

# How successful were immigration schemes in the british, french and spanish territ...

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How successful were immigration schemes in the British, French and Spanish territories? After the emancipation of the slaves, it was very difficult for planters to obtain a successful labor force. There were not enough people to work on the plantations and also planters found it difficult to control their remaining labor. As a result planters were at a loss. Immigration was introduced in the hope of fixing the labor problems of the planters. Although some colonies flourished, others failed horribly. There were three main territories in that era. The British territory used many schemes.

They used the European, Portuguese, African, Chinese and Indian schemes. First was the European scheme. European labor was imported chiefly by the British colony Jamaica in order to increase its white population as well as providing plantation labor at the same time. Robert Greenwood and Shirley Hamber state that " between 1834 and 1838, thousands of Scots, Irish and a few hundred Germans came to Jamaica. " However that scheme failed tremendously as most Europeans died because they lacked immunity to tropical diseases and others refused to work when they saw what they had to do and understood that it was the work of blacks.

Even so, the Jamaican government tried this scheme again in 1841, importing more whites from Britain. Yet again, the scheme failed as most Europeans died and others asked to be repatriated. Finally the governments were convinced that labor from northern Europe was a hopeless prospect. Secondly, the British territory used the Madeiran scheme. It began in Madeira which is a Portuguese island in the Atlantic off the coast of Morocco. Greenwood and Hamber state " that these laborers were paid 3 to 4 pence a

day and were attracted to higher wages and prospects in the West Indies. The importations of the Mandeiran people began in 1835, but were suspended in 1839 because the British government was examining the conduct and morality of the schemes. The scheme began again in 1841 on an official basis where large numbers went to British Guiana until 1848 when the scheme was suspended again. It resumed in 1850 but not on a large scale. Mandeiran immigration lasted from 1835-1882 with a total of 36, 000 immigrants to the B. W. I. It was an unsatisfactory scheme as it was irregular, it had a high death-rate of new arrivals and most Mandeirans especially in British Guiana went into trading as soon as possible.

Thirdly was the African immigration scheme. In 1841, importation of Africans from Sierra Leone, the Kru coast, St. Helena and those rescued from slave ships began. The scheme lasted from 1841-1862. It was very popular at first but declined after the 1850s mainly for two reasons. The first reason was because chartered ships were used to carry the emigrants from Africa which made them think it was slavery all over again. The second reason was because the agents in West Africa undoubtedly lured the Africans with false promises of money and land.

As soon as news of the conditions of the West Indies leaked back, it was hard to attract the Africans. Fourthly was the Chinese immigration scheme. At first it was difficult to attract Chinese immigrants to the B. W. I. for example when Trinidad attempted to import some Chinese, few arrived and they either refused to work or were unsuitable. A large scale of Chinese immigration began in 1852 from the Portuguese colony of Macao. These immigrants were

only male convicts or prisoners of war. Therefore in 1859 a family immigration scheme was started.

By having Chinese women immigrants less jealousy arose on the plantations. This scheme was more successful however, there was deception caused by agents in false promises about repatriation and also the nature of work. Moreover, Chinese immigrants were small farmers and market gardeners, not plantation workers. This scheme suffered many problems for example since china was not a British colony, the British government could only try to persuade the Chinese government to allow emigration. Finally was the Indian immigration scheme.

The year 1838 was the arrival date of Indians to the B. W. I however, it was suspended by the Indian government in the same year because of ill-treatment of the Indians and also Indians were not being paid the promised wages. This scheme resumed in 1844 and lasted until 1917. This scheme was generally successful throughout the B. W. I because Indians were a cheap source of labor and were able to adapt to plantation life well. The French also tried to meet their labor needs. They used the immigration schemes of Regional, Europeans and Indian.

First they tried regional immigration. Rosamunde Renard shared the view that " among the first immigrant workers introduced in Guadeloupe were those brought from the British West Indies (B. W. I). Approximately, they imported eighty Madeiran and seventy blacks from the British colonies. However, this immigration attempt was failed because that was a bad set of laborers. They also tried the European immigration scheme. Rosamunde

Renard states that “ the governor general of Martinique allocated a fund of 100, 000 francs to facilitate European immigration to the colonies. The government prepared themselves to support European immigration at the rate of 250 francs per adult and 150 francs per child. Even so, this scheme was not successful at the end because Europeans contracted diseases easily and planters argued that they were not fit for plantation work. Contrary to that, planters argued that European immigration had two positive effects; it brought the native workers back to the plantations and also brought down wages. Finally they tried Indian immigration schemes.

Indians were a good source of labor and Martinique and Guadeloupe showed high demands for this scheme. However the French were faced with problems. Since Indians were controlled through the British it was difficult acquire such a labor force. Moreover French planters argued that priority was always given to the British recruiters and they got inferior immigrant laborers. It was also argued that Indian immigration was seen as a vital part to the recovery of the French West Indies. The final territory was that of the Spanish.

They used the African, Chinese, European immigration scheme. First was the African scheme. It was a source of inexpensive labor. However, this scheme was done illegally because they used slaves. They sent illegal Africans to Havana. This scheme did not last long. Africans grew resistant to work. Moreover, they used the Chinese immigration scheme. One can argue that this is what they are most notorious for. Chinese immigration was another

source of cheap labor. The first Chinese contract workers were brought to Cuba in June, 1847.

After the group arrived, the scheme was suspended for six years due to international prospects and other difficulties. Mary Turner states that between 1847 and 1874, a period conceding with 10 years of the transatlantic slave trade, 125, 000 Chinese were landed in Cuba. Their contracts were offered for sale. Chinese workers were contracted for eight years for about four (4) pesos a month for men and three (3) pesos a month for women. Even so, the scheme failed because the laborers were undisciplined because of desertion and absenteeism.

Furthermore they used the European immigration scheme. Lucia Lamounier states that " white immigration was first sought mainly to counteract the growing black slave population. " There were expectations that European settlers were to become industrious, independent small landholders, providing a racial balance and political stability. However, the European immigrants were expensive and were unsuitable for plantation work. When Europeans noticed that methods used on plantations were like that of slavery, they refused to work. As a result this scheme was unsuccessful.

In conclusion the immigration schemes used by all three territories was not entirely successful because not every scheme for each territory occurred without having any serious problems in which the planters could recover easily from. As a result, immigration was successful to a certain extent.

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