

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 anonymous reviewer 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

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to undertake a major rewrite. The new article is an opinion piece with the objective of highlighting key environmental and governance policy issues with regards to 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 would however like to respond specifically with regards to: Reviewer 1 “Certainly, there is no novel scientific contribution provided; the links between rural road construction and landslides has been discussed and demonstrated by many authors previously, some of which the authors reference. Thus, the manuscript could be significantly improved by refocussing the paper and being clear from the outset what is the novel contribution being made.”

There are a handful of studies which have demonstrated this relationship but few, if none, in Nepal since the 1979 Laban study. The fact that 74% of all landslides are natural was most likely true in 1979 but no longer today, yet this figure is still used in Nepal and has even become a political issue. The country is also at a new crossroads with a major government reshuffle and new opportunities provided by the BRI

Thus the novelty and importance to research and publish on this topic, which is what we are intending with the revised commentary. We hope the rewritten brief communication meets expectations. Thank you once again to NHESS for considering our revised manuscript for publication.

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