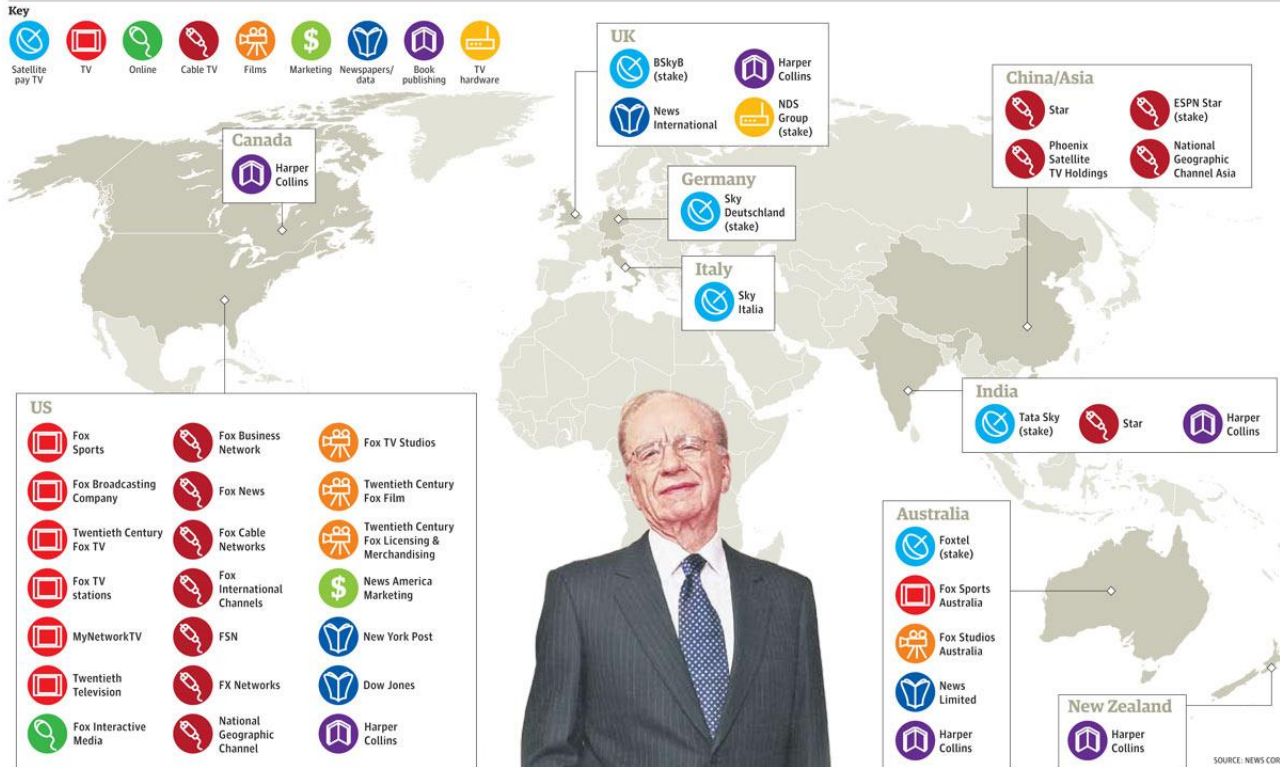


Selection 2 – Media Ownership – The Murdoch Empire

Document 1 – Rupert Murdoch's global empire – What News Corp owns

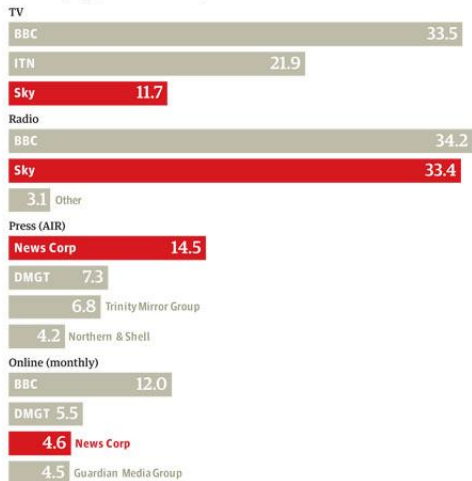
Rupert Murdoch's global empire What News Corporation owns



Murdoch's UK operations

Reach across platform

Millions of people, at wholesale level, 2010



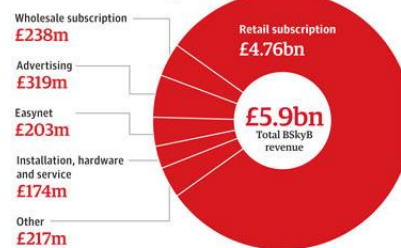
How Murdoch's operations compare in the UK

Total revenues, 2010 or latest available



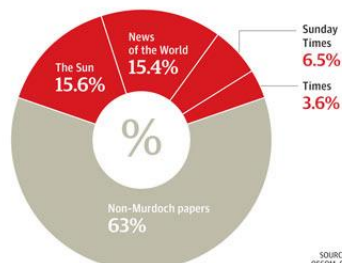
BSkyB: where does the money come from?

Breakdown of revenues in 2009/10



News International's UK newspapers

Share of circulation



SOURCE: ENDERS, BSKYB OFCOM, COMPANY REPORTS

Document 2 - Fox founder Rupert Murdoch steps down from his media empire, handing it to his son

NPR, September 21, 2023

David Folkenflik

Rupert Murdoch, the media magnate who built an unmatched global media empire over seven decades from a single newspaper he inherited in his native Australia, announced on Thursday that he would step down.

"I have been engaged daily with news and ideas, and that will not change," Murdoch wrote in a memo to employees at Fox News, *The Wall Street Journal*, and the many other properties that make up his two corporations, Fox Corp. and News Corp. "The time is right for me to take on different roles."

Murdoch's career has been marked by a singular drive for business success, an eagerness to have sway over elections and policies, and the repeated eruption of scandals. Fox News, which he founded in 1996, has played an increasingly prominent role in his profits, his influence, and his crises.

10 In his note to staff, Murdoch, 92, took a shot at unnamed elites, saying they "have open contempt for those who are not members of their rarified class" and said most of the rest of the media was in "cahoots with those elites."

His elder son Lachlan Murdoch, who has been leading the companies with him, will become the sole chairman of both Fox Corp., the broadcast arm of the family's holdings, and News Corp., which encompasses newspapers and book publishing. Rupert Murdoch will become chairman emeritus.

15 The changes will take effect in November, when the two companies, together worth about \$26.5 billion, have their shareholder meetings. While they are publicly traded, Murdoch is considered to control more than 40% of their voting shares. *Bloomberg* estimates his fortune at more than \$8.2 billion.

From tabloids to papers of record

Through outlets he acquired and others he founded, Rupert Murdoch ultimately dominated journalism and politics in 20 Australia, the U.K. and the U.S. Outside the U.S., he leveraged his outlets to support politicians from the center-left to the far right. In this country, his sway is almost entirely limited to the Republican Party.

Though Murdoch built his fortune initially on populist tabloids, he bought prestige newspapers such as the *Journal* and the *Times of London* to reach elites who forged policy and set consensus. He also created *The Australian* in 1964, that country's only national daily.

25 That high-low approach, and his willingness to boost favored politicians, gave him entrée to top leaders in Australia and the U.K.; those seeking office would fly thousands of miles to court him. He did not have the same level of access in the U.S. except when former President Donald Trump, whom Murdoch privately disparaged, was in office.

Over the decades, Murdoch courted controversy with salacious coverage in his tabloids, appealing to readers' fears of crime and immigration and aerobic appetite for sex scandals. Yet the bare-knuckled approach often led to periodic 30 scandals in his own properties.

Scandal after scandal

Murdoch's *Sun* tabloid relied on anonymous police sources to blame soccer hooligans for a deadly stampede after a stadium collapse; in fact, the police's own poor disaster response was found to be responsible. News Corp. later paid hundreds of millions of dollars after it came to light that people acting on its behalf had hacked into the mobile phones, 35 voicemails and emails. The Murdochs closed down one of its tabloids, News of the World, and abandoned hope of taking full control of Sky, a major British satellite television outfit in which it held a significant stake.

In the U.S., Fox News paid nine figures to resolve a growing wave of sexual harassment accusations against then-Fox News chairman and CEO Roger Ailes, among others. It later paid millions of dollars to the family of a slain Democratic National Committee staffer whom it baselessly claimed had leaked thousands of party emails that had actually been 40 hacked during the 2016 campaign by the Russian government.

Yet nothing matched the debacle after the 2020 presidential election.

Murdoch's role in allowing Fox News stars to embrace discredited claims of fraud in that race came into sharp view during a defamation suit filed against the network and Fox Corp. The company settled for \$787.5 million this spring, just before opening arguments in the trial were to begin. Dominion Voting Systems, the plaintiff, planned to make 45 Murdoch one of the first witnesses to testify before the jury.

Despite Murdoch's contempt for Trump, Fox amplified his baseless claims of having been cheated out of victory. Documents from that legal case show network leaders were desperate to win back viewers angry that Fox News journalists had projected Trump would lose Arizona on Election Night.

Stepping down but not away

- 50 Once Murdoch dies, the fate of his family's trust will be determined by Lachlan and three of his siblings. James has signaled his desire to take over the companies and chart a different course, publicly condemning the family's outlets for their coverage of 2020 elections and climate change. The intentions of their sisters Elizabeth and Prudence — whether to choose between the brothers, seek the hiring of a chief executive, or force a sale of many or all of their remaining holdings — are not clear.
- 55 But such stark choices do not appear to be immediate. Corporate officials say Murdoch remains in fine health and form. Murdoch made clear in his note to staff that he did not intend to simply fade away after he steps down. "I can guarantee you that I will be involved every day in the contest of ideas," he wrote. "I will be watching our broadcasts with a critical eye, reading our newspapers and websites and books with much interest, and reaching out to you with thoughts, ideas, and advice."

Document 3 - Power and scandal: how Murdoch drove the UK, US and Australia to the right

He built a global conservative media empire, but the phone-hacking scandal and Dominion libel action almost undid the divisive mogul

Dan Sabbagh, *The Guardian*, Thu 21 Sep 2023

- 5 Seventy-one years ago Rupert Murdoch inherited a single newspaper in Adelaide and turned it into the English-speaking world's most powerful news provider, driving the politics of three countries – Australia, the UK and the US – to the right and
- 10 surviving a string of scandals and controversies until his retirement at the age of 92.

An empire of newspapers

- At 21 he took over the Adelaide News from his father, and by the 1960s had created Australia's largest
- 15 newspaper group, whose titles made and broke Labor prime minister Gough Whitlam in 1972. Turning his attention to Britain in the late 1960s, he bought the News of the World and launched the Sun as a tabloid, which rapidly became the country's bestselling title
- 20 with a crude formula of sex, celebrity and sport.

- The Sun, whose Page 3 topless photographs lasted 44 years, turned from Labour to supporting Margaret Thatcher. Murdoch bought the Times titles with a supportive government in the background and fought
- 25 the print unions at Wapping – before switching later to Tony Blair, eagerly backing him over the invasion of Iraq and sticking with him long after it had been revealed to be a disaster.

- When the polls turned again, the papers, always with the
- 30 proprietor making the final call, backed David Cameron, then Brexit, a once marginal cause that had

been kept alive by a handful of rightwing newspapers and promoted with unsophisticated but memorable headlines – “Up yours Delors!” – until it eventually

- 35 went mainstream.

- Meanwhile, an attempt to diversify into television in Britain nearly bankrupted him, but eventually, after an enforced merger, turned into the lucrative BSkyB which came to dominate football in the way his newspaper
- 40 group, easily Britain's largest, loomed over Westminster. Murdoch didn't control all of Sky, but he tried to merge it with his newspapers in 2011 until a major scandal intervened.

A billion pound scandal

- 45 Two years of patient digging by the Guardian revealed that journalists at the News of the World had engaged in routine phone hacking, eavesdropping on private messages in pursuit of stories. But it took one story – the revelation of the hacking of murdered schoolgirl
- 50 Milly Dowler's phone – to prompt a public and political outcry which led to Murdoch shutting the Sunday tabloid and the end of the Sky merger.

- Over £1bn was eventually paid in compensation to hacking victims, but a slow path to recovery followed,
- 55 starting with Murdoch appearing in front of MPs and insisting that, while he knew nothing of phone hacking, it was “the most humble day of my life”. Even a protester with an improvised custard pie couldn't cover the media mogul in shaving cream that day, beaten off
- 60 by his then wife, Wendi Deng.

One former News of the World editor, Andy Coulson, went to prison, but his favourite, Rebekah

Brooks, came back as chief executive. A Sunday tabloid was relaunched, and private meetings with Boris Johnson followed, including on the day the then prime minister signalled his intention to break the hung parliament by calling a general election in September 2019.

The emergence of Fox

Nevertheless, Britain had lost some its lustre for Murdoch. The proprietor had long ago relocated to New York, in 1974, but it was a long time before he recorded his first business success: the launch of the Fox television network in 1986, a fourth US national broadcaster that it was long said the market could not accommodate.

Fox News followed in 1996, led by Roger Ailes, a conservative political consultant who had helped Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan to election victories. Twenty years later, however, it finally emerged that the Murdoch ally had been a sexual predator – 20 women led by host Gretchen Carlson made sexual assault and harassment complaints that finally led to his ousting.

By then the channel had become the most profitable business unit at Murdoch's News Corporation, eclipsing CNN and MSNBC. Executives were quick to call the disputed 2000 presidential election early for George W Bush, despite the uncertainty in Florida, forcing other networks to follow and creating a decisive momentum for the Republican in an election that it is still not certain that he won.

A relationship with Donald Trump

During the Barack Obama years, the Fox News conservatism went further, unable seemingly to deal with the presence of a black Democrat in the White House. Regularly described as Barack Hussein Obama, a deliberate policy some said, the president was described as "a racist" by one presenter, Glenn Beck, but the station was nevertheless repeatedly endorsed by Murdoch, who said in 2010 he was "proud of Roger Ailes".

The high point of Murdoch's political influence came with the surprise election of the populist Donald Trump to the White House in 2016. Murdoch himself had never

been particularly close to a US president before – "What's Rupert like? I never met him," George W Bush had once asked Blair.

But with Trump, Murdoch was able to call through to advise the inexperienced occupant of the White House, and it was said in 2017 that the two men spoke "now almost every day". It was a personal lobbying technique first honed in the UK with Thatcher, Blair, Cameron and Johnson, involving visits to No 10 by the back door.



Murdoch with Donald Trump, the US president with whom he spoke 'almost every day'. Photograph: Carlo Allegri/Reuters

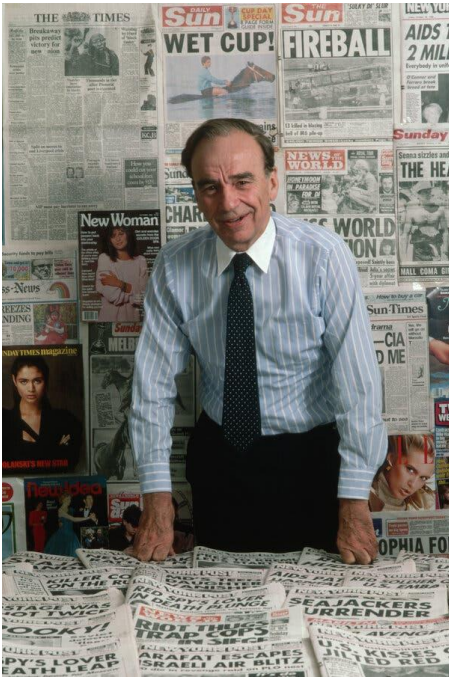
Yet there was time for one final disaster. Trump's extremism cost him the 2020 election, although he refused to concede, with a series of desperate attempts to argue the vote had somehow been rigged. Fox News and its presenters went all in in support, including supporting bizarre and false allegations that Dominion, a voting equipment company, was involved in a plot to steal the election.

Dominion brought a libel action, and Fox was eventually forced to pay out \$787.5m (£640m) to settle a defamation lawsuit ahead of a six-week trial. Internal Fox emails demonstrated that company insiders knew the voter fraud claims were false, including one from Murdoch himself, who said Trump's insistence he had won the election was "pretty much a crime".

It was a pattern of commercial success and political scandal that had happened once before. But with Murdoch exercising a controlling shareholding the 92-year-old was in the end able to step back at a moment of his own choosing, far later than any ordinary chief executive would have been allowed to.

Document 4 -How Rupert Murdoch Built His Media Empire

Over seven decades, the Australian-born magnate compiled an array of news outlets, book publishers, and film and television properties into a global behemoth.



Rupert Murdoch, shown in 1985, amassed a collection of media over the decades.Credit...Getty Images

By J. Edward Moreno, *The New York Times*, Sept. 21, 2023

Rupert Murdoch, the 92-year-old media tycoon who announced his retirement on Thursday, spent the past 70 years building a global media empire that gave him influence in journalism, politics and pop culture.

Over dozens of acquisitions, Mr. Murdoch created a media conglomerate known for the rise of the modern tabloid and conservative commentary. His tenure has not been without scandal: One of his properties in Britain folded in 2011 after a phone-hacking inquiry, and he admitted this year that Fox News had spread falsehoods about the 2020 U.S. presidential election. Here's how Mr. Murdoch built his empire:

1950s

The Australian-born mogul ventured into media in 1952 when he inherited his family's business after the death of his father, Keith Murdoch. A 21-year-old Oxford student, he inherited The News of Adelaide, a newspaper in southern Australia with a circulation of 75,000.

1960s

Mr. Murdoch bought several local newspapers in Australia in the 1960s, including The Sunday Times in Perth and The Daily Mirror in Sydney. In 1964, he founded The Australian, a national newspaper.

In 1969, he stepped into the British media market, buying The News of the World and The Sun.

1970s



Mr. Murdoch in the newsroom of The New York Post in 1978, two years after he acquired it.Credit...Getty Images

Mr. Murdoch, through his media company, News Corp, moved into the U.S. media market in 1973 with the purchase of The San Antonio Express and The San Antonio News, which he no longer owns. In 1976, he bought The New York Post, which he sold in 1988 and then reacquired in 1993.

1980s

Mr. Murdoch acquired The Times and The Sunday Times in Britain in 1981, controlling a bigger chunk of the British media market.

In 1985, he acquired 20th Century-Fox, a movie studio. By 1986, he had launched Fox, a broadcast network that would run shows that became TV classics, like “The Simpsons” and “The X-Files.”

In 1986, Mr. Murdoch abruptly moved the offices of his British newspapers to a site where printing would be done with less labor-intensive technology. More than 5,000 printing and production workers who called a strike in protest were dismissed, in a bitter dispute seen as a turning point in the balance of power between unions and employers in Britain.

In 1987, News Corp bought Harper & Row, which would become HarperCollins in 1990 after it merged

with William Collins, another publisher Mr. Murdoch had investments in.

In 1988, Mr. Murdoch founded Sky Television in Britain. The next year, the network started Sky News, a cable-TV news channel.

1990s

In 1995, News Corp established a broadcast company, Foxtel, in Australia. It launched Sky News Australia in 1996.

In 1996, Mr. Murdoch started the Fox News cable channel alongside Roger E. Ailes, a former media adviser for Presidents Richard M. Nixon and George H.W. Bush. Fox News became a hallmark for conservative TV commentary, bolstering the careers of hosts like Bill O'Reilly, Glenn Beck, Tucker Carlson and Megyn Kelly.

2000s

Mr. Murdoch bought Intermix media, the parent company of Myspace, for \$580 million in 2005. Myspace, which struggled to keep up with other social media competitors, was sold six years later for \$35 million.

In 2007, Mr. Murdoch acquired The Wall Street Journal's parent company, Dow Jones & Company, for \$5 billion. Shortly after the acquisition, there was a leadership shuffle among The Journal's editorial staff, and its new owner pushed for more coverage of politics.

2010s

James Murdoch, one of Mr. Murdoch's sons, was named News Corp's deputy chief operating officer in 2011. That same year, he became engulfed in a phone hacking scandal that led to the shutdown of The News of the World.

In 2012, Rupert Murdoch split his newspaper business and entertainment business into two separate entities: News Corp and 20th Century Fox. He considered remerging them, but those plans were dropped this year. In 2018, Mr. Murdoch's elder son, Lachlan Murdoch, was named chief executive of Fox Corp, the media empire's TV arm.

The Walt Disney Company acquired most of 21st Century Fox's assets in a \$71.3 billion deal in 2019, taking over Mr. Murdoch's entertainment business. The remaining broadcast business now falls under a new entity, Fox Corp.

2020s

James Murdoch resigned from News Corp in 2020 because of "disagreements over certain editorial content published by the Company's news outlets and certain other strategic decisions."

Rupert Murdoch was deposed in 2023 in Dominion Voting Systems' lawsuit over Fox News's coverage of allegations of fraud in the 2020 presidential election, and he acknowledged that the network had endorsed false statements. The network settled the landmark defamation case for \$787.5 million in April.

In September 2023, Mr. Murdoch leaves the reins of Fox and News Corp to Lachlan Murdoch. The elder Murdoch remains chairman emeritus of the two companies.

Document 5 - Au Royaume-Uni, l'empire déclinant de Rupert Murdoch

Le tabloïd « The Sun » a vu sa diffusion divisée par quatre en quinze ans, et TalkTV, lancée en 2022, reste confidentielle.

Par [Eric Albert](#) (Londres, correspondance), *Le Monde*, 12 août 2023

A 92 ans, Rupert Murdoch ne compte pas s'arrêter. En juin, quand le *Spectator*, un hebdomadaire britannique petit mais influent dans les cercles conservateurs, a été mis en vente, le magnat de l'information a été, selon nos sources, parmi les premiers à s'intéresser au dossier. Les discussions n'ont pour l'heure pas abouti, mais elles confirment une nouvelle fois la persévérance du milliardaire australo-américain, qui, depuis des années, rêve de mettre la main sur ce magazine. Les organes de presse situés au cœur du pouvoir ont toujours été sa passion.

Son hyperactivité affichée ne cache pourtant pas le déclin relatif de son groupe au Royaume-Uni. News Corp, l'une des moitiés de son empire (l'autre est Fox Corp, qui détient notamment la chaîne d'information américaine Fox News), a publié, jeudi 10 août, ses résultats annuels, allant de juillet 2022 à juin 2023.

Dans l'ensemble, le groupe se porte plutôt bien : un chiffre d'affaires de 9,9 milliards de dollars (9 milliards d'euros), en légère baisse pour des raisons de taux de change, et un bénéfice avant impôts de 330 millions de dollars, le deuxième plus élevé depuis dix ans. Toutefois, l'essentiel de la croissance émane du groupe d'informations financières Dow Jones, qui comprend le quotidien américain *Wall Street Journal* et ses 4 millions d'abonnés (à 85 % numériques).

Tentative de diversification

Au Royaume-Uni, en revanche, la dynamique est plus poussive. Le symbole le plus évident vient du *Sun*, dont la diffusion a été divisée par quatre en quinze ans. Après l'avoir acheté en 1969, le magnat en avait fait une force dominante des médias britanniques, à coups de pin-up aux seins nus (la fameuse « page 3 », si scandaleuse à son lancement, en 1970) et de ragots sur le show-business et la politique.

A son apogée, dans les années 1990, il vendait 4 millions d'exemplaires par jour ; en 2010, encore 3 millions ; en 2019, seulement 1,2 million. Depuis, News Corp a préféré le retirer d'ABC Circulation, l'entreprise auditant officiellement la diffusion, mais celle-ci avoisinerait 700 000 exemplaires par jour.

Bien sûr, le déclin de la presse papier est global. Mais, d'une part, le *Sun*, doublé par le *Daily Mail* (autour de 750 000 exemplaires quotidiens), n'est plus le premier quotidien britannique, et, d'autre part, il n'a pas réussi à trouver un modèle économique d'abonnement payant en ligne. En 2021, News Corp en a tiré les conséquences : sa valeur a été réduite à zéro dans ses comptes.

Le *Sun*, qui a longtemps occupé une place à part dans le cœur de M. Murdoch – « *Si vous voulez savoir ce que je pense, lisez le Sun* », déclarait-il en 2012 –, a lancé un site Internet pour les Etats-Unis, afin de trouver un relais de croissance. Le tabloïd génère beaucoup de trafic (159 millions de visiteurs uniques en juillet), mais cette stratégie n'est pas rentable. L'année 2024 s'annonce périlleuse pour le titre. En effet, le prince Harry le poursuit en justice, l'accusant de l'avoir espionné en recrutant des détectives privés. Le procès doit se tenir en janvier.

Face à ce déclin, M. Murdoch tente de se diversifier hors des quotidiens. En 2016, il a créé TalkRadio, une radio qui propose des talk-shows plutôt orientés à droite, puis, en 2022, TalkTV, sa version télévisuelle. Celle-ci s'inspire vaguement de Fox News : des émissions de discussions politiques, aux opinions tranchées, marquées à droite. « *Son Audimat a été particulièrement décevant* », souligne Enders Analysis, une entreprise de recherche en médias.

Succès commercial du « Times »

Plusieurs créneaux horaires ont drainé si peu de téléspectateurs que leur Audimat a été officiellement de... zéro. Le magnat a recruté à prix d'or – un contrat de 50 millions de livres sterling (58 millions d'euros) sur trois ans, d'après les médias britanniques – le très controversé présentateur Piers Morgan. Certes, celui-ci est capable d'attirer des personnalités de premier plan : il a obtenu un entretien avec Donald Trump et un autre avec le footballeur Cristiano Ronaldo. Mais son prime time de 19 heures à 20 heures ne réunit en moyenne que 33 000 téléspectateurs, selon Enders Analysis.

Ces difficultés sont partiellement compensées par le succès commercial du *Times*. L'illustre quotidien, racheté en 1981 par M. Murdoch, a, dans les années 2000, accumulé des pertes de près d'un demi-milliard d'euros. En 2010, le magnat a fait partie des premiers à oser rendre son site Internet entièrement payant, bloqué derrière un *paywall*. Avec désormais un demi-million d'abonnés, le quotidien a retrouvé le chemin de la rentabilité. Une radio en ligne, Times Radio, a aussi été lancée en 2020, en vue d'élargir l'audience. **Néanmoins, ces multiples initiatives dissimulent mal le fait que les opérations britanniques de M. Murdoch ne sont plus que l'ombre de ce qu'elles étaient à l'acmé de sa puissance, il y a une vingtaine d'années.**

● Murdoch, le grand manipulateur des médias | Interview d'Eric Albert | ARTE

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VeBPpci9Ac&ab_channel=ARTE

● New York Times Investigation

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/04/03/magazine/murdoch-family-investigation.html>

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/04/03/magazine/rupert-murdoch-fox-news-trump.html>

Julia Cagé, économiste de la presse, analyse les risques de la concentration des médias actuelle.

propos recueillis par [Guillaume Galpin](#)

ina, La Revue des Médias, 04 décembre 2015

On assiste à une concentration exceptionnelle dans le paysage médiatique français. Mais, compte-tenu de la crise dans laquelle sont plongés les médias, est-ce que cette concentration n'est pas inévitable ?

Julia Cagé : Il y a deux choses qui sont en train de se passer. D'une part, il y a une reconsolidation des médias et on aurait pu assister à la disparition d'un certain nombre de titres – on a eu très peu de fermetures en France relativement aux États-Unis par exemple. Ou à une consolidation avec des fusions et des créations de groupes comme ce qui est en train de se passer aujourd'hui. Par contre, ce qui n'était pas obligatoire et pas forcément attendu, c'est la nature des entreprises qui ont racheté ces médias à la chaîne. On aurait pu voir une consolidation avec la fusion entre un certain nombre de médias détenus de manière indépendante. Mais là, ce qui s'est passé, c'est qu'on a eu à la fois une consolidation mais aussi une perte d'indépendance parce que la plupart des titres ont été rachetés par des groupes industriels ou de télécoms qui n'ont pas pour objet premier de faire du média. Il y a le problème de l'identité de ceux qui rachètent les médias – et en particulier de leur secteur d'activité. Et il y a un autre problème : celui du pluralisme. Quand une même personne possède plusieurs hebdomadaires dont *L'Express*, un titre de presse quotidienne nationale *Libération*, une radio *RMC*, une chaîne de télévision *BFM*,... là c'est un problème. Si une même personne fait main basse sur plusieurs médias et qui plus est diffuse sur plusieurs supports, on doit le réguler. Dans tous les pays et dans toutes les démocraties qui fonctionnent bien, il y a des lois relativement fortes pour empêcher cette concentration de la presse du point de vue de l'actionnariat. Aux États-Unis, par exemple, il est interdit de posséder tout à la fois une radio, une télévision et un journal dans une même localité.

Ces télécoms qui rachètent ces médias, ce n'est pas dans l'optique d'enrichir leur offre de services ?

Julia Cagé : Pas forcément. Typiquement, on ne peut pas dire que le rachat effectué par Xavier Niel répond à une volonté d'enrichir l'offre de services de Free. On n'a vu aucun lien, aucune synergie entre *Le Monde*, *Le Nouvel Observateur* et Free. Dans le cas de Patrick Drahi c'est un tout petit peu différent parce qu'on a vu les premières offres émerger où, pour un abonnement téléphonique, vous aviez un journal gratuit. Et d'ailleurs on ne peut qu'interroger et dénoncer cette pratique qui revient à rabaisser le rôle de la presse et le travail des journalistes qui travaillent par exemple à *L'Express*. Quelle est leur véritable motivation ? Je ne pense pas que ce soit une manière d'enrichir leur offre télécoms par une offre médias et de mélanger à la fois le fournisseur d'accès et le contenu de produits. Je pense que ce qui a conduit à ça est une recherche d'influence politique, de prise de contrôle et de pouvoir avec un jeu de concurrence entre les deux d'ailleurs. On a toujours vu Patrick Drahi bouger avec un coup de retard sur Xavier Niel. Quand on voit Xavier Niel qui crée aujourd'hui un fonds d'investissement, avec Matthieu Pigasse, de plusieurs millions d'euros pour racheter des médias, on voit bien que ce n'est pas dans la logique de synergiser l'activité de télécoms de Xavier Niel mais bien de construire un empire médiatique, en France et à l'international. Et de ce point de vue-là, il n'y a pas vraiment de différence entre un Xavier Niel, un Vincent Bolloré ou un Martin Bouygues. Dans tous les cas, on a des gens qui ne viennent pas du secteur des médias et qui réinvestissent de l'argent dans les médias.

Mais quel est le risque que ces hommes ne soient pas seulement des entrepreneurs de presse pour l'indépendance des médias ?

Julia Cagé : Il y a plusieurs risques. Le premier est celui du pluralisme parce qu'on a une concentration accrue, donc un nombre très réduit de groupes, alors qu'on a des lois normalement pour limiter la concentration sauf que ces lois en France sont extrêmement vieilles. On n'a pas régulé les médias sérieusement depuis 1986, c'est-à-dire avant l'invention d'Internet, donc il y a très peu de limites à la concentration. Donc le premier risque c'est la perte du pluralisme d'opinion, risque qui va être transféré au lecteur.

Le deuxième risque est pour les journalistes. Après, il y a différents types de propriétaires. Il y a des propriétaires ouvertement interventionnistes comme Vincent Bolloré et je pense dans ce cas à Canal+. Le risque est évident puisque Vincent Bolloré a très directement censuré des documentaires de la chaîne. C'est plus compliqué à voir dans le cas d'un Xavier Niel ou d'un Patrick Drahi, puisque ce sont des gens qui ne vont pas forcément intervenir dans le contenu. Mais

le risque le plus fort c'est celui de l'autocensure de la part des journalistes qui vont par exemple arrêter d'enquêter sur le secteur des télécoms pour ne pas déplaire potentiellement à leur actionnaire majoritaire.

Dans ce cas, comment faire pour garantir leur indépendance ? Que pensez-vous des propositions de Fleur Pellerin qui dit vouloir renforcer les pouvoirs du CSA début janvier ?

Julia Cagé : Fleur Pellerin a raison, elle va dans le bon sens mais elle ne va pas assez loin. Il n'y a aucune raison que ça ne concerne que l'audiovisuel, la radio et la télé. Ça devrait être aussi étendu à la presse écrite.

Deuxièmement, dans les mesures qu'elle a annoncées, il s'agit plutôt de vérifier que, dans chaque entreprise, il y ait une charte signée entre les journalistes et les actionnaires. Une charte éthique et déontologique. Le problème aujourd'hui c'est que les journalistes sont en position de faiblesse et je crois qu'en fait il devrait y avoir une charte globale pour l'ensemble de la profession, négociée avec le ministère, les syndicats de presse et les syndicats de journalistes, et qui s'imposerait en amont à l'ensemble des titres papiers, sur Internet, et à l'ensemble de l'audiovisuel. Ce que Fleur Pellerin a dit va dans la bonne direction, et encore une fois c'est tant mieux, car je pense que le ministère a été trop long à réagir sur ce sujet. C'est un mieux mais ça ne va clairement pas du tout assez loin dans ce qu'il faudrait faire pour garantir l'indépendance des journalistes en France.

Vous proposez dans votre dernier livre un modèle de société de médias. En quoi il résoudrait ces problèmes d'indépendance et de pluralisme ?

Julia Cagé : Le modèle que je propose de société de médias à but non lucratif est un modèle dans lequel on donne beaucoup de plus de droits de vote aux journalistes, au-delà des seuls droits de vote de l'actionnaire majoritaire, mais également aux lecteurs. C'est-à-dire que ce n'est pas un modèle où on va laisser l'actionnaire majoritaire seul aux manettes pouvant prendre toutes les décisions, y compris celles de nommer les directeurs de rédaction même si c'est contre l'avis des journalistes, ou de censurer des reportages. Au contraire, le pouvoir va être partagé entre les actionnaires, les lecteurs et les journalistes. Donc de ce point de vue-là, les journalistes sont protégés puisqu'eux-mêmes sont partie prenante de la décision et je pense que c'est quelque chose d'extrêmement important.

Vous parliez beaucoup de la presse écrite dans votre livre. Ce modèle est-il exportable à tous les autres médias ?

Julia Cagé : Oui bien sûr. Je parle des médias d'information générale, c'est pour ça qu'une grande partie du livre parle de la presse écrite, mais pas seulement. Le modèle que je propose est aussi exportable aux télévisions et aux radios d'information comme BFM, iTélé, LCI... Ce modèle n'est cependant pas exportable à un média tourné vers la production de loisirs et de contenus de flux. Il s'agit de réguler la production d'information politique et générale, celle qui alimente le bon fonctionnement de nos démocraties. Donc oui, mon modèle est exportable à l'audiovisuel même si je parle moins de l'audiovisuel parce que c'est un secteur où on a déjà un modèle un peu alternatif avec l'audiovisuel public. Mais, et on le voit avec ce qui s'est passé à Canal+ avec Bolloré, on a aussi besoin de trouver des formes innovantes de gouvernance dans l'audiovisuel privé.

Quelle est la différence entre concentration et consolidation de la presse ?

Julia Cagé : Consolidation, c'est le mot politiquement correct pour parler de concentration. Quand vous rachetez un média et que vous ne voulez pas être accusé justement de vous mettre en position de monopole, ou plutôt d'oligopole, vous allez dire qu'il faut que le secteur se consolide pour que les acteurs puissent profiter d'économies d'échelles et réaliser des profits. C'est le même mot mais il y en a un qui est utilisé de manière politiquement correcte. Consolidation, il n'y a rien de négatif alors que concentration, on voit bien tous les problèmes que ça pose en termes de pluralisme.

Julia Cagé est professeur d'économie à Sciences Po Paris et auteure de « Sauver les médias : capitalisme, financement participatif et démocratie » aux éditions du Seuil.

DOCUMENT 7 – VIDEO - What Does Media Concentration Do to a Country? (The case of Australia)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gEcq8c90IOw&ab_channel=MediaReformCoalition

DOCUMENT 8 - Record-breaking Australian petition calls for inquiry into Rupert Murdoch's media monopolies

Tim WYATT | *The Independent* | 16 July 2021

More than half a million Australians have signed a parliamentary petition demanding a public inquiry into Rupert Murdoch's control of the country's media landscape.

The petition, which was launched by former Labor prime minister Kevin Rudd last month, has drawn more signatures than any other and at times was so popular it caused the parliamentary petition website to crash.

5 “We are especially concerned that Australia's print media is overwhelmingly controlled by News Corporation, founded by Fox News billionaire Rupert Murdoch, with around two-thirds of daily newspaper readership,” the petition states.

“This power is routinely used to attack opponents in business and politics by blending editorial opinion with news reporting. Australians who hold contrary views have felt intimidated into silence. These facts chill free speech and undermine public debate.”

10 The petition calls for a Royal Commission, a judge-led public inquiry, into the diversity and strength of the Australian news media.

In a video announcing the launch of his petition, Mr Rudd described Mr Murdoch as an “arrogant cancer on our democracy” who had destroyed Australian politics’ “level playing field” by using his media properties to vigorously campaign for the Liberal-National coalition.

15 Among the more than 140 newspapers owned by News Corporation are the nationally-distributed Australian newspaper, as well as a major local outlet in cities including Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Adelaide.

As well as a slate of magazines and radio stations, the company also runs the widely-read news website news.com.au, and owns both the Australian Sky News TV channel and the pay-TV company Foxtel.

The petition has now closed and will be presented to parliament, but observers say it is unlikely to lead to any action 20 by the Liberal-National government of prime minister Scott Morrison.

The current Labor leader, Anthony Albanese, has also distanced himself from his predecessor's campaign.

Mr Rudd, quit Australian politics after losing the 2013 election and now works with a number of international think tanks and educational bodies, praised the 501,876 people who had added their names to his petition in a tweet on Wednesday. “Half a million Australians have spoken. They've smashed the records to make their voice heard: Australia 25 needs a #MurdochRoyalCommission to protect the lifeblood of our democracy.”

Another former prime minister, the Liberal predecessor of Mr Morrison Malcolm Turnbull, has also added his name to the petition while admitting doubt it would actually end up changing anything about Mr Murdoch's monopolisation of the media.

News Corporation newspapers are among Australia's best-sellers, with some estimating they attract much as 70% of 30 Australian newspaper readers, but have been regularly criticised for downplaying the impact of climate change and a string of scandals, including a cartoon of Serena Williams seen by many to be racist.

In January a News Corporation employee sent an all-staff email castigating the firm's “misinformation campaign” over the impact climate change had in the country's devastating wildfires. [...]

News Corporation has declined to comment on the call for a Royal Commission and its newspapers have tended to 35 avoid covering Mr Rudd's petition.

Columbia Journalism Review. [THE MEDIA TODAY](#)

DOCUMENT 9 - Does Murdoch make the political weather or follow it? Yes.

AUGUST 1, 2022 By [JON ALLSOP](#)

“IT'S *THE SUN* WOT WON IT.” Thirty years ago, *The Sun*, a Rupert Murdoch-owned tabloid in the UK, plastered those words on its front page—a humblebrag it was not—after John Major, then Britain's Conservative prime minister, was reelected; the day before, the paper had mocked up a front-page image of Neil Kinnock, Major's Labour Party opponent, inside a lightbulb next to the headline “If Kinnock wins today will the last person to leave Britain please turn 5 out the lights.” Years later—appearing before an inquiry that was established following a massive phone-hacking scandal at another of his titles—Murdoch said that the “*Sun* wot won it” headline was “tasteless and wrong” since newspapers “don't have that sort of power,” adding that he'd given the editor responsible for it “a hell of a bollocking.”

But *The Sun* would again nod back at the lightbulb front page, returning to the theme in 2019 to warn that a Kinnock administration would have been a “picnic” compared to the “Marxist” plans of that year’s Labour candidate, Jeremy
10 Corbyn. Boris Johnson, the Conservative prime minister, was subsequently reelected.

The “*Sun* wot won it” front page is often held up in the UK as shorthand for a broader debate around the influence of the press at election time. It also speaks to a version of that debate that is specific to Murdoch but extends beyond the UK: the question of whether, in the various countries where he owns media properties, he has an uncanny ability to anoint political winners or simply jumps on the bandwagons of politicians who look likely to win anyway. Earlier this
15 year, this debate resurfaced in Australia, where Murdoch was born and still dominates the newspaper business, after that country’s Labor Party returned to power. Ahead of the election, a senior Murdoch lieutenant insisted that Murdoch’s Australian media business had no unified view of who to back, though Murdoch’s many critics have long accused him of running political cover for Scott Morrison, then the incumbent Liberal Party prime minister (who was not “liberal” in the US sense of the word). A number of commentators characterized voters’ rejection of Morrison as a sign that
20 Murdoch’s influence was on the wane. Kevin Rudd, a former Labor prime minister and longtime Murdoch critic, mocked up a copy of a Murdoch paper with the headline “Australia rejects Murdoch’s pick,” calling it a “front page you’ll never see.”

Now Murdoch’s political influence has returned as a topic of conversation in the US after two of his American titles, the *Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Post*, recently published near-simultaneous editorials strongly criticizing
25 Donald Trump’s conduct on January 6, 2021. The *Post* went so far as to call Trump unfit to be president again. The two papers’ stance was not especially new—both have expressed squeamishness about the insurrection before, running similar back-to-back editorials after the House January 6 hearings kicked off in June—but it nonetheless generated reams of coverage across the rest of the press, where it was often taken as a sign that Murdoch and his media empire have decisively broken with Trump after backing him for years.

30 This conclusion elicited some pushback, with other commentators pointing out that prominent opinion hosts on Fox News, Murdoch’s most influential US property, have very much *not* broken with Trump, decrying the January 6 hearings, for example, as a sham. (“Wake me up when Sean Hannity editorializes against Trump,” *Washington Post* media critic Erik Wemple requested.) On Friday, however, Jeremy W. Peters, of the *New York Times*, reported that cracks are showing on the Fox end of the Murdoch-Trump relationship, too. Peters noted that Trump has not been
35 interviewed on Fox in more than a hundred days and that the network has also recently eschewed live coverage of his rallies and speeches while granting more airtime to other Republican presidential hopefuls, not least Florida governor Ron DeSantis—snubs, Peters reported, that “are not coincidental,” reflecting Murdoch’s “skepticism” about Trump and his refusal to accept the result of the 2020 election. Fox’s Howard Kurtz insisted yesterday that there is no “edict” against having Trump on the network, adding that he had tried (and seemingly failed) to book Trump recently—but, per Peters’s
40 reporting, Trump does indeed feel neglected by the network. Last week, after a host on *Fox & Friends* noted polls showing DeSantis besting Trump, Trump blasted the show on Twitter Truth Social, accusing it of having “gone to the ‘dark side.’”

Among those who accept that Murdoch *is* actually breaking with Trump (more on which in a moment), there are different theories as to why he’s doing it—theories that, together, reflect something like the aforementioned debate as
45 to whether Murdoch is a merchant more of proactive influence or reactive judgment. Jonah Goldberg, of *The Dispatch*, has suggested that while it’s hard to know what Murdoch is truly thinking, his papers’ recent anti-Trump editorials could reflect that Murdoch feels he has gained all he can from Trump and that he is now trying to pivot the Republican Party toward “more exciting prospects” by sending a signal to conservative elites, if not yet Republican voters, that there’s space on the right to explore a post-Trump future. Others have agreed that the recent editorials were
50 pitched at political elites but suggested that their goal was only to distance Murdoch from Trump reputationally while Trumpy Fox hosts continue to play to the base. *Politico*’s Jack Shafer, meanwhile, argued that Trump, in the “final days of his political career,” is now “expendable” for Murdoch, whose support of politicians “has always been transactional”—though Shafer added that, should Trump come back and win the 2024 GOP nomination, Murdoch could still do what he always does and “place his bet on the leading pony.”

55 There’s a lot to unpack here, starting with the question of whether Murdoch is really breaking with Trump. In a moral sense, at least, I’d argue that the answer is no; as I’ve written before, the only proper standard for Trump’s coup attempt is zero-tolerance disavowal—and if the recent editorials met that bar, then the Murdoch-enabled diatribes of, say, Tucker Carlson certainly do not. I’d also argue, though, that this reality illuminates the broader debate about Murdoch’s

influence more than it invalidates it. Murdoch's print papers denouncing Trump over January 6 while he allows Carlson 60 and company to go on denouncing the investigators suggests, perhaps, hedging on Murdoch's part. And *hedging* is, in my view, a key insight in the broader debate here.

Murdoch is undoubtedly extremely powerful, not just in the US but in the UK, Australia, and elsewhere. His media properties—which, collectively, straddle key swaths of various markets—have manifestly exerted an outsize influence on political discourse, by reaching news consumers directly but also by molding the behavior of political elites who 65 value that reach, or at least the perception of it; as the academic James Rodgers once put it with reference to the “Sun wot won it” debate, “if politicians believe in the power of the press, then, in that sense at least, it is real.” And yet Murdoch's power has limits. He did not initially back Trump ahead of the 2016 presidential election; he pivoted to do so as Trump's hold on GOP voters became undeniable, and even then, he reportedly toyed, at one point, with throwing his weight behind Hillary Clinton. Murdoch, to my mind, exists in a constant equilibrium of making the weather while also 70 checking the forecast; indeed, reading the public mood is essential to his ability to then influence it. This is not an exact science—which is where hedging comes in.

When it comes to Trump, specifically, both arms of the broader Murdoch debate can be true at once in much the same way: Murdoch may be showing some signs of souring on Trump because he senses that that's the way public opinion is blowing, *while also* seeing that as an opportunity to get to help make the next Republican king, *while also* leaving 75 enough wiggle room to cozy back up to Trump if he ends up retaining the crown. Above all, Murdoch values winning—and, as with anyone for whom that's true, it's preferable, but not essential, that he dictate the terms of victory. In his *Times* story, Peters reported that Murdoch's Trump skepticism also “reflects concerns that Republicans in Washington, like Senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, the minority leader, have expressed to the Murdochs about the potential harm Mr. Trump could cause to the party's chances in upcoming elections.” Murdoch and McConnell are 80 actually very similar. Both seem to find Trump an inconvenience. But they haven't hesitated to ride his coattails to power before. And they'd both do so again in a heartbeat.

The *Washington Post* also published a story on Murdoch and Trump over the weekend, with its authors, Sarah Ellison and Jeremy Barr, broadly confirming Peters's reporting that Murdoch has lost his enthusiasm for Trump (if he was ever *that* personally enthused to begin with). Ellison and Barr noted that Murdoch “has always been a pragmatist when 85 it comes to his political relationships,” then name-checked Tony Blair as evidence. Blair (eventually) took over from Kinnoch as the leader of Britain's Labour Party in the years after the “*Sun wot won it*” headline; five years on from that headline, he became Britain's prime minister—with Murdoch's backing, which he had aggressively courted. *The Sun* dramatically announced that it was changing sides to back Blair, though its tone in doing so wasn't quite so hubristic. Blair would have won either way. There's not much evidence that it was *The Sun* wot won it for Major five years earlier, 90 either.

DOCUMENT 10 - How much influence does the Murdoch media have in Australia?

Kevin Rudd is convinced News Corp has too much influence. How much of the media does News Corp own in Australia? How much sway does it really have?

Explainer – *The Sydney Morning Herald*, By Zoe Samios, OCTOBER 15, 2020

How influential is Rupert Murdoch's media empire? According to Kevin Rudd, extremely, and not in a good way. The former prime minister has emerged as one of the fiercest critics of the Murdoch family's media 5 company, News Corp, which he says has the power to sway public opinion to protect its own agenda and to damage its political enemies.

On October 10, Rudd created a petition to establish a royal commission into the strength and diversity of 10 Australian news media – he called it a

#MurdochRoyalCommission on Twitter. High on his list of concerns was that “Australia's print media is overwhelmingly controlled by News Corporation” and “this power is routinely used to attack opponents in 15 business and politics by blending editorial opinion with news reporting”. As of the afternoon of October 15, the petition had attracted 247,693 signatures.

Rudd's latest blast against News Corp (which he describes as a “cancer on democracy”) coincided with a 20 rare media interview by James Murdoch, who told *The*

New York Times he left the company because he was concerned its newspapers were disguising facts and endorsing disinformation.

Rudd's push is the latest to raise questions about the influence the Murdoch family has over the public and politicians in Australia. On the one hand, News Corp has the biggest commercial media footprint in the country. On the other hand, in an era where there are more local and international online sources of news and many consumers get their news via Google and Facebook, can a traditional media company really shape public opinion to the extent that News Corp's critics believe?

What publications does News Corp own in Australia?

News Corp is the country's biggest newspaper owner when taking into account the amount of mastheads it owns and how many people read them. Its titles include national broadsheet *The Australian* and Sydney's *Daily Telegraph*, Melbourne's *Herald Sun*, Brisbane's *The Courier Mail* and Adelaide's *The Advertiser*. But it isn't just the large capital cities where News Corp has a big audience – it has a newspaper in nearly every state and territory, owning the major newspaper in the Northern Territory, *The NT News*, and Tasmania's *Mercury* as well as a large number of online suburban and regional titles. And it runs Australia's second-biggest digital website, news.com.au, according to August figures from measurement provider Nielsen.

News Corp is also the controlling shareholder of pay TV company Foxtel; and it owns 24-hour channel Sky News in Australia. Sky's mostly conservative commentators include Alan Jones and Peta Credlin. Some of Sky's coverage appears on free-to-air regional channel WIN. And Nova Entertainment, the radio network that broadcasts Nova FM and Smooth FM across Australia, is a privately run company owned by Rupert Murdoch's eldest son, Lachlan.

There is only one other commercial news organisation that has scale comparable to News Corp in Australia – Nine Entertainment Co, the owner of this masthead. Nine, which bought Fairfax Media in 2018, owns the Nine television network; *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age*, *The Australian Financial Review*, streaming platform Stan and radio stations such as 2GB in Sydney, 3AW in Melbourne and 4BC in Brisbane.

National broadcaster the ABC is the third major player through television, radio and the nation's most visited website. Like News Corp and Nine, it has a footprint

that gives it the ability to communicate with the majority of the population daily.

The industry term for this is "reach".

How much 'reach' does News Corp have?

Derek Wilding, a professor at the University of Technology Sydney's Centre for Media Transition, says it is difficult to work out just how much reach News Corp – or any media company – has because of the way the industry measures audiences.

"It's very difficult to actually pin down precisely the reach," he says. "We've tended to look just within existing markets – i.e. print or broadcast. That problem is exacerbated in an environment where there's increasing digital reach and people get their news not just directly from the news supplier but from digital platforms."

A 2016 study by academics Franco Papanđrea and Rodney Tiffen on media ownership and concentration said News Corp owned about 65 per cent of print newspaper readership across Australia. That study was based on data from 2012, before News Corp owned a range of regional newspapers it acquired from APN News & Media but, given News Corp has now stopped printing a number of these publications, it's unlikely there is much change in how much print readership News Corp controls. (This was the report cited in a study commissioned by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission of how much market power Google and Facebook have.)

In information it provides to advertisers, News Corp says it reaches 16 million Australians each month across its news outlets. Nine says it reaches 70 per cent of Australians through its television network each month. It says that it has 2 million listeners to its radio stations and that its mastheads have an average of 12 million news readers across print and digital each month. In its 2019 annual report, the ABC says it reaches 68.3 per cent of the population with its different platforms. Reach also exaggerates audience. To qualify a person only needs to interact with a media company's journalism as little as once a month.

The other caveat about News Corp's reach is the conversation tends to be shaped by its print dominance. The fact that the total number of people reading physical newspapers is shrinking is often ignored. Decades ago, the influence of a print edition would be considered much greater than it is now with the fragmentation of the media industry that has occurred because of the internet.

Is the media industry more competitive than in the past?

Before the internet, moguls such as Rupert Murdoch dominated the media landscape. Today it's very different. Social media sites such as Facebook and tech giants such as Google have changed the way consumers read news, and the internet has allowed people to access articles from international news outlets. This has meant that traditional media such as newspapers don't hold the same kind of influence they once did, because there is so much choice for readers.

The New York Times and *The Economist*, which previously would have struggled for global reach, have been able to find Australian readers. Other global mastheads such as *The Guardian* and *Daily Mail* employ large numbers of journalists and have established big online Australian audiences. Industry superannuation funds set up *The New Daily* website while universities fund *The Conversation*. Meanwhile, digital-only websites such as Junkee Media and Crikey make up a small portion of the media industry but their content resonates with Australians.

Wilding says it would be wrong to assume that these outlets have diminished the strength of large local players such as News Corp, the ABC and Nine.

"While some of those international sources and local startups add to the range of accessible news, the bigger the existing large media players get ... the greater the challenge for smaller players to compete."

How influential is News Corp?

News Corp's influence is perhaps best articulated by one of its former senior executives. "News Corp has no influence with the public but an acute influence with politicians," says Kim Williams, who ran News Corp in Australia between 2011 and 2013.

Being able to speak to a large section of the population is one thing. But influence is different – it requires news articles and analysis to have an effect on people or to sway a point of view.

Murdoch is one of the world's most successful media proprietors and his conservative views on politics and business are well known. His son Lachlan, who is co-chair of News Corp and runs the family's other US-focused business, Fox Corp, is said to share a similar world view.

But while right-leaning politicians have often aligned with News Corp on policy, there is a fairly long list of left-leaning politicians in the English-speaking world who have attempted to curry favour with Rupert Murdoch to further their leadership ambitions. The list includes former prime minister Paul Keating (who allowed Murdoch to buy the Herald & Weekly Times in the 1980s) and former UK leader Tony Blair (godfather

to one of Murdoch's children with Wendi Deng). Blair tried to win over News Corp's UK tabloid *The Sun* before he was elected in 1997). Even Rudd, who had a long-standing relationship with *The Australian's* former editor-in-chief Chris Mitchell before entering politics, was famously taken by former *New York Post* editor Col Allan to a New York strip club).

Murdoch papers have swung support behind left-wing parties: in federal politics, Keating and Rudd as well as Bob Hawke. News Corp mastheads have backed former premiers Neville Wran and Bob Carr in NSW, Wayne Goss in Queensland, and at times, Steve Bracks in Victoria.

At times the newspapers have shifted their view and have rallied against political leaders. In 2007, after backing prime minister John Howard for years, *The Daily Telegraph* splashed with the headline "Sydney walks away from PM".

The tables also turned on Rudd, who blames his downfall as prime minister on News Corp and the Murdochs. Former prime minister Malcolm Turnbull also believes he was ousted because he was not "News Corp's man".

Politicians certainly think News Corp has influence. Under Hawke and Keating, Murdoch took control of two-thirds of the newspaper industry's daily circulation. After his election victory, Rudd was so close to Chris Mitchell that Mitchell used to sound him out about journalist hires.

Rudd told *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age*: "My job as Labor leader then was try to maximise our positive coverage."

Under Turnbull, media ownership laws were relaxed – something that News Corp had lobbied for for decades, and that allowed for a potential takeover of Network Ten (Lachlan Murdoch was a major shareholder until it was bought by ViacomCBS). Despite efforts, Rupert Murdoch was unsuccessful and News Corp has not gained much from this change.

There is some merit to Rudd's concerns. In some instances, News Corp has successfully lobbied the government. A compulsory code being created to make Google and Facebook pay for the use of news content is just one example of an issue News Corp lobbied hard for. But whether it succeeds will be a test of just how influential it is with politicians.

News Corp has also not been successful with changing some federal policy. The one rule that News Corp has wanted removed for years – anti-siphoning (the mandatory requirement for certain sport matches to appear on free-to-air television) – has never been

removed. Foxtel, owned by News Corp, wants the laws
225 to be relaxed to allow it to be able to run sports matches
exclusively, a move that would gain it subscribers.

Whether News Corp can overthrow a prime minister
could also be contested. Newspapers combine news
reporting with commentary and analysis and this is
230 often the sticking point among News Corp's critics. It is
also one of the driving reasons behind James Murdoch's
abrupt exit from the board of News Corp's parent
company on July 31.

Wilding says in areas where News Corp owns the only
235 major print newspaper, there is an ability to shape
opinion.

"The element that is often overlooked is the influence of
the print circulation on the radio sector and the extent to
which News Corp publications do drive radio agendas,"
240 Wilding adds. "The fact that there's so many markets in
which there's only a News Corp local publication means
that they have that added reach via commercial radio.
Particularly in Adelaide and Brisbane, where there's
only one daily newspaper ... the influence of whoever
245 owns that newspaper is enhanced."

But sometimes, no matter what *The Australian* or *The
Daily Telegraph* says, they do not affect outcomes. In
Queensland and Victoria, Labor leads despite critical
coverage of Premiers Daniel Andrews and Anastacia
250 Palaszczuk.

Influence also requires an audience of all ages. Because
of the wide range of choice on the internet, younger
audiences do not tend to read newspapers in the same
way they may have done decades ago.

255 News Corp critics say owning the majority of
Australia's newspaper industry allows the Murdoch
family to push their views out into the world, to mislead
the public and ultimately shift perceptions of politicians
and issues. However, it doesn't necessarily follow that
260 they are successful in their attempts to influence.

It's more likely that the influence News Corp wields is
not from galvanising the public but rather lies with
politicians seeking approval or trying to appease editors
with policy changes.

265 Wilding argues it's hard to measure how much
influence News Corp has, but he says the influence of
media proprietors on public policy is well documented.
"It's still very much the case that media owners are
taken seriously by governments of any political
270 persuasion and decisions on media policy have
routinely been made with a view to the potential effects
for governments and political parties," he says.

A piece that appeared in this masthead by academic
Rodney Tiffen, who has written extensively about
275 Murdoch, says News Corp gains much of its power from
the enthusiasm of politicians who indulge it. Reviewing
the evidence, he does have a point.

DOCUMENT 11

6 Takeaways From The Times's Investigation Into Rupert Murdoch and His Family

USING 150 INTERVIEWS ON THREE CONTINENTS,
THE TIMES DESCRIBES THE MURDOCH FAMILY'S
ROLE IN DESTABILIZING DEMOCRACY IN NORTH
AMERICA, EUROPE AND AUSTRALIA.

The New York Times BY [LIAM STACK](#) APRIL 3, 2019

Rupert Murdoch, the founder of a global media empire that
includes Fox News, has said he "never asked a prime minister
for anything."

But that empire has given him influence over world affairs in
a way few private citizens ever have, granting the Murdoch
family enormous sway over not just the United States, but
English-speaking countries around the world.

A six-month investigation by The New York Times covering
three continents and including more than 150 interviews has
described how Mr. Murdoch and his feuding sons turned their
media outlets into right-wing political influence machines
that have destabilized democracy in North America, Europe
and Australia.

Here are some key takeaways from The Times's investigation
into the Murdoch family and its role in the illiberal, right-
wing political wave sweeping the globe.

THE MURDOCH FAMILY SITS AT THE CENTER OF GLOBAL UPHEAVAL.

Fox News has long exerted a gravitational pull on the
Republican Party in the United States, where it most recently
amplified the nativist revolt that has fueled the rise of the far
right and the election of President Trump.

Mr. Murdoch's newspaper The Sun spent years demonizing
the European Union to its readers in Britain, where it helped
lead the Brexit campaign that persuaded a slim majority of
voters in a 2016 referendum to endorse pulling out of the bloc.
Political havoc has reigned in Britain ever since.

And in Australia, where his hold over the media is most
extensive, Mr. Murdoch's outlets pushed for the repeal of the
country's carbon tax and helped topple a series of prime
ministers whose agenda he disliked, including Malcolm
Turnbull last year.

At the center of this upheaval sits the Murdoch family, a clan
whose dysfunction has both shaped and mirrored the global
tumult of recent years.

The Times explored those family dynamics and their impact
on the Murdoch empire, which is on the cusp of succession as
its 88-year-old patriarch prepares to hand power to the son
whose politics most resemble his own: Lachlan Murdoch.

A key step in that succession has paradoxically been the partial dismemberment of the empire, which significantly shrunk last month when Mr. Murdoch sold one of his companies, the film studio 21st Century Fox, to the Walt Disney Company for \$71.3 billion.

The deal turned Mr. Murdoch's children into billionaires and left Lachlan in control of a powerful political weapon: a streamlined company, the Fox Corporation, whose most potent asset is Fox News.

MR. MURDOCH NEARLY DIED LAST YEAR, MAKING THE SUCCESSION QUESTION AN URGENT ONE.

Succession has been a source of tension in the Murdoch family for years, particularly between Mr. Murdoch's sons Lachlan and James.

His two sons are very different people. James wanted the company to become more digitally focused and more politically moderate, while Lachlan wanted to lean into the reactionary politics of the moment.

The brothers have spent their lives competing to succeed their father, and both men felt as if they had earned the top job. When Mr. Murdoch decided to promote Lachlan over James, it was Lachlan who delivered the news to James over lunch, souring the already poor relationship between the men.

James briefly quit the company in protest. But he was lured back by a carefully crafted compromise that put Lachlan in charge but allowed James to save face by maintaining the public illusion that he was the heir.

But all of these succession plans — as well as the lucrative Disney deal — were thrown into chaos last year when Mr. Murdoch broke his spine and collapsed on a yacht.

He was rushed to a hospital, and appeared to be so close to death that his wife, the model Jerry Hall, summoned his children to say their goodbyes.

Mr. Murdoch survived, but his brush with death only highlighted the instability in his family — and at the heart of his empire.

THE MURDOCH EMPIRE HAS BEEN A CHEERLEADER FOR THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT AND HELPED OVERTHROW AN AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER.

Mr. Murdoch's media outlets have promoted right-wing politics and stoked reactionary populism across the globe in recent years.

During the 2016 campaign, the Fox News host Sean Hannity advised the president's former lawyer, Michael D. Cohen, to be on the lookout for ex-girlfriends or former employees of Mr. Trump lest they cause him trouble, according to two people who know about the interactions (Hannity denies offering such advice). Mr. Cohen was later sentenced to three years in prison for paying hush money to two women who said they had affairs with Mr. Trump.

The Murdoch empire has also boldly flexed its muscles in Australia, which was for many years Lachlan's domain.

In Australia, Lachlan expressed disdain for efforts to fight climate change and once rebuked the staff at one of his family's newspapers, The Australian, for an editorial in support of same-sex marriage (He says through a representative that he is in favor of same-sex marriage). He

also became close to the politician Tony Abbott, whose 2013 election as prime minister was given an assist by Murdoch newspapers.

The Murdoch family changed Australian politics in 2016 when it took control of Sky News Australia and imported the Fox News model. They quickly introduced a slate of right-wing opinion shows that often focused on race, immigration and climate change. The programming became known as Sky After Dark.

Last year, Mr. Turnbull and his staff accused Rupert and Lachlan Murdoch of using their media outlets to help foment the intraparty coup that thrust him from office in August. Mr. Turnbull, a moderate and longtime nemesis of his friend Mr. Abbott, was replaced by the right-wing nationalist Scott Morrison.

The Murdochs have denied any role in Mr. Turnbull's downfall.

JAMES MURDOCH THOUGHT FOX NEWS WAS TOXIC TO THE COMPANY.

James Murdoch became disillusioned with the family empire in the years before Lachlan emerged as heir. He came to see Fox News, in particular, as a source of damaging ideological baggage that was hobbling the company's efforts to innovate and grow.

But Lachlan and Rupert did not share that belief. When Roger Ailes, the chief executive of Fox News, was ousted in 2016 amid a sexual harassment scandal, James wanted to revamp the network as a less partisan news outlet. He even floated the idea of hiring David Rhodes, a CBS executive.

His proposals went nowhere. Lachlan and Rupert opposed any change to what they saw as a winning formula and decided to stick with Fox's incendiary programming.

But James believed he had seen firsthand the damage that outlets like Fox News were doing to the company.

He was the face of the Murdoch empire in Britain during a 2010 attempt to take over British Sky Broadcasting, in which the company owned a minority stake.

That bid was blown to pieces by the 2011 phone hacking scandal, which forced James and his father to appear before Parliament to explain why their employees hacked into the voice mail of private citizens, including a dead 13-year-old girl. The scandal forced the Murdochs to abandon their bid for Sky.

Five years later, facing pressure from digital rivals like Netflix and Amazon, the family made a second bid for Sky. James again acted as the empire's public face. The bid again collapsed in a humiliating scandal.

This time it centered on the culture of Fox News, where sexual misconduct allegations and millions of dollars in secret settlements led to the departure of Mr. Ailes, the star host Bill O'Reilly and Bill Shine, an executive who later went to work for President Trump.

The behavior of Mr. Hannity, who used his show to spread conspiracy theories about the death of a Democratic National Committee staff member named Seth Rich, also fed concerns in Britain over the ethics of the company.

After months of review by regulators — and scrambling inside 21st Century Fox — the British government issued a withering rebuke to the Murdochs last year.

Not only did Britain block the company's bid for Sky, it also ruled that no member of the Murdoch family could serve at Sky in any capacity, including on its board. At the time, James was serving as Sky's chairman.

It was a deep humiliation that convinced James once and for all that the family empire could not survive its own politics and culture. Lachlan instead saw it as validation of his belief that James, having failed to acquire Sky once, had been the wrong man for the job.

Either way, by putting a much-needed revenue stream permanently outside the family's grasp, it helped make the sale of 21st Century Fox inevitable.

THE DISNEY DEAL WORSENEA A FAMILY RIFT.

James and Lachlan were bitterly split over the prospect of selling 21st Century Fox to Disney. James pushed hard for the deal, which was completed last month, and Lachlan fiercely opposed it.

Lachlan vociferously opposed the deal because it substantially shrank the company he returned from Australia to one day lead, people closer to his brother said. He felt so strongly that at one point he warned his father he would stop speaking to him if he continued to pursue the deal. Mr. Murdoch ignored that threat. (Lachlan denied making the threat.)

Lachlan's opposition was also fueled in part by his suspicion that his brother's judgment had been clouded by personal ambition, people closer to Lachlan said. He thought James was willing to sell 21st Century Fox for less than it was worth because he wanted the deal to include a job for himself at Disney.

The deal transformed Disney into a media colossus, and a job there might have enabled James to position himself as a successor to its chief executive, Robert A. Iger. It would also let him escape the family company, its political baggage and the prospect of working for Lachlan.

The two brothers clashed over everything. When James wanted to respond to President Trump's 2017 travel ban with a statement reassuring their company's Muslim employees, Lachlan strenuously resisted. When James bought their father's Beverly Hills mansion for \$30 million, Lachlan, who

had also wanted the house, got so upset that their father gave him some of its antique furniture. James thought he had bought that, too.

During the Disney negotiations, Mr. Murdoch grew concerned enough that James's ambitions might interfere with the deal that he decided to assure Mr. Iger that it was not conditional upon Disney's hiring his son. In the end, the sale went through, but James did not get a job. Today, the two brothers are barely on speaking terms.

THREE OF THE MURDOCH CHILDREN WANTED OUT, AND LACHLAN MIGHT TOO.

After the Disney deal, the commitment of Mr. Murdoch's children to what remains of his media empire has been called into question.

The Disney deal made all of them an enormous amount of money: Mr. Murdoch received \$4 billion and his children received \$2 billion each. As executives at 21st Century Fox, Lachlan and James got an additional \$20 million in Disney stock plus golden parachutes worth \$70 million each.

Mr. Murdoch had structured his companies, 21st Century Fox and News Corporation, so that the Murdoch Family Trust held a controlling interest in them. He held half of the trust's eight votes, and the remaining four were divided up among his four adult children. They were barred from selling those shares to outsiders.

James struck out on his own at the end of 2018. To make a more complete break with the company, he and his sisters Elisabeth and Prudence offered to sell their shares to Lachlan. Mr. Murdoch embraced the idea and urged Lachlan to buy out his siblings. Then father and son would own the company together.

Bankers drew up documents to execute the sale, but Lachlan backed out; he said that it was not financially doable, though the decision raised questions about his commitment to the company.

People close to James said they believed Lachlan was not sure he wanted to stay at the company after the Disney deal was complete. They said he might even want to go back to Australia.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/sep/22/rupert-murdoch-legacy-power-blame-elite-fox-donald-trump-russell-brand>