

Nineteenth-Century Bahia's Passion for British Salted Cod: From the Seas of Newfoundland to the Portuguese Shops of Salvador's *Cidade Baixa*, 1822-1914

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Nineteenth-Century Bahia's Passion for British Salted Cod: From the Seas of Newfoundland to the Portuguese Shops of Salvador's *Cidade Baixa*, 1822-1914¹

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The Portuguese brought with them to Brazil an obsession for codfish or *bacalhau*, which their bold fisherman brought into Portugal from the Newfoundland Banks. So *bacalhau* has ever since been the image of fish to most Brazilians, and it is one of the country's principal imports. The mammoth *pirarucu* of the Amazon is salted and sold locally, but wherever the Portuguese influence on the kitchens of Brazil has survived, the cod is fish. ... In the coast country, farm workers, before going out to the field in the morning, would put a chunk of *bacalhau* in their hip pocket to munch at midday.

William Lyle Schurz, *Brazil: The Infinite Country*, New York: E.P. Dutton, 1961, p.123

The Supply Source

Sally Cole summarised the earliest history of the Portuguese on the Grand Banks:

The abundance of cod on the Grand Banks appears to have been known to the Portuguese by 1472 and maps of the period identify Newfoundland as 'Codfish Land' (*Terra dos Bacalhau*). The Portuguese discovery of the Grand Banks cod occurred as part of their search for a sea route to Asia and Portuguese knowledge of Newfoundland preceded by several years John Cabot's so-called discovery of the territory for King Henry VII of England in 1497. Between 1510 and 1525 the Portuguese attempted to found a colony in Atlantic Canada the exact location of which has not been determined but is thought to have been either in the Bay of Fundy (*Baía Funda*) or on Cape Breton Island. In any event it was short-lived.²

Dried cod has played a similar role to sugar in the international chain of commerce. It became a major traded commodity between British North America (Newfoundland, Nova Scotia Gaspe) in the nineteenth century. Cheap cod fed the slaves who grew and produced the sugar (and coffee and cotton) which in turn energised the workers of the Industrial Revolution who worked the machines which made the commodities of empire. The machines in factories and their output provided the material basis of Empire. Sugar and cod were important in the

¹ Many thanks for suggestions and criticism to William Gervase Clarence-Smith and John Vignoles both from London for suggestions and criticisms and to Lucigleide Nery Nascimento from Salvador for assistance in formatting matters.

² Sally C. Cole, 'Cod, God, Country and Family. The Portuguese Newfoundland Cod Fishery'. *Maritime Studies* 3:1 (1990), pp.1-29.

cultures of Britain, Newfoundland, the West Indies, West Africa and Brazil.³ Demand (tastes) and (low) price dictated that salted cod would become a main staple in the West Indies and Brazil even though ample supplies of fresh fish existed locally.⁴

The Portuguese, for whom cod fish figured so centrally in the making of identity,⁵ brought cod as a food to Brazil. Over time, cod was first ‘a food of the negroes’, and then a food of the poor, and in the last century moved to being a food of the rich in Brazil. Cod has a high nutritional value: a kilo of salted cod has 3.2 times the nutritional value of common fish. Cod was an important element in the diet of Brazilian slaves producing commodities for the world markets during the age of classical imperialism – sugar, cotton and then coffee. The commodity also became an important wage-good for the poor, and it was a food consumed on Fridays. The related cod liver oil – also imported into Brazil in the nineteenth century – was touted as a miracle-curing commodity (a patent medicine).

The commodity became an important part of urban and rural diets on both sides of the Atlantic. Already in the sixteenth century fishermen migrating for a summer of fishing in the Newfoundland region came from Portugal, Spain’s Basque region, France and England. Thus the North Atlantic fishing grounds of Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and New England became a provisioning source for the thriving plantation economies of the western Atlantic during the seventeenth through to the nineteenth centuries: the southern United States and the West Indies. By 1790, the cod aristocracies of Gloucester and Boston were sending 600 ships a year to the Caribbean.⁶ Documentation exists showing that in 1653, Brazil imported 607 tons (or 11,921 quintals) of salted codfish, with 42 percent coming through the port of Salvador.⁷

Cheap salted cod became a vital source of protein in the diets of the poor in these peripheries as well as along the Atlantic and Mediterranean coasts of Europe where it was one of the least expensive sources of protein. Lower quality cod was sent to the West Indies, whereas the premium quality went to southern Europe where dried cod was an affordable alternative to meat for persons of modest means. It was also extensively served in Catholic institutions like monasteries. Nova Scotia salted cod with lower quality (except for Arichat) went mostly to the Caribbean whereas Newfoundland exported to Europe and Brazil.

The need for salt was enormous and therefore a venerable history exists to preserve fish.⁸ Salt was first procured in France (its western seaboard, e.g., La Rochelle), England (Tyne) and Portugal, and then in the seventeenth century Caribbean salt became a leading

³, Margaret Visser, ‘Food and Culture: Interconnections’, *Social Research*, 66:1 (1999), pp. 117-30.

⁴ Import of salted cod in Cuba was explained by price and dietary preferences (as in Brazil); by 1846, the amount imported reached 6,413 tons (or 125,970 quintals). Cuban slaves were fed cheap imported salted fish and imported jerked beef. The cod was caught by Spanish fishermen on the Great Banks. Such preference for imported fish instead of local marine species persisted well into the twentieth century (see Julio A. Baisre, ‘Historical Development of Cuban Fisheries: Why we need an Integrated Approach to Fisheries Management’, *Proceedings of the 59th Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute from 2006, 2007*, Belize City, pp.52-6).

⁵ José Manuel Sobral & Patricia Rodrigues, ‘O fiel amigo : o bacalhau e a identidade portuguesa’, *Etnografia* (Lisbon) 17:3 (2013), pp.1-25.

⁶ ‘El Valle de Anton, Panama: Salt Cod, Chicken, Slavery and Yams’, at <https://elvalleinformation.wordpress.com/salt-cod-slavery/>.

⁷ Luiz Felipe de Alencastro, *O trato dos viventes: formação do Brasil no Atlântico Sul, séculos XVI e XVII*, Rio de Janeiro: Companhia da Letras, 2000, p.363.

⁸ Charles L. Cutting, *Fish Saving: A History of Fish Processing from Ancient to Modern Times*, London: L. Hill, 1955.

cargo on ships sailing north from the Caribbean along with molasses and rum.⁹ Two pounds of salt were required to dry one pound of cod.

Brazil became an important market during the early nineteenth century:

Shipments began only in 1808, when Brazil was still a Portuguese colony. For about ten years sales were low. But exports increased substantially after 1819, helped first by Portugal's preferential tariff, and after 1825 by a similar tariff agreement with newly-independent Brazil. During the period 1824-1833 shipments ranged between 32,000 and 85,000 quintals. The preferential tariff agreement expired in 1844, but Brazil continued to be a vital market for Newfoundland exports. Competitors such as Norway and the United States were unable or unwilling to supply the Brazilian market, and Newfoundland was able to produce the small, very dry cure that Brazilians preferred.¹⁰



Figure 1. A view of ships in the port of Salvador, circa 1912. Note the numerous three-masted lugres.

(Source: postcard of Edição de Miscelanea No. 8 (1912) from the private postcard collection of Ewalt Hackler, Salvador)

After 1808 the export of cod was carried out mostly by Anglo-Newfoundland and Jersey-Gaspe merchants based primarily in Poole and on Jersey Island, but as the century progressed, local merchants in Newfoundland and Nova Scotia gained in importance.¹¹ The

⁹ Ian K. Steele, *The English Atlantic, 1675-1740*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986, p.81. The emergence of two new technologies – cooling/refrigeration and canning – would lead to the quasi-extinction of salting foods.

¹⁰ Collier, Keith, '19th Century Salt Fish Markets, 1793-1850s', at <http://www.heritage.nf.ca/articles/economy/salt-fish-markets-1793.php>.

¹¹ Peter Barry, 'The Newfoundland Trade: The Decline and Demise of the Port of Poole', *American Neptune*, 28:4 (1968), pp.275-83.

transportation of the salted cod was made in sailing ships even after steam became the preferred means to ship cod. Cod fishing on the Pacific Coast also involved sailing ships.¹² For certain commodities – like nitrates,¹³ grain, lumber, coal (which was delivered to Salvador at the turn of the twentieth century in sailing ships), opium and codfish – shipping by sail persisted in the age of steam as these commodities were high bulk, non-perishable and low value.¹⁴ A photo of the port of Salvador (Figure 1) shows ocean-going sailing ships alongside steamers. The last codfish schooners disappeared from the Grand Banks only in the 1950s.¹⁵

In cod fishing the Portuguese had used the *lugre* (lugger), a sailing ship with three masts and quadrangle sails (as in Figure 2).¹⁶

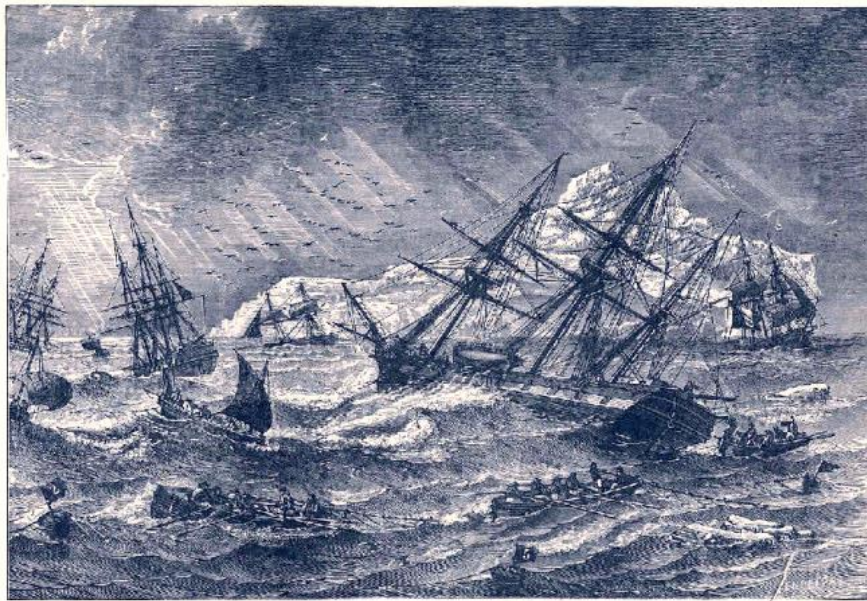


Figure 2. Cod fishing on the Great Banks off Newfoundland

(Source: F. Whymper, *Fisheries of the World: an Illustrated and Descriptive Record of the International Fisheries Exhibition 1883*, London: Cassell and Co., 1883, p. 276)

Soon after Canada was ceded to Great Britain in 1763, Jersey and Guernsey Island entrepreneurs established themselves in Labrador, Cape Breton, the Gaspe Peninsula and New Brunswick.¹⁷ Three brothers – Philip, John and Charles Robin – set up the first Robin family

¹² Shields, Captain Ed, *Salt of the Sea: The Pacific Coast Cod Fishery and the Last Days of Sail*, Lopez Island: Pacific Heritage Press, 2001, p.38.

¹³ Basil Lubbock, *The Nitrate Clippers*, Glasgow: Brown, Son & Ferguson, 1932.

¹⁴ Geels, Frank W., 'Technological Transitions as Evolutionary Reconfiguration Processes: A Multi-Level Proposition and Case-Study', *Research Policy*, 31 (2002), pp.1263-70; Juan E. O. Stemmer, 'Freight Rates in the Trade between Europe and South America', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 21:2 (June 1989), pp.23-59; Lubbock 1932.

¹⁵ Pol Chantraine and Kathe Roth, *The Last Cod-Fish: Life and Death of the Newfoundland Way of Life*, Montreal: Robert Davies Publishing, 1993.

¹⁶ Celestino Soares, *California and the Portuguese: How the Portuguese Helped Build up California*, Lisbon: S.P.N Books, 1939, p.21.

¹⁷ Paul Robert Magocsi, 'Channel Islanders', in *Encyclopedia of Canada's Peoples*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999, pp.344-5.

enterprise in 1765, shortly followed by a permanent fishing station in Arichat, Cape Breton.¹⁸ Other Jersey Island merchants – like De Carteret & Le Vesconte, second only to the Robin firm as an exporter of dried cod – followed and came to dominate the maritime economy of the Gulf of the St. Lawrence during the first eighty years of the nineteenth century, operating in Newfoundland, Cape Breton and the Gulf of the St. Lawrence, the Gaspé Peninsula, New Brunswick and Labrador. At the outbreak of the American Revolution, Britain’s West Country merchants (for example from Poole and Dartmouth) and Ireland (Waterford) had already established an enormously productive cod fishery extending more than a thousand miles around the coast of Newfoundland and along the south shore of Labrador.¹⁹

The late eighteenth century had a profound effect upon the organisation of Newfoundland’s fishing and society. When the wars drew to an end in 1815, the fishery was almost entirely land-based as the annual migration of the English and Irish to the Newfoundland region had declined dramatically.²⁰ The merchants like the Robins provided merchandise on credit to the individual fishermen, who reimbursed the company at the end of the fishing season. Often the value of the expensive supplies was greater than the value of the fish catch, creating a system of indebtedness that tied the fishermen to the merchant enterprise; although some inhabitants were able to work for themselves and sold their fish to the merchant of their choice.



Figure 3. Drying cod on flakes, ca. 1886.²¹

(Source: Photo by Simeon Parsons. Courtesy of Library and Archives Canada (PA-139025), Ottawa, Ontario. http://www.heritage.nf.ca/society/pa_139025.html)

¹⁸ Rosemary E. Ommer, *From Outpost to Outport. A Structural Analysis of the Jersey-Gaspé Cod Fishery, 1767-1886*, Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1991.

¹⁹ Stephen J. Hornsby, *British Atlantic, American Frontier: Spaces of Power in Early Modern British America*, Lebanon: University Press of New England, 2005, p.28.

²⁰ Shannon Ryan, ‘Fishery to Colony: A Newfoundland Watershed, 1793-1815’, *Acadiensis*, 12:2 (Spring 1983), pp.34-52.

²¹ Throughout the 19th century, Newfoundland and Labrador fishing people spent the summer months catching and drying cod. In the fall, they traded the salt fish to local merchants to pay for supplies they had previously received on credit.

The fishing generally either took place offshore at the Greater Banks with small boats from a mother ship or close to shore with a small onshore boat. Fishermen in the small boats dropped long baited lines. During the nineteenth century, the technology of cod fishing remained traditional: more than three-quarters of all fishermen fished from small boats in inshore waters; the rest crewed schooners used in deep sea fishing and in coastal trading.²² These vessels were merchant-owned and manned by hired labour, but such offshore fishing disappeared after 1886. The main cod fishing in Newfoundland was carried out 'inshore' – that is to say, between one and three miles off land. The small boats were manned by two to four men and boys. The offshore fishing on the Greater Banks was undertaken by the French and Americans.

Local merchants like Robin or Le Boutillier first advanced credit to the fishermen to purchase necessary inputs (gear, bait, etcetera) and capital goods with a lien on the catch and then bought the fish harvest, often exploiting the fishermen at both ends.²³ Thus merchants controlled both the price of fish and the prices of supplies:

As a result, merchants were in a position to appropriate a very high proportion of surplus labour, to the point where fishermen and their families were forced to produce some of their own subsistence.²⁴

But one should not infer that merchants therefore automatically appropriated the bulk of the revenue generated. Neis has described the struggle between export merchants, retailers and fishermen in Newfoundland.²⁵

The caught fish would be brought on shore to be prepared (beheaded and split open), dried and packed. In that case one needed less salt (than in the other method of line-fishing and salting the fish on board the schooner) but more land. The split fish were spread out on the beach or on wooden stages ('flakes'). With great care, the cod were turned over again and again, day after day for the drying. It was women who carried out such repetitious activity, as well as preparing the fish to be put in barrels. The English, who had no salt of their own and had to buy it from warmer countries, favoured the on-shore drying method. The packing into tubs or barrels was done by means of an English iron screw press worked by two or three men. The dried cod was then packed into barrels (or drums) using the British two-man barrel press either on land (or on board ship).

²² Hornsby, Stephen J., *Nineteenth Century Cape Breton. A Historical Geography*, Montreal: McGill University Press, 1992, p.89.

²³ Hiller, James K., 'The Newfoundland Credit System: An Interpretation', in Rosemary E. Ommer (ed.), *The Merchant Credit and Labour Struggles in Historical Perspective*, Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1990, pp.86-101.

²⁴ Barbara Neis, 'Competitive Merchants and Class Struggle in Newfoundland', *Studies in Political Economy* 5 (Spring 1981), p.130.

²⁵ Neis 1981.



Figure 4. Salt Cod Fish in a Barrel, ca. 1905.²⁶

(Source: Photographer unknown, ca. 1905. Job Photograph Collection, Maritime History Archive. Reproduced by the permission of the Maritime History Archive (PF-315.139), Memorial University, St. John's, NL. http://www.heritage.nf.ca/society/pf315_139.html)



Figure 5. Two men 'screwing fish'

(Source: Detail from the Salem Marine Society membership certificate in the Salem Maritime National Historic Site Museum collection, <http://www.nps.gov/sama/learn/historyculture/upload/vol6no1pickledfish.pdf>. Note that the man on the left should be facing us)

²⁶ Salt cod fish was packed in shipping barrels like this for transport to market. Good barrels and packing crates were important to keep salt fish intact during shipping, and coopers working in Newfoundland making barrels were often in high demand.

One man stamped down the cod into a barrel at regular intervals to make sure it was well packed in. When 448 lbs had been put in, the cod was almost one foot above the top rim. Then the iron screw press was used by two men,²⁷ with the fish being pressed in the tub in the smallest possible space.²⁸ The cod fish was shipped to Pernambuco in wooden drums, to Bahia in tubs and to Rio de Janeiro in wooden barrels, accommodating local market preferences (a drum or tub contained one quintal of cod).



Figure 6. Tending to cod on flakes, pre-1898.²⁹

(Source: Photographer unknown. Archives and Manuscripts Division (Coll. 137 03.07.003), Queen Elizabeth II Library, Memorial University, St. John's, NL. http://www.heritage.nf.ca/society/coll_137_03_07_003.html)

The Export Markets

The dried codfish was consumed locally and the hard dried type exported to Brazil and the West Indies, the softer-cured type exported to the Iberian and Mediterranean areas and the United States.³⁰ During the 1700s to early 1800s, the trade routes were from Poole, Dartmouth and Waterford (Ireland) to Newfoundland with crews and supplies, dried cod fish from Newfoundland to the British West Indies and port cities of Catholic countries like Lisbon, Bilbao, Cadiz and Naples. Exports of Newfoundland cod to the Iberian and Mediterranean countries during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries enabled Great Britain to overcome barriers to exporting to these areas (caused by stiff tariffs on British manufactures). Thus:

²⁷ Roch Samson *Fishing at Grande-Grave in the Early 1900's: National Historic Parks and Sites Research. History and Archeology Vol. 41*, Parks Canada. Environment Canada. Ottawa, January 1, 1980, p.98.

²⁸ Harold A. Innis, *The Cod Fisheries. The History of an International Economy*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940, p.359.

²⁹ Women's work was vital to Newfoundland and Labrador's inshore fishery during the 19th century. Although men built boats and did the actual fishing, women were largely responsible for processing the catch for sale to merchants.

³⁰ 'The North American Fisheries and the Halifax Commission', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 123 (March 1878), p.296.

Growing exports of salt cod enabled the British merchants to increase their purchases of Mediterranean agricultural products without having to pay for them in cash.³¹

Dried cod (or *bacalhau*) had entered the Portuguese national diet during the 1500s and cod has remained a favourite dish in Portugal and in Brazil (long after Portuguese fishermen ceased supplying the national and Brazilian markets). During the 1770s, Portugal imported from New England about 15 million pounds of cod per year (or 2.6 kilos per capita per year).³²

Thousands of miles to the south of Newfoundland, the Portuguese trade monopoly with Brazil (in cod, flour, oil and wine) was lifted in 1808, which permitted Britain to begin the export of salted fish from its North American colonies. During the eighteenth century all cod destined for Brazilian markets had to be exported to Portugal and then trans-shipped to and sold in Brazil by Portuguese-based merchants.³³ In 1812, the first British shipment of codfish was made and by Brazilian independence in 1822, the codfish trade with Brazil was firmly established.³⁴ As Ommer notes, the Gaspé trade was of a triangular nature: the metropolis (or management base) was on the island of Jersey; the production base was in the Gulf of the St. Lawrence and Newfoundland; and the marketing involved the West Indies, Brazil and the Mediterranean area (e.g., Naples in Italy).³⁵ Between 1818 and 1829, Newfoundland salted cod exports to Brazil rose from 664 tons to 4,303 tons.³⁶ During the 1830s, the Caribbean cod-fish trade shrank as a result of emancipation of slaves and the collapse of the slave-plantation market for cheap, poor-quality dried codfish. But the Caribbean market was replaced with the Brazilian market.³⁷ Fish from Gaspé was most prized in South America because it was drier; causing it to withstand the hot climate and the long passage by sailing ship, and it was beautifully white and smaller than fish caught elsewhere.³⁸

By the late 1500s hundreds of Jersey men were sailing across the Atlantic seeking cargoes of Newfoundland cod. They left Jersey in spring and returned for the ploughing months.³⁹ In the nineteenth century, the firm with the most extensive interests in the St. Lawrence region was Charles Robin and Company (CRC) headquarter in Paspébiac. It contracted with more independent fishers than any other firm.⁴⁰ Its output of dried cod totalled 1,400 tons in 1828, soaring to 2,900 tons in 1865, making it the largest fish exporter in Atlantic Canada. The company was completely integrated, controlling all aspects of the trade in dried cod, from financing, shipbuilding, to fishing and sales. The CRC was capitalised at

³¹ John A. Davis, 'The European Economies in the Eighteenth Century', in Antonio di Vittorio (ed.), *History of Europe. From Expansion to Development*, Abingdon & New York: Routledge, 2006, p.112.

³² John Dewitt, *Early Globalization and the Economic Development of the United States and Brazil*, Westport: Praeger Publishers, 2002, p.63.

³³ Ommer 1990, p.80.

³⁴ Innis, 1940, pp.301 & 307; David Alexander, 'Newfoundland's Traditional Economy and Development to 1934', *Acadiensis* 5:2 (1976), pp. 56-78; Lear, W. H., 'History of Fisheries in the Northern Atlantic: The 500-Year Perspective', *Journal of Northwest Atlantic Fisheries* 23 (1998), pp.41-73, 1998).

³⁵ Ommer 1990, p.5.

³⁶ Shannon Ryan, *Fish out of Water: The Newfoundland Salt Fish*, St. John's: Breakwater Books, 1985, p.207.

³⁷ Ommer 1990, p.151.

³⁸ P. L. Simmonds (ed.), *Simmond's Colonial Magazine and Foreign Miscellany*, Vol. 4, London: Simmonds & Ward, Foreign and Colonial Office, 1845, p.158.

³⁹ Le Sauteur, William Thomas, 'A Brief History of Jersey. La Plus Grandes des Iles Anglo-Normandes', at <http://www.tonylesauteur.com/english.htm> ; and Rosemary E. Ommer, "'A Peculiar and Immediate Dependence of the Crown": The Basis of the Jersey Merchant Triangle', *Business History Review* 25:2 (1983), pp.107-24.

⁴⁰ Magosci 1999, p.345.

more than \$1 million in 1870.⁴¹ A number of other Channel Island entrepreneurs started out with the CRC: William Fruing (1832), John Le Boutillier (1833), Le Boutillier Bros (1838), as well as John Fauvel and Elias Collas. In the 1870s and onwards, the main competitor to Robins was the DeGruchy's enterprise. The two giants had acrimonious relations. Ommer noted that the CRC ranked among all Newfoundland exporters in 1874 (when its total output was 46,586 quintals of cod.⁴² The vessels sailing to export markets were typically either chartered by the large Newfoundland merchants or owned outright by them.

The Export Market of Bahia

During the nineteenth century:

Merchant ships would regularly leave the port of Gaspé with 2,000-3,000 quintals of cod and sail for the ports of Cadiz in Spain; Naples, Ancona, and Civitavecchia in Italy; Rio de Janeiro, Bahia and Pernambuco in Brazil; St. Thomas and Bridgetown in the Caribbean; and Jersey in the English Channel where fish was trans-shipped to other markets. Merchants in Naples and Civitavecchia in Italy controlled the buying and selling operations for all the dried cod shipped to the Mediterranean.⁴³

By 1830, Charles Robin and Co. of St. Heliers, Jersey Island, headed then by James Robin of the Robin codfish dynasty was shipping directly to Brazil; and five years later a Jersey Island merchant was in place in Bahia, associated with the prominent politician of Jersey, Sir Thomas Le Breton.⁴⁴ Sir Thomas sent his son, Francis, over to Bahia in the late 1830s to run the firm. Messrs. James Robin & Co. and Nicolle Brothers employed nearly one-thousand persons in the Gaspé during the 1840s.⁴⁵ The British merchant firm of Le Breton, Whately & Co. of Bahia – owned by Francis Le Breton, John Whately (then British consul in Bahia) and Thomas Forster – was active in the port of Bahia in the 1840s and 50s.⁴⁶ Upwards of 16,000 barrels (or 931 tons) of dried cod fish were shipped from Jersey to 'the Brazils' in 1835. Around 1840, nearly 80 vessels (8,000 tons) from Jersey were engaged in the deep ocean cod fishery, which output was mostly then sent to Brazil. On the return voyage to Jersey, the sailing ships carried sugar and coffee, which was then exchanged for corn, timber, hemp and tallow in northern Europe. The important Italian market of the CRC was served as of the 1830s through the 1870s by the British merchant firm Maingay, Robin and Co., of Charles Maingay, brother-in-law of Charles Robin's grand-nephew. Norwegian cod was first imported into Brazil via Portugal in 1843, but remained a rather minor factor.

⁴¹ Beginning in the 1870s – partly as a result of the world economic crisis set off in 1873 – the failures of numerous Jersey Island banks hurt the Channel Island fishing firms. Many vanished and others formed partnerships with Canadian interests. In 1904, the CRC moved from Jersey to Halifax where two years later it joined with the enterprises A. G. Jones and A. H. Whitman. Many of the original Jersey fishing enterprises were linked through marriages (Magocsi 1999, p.354). Ommer (1991) discusses the collapse of the Gaspé triangular trade in her chapter seven.

⁴² The pounds in a quintal figure is from <http://www.heritage.nf.ca/dictionary/azindex/pages/3555.html>. One English quintal in European markets equals 112 pounds or 50.8 kgs, but in Brazil the Portuguese quintal of 128 pounds is employed (Ommer 1990, p.108-9).

⁴³ Roch Samson, 'Good Debts and Bad Debts: Gaspé Fisheries in the Nineteenth Century', in James Candow and Carol Corbin (eds), *How Deep is the Ocean? Historical Essays on Canada's Atlantic Fishing*, Sydney: University College of Cape Breton Press, 1997, p.111.

⁴⁴ Ommer 1990, p.81.

⁴⁵ Simmonds 1845, p.158.

⁴⁶ Pierre Verger, *Notícias da Bahia 1850*, Salvador: Editora Corrupio; Fundação Cultural do Estado da Bahia, 1981, p.129; Ommer 1991, p.81.

During 1844 and 1845, nine sailing ships weighing between 150 and 200 tons each docked in Bahia coming from Gaspe, Halifax, St. Johns and Little Bay.⁴⁷ Eighteen sailing ships from Britain's North American colonies docked in Bahia unloading 3,465 tons of salted cod in 1850 and over 7,772 tons in 1858.⁴⁸ Whereas between 1820 and 1850, sailing vessels from Nova Scotia also carried cod to Bahia, by 1850 only two out of the twenty ships unloading cod did not come from Newfoundland, a pattern that then maintained itself. Average annual imports of Newfoundland cod fish into Bahia rose by 59 percent from the 1820s to the 1840s. Annual imports in the period 1825-29 were 1,626 tons and during the 1840s 2,582 tons per year.⁴⁹ The prominent Jersey Island family enterprise of De Carteret & Le Vesconte based in Arichat, Cape Breton, sold to commission agents in Brazil, Barbados and Europe (for example to McCulmot & Co. in Pernambuco, and to Muller & Co. in Bahia and Rio de Janeiro).⁵⁰ Isaac Le Vesconte (born 1822) in Jersey moved to Arichat where he, his family and partner, a De Cateret, developed a large business shipping dried fish to Brazil in ship holds that were protracted by linings of birch trees.⁵¹

The merchant fishing enterprises of J. J. Le Boutillier Brothers and Charles Robin & Co (CRC) were the two major exporters of dried cod from the Gaspe and Paspébiac regions destined to the ports of Bahia and Pernambuco. CRC ruled the Gaspe and Paspébiac fishing stations "with a rod of iron".⁵² Le Boutillier shipped 5,000 tubs (each tub having 128 pounds or 290 tons of dried cod) to Brazil in 1857. A huge increase in Newfoundland cod shipped to Brazil had taken place between 1833 and 1857: the amount rising from 47,407 to 368,205 quintals. The Robins enterprise's output went from 27,000 quintals (1.4 million kilograms) to 57,000 quintals (2.9 million kilograms) in 1865. In 1858, Newfoundland shipped a little over 20,000 tons of salted fish (or 392,857 quintals) of salt-fish to Brazil, mostly to Pernambuco and Bahia.⁵³

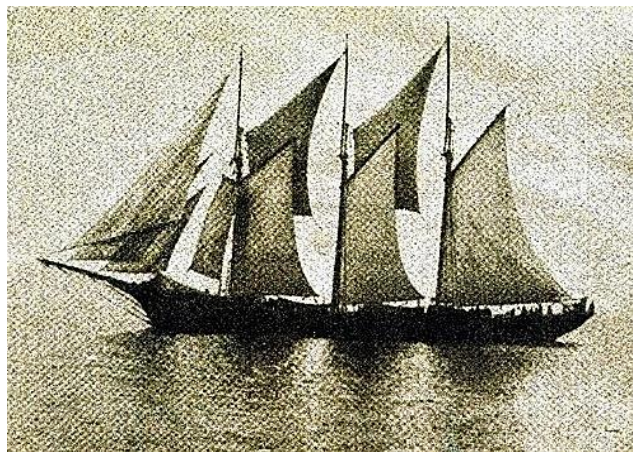


Figure 7. A typical three-masted cod fishing lugre, the "Gaspar"

(Source: <http://vilapraideancora.blogs.sapo.pt/tag/hist%C3%B3ria>)

⁴⁷ John Macgregor, *Commercial Statistics*, Vol.4, London: Whittaker & Co., 1850.

⁴⁸ Ryan 1985, pp.208 & 212.

⁴⁹ Ryan 1985, p.208.

⁵⁰ Hornsby 1992, p.88.

⁵¹ Marion G. Turk, *The Quiet Adventurers in Canada*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979, p.60.

⁵² George Reginald Balleine, *A History of the Island of Jersey: from the cave men to the German occupation and after*, London: Staples Press, 1950, p.304.

⁵³ Stephen Bell *Campanha Gaucha: A Brazilian Ranching System, 1850-1920*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998, p.78.

The cod was shipped to Brazil on bark, brig, patacho, schooner, lugre and brigantine sailing vessels weighing from 90 to 200 tons, with crews of between eight and twelve men (see Table 1). A 120-ton ship typically loaded between 2,000 and 2,600 quintals of Newfoundland dried cod; larger ships of 250-300 tons were mostly employed in the Brazil and West Indies trades. A Canadian publication of the 1860s commented:

The Brazilian market for fish is expensive and one of the best in the world. The codfish from Gaspe Peninsula (New Brunswick) was preferred to any other and always commands the highest price.⁵⁴

Mention was specifically made of the CRC fish brand.

Table 1. Sailing Ships (loaded with salted cod) arrivals in Port of Salvador, 1899

Source: various issues of *Jornal de Notícias* (17 January – 17 March 1899)

Arrival date	Ship name	Ship empty tonnage	Buyer of salted cod
January 17	Consul Kaestner	116 tons	G H. Duder
January 17	Grace	198 tons	Manoel J. Carvalho
January 17	Eletro	157 tons	Conde Filho & C.
January 20	Congo	196 tons	Julio Matheus dos Santos & C
January 23	Elsa	113 tons	G. H. Duder
February 8	W. W. Lloyd	251 tons	n.a.
February 8	E.E. Hutchins	266 tons	Conde Filho & C.
February 11	Silver Sea	177 tons	J. Matheus dos Santos & C.
February 11	Ellen Lloyd	176 tons	G. H. Duder
February 17	Petunia	207 tons	J. Matheus dos Santos & C.
February 27	Ida	149 tons	G. H. Duder
February 28	Golden Hind	188 tons	n.a.
March 11	Tanny	187 tons	Manoel J. Carvalho
March 11	Sidona	196 tons	G. H. Duder
March 17	Vidonia	196 tons	G. H. Duder

Source: various issues of *Jornal de Notícias* (January 17 - March 17, 1899)

Ryan argues that in the late 1850s competition from jerked beef became a factor in the Newfoundland-Brazil trade. Jerked beef imports from the River Plate region rose from 3,962 tons in 1854 to an average of some 5,000 tons annually on average during the rest of the century.⁵⁵ The import of jerked or dried beef from Rio Grande do Sul into Salvador was almost entirely in the hands of Joaquim Pereira Marinho, famous slave dealer and merchant.⁵⁶ The degree to which a cross elasticity of demand exists between cod and jerked beef remains unexplored. While imports of jerked beef were substantial between 1905 and 1914 (See Table 2). At the turn of the century, Brazil consumed about 500,000 quintals of fish annually, but

⁵⁴ 'Brazil', *Report of the Commissioners from British North America. The Trade of the West Indies, Mexico & Brazil*, Ottawa: Houses of Parliament by Order of His Excellency the Governor General, G. E. Desbarats, 1866, p.29.

⁵⁵ Ryan 1985, p.219.

⁵⁶ Katia Q. Mattoso, *Bahia, A Cidade do Salvador e Seu Mercado no Seculo XIX*, Sao Paulo: HUCITEC and Secretaria Municipal de Educacao e Cultura (Salvador), 1978, p.257.

the United States supplied less than two per cent.⁵⁷ The tonnage shipped to Bahia doubled during 1890-1914: from 2,553 tons in 13 ships in 1890 to 5,706 tons in 31 ships in 1914.⁵⁸ In 1920, there were 18 shipments made to Bahia in schooners carrying an average of 325 tons of codfish (giving an annual imported total of 5,850 tons).

Table 2. Bahia's Imports of Newfoundland Salted Fish in British Sailing Ships, 1890-1914

Source: Ryan 1985, p.216, presents annual data on codfish imports into Bahia for the period 1890-1914. The data for 1912 comes from Consul W. H. M. Sinclair, 'Report for the Year 1912 on the Trade of the Consular District of Bahia', Diplomatic and Consular Reports 5076 (June 1913 Annual Series), p.11

	Number of cargoes	Total tonnage of cod
1890	13	2,553
1895	23	4,728
1900	29	5,094
1905	13	3,087
1909	29	5,237
1912	25	4,596
1914	31	5,706

Codfish imports into Salvador in 1910 totalled 6,750 tons and in 1911, 6,780 tons; imports of jerked beef amounted to 5,628 tons in 1910 and 6,191 tons in 1911.⁵⁹ The codfish commerce in Rio de Janeiro was estimated at 4,600 tons in 1899 and 7,500 tons in 1900, coming from Canada via Halifax and from Norway via Hamburg.⁶⁰

Brazilian codfish imports notwithstanding competition from jerked beef remained an important part of the national diet. Imports of Newfoundland salt fish remained at about 330,000 quintals annually during the 1890s and grew even more in the early twentieth century. Brazil imported 335,000 quintals annually in 1901-1905; rising to 418,000 quintals during 1911-1914. In per capita consumption terms, the figures are 2.06 lbs/year in the 1890s and 1.94 lbs/year during 1911-1914. The codfish trade between the Newfound Banks region and Bahia continued to remain significant well into the twentieth century.

A sample of two months' ship arrivals in the port for Salvador in 1899 reveals typical data about imported salted cod from Newfoundland (Table 1). Fifteen sailing ships arrived from St. Johns, Newfoundland, bringing salted cod to a handful of local importing/warehousing enterprises. A sailing ship bringing salted cod from Newfoundland docked on average every four days (fifteen ships in two months) in the port of Salvador. These ships averaged delivering 176 tons of cod per ship in 1900. Most ships delivered 114 to 168 tons per voyage. In 1920, there were still eighteen shipments made to Brazil from the St.

⁵⁷ 'Foreign Codfish Markets', *Bulletin of the United States Fish Commission XVIII*, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1898, p.406. The US supplied no cod fish to the important Catholic markets of southern Europe. The imports into southern Europe were principally from Norway and Newfoundland.

⁵⁸ Ryan 1985, p.216.

⁵⁹ Sinclair 1913, p.7.

⁶⁰ 'Commerce in Codfish at Rio de Janeiro', *Monthly Bulletin of the Bureau of the American Republics* (January 1902), pp.292-3.

Lawrence Bay region in schooners carrying an average of 325 tons of codfish each (in barrels of 142 pounds and in half barrels).⁶¹

British merchants dominated Salvador's external trade during the first half of the nineteenth century, whereas Portuguese merchants focused upon internal trade as in groceries (*secos e molhados*). The Portuguese immigrant during the second half of the nineteenth century sought out urban commercial occupations.⁶² Spanish immigrants from Galicia began challenging the Portuguese in the last decades of the nineteenth century.⁶³ The Spanish merchants set up stores in the more outlying areas of Salvador away from the heart of the city (for example in the neighbourhood of Rio Vermelho, located north of the city centre).

Visitors to Salvador at the end of the nineteenth century noted the presence of (North American) salted cod being sold in small shops in the da Se neighbourhood on the Rua do Bacalhau and the alley of Tira-chapeu.⁶⁴ But the main commercial areas of the city were in the lower city's districts of Nossa Senhora do Pilar and Nossa Senhora de Conceição da Praia, next to the warehouses and waterfront. The unloading and carrying of barrels of codfish as well as other menial labour in the lower city was performed by freed slaves.⁶⁵

The daily fare of most Bahians during the nineteenth century was sun-dried beef and dried salted cod with *farinha* of manioc (respectively protein and carbohydrates). Upon arriving in the port of Salvador, the fish was unloaded and wholesale merchants took charge of the in-coming cargo, distributing it to Portuguese store owners. The codfish was sold in the back streets of Salvador's Lower City (the Cidade Baixa) in long lines of smaller stores full of coloured stuffs, *cachaça* and codfish (see Figure 8). Little stores cluttered the Conceição da Praia, the da Se and the Pilar neighbourhoods selling wines, oils, beans, vinegars and codfish.⁶⁶ During the latter nineteenth century, Portuguese retail merchants predominated in the Conceição da Praia neighbourhood, often living above their store.⁶⁷ Codfish was also sold in the upper city's da Se neighborhood on the rua da Ajuda, the Ladeira dos Gatos, and a street in the da Se neighborhood was even named rua do Bacalhau. A map of Salvador's streets published in 1864 by the Secretaria do Governo da Bahia lists the Ladeira do Bacalhau, no doubt because of the commerce in this product, in the Se neighbourhood close to the Rua dos Gatos.⁶⁸ This city street is mentioned in the writings of Bahia's foremost novelist, Jorge Amado.⁶⁹

⁶¹ US Bureau of Fisheries, *Report of the Commission of Fisheries to the Secretary of Commerce and Labor*, Washington D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1923, p.61.

⁶² Mario Augusto da Silva Santos, *Comércio Português na Bahia 1870-1930. Centenário de Manoel Joaquim de Carvalho & Cia. Ltda*, Salvador: S.A. Artes Gráficas, 1977, p.9; Tania Penido Monteiro, *Portugueses na Bahia na segunda metade do século XIX*, Porto: Secretaria de Estado da Emigração, Centro de Estudos, 1985, p.189.

⁶³ Jeferson Afonso Bacelar, *Galegos no paraíso racial*, Salvador: Universidade Federal da Bahia, CEAO/Ianame, 1994; Lucia Lippi Oliveira, 'Os galegos em Salvador', in *Nós e eles. Relações culturais entre brasileiros e Imigrantes*, Rio de Janeiro: FGV Editora, 2006, pp.29-40.

⁶⁴ James Hufford, *Cruzeiro do Sul: A History of Brazil's Half Millennium*, Vol. 1, Bloomington: Author House, 2005, p.258.

⁶⁵ Ana de Lourdes Ribeiro da Costa, 'Espaços Negros: "cantos" e "lojas" em Salvador no século XIX', *Caderno CRH 4* (Supplement 1991), pp.18-34.

⁶⁶ Anna Amelia Vieira Nascimento, *Dez Freguesias da Cidade do Salvador: aspectos sociais e urbanos do século XIX*, Salvador: Fundação Cultural do Estado da Bahia, 1986, pp.33, 74-87.

⁶⁷ Santos 1977, p.166.

⁶⁸ See map and text at <http://uranohistoria.blogspot.com.br/2012/04/pelas-ruas-de-salvador-seculo-xix.html>.

⁶⁹ Jacques Salah, *A Bahia de Jorge Amado*, Salvador: Fundação Casa de Jorge Amado, 2008, p.63.

Wholesale distribution in Salvador of salted cod, kerosene, dried or jerked beef, wheat, sugar and fresh meat was in few hands. In 1891, there were six importers in Salvador of jerked meat; and in 1905 the number was five. In 1913 it had risen to eight or nine. The dominant enterprise during the first two decades of the twentieth century was that of Manoel Carvalho.⁷⁰



Figure 8. A typical small Portuguese retail outlet selling dried cod

(Source: <http://aps-ruasdelisboacomhistria.blogspot.com.br/2008/04/rua-do-arsenal-i.html>)

The largest wholesale merchants in Salvador in the latter nineteenth century were the Portuguese Luso-Brazilians Manoel Joaquim de Carvalho; Conde Filho e Cia; Julio Matheus dos Santos & C., owner of the Loja Matheus located at the Largo do Plano Inclinado and also dealer in snuff;⁷¹ Ferreira Fresco & Cia.; and Loureiro, Viana e Cia. In 1900, Conde Filho and the Manoel Carvalho merchant enterprises ranked numbers 1 and 3 amongst enterprises paying taxes in Bahia. For his part, Joaquim Matheus do Santos was recognised as one of Salvador's leading merchants in the later nineteenth century: he owned his own commercial establishment as well as nineteen other properties in Bahia and three in Portugal.⁷²

The Ferreira Fresco merchant firm located at Rua das Princesas 9, was founded in 1878 by Portuguese immigrants Jose Maria Ferreira Fresco and Jose Fernandes da Costa.⁷³ It dealt in Swiss Nestle condensed milk, canned fish and fruits from London's C. & E. Morton Ltd., codfish from Newfoundland and A. & M. Smith Ltd. of Aberdeen, butter from

⁷⁰ Mario Augusto da Silva Santos, *A república do povo, sobrevivência e tensão: Salvador, 1890-1930*, Salvador: Edufba, 2001, p.73-4.

⁷¹ Monteiro 1985, p.149.

⁷² Tania Riserio d'Almeida Gandon, *Portugueses na Bahia na segunda metade do século XIX: emigração e comércio*, Salvador: EDUNEB, 2010, p.150.

⁷³ 'Impressões do Brasil. Estado da Bahia', at <http://www.novomilenio.inf.br/santos/h0300g42c.htm>.

Denmark, as well as national items. The firm also exported cocoa, coffee, piassava and tropical wood to Germany, Lisbon and Porto, and Valparaiso.

The Conde enterprise was created in Salvador by the Azorean immigrant, Manoel Jose de Conde in 1853. But it dates from 1838 when Manoel Conde formed a small merchant firm in Cachoeira. He began with selling imported white flour and bread to customers living in the Rua da Valla area.⁷⁴ The business thrived and he began importing foreign goods, and was exporting tobacco. He was awarded the title of Visconde de Rosario. His son, Manoel Jose do Conde Fliho, joined the firm whose name was changed to Conde Filho & Cia., and later to Conde & Cia. The firm entered the shipping agency business in 1900, representing the Lloyd Real Holandes (Royal Holland Lloyd line, 1899-1981) whose ships sailed to Brazil from Coruna and Vigo, the Alliance Assurance Co. Ltd (London) and the Prince Line of steamships. In 1913, the firm's partners were Manoel Cerqueira Conde (grandson of the founder) and Francisco Rosario Conde.

The Carvalho enterprise was created in 1877 by a Portuguese immigrant, Manoel Joaquim de Carvalho (1853-1923) of modest family background, who had arrived in Bahia in 1866 at the age of thirteen.⁷⁵ He worked as a clerk in a Portuguese firm Pinto & Rodrigues, in the *secos e molhados* business (groceries) in Salvador, before founding his own enterprise in 1877, becoming a major player in the import-export business of Salvador for four decades (three generations of the family). For many years, the firm prospered importing codfish from Newfoundland. Manoel Joaquim did so well that he became known as the “king of codfish”.⁷⁶ Documents of the firm reveal that he handled about one-third of all cod fish imported into Bahia in the early 1900s.⁷⁷ By 1913, the Carvalho enterprise controlled a third of the codfish sales in the Brazilian northeast (Bahia, Sergipe, Alagoas and Pernambuco).⁷⁸ But the Carvalho enterprise traded a large assortment of commodities and held investments in many of Salvador's industrial and transportation enterprises.

Other major importers in Salvador of Newfoundland cod included the enterprises of Soares & Cia (est. 1906), Goncalves Carrisso & Cia (related to the Carvalho firm), and the Portuguese Ferreira Fresco e Cia (est. 1878) (see Table 1). Soares & Cia was created in 1906 by Jose Pereira Soares (born in Bahia). The enterprise engaged in exporting (tobacco and cocoa) and in importing large quantities of codfish (from Nova Scotia and Newfoundland), wheat and flour (Argentina), and dried meat (Rio Grande do Sul).⁷⁹ The very prominent British merchant enterprise in Salvador, George H. Duder, was also a major importer of Newfoundland salted cod, as well as being engaged in everything from whaling to sugar, jacaranda hardwoods to piassava, etcetera.

Manoel Carvalho served as director of the Associação Comercial da Bahia. At the turn of the century, he owned and operated two large warehouses (*trapiche*) including the Adelaide one abutting the port on the Cais does Barroso in front of the Conceição cathedral. An imposing merchant house for Carvalho & Cia. trading in coffee, mamona, etcetera, was built in 1877 on the rua Miguel Calmon n. 12. In 1890, he bought the large ornate home, Solar/Casa dos Carvalho in Graca (on Av. Princesa Leopoldina).

⁷⁴ Flavio Novaes, ‘Honra e glória da Bahia’, *Correio da Bahia* (30 April 2006), p.6.

⁷⁵ Santos 2001, pp.177-204.

⁷⁶ Santos 2001, pp.71-204.

⁷⁷ Santos 2001, p.182.

⁷⁸ Santos 2001, p.74.

⁷⁹ ‘Impressões do Brasil. Estado da Bahia’, at <http://www.novomilenio.inf.br/santos/h0300g42c.htm>.

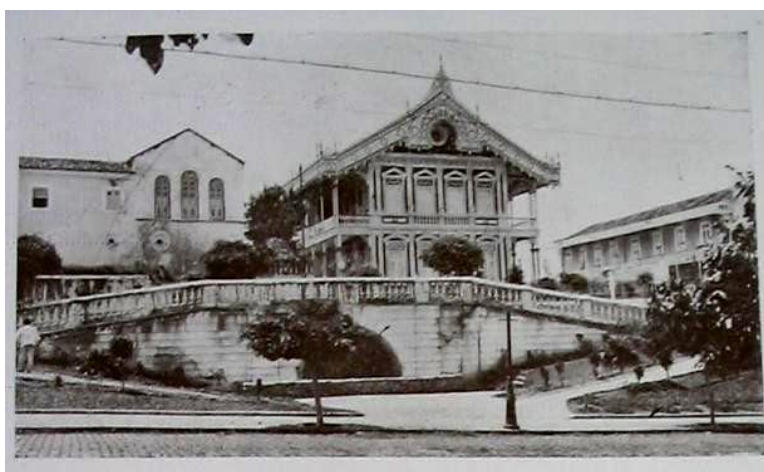


Figure 9. The residence then of Salvador's codfish king, Manoel Joaquim de Carvalho in the elite Graça neighborhood of Salvador c. 1917

(Source: *Bahia Illustrada* no. 2, anno II (January 1918), no pagination)

The reasons for the large amounts of Bahia's cod fish imports (1850-1914) included the low import tariffs on the commodity, the continued expansion of the Portuguese, Italian and Spanish Galician population of Bahia through immigration, and the low relative cost of *bacalhau* making it a food of the masses,⁸⁰ especially in urban areas. Cheap salted cod fish with its protein was also a staple of the slave diet in the Americas.

Planters in the Recôncavo had long been purchasing salted cod for their slaves along with jerked beef and calorie-rich mandioca.⁸¹ The addition of 240,919 imported slaves into Bahia during 1801-25, and another 136,831 during 1826-50, no doubt also stimulated the import of cod fish.⁸² This typical slave diet (of manioc, jerked beef, whale meat, dried cod, with some brandy added primarily as a stimulant to raise work productivity) in Bahia was supplemented with beans, corn, rice, okra and other greens, coconut oil and taro on the rich plantations or in the wealthy town homes of the planter and merchant aristocracy.⁸³ But the diet on the sugar plantations of the Reconcavo was generally unbalanced and insufficient.⁸⁴ The introduction of greens into the Brazilian cuisine, generally indifferent to vegetables, the African may be thanked for. The landed gentry disdained the fresh vegetables and leafy greens eaten by the African population, opting instead to eat a diet of largely imported European foods, which were often rancid or spoiled.

Gilberto Freyre has noted:

⁸⁰ Helena Gama Lobo, *Receitas da Bahia*, São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1959, p.31.

⁸¹ B. J. Barickman, "'A Bit of Land, which They Call Roca': Slave Provision Grounds in the Bahian Recôncavo", *Hispanic American Historical Review* 74:4 (November 1994), p.69; John C. Super and Thomas C. Wright, *Food, Politics, and Society in Latin America*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985, p.10.

⁸² Alexandre Vieira Ribeiro, 'The Transatlantic Slave Trade to Bahia, 1582-1851', in David Eltis and Davis Richardson (eds), *Extending the Frontiers. Essays on the New Transatlantic Slave Trade Database*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008, p.153.

⁸³ Gilberto Freyre, *The Mansions and the Shanties. The Making of Modern Brazil*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963, pp.185-6; Barickman 1994.

⁸⁴ Richard Price, *Maroon Societies: Rural Slave Communities in the Americas*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979, p.206.

The African, while a slave, was by a large better nourished than the free Negro or mulatto and the poor white of shanty or hut of the interior or the cities, whose diet was normally limited to dried beef or salt cod with manioc meal. Better nourished than the plantation owner or the rancher or the mine owner of average or modest means...whose diet, too, was characterized by the excessive use of dried beef and salted cod purchased in the cities, and hardtack, dried fish, and manioc meal.⁸⁵

Codfish was consumed primarily in the coastal areas though Richard Francis Burton had seen it in São Romão a village along the Rio Sao Francisco in 1860:

...whilst the river flowing before their doors produces the best of fish, and while salt may be brought from a few leagues, if indeed it cannot be washed from the ground, the townspeople eat the hard, dry, and graveolent ‘bacalhao’ or codfish, brought in driblets from Newfoundland.⁸⁶

Salted cod (along with dried meat or *carne de seca* or *carne de boi*) mixed with manioc flour, beans was a mainstay during the nineteenth century in the diet of the poor, sometimes even being eaten uncooked.⁸⁷ On the other hand, the urban elite also ate the imported codfish. In 1891 the *Jornal do Brasil* mentioned that the intellectuals of that era led by Brazil’s foremost writer, Machado de Assis, met regularly on Sundays in restaurants at the centre of Rio de Janeiro to eat authentic ‘Bacalhau do Porto’ while discussing the problems of Brazil.⁸⁸

In his book about the food supply of Salvador (1890-1930), Da Silva Santos noted that imported dried cod by necessity was the “fish of the poor” (working class and some strata of the lower middle class). Portuguese middle classes generally shunned being seen eating codfish. On the other hand, washerwomen – one of the lowest earning professional groups of the city – daily purchased cod because it was cheap and ate it with vinegar and oil. Some members of the Portuguese immigrant upper class chose to consume codfish as part of customs of the mother land.⁸⁹

Pierre Verger recounted how merchant enterprises advanced monies to the sugar plantation owners in 1850 who then purchased all the food needed in their *casa grande* so as to able to eat as in Portugal – salted cod, wine, oil, vinegar, olive oil, cheese and even bread made from wheat flour.⁹⁰ The centrality of cod fish in Bahian society was revealed in the financial support provided by two important social groups of the Bahia elite then – the food importers of codfish (the ‘nobreza do bacalhau’) and of Portuguese chestnuts (the ‘nobreza da

⁸⁵ Cited in Price 1979, p.186.

⁸⁶ Richard Francis Burton, *The Highlands of the Brazil*, Vol. II, London: Tinsley Brothers, 1869, p.248.

⁸⁷ Abdon Rosaldo et al., *Salvador era assim: memórias da cidade*, Vol. 1, Salvador: Instituto Geográfico e Histórico da Bahia, 1999, pp.96 & 99.

⁸⁸ <http://www.bacalhau.com.br>.

⁸⁹ Santos 2001, p.68.

⁹⁰ Verger 1981, p.43.

castanha’ – the chestnut elites) – to the Conde dos Arcos in his effort to build the Teatro São João completed in 1812.⁹¹

The codfish (or *bacalhau*) entered into Bahian and Brazilian culture in numerous ways besides just in its cuisine and as a food permitted to eat on Friday by Catholics – ‘*bacalhau era o prato de sexta-feira*’ – and was also favoured on Christmas, Lent and Easter. It also figured in torture, dance, medicine and folklore. The instrument of punishment or torture of slaves which consisted of a twisted rawhide (leather) whip was called the ‘*bacalhau*’.⁹² Cod liver oil – the very popular *Emulsão de Scott* (innovated in 1830, imported into Brazil in the second half of the nineteenth century, with production beginning in Sao Paulo in 1908) – was a heavily advertised and used patent medicine, one of the most successful brands ever in Brazil during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: “*Pela família, pelo Brasil, pela humanidade, fortaleça-se com Emulsão de Scott*” (Figure 10). Scott & Browne (NYC)’s patent cod-liver emulsion was particularly popular throughout Brazil and Bahia as of 1880 (see following ad). Other popular imported patent drugs were the Elixir de Boubee and the Elixir do Dr. Guille dating back to 1838. The famous Scott & Browne (NYC) cod liver oil emulsion was alleged to cure tuberculosis and countless other illnesses



Figure 10. Advertisement for Scott cod-liver oil.

(Source: Eduardo Bueno and Paula Taitelbaum, *Vendendo Saude. A Historia da Propaganda de Medicamentos no Brasil*, Sao Paulo: Agencia Nacional de Vigilancia Sanitaria (ANVISA), 2008, p.40)

Also, a popular description of a very thin person was ‘*bacalhau de porta de venda*’. *Porta de venda* means shop door. Frequently the strips of dried *bacalhau* were hung from the

⁹¹ Neves, Maria Helena Franca, *De La Traviata ao maxite: variações estéticas da prática do Teatro São João*, Salvador: Empresa Gráfica da Bahia, 2000, p.62.

⁹² Conrad, Robert Edgar, *Children of Fire. A Documentary History of Black History Slavery in Brazil*, University Park: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994, p.299.

door top of small stores (see Figure 8). The Imperatriz Leopoldinense samba carnival group featured the history of the *bacalhau* in Rio de Janeiro in 2007.⁹³

Analysis of the Codfish Commodity Chain: Newfoundland to Bahia

Between 1910 and 1914, the import of cod into Brazil ranked tenth, accounting for 2.5 percent of total imports (putting it second in terms of food imports, surpassed only by wheat grains, which accounted for 5.3 percent of imports).⁹⁴ By 1914, reportedly over 20,000 tons of Newfoundland Banks' codfish were sold in Bahia and Pernambuco.⁹⁵ Thirty-one British sailing ships unloaded 5,706 tons of salted cod (for an average of 184 tons per vessel) that year in the port of Bahia, making the per capita annual consumption over two kilos.⁹⁶ But this figure greatly underestimates codfish consumption in the Salvador area. If we assume that 80 percent of the landed cod was consumed in Salvador, then the per capita codfish consumed annually there becomes 18.3 kilos or 1½ kilos per month.

It is possible to reconstruct the dried cod supply value chain for around 1900. I use the English quintal for this derivation (1 quintal = 112 pounds). The Brazilian import tax was about 2 cents/lb; Brazilian import tariffs after 1890 were on average 37 percent.⁹⁷ The on-ship export price for dried cod in Newfoundland was reported as \$4/quintal.⁹⁸ Ryan estimated the on-ship price of dried cod in Bahia as 1.5 pounds sterling per quintal, or (at an exchange rate of US\$4.87 per pound) or at US 6.5 cents/pound.⁹⁹ Retail prices of delivered Newfoundland cod (data for 1866) were \$5-6/quintal in Demerara (British Guyana) and in Brazil, at US\$12.50/quintal, or 11.2 US cents per quintal.¹⁰⁰ This price included the Brazilian tariff of 2.0 cents/lb whose inspiration was to raise state revenues (rather than afford protection).¹⁰¹ Wholesalers and retailers in Salvador earned 2.7 cents/lb.¹⁰²

⁹³ See photo at http://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ficheiro:Imperatriz_2007_-_comiss%C3%A3o_de_frente.JPG.

⁹⁴ Helio Schlittler Silva, 'Índices de preços no comércio exterior do Brasil', *Revista Brasileira de Economia*, 6:2 (1952), p.97.

⁹⁵ Ryan 1985, p.225; Arthur Silva White, 'Newfoundland: A Study in Regional Geography', *Scottish Geographical Journal*, 30:3 (1914), pp.113-28.

⁹⁶ The imports of salted cod in 1914 were 5,706 tons according to Ryan (1985, p.216). The population of Bahia in 1914 was 2,846,205 according to Pearse (*Brazilian Cotton: The Report of the Journey of the International Cotton Mission Through the Cotton States of São Paulo, Minas Geraes, Bahia, Alagoas, Sergipe, Pernambuco, Parahyba, Rio Grande do Norte*, Manchester: Tayloy, Garnett, Evans & Co., 1922, p.13).

⁹⁷ Alice H. Amsden, *The Rise of 'The Rest' Challenge to the West from Late-Industrializing Economies*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, p.175.

⁹⁸ Neis 1981, p.131.

⁹⁹ Ryan 1985, p.222.

¹⁰⁰ The classic study of retail prices during the nineteenth century in Salvador is Mattoso ('Os preços na Bahia de 1750 a 1930', in Katia Queiroz Mattoso, *L'Histoire Quantitative du Brésil de 1800 a 1930*, Paris: C.N.R.S., 1973, pp. 167-182). But the data on cod fish prices is not usable for this analysis.

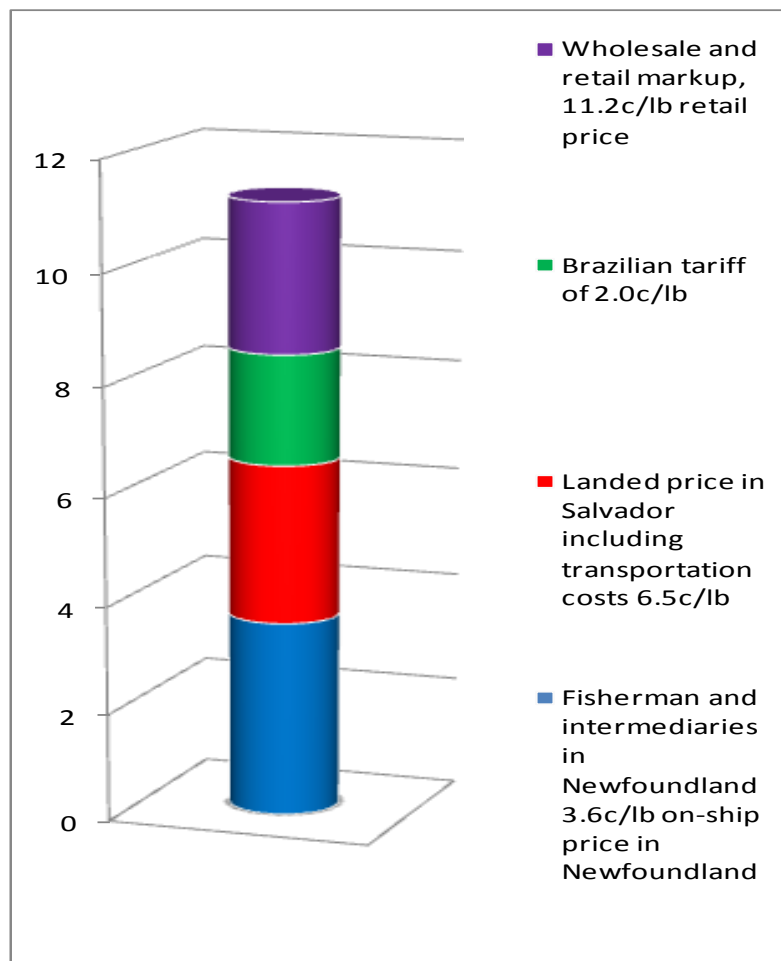
¹⁰¹ John H. Coatsworth and Jeffrey G. Williamson, 'Always Protectionist? Latin American Tariffs from Independence to Great Depression', *Journal of Latin American Studies* 36:2 (May 2004), pp.205-232. This was a common practice in Latin America. In 1911 the Brazilian duty on imported dried cod was 2,500 reis per barrel. Cod was shipped in barrels of 142 lbs (or 65 kilos) or in half-barrels (of 71 lbs). The duty per pound of dried cod was hence 2.5 milreis or 475 cents per barrel, that is 475/142 = 3.35 cents/lb if we use the exchange rate of 0.19 milreis per dollar. Data from U.S. Bureau of Fisheries (1923, p. 61). This figure is close to that estimated here at 2.0 cents/lb.

¹⁰² The relationship between the retail price of foodstuffs (including dried cod) in Salvador, meeting minimum food needs, and vulnerability to disease is outside the scope of this paper. It is examined for the period 1918/19 by Christiane Maria Cruz de Souza, 'A gripe espanhola em Salvador, 1918: Cidade de becos e cortiços', *História, Ciências, Saude – Manguinhos* 12:1 (January-April 2005), pp.71-99.

We can now reconstruct the dried cod-fish value chain from the shores of Newfoundland to the small retail stores in Salvador da Bahia. If one generously assumes that one-third of the Newfoundland on-ship value accrued to the fishermen, this would give them US 1.2 cents/lb, or only 11 percent of the retail market value of 11.2 cents (11.2c) per pound in Salvador.

During the nineteenth century in Bahia and Rio de Janeiro, fairly widespread resentment existed among Brazilians towards Portuguese merchants and retailers who deliberately charged exorbitant prices (speculation and price-gouging) for basic goods. Beginning with the *Mate Maroto* riots of 1823-31, this led to frequent anti-Portuguese riots in which shops were attacked and looted.¹⁰³ The bar graphs below (Figures 11 and 12) suggest that merchants in Salvador did indeed posted significant markups on imported dried cod.

Figure 11

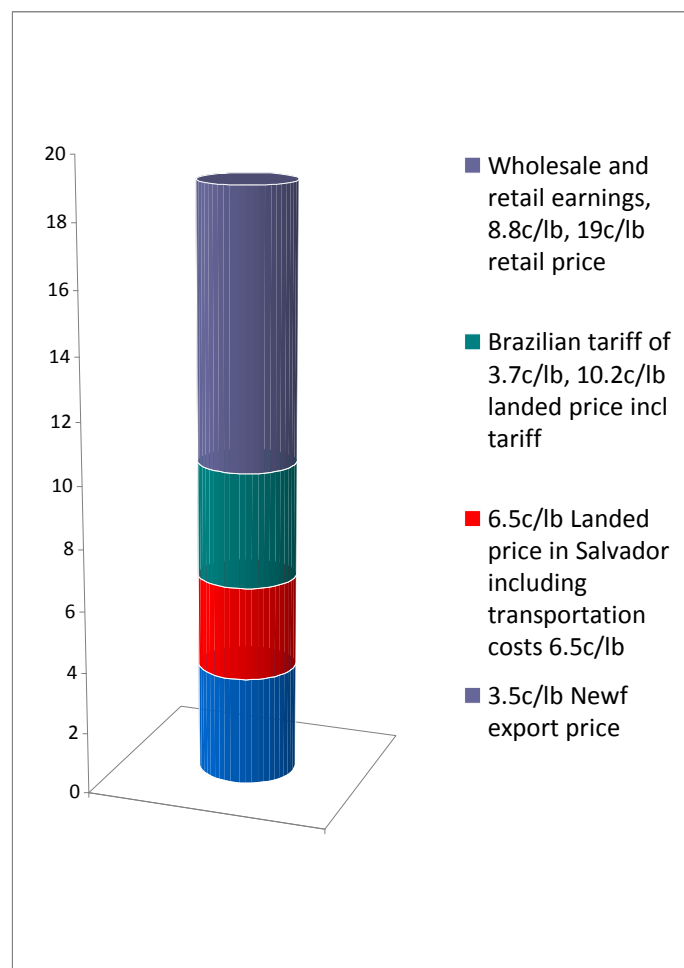


An alternative reconstruction of the value chain using different data for both the retail price in Salvador and the Brazilian tariff on imported cod reveals the following value chain. The export price from Newfoundland at the turn of the century was US\$ 4.50/quintal (of 128

¹⁰³ Rosana Barbosa Nunes, 'Portuguese Immigrants in Brazil: An Overview', *Portuguese Studies Review* 8:2 (1999-2000), p.33.

pounds).¹⁰⁴ The exchange rate then was 1 mil reis = US\$0.19 or 19 cents,¹⁰⁵ giving an export price of 3.5 cents/lb. The on-ship arrival price at the port of Salvador was 6.5 cents/lb.¹⁰⁶ The local newspapers (for example the *Diário da Notícias*) in 1899 reported a per barrel price of imported dried cod in Salvador retail of \$54\$000. A barrel then was 260 lbs. so the barrel price was 4,940 US cents (given an exchange rate of 1\$000 equals US\$0.19 as above). So the retail price in Salvador was US\$0.19/lb. The Brazilian tariff at the turn of the century and in the first decade was reported as being 2,500 reis/quintal. A quintal (Portuguese) was 128 lbs giving a tariff per pound of 19.6 milreis or 3.7 cents. The tariff rate was about 57 percent (= 3.7/6.5), which conforms to what Ridings had noted (ad valorem tariffs being 50-80 percent).¹⁰⁷ The value captured by merchants was 90 percent (Salvador-based wholesalers and retails @ 46 percent and Newfoundland merchants 44 percent, if we assume they owned or chartered the sailing vessels and earned at least 50 percent of the Newfoundland on-ship export price of 3.5 cents/lb.). The Brazilian government captured another 19 percent of the final sales value. Fishermen in Newfoundland earned at most 9 percent of the final sales value. Figure 12 shows the value chain.

Figure 12



¹⁰⁴ Neis 1981, p.131.

¹⁰⁵ Dale Torston Graden, *From Slavery to Freedom in Brazil: Bahia, 1835-1900*, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006, p.xxvi.

¹⁰⁶ Ryan 1985, p.221.

¹⁰⁷ Eugene W. Ridings, *Business Interest Groups in Nineteenth-Century Brazil*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, p.228.

At both ends of the cod commodity chain, powerful mercantile oligopoly elements existed – the Robin merchant fishing empire in the Gulf of the St. Lawrence and the Manoel Joaquim de Carvalho merchant enterprise in Salvador. This market situation in which both parties exerted market power resembled an oligopolist (Robin) selling to an oligopsonist (Carvalho).¹⁰⁸ Intermediaries and the Brazilian state captured almost 75 percent of the value produced in the dried cod-fish commodity chain, leaving only 25 percent for fishing families in Newfoundland and Portuguese retailers in Salvador; 58 percent remained in British-Canadian hands mostly with the fishing merchants and 42 percent in Brazilian hands mostly with the four to five cod-fish importers/wholesalers (measured in price/monetary terms). Such elements of market power challenge the once popular dependency analyses whether of Newfoundland or Bahia.¹⁰⁹

Conclusion

The production function for the Newfoundland region's salted cod destined for Brazil resulted from the coming-together of a number of factors. Once the need (demand) for a cheap, nutritious food existed in Brazil, it was only a matter of time or from where such would be had. The large increases in both the slave population of Bahia during the nineteenth century as well as the sharp rise of Salvador's population – going from 45,600 in 1805 to circa 145,000 in 1890¹¹⁰ – set in motion the process. The technology of the two to three-man iron screw press assisted the emergence of the cod supply chain. Interestingly, a relatively simple technology like the screw press was far more instrumental than the steam engine (on steamships) for the expansion of this chain. The immigration of Jersey men who settled in the Newfoundland area was another vital element; and lastly, the opening in 1808 of the ports of Brazil – thereby eliminating the restrictive Portuguese trade monopoly – was the immediate catalyst. Britain soon supplanted Portugal as Brazil's main trade, commercial and financial partner. The nineteenth century represented the apogee of British influence in Brazil (and Bahia).¹¹¹ During the nineteenth century, Brazil became an important part of the global British Empire, which supplied Welsh coal to cod from its Maritime Provinces, to railroads, to banking services, etcetera, receiving in return Bahia's varied export commodities.

As Bahia's spatial isolation began being eroded by ideas (the doctrine of free trade), by immigration and by technologies (transportation and packaging innovations), the consumption of cod fish became more widespread and imports of salted cod fish from the Newfoundland region began rising as of the 1820s. A complex commodity chain came into being: men fishing and women preparing the cod in the British maritime provinces, which cod was then purchased by merchants there, packaged and shipped on British sailing vessels for a two-months journey to the port of Salvador where a few Portuguese merchant wholesalers

¹⁰⁸ This case is specifically modelled for Norwegian exporters of dried salted cod sold to importers in Portugal, in Anderson et al., 'Oligopolist and Oligopsony Power in Concentrated Supply Chains', Stavanger, Norway: Unpublished Paper, University of Stavanger, 2008, at <http://web.uri.edu/isiac/files/wp08-1.pdf>.

¹⁰⁹ David Alexander, 'Development and Dependence in Newfoundland, 1880-1970', *Acadiensis* 4:1 (1974), pp.1-29; and Eugene W. Ridings, 'The Merchant Elite and the Development of Brazil: The Case of Bahia during the Empire', *Journal of Inter-American Studies and World Affairs*, 15:3 (August 1973), pp.335-53.

¹¹⁰ Mattoso 1978, pp.129 & 135.

¹¹¹ Marc W. Herold, 'They Came, They Founded, They Built, They Sold and They Prospered: the British in Bahia, Brazil, 1820-1920: An Archeology of Enterprise', paper presented at the International Symposium on Diplomacy, Economics, Arts and Culture: The History of the British Presence in Bahia, Bibliotheca Central da Bahia, November 3, 2008).

bought the fish packed in drums and stored it in warehouses for sale to small-scale retailers. This last step in the chain was from the wholesaler's warehouse in Salvador's Cidade Baixa to the small retail outlets in the Nossa Senhora da Conceição da Praia parish of Salvador's Cidade Baixa, a parish where Portuguese merchants first had clustered and where the dried cod was purchased as a popular food for slaves or the masses; never mind that local sources of fresh fish were nearby and abundant.¹¹² The cod commodity chain displayed strong monopolistic elements both in the Newfoundland region and in the wholesale market of salted cod in Salvador. This was not a reality fitting well within the dominant free trade doctrine of the nineteenth century, which assumed competitive markets.

The cod-fish commodity chain involved the labour of blacks and whites, men and women in defined locations along the chain. The chain joined the men and women from Jersey with black slaves from the Gulf of Benin in West Africa and Angola by way of the port of Salvador. Cod as cheap, nutritious food played a role in a number of tropical agricultural commodities: as, for example, Bahian exports produced by slave labour in sugar, cotton and coffee. Salted cod was also a cheap, nutritious wage good thereby assisting capital accumulation to different degrees along the cod value chain. And as in Portugal where cod played a central role in the construction of identity, so too has it figured centrally as documented herein in Bahia's culture.

¹¹² Agenor Augusto de Miranda, 'As extraordinárias possibilidades do Rio São Francisco', in *O Rio São Francisco*, São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1936, pp.47-59.

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The mutually reinforcing relationship between 'commodities' and 'empires' has long been recognised. Over the last six centuries the quest for profits has driven imperial expansion, with the global trade in commodities fuelling the ongoing industrial revolution. These 'commodities of empire', which became transnationally mobilised in ever larger quantities, included foodstuffs (wheat, rice, bananas); industrial crops (cotton, rubber, linseed and palm oils); stimulants (sugar, tea, coffee, cocoa, tobacco and opium); and ores (tin, copper, gold, diamonds). Their expanded production and global movements brought vast spatial, social, economic and cultural changes to both metropolises and colonies.

In the Commodities of Empire project we explore the networks through which such commodities circulated within, and in the spaces between, empires. We are particularly attentive to local processes – originating in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Latin America – which significantly influenced the outcome of the encounter between the world economy and regional societies, doing so through a comparative approach that explores the experiences of peoples subjected to different imperial hegemonies.

The following key research questions inform the work of project:

- 1) The networks through which commodities were produced and circulated within, between and beyond empires;
- 2) The interlinking 'systems' (political-military, agricultural labour, commercial, maritime, industrial production, social communication, technological knowledge) that were themselves evolving during the colonial period, and through which these commodity networks functioned;
- 3) The impact of agents in the periphery on the establishment and development of commodity networks: as instigators and promoters; through their social, cultural and technological resistance; or through the production of anti-commodities;
- 4) The impact of commodity circulation both on the periphery, and on the economic, social and cultural life of the metropolises;
- 5) The interrogation of the concept of 'globalisation' through the study of the historical movement and impact of commodities.

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