

# Wretched Refuse? vs. Ominous Speculation

An army of immigration skeptics warn that mass immigration paves the road to socialism and tyranny. When they express these fears, they almost always find a receptive audience. Even thinkers inclined to favor immigration often get cold feet when they visualize the new arrivals' broader political effects.

Yet if you search for actual research on what economists call "the political externalities of immigration," you won't find much. George Borjas himself writes: "Unfortunately, remarkably little is known about the political and cultural impact of immigration on the receiving countries, and about how institutions in these receiving countries would adjust to the influx." Indeed, to the best of my knowledge there isn't a *single* book published on this general topic.

Until now. Early next year, Cambridge University Press releases Alex Nowrasteh and Ben Powell's *Wretched Refuse? The Political Economy of Immigration and Institutions*. Immigration skeptics will no doubt protest that both authors are well-known for their pro-immigration stances.

Yet the fair question to ask skeptics is: Shouldn't you have published *your* book on this topic years ago? They, after all, are the ones predicting doom. The fact that Nowrasteh and Powell are beating them to the punch is deeply revealing at the meta level: Even the more scholarly critics of immigration rely heavily on ominous speculation. In social science, pessimists normally present concrete evidence of social ills, and critics try to rebut them. For immigration, the critics often have to create the pessimists' case *for* them, then rebut it – because the pessimists don't go beyond vague Cassandra cries.

I'll discuss *Wretched Refuse?* in depth when it releases. For now, I'll just say that I've read the book, and it's excellent. Pre-order now!