

# **Farm household livelihood strategies and socio-economic changes in rural Indonesia**

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## **Abstract**

The concept of livelihood has received growing attention both from rural development planners and socio-economic scientists since the early 1990s. The concept is particularly useful to help elaborate small farmers' way of making a living and is instrumental to understand how poor people manage to survive in the rural areas of developing countries. In 2 regions of Indonesia differing in socio-ecological conditions (West Java and West Kalimantan), the livelihood strategy (LS) of farm families was studied, focusing on 2 distinct livelihood objectives that people normally try to achieve: securing survival and improving their standard of living. Two dominant types of LS were identified. West Javanese smallholders tend to adopt a LS based on the individual household, aiming at diversification of household income sources. In West Kalimantan, people tend to maintain a community-based LS with a strong focus on agricultural activities. The adoption of a specific LS can bring about a significant change in rural socio-economic structures. In the long-term, the mutual influences between the individual LS and the rural socio-economic environment can create a dynamic mechanism ("oscillatory mechanism") of change. A concept to describe these causal relationships, called "oscillation concept", is discussed. **KEYWORDS:** TROPAG | social change | survival | households | family farms | nonfarm income | diversification | farming systems | socioeconomic development | Indonesia | Java | Kalimantan.

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