TEF, KHAT, AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE: A MIXED METHODS EXAMINATION OF SMALLHOLDER ADOPTION OF SUSTAINABLE INTENSIFICATION PRACTICES

Anne M. Cafer

Advisor: Sandy Rikoon

ABSTRACT

Climate induced rain variability, extensification into marginal lands, an inability to penetrate the agricultural knowledge information system (AKIS), and limited access to credit all hinder Ethiopian farmers' ability to be effective producers, which consequently reduces their ability to achieve food security (Dar and Twomlow 2007; Davis et al. 2012; Hounkonnou et al. 2012; Rosell and Homer 2007). Currently, the Government of Ethiopia, in an effort to improve food security and provide essential agricultural on-farm educational services, has greatly expanded its extension program. This expansion is intended to promote access to the AKIS in the hopes that farmers will achieve food security through sustainable (cereal) intensification with the implementation of new technologies and improved management practices. This is critical to greater food availability and improved access which to this point has been universally unrealized in Ethiopia (Feed the Future 2013; ATA 2013; FAO 2003). However, to-date, despite the expansion of extension services, adoption rates of new technologies and improved management practices remain low. Understanding how farmers come to the decision to adopt or not adopt a particular technology or management practice is essential to successfully changing behaviors around agricultural production.

This dissertation consists of three separate but related pieces which demonstrate the complexity of on farm decision making. Relationships with extension and access to AKIS were important factors in nonadoption, but were not the most critical. Access to capital was essential for adoption, but nature of capital in facilitating adoption is complicated. This capital, often in the form of income generated from khat, comes at the cost of community and environmental health, and also, continues to undermine cereal production in the region.