

Polish Urban Fieldsite

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Location of the fieldsite

The research in the framework of the project Kinship and Social Security was realized in one of the districts of Poznan. Poznan is a city located in the western part of Poland. It's one of the largest cities in Poland counting about 578.000 inhabitants. The admistration of Poznan is based at the model of the administration of a district. The city is divided into five districts which are lacking an independent admistration. We have focused our research on the largest of them (covering 18 % of the surface of Poznan).

Family model and the role of women

The most popular model of the Polish family can be described as a hybrid in which old patriarchal features combine with elements of the model based on partnership. These transformations are related to economic activity of women and renegotiations of their family roles.

Although marriage is perceived as a cornerstone of a family life and the purpose of marriage is procreation, birth rate in the Polish society decreases (and is currently lowest in the EU) and reproductive strategies are rationalised. These rationalisations are mostly done by women for whom motherhood fixes them at home and the role of housewife obstructs their professional career.

Women are economically active, but this activity is simultaneously perceived as a necessity that prevents women to take proper care of their young children. Wife's work and earnings are seen as complementary income to the family budget. Their salaries are usually lower than their husbands.

Family is seen as highly intimate sphere and protected against external interferences. The idea of family does not coincide with practicing family. There is a discrepancy between declarations and the actual daily realisations.



Relationships

Mutual help within family is very important in Polish society. It is caused by internal and external factors. The first one is determined by the cultural image of family as a 'natural' and obvious support institution. The second one is a state sponsored public help. Social security system is seen as not adequate enough and cannot meet expectations. Family assistance flows usually from parents to children and most often takes form of a financial help. It lasts for years and makes children dependent on their parents even in their adulthood. Young couples are supported by their parents who supervise small children; this help enables women to follow their professional career.

Working of the family obviously depends on economic situation.

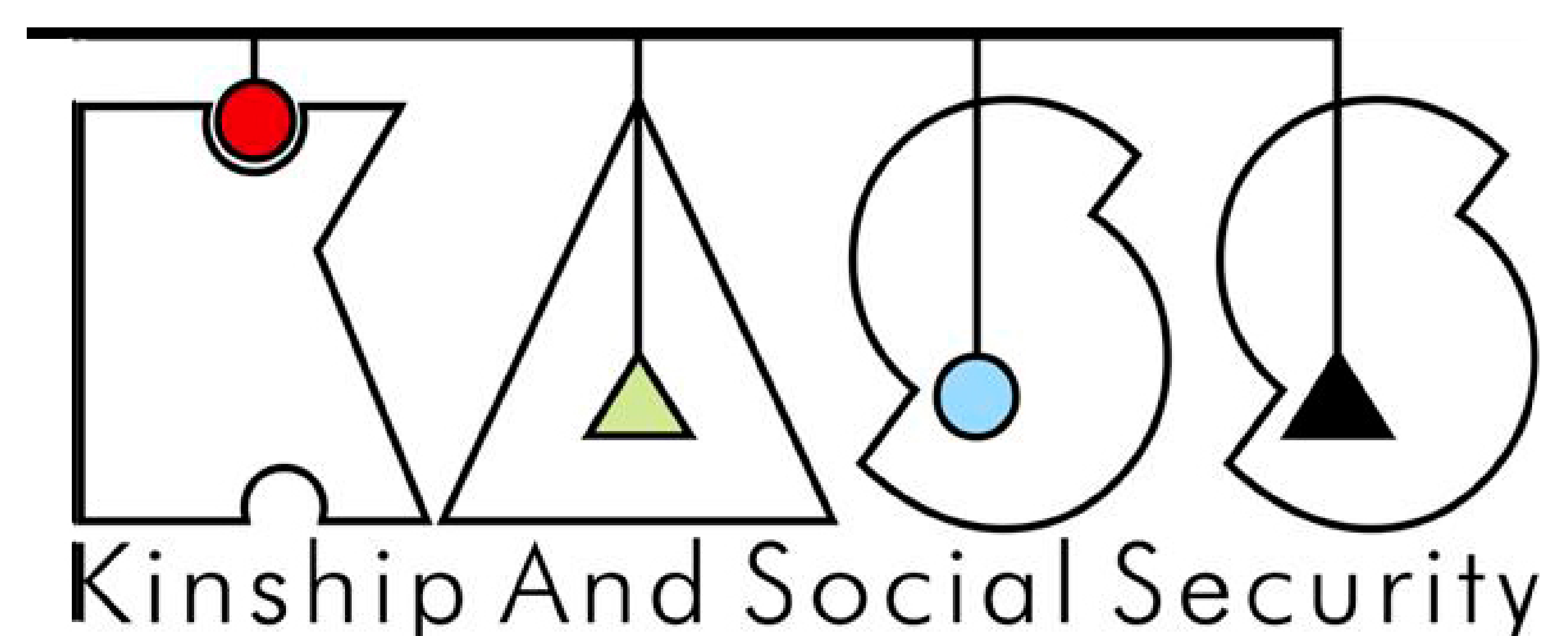
Family in society

In the Polish society family plays very important role in the axiological and normative systems. Its value is stereotyped and to a certain extent is produced by the feeling of economic security.

Social security provided by a net of kin is created by a family that is understood as a group of people comprised by a nuclear family and families of origin of both married couple. In the families of origin most important are couple's parents and sometimes grandparents.



Poznan



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