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Emergent system behaviour as a tool for understanding disaster resilience: The case of Southern African subsistence agriculture

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1. Introduction

The concept of resilience is becoming an increasingly important paradigm for managing risk faced by disaster affected societies. Prominent international policy documents such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and contemporary academic discourses on disasters reiterate the importance of understanding and prioritising building societal resilience. However, despite its prominent position in current and future disaster risk management, confusion still exists on what exactly resilience entails and how it can be enhanced. This paper attempts to provide a perspective on this problem from the point of view of Complex Adaptive Systems Theory, with specific focus on the notion of emergence within adaptive systems. Emergence, which is defined as the concept that complex behaviours at macro-level

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