

# RESEARCH

## Rural Change in Tanzania

by Rayah Feldman\*

I carried out fieldwork for a project on rural change in Tanzania between 1969 and 1970. Specifically, the research was to examine patterns of innovation in Ismani, a commercial maize growing area in southern Tanzania, which had been settled by immigrants from surrounding areas since the early 1950's. My object was to examine the choices made by farmers *vis à vis* agricultural technique and practice, and forms of farm organisation, and to try to relate these to certain systematic features of the farmers and the farming situation.

The main factors which I studied, were individual farmers' family size and structure, their status in the community and their positions in relation to government aid and services. I also examined land tenure and its effect on agricultural decisions. Other factors studied were the relationship between types of settlement in the area - seasonal or permanent, and farming behaviour, and finally, the role of government policy, institutions, and political ideology. The complex question of the feasibility of different kinds of agricultural improvements, and their economic effects on farmers was studied in Ismani by David Feldman, and his results will necessarily form part of my own analysis. Fieldwork quickly revealed considerable economic differentiation among farmers. Much of the research has therefore been devoted to examining the way in which such differentiation has grown and has modified the relationship between the factors enumerated above and farmers' behaviour.

Ismani consists of many villages and dispersed settlements. My fieldwork was mainly carried out in one of the five major villages, but information from

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other villages, and from the area as a whole was also used. Data was collected using surveys, participant observation, and records from government offices in Iringa (the district headquarters for Ismani), local courts, and from the National Archives in Dar-es-Salaam.