

I

INTRODUCTORY: SCOPE AND METHOD

This monograph is concerned with the various statistical problems arising out of the presence in this country of the immigrant and his children. It is based chiefly upon the data bearing on this topic that appear in the census publications, in so far as they are not taken up in other monographs in this series,¹ and it is not, therefore, in any sense, a complete treatise on the immigrant question.

Of those topics that are taken up, some are analyzed much more completely than others, not because they are intrinsically more important, but because a larger amount of material relating to them is available. Thus, the analysis of the composition of the foreign stock can be carried throughout four chapters, while the statistical information relative to the immigrant's vitality and fecundity is so scanty as to make possible only one short chapter.

In some instances, other data than those found in the Fourteenth United States Census have been utilized. The most important sources are the reports of previous censuses, the reports of the Commissioner General of Immigration, and the Report of the Immigration Commission. In addition, incidental reference is made to various statistical studies of immigration, both public and private in origin. No attempt, however, has been made to exhaust the literature of immigration statistics, since the primary basis of this monograph is the reports of the United States Census Bureau, and the only additional material which has been used is such as is directly supplementary to the information obtained from the census statistics.

Considerations of economy of effort and unity of treatment have made it seem advisable to omit the discussion of one very important element of the immigrant problem, namely, that of oriental immigration. The oriental foreign born are relatively insignificant in numbers, and they differ materially from the nonorientals, both as to the type of problems which they present and the policy which the American people has adopted toward them. Consequently, this analysis is confined to the immigration arising in Europe, Asia Minor, North, Central, and South America, and the Atlantic Islands.²

¹ Rossiter, William S.: Increase of population in the United States, 1910-1920; Washington, 1922. Ross, Frank Alexander: School Attendance, 1920; Washington, 1924.

² African and Australasian immigration is negligible in quantity.

In addition to these deliberately imposed limitations, there are certain others inherent in the nature of the subject matter. In the first place, considerable ambiguity is involved in the terms "native stock" and "foreign stock." It is easy enough to distinguish between native and foreign *born*, but beyond this point it is difficult to proceed. Two persons may be native, but one of them may be descended from a pre-Revolutionary colonist, while another may be the infant of a recently arrived immigrant. Clearly, the second is, to a much less degree, of "native American stock" than is the first.* Even when the nativity of the parents of the native is taken into account—as is done throughout most of this study—considerable confusion still arises. The grandson of an immigrant is much less truly of native stock than the grandson of a native, though both have native parents, and neither is nearly so American in lineage as a great-grandson, or a great-great-grandson, of a native American.

There is still another set of difficulties. Of two native sons of foreign parentage, one—born, perhaps, several years after his parents' arrival in the United States—may be much more thoroughly assimilated than the other, whose nativity may date from a few months after his mother's immigration and may be, therefore, from the cultural and civic standpoint, much less "foreign" than the other; yet both must be counted as equally of foreign stock.

There seems to be no way of avoiding these anomalies. The foreign stock can be traced back only one generation; that is, the immigrants and their children can be clearly set apart, as the title of this monograph indicates. Beyond this the population must, in most cases, be treated as an undifferentiated body of "native stock." So, throughout the discussion, it must be remembered that the "native stock," as thus defined, contains individuals who represent all the way from three to nine generations of native descent, and that some of the "foreign stock," thus defined, are as truly American in speech, habits, and outlook as many of those of colonial American ancestry.³

A second difficulty is associated with the ethnic classification of the immigrant stock. Three different bases of analysis are used in this study—country of origin, mother tongue, and race or people. The first two are based on the census enumeration; the third is that used by the United States Bureau of Immigration. Neither

*A recent study of the school population of New London, Conn., conducted by Mrs. B. B. Wessel, indicates that, whereas 39 per cent of the children were native born of native parentage, only 22 per cent were native born of homogenous native grandparents.

³The published census figures for parentage are for the white population only in all detailed tables. The foreign colored are numerically unimportant, except in a few States. It is of some interest to state that the total foreign colored, amounting in 1920 to 207,933, was made up of negroes from Mexico and Central and South America, from Great Britain, Spain, and Portugal, and their colonies; Chinese, Japanese, and Hindus, of Asiatic origin; Indians, from Canada and Mexico; and of other small groups such as Koreans, Malays, Siamese, Samoans, and Maoris.

presents a complete picture of the ethnic make-up of the foreign population. All three together supplement each other somewhat; yet they also confuse the question considerably. Many important aspects of the immigrant problem hinge upon questions of the racial grouping of the foreign born. Yet, so long as there is no single, clear-cut, and generally accepted basis of classification, all discussion relating to these problems, in this as in other studies, can be of only limited significance.

Again, there are certain drawbacks connected with the manner in which certain statistical material has been gathered. The most serious is the fact that the data published by the Census Bureau and the Commissioner General of Immigration can not always be profitably compared, because the first relate in general to a certain date in each decennium, and the latter are based on the appropriation or *fiscal* year; census data relating to the year of immigration and to vital statistics are based, however, on the *calendar* year. Again, there is no way of measuring net immigration before 1908, because of the absence of any record of alien departures before that date. Yet again, a study of the very important the over-border Canadian and Mexican immigration is handicapped by the chaotic condition of the statistics of immigration from these sources for much of the nineteenth century.⁴

Finally, it must be remembered that certain features of the immigrant problem are altogether incapable of statistical enumeration. Many of them are outside the realm of external observation and, therefore, of statistical study. Rather they have to do with such elusive entities as points of view, loyalties, habits, traditions, and personality make-up. Yet these are of capital importance, for they are intimately connected with questions of assimilation, fitness for citizenship, and the like. Deficiencies of the statistics in this field may be compensated by general impressions gained from observation, interviews, or otherwise. But such methods of approach have no place in a work of this nature.

In general, the discussion is based upon tables which are introduced at appropriate points in the text. Certain detailed tables are, however, omitted from the text and placed at the end of the monograph.

The maps and charts that are referred to are all contained in the text. Where charts involve the plotting of curves, the logarithmic scale is generally utilized, as it involves a minimum of distortion of rates of change.

⁴ Since this monograph was written, the Department of Labor has published an extensive statistical analysis of Latin American and West Indian immigration, prepared by Dr. Robert F. Foerster, of Princeton University. The title of the bulletin is "The Racial Problems Involved in Immigration from Latin America and the West Indies to the United States."