



## **Natural hazards knowledge and risk perception of Wujie indigenous community in Taiwan**

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The purpose of this work is to investigate the natural hazard knowledge and risk perception of Wujie indigenous community, located in Fazhi Village in the Central Mountain Range of Taiwan. Taiwan has encountered many different types of natural hazards (e.g. landslides and debris flows) that have increased sharply in the last century. Because of that, they are one of the most critical issues for the government and for the people living in mountainous areas. These areas are mainly populated by indigenous people that have experienced economic competition and military conflict with a series of colonizing periods causing a progressive loss of their original cultural identity. The motivation of selecting the case study of Wujie community is because (i) it has suffered, more than others, generations of devastating colonial oppression by foreign governments; (ii) the consequences of hydroelectric projects that moved a lot of water and sediment to the valley and modified the path of the river through the years; (iii) the documented landslides and debris flows occurred in the region during the last decades. Two questions appear spontaneously: How indigenous people are nowadays living with natural hazards? Have land use change or any other human footprint affected their knowledge and perception on natural hazards? This research, the first carried out in Taiwan involving an indigenous community, can offer a unique opportunity to answer these questions. The investigation utilized a variety of participatory methods conducted at the household and community level by the use of 65 face-to-face interviews. Results revealed that residents felt a higher worry about landslide and flood risks, and a slight preparedness to face them. This discrepancy may derive from an unsatisfactory level of communication and information, and the most considerable differences were found between the evaluations of individual subjects as opposed to overall communities. Results revealed also the complexity of residents' perspectives, attitudes, behaviours and decisions about risk-related issues. In addition, gender, age, education, experience and exposure to natural hazards are also found as significant predictors of this issue. Paying attention to the indigenous perception of a hazard and risk can increase the effectiveness of projects implemented by scientists who might need to communicate risks in the future, but also help governments in their possible need to order evacuations, and future researcher planning to conduct similar projects.