

## NHESS review

This revision is a significant improvement on the previously submitted draft. However, in several places the central argument as well as the data analyzed can and should be presented more explicitly. My comments below have three main parts:

1. This central point made here should come at the start of the article so that the reader knows exactly what is being argued. The data analyzed can then be presented in more direct relation to substantiate this claim: “This commentary suggests that the issue of poor roads in Nepal is a political, not a technical issue and one where better service and less environmental damage could both be significantly addressed through improved governance.”
2. While statements like this are partially true – “In general, connectivity is thus positively correlated with lower poverty rates” – other research shows that roads in fact increase levels of social stratification, marginalization, and uneven development. In addition to these references (Hettige, 2006; limi et al., 2016) which are cited numerous times at the start of the article, this reviewer strongly advises the authors to engage more extensively (one paragraph at least) with the highly influential work conducted by the University of East Anglia research team in the 1970s and 1980s (Blaikie et al. 1976). Please also double-check the citation year for this reference in the text. Please note that Rankin et al. 2017 closely review the findings of these studies as well.
3. The BRI issue is highly important but in the current version the text touches on the topic very lightly. I would suggest taking one of two alternative approaches: 1. discuss the BRI and its significance in more depth (not only what it means for Nepal, but why it has been taken up with such enthusiasm by elites in KTM, as well as the ambiguous and discursive nature of the BRI – a reified ‘thing’ that thus far has no real ‘thingness’); or 2. pay less attention to the BRI and instead focus on the connection between road construction, landslides, and increasing risks and hazards due to climate change. I think the latter (#2) is actually a far more important intervention that this article can make to the current literature and broader knowledge of road construction and landscape change and hazards in the current political and climatic environments. BRI gets lots of attention these days, but this paper is not saying all that much new or contributing a great deal to such conversations. Conversely, by building on Petley, etc., it has much to offer to debates around the connections between road construction and landslide frequency.

I hope these comments are helpful with the next round of revisions and I look forward to reading the final version.