

## Worksheet 3.3

### Filters

The following factors have been identified as possible filters affecting the kinds of stories that make it into the news. Use this table to answer the questions contained in column 1. Explore the site for anecdotes and experiences that will confirm or deny the presence of such constraints.

<p><b>Ownership</b>                  In what way might the owner of a newspaper or a television station alter the kinds of stories that it covers or the interpretation it offers of news stories?</p>	
<p><b>Advertising</b>                  How might advertisers apply pressure on a broadcaster to stop or influence the coverage of a news story?</p>	
<p><b>Sources</b>                  One additional factor that journalists need to guard against is the ploy corporations use when they fund an academic to come up with findings about cigarettes, fatty foods etc. that chimes well with their business. Such 'reports' or 'experts' end up being quoted as if they were independent when in fact they are not. A lot of pro-McDonald's messages were disseminated in this way after the film Super Size Me.</p>	
<p><b>Flak</b>                  Sometimes the news agenda can be affected because editors become wary and self-censoring because they know they will have to deal with criticism from pressure groups. Religious groups can also mount considerable protest campaigns.</p>	
<p><b>Anti-socialism</b>                  In the US, it can be hard to advocate a left-leaning agenda in the news because there is so much hostility to what is seen as liberalism or socialism.</p>	
<p><b>False dichotomies</b>                  False opposites. This is the tendency in some news media for setting up good and bad causes – calling one group terrorists and another 'freedom fighters', or perhaps ignoring one human rights abuse because it relates to a country or leader that is an ally, rather than those carried out by an enemy.</p>	
<p><b>Time</b>                  It takes time to explain complicated stories that sometimes go against the narratives being used to explain something, and time is often what news programmes do not have a lot of.</p>	
<p><b>The imperative of images</b>                  TV news requires images and if they don't exist then a story won't feature. Terrible things happen in Burma every day but because of a blanket ban on the media, actual coverage of Burma is very rare.</p>	

