

Non-media coverage of natural risks: the case of clay risk in Auvergne

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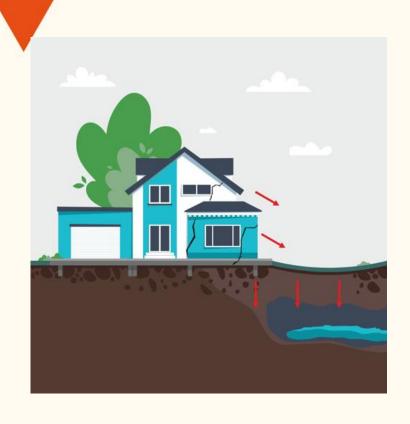
- With climate change, the number of natural disasters is increasing
- Particularly droughts and floods
- This generates a lot of material and human damage, including the cracking of homes.
- The risk of damage to homes linked to the shrinkage and swelling of clay soils currently concerns 1/5 of French territory, and 10 million individual houses in France are currently moderately or strongly exposed to clay risk.







 Clay soils are particularly susceptible to subsidence because they shrink and swell depending on their moisture content. This means that the weather can have a huge impact on their composition. Clay soils are widespread in France. Swelling pressures can cause structures to rise or lift, while shrinkage can cause settlement or subsidence. Shrinkage and swelling of clay is a geological hazard that could potentially cause substantial damage to buildings.



Damage to the corner and center of a house due to clay shrinkage-swelling







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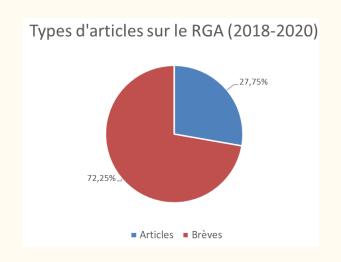
A very little publicized risk

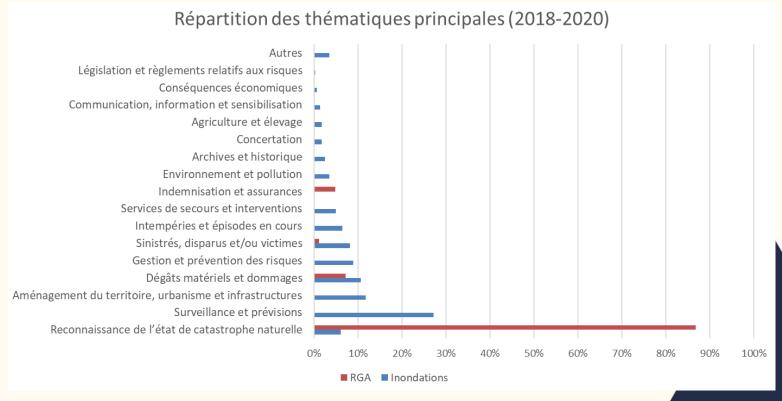
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Very little media coverage of the clay risk in the press

An exception: the publication of orders recognizing the state of natural

disaster







Superficial media treatment of the problem

Very little media coverage of the clay risk in the press

An exception: the publication of orders recognizing the state of natural disaster

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TRIBUNAL ADMINISTRATIF Les communes non retenues aimeraient une nouvelle expertise

Des fissures avérées mais non reconnues

Treize communes du Puy-de-Dôme contestent le refus de reconnaître l'état de catastrophe naturelle pour les dommages causés par les mouvements de terrain difrentiels consécutifs à la sécheresse et à la réhydra-

reize communes du Puy-de-Dôme face au ministère de l'Intérieur, à la barre du tribu nal administratif de Clermont-Ferrand (*). En dehors de la salle d'audience, ce sont des dizaines de particuliers qui ont constaté sur leur maison des fissures issues de mouvements de terrains argileux, causés par la sécheresse puis la réhydratation des sols, en 2017.

Évaluer « l'intensité anormale d'un

Les propriétaires ne sont



nal, c'est qu'elles recoivent nouvelle expertise. des particuliers qui ont constaté des fissures, avec la forme évacuées, le désont en danger », a indil'audience

Une fois les subtilités sur

parfois des maisons qui bat de fond porte essentiellement sur cette quesqué Mª Marion durant tion : comment évaluer

réalité : « Si les communes communes demandent nisation via la solidarité viennent devant le tribu- son annulation et une nationale pour les dommages matériels directs

Le rapporteur public, Ca-« l'intensité anormale d'un roline Bentejac, a fait le Non retenues dans l'ar- agent naturel » ? C'est ain- tour de la question en prépas à la barre mais les rêté de reconnaissance de si que se définit en France sentant dans le détail les deux avocates des com- catastrophe naturelle du la catastrophe naturelle et techniques scientifiques nécessaire d'après le rapmunes rappellent cette 24 juillet 2018, les treize l'ouverture d'une indem- mises en place par Météo port présenté à l'audience

luation. Les conclusions fois que des communes scientifiques basées sur du Puy-de-Dôme contesdes paramètres géologiques et météorologiques commission spécifique et permettent ensuite au ministre concerné de classer la commune, ou non, en état de catastrophe naturelle : « La pertinence de trée. Et on n'apporte pas a preuve qu'elle comporte

D'autres dossiers pour l'année 2015

La caractérisation du hénomène par Météo France ne fait pas pour autant obligation au ministre pour le classement. Il est possible, en fonction d'autres éléments portés à sa connaissance, de prendre une autre décision.

Concernant les communes du Puy-de-Dôme, « rien ne démontre que le ministre devait s'écarter des conclusions de la commission ». En plus du rejet de la requête en annulation, la demande de nouvelle expertise par les communes ne paraît pas

tent des arrêtés de catas trophe naturelle. D'autres dossiers sont en cours pour l'année 2015 : après tribunal administratif de Clermont-Ferrand, les

« Critères qui sont sujets à évolution »

« On se heurte à des critères qui sont suiets à évolution, a défendu l'avocate de onze des treize communes. Me Bonicel-Bonnefoi. Et qui font que les collectivités se font fermer la porte à la reconnaissan ce de catastrophe naturel le. De nombreuses fissures ont été constatées : pour quoi faisons-nous l'impasse sur une expertise? »

A priori, en cas de reiet de la demande par le tribunal administratif, les communes feront à nouveau appel.

Guyon, Saint-Bonnet-près-Riom Pont-du-Château, Clermont La Roche-Blanche, Cournon

Superficial media treatment of the problem





La Montagne, September 9, 2019, p

Problematic

On the one hand, the clay hazard causes more and more numerous and significant damage to homes due to the average increase in temperatures and the drop in rainfall.

On the other hand, this hazard generates few press articles - compared to other natural disasters.

How to explain this paradox? Why, in particular, is the clay risk not the subject of more controversy taken up in the public media space?

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Problematic



Questions

- What reasons justify in the eyes of journalists an article on the shrinkage-swelling of clays, this phenomenon which generates a lot of material damage but is barely visible?
- Is this due to the occurrence of a sudden hazard affecting numerous victims?
- Should a collective of residents make a public complaint for better consideration of the consequences of this hazard?
- Do we need spectacular images?

Research methodologies



What data is needed to answer these questions?

- Interviews to understand the editorial constraints of journalists and their relationships with sources related to natural risks.
- Objective: Analyze exchanges between journalists and informants to understand the social construction of natural risks.
- "Risk factory" approach: risks are the product of interactions between actors and their arbitrations.

Research methodologies



Semi-structured interviews with journalists and stakeholders.

- Selection of journalists who have covered the shrinkage-swelling of clays or flooding in Puy-de-Dôme.
 - The Mountain
 - France Bleu Pays d'Auvergne France 3 Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes
- Questions about journalistic practices, perceptions of risks, and relationships with sources.

Research methodologies



Semi-structured interviews with stakeholders.

- associations (CatNat 63 and CatNat Cournon Le Cendre)
- Public monitoring and risk management bodies (Regional Directorate of the Geological and Mining Research Bureau [BRGM])
- Communities (mainly Clermont-Ferrand and Cournon d'Auvergne).





- Media causes
- Political causes
- Technical causes
- A lack of resources for victims' associations

A – Media causes



The shrinkage-swelling of clays, a hazard difficult to promote in the media and to tell about

Cracks linked to clay are considered less spectacular than the flood











82.5%

14.5%



A – Media causes



Underestimation by journalists

Unknown and underestimated by journalists

Coverage by the local press (general)

- Organizational constraints of local editorial offices
- Mainly covered by general journalists
- Role of local journalists in covering natural hazards

Need for specialized journalists

- There are few official sources dealing with the duration
- Lack of cause entrepreneurs

B – Political causes



Reluctance of mayors to tackle the problem to preserve the attractiveness of their municipality

- Some of the victims do not wish to advertise on the subject.
- The political cost of not addressing the subject is limited.
- The insurance framework of clay risk reduces the political responsibility of elected officials

C - Technical and administrative causes



- Experts are less requested by elected officials for technical expertise on the ground in the case of clay risks than for other natural risks.
- The technical services believe that it is not their role to encourage the implementation of preventive communication
- From their point of view, risk communication is therefore first and foremost technical communication.

D – Victims' reluctance



In theory, the preponderant role of cause entrepreneurs

- Importance of cause entrepreneurs to mediate problems
- Examples of spectacular actions or pressure on elected officials

Reluctance of victims to report disasters

- Influence on real estate valuation
- Example of an association manager

Objective alliances

- Alliance of real estate players to avoid the devaluation of properties
- Opposition of victims to natural disaster recognition procedures

To conclude...



- Finally, why is the clay risk not the subject of more controversy taken up in the public media space?
 - Media causes
 - Policies
 - Social
 - Technical and administrative
- Consequences?
 - Clay risk as a depoliticized risk
 - Reduced treatment which leads to limited awareness of this risk





Thank you for your attention











