

Italian Urban Fieldsite

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Location of the fieldsite

The urban area in Milan chosen for KASS fieldwork belongs to the so-called “quartiere di Porta Genova-Navigli”. Since 1996 when the districts of Milan had been reduced from 20 to 9 this neighbourhood belongs to zona 6 and it is located between the border of the historical centre and the beginning of the south-west semi-periphery, at the confluence of two water channels built in the Middle Ages.

Description of the local context

Milano is unquestionably an economically thriving city, with a below average unemployment rate in comparison to the rest of the country. Yet, the combined impact of the post-Fordist transformation of the labour market, a welfare system with low effectiveness and poor coordination, the rapid increase of the real estate market and finally the short supply of public housing is creating situations of marginalization and poverty spread throughout the city including our field site.

Although the fieldwork area is undergoing a process of gentrification, it is still characterized by a mix of run down and newly restored dwellings, and the resulting picture is that of an area where individuals characterized by different socio-economic conditions live side-by-side.



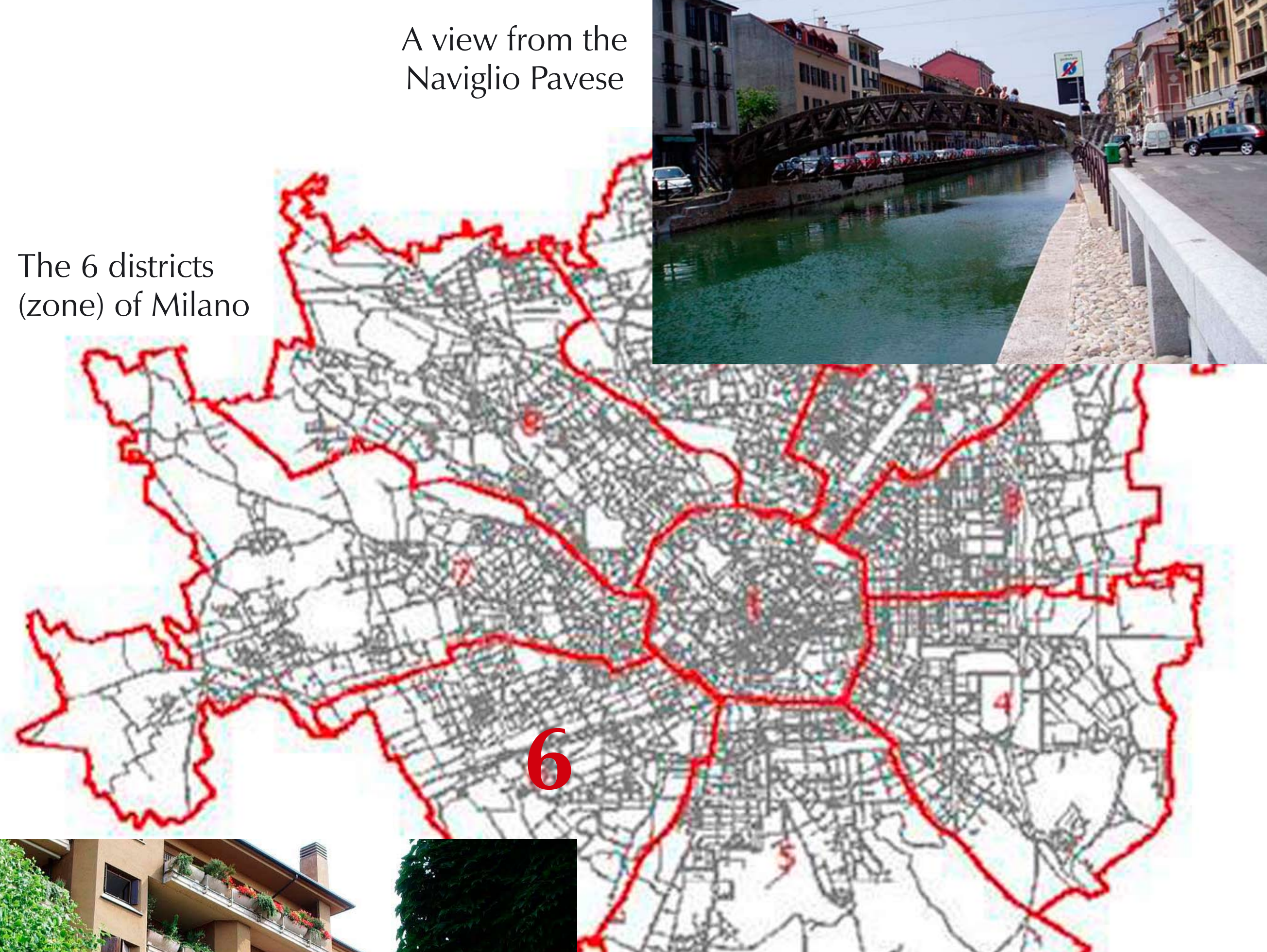
Birthrate and household size

In Milano the fertility rate remains one of the lowest in Europe, and this has had a direct impact on household size and typology. The average number of members per household has fallen since 1951. The number of components per household is now 2.1 persons.

Preliminary observations

We do not have enough ethnographic data to write provisional conclusions, given that we have only recently started fieldwork. However there is one point that several people interviewed have made:

Families seem to be more dispersed than ever. The physical contiguity among kin that characterized the family in the past is entirely vanished. Most of the newly formed families move out of the city in search for more affordable housing, while their parents continue to live in the area. Yet, there seems to be a continuity of help and assistance of various kinds (child care, monetary aid etc.), given especially by largely elderly parents towards their adult children. The disappearing of the old case di ringhiera (the restoration of this kind of building tends to privatize most of the public space of the original construction) makes the establishing of constant social relationships with neighbours more difficult.



A view from the Naviglio Pavese

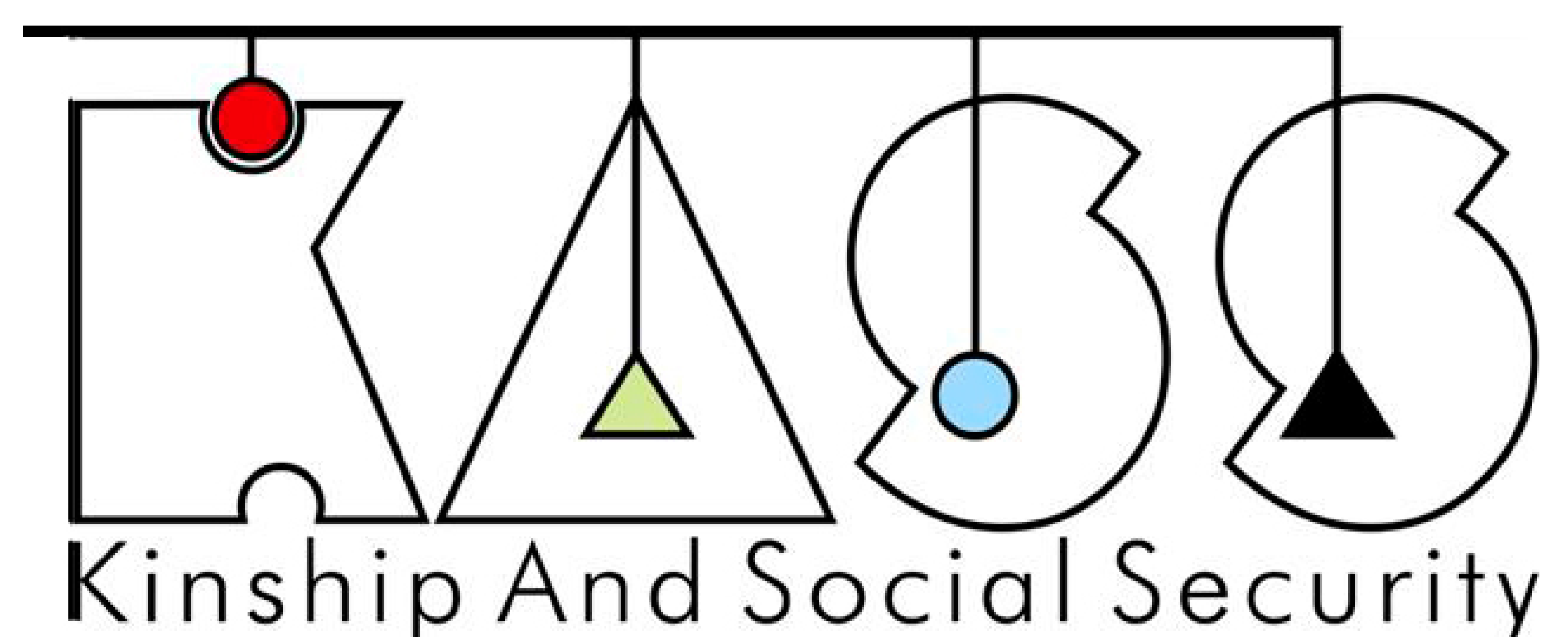
The 6 districts (zone) of Milano



Higher income residences viewed from within the courtyard



A casa di ringhiera, viewed from within the courtyard



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