

Croatian Rural Fieldsite

Carolyn Leutloff-Grandits, Danijela Birt

Location of the fieldsite

The seven villages we have chosen as the rural fieldsite are about 10 km from the town of Bjelovar situated in the north-west of Croatia (about 1,5 hours drive from the capital Zagreb). The villages all belong to the Catholic parish of Velika Ciglana and altogether consists of 488 permanently inhabited households with 1642 inhabitants.

Economic and social profile of the inhabitants

Based on the relatively rapid industrialisation and the following rural-urban migration in the region during socialism, most villages lost in size while the town of Bjelovar grew. However, private agriculture was never completely abandoned and for many families agriculture on private plots remained a secondary employment and an important source of income. This is also the case after the post-socialist transition, in which private agriculture became for some a kind of crisis economy. However, only few families started to become full time farmers and specialised their production. Most families also advice and support their children to gain higher education and to look for a job outside agriculture. Still, while the majority of men is engaged in wage work, most women stay at home to care for the children and engage in agriculture.



The guests from a local wedding.



Harvesting of wine by one family.



Tradition of „sipanja“, celebrating the arrival of a new born at home.

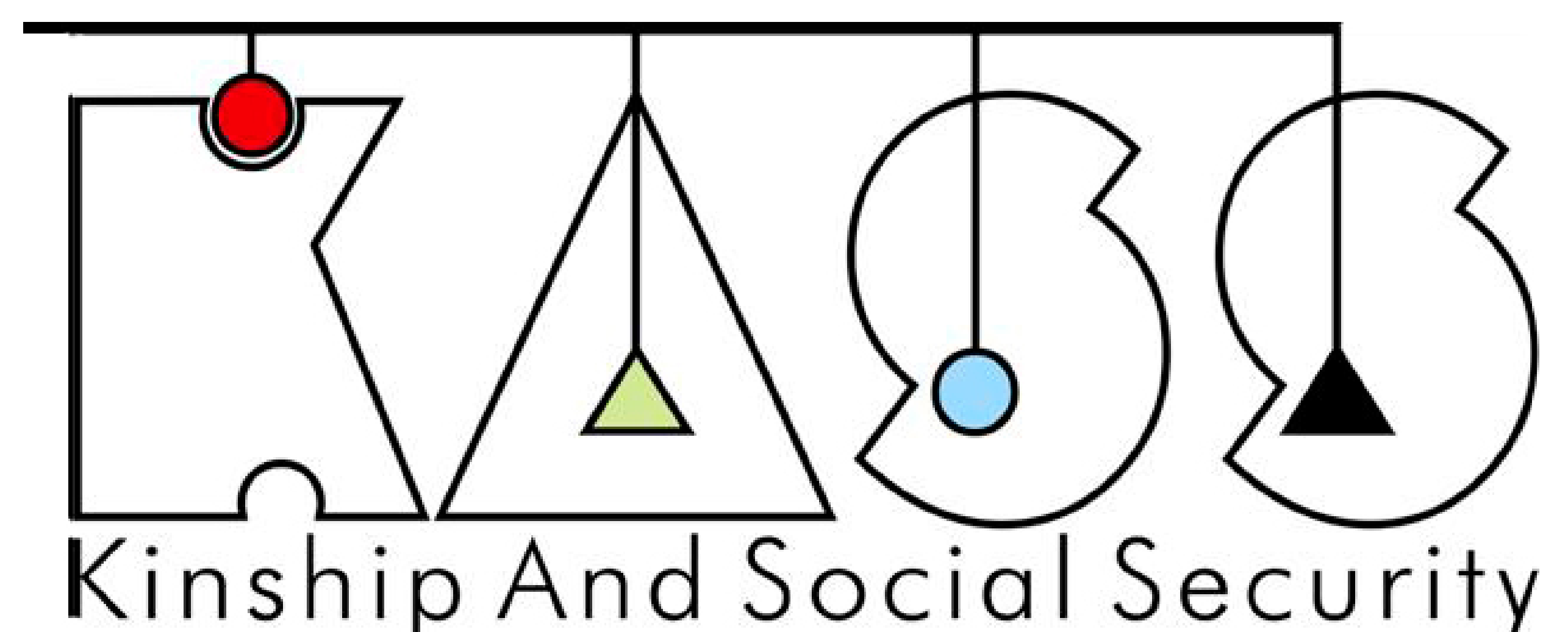


Helping relations

The nuclear family and the larger kingroup is seen as very important for the social/economic status and social security of individuals. Parents and grandparents try to provide their children with a good education and housing. Based on the support of their mothers and mothers in law in childcare and household, women could easily take up wage work. But for many of them this does not pay off financially. Therefore they rather keep on working in agriculture. An increasing number of women still wants to escape agricultural work and find employment in town.

Based on the limited economic possibilities most families avoid having more than two children, although children enjoy a considerable meaning in the rural society. The help given from the elderly to the younger is largely returned as soon as the elderly become needy. This is especially the case in the still widespread three generation households. However, there are many cases in which elderly are left on themselves, because young people have moved away. The state, but also the church and other civil organisations are largely absent in the care for the elderly.

The wider kingroup as well as neighbours and friends play an important role for the social security. They help in various agricultural tasks, with weddings and other festivals, and celebrating together. The obligatory gift givings are highly structured and organised manners and have a strong symbolical value.



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Further information:

Heiko Kastner
KASS Coordination
Phone: +49 (0)345 - 2927 211
E-mail: kastner@eth.mpg.de

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