# Major Issues in Colonization: Comparing Spain, France, England, and the Netherlands

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| This table provides a way for you to think through the differences in the colonies. The table also tells you **who will eventually win** in North America. Look at each row in the table. Ask yourself what is the **difference in the practical consequence**s if the Europeans are:* Predominantly individual **males** **OR** come with their **families**?
* Few in number and spread out **OR** concentrated in one place?
* Doing agriculture **OR** trading with the native population?
* Are individual farmers **OR** large-scale agriculture such as tobacco or later cotton with many laborers needed?
* Believe they **must** convert the Indians **OR** **not?**
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| **Trait** | **Spanish** | **French** | **English** | **Dutch** |
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| Where they went? | Central and South America | Canada and down the Mississippi River to the Gulf of New Mexico | Atlantic sea coast  | Area later called New York (Most of their colonies are in the Far East.) |
| Demographics of the colonies? | * 450,000 through mid-1600s
* Mainly male
 | * 15,000 by 1700
* Mainly male
 | **Families[[1]](#footnote-1)**:* 2,000 in early 1600s
* 50,000 by mid-1600s
 | **Families:**> 300 in early 1600s |
| Demographics of the colonies? (Why would ordinary people come?) | Catholicism dominated Spain, so mainly men, came not families  | Protestants lived safely in France until the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, so until that time mainly men came, not families  | With persecution, families have a reason to take the risk of taking women and children across the Atlantic and of living in a wilderness.  | Although the initial settlers were some Protestant refugees,[[2]](#footnote-2)  |
| Economy of colonies? | Conquest – the conquistadorsMiningAgriculture, large scale | Fur trade—the coureurs de bois (runners of the woods) | AgricultureShipbuilding | Fur tradeBreweriesAgriculture  |
| Large landholdings? (feudal landholdings) | Yes | Yes, attempted but fails  | Attempted, fails as feudalism but occurs with slavery in the South | Yes, called patroonships  |
| Local governance? | Primarily a Spanish administration  | Primarily a French administration | Local governance in the colonies, particularly in New England with its town meetings. (Covered with the English settlement.) | No, a Dutch administration |
| Missionary effort? | Yes, sometimes by forced conversion  | Yes, but they adapt the religion to the Native Americans  | Some, but generally separate from the Native Americans | ⎯ |
| Mix with the native population, including intermarriage? | Yes. Mainly a male population migrated. | Yes. Mainly a male population migrated. | Rarely. Among the reasons, migration of families in all areas but the South. | ⎯ |

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1. The religions of the English kings varied so who was being persecuted varied—and who wanted to get out of England varied. Click [here to see for yourself](http://www.cjbibus.com/1485_1776_English_Rulers.pdf). (Link Address: http://www.cjbibus.com/1485\_1776\_English\_Rulers.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Once the Spanish–those who were persecuting the Dutch Protestants—were forced out of the Netherlands, Protestant families were safe without moving to colonies. This and the remaining entries in the column are from the Oxford Companion to United States History, p. 199. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)