

Open-border propagandists exploit children in fake images

Jennifer Oriel, *The Australian*, 25 July 2018

Editor's note: consider this apparent oxymoron: *'Among the people most removed from public opinion are the opinion-makers; 72 per cent of arts and media professionals want to increase immigration. As public opinion turns against the politically correct media, journalists are taking more extreme measures to enforce their world view.'*

Time's latest cover featured a photoshopped image of the picture by Getty Images photographer John Moore of a child who was never separated from her mother.

The battle over border security is intensifying as migration activists go on the offensive. Recent research illustrates the deep divide between open-border activists and democratic citizens on the size and profile of immigration into Western countries.

The resurgent belief that democratic governments should govern in the national interest has caused a moral panic among big-migration and refugee advocates.

They are resorting to desperate measures. The use of children for porous-border propaganda is a sign of the times.

Two polls that shocked the nation showed Australians dislike policy that puts foreign interests before the national interest. Almost half (49 per cent) of people responding to an Essential poll in 2016 wanted to ban Muslim immigration. Many respondents cited Muslims' lack of integration into Australian society as their reason.

A majority of Australians wants less immigration overall, according to research published recently by the Australian Population Research Institute. Researchers found that 54 per cent of people surveyed wanted a reduction in the migrant intake. By contrast, 60 per cent of candidates at the 2016 federal election wanted to increase immigration. The figure rose to 67 per cent for Labor candidates.

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As public opinion turns against the politically correct media, journalists are taking more extreme measures to enforce their world view. A disturbing trend is the use of children to turn public opinion against secure borders.

Picture this: a toddler in the borderlands screams as US border patrol frisks her mother. Her face is upturned and desperate. The heart-wrenching image is splashed across global media. The scarlet letter press declares US President Donald Trump and nationalists guilty without trial.

It was an encore performance by journalists, who thrilled at the chance to vilify patriots. And it was fake news — again. Getty Images photographer John Moore captured the moment that provoked a global outcry. The news went viral after the sobbing child photo was linked to Trump's plan to separate children from immigrant parents in detention.

The front cover of *Time* magazine featured an illustration of the President towering over the crying toddler with the caption "Welcome to America". It was conceptually clever, but political

overkill. Trump's base already was moving against his proposal to separate children from parents who had entered the country illegally.

The fiercest backlash against the President's proposal came from Christians and conservatives for whom the sanctity of the family comes second only to God. The image appalled conservative Republicans. Evangelicals denounced him. Former first ladies lined up in defence of the rights of the child. Melania Trump took a public stand against her husband. By the time the photo of Yanela Sanchez was exposed as fake news — she had not been removed from her mother at the border — Trump had ditched his ill-advised plan. However, an intransigent problem remains. The powerful political effect of images depicting children as victims creates a perverse incentive for more.

An increasing number of children is being used for political purposes. Before Yanela, there were the children in steel cages. Jon Favreau, who worked as a speechwriter for Barack Obama, retweeted a story with a photo supposedly showing immigrant children in detention under the Trump administration. Social media erupted in rage before the truth came out; the photo was taken while Obama was president.

This month, migrant activists used another kid in a cage for political effect. This time, I believe the production of the image bordered on child exploitation. The photo depicting a little boy crying with his face pressed against a wire cage was circulated on social media. CNN reported that journalist and filmmaker Jose Antonio Vargas posted the photo on Twitter, saying: "This is what happens when a government believes people are 'illegal'. Kids in cages."

After Vargas posted the image on Facebook, it reportedly received almost 10,000 shares. However, the crying child used as proof that secure borders harmed youth was in the cage courtesy of open-border activists. The photos were taken at a protest against the use of secure facilities to process migrants. The sobbing toddler stuck in a cage with his brother was photographed by Leroy Pena, head of the Brown Berets in Dallas-Fort Worth. Pena wrote on Facebook: "This was part of our protest yesterday, but this is actually going on right now, at this very moment, in child detention centres throughout the country." He later defended the use of the child and said the little boy was crying only because he saw his mother outside the cage.

In the recent history of child pawns used for open-border propaganda, there are few more shocking cases than that of Alan Kurdi. Images of the drowned child went viral. Like the photo of Yanela, the image of Alan provoked the most primal maternal instinct to protect a child from harm. The outrage seemed justified. His father, Abdullah Kurdi, stated the family was seeking asylum when their boat engine failed and Alan drowned. Activists claimed the boy was a victim of Western cruelty to refugees. They demanded the abolition of secure-border policy. The truth about a little boy's terrible death was lost in the noise of activists clamouring for a cause. It came to light after people on the same boat as the Kurdi family identified Abdullah Kurdi as the captain. The boy was a victim of people-smugglers.

The demise of the democratic world is empowered by an activist class that seeks to introduce porous-border policy without democratic consent. In reaction to popular revolt against rule from above, activists have sunk to a new low: using children for propaganda.

Open-border activists push children to the frontline of border wars, then feign shock when innocents die. Australia signed the UN protocol on child soldiers in 2002. The UN opposed the use of children in armed conflicts, but it tolerates the abuse of children for political conflicts. It doesn't matter whether the exploitation of children comes from the political left or right. It must stop.

