Uncovering smallholder heterogeneity

An analysis of diverging livelihood trajectories and outcomes of engagement in tree-crop value chains in Ghana

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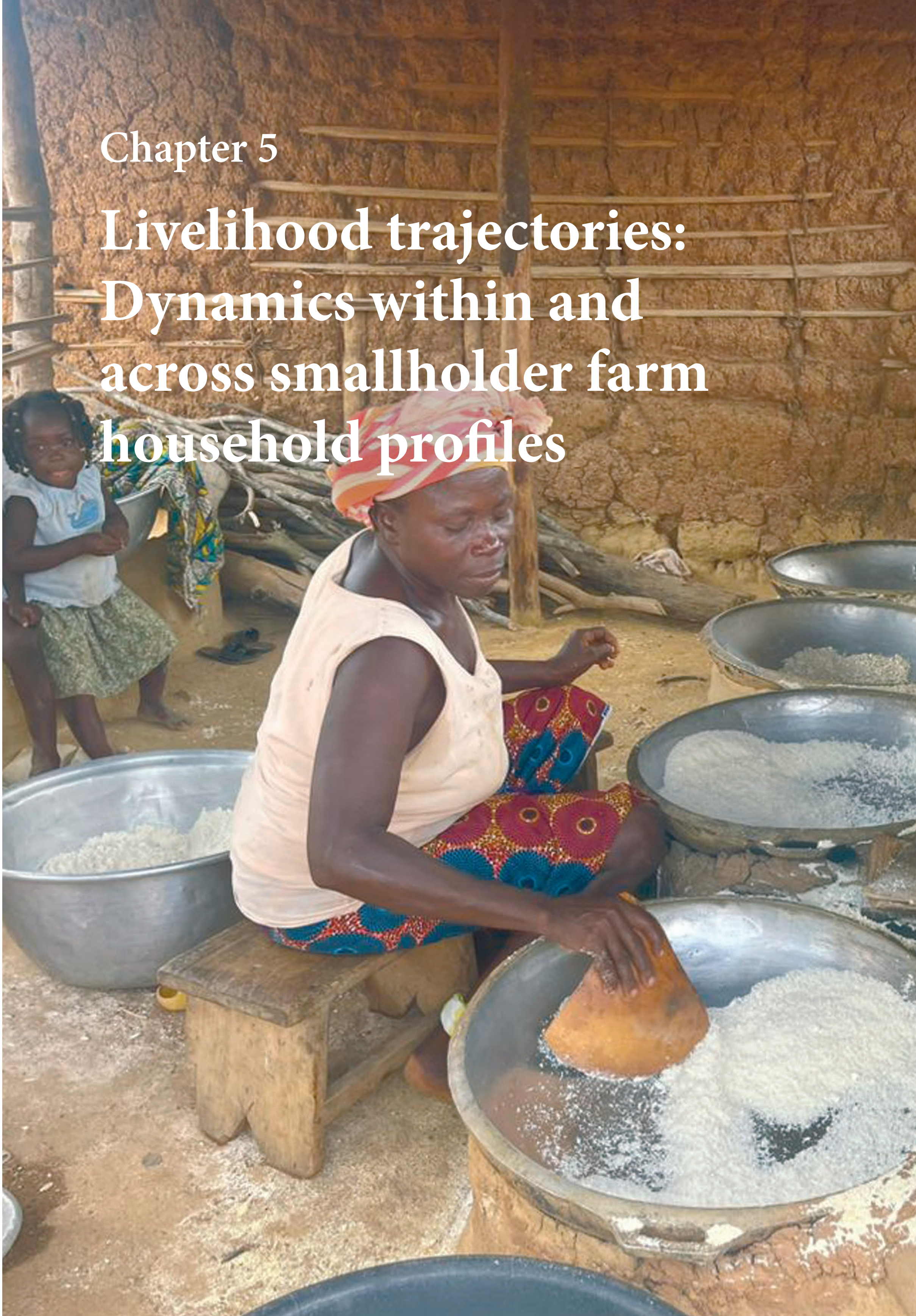


Chapter 5

Livelihood trajectories: Dynamics within and across smallholder farm household profiles

5.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 revealed that different forms of VCCs may work differently for different smallholders, while Chapter 4 identified four smallholder tree-crop farming household profiles that show dynamics in space and differences in engagement in VCCs. Chapter 4 further revealed that landless and single tree-crop farmers are largely excluded from VCCs that may have wider livelihood impacts. The profile dynamics in time and space reveal different trajectories determined by different livelihood strategies, opportunities, constraints, and aspirations and hence the underlying reasons for VCC engagement. Studying and understanding these dynamics will provide insight into farmers' engagement in VCCs and the risks and benefits of engagement. The study uses livelihood trajectories as a concept to unravel these livelihood and profile dynamics (see Chapter 1). The chapter addresses the following questions:

1. How do smallholder profiles and livelihood trajectories evolve for each of the small-holder tree-crop farming household profiles?
2. What factors (opportunities, constraints, and aspirations) determine these livelihood trajectories?

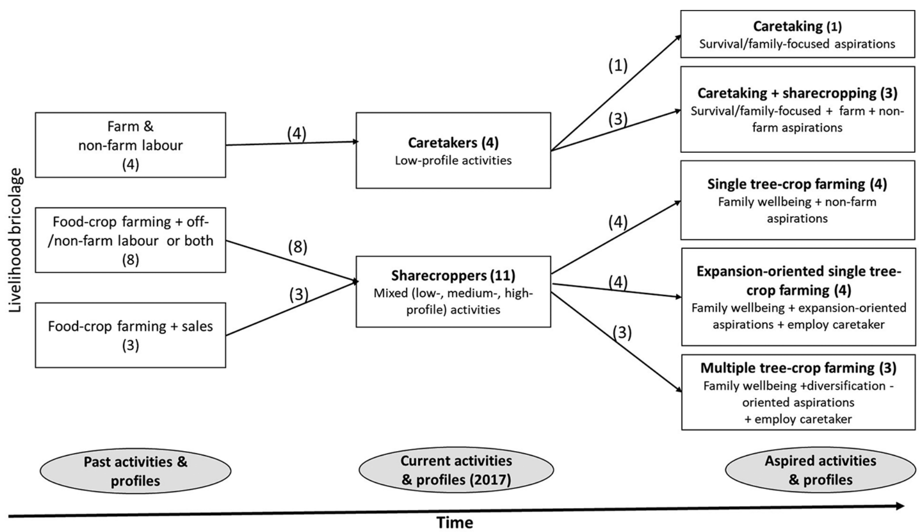
The primary data is based on an in-depth analysis of 65 profile-specific life history interviews randomly selected from life history interviews with 143 of the 168 surveyed households (see 2.6.7). As explained in 2.7.4, the life history interviews were randomly selected with SPSS and analysed using ATLAS.ti to identify patterns in livelihood activities, constraints, opportunities, and aspirations over time (past, present, and future). Being selected as tree-crop farmers (see 2.6), it is no surprise that most households consider tree-crop farming their main livelihood activity. Therefore, tree-crop farming is considered in this chapter as their primary activity in the present, and all other activities are considered secondary livelihood activities. Secondary livelihood activities are divided into low-profile, medium-profile, and high-profile, depending on the capital and skills needed to undertake the respective activities and the incomes they can generate. Examples of low-profile activities are selling meals (cooked food) and farm labour, while activities with medium-profile include working as purchasing clerks (PCs), guards, and lottery agents. Being a teacher, running a provision store, and artisanry are examples of high-profile activities.

In Sections 5.2 to 5.5, we trace the trajectories for each household profile, identifying and examining the household livelihood portfolio per profile based on their activities in the past[64] and present (2017) and those they aspire to undertake in the future. The analysis

[64] Past activities include all activities that households used to undertake before engaging in tree-crop farming. These include activities that they have stopped doing, modified or expanded, and past processes of acquiring tree-crop farms.

includes the opportunities and constraints underlying the livelihood choices over time. The discussion (see 5.6) explores similarities and differences in livelihood strategies, constraints, opportunities, and aspirations across household profiles. The synthesis will be related to the broader literature on typologies and livelihood trajectories. Section 5.7 answers the research questions and addresses the theoretical and policy implications for value-chain collaborations and interventions targeting smallholders in the tree-crop sector.

Figure 5.1 Livelihood and profile trajectories of landless farming households



Source: Life history interviews December 2016-March 2017.

5.2 Livelihood and profile trajectories of landless farming households

The results show that all 15 landless households were involved in various livelihood activities in the past (see Figure 5.1). These past livelihood activities were oriented towards survival, and the combination of various activities emerges as a new 'livelihood bricolage[65]' profile not identified in Chapter 4. These activities were low- to medium-profile activities. They can be divided into selling labour (n = 4), food-crop farming and other activities (n = 8), and food-crop farming only (n = 3) (see Figure 5.1). In the present

[65] Dressler et al. (2016:75) coined the term livelihood bricolage and defined it as "mixing, matching and building of portfolios based on the economic and socio-cultural considerations of place." Batterbury (2001) emphasizes the fluid, non-linear, and dynamic nature of this bricolage process (p. 437), different from the notion of livelihood diversification (e.g. Ellis 2000).

(i.e., 2016-2017, when the data was collected), two sub-profiles can be highlighted: the caretakers' and the sharecroppers' trajectories.

5.2.1 Livelihood and profile dynamics among caretakers

The trajectory of caretakers (n = 4) displays a low-income and constraint-driven pathway, resulting in stagnation or, at best, aspiring for a slight improvement in the future. Households following this trajectory sold farm and wage labour in the past, for instance, as masonry labourers or load carriers, popularly known as *kayayei* or 'head potters' in Ghanaian English (Cobbinah & Niminga-Beka, 2017), resulting in low and unstable incomes. These households lack farming land and migrated to start cocoa caretaking[66] as a farming opportunity for stable and better incomes. Caretaking requires no initial payment and is a medium-profile opportunity for households that do not have tree-crop farming lands or sufficient incomes to get into tree-crop farming. Caretakers start young but can continue long, as evidenced by a 63-year-old caretaker; although they are usually male, there are also female caretakers (see Chapter 4).

Presently, caretakers still have limited opportunities due to the low productivity of the farms they manage, resulting in low incomes. They aspire to increase cocoa yields but see it as outside their responsibilities. Caretaking is unstable and insecure as the caretaker has no autonomy in decisions regarding the farm (see Chapter 4). They, therefore, focus on present survival and do not invest in secondary activities due mainly to a lack of financial means. However, all caretaking households complement their income by selling farm labour and raising chickens and small stock, which they usually do under a 'keep & share' arrangement. Under such an arrangement, they rear poultry and small stock for the owner of the animals in return for a share in the proceeds at the end of the deal. Caretakers often exchange labour for food but can also produce food crops under a crop-sharing arrangement; participate in labour-for-food production arrangements[67]; or use lease land, as they are land constrained (see Chapter 4). Cocoa purchasing clerks are their opportunity to access loans, usually facilitated by the farm owner. However, these loans can charge up to 100% interest between the cocoa off- and main seasons.

Based on their aspirations, there are two likely trajectories ahead among caretaking households. Those with aspirations that focus merely on the family (n = 1) and those with additional sharecropping aspirations (n = 3). Aside from limited income, which does not permit saving for other things aside from family survival, the one caretaker's modest farming aspirations are also related to high age. Young caretakers aspire to

[66] Caretaking arrangements are less common in the oil palm sector.

[67] Labour-for-food arrangements are deals whereby a landless farmer supplies labour to a tree-crop farmer in exchange for the opportunity to interplant food crops between the tree crops. The landless farmer manages the farm until s/he has removed all food crops from the farm, after which s/he hands the farm over to the tree-crop farmer again.

enter sharecropping (land-sharing arrangement) as becoming a farm owner offers the opportunity for higher incomes in the future to meet family needs (including education), learning skills, and investing in a stable non-farm activity (e.g. a provision store, which is preferred by many due to secure demand for daily provisions).

5.2.2 Livelihood and profile dynamics among sharecroppers

The second trajectory among landless farm households is that of the sharecroppers (n = 11) (Figure 5.1). This trajectory is pursued by three households growing subsistence food crops, grains (rice and maize) and vegetables for the market in the past. Eight households also previously combined the sale of surplus food crops with off-farm labour or low- to medium-profile, such as selling meals, petty trading of food items such as canned foods and bottled drinks, and working as a watchman and ambulant hairdresser. Nine out of these 11 households are migrants.

Currently, 8 of these 11 sharecroppers combine it with caretaking. For households without suitable lands[68] for tree-crop farming, sharecropping offers the least expensive opportunity to enter tree-crop farming (see Chapter 4). Sharecropping requires an initial payment, and although opportunities to buy land exist, these are expensive and surrounded by legal procedures. Most sharecroppers sell food crops to sustain the household during at least the first three years when the tree crops do not yield any income yet. The food crops are often interplanted with tree crops during farm establishment and serve as shade for the tree-crop seedlings. However, the latter often serves as the main income source for those who combine sharecropping with caretaking. Some sharecropping households complement their income with the occasional sale of farm labour, chickens and small stock. All sharecroppers aspired to become farm owners in the future, but three different aspired trajectories emerged.

The first trajectory involves households who aspire to become single tree-crop farming households, manage their farms, and invest in stable non-farm activities (n = 4) (Figure 5.1). These households are currently sharecroppers, and some combine sharecropping/caretaking with the sale of farm labour and surplus food crops. As sharecroppers, they have low and unstable incomes, limited access to farm inputs, and lack land for expansion, autonomy over production, and recognition from the government and other value chain actors, which affects their ability to access support and services. Caretaking allows them to access loans and inputs from cocoa-purchasing clerks and their buying companies. Availability of family labour is an opportunity as sharecropping and caretaking require a lot of labour input. However, sometimes, caretaking comes with

[68] Some landless households have access to family land, but such land is usually not suitable for tree crops or planting perennials is not allowed as family lands belong to all members and can only be used for seasonal crop production.

compulsory extra labour for the farm owner beyond the cocoa farm. This extra work is commonly referred to as *nnahoo* (c.f. Roth et al. 2017; LeBaron & Gore 20202019). The number of extra hours of farm labour is at the farm owner's discretion and can be translated into in-kind payments, ranging from 'plain' (half a bag of cocoa) to several bags. It stands in the way of investing labour in land-sharing arrangements and acquiring farm ownership as a way towards recognition to access support and services from the government and other value-chain actors. Farmers aspire to land ownership as they expect it to lead to increased incomes for their children's education and as a basis for establishing stable non-farm high-profile activities (e.g. running a provision store).

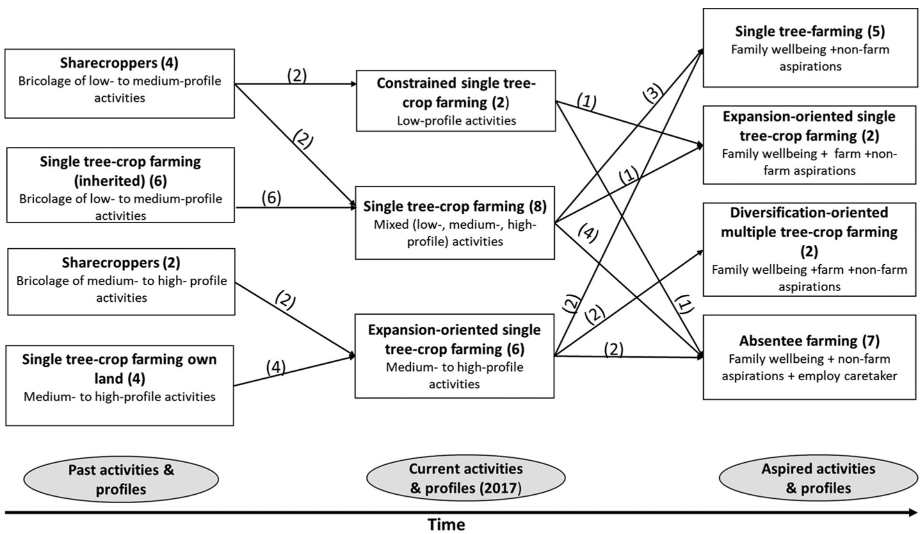
The second likely trajectory is becoming a single tree-crop farming household seeking farm improvement in the future (n = 4) (Figure 5.1). These households are currently also a mix of sharecroppers and sharecroppers/caretakers. They combine this with low- to medium-profile activities such as off-farm labour, random sales of animals, petty trading of food items, hairdressing and, in rare cases, salaried work (i.e. the case of the watchman). Aside from prioritizing children's education for the future, they aspire to maintain their farms. Some invest in farm inputs and increase yields. Some even aspire to expand their farm size through their own land or another sharecropping arrangement. Despite the many constraints and limited opportunities they have as sharecroppers, this group sees some opportunities to earn an income to invest in the tree-crop farm in the future. They hope to advance their non-farm activities into high-profile types that generate higher incomes, such as running a provision store.

The third possible future trajectory is the most progressive one, aspired by three households that aim to expand and diversify their tree-crop farms and secondary livelihood activities to become multiple tree-crop farming households (see Figure 5.1). These households are currently sharecroppers/caretakers who are diversifying their livelihood portfolio by cultivating rice, maize and vegetables for the market. Some raise and occasionally sell animals (chickens and small stock). They also undertake medium- to high-profile activities such as buying cocoa (purchasing clerks), trading food items, running a provision store, and home processing and trading palm oil. These households, therefore, have much higher income capacity than other households within the landless category and are able and willing to invest in farming. These households are in an area (Dunkwa) where a recent outgrower scheme has created a market for oil palm and where the government has distributed free oil palm seedlings. In the future, they aspire to trade agro-inputs, sell building materials, and run an oil palm processing Kramer.

Five households want to become absentee households in the long term mainly because they consider themselves as becoming too old to continue farming, are short of family labour as children concentrate on education or become independent, believe that managing matured tree-crop farm is difficult for females, or because they need to migrate back to their home communities.

Overall, the landless households are farmers who face a lot of constraints, with the majority still mixing and matching livelihood activities to survive. They are not even recognized as farmers but aspire to grow in the future.

Figure 5.2 Livelihood and profile trajectories of single tree-crop farming households



Source: Life history interviews December 2016-March 2017.

5.3 Livelihood and profile trajectories of single tree-crop farming households

All single tree-crop farming households have already engaged in the tree-crop sector in the past, with farms at various stages of development in 2017. They also combined a mix and match of various activities for family survival. Their engagement in the tree-crop value chain was through sharecropping or on their own land acquired through inheritance or their own establishment. The nature of supplementary activities – low- to medium-profile or medium- to high-profile – determined the pathways to three categories of single tree-crop farming households in the present (see Figure 5.2).

5.3.1 Livelihood and profile dynamics among constrained single tree-crop households

This category of single tree-crop households comprises two households mainly dependent on cocoa farming. They display characteristics similar to farmers' self-identified category of 'constrained tree-crop farmers' (see Chapter 4). In the past, these households were sharecroppers engaged in low-profile activities such as selling farm labour, home processing and the sale of oil palm, and casual labour (see Figure 5.2). With middle-aged heads (mean age 47 years), these households manage their farms and generate seasonal incomes, barely enough for family survival. Their incomes are low due to low productivity, and despite incomes from caretaking or the random sale of animals and surplus food crops, these households often need loans from PCs to bridge the lean season. As past sharecroppers, these households currently have neither the land for further farm expansion nor the income to enter another land-sharing arrangement or more rewarding income-generating activity. They additionally grow food crops or dry-season vegetables (e.g. cabbage) on leased lands or through food-crop sharing or labour-for-food arrangements. They are highly dependent on free government inputs. However, these are provided inadequately (for instance, only two of the four application regimes or without a guarantee that the farm can be sprayed within the growing season) and inconsistently (not every season) and these smallholders are unable to supplement the deficient spraying regimes. Opportunities for inputs on credit from licensed buying companies (LBCs) exist, but interest rates can be as high as 50%, and most of these households do not make use of it as they are likely to run into indebtedness.

The likely trajectory for the future depends on the age and gender of the household head. The household expecting to expand in the future is young and will have family labour to support expansion in the future. The other one is female-headed and of age and expects to be too old in the future to farm, hence the aspiration to become an absentee farmer who leaves the farm management to a caretaker.

5.3.2 Livelihood and profile dynamics among single-crop households

The single tree-crop farming household trajectory differs from the first category in combining farming and non-farm activities. Most (n=6) of these households are female-headed. This category consists of past cocoa sharecroppers and households who inherited cocoa farms that they have partly rehabilitated or replanted (Figure 5.2). In the past, they combined cocoa farming with food-crop farming and caretaking, and low-profile non-farm activities such as selling surplus food crops, cooked meals (Ga kenkey and rice), and farm and casual wage labour (as mason), or palm-wine tapping, and soap making (with an ingredient from cocoa husks). A few households were engaged in medium-profile activities, including petty trading of food items such as fresh and dried fish, spices, bottled water and other drinks, buying and selling food crops outside of the community, and working as an ambulant seamstress. However, incomes were low and primarily used for family survival, leaving limited opportunities for farm investment and delaying the establishment and subsequent acquisition of the cocoa farm through land sharing.

Among the former sharecroppers, the main constraints faced were land tenure insecurity, deficient farm inputs, and a lack of recognition from the government and other value-chain actors that restricted their access to support and services.

Presently, these households combine farming with medium- to high-profile secondary activities. These include caretaking, petty trading of food items, running a drinking spot, provision store, cold store (a frozen fish and meat shop), or clothing shop, and buying and trading food crops in the city. Some combine cocoa farming with dry-season vegetable and rice production, which they do on leased lands along rivers and streams. Vegetable and rice production are mainly for the market and offer relatively substantial household income during the dry season when the produce fetches high prices. Poultry (chicken) and small stock (sheep and goats) are often reared and sold during the festive seasons when they generate higher income. These households view access to family labour, government inputs, loans and credited inputs from PCs and their LBCs as their biggest opportunities. They are, however, constrained by ageing farms, low yields and incomes, insufficient government inputs and high input costs. As a result, they can only meet family needs and are rarely able to reinvest in the farm. The majority still depends on substantial loans from PCs to supplement income during the cocoa off-season, some using their farms as collateral (*Awowa*) and losing it in the process. Cocoa income comes when a new school year begins, and school fees take most of the income. Next follows Christmas with high expenditure on food and gifts, leaving no money for farm reinvestment. Most single tree-crop households are thus highly dependent on free government inputs and expensive credited inputs from buying companies.

The likely future trajectory of this group is contingent on the age and gender of the household head, availability of family labour, family support, access to land and the income capacity of the household. Six households in this category are female-headed, most of whom had acquired their farms through inheritance. They have no land to expand or lack the family labour to manage the farm. Hence, they aspire to leave their farm to a caretaker in the future but attach great importance to non-farm income-generating activities in which they are already engaged or hope to engage in the future.

Three of these households seek or expect to remain single tree-crop households in the future. These are relatively young households (ages of heads between 39-52 years) with access to family labour but insufficient income capacity to invest in farm expansion.

Only one single tree-crop farming household aspires to expand the farm in the future. The household has no land for expansion, but the head is relatively young and hopes for increased income capacity to engage in another land-sharing arrangement or to invest in a high-profile activity once money can be saved as the children near completion of their education.

All single tree-crop households aspire to add or expand high-profile activities such as running a provision store to generate sufficient income. They all aim to enhance a family's well-being by investing in children's education, buying assets (e.g. houses, a car), and leaving the farm as an inheritance to their children. Overall, investing in the farm is no priority and depends on support from the government, PCs and their LBCs as it implies a constraint to achieving their non-farm livelihood ambitions.

5.3.3 Livelihood and profile dynamics among expansion-oriented single tree-crop households

Six households are currently investing in tree-crop farm expansion, four in cocoa and two in oil palm (see Figure 5.2). Their expansion is facilitated by access to land or income capacity that allows acquiring a share contract and investing in making new farms. In the past, these households had been engaged in medium- to high-profile activities that generated relatively high incomes. Examples include trading in citrus, running a frozen fish/meat store (cold store) or agro-inputs shop, artisanry (carpentry, seamstress), gari (cassava flakes) processing, and salaried work. Mostly male-headed and mixed-aged (36-60 years), these households consciously combine farming and non-farm activities and can be considered 'mixed-income farmers' as farmers labelled them in the self-identified profiles (see Chapter 4). These households see farm size expansion as a pathway towards increased tree-crop incomes and have both the assets and the income capacity (mostly from non-farm activities) to reinvest in farming. However, cocoa-farming households depend on the government and LBCs for credited inputs.

The oil palm households can be considered 'elites' with access to own land, high education (secondary and tertiary levels), skills (carpentry, seamstress), support from children or family members, and high incomes from their non-farm activities. In addition to salaries, these households earn an income from the sale of meals (*Fanti kenkey*), oil palm processing (Kramer), trading in palm oil, running a provision store, and/or selling borehole water. They aspire to further diversify in the future to include running a drug store or a tree-crop farm management agency[69], which takes over the farm management from "constrained farmers" by paying them a specified amount. Hence, they have the income capacity to hire labour to make additional oil palm farms. Farmers label oil palm farming as "labour and capital intensive, but short-lived" and only favourable to well-off households or for farmers in an outgrower scheme. The oil palm households in this

[69] Farm management business is where one contracts and manages the farm of other farmers with specified guaranteed amount to be paid to the farmer every cropping season. The contractor pays the same contract amount to the farm owner whether he makes profit or not. This was reported at the Kade area in citrus and oil palm.

sample also appear to be the most ambitious regarding the future, aiming to diversify into cocoa, mango and rubber to become multiple tree-crop households (see Figure 5.2). Despite varying ambitions, all single tree-crop farming households foresee increasing reliance on the government and other value-chain actors in the future. Even the 'rich elite' oil palm households aspire for government support and services like the cocoa sector, as they have limited access to credit.

Overall, single tree-crop households are farmers constrained by low seasonal cocoa incomes. They depend mostly on the government and other value-chain actors to meet farm needs and bridge households' needs but still aspire to hold their farm as an inheritance for their children.

5.4 Livelihood and profile trajectories of multiple tree-crop farming households

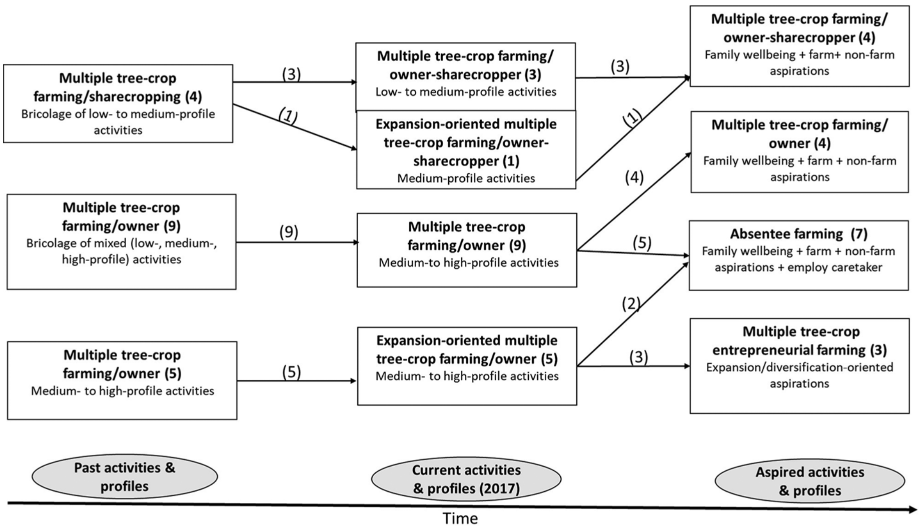
With 38% of all surveyed households, the multiple tree-crop households formed the largest group. They grow cocoa and oil palm, but some also have other tree crops such as citrus, mango or cashew (see Chapter 4). Most of these households had well-established farms by 2017 but at different stages, with some recently replanting their oil palm farms after 30 years and others still expanding their cocoa or oil palm farms. Most households analysed in this section are male-headed with mid-to-old-aged heads (45-75 years). Only one male household head was under 40 years, and two households were female-headed. All households already had multiple tree-crop farms in the past, but they differed according to the prospects for farm expansion in the present (see Figure 5.3). This was related to landownership (sharecroppers versus landowners) and their secondary activities (low/medium versus medium/high profile).

5.4.1 Livelihood and profile dynamics among owner-sharecroppers

The owner-sharecropper category among the multiple-tree-crop farmers (see Figure 5.3) is a group of male-headed households who own a tree-crop farm (usually the cocoa farm) but engage in sharecropping for their oil palm. Aside from tree-crop farming in share arrangements in the past, the households were also involved in low- to medium-profile secondary activities, such as food-crop farming and selling surplus food crops, sale of farm and casual labour, caretaking, petty, petty trading or small-scale mining (*galamsey*). Presently, three households depend mostly on tree-crop incomes (both crops), complemented by income from the sales of surplus food-crop production. This is commonly combined with rearing and occasionally selling chickens or other secondary income, such as from a small bakery. In the past, the availability of family labour and support in establishing tree-crop farms were the most mentioned opportunities.

Availability of family labour is an important factor in establishing tree-crop farms, and often a combination of family, hired and communal labour (*nnoboa*) is used.

Figure 5.3 Livelihood and profile trajectories of multiple tree-crop farming households



Source: Life history interviews December 2016-March 2017.

Similarly, access to land through a share arrangement is mentioned as an opportunity in the past. However, these share arrangements did not lead to land ownership in the oil palm sector as they did in the cocoa sector. Two households received a share of over half of the land for 30 years. The other two households received two-thirds of the harvest after establishing the farm and investing their labour and capital. Two households were enrolled in an oil palm outgrower scheme, where land-sharing arrangements are forbidden. Although these households considered the support in the form of credit, inputs and training as an opportunity in the past, they now feel constrained by the outgrower contract as 25% of the harvest is used to service the contract debt before sharing the rest with the landowner. After this, the sharecropper still must buy inputs for the oil palm farm as credited inputs from the outgrower cease at year four of farm establishment. Consequently, these households are confronted with multiple payments from their tree-crop incomes and have reduced possibilities to accumulate land or capital through these arrangements.

The expansion-oriented household is relatively affluent. Aside from having worked as a harvester for the large-scale oil palm company in the area (GOPDC), the household head is also the only cocoa-purchasing clerk (PC) in his community. As the credit source for cocoa farmers, he has gained a lot of social capital (e.g. trust and reciprocity), which enabled him to acquire new sharecropping lands for both cocoa and oil palm, while his work as a PC provided him access to financial capital to invest in new farms (borrowed from the company's money he could manage to buy cocoa from farmers).

The likely trajectory towards the future for this group is to remain multiple tree-crop farming households based on a combination of land ownership and sharecropping. Aspirations for the future include maintaining the farm, especially the cocoa, as an inheritance for children, increasing farm investment in the oil palm farms, and increasing yields. Investments are not mentioned in relation to the cocoa farms, as farmers expect these inputs from the government. However, the real priority of these households is to invest in their children's education up to the university level for them to have better jobs in the future. Also, investing in a provision store and acquiring assets (e.g. house or a farm truck) are also mentioned as future aspirations.

5.4.2 Livelihood and profile dynamics among land-owning multiple tree-crop farming households

The multiple-tree crops households with own land only are the largest group in this profile. Within this group, two distinctive trajectories can be discerned (Figure 5.3): one of a mainstream group of nine households that combine tree-crop farming with medium- and high-profile activities (addressed in this section) and a group of five households with a similar livelihood profile, but more expansion-oriented (see 5.4.3).

The non-expansion-oriented group comprises households that undertook a broad range of livelihood activities in the past (see Figure 5.3). They are landowners who established their farms on their own land (family land, inherited, gift or bought), with some having also inherited mature tree-crop farms in the past. Past secondary activities were low-to high-profile, including trading food crops, petty trading of food items, selling meals (chop bar), driving, commercial poultry farming, artisanry and salaried jobs. Presently, nearly half of these households (n = 4) depend solely on farming incomes, but not only on tree crops, which they combine with dry-season vegetable production, maize, and rice for the market. These households see low- and medium-profile activities below their present status and await high incomes from high-profile activities (e.g. provision stores). The five other households combine farming with medium-to high-profile activities such as oil palm processing, running a provision store, artisanry, or small stock rearing, while some have a stable income from pension and/or remittances.

The households considered the different livelihood activities and resulting diversification of income sources in the past as an opportunity that enabled them to establish a tree-crop farm. Similarly, gaining access to land through inheritance (access to family land), family labour and support from the family were mentioned as past opportunities.

Five households engaging in an oil palm outgrower scheme considered access to credit, inputs and training, and the ready market through this scheme as an opportunity they had in the past. They particularly appreciate the multiple income sources and the regularity and security of oil palm income

Among this group of multiple tree-crop farmers, cocoa generates lump sums for high expenditures such as university fees, while oil palm is considered ''the farmers' chop money".[70] Support from PCs and VCCs or the government in the form of inputs and loans form additional investment opportunities. These farmers, however, also faced constraints in investing adequately in farm maintenance and expansion in the past. In this respect, they mostly referred to insufficient incomes, inadequate government support to start a tree-crop farm, and high school fees, while female-headed households particularly referred to challenges related to high labour needs. Also, these households currently face constraints to invest properly in the farm because they are indebted to a PC or the company with which they have an outgrower contract. Paying interest, high school fees, and high costs of inputs limit their income and investment capacity. Low productivity and income pose a challenge for those who inherited an ageing farm. Some farmers, notably in the oil palm sector, refer to the inability to meet the recommended dosage of fertilizer applications and the resultant lower-than-expected yields.

The age and gender of the household head determine future pathways. Those working with caretakers who manage their cocoa farms and/or with labourers on oil palm farms and the female-headed households aspire to become absentee households. These are also the households with the oldest heads (52-75 years) and old farms. Some of these households aspire to replant the aged farms using sharecroppers and invest and increase yields for their children to inherit the farm. Investment in assets (e.g. houses) and high-profile activities such as building a house for renting and running a provision store were also mentioned.

Households with the aspiration to maintain their farms are relatively young (age of head 38-59 years) and male-headed. The overall aspirations focus on family well-being, such as investing in children's education and acquiring assets (a better house etc.), setting up high-profile secondary activities like a provision or building materials store, and leaving the farms as an inheritance to their children in the future.

The anticipated opportunities to realize these aspirations are based on higher incomes after repayment of debts or completion of children's education so that no school fees need to be paid anymore; savings or loans that allow investment; and remittances from children. The ready market for provision stores and other businesses is also a future opportunity. However, outgrowers fear that their children might inherit their outgrower

[70] "Chop money" is a common Ghanaian English term for housekeeping money. In Ghanaian English, 'to chop' means 'to eat' – hence the term 'chop bar' for an informal restaurant selling traditional food.

debts or that they will not be able to save enough money or access credit to realize their aspirations.

5.4.3 Livelihood and profile dynamics among expansion-oriented households

This is a category of endowed farm owners. They all have established oil palm and cocoa farms, some acquired by engaging sharecroppers and some through inheritance. Oil palm farms were mostly established with their own resources, with two households also engaging in an outgrower scheme. In the past, these households were already engaged in medium-to-high profile activities from which they acquired relatively high incomes, such as *galamsey*, petty trading of food items, selling meals in a restaurant or chop bar, artisanry, running a Kramer or electrical shop, and salaried work (e.g. teaching). Some earned relatively high side incomes from small stock (including piggery, ducks, turkey), citrus, and rice farming. These households have the assets and income capacity to expand their farms by engaging sharecroppers, using family labour, or employing hired labour. These households are male-headed, and these heads are advanced in age (46-67 years). For the majority, the mismatch between support and services from VCCs with their needs is their major constraint.

Their future trajectories depend highly on assets and income capacity. The three households earning income from businesses (e.g. a restaurant, supermarket, or oil palm Kramer) are expected to become entrepreneurial households. These households aspire to diversify into rubber, fisheries, citrus juice processing, and medium-scale oil palm processing companies to increase employment opportunities in the community. These households also have the social network to access credit thanks to having worked in leadership positions (e.g. assembly member, Unit Committee[71] chairman) or being recognized as the best farmers in their municipality.

5.5 Livelihood and profile trajectories of absentee tree-crop farming households

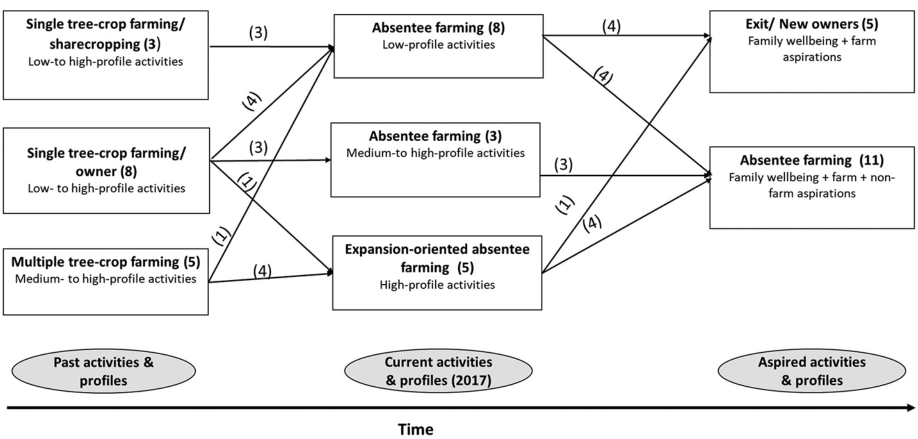
The absentee tree-crop farming profile is defined by ageing household heads (53-95 years). These households mostly leave the management of their cocoa farms to caretakers, a sharecropper, or a labourer in the case of an oil palm farm. The households are growing cocoa or oil palm, but five of them have both. They all engage in non-farm activities and can be subdivided according to the profile of these activities (low, medium-to-high or

[71] The Unit Committee is the smallest administrative unit in Ghana's decentralized governance system, formally responsible for tasks such as the registration of births and deaths, monitoring the implementation of self-help and development projects, acting as focal point to discuss local problems, overseeing the performance of District Assembly members, etc. (Legislative Instrument 1967, Fourth Schedule, Regulation 25 (2010) cited in Botchwey (2017: 181).

high; see 5.1) and their associated prospect for farm expansion in the present (see Figure 5.4).

Considering their non-farm activities, these households seem to correspond to what farmers self-identified as the mixed-income or part-time farming profile. Their age and attention to other income-generating activities explain the need to engage caretakers and/or sharecroppers. In terms of income, their position seems to be similar to that of multiple tree-crop farming households (see Chapter 4).

Figure 5.4 Livelihood and profile trajectories among absentee tree-crop farming households



Source: Life history interviews December 2016-March 2017.

5.5.1 Livelihood and profile dynamics among absentee households with low-profile activities

With eight households, this category is the largest in the sample (see Figure 5.4). These are aged households with heads 59-95 years old, and many depend solely on tree-crop incomes due to advanced age and poor health – acquired from farms managed by a caretaker, sharecropper or labourer. Others combine with food-crop farming from which they sell surplus, rearing and random sales of chickens or goats and selling meals. Three of these households had acquired their farms through sharecropping, and five had inherited already established farms or land. In the past, these households were already engaged in tree-cropping, combined with a variety of secondary activities, including the sale of surplus food crops and small stock, lottery agent, oil palm and *gari* (cassava) processing, cocoa caretaking and salaried jobs (e.g. tax collector, office clerk). The households cited access to land-sharing *abunu* or inherited family land, family support and labour, non-farm incomes, and access to credit facilitated by non-farm activities as key opportunities in the past. Presently, they consider having multiple income sources, which together provide a stable income, the availability of caretakers, access to credited inputs and loans from purchasing clerks or their licensed buying companies, and free government inputs for the cocoa sector as the key opportunities. However, households overwhelmingly pointed to low or unstable income and high school fees, leaving little money to reinvest in the farm in the past. The sharecroppers explicitly mentioned the high cost of securing sharecropping lands and the insecurity of tenure, which affected the farm completion rate and delayed farm ownership. Households also frequently cited inadequate government and VCC support for the tree-farm establishment. All cocoa households mentioned a broad range of constraints, including inadequate and or inconsistent government support to cocoa farmers, seasonality of cocoa incomes, a lack of family labour, high labour costs (including for caretakers), insecure arrangements with caretakers[72], high costs of inputs, and high interest on loans and credited inputs from PCs and LBCs. In some cases, personal constraints, such as ill health, a lack of skills, and higher school feels at the university level, constrained the prospects for farm expansion or the ability to reinvest in the farm.

Future goals depend on age, health, succession plans, ageing farms, and cultural attachment to farming. The latter explains the great value attached to leaving the cocoa farm as an inheritance for the next generation. The household heads aspiring to exit are old (76-85 years) and with poor health and intend to divide the farm amongst children and family in the hope that the family will keep and replant the old farms. They also hope their family will use the farm income to provide for themselves when they stop farming and die. Some households have a sentimental attachment to farming and aspire to continue food-crop farming, combining it with a high-profile non-farm activity. However, all households in this group foresee constraints in terms of old age, failing strength, and ageing farms with low yields that cannot be replanted due to a lack of financial capacity. Their only hope for the future is better – i.e. sufficient and consistent – government and VCC support.

5.5.2 Livelihood and profile dynamics among absentee households with medium- to high-profile activities

The difference between this category of absentee farmers and the previous one is that these households presently have medium- to high-profile secondary activities or income sources (see Figure 5.4). These households are relatively young (53-62) and engage

[72] Caretaking arrangements are insecure for farm owners because caretakers can abandon the farm when productivity goes down to find better yielding farms. Also, some caretakers do not maintain the farm as required, underreport yields, and even sell inputs acquired by the farm owner for the farms particularly when the farm owner reside outside the farming community.

in food-crop farming and selling surplus, small stock (including piggery), running a drinking spot or provision store, and salaried jobs (e.g. teaching or as a *susu*[73] collector). Like the other two sub-groups, the households were already engaged in tree-crop farming in the past, either growing a single tree crop (n = 3) or multiple ones (n = 1), having inherited already established cocoa farms which they have rehabilitated or replanted. In addition, they were engaged in food-crop farming, from which they sold surpluses, while one household sold second-hand clothes and had a member working as a cleaner. This household got the opportunity to enter an oil palm outgrower scheme with part of the family land and combined this with cocoa.

These households face similar constraints and opportunities as the previous group. Their limited savings and incomes, combined with high costs for school fees, labour and inputs, hinder adequate investments in the farm. This explains why they depend on credited inputs and government support, both of which are constrained due to high interest rates and the inadequate and irregular nature of this support, respectively. For cocoa households, seasonality of income is a problem, while for oil palm households, the terms of outgrower contracts (longstanding debts and low incomes) are a key challenge. As a result, households living off a provision store are confronted with clients borrowing and eventually not paying for items they sell.

The future profile of these households is influenced by their ability to remain involved in food-crop farming and improve their secondary activities. Most absentee households in this group have already built houses and have grown-up, independent children, but a considerable number still consider investing in higher education for their children and acquiring assets (e.g. houses and cars) as priorities in the future that will affect their ability to reinvest in the farm adequately.

5.5.3 Livelihood and profile dynamics among expansion-oriented absentee households

The five expansion-oriented households (see Figure 5.4) generated their main incomes from high-profile non-farm activities in the past, mostly as teachers and small business owners (e.g. a timber contractor, yam importer). Four of them are multiple tree-crop farming households that gained oil palm farms mostly through outgrower schemes. Their household heads are relatively old (70-85 years) and retired, receiving pensions, with only one under 60 years and still teaching. Some households combine farming with buying cocoa (PC) and running a provision store or an oil palm processing Kramer. These

[73] Susu is a traditional saving and credit system, whereby the susu agent collects a fixed amount of money from the members of a susu club or association, to either return it by the end of the month, or to use it for a bigger loan to one of the members. Formal financial institutions increasingly recognize the value of susu as a micro-finance system for small and medium enterprises and incorporate it into their banking system, for which they employ collectors and operators (Alabi et al. 2007).

households are expanding their cocoa or oil palm farms with the opportunity attributed to secure income sources, access to land, access to credit facilitated by their non-farm activities, and the availability of caretakers and sharecroppers; opportunities they also mentioned as being key in the past. Present constraints are also faced: inadequate access to credit, the mismatch between support and services from VCCs with their needs, and inadequate savings. Like the multiple tree-crop households, however, these households find the secure and continuous flow of oil palm incomes a major opportunity.

In the future, these households aspire to maintain their farms as absentee households. These households are engaged in advanced VCCs (see 4.6.1) and aspire to greater benefits from the VCC, which would help, for instance, to buy oil palm processing machines, trucks and machines for harvesting oil palm fruits from taller palm trees. They also aim to service their outgrower debts fully and hope to have family labour or sharecroppers to replant aged oil palm farms. Compared to the other sub-groups, they have a greater capacity to save and access credit and aspire to expand or improve their provision store, oil palm processing facility or trading business.

The overall picture of the absentee farming households is one of households not actively engaging in farm work but still identifying strongly with their farm, which they see as a heritage for their children. They make a living off multiple income sources, have always done so and aspire to do so in the future.

5.6 Discussion

The chapter addressed the dynamics in households' livelihood trajectories across different profiles. Using the concept of livelihood trajectories, I examined households' past, present and aspired future portfolios and the constraints and opportunities that determine these. I found a link between a household's livelihood trajectories and household profiles: a more varied and quality livelihood portfolio leads to progression in the household's profile. Access to land, income capacity, the combination of tree crops, and age and gender explain such variations across and within profiles.

A critical factor in tree-crop farming is the role of customary land tenure arrangements, with widespread land-sharing arrangements, particularly in the cocoa sector. These land-sharing arrangements – whereby a sharecropper establishes a tree-crop farm for the landowner in return for which he usually receives half of the land when the farm is ready (see Chapter 4) – act as a pathway to landownership for sharecroppers, as has also been observed by Grega et al. (2015), Asamoah & Owusu-Ansah (2017) and Roth et al. (2017). The widespread occurrence of sharecroppers and caretakers in the tree-crop sector has also been noted in the broader literature (e.g. Amanor & Diderutuah 2001; Amanor 2008; Grega et al. 2015; Asamoah and Owusu-Ansah 2017). They have been instrumental in spearheading the expansion of cocoa and oil palm from the 1920s, establishing or managing established farms (Gyasi 1994; Amanor 2008). However, these arrangements are context- and location-specific and have seen rapid changes in response to land pressure from competing economic opportunities and land uses (Gyasi 1994; Amanor 2008; Ruf 2010).

As seen in this chapter, sharecroppers aspire to farm ownership, and many households have indeed become owners through sharecropping in the past (see Figure 5.2). However, the opposite has also been observed among a few multiple tree-crop households that own their cocoa farms but remained tenants in the oil-palm sector. This can be explained by the fact that land-sharing arrangements are more common in the cocoa sector than in the oil-palm sector, where crop-sharing arrangements prevail. Other studies have also shown that most cocoa-farming households obtained their farms through sharecropping arrangements (Grega et al. 2015; Asamoah & Owusu-Ansah 2017). Thus, some landless households can move to single tree-crop households through sharecropping, but this holds limited prospects for growth and higher welfare (see 5.2 and 5.3). This also applies to households that inherited land or farms.

In addition to access to land, this chapter revealed the importance of livelihood diversification and its implications for a household's income and capacity to invest in farm and non-farm activities, reinvest in old farms, or create new farms by entering into new land-sharing arrangements for which an amount of money is to be paid to the landowner. Diversifying into non-farm activities is important because they generate higher incomes than farm or off-farm activities. A study by Owusu-Amankwah et al. (2017) has shown that farmers who diversify into non-farm activities get about 50% more yields and about five times the income of those who depend on cocoa farming alone and that diversification into non-farm activities yields more income than farm activities. This chapter showed the relevance of distinguishing between low-, medium- and high-profile activities. Within each of the four household profiles, livelihood trajectories diverged depending on the profile of income-generating activities, with higher prospects for a few expansion-oriented sharecroppers, single-tree crop, and multiple tree-crop households to move from one profile into a more solid one (see Table 5.1).

Stagnation or progression in households' livelihood trajectories can be further explained by specific opportunities and constraints. Based on the specific combination of constraints and opportunities, a distinction can be made between survival-oriented and growth-oriented livelihood trajectories (c.f. Kini and Likoko 2017; Betge et al. 2020). Survival-oriented households have a low-income capacity, often prioritizing household needs over farm investment, limited access to land, limited opportunities for expansion, and no prospects for accumulation compared to growth-oriented households. It is a category to which Dorward et al. (2009) refer to as 'hanging in': all assets and activities are oriented towards household survival and maintaining what they have. Growth-oriented

Table 5.1 Household profile and livelihood characteristics

Characteristic	Landless	Single tree-crop households	Multiple tree-crop households	Absentee households
Age household head	Relatively young (23-56 yrs.)	Intermediate (33-70 yrs.)	Relatively old (53-75 yrs.)	Old (55-95 yrs.)
Gender	Predominantly male	Mixed	Predominantly male	Mixed
General characterization	Extremely constrained; invisible	Constrained farm owners	Relatively wealthy; good networks; most with medium- to high-profile non-farm activities	Profile of mixed wealth with households depending mainly on tree-crop income but combining this with non-farm activities; culturally attached to the farm
Ambition for the future	Moving towards single- or multiple-tree-crop households	Remain 'as is' or become absentee; a minority: expand/ and become a multiple tree-crop farm household	Remain a multiple tree-crop farming household with stable non-farm income or become entrepreneurial or absentee	Maintain the farm for inheritance
Likely prospect for the future	'Hanging in' (remaining in the same profile) or 'inching up' into a single or (rarely) multiple tree-crop profile, facing a lot of constraints	'Hanging in' and remaining highly dependent on government & VCC support; a few 'inching up' (some expansion and diversification) and 'stepping out' (becoming absentee)	Varied: 'Hanging in', 'stepping up', 'stepping out'	Step out and leave the farm to their children
Ambition for the children	Education	Education & inherit farm	Education & inherit the farm	Education & inherit the farm

(table continues on the next page)

Characteristic	Landless	Single tree-crop households	Multiple tree-crop households	Absentee households
Strategies	Most seek higher incomes through livelihood bricolage ('hassling') to become single tree-crop households. Few caretakers enter a share-cropping arrangement, a few seeking outgrower schemes to become multiple tree-crop households	Majority: looking at government and VCCs rather than relying on own agency; minority: high non-farm income for expansion and/or diversification	Making use of social networks, medium- to high-profile income-generating opportunities, and making use of sharecroppers/ caretakers	Rely on caretakers, government, acquire credited inputs from VCC
Main opportunities	A land-sharing arrangement is a way to acquire land	Government support, PC loans, credited?? inputs from LBCs	Access to land, labour, credit, networks, high-profile non-farm activity	Government and VCC support; high-profile income source
Main constraints	Invisibility/lack of support; insecurity of tenure and income	Seasonality of income; high interest on VCC loans and inputs; inconsistent government support	Long-term debt from outgrower scheme or end of outgrower contract (no inputs anymore)	Age, gender and limited physical strength; aged, unproductive farms
Equivalent farmer-defined profile	Caretakers/sharecroppers	Constrained tree-crop farmers; a few: mixed-income farmers	Mixed-income and entrepreneurial farmers	Mixed-income, part-time and absentee farmers

Source: Life history interviews December 2016-March 2017.

5

households, in contrast, have the income capacity to invest in their farm properly and aspire to increase productivity, expand the farm, and/or invest in high-profile non-farm activities. Dorward et al. (2009) refer to these strategies as 'stepping up' (investments in assets to increase yields and income and/or expand the farm) and 'stepping out' (investing mainly in high-profile non-farm activities to be able to step out of agriculture and leave the farm to a caretaker or their children). I add the 'inching up' category introduced by Olofsson (2020) for farm households that, despite the constraints, aspire to improve their farm and livelihood portfolio. These are different from the 'stepping up' category, which has a greater capacity to invest in multiple sectors and activities.

The survival-oriented households currently comprise landless households, a large section of single tree-crop households, and (very) few multiple tree-crop households. These households are 'hanging in" by maintaining their farms and combining this with low-to medium-profile activities. The most static in terms of trajectories are landless households. Despite many aspiring for better prospects, they are constrained by tenure insecurity, low incomes and invisibility to government and other value-chain actors providing support and services. While deficient support and services apply to all households at the tree-crop establishment phase, it exacerbates the plight of the landless. Entering a land-sharing arrangement requires a payment to the landowner, which caretakers can generally not afford. Therefore, their livelihood trajectory generally remains static: the four households in Figure 5.5 likely to be landless in the future are presently all caretakers. Those who manage to enter a land-sharing arrangement face constraints to invest in the farm, which delays its establishment and hence farm ownership. Tenure insecurity adversely affects farm investments and productivity (Grega et al. 2015; Asamoah & Owusu-Ansah 2017), offering landless farmers few prospects to strengthen their profile, even if they become a (single tree-crop) landowner.

Another group of survival-oriented households 'hanging in' are the majority of single-tree crop households cultivating cocoa. Although they are farm owners, they are constrained by low yields and incomes and the seasonality of their incomes. The prospect of expanding their farm is constrained, and they can maintain it only with government support (free inputs) or credited LBC inputs, and they often need loans from the PC to bridge the lean season. Although the buyer-seller relations network helps their household survival (see Chapter 3), these relations appear oppressive and exploitative, involving high interest rates of up to 100%. This may result in permanent indebtedness, with the risk of losing their tree-crop farm. Figure 5.5 shows that only two single tree-crop households aspire to become multiple tree-crop households; the rest either expects to remain a single tree-crop household or to 'step out' and become an absentee household (see below).

Also, some multiple tree-crop households entangled in debts through their enrolment in an outgrower scheme are 'hanging in'. Particularly those who do not own the land brought into the scheme face high debts as they owe the oil palm company for inputs and loans provided during the first four years and must pay the landowner a share of the harvest. These debts leave them unable to invest in their farms. I found this group mainly among households engaging in the BOPOP scheme (see 3.2.3). After deducting a debt payment of 25% from their incomes to the oil palm company and paying one-third of the harvest to the landowner, insufficient money remains to buy inputs for the farm. As a result, yields are lower than expected, which could extend the debt repayment period from 10 to over 20 or 30 years (pers. comm. TOPP staff 2015).

The 'inching up' strategy applies to landless households aspiring to become sharecroppers or expansion-oriented sharecroppers and single tree-crop households. They aim to expand their farm or diversify their livelihood portfolio through share-cropping, medium-to high-profile activities, and/or engaging in both cocoa and oil palm. Although they appear to have better income capacity now than others in the 'hanging in' category, several constraints will likely hinder them from realizing their ambitions. These constraints include land and credit access, inadequate government support, and unfavourable terms of outgrower schemes for those who aspire to engage in oil palm. As a result, they will likely be unable to adequately invest in their farms, resulting in limited accumulation, if any. The most likely scenario for this 'inching up' trajectory is that these households can sustain the farm and meet needs at best.

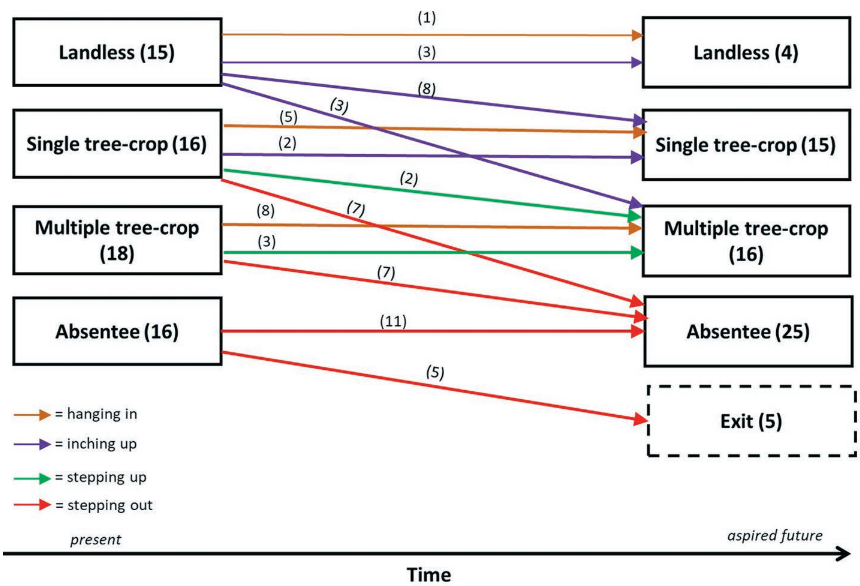
Households 'stepping up' in the present and future are the expansion-oriented single and multiple tree-crop households. These households are expanding and diversifying their farming and non-farm activities for higher or more stable returns. These households are well-off compared to the 'hanging in' and 'inching up' households and more visible to support from the government or companies. However, the support offered often does not meet their aspirations. For instance, they would prefer a motorized mist blower to apply agrochemicals instead of a knapsack for spraying.[74] Or they would prefer support for commercial poultry, which is beyond the scope of sectorial government support and VCCs.

The prospect of becoming a 'real entrepreneurial farmer' who engages in multiple tree crops and high-profile non-farm activities is likely to materialize in only a few cases where households have access to land, labour and credit; high-income capacity; and social networks, including VCCs. These households aspire to more than just tree-crop production and take opportunities such as running a Kramer and processing their own oil palm, aquaculture, or commercial poultry farms. Some also engage in an outgrower scheme without becoming indebted or in another type of VCC. Some of these households use sharecroppers, caretakers and labourers to enhance their prospects for accumulation.

[74] See Section 6.4.3 for the health and environmental sustainability effects of spraying agrochemicals.

Finally, there is a 'stepping out' category, consisting of all farm owners who are currently absentee farm households or aspire to become one. Rather than focusing on their farming activities, they aspire to step out of agriculture and engage in a high-profile income-generating activity such as running a provision store. Age and gender are the main determinants here: particularly female-headed households, and those with a household head older than 55 will likely step out in the future. This does not mean, however, that they aim to give up their farm. Rather they will leave the farm management to a caretaker or their children.

Figure 5.5 Prospects of farm household profiles for the future



Source: Author's construct based on life history interviews December 2016-March 2017.

The majority of the tree-crop household had 'inched/stepped up' into tree-crop farming in the past to increase their prospects. However, based on the analysis of the livelihood trajectories, I conclude that being a smallholder tree-crop farmer offers a poor prospect now and for the future. Figure 5.5 shows that of the 65 households studied in-depth, only five will likely step up. Almost half of the households (n = 30) aim to step out, and the same number are either 'hanging in' or 'inching up'. Existing literature confirms that smallholder cocoa farmers in Ghana are among the poorest in rural communities with low incomes (Hainmueller et al. 2011). Currently, virtually no smallholder cocoa farmer in West Africa earns a living income (Cocoa Barometer 2020), which is the minimum net annual income to make a decent standard of living for all household members (Smith

& Sarpong 2018) – including the basic needs regarding food, healthcare, education, housing and savings for emergencies (Komives et al. 2015). In Ghana, a living income is estimated at GHS 17,568 (USD 3,948) per year or GHS 1,464 (USD 339) per month for a typical 5-member household in cocoa communities (Smith & Sarpong 2018). Table 4.8 shows that the average annual gross household income from farm and non-farm activities was USD 687 for landless farmers, USD 1,242 for single tree-crop farmers, and USD 2,035 and 2,082 for multiple tree-crop and absentee farmers, respectively.[75] This seems to be lower than the figures by Bymolt et al. (2018), who calculated a net income from cocoa only at USD 1,510 and all income sources together at USD 2,467. Farmers initially have higher expectations of oil palm in this regard because it can provide a steady income. However, this prospect currently hardly materializes due to high labour and capital demand (Amanor 2008). This makes oil palm a crop of choice for relatively well-off households. Others can only engage in oil palm through outgrower schemes where they risk becoming permanently indebted.

This raises the question of why farmers want to become or remain tree-crop farmers. This is related to the cultural attachment placed on cocoa. This implies that farmers do not necessarily consider farming a business but a lifestyle and heritage for their children. Farmers prefer cocoa over oil palm despite the more regular income from oil palm because the latter is unattractive as an inheritance crop due to its short productive life (maximum 30 years, often less).

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter asked (1) how do livelihood portfolios and household profiles evolve for each of the smallholder tree-crop farming household profiles and (2) what factors (opportunities, constraints, and aspirations) determine these livelihood trajectories. The findings reveal that the landless and single tree-crop households are highly constrained survival smallholders, with only a minority managing to 'step up'. Also, a large segment of multiple tree-crop farmers is constrained due to permanent indebtedness. Overall, slightly more than one-third of the tree-crop farming households analysed in this chapter could be considered growth-oriented, but most of them were 'inching up' at best. Factors determining the course of livelihood trajectories include access to land, labour and credit, VCCs, and – above all – the profile of non-farm activities. These findings have important implications for policies and interventions aimed at improving the livelihoods of smallholder tree-crop farmers. However, before I address those in the last chapter, the next chapter first explores if and how the expansion of tree-crop farming affects the household food and security of the four household profiles.

[75] Meaning that the landless cocoa farmers are below the World Bank poverty line of USD 2,15 a day (USD 784.75 a year).