

Social Dimensions of Agroecology in Laos



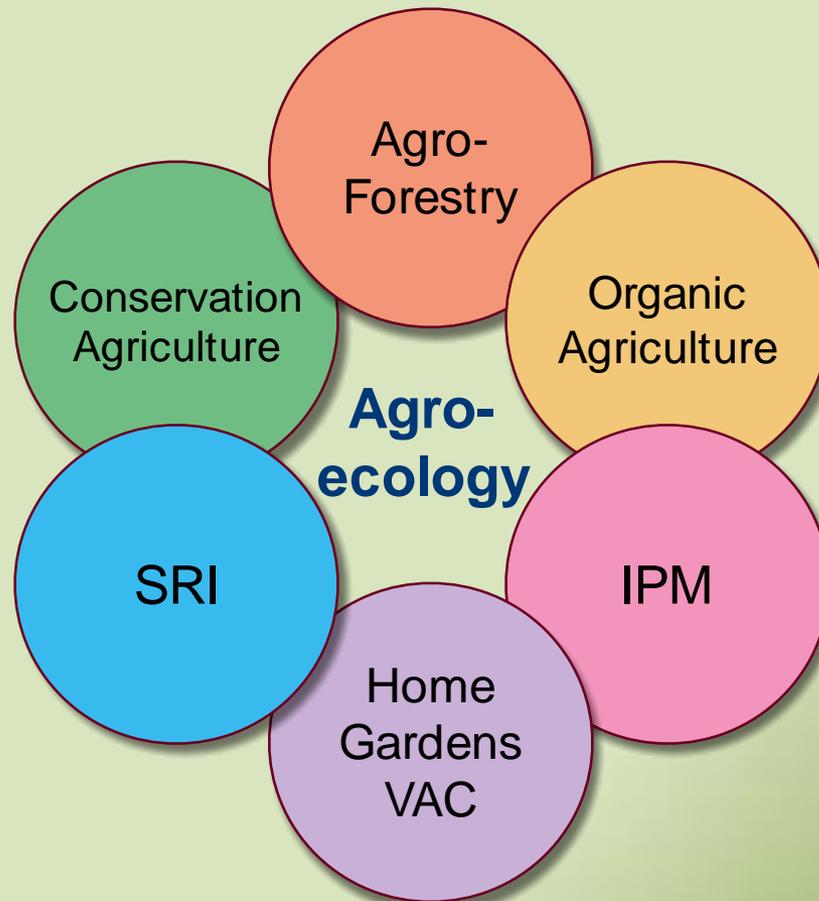
Andrew Bartlett
Lao Upland Rural Advisory Service

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Introductory remarks

- ⊙ *Agroecology is often seen as set of techniques or practices, but to understand why these practices are relevant and how they may be applied requires an understanding of the underlying social context in which farming takes place.*
- ⊙ *In particular, we need to appreciate the political and economic conditions that have given rise to the unsustainable farming practices that agroecology aims to replace.*

Agroecological techniques



Social dimensions



Social dimensions

Dimensions	Questions

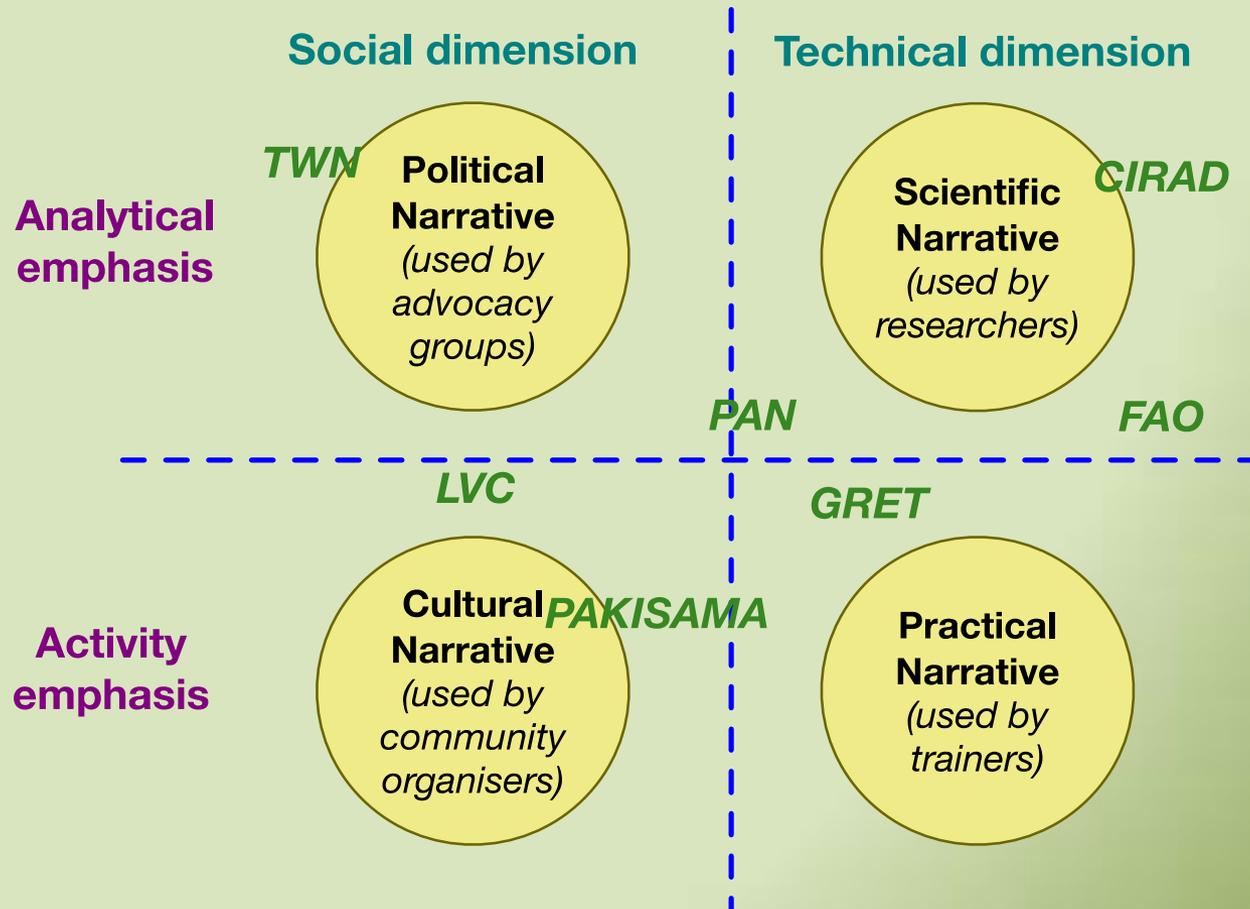
Different perspectives

Technical – Reijntjes <i>et al</i> 1992	Social - Nyéléni Declaration 2015

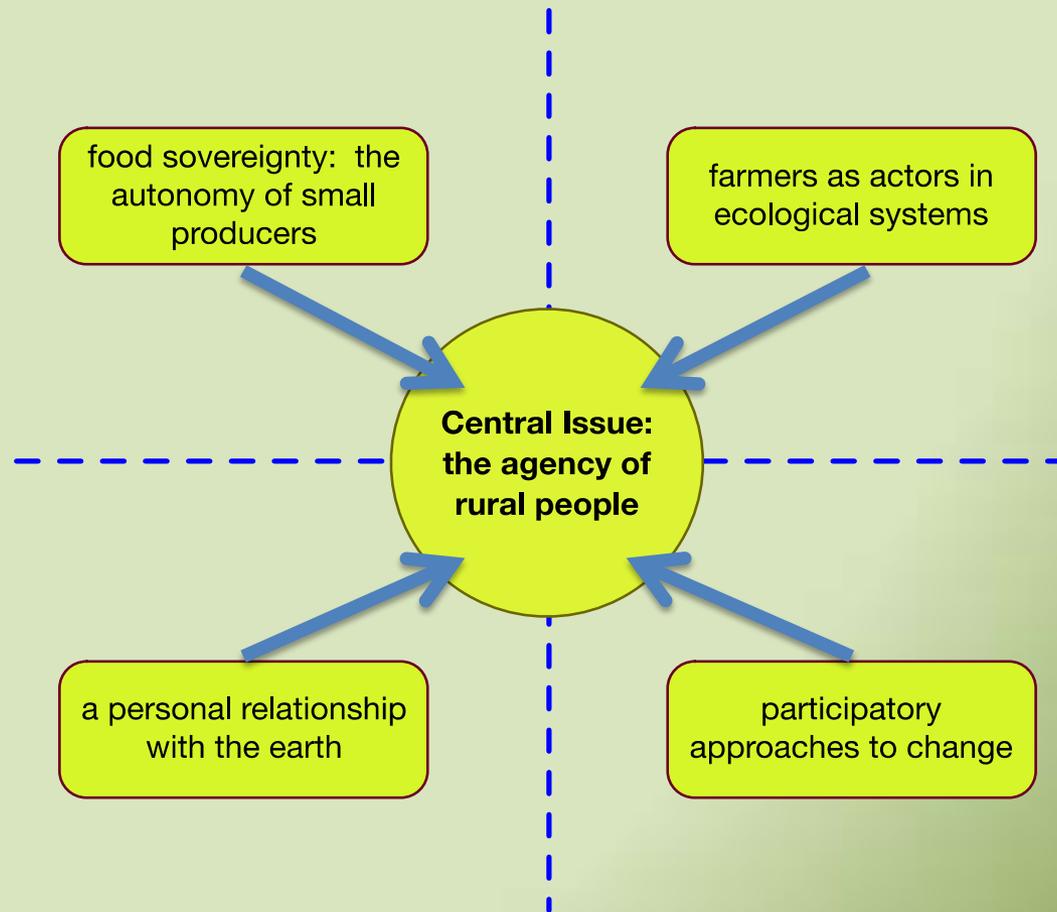
Regional Consultation

- ⦿ Different perspectives were noticeable at the Multi-stakeholder Consultation on Agroecology for Asia and the Pacific, in Bangkok in November 2015
- ⦿ The event, organised by FAO, was attended by over 150 participants representing governments, civil society, academia and private sector
- ⦿ The technical/social dichotomy was overlaid with another contrast between the analysts and activists

Different perspectives



Narrative analysis



The toxic landscape



Kham and Nonghet Districts
in Xieng Khuang Province

23,000 ha of hybrid maize
being grown for export as
animal feed



The toxic landscape



Thousands of tonnes of topsoil are lost each year due to erosion

The amount of Paraquat used in a single season is enough to kill a million people



Technical responses

- ⊙ Conservation agriculture has been introduced into this part of Laos by CIRAD
- ⊙ A type of SRI has been advocated by SAEDA
- ⊙ And a type of IPM has been supported by FAO
- ⊙ Agro-forestry and organic farming have also been promoted by various organisations in other parts of Xieng Khuang province
- ⊙ **But the toxic landscape persists**
- ⊙ *Why have agroecological practices not been scaled up beyond the demonstration plots and model villages where projects have introduced them?*

Toxic social conditions

Dimensions	Questions

Concluding remarks

- ⦿ If the underlying social conditions are unchanged, we cannot expect agroecological techniques to become more widely adopted.
- ⦿ In order to move forward, we may need to have a broader discussion about the future of farming in Laos, that encompasses all of the narratives that were encountered at the Regional Consultation in Bangkok.
- ⦿ And at the centre of this discussion should be the interests and voice of rural people.

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LURAS Lao Upland Rural Advisory Service

