

Interactive comment on “Brief Communication: Vehicles for development or disaster? The new Silk Route, landslides and geopolitics in Nepal” by Karen Sudmeier-Rieux et al.

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The authors would like to thank the two anonymous reviewers for their careful reading of our commentary, “Brief Communication: Vehicles for development or disaster? The new Silk Route, landslides and geopolitics in Nepal”. In light of the editor’s suggestion to refocus the paper, we will not respond to each reviewer point but rather provide an overall response. The main point made by both reviewers and the editor is that the commentary tried to answer too many questions in a short space, with several research papers condensed into one brief communication. This point is well taken and the authors have accepted to undertake a major rewrite to a shorter opinion piece. The

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focus will thus be more policy-oriented with the objective of highlighting key environmental and governance issues with road construction in Nepal in light of several new drivers, in particular, the new decentralized Federal governance structure and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

The authors will, however, respond to a few specific comments: Reviewer 1 “the links between rural road construction and landslides has been discussed and demonstrated by many authors previously, some of which the authors reference” There are a handful of studies which have demonstrated this relationship based on research from around the world, but few or none to our knowledge, in Nepal since the 1979 Laban study. The fact that 74% of all landslides were natural was true in 1979 but no longer today. Yet this figure is still used in Nepal and has even become a finger-pointing political issue. Thus, the importance for more empirical research on anthropogenic causes of landslides, including roads, in Nepal.

Reviewer 2 – With reference to the BRI; “High number of references are from online and popular media sources. Where is the data?” This comment is interesting and the response is that as the issues surrounding the BRI are so recent, there are hardly any peer-reviewed publications on this topic, at least not according to our research. Thus the novelty and importance to research and publish on this topic, which is what we are intending with the revised commentary.

Thank you Karen Sudmeier-Rieux

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