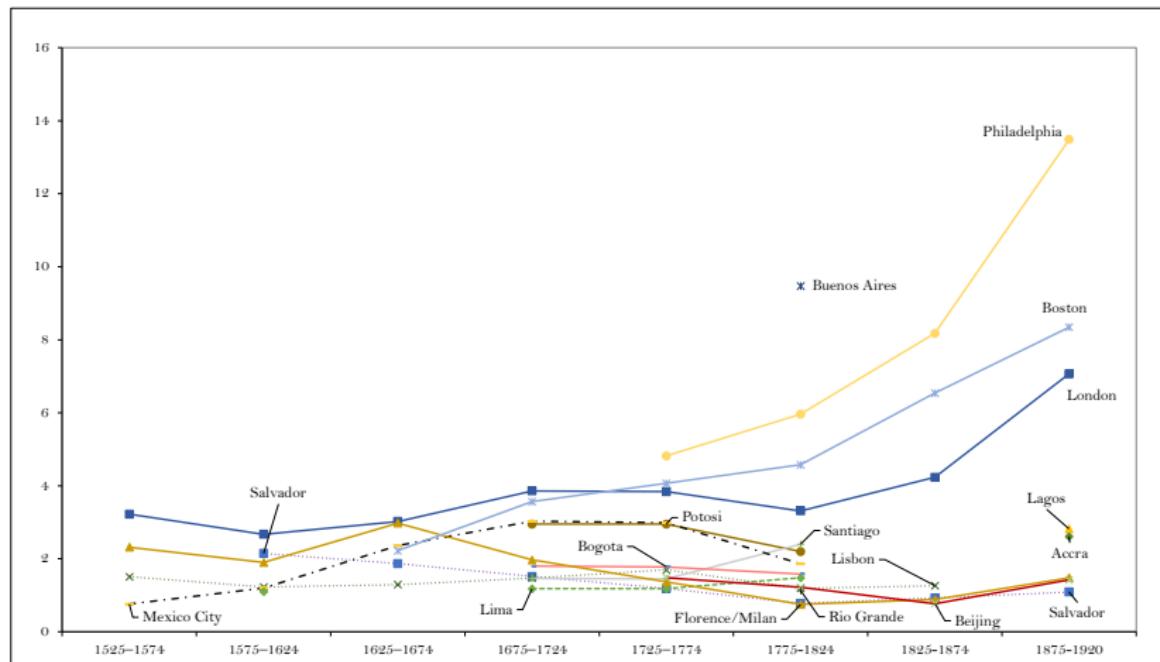


Skill premium

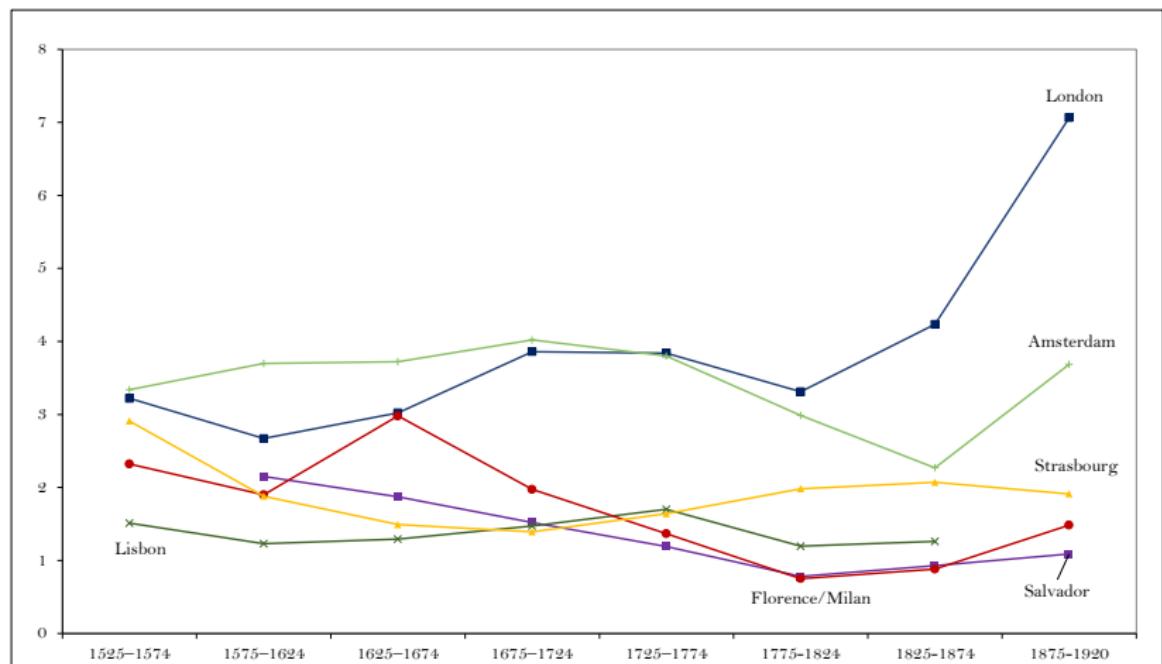
Skill premium of carpenters (1572–1920)



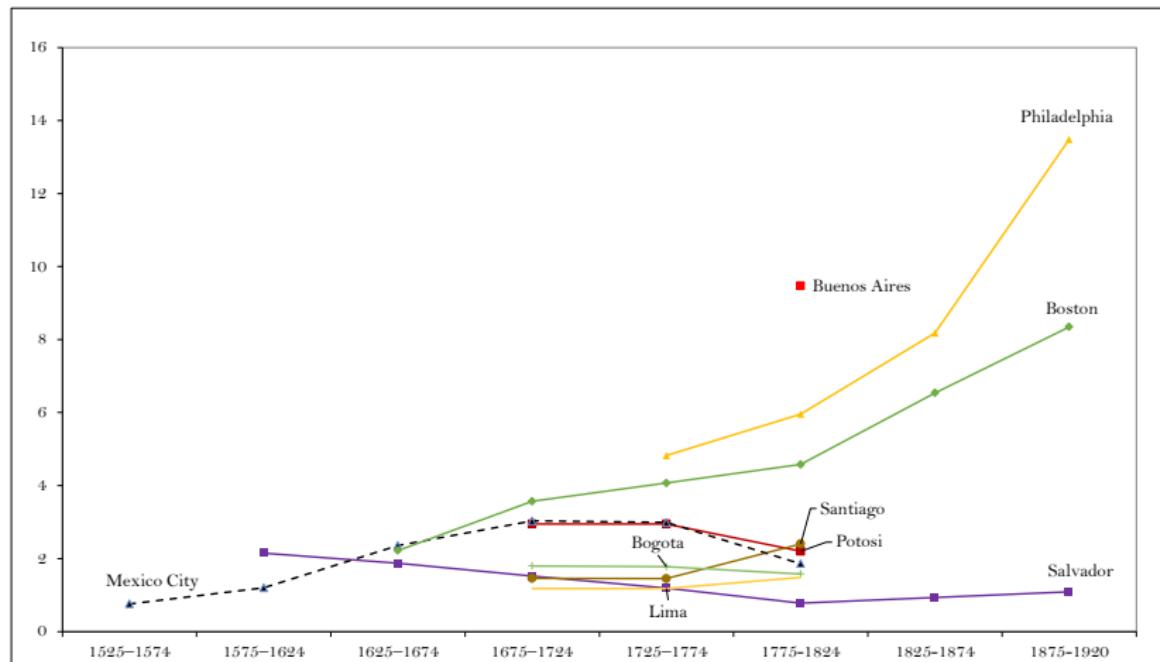
Salvador in global perspective



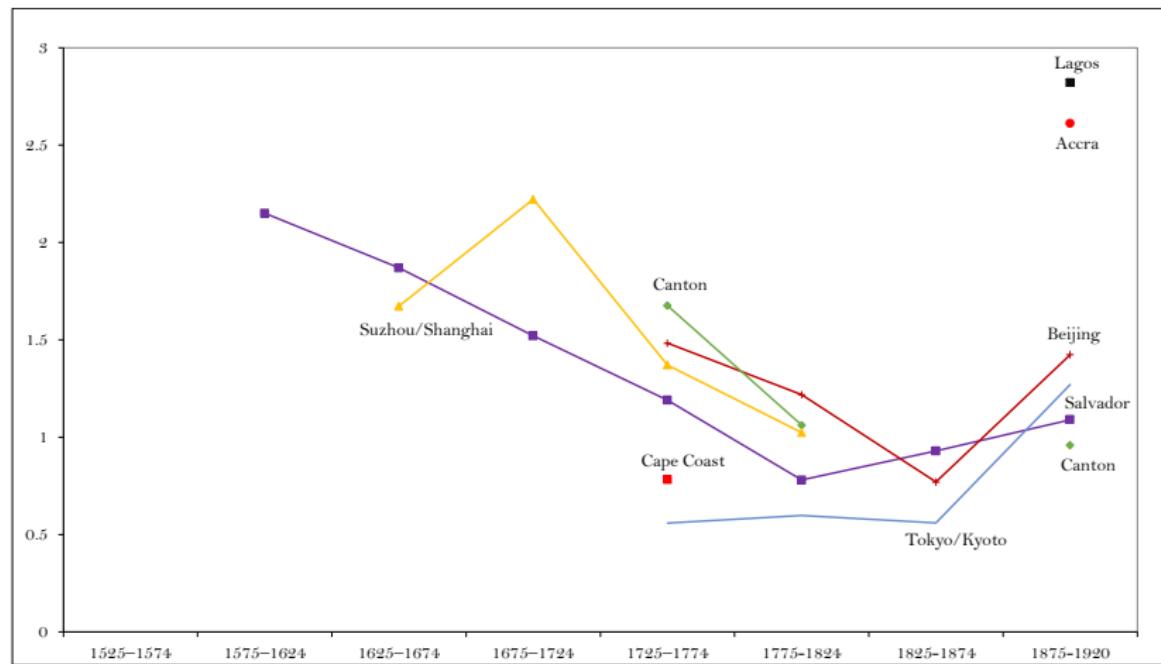
Salvador in global perspective: Europe



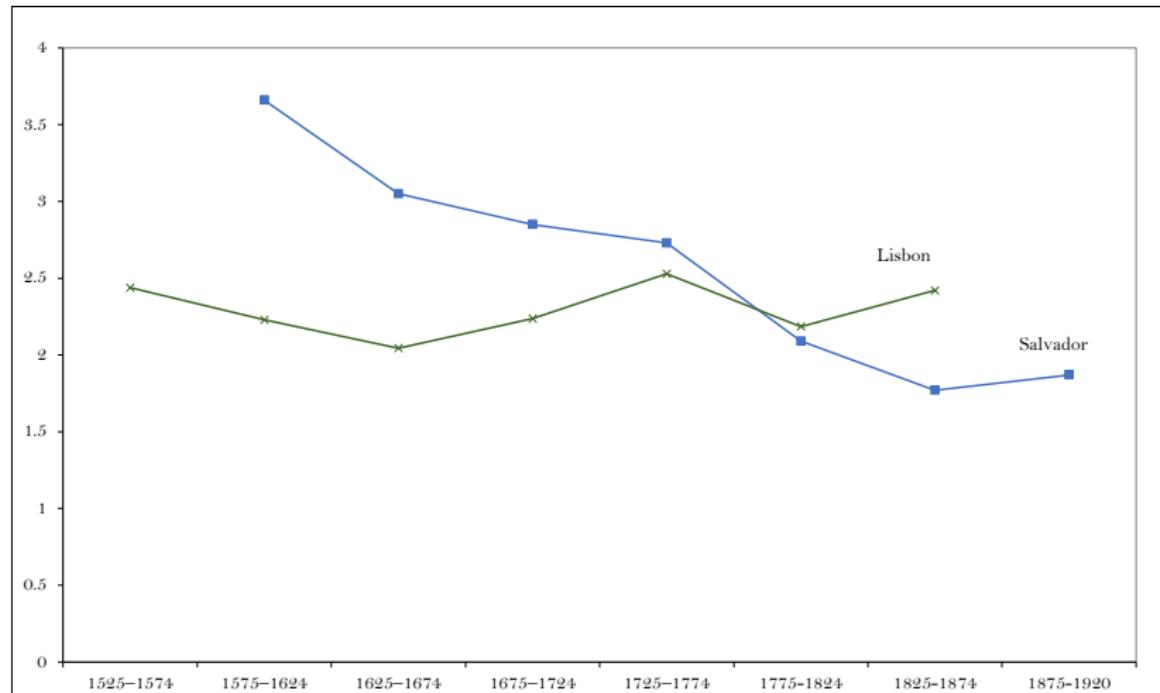
Salvador in global perspective: Americas



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?