



## **Understanding complexity in the water-climate-food nexus**

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Complexity thinking is gradually entering the arenas of water, climate, food security and economic development, as concepts emerging from complexity theory such as resilience are becoming part of everyday language. But how do people understand these concepts, are people talking the same language? This presentation shows the results of two case studies, one in the Netherlands and one in Vietnam, where practitioners from various backgrounds are asked for their assessment of resilience and flexibility in the case of freshwater management. Using mixed-methods research, the study shows that practitioners have widely varying interpretations of concepts and how these evolved over time, and that such interpretations are highly influenced by context and culture. But moreover, the results show that practitioners are more concerned with considerations that are currently not well addressed in literature and policies: the need for physical and institutional space for self-organization in nature; dependency management as opposed to resilience; and trade-offs between robustness and flexibility. These results have an implication for policymakers and practice-oriented researchers working on the water-climate-food nexus, to ensure that their policies and research contribute to improved management of ecosystems.