

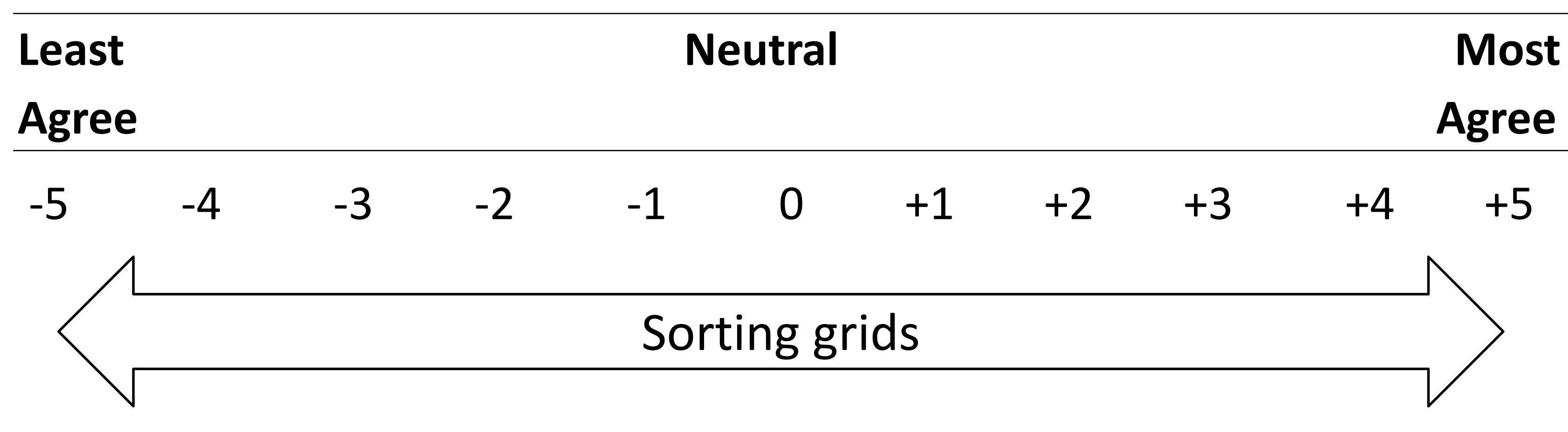
## Objective

Environmental, social and economical challenges drive farmers in Africa to continuously innovate, both technically and organisationally. In Benin, the pig value chain faces major constraints calling for a sustained innovation effort. In order to evaluate how a stakeholder platform might stimulate this innovation, this study tackles the perception of innovation using the Q method, a social science tool.

## Methods

In 3 communes of the Ouémé-Plateau region, defined by participatory appraisal, a set of 55 statements was developed in focus groups. These were submitted to 25 stakeholders across the pig value chain to be sorted along an agreement scale ranging from -5 to +5. The PQmethod software (Schmolck, 2002) allowed for centroid and PCA analysis and the description of 3 typical discourses at play.

**Fig 1: The sorting grid for the scoring of the 55 statements.**



## Results

The Q-method analysis lead to the classification of perceptions under 3 principal discourses, all sharing a consensual basis.

### Consensus

All discourses state that hardships lead actors to innovations, seen as benefits for adopters and a necessary challenge. Innovation is not felt as disruptive of tradition.

### Discourse F1 (13 actors)

#### "Optimistic discourse on present innovations"

For the proponents of this discourse, innovation is an on-going and fruitful process, also borne by field actors.

### Discourse F2 (3 actors)

#### "Innovations as an ineffective, linear, top-down process"

This discourse considers innovations as originating from scientists, transferred to the field by extensions services. The efficacy of innovations is here questioned or denied.

### Discourse F3 (9 actors)

#### "Innovations and failing institutions"

This discourse also agree that innovation can have positive impacts, but it remains cautious about agricultural institutions functioning and inclusiveness of innovations.

**Table 1: Consensus statements between factors (agreement score)**

N°	Statements	F1	F2	F3
2**	Innovations come from local research	-5	-5	-5
4**	Innovations can be achieved by everyone	4	5	4
8*	Innovations are often a benefit for people who adopt them	4	2	3
9**	Innovations influence traditional practices	-3	-3	-5
12**	We have to innovate for a sustainable agricultural production	5	5	5
16*	Innovators are those who have problems and decide to resolve them	3	5	4
41*	The actors of agricultural value chains have little incentive to innovate	-1	-3	-2
51**	The innovations are challenges to be faced in Africa	4	4	3

Statistically non significant difference between any pair of factors: \*\* at  $p > 0.05$ , \* at  $p > 0.01$

**Table 2: Statements distinguishing all factors (agreement score)**

N°	Statements	F1	F2	F3
33**	The innovations can support a lot productions in the African context	+5	-5	+3
29**	The poor farmers would remain lagging the innovations	-2	-5	+2
46*	The innovations allow for improving agricultural yields	+4	-1	+1
1*	Innovations come from foreign research	-4	3	0
18**	A minimum of instruction and experiences are needed to innovate	-3	5	0

\*\*Statistically significant difference between all pair of factors: \*\*at  $p < 0.01$ , \* at  $p < 0.05$

## Discussion & Conclusion

This study facilitated exchanges with pig value chain actors regarding innovation and its practical origins, ways and consequences. Our results bring an understanding of potential gaps in perception that could undermine the participation to a multi-stakeholder innovation platform, and should help in tailoring messages in order to prevent or correct these gaps. The discourses 2 and 3 particularly point to the need for a full participation of stakeholders in the project, meaning their involvement in decision-making. The discourse 1 shows that an internal motivation and optimism could be mobilized in this collective process.