Interactive comment on "Seismic Risk: The Biases of Earthquake Media Coverage" *by* Maud H. Devès et al.

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Dear Editors,

Herein is my response to the manuscript entitled "Seismic Risk: The Biases of Earthquake Media Coverage", by Maud H. Devès and colleagues to Geoscience Communication. The authors present an interesting piece about international news outlets' reporting on earthquakes. I really like the figures as they nicely complement the paper – especially Figure 4, which visualizes and summarizes parts of the findings. However, I would suggest the authors describe in more detail the theoretical background of their paper, as well as their conceptual framework, and methodology. My relevant expertise for reviewing this paper is in framing research.

Lines 72 – 77: The first paragraph could do with some more clarity and explanations: a) I would use "media coverage" when first mentioning the term, variations are fine afterward; b) Public opinion about what? Some references would be great too here to support your arguments; c) Social media and online press are two very distinct things. I am not sure why the authors are mentioning "social media" at all since the news outlets they examine later on are traditional online news outlets, not social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, or Reddit; d) "One would expect", who would expect, why would they expect this? The authors could draw on literature about the media's role in society, for example. See, for example: Lasswell (1948), Wright (1960).

Lines 79 – 80: "Scientists often blame journalists," making such a strong and generalized claim, I would add at least (!) two more references. And perhaps consider a less aggressive turn of phrase for balance.

Line 86: Please add a short explanation what is meant by "media filter."

Lines 79-95: I like that this paragraph zooms in on geoscience research in the media, but it would be good to contextualize these findings within the wider media sphere and its practices. Since the authors focus on "international" media, it would be enough to focus on general characteristics of media, such as news values (while cautioning that taxonomies of news values cannot explain everything). See, for example: Harcup and O'Neill (2001), Harcup and O'Neill (2017), Wu (2000).

When citing Harris' research, I am missing the explicit connection to framing research. For example, simplifying complex arguments is one of the very goals of framing, and so is the suggestion of a particular interpretation of events.

Moreover, in this context, it is important to note that, depending on the country, science journalism is declining (Bauer et al., 2013), and that non-specialist reporters are now covering science-related news, and that this of course contributes to the kind of coverage (e.g., how detailed the report will explain the research) the reader gets.

Line 93: Uncertainty about what?

Lines 97 – 107: I think this paragraph would actually fit much better right after the first (after line 77), if "Things, however, have proven to be more complex." was deleted, the text would also flow much more nicely. How the authors structure their text is of course up to them, but as a reader I was hoping for an explanation and/or some examples regarding the media's influence on public opinion and action in this context. I would find it easier to follow the manuscript if related paragraphs would be grouped together, and my mind would not have to jump between topics and then back.

Line 105 – 106: Direct implications for what? What agencies?

Lines 109 – 125: The relevance of this paragraph for the current paper should be highlighted.

Lines 127 – 161: Personally, I find this section difficult to follow. It is titled "This study," yet only 17 lines are about this study. I am missing explicit research questions and hypotheses, something that explains how the authors are approaching their overarching research question "in a globalized world, can we find systematic trends in how the international press covers earthquake events?"

Lines 147 – 148: a) The authors write "the different laws postulated by Galtung," but then cite Koopmans & Vliegenthart, 2010: Why not cite the original article? b) However, I am unsure why this is mentioned as the authors do not analyze, nor connect their findings to, the level of newsworthiness according to Galtung's taxonomy c) If I have missed the connection between Galtung and the authors' findings, there have been, at least, two notable "updates" on Galtung's work, which might be worth considering, Harcup and O'Neill (2001) and Harcup and O'Neill (2017).

Line 168: Could the authors please define "the international press" in the context of their paper, and also give a more detailed explanation for the selection of news outlets? In particular, I would argue that some news sources chosen for this paper do

not necessarily constitute as international news outlets, depending on how the term is defined: Vancouver Sun (looking at the circulation, it even becomes difficult to say this is a national newspaper), The Star, LA Times, El Informador. Likewise, it would be helpful to explain why these news sources were chosen over others that are arguably more relevant "international" news outlets (e.g., CNN, the BBC, Al Jazeera). Moreover, I would be interested to know why the authors included the Financial Times. While this is certainly an international news source, its focus is on business and economics.

Lines 168 – 169: Please briefly explain what data the geophysical set contains and how it was selected.

Line 169: The acronym "USGS" should be spelled out when used the first time.

Line 173: How did the authors assess "media quality?" What were the inclusion and exclusion criteria for RSS feed regularity, the geographical location of the news outlet, and volume? Why did the authors not include website traffic/news circulation in their source selection criteria?

Line 175: It would be good if the authors could elaborate on "sufficiently homogeneous:" What are the similarities, and where do the selected sources differ?

Line 183: Please add (n=X) for items that were excluded because they were void of relevant information? The authors should also state how many items they started out with, before the cleaning and tagging.

Lines 187 – 188: Please add how many duplicates were removed.

Line 190: What software did the authors use for the tagging process?

Line 193: Is the dictionary available somewhere?

Line 230-232: Critical discourse analysis does not just analyze texts but relates the content and its meaning to underlying structures of the sociopolitical context. This is also being done in Cox et al. (2008), which the authors say "inspired" their methodol-

ogy. For the context of this paper, it might be better to not use the term as this is not what is done.

Line 235: "As we are dealing with hundreds of thousands of items": In line 198, the authors write "4411," so this seems like a slight exaggeration. (see comment to line 544)

Lines 244 – 256: I like that the authors briefly and clearly describe the individual categories.

Line 270: Please briefly explain those limitations.

Line 390 – 391: Since the authors write "centers," which other regional centers have been referred to?

Line 419: What do the authors mean by "romanticized?"

Lines 476 – 477: This is really interesting, and it would be great if the authors could add a few quotes.

Line 484: Could the authors either explain further, or delete, "that one could call topoi?"

Lines 490 – 492: This is really interesting! Is this the same across all news outlets (i.e., do all, or a great proportion of, news outlets cover these topics for the Nepal earthquake?)? Why do the authors think this is?

Lines 521 – 522: Do the authors think that this might have been different if they had looked at news outlets from the countries the earthquakes were located in?

Line 544 (Figure 5): This might relate to my confusion in line 235, what does "items" refer to here? It seems that the authors are using it for different purposes (i.e., news items and ?)?!

Lines 553 – 554: Do the authors have any idea why? Since these are foreign news outlets, referring to celebrities could increase the newsworthiness of the reports?!

Lines 574 – 576: Again, I wonder if this might be different with local news outlets (i.e., the country affected by the earthquake) because "issues of recovery, restoration, reconstruction, adaptation, mitigation and preparedness" might seem somewhat more relevant to those countries than to faraway places, especially those that do not experience earthquakes.

References

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Lasswell, H. D. (1948). The structure and function of communication in society. The communication of ideas, 37, 215-228.

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