

Interactive comment on “Migration and global environmental change: methodological lessons from mountain areas of the global South” by A. Milan et al.

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Dear reviewer, Thank you very much for your thoughtful and constructive feedback. Please allow us to highlight point by point how we took your suggestions into account:

1. I would suggest that the authors strengthen their review of current methodologies in this body of literature— there are only two small subsections where the authors review surveys and mixed methods and there is no mention of case studies –We appreciate your suggestion and we have now changed the subsection 1.3.1 title to “quantitative studies”: section 1.3 aims to look at quantitative studies as opposed to qualitative studies and mixed quantitative-qualitative studies. In this context, we have clarified in the

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two subsections when we are referring to a paper that took a case study approach.

2. “The authors do not explain why it is problematic that ‘the literature on migration and global environmental change has not yet moved beyond case study results’” – We clarify this point in the abstract: “the literature on migration and global environmental change has not yet moved beyond case study results to address and explain global patterns and specificities of migration in mountain areas of the global South”. Moreover, the whole underlining idea of household profiles proposed in the paper aims at overcoming the inherent tension between much needed site-specific research digging deeply into a situated reality (with a combination of quantitative methods and ethnographic and PRA methods, as presently represented in the literature) and generalizations conducive to comparability and general lessons for policy makers. This is explained in details in section 5.
3. “There also seems to be a confusion on what is a case study. The authors’ methodology, even if it includes household surveys, is based on three case studies” – Our review focuses on quantitative and qualitative approaches and it shows that mixed methods are the best way to study migration in the context of environmental change. As a consequence, we consider case studies as well as any other approach (surveys, experiments, analysis of archival records, etc.) within quantitative/qualitative approaches.
4. “I find that the results on household profiles – which is the main contribution of the paper as the authors mention, come very late... different types of households” – As mentioned in several points in the text, the profiles were built from data analysis as an ex post exercise. For the future, we suggest that the relevant indicators should come from a survey designed in a participatory way and aimed at building a multidimensional vulnerability index. More generally, in order to avoid repeating results published elsewhere, we choose to focus on methodology and on how the methods used relate to the results. For more information on the results of the three case study results, please refer to Afifi et al., 2014; Gioli et al., 2013; Gioli et al., 2014; Milan and Ho, 2014.
5. It is also not clear to me whether income is before/during/after migration – In the table we refer to after migration.
6. Pakistan results suggest that ex ante mobility is the most successful form of mobility - but is it

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successful because it is ex ante or because those who were able to move before the shocks were also those who were already less vulnerable? - The average income of the considered subsample is about half of the mean value for the whole sample. Within this group, only 64% are migrant households (compared to 76% of the total sample). Among these, 39% migrated after 2010 to cope with the losses and the disruption of their livelihoods (compared to 34% of the total sample). Also, 10 years ago the average income of the subsample was lower than that of the rest of the sample. These are poor and extremely vulnerable households. This means that among these households, those who managed to mitigate the risk they are facing by migrating for labour are in a better situation, whereas they were comparable to the rest of the sub-sample before. This indicates that migration is indeed an important way to mitigate risk and to cope in the face of environmental shocks for those with no access to formal insurance mechanism.

Interactive comment on Earth Syst. Dynam. Discuss., 5, 1711, 2014.