



Geohazards storytelling between reality and representation

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Ethics towards geohazards might start at early age and it might radicate on narratives occuring in the media, as disfunctional ideas and perception are passed from school or society to children.

In this paper we study the representations and imaginaries of natural hazards as they are in the media and how they are passed on chidren and laypeople. The investigation is led on an experimental basis on primary schools in Northern Italy (Varese province), where data concerning school education are collected. The approach is that of the storytelling that allow evaluation of children perception of hazard and risk. Narratives (news, rhetorics, images and pictures, symbols, metaphores and interpretations) that mass media and education generally used in order to explain and represent geohazards (earthquakes, volcanoes, hydrogeological instability, climate change and so on) are also analysed. They are responsible for certain individual and collective perceptions, indeed. The research has attempted to analyze how imaginaries and common “wrong” ideas can influence environmental education and public communication of natural hazards. A better understanding of feelings (fears and hopes), and all cultural behaviours included in the social construction of collective narratives and representations of environmental emergencies could be useful in order to re-orient education and communication strategies on the basis of more targeted and participatory approaches.