

Perceptions, Politics and Participation

The role and relevance of public participation in the redevelopment of Gdańsk Shipyard

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Abstract: This work interrogates a case of public participation around the redevelopment of the post-shipyard area in Gdańsk, Poland, questioning the role and relevance of such processes in a context of political and historical complexity. Located on the edge of the historic old town and in proximity to the city centre, this (post)industrial waterfront has undergone multiple privatisations, fragmentation and restructuring attempts over the past 30 years. The negotiation between the aim to create a new, integrated inner-city district and commemorating its heritage value as the cradle of the Solidarność (Eng. Solidarity) movement, coupled with the size of the area and fragmented ownership, have stood in the way of substantial progress. The narratives of the stakeholders and participants involved in the latest participatory initiatives revealed the importance of positioning the most recent consultations in the wider history of public involvement in this area. Interrogating why and how public participation became part of the discourse on the transformation of this area was key to understand the current role of community engagement in the shipyard redevelopment. By examining the latest participatory consultations not in isolation, but rather as a consequence of earlier grassroots initiatives, this paper traces their evolution from bottom-up to top-down. The interviews revealed differences in the meaning behind words and names used by the participants, suggesting that these discrepancies can influence dialogue in participation. Four of these terms were the most relevant to the shipyard transformation: heritage, naming, values, and conflicts. Finally, the work links the findings back to the critical theory of public participation, using the concepts of crossbenching (Miessen, 2010) and agonism (Mouffe, 1999) to describe the mechanisms found in the case study.

Key words: Gdańsk Shipyard, public participation, cultural heritage, crossbenching, agonism, discourse analysis, waterfront redevelopment

1 Introduction

One of the key aspects of integrating spatial justice into policymaking is the introduction of meaningful public participation into the processes of (re)production of space. Proposed in the writings of Edward Soja (2009), David Harvey (2005), Saskia Sassen (2014) and others, in the context of the re-emerging relevance of the writings of Henri Lefebvre (1968), spatial justice addresses the physical, geographical and built representations of social inequalities. The pursuit of spatial justice should be a core motivation for all public participation and citizen empowerment movements. However, many researchers, theorists and practitioners such as Faranak Miraftab (2004), Markus Miessen (2010), Susan Fainstein (2018), or Jeremy Till (2005) have critically reviewed the limits of these processes through the spatial lens, concluding that participation in its current form is often an affirmative, rather than interrogative practice. This article aims to address the issues of spatial justice by examining the critical theory of public participation through a case study. While the theory of spatial justice stems from questioning what rights people have to space, this work began as an inquiry into who has the right to participate in the city, and whose city is being influenced by these processes.

The paper presents a case of public participation around the redevelopment of the post-shipyard area in Gdańsk, Poland, interrogating the role and relevance of such processes in a context where cultural heritage is crucial, but there is also an urgent need for new development. Gdańsk shipyard is a remarkable example of such political and historical complexity; moreover, it shows what lessons can be learned from such initiatives after everyone leaves the discussion table. Gdańsk is a port city with a rich history and a multitude of cultural and social influences, including Polish, German, and Hanseatic. The *Solidarność* (Eng. *Solidarity*) movement that emerged from the Shipyard¹ eventually paved the way to the fall of communism in the soviet bloc in 1989. After joining the EU, Gdańsk has become one of the most rapidly developing urban agglomerations in Poland. With a steady influx of citizens from the region, Warsaw, and other parts of the country, as well as increasingly from abroad, the rapidly increasing real estate and land prices, developer-led urbanisation and sub-urbanisation, and pressure on attractive inner-city locations are expected to show growing inequalities in the urban population of the city (Śleszyński & Wiśniewski, 2014). While Gdańsk boasts a range of public participation mechanisms including municipality-led consultations, annual city-wide participatory budget, de-centralised



Figure 1. View of the shipyard area. Source: Robert Migas (2020)

¹ The word *shipyard* written with lower-case 's' relates to the former territory of the enterprise Stocznia Gdańska (Eng. *Gdańsk Shipyard*), written with capital 'S', which still operates, although in a limited scope, producing mainly steel elements and wind towers.

Neighbourhood Councils, and independent NGOs, these emerging and increasingly popular practices offer a complex and multi-layered research ground outside of the well-established placemaking practices in Western European countries, such as the Netherlands.

The negotiation between the aim to create a new, integrated inner-city district and commemorating its historical significance and heritage value, coupled with the size of the area and fragmented ownership, have stood in the way of substantial progress in the redevelopment of the site. In turn, such deadlock gave way to the loss of some heritage industrial architecture and controversial new developments have emerged. With the aim to keep up with the changing views on urban development, balancing outdated regulations and urban planning, public expectations and capital investment, there have been multiple attempts, including grassroots initiatives (Kosmala & Sebastyański, 2014), EU-funded programmes (NCK, 2020), local and international academic conferences and projects (Lipiński & Lorens, 2016), as well as municipal strategies (Inicjatywa Miasto, 2021) to bring public participation to the table for a variety of reasons. Each stakeholder and initiator of participatory processes has their own motivation and aims. The fabrication of a city is a political act; even more so, when it occurs on historically sensitive, post-industrial terrain in an extremely attractive inner city location. The methods used in such processes reflect the larger political agenda. Their outcomes help unfold the landscape of power relations in city-making. Political sensitivity on a terrain which is, in an overwhelming majority, in private hands, requires participation not only to exert public control but to make space for disagreement before common space is established.

The paper is organised into seven parts. The introduction is followed by a brief overview of the methodology used. Then, the theoretical positioning underlying the research is presented and discussed. The subsequent chapters introduce the case study, including an overview of the recent history of the shipyard area and an analysis of the contemporary situation of the site, to position the latest participatory initiatives in a broader context. Part six presents and discusses the key layers of differing perceptions that have emerged as a result of the research. The final section concludes the findings and critically reflects on the impact and challenges of public participation within the specific context of Gdańsk shipyard area and their relevance for broader theory and practice.

2 Methodology

To interrogate the role and relevance of the participatory processes around the redevelopment of the Gdańsk shipyard, it was important to understand the motivations, aims and experiences of those who organised the events as well as those who participated in them. Over the course of five months, I conducted seven in-depth interviews lasting between forty-five minutes and two hours thirty minutes. I interviewed the organisers of the last round of public consultations, the city architect, a project manager for one of developments, an urbanist, researcher and activist who has been working with the shipyard area for over 20 years, a co-founder of a local NGO and maker space, a community coordinator from the European Solidarity Centre (ECS) and an activist and cultural researcher. Most of my interlocutors participated in the most recent public consultations in different roles, with varying degrees of power and activity. All of them have been involved in the area professionally but also, in many cases, have a strong personal connection with the shipyard. The index of the interviews can be found in Appendix 1. The interviews were semi-structured, with a number of prepared questions and space for additional clarifications and reactive inquiries. As there was no predefined selection, the list of potential interviewees grew with every meeting, as one interview usually led to another. The focus was put on allowing the interlocutors to speak freely of their perceptions and impressions, to understand not only their points of view and motivations but also get an overview of a multi-faceted image of the situation, which in turn guided the research into a more in-depth analysis of the wider history of public participation in the redevelopment of the shipyard.

Interviews with the city architect and activist, urbanist and researcher Roman Sebastyański were especially rich in this regard, as they have witnessed and participated in the changes happening in this area for more than 25 years. Both of my interlocutors have also extensively written about the shipyard in Polish and English (Lorens, 2001; Lipiński & Lorens, 2016; Lorens, 2019; Lorens & Bugalski, 2021a, 2021b; Kosmala and Sebastyański, 2014; Sebastyański, 2017). Due to these conversations, the scope of this work has shifted from the impact of the current and most recent processes towards an interest in the political, historical, and economic factors which have shaped the participatory landscape on the terrain of the shipyard.

What became evident quite early in the process was the importance of language. Partly due to the complex history of the area and its later fragmentation, partly because collecting data through semi-structured interviews requires attention not only to what is being said but also *how*. Discourse analysis and sensitivity to how values and positions were expressed through language became an important methodological tool for the analysis of the interviews, and consequently, for establishing the main themes examined in this work. By listening to people's own narratives of their involvement in the participatory processes, their memories of the history of the site and public engagement around it, key differences in perceptions and use of certain words and phrases emerged. These findings were grouped around the notions of heritage, naming, values and conflicts. Moreover, those less interested in the theory and critique of public participation could assume that participation, participatory processes, and public consultations are synonyms. However, paying attention to and understanding the differences between these terms has opened a more nuanced path of inquiry, described in part 6 of the paper.

3 The Trouble with Participation

Participation lies at the core of egalitarian, inclusive and emancipatory citizenship. However, until recently considered a wonder ingredient in any planning scenario, participation has fallen under strong criticism due to it often being misused as a token or placative feature giving the illusion of a democratic and open process. Miessen argues that 'this often-unquestioned mode of inclusion (...) does not produce significant results, as criticality is challenged by the concept of the majority' (2010, p. 13).

Jeremy Till argues that participation is an 'unchallenged generic term' which entails a broad range of processes ranging from token participation to full citizen control (2005). Faranak Miraftab (2004) distinguishes between the overlapping notions of invented and invited spaces of participation which either directly challenge the status quo or are legitimised by its stakeholders. These spaces offer different opportunities and limitations connected to power and influence, organisation and outreach, as well as public perception of such initiatives. Susan Fainstein (2018) suggests that participation does not explicitly equal justice – homogeneous communities often use it to reinforce the separation, and in heterogeneous ones, it means that the majority gets what they want, and the minority must accept the democratic process. Municipalities use public consultations to placate citizens and give them an illusion of power within the otherwise undisputed process. Citizens participate often with little confidence in witnessing tangible outcomes of their involvement. Architects and planners, conscious of their shifting role in society, should facilitate, curate, and encourage emancipation through participation and co-design processes. However, Miessen also points out that in the current economic reality, architects are prone to working with as little friction as possible (2010, p. 27). In the most widespread contractual relations with clients and contractors nowadays, there are very few opportunities for architects and planners to induce that friction and establish their agency to the public.

Following Miessen's argument that only by working outside of the pre-existing power structures as a 'crossbench practitioner' or an 'uninvited outsider', a capacity for such responsibility can be meaningfully established (2010, p. 251). Miessen introduces a crossbencher as someone who is not part of any major stakeholder group and who, in consequence, is capable of producing friction and conflictual participation in an otherwise uncontested, and essentially meaningless process (2010, p. 244). This approach stems from the

agonistic approach proposed by Chantal Mouffe (1999, p. 754), one concerned with the capacity of conflict to produce meaningful results, and which, when applied to public participation, can introduce the friction these processes have lost in many neoliberal contexts. As Miessen's reasoning emerges from a critique of conventional forms of public participation processes, I am interested in testing how pertinent his arguments are to the shipyard case study. The following sections introduce the history of the site, outline the chronological development of public involvement in the area, and interrogate how public participation negotiated its presence within the territory of the Gdańsk shipyard exactly through the engagement of crossbenching practices, to become an instrument in the official discourse on the transformation of the site.

4 The Death and Life of the Gdańsk Shipyard

The area of the former shipyard is located to the North of the historic city centre of Gdańsk, covering approximately 73 ha of brownfield land (Figure 2). The history of the shipbuilding industry on this site dates back to 1840s with the establishment of the Imperial Shipyard (*Ger. Kaiserliche Werft, Pol. Stocznia Cesarska*) on an empty territory of a medieval settlement called Young City (*Ger. Jugendstadt, Pol. Młode Miasto*) (Lorens & Bugalski, 2021a). Figure 3 shows a detailed timeline outlining the history of the site relevant for this research, from the establishment of the Young City to the liquidation of the Gdańsk Shipyard, and the subsequent history of public engagement in the area after 1989, hinting at the inherent complexity of its national, functional, and political identity.

Within the context of this study, it is essential to understand that the area unanimously referred to by the inhabitants of Gdańsk as *Stocznia* (*Eng. Shipyard*) has a complex and multi-layered heritage, outlined in detail in the works of Lorens and Bugalski (2021a; 2021b) and Golinowska (2021). This heritage impacts the perception(s) and image(s) of this place, in turn influencing public participation in the area redevelopment. The authors of the above works describe this complexity as clashes of narrative (Golinowska, 2021), among which specific examples can be highlighted: conflicts between the XIX century built heritage and the immaterial memory of place linked to *Solidarność* (*Eng. Solidarity*) movement from the end of the XX century; its Polish (post-war) and German/Prussian (pre-1945) identity; or its positive heritage as the cradle of the fall of communism in Poland and a huge regional industrial plant contrasted with the negative memories of wartime U-boat manufacturing and adjacent work camp, or shipyard's degradation after the transition to market economy. Naturally, with an almost total, forced replacement of the city's population after the second world war and wartime traumas, the pre-1945 memories give way to the more recent ones, with the official heritage discourse focused on the legacy of *Solidarność* and the role of the shipyard workers in the struggle for freedom (Golinowska, 2021, p. 252).

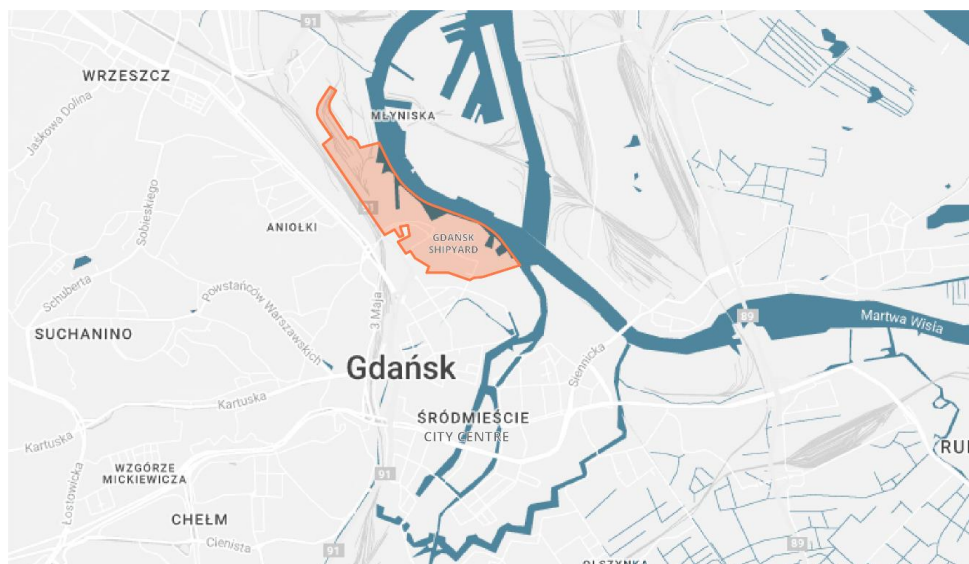


Figure 2. Map showing the extents of the post-shipyard area in relation to the city centre. Made by the author using Google Maps (2023)

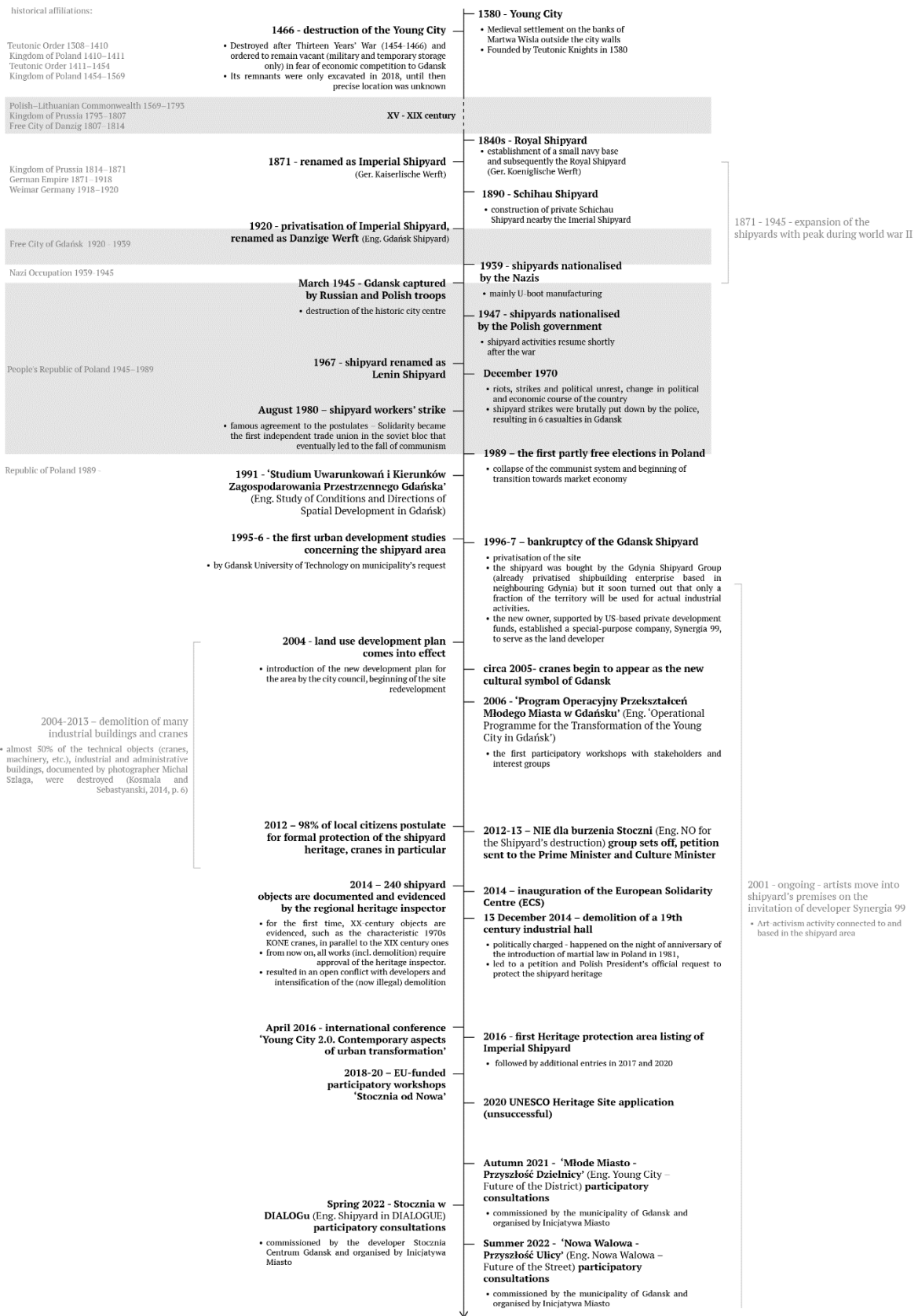


Figure 3. Timeline outlining the history of the site relevant for this research, from the establishment of the Young City to the liquidation of the Gdańsk Shipyard, and the subsequent history of public engagement in the shipyard area after 1989. Made by the author after Lipiński & Lorens (2016); Lorens & Bugalski (2021a; 2021b); Kosmala & Sebastyański (2014); and interviews.

While this multi-dimensional heritage of the shipyard area constitutes an immense and overwhelming area of inquiry, I argue that only by acknowledging this, one might begin to understand what motivations, fears and ambitions stand behind public participation and involvement in this area. While this research begun with the intention to examine the impact of recent participatory initiatives organised by the municipality around the redevelopment, the very first interviews made clear that these processes,

‘although very broad in their scope, are a repetition of what has been going on for the last 20 years [...] [P]eople have been working with this area for all this time, but nothing has changed really, there is no plan.’ (Interview 2, August 2022)

‘[It] is the last crumb of a process which has lasted since the 90s. [...] They have been discussing it for 20 years now and have not reached an agreement.’ (Interview 1, August 2022)

Other interlocutors were unhappy with how these last consultations, organised first by the municipality and subsequently by a private developer with the organisational help of Inicjatywa Miasto, disregarded, or in some opinions, completely ignored, the previous, external and bottom-up participation initiatives concerning the shipyard (Interview 2, August 2022; Interview 3, September 2022; Interview 4, September 2022). The collective consciousness of the continuity of public involvement in the area that preceded the most recent, top-down consultations brought forward the need to examine the most recent history of the shipyard area from the perspective of public participation.

Gdańsk Shipyard is the most well-known as the birthplace of Solidarność – the first independent trade union in the Soviet bloc, established in August 1980 as part of the agreement between the striking shipyard workers and Polish government - a movement that eventually led to the first partly-free democratic elections in 1989 and a subsequent transition from communism to a market economy. It can be argued that these events, apart from their larger historical significance, are also an important marker of public involvement and a rebellious spirit of the shipyard community. At its peak, the shipyard used to employ some 20,000 people, thus being an economic provider for many local families whose members, men and women alike, were on its payroll (Interview 4, September 2022). Neither of these roles the shipyard had for the local and national identity saved it from the new economic system it helped build. Geared towards a centrally organised market, its overly expansive land use and outdated technologies led to the bankruptcy of Gdańsk Shipyard in 1997 (Lorens & Bugalski, 2021a, p. 10) and its subsequent liquidation. The site was privatised, but only a part of it was planned to accommodate shipbuilding activities; 73 ha adjacent to the city centre were selected for a transformation into a new urban district, called Młode Miasto (*Eng. Young City*), in line with the first urban studies prepared in 1991 and 1995-6 prior to the official liquidation process (Interview 4, September 2022; Interview 7, December 2022). Due to various financial and political reasons, the municipality never decided to purchase the land, so the area remained in private hands (Interview 4, September 2022).

‘The municipality, if I remember correctly, had an opportunity to take over the post-shipyard area but did not do so, which is not surprising. Back then, to maintain and secure some 70 hectares of land would have required heaps of money, [...] so the city let go of it at some point.’ (Interview 7, December 2022)

Between 1991 and 2013, multiple urban planning studies and masterplans, described in detail by Lipiński and Lorens, were prepared by the municipality, the landowner, Gdańsk University of Technology and other academic institutions, as well as Polish and international private firms (2016, pp. 167-199). One of my interlocutors, directly involved in one of the first urban redevelopment studies by the Municipal Development Office (*Pol. Biuro Rozwoju Miasta*) and later working with the new developer, Synergia 99, said that

‘The new owner was primarily interested in the fastest possible development of the area in direct cooperation with the local government, so above the public level. The new land use plan was drafted in four years between 2000-2004 with no consideration of people’s voice. [...] The official discourse in the media, at meetings and workshops repeatedly assured the public of the position of the landowner and the authorities towards the questions of cultural heritage preservation,

so the inhabitants of Gdańsk [...] trusted, without any of the plans being actually published, that the shipyard's heritage will be preserved.' (Interview 4, September 2022)

The city architect admitted directly that the still valid 2004 land use plan is 'old and outdated' and came to life when the modernist influence on the ideas of a central business district was still operational (Interview 7, December 2022). The coordinator of the recent participatory consultations also pointed towards the then-popular ideas of shopping malls as urban life hubs and a lack of height restrictions in the masterplan which guide the real estate valuations (Interview 1, August 2022). In a paper on the preservation of the shipyard's cultural heritage, Kosmala & Sebastyański point to the failure of the 1995 study commissioned by the municipality to 'acknowledge [post-war] non-architectural, post-industrial objects like cranes and other technical infrastructure' (2014, p. 170). That study later saved as a knowledge base for the 2004 land use plan which did not include any regulation on the protection of shipyard's cultural heritage and disregarded the original, dense shipyard grid (Kosmala & Sebastyański, 2014, p. 171).

The story of public involvement in the area started with young local artists who were invited to live and work in the shipyard area by the landowner, Synergia 99, in 2001 (Kosmala & Sebastyański, 2014, p. 168; Interview 4, September 2022; Interview 7, December 2022), later known as *Kolonia Artystów* (Eng. *Artists' Colony*). They were not only inhabiting the shipyard territory but became actively engaged with its built forms and cultural heritage by making art within and about it, broadcasting it to the outside². When, contrary to the popular belief in the protection of shipyard's heritage, mass demolition of halls and cranes started happening, it caused an outrage among the young artistic and activist groups (Interview 4, September 2022; Interview 7, December 2022).



Figure 4. View of Hala Trasernia (Eng. Tracer Hall) and cranes. Taken by the author (2022).

² To some of my interlocutors, the shipyard in the 2000s was a 'magical but inaccessible place' (Interview 2, August 2022). Its territory, fenced off from the city, could only be explored during festivals and events, until one of the developers decided to open the gates of Stocznia Cesarska (Eng. *Imperial Shipyard*), creating a visitor's path and organising regular guided tours in 2018.

'More or less formal activist groups emerged, whose main objective was to resist the destruction of [shipyard's] cultural heritage, understood primarily as the post-industrial heritage. Nobody referenced the Prussian or Teutonic heritage but rather the halls where their parents and grandparents worked in and the cranes which started to disappear from the city's skyline.' (Interview 4, September 2022)

Kosmala & Sebastyański point to the two primary forms of involvement – informal-individual and formal-collective (organised), and describe shipyard's landscape of artistic activism in more detail (2014, pp. 172-174). According to the city architect, public participation has 'involved itself' in the making of the city within the shipyard areas due to their symbolic significance to the artist/activist community 'whether we want it or not' (Interview 7, December 2022). However, he pointed to the specificity of the groups involved:

'What we are talking about is the participation of, I would say, activist communities [...], not really the general public who, broadly speaking, is not particularly interested in this topic.' (Interview 7, December 2022)

and a lack of organisation inherent to such fragmented, bottom-up initiatives. From the perspective of those involved, however, this conflict was strong enough to force an apparent shift in the municipal policy, leading to

'the first such, let's call it consultation of sorts; various, simulated attempts to include different groups have begun.' (Interview 4, September 2022)

'In 2006 I had the opportunity to organise the first consultation process [...] which outlined the direction of the development, with Synergia 99 as the main organisational support.' (Interview 7, December 2022)

These consultations led to the creation of a document called *Program Operacyjny Przekształceń Młodego Miasta w Gdańsku* (Eng. *Operational Programme for the Transformation of the Young City in Gdańsk*) prepared from the initiative of the landowners and the municipality as part of an effort to obtain EU funding for urban regeneration (Lipiński & Lorens, 2016, pp. 252-253). In the meantime, due to multiple changes in land ownership and further fragmentation of the shipyard area, some artist groups were forced out of its terrain. Others, like photographer Michal Szlaga, carried on documenting the intentional destruction and parallel deterioration of the shipyard. The new investors who appeared after the division of Synergia 99's assets in 2006 were 'completely unaware' of the political complexities of the area and 'did not really work together' (Interview 7, December 2022). In the meantime, as a result of artists' presence in the area, the shipyard's cranes, increasingly present in the cultural visual narrative, have become a symbol of Gdańsk, also in the official promotional material of the city (Interview 4, September 2022; Interview 7, December 2022). In 2014, these 1970s Kone cranes were evidenced in parallel to the 19th century heritage by the regional inspector for the first time, leading to an intensification of (now illegal) demolitions and an open conflict with the developers (Kosmala & Sebastyański, 2014, p. 174). Those actors demanding greater regard for heritage protection, encouraged by growing public support, led to the engagement of the national government and a decision to apply for the UNESCO World Heritage status. Changes to the shipyard's urban tissue were slow and punctual; not always positive in the public and municipal view. Consequently, between 2016 and 2020, almost the entire shipyard territory became listed by the regional Heritage Inspector (*Pol. Pomorski Wojewódzki Konserwator Zabytków*), including more than 60 halls (Pomorski Wojewódzki Konserwator Zabytków, 2020; Interview 4, September 2022). In the meantime, between 2018-2020, an EU-funded project *Memory of Water* enabled a more formalised dialogue in the form of a participatory laboratory called *Stocznia od Nowa*, whose outcome was an implementation plan for the shipyard and its heritage (NCK, 2020). In 2021, a new position of the City Architect was created in the Gdańsk municipality, assumed by an architect, urbanist, and researcher Piotr Lorens, involved professionally and academically with the shipyard area transformation since the late 1990s.

'When I assumed the post of the city architect, we have become very keen on introducing a systematic discourse about the future of this area, firstly with the institutional stakeholders: landowners, investors, commercial and public institutions [...] and secondly, to try to involve all these informal groups in a common discussion.' (Interview 7, December 2022)

5 Positioning current consultations

This section takes a closer look at the motivations for and organisation of the latest participatory process, initiated by the municipality, through the perceptions of the participants. In autumn 2021, the City of Gdańsk authorities commissioned Inicjatywa Miasto (*Eng. Initiative City*) to organise and moderate a series of consultation processes concerning the redevelopment of Młode Miasto area which includes the terrain of former shipyard and surrounding brownfield sites. According to the city architect, ‘it is the role of the municipality to organise and coordinate such [participatory] processes’ in order to bring together all the stakeholders in a fair and organised way that enable a direct conversation (Interview 7, December 2022). This series, called *Młode Miasto - Przyszłość Dzielnicy* (*Eng. Young City – Future of the District*), in the view of the organisers was

‘not a typical participatory project but rather an attempt to negotiate a vision of shared interest in how this district should look like.’

‘The shipyard does not really have residents, but it has stakeholders, people very interested in this topic for professional, ideological, historical, spatial, business or identity-related reasons, [...] which makes this process unique.’ (Interview 1, August 2022)

From these meetings, a need for additional consultations emerged regarding the official naming of the specific areas of the shipyard and a new street cutting through its terrain. Another series of workshops was organised in spring 2022 by one of the developers, Stocznia Centrum Gdańsk (SCG), also moderated by Inicjatywa Miasto, called *Stocznia w DIALOGU* (*Eng. Shipyard in Dialogue*). The moderators consider it a continuation of the process initiated by the municipality who acts as an ‘organisational umbrella’, narrowing the focus down to a particular area in SCG’s scope (Interview 1, August 2022). The city architect described the relationships between these workshops as

‘separate and independent, although agreed and coordinated with [the municipality] as partners of the event’ (Interview 7, December 2022)

Other interviewees perceived the different consultations in a similar way; therefore, the following descriptions relate to the entirety of these processes that happened between autumn 2021 and summer 2022. The majority of my interlocutors were happy to see the municipality take responsibility for this area, securing the presence of cultural and social activity in the shipyard. They acknowledge the importance of the city in taking agency and leading the conversation about the redevelopment of the shipyard as a public stakeholder, especially given that almost the entirety of the area is in various private hands (Interview 2, August 2022; Interview 3, September 2022). The participants were also satisfied with the quality of the process, the techniques used and the prompt improvements in response to feedback (Interview 2, August 2022; Interview 3, September 2022; Interview 6, November 2022). From the perspective of the developers, the consultations

‘were a tool which allowed us to look from a different perspective [...] and, frankly, in the case of this project turned out to be very helpful, as it brought us closer to the groups who were not the biggest fans of the revitalisation of this area, and who through public participation became our greatest support.’ (Interview 6, November 2022)

‘There was an opinion which was important to me during the consultations, from the side of the developers talking about their property, that they need the municipality’s decision, or a land use plan in general, in order to have real influence [...] and the city was not really taking this role.’ (Interview 2, August 2022)

However, the ‘critical mass’ of strongly opinionated stakeholders involved in the terrain for up to over 20 years, very often emotionally attached not only to the shipyard and its heritage but also the amount of work they put into protecting it and planning for its future, shared a particular opinion of the consultations:

‘what we did not like the most was not to respect the context of multiple people who organised such workshops before. [...] Initially, there was this approach to break off with it and start from scratch, but you cannot break with the history of

the place, the people who have been fighting bottom-up to include this place into the urban tissue on a cultural and social level.' (Interview 3, September 2022)

'To me it was odd that we have just concluded a successful two-year process of formulating a strategy; the main goals and a number of sub-aims and specific tasks, and not long after, a completely new team commences another strategy development process.' (Interview 4, September 2022)

Not one of my interlocutors thought of the current participatory events as standalone, but rather another round, or even a repetition, of a number of long-lasting and largely inconclusive processes, so these concerns were quickly communicated. Some comments related also to the way the meetings were organised and moderated. Despite the perceived awareness of the motivations and opinions of the invited groups,

'[the meetings] were really geared more towards the inhabitants who were absent at that moment, not visible. [...] It was not announced in the neighbourhood, no posters or information point. The communication was through the Stakeholders' Board (pol. Rada Interesariuszy Młodego Miasta i Polskiego Haka)³ and direct e-mailing to the interested organisations. They have built up a very specific target but the workshops were prepared in a very traditional form aimed at residents.' (Interview 3, September 2022)

Although this statement was aimed as a criticism, for a community coordinator from the European Solidarity Centre, these consultations were nevertheless important as an opportunity to bring attention to the inhabitants of neighbourhoods surrounding the shipyard.

'We know that [the residents] were missing because they had no way to find about the consultations. Therefore, it was our professional role to say what should be said in such a process.' (Interview 2, August 2022)

This shows that the right of the residents of the fringe areas of the former workers' districts which have always been functionally dependent, although spatially separate, from what is understood as the shipyard area, to participate in these consultations had to be negotiated.

'We worked very hard during the first consultations to stop the narrative about the post-shipyard area and Młode Miasto as an area without any residents. [...] We managed to broaden the perspective to include the people who were not originally there, to really think about the adjacent areas as immediate neighbourhood that will be directly impacted by the changes.' (Interview 2, August 2022)

These groups, perhaps less interested in the political context, participated in the consultations to voice their concerns connected to the creation of a new urban district adjacent to their old neighbourhoods. These worries about view axes, building heights and gated communities, typical of such developments, were in majority dismissed by the moderators and developers as out-of-place and irrelevant to the actual plans (Interview 1, August 2022; Interview 6, November 2022), but remain a point of attention in the local media and among particular interest groups.

It appears that, at a certain point, people, no matter how much involved in the shipyard, have grown tired of these processes, not only due to the impact on their daily workload but also in a larger timescale:

'ultimately, it was too much for me because [...] the first consultations took place every Monday for two months and I would go to every meeting. The following ones were every Tuesday [...] It was too often. Too often we ask the same questions or talk about the same issues, the same people come. [...] It was simply too exhausting.' (Interview 2, August 2022)

'For the last 20 years, two to three times a year on average, different initiatives have organised various activist and cultural interventions.' (Interview 3, September 2022)

³ Rada Interesariuszy Młodego Miasta i Polskiego Haka (Eng. Board of Young City Stakeholders) – interest group started by the vice-mayor of Gdansk in 2011, comprising NGOs and independent associations connected to the shipyard, individual stakeholders and professionals, as well as the land owners, developers and private enterprises based in the area. (Portal Miasta Gdańska, 2021)

One of my interviewees who had not taken part in any consultations or gatherings (despite being directly invited), explained that the planning of the consultations made it difficult to engage long-term, especially for the people whose engagement with the shipyard is not their (main) source of income (Interview 5, October 2022).

The consultations resulted in a strategy for a mixed-use urban district, in line with the current vision of the municipality and developers:

'In terms of planning policy [...], we are evolving towards a mixed-use inner-city district, 15-minute city and other similar concepts addressed by contemporary urbanist theories.' (Interview 7, December 2022)

'I would not say it is a project but rather a strategy of keywords, values and ideas which should find their place in this area. [...] There is, however, one thing which has had a strong presence in this vision, that this area must stop being perceived as a business district [...] but as a cool, multi-functional, multi-dimensional district.' (Interview 1, August 2022)

The participants generally expressed satisfaction with the content of the workshops, addressing the topics of inclusivity and accessibility of the area, designing for non-human users, as well as the involvement of, and quality of discussion with, the municipality and developers. However, concerns about the lack of a clear direction forward were universal between those not involved in the decision-making.

'Thinking about the potential for change, the reality of transforming, working with this area, what I miss is purposefulness. Apart from a strategy, a document [...], for one of the sides to take responsibility for what are we going to do with it next [...] not to end up with another consultations in a few years' time.' (Interview 2, August 2022)

'[the result] was formulated only in general terms, [...] there are no specifics. [...] The proposals are elaborated in such vague terms to leave as much room as possible for interpretation.' (Interview 4, September 2022)

These observations show that the complexity of the shipyard relates not only to its past but also to the present interests and different scales of its (future) redevelopment. The latest participatory processes cannot be examined in isolation; only after acknowledging the recent history of public participation on the shipyard's site, a full image starts to emerge. The positions revealed in the interviews are often a result of a longstanding professional, academic (and often personal) involvement in the area and relate not only to the shipyard itself but also broader issues of urban management, dialogue, and fairness. The interviews revealed not only the importance of the historical context and differing perceptions of the recent consultations but also key layers, that these differences focus around. While this section analysed the recent participatory initiatives chronologically and in relation to the past, the following chapter presents a thematic approach, focusing on the main points that emerged during the interviews.

6 Layers of differing perceptions

The current participatory initiatives organised by the municipality and developers are a result of the bottom-up processes initiated by artists and activists as an attempt to protect shipyard's heritage by introducing it into Gdańsk's cultural narrative. In parallel, the cultural and artistic activity and engagement in the shipyard area became inherently embedded in the contemporary identity of the place. Taking responsibility by the city for the organisation and products of public participation is a way for the authorities to negotiate greater presence in the area and control over the dialogue.

'There is no opposition between the top-down and bottom-up – it is an issue of bringing together all these matters in an organised and civilised way.' (Interview 7, December 2022)

It is also perceived as a positive shift by the public who have little trust in private developers. As the city architect said, such processes should lay in the municipal capacity (Interview 7, December 2022), yet in some

opinions, the artistic participation in the protection of the shipyard's heritage forced a shift in the political accountability:

'politicians and developers can no longer proceed without proving they have public legitimacy' (Interview 4, September 2022)

and 'quasi-participation' is a way of achieving it. The use of the term *participatory* signifies in this context that neither the municipal authorities, nor the organisers recognise these initiatives as full citizen participation. The city architect referred to them as

'consultative processes [...]. Let us not forget that we have a city council resolution (Pol. Uchwała Rady Miasta – author's note) about what do we mean by the term 'public consultations' and we are not using it here, as those processes do not meet the statutory definition.' (Interview 7, December 2022)

The differences in language used to describe the uninvited participation and organised consultative processes carry a professional consciousness of the theory behind these terms. The interviews also revealed the differences in the meaning behind the use of certain words and phrases between my interlocutors. Some of them were already signalled in the conclusions of the report prepared by Inicjatywa Miasto (2021) after the consultations as questions or suggestions (Interview 1, August 2022), but the interviews showed that they have considerable influence on the discourse around the shipyard redevelopment and a proverbial elephant in the room when dealing with the public. This part organises the analysis of the most recent participatory consultations around the themes which emerged during the interviews, which include heritage, official naming, as well as more general values and fuzzy concepts used in such processes. They mirror the wider, national context of political divisions and interpersonal conflicts resulting from them. These differences, although expressed by individuals, hint at more widespread discrepancies in the public perception and understanding of the shipyard's past and future. Moreover, it was argued, especially by those criticising the recent participatory consultations, that these differences can enable manipulation and impede dialogue (Interview 4, September 2022). Unpacking these dissimilarities helps understand the importance of the history of the area on the conflictual visions for its future and how conflict can be used as a (counter)productive force.

6.1 Heritage

The multiplicity and complexity of shipyard's heritage, briefly described in the beginning of this article, naturally impact the participatory processes around its redevelopment. This manifests, first of all, in how the relation between cultural heritage and built forms is perceived. It partly corresponds with what Lorens and Bugalski (2021a; 2021b) describe as the dual heritage of the shipyard area roughly divided by the time until the end of World War II under Prussian/German/Nazi rule and post-war times under the Polish rule. What has been considered as the built heritage of the shipyard from the point of view of authorities, relates to the XIX-century industrial and administrative buildings. The XX-century heritage of the shipyard is twofold and predominantly immaterial; firstly, it is concerned with the legacy of *Solidarność*, the memory of the events of August 1980 and the role of the shipyard's workers in the subsequent transition to market economy; secondly, it addresses the impact of the presence of the shipyard on the urban identity of the city and its population (Interview 7, December 2022). However, as the city architect points out,

'Solidarność did not create any spatial forms which could be preserved. There were events which happened in specific spaces or buildings, like 1970s locker rooms or barracks, but it is questionable whether they are significant enough from a spatial and material perspective to become its material heritage.' (Interview 7, December 2022)

The differences between the material and immaterial heritage, and its overlapping narratives, have been unpacked and analysed predominantly in the academic and legislative context (Lorens & Bugalski, 2021a; 2021b), and as authors admit, are not entirely explained yet. As a result, they are oftentimes 'swept under the carpet' (Interview 7, December 2022). In terms of public participation, that means these differences are not always sufficiently explained, causing confusion and fear about the fate of shipyard's heritage, or they can be

used to manipulate and mislead, as it was the case in previous years. The complexity of the (im)material heritage of the shipyard is difficult to translate into the public discourse, stained with emotional memories of the generations born before the 1960s, for whom these events are 'live history' which they have witnessed and partaken, as well as the current political conflicts fuelling divisions in the society.

The report from the consultations written by Inicjatywa Miasto mentions intergenerational differences in the perception of the shipyard (2021, str. 48). The remembrance of the slow death of the shipyard towards the end of the 1990s is still very painful to the oldest generation for whom it is not only the memories of being made redundant, or the degradation to lower positions because of the technological advancements, but also seeing the destruction of the place to a completely unrecognisable state (Interview 5, October 2022). As much as the role of Solidarność in modern Polish history is known and valued across generations, its memory is often overshadowed by the union's current involvement in the domestic politics. To the younger generations, the post-industrial tissue is more valuable in terms of incorporating it into the new architecture new neighbourhood for its aesthetic and atmospheric qualities, echoing the unique identity of the city. This has been proven by the emerging identity of a part of the shipyard area which in recent years has become an important entertainment hub within the post-industrial environment.

The physical artefacts of the immaterial heritage of the shipyard have had to be negotiated. This has in part been achieved by the artistic activism in the area - the cranes, which are perhaps its most iconic symbol, seem to be safe now that they have started to be perceived as vehicles of value – heritage and cultural value of these objects on the city skyline translates into the economic value of the area, providing particular views and identity of place. The artistic and cultural identity of the shipyard area, together with its central location in the city and industrial surroundings, were a fertile ground for the event and entertainment industry, with nightclubs, outdoor food markets and galleries sprouting within and between the derelict halls. In their final report, Inicjatywa Miasto uses the term 'contemporary heritage' to describe the cultural landscape which emerged in parallel with activist groups campaigning for the preservation of the shipyard's remains. This 'heritage' comprises not only artist collectives, their work and overall 'spirit' of the place but also the night-time economy of clubs and venues which have emerged there, becoming extremely popular among locals and tourists alike, and often problematic for the surrounding residents. Excessive noise, rubbish, and inappropriate behaviour, as well as the increase in short-term rental apartments in the surrounding neighbourhoods have been making it very difficult for the local inhabitants to appreciate the rise in popularity of their neighbourhood (Interview 2, August 2022). While a lot of people value this new identity of the area, which has really put the shipyard in the centre of attention, especially in the summer months, for many others, calling this sphere 'heritage' is not only wrong but also manipulative, as it places the current nightlife and entertainment economy, as well as grassroots artist practices 'on the same level' as the heritage of Solidarność and the material symbols of the area (Interview 4, September 2022).

6.2 Official naming

The complex and heterogeneous pre-war heritage of the area, and its gradual fragmentation at the turn of the XXI century have produced a number of names for this territory. These names, with Młode Miasto (*Eng. Young City*) as perhaps the most striking example, which date as far back as the Middle Ages, are now being reproduced as official names used in municipal documents, or as commercial names of private developers and their realisations, as in the case of Stocznia Cesarska [Development] (*Eng. Imperial Shipyard [Development]*). The city architect pointed out that

'What emerged out of [the consultations] was that further steps are needed to structure the discussion on this topic. One of the elements was the issue related to the naming of the different areas. We prepared some documents, then it was discussed with Rada Interesariuszy [Eng. Stakeholders Board – author's note] how different areas should be called; this is an attempt at consolidating terms which have been in use unofficially' (Interview 7, December 2022)

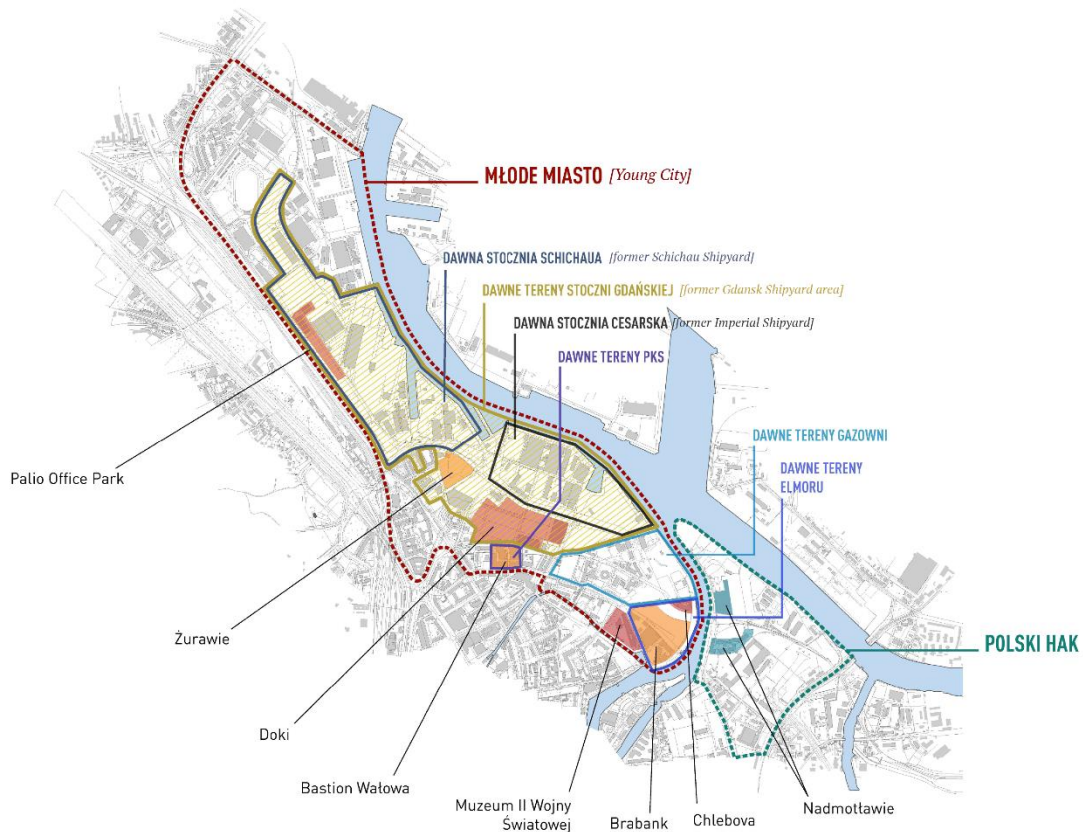


Figure 5: Map of the area showing the former industrial sites, new official area names, and new commercial developments. Source: Biuro Architekta Miasta Gdańska (2022)

In broad terms, Młode Miasto (*Eng. Young City*) encompasses the area of the shipyard as well as adjacent brownfield areas undergoing a transition from (post)industrial to residential functions. Stocznia Gdańska (*Eng. Gdansk Shipyard*) refers to the area occupied by shipbuilding activities in the communist time. Figure 5 shows the document prepared by the municipality mapping the different historical, commercial, and administrative names present in the area onto its territory. While the name Stocznia has been present as an inherent and symbolic part of the collective memory of the local population, naturally embedded in the public consciousness, Młode Miasto is a completely new label whose origins date so far back in history, that it has little significance in the public perception.

This linguistic layer is extremely important not only for structuring the discussion and wayfinding around a large terrain but also as a direct reference to specific parts of the history of the area. In the view of my interlocutors, Stocznia, or Stocznia Gdańska is unanimously the most inclusive and representative name for the inhabitants of the city (Interview 2, August 2022). However, some of the names present in the area, which address the shipyard's heritage, such as Stocznia Cesarska (*Eng. Imperial Shipyard*) or Montownia, although linguistically attractive, relate to its more contentious history:

'Behind the imperial era of the shipyard there is slave work and military production. Or Montownia [Eng. assembly plant – author's note], which is going to be a food hall, used to be a U-boot assembly plant.' (Interview 2, August 2022)

Even though the German and Prussian heritage of Gdańsk, including the architecture, has with time evolved from contested and denied to a natural part of the city's history, its remains and reminders are used in the fringe nationalistic discourse, influencing especially the older generation. In terms of the intergenerational differences, the use of names with a historically negative associations is perhaps the most conflictual point.

The naming is not only a spatial matter, helping people to identify and recognise the terrain. Another issue that was raised in one of the interviews was the importance of differentiating between commercial and

historical names (Interview 2, August 2022). This concerns not only the names of new investments and large developments but also the aforementioned nightclubs and markets – while some of them have cleverly referred to the history of the area with regard to their naming (for example, the name of Ulica Elektryków [*Eng. Electricians' Street*] which is an outdoor club, originates from the industrial function of that space at the time of shipyard's operation). While it is generally appreciated and has undoubtedly influenced the use of original shipyard names in many new investments, in some views, stronger leadership from the municipal side is needed to structure the naming of the area, so that the commercial naming does not overshadow its historical origins in the urban space in a writing (on signposts and documents), as well as in spoken form (Interview 2, August 2022).

6.3 Values and fuzzy concepts

A number of interviews revealed how the use of certain general notions and values in a participatory process without settling a common understanding can be counterproductive. The example of heritage, which perhaps was the most important concept in the case of the Gdansk shipyard, was elaborated in more detail earlier in this chapter and relates primarily to the existing tissue of the area. Other concepts, briefly analysed below, address the transformation of the site and its future.

The organisers pointed out the use of terms such as 'greenery' or 'culture' without specifics, as well as incorrect assumptions about overshadowing, scale of buildings and open spaces by the participating public (Interview 1, August 2022). While these issues were resolved with conversation and visual aids, comparing the map of the shipyard with scale of other spaces in the city known to the participants, this hints at the fact that those outside of the circle of participation veterans and experts sometimes lack the tools to articulate their fears and wishes, and to meaningfully participate in the process.

One of the main fears voiced during the consultations was that the transformation of the area will create 'gated communities'. As mentioned in the previous chapter, while a developer representative said there was never a plan to create fenced off apartment complexes (Interview 6, November 2022), which still a popular practice in Poland, multiple articles in the local media outlets keep repeating otherwise, and people's perceptions of the future of the district mention a flood of short-term apartments and overwhelmingly upper class resident composition, confirmed in the words of other developers (Tokarczyk, 2022). It shows that people (rightfully) fear enclaves for the wealthy, even though participation showed that municipal, public and, to some extent, developers' expectations are towards an inclusive district. Whether it will be possible depends on the cooperation between the municipality, heritage inspector and landowners, as the 2004 land use plan contains valorisation clauses that can prevent that (Interview 1, August 2022). Nevertheless, the use of the term 'gated communities' by the residents to describe enclaves which might not be *physically* separated, gives the decision-makers an easy way to argue otherwise. This example proves that there is a need for initiatives such as the one described by a community coordinator at the European Solidarity Centre:

'This year we focus on organising seminars that aim at explaining core concepts like revitalisation, gentrification. We assumed that these terms get used quite a lot, but it is not always entirely clear what they imply exactly. [...] The goal is to equip [the residents] with tools for action and resilience to the changes that are going to happen in their neighbourhood.' (Interview 2, August 2022)

Enabling those who want to participate with the tools to take part in the dialogue in a fair and egalitarian way is key to sustaining a fair and just process, which links to Sebastyański's doctoral research which interrogates the role of dialogue in the shipyard transformation (Interview 4, September 2022). This can be done symptomatically, as it was resolved during the participatory workshop, or through systematic engagement with the community, like the workshops organised by ECS. However obvious it sounds, the case of Gdańsk shipyard shows that without establishing a common understanding of the language and terms used in the process, participation is prone to manipulation and misinterpretation.

6.4 Conflicts

While the consultations have indeed brought a more open and effective approach to dialogue about the redevelopment of the shipyard area, there are still a number of conflicts that not only persist but were also fuelled by the way the meetings were organised. Firstly, the initial apparent lack of awareness about the results of the work done previously on the topic prevented its authors from trusting the organisers and consequently participating in the workshops (Interview 4, September 2022). If we understand the role of public participation as a means of broadening the amount of available knowledge about a particular issue, this seems to be an unparalleled loss to the depth of discussion and potential outcomes that could have resulted from it.

Similarly, the absence of the regional heritage inspector at the consultations is perhaps of an even greater impact. This stakeholder is perceived probably the most diversely by other participants, and so was his nonattendance. His role as the protector of the shipyard's heritage is recognised by all, but not everyone sympathizes with his efforts to do it. Still, his absence at the consultations was generally considered a pity. In 2022, he rejected a masterplan prepared by Stocznia Cesarska Development, which was one of the first visions for the area that were met with a universally positive public opinion, and imposed drastically lower height restrictions, forcing its complete revision. Some of my interlocutors perceive him as a negative force impeding the redevelopment of the area, but others disagree with the way he was scapegoated during the meetings at which he was not present. The city architect also pointed to the political divisions on the national level that influence the local context on the front between the mayor and the heritage inspector (Interview 7, December 2022). He has significant legal and administrative power, but

'unfortunately, such an important stakeholder was consistently overlooked, or misled, in this dialogue for many years. This person such be the main partner in the conversation. [...] [Instead,] his absence shows that again, the most important element which has impaired the planning process for the last 30 years, the issue of cultural heritage and its role in the development of this area, is consistently ignored.' (Interview 4, September 2022)

The third conflict, perhaps the least explored in the context of public participation concerns the current and future functions of the area, described by the city architect (Interview 7, December 2022). Various industries, still present in the vicinity of the shipyard area are beginning to get pushed out to make space for the new mixed-use development. The inevitable shift in the identity of the area has caused opposition from one of the petroleum companies owning part of the land under the redevelopment plan, forcing its legal revocation. While these neighbours did not partake in the public consultations, it seems that their impact on the redevelopment plans concerning the whole Młode Miasto district can become more significant as the transformation of the area moves forward.

The thematic lens of the discourse analysis of the interviews allowed a comparison of the language used by the stakeholders and participants, and brought to the fore specific points where it can be used to interfere with or manipulate dialogue. More importantly, this pertains not only to the relation between decision-makers and residents, which is at the focus of the critical theory of participation, but also between the stakeholders themselves. The interviews revealed key points around which the differences in perception and understanding of certain issues have the biggest impact. Some of them, such as heritage and naming, are quite unique to the shipyard, but in general they have shown, through concrete examples, how dialogue, a key element of meaningful participation, can be influenced by a lack of common language.

7 Conclusions

The case of Gdańsk shipyard shows how the multi-layered history of a territory can impact its redevelopment. By interrogating it through the focus on public participation, the importance of historical positioning acquired a new lens – that of public perceptions and their impact on the dialogue about the area. Moreover, it also showed that exploring *the history of the participation itself* can reveal new paths of inquiry. Interrogating why

and how public participation became part of the discourse on the transformation of this area was key to understand its current consequences.

The recent history of public participation in the shipyard has shown how the discourse on heritage can change the perceptions of value on a politically charged, post-industrial terrain. It serves as a way of expanding the field of knowledge which can lead to much more informed decisions being made by those in power.

'After over a decade those developers admitted they did not have this awareness. It was only the activists and various people who in a way forced this discourse bottom-up which helped us understand that there is a lot of value [in the shipyard area] which we have not considered earlier.' (Interview 4, September 2022)

The research revealed that the role and relevance of public participation around the shipyard area redevelopment have, first of all, changed over the years, moving from a grassroots initiative with real impact to an instrumentalised element of the official discourse. Alternatively, if we use the theoretical approach of Miraftab (2004), the invented participation evolved into an invited process, losing its edge and non-expert creativity. Secondly, the analysis of interviews has shown that there are *multiple* roles and purposes of these processes for different stakeholders: for the public, it gives an apparent degree of control over the issues they fear the most; for the municipality, it is a way of organising the discourse on the area and overseeing the transformation of a privatised terrain; for the developers, these consultations offer public legitimacy in the process of negotiating their plans with the heritage inspector – that is why the questions of what constitutes the heritage of this area turned out to be so disputed (and differently understood) in the process. What seems to have gotten lost in the process of formalising the discussion is the position of Miessen's crossbench practitioner (2010, p. 251), initially assumed by people like Sebastyański, who took responsibility for trying to turn the grassroots movements into more coherent projects for the last 20 years, taking on different roles – from working with the municipality, land owners and developers, towards a more activist approach, to academic research - but have inevitably lost that momentum. Following Miessen's argumentation, it seems that this type of an 'uninvited outsider' would be what the current 'participatory consultations' are lacking in order to regain their relevance and a capacity to produce unexpected results.

Public participation, however, is only a part of a lengthy and inconclusive process around the shipyard redevelopment, which has its legislative, economic, social, and physical aspects. The apparent lack of logical structuring of these stages of the transformation – an outdated land use plan with little chance of updating, apparent lack of clear leadership and fragmented ownership of the site offer an interesting research ground with regards to process management. While the role of the individual 'crossbencher' only has a theoretical potential for bringing the participation to a more productive level, in an invited, or bottom-up participatory process, clear leadership and good management seem to be equally, if not more important to the end result. In the case of the shipyard area, fragmented ownership and an inconsistent presence of the municipality over the last decades have negatively impacted not only the public perception of the administration of the site but also of the effectiveness of the transformation process.

The participatory process concerning the shipyard area redevelopment is unique due to the multiplicity of layers it encompasses and its political significance. It can, nevertheless, be a relevant and useful case study for researchers, policymakers and activists because it touches on many challenges and aspects of city-making and urban (re)production of space, public participation being only one of them. Its post-industrial tissue and the questions of heritage, contemporary policymaking and developer-led urbanisation it raises are widely discussed and tackled in the wider European context and beyond. The issues of justice and fairness are key to making participation meaningful. The role and nature of public participation in the case of Gdansk shipyard has shifted from bottom-up to top-down, which has as many positive implications from the point of view of fairness as negative ones. Greater inclusivity, better organisation and public agency came at the expense of tangible impact, meaningful public involvement and possible manipulation. It seems that a common vision for the area has been negotiated but there is little confidence in the actual, material implementation of this vision.

However, these processes will most likely still continue for a while. There are still people, experts and ‘non-experts’ alike, who believe that they can have a positive impact on the future of this area, and more importantly, share their knowledge and tools with others. Initiatives such as those of the European Solidarity Centre described earlier, build the capacity in the surrounding community to participate meaningfully. It is one of the most promising ways to direct public participation back towards an agonistic practice described by Chantal Mouffe (1999), and make it a space of a *productive* conflict.



Figure 6. Promotional graffiti for one of the shipyard's clubs, showing a crowd of figures. Source: Z Photography (n.d.)

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Figure 1. Migas, R. (2020). *View of the shipyard area*. Accessed via: <https://www.polskieradio.pl/8/3669/artykul/2458177,hale-popadaly-w-ruine-stocznia-gdanska-trafi-na-liste-unesco> on 11 September 2022

Figure 2. Author. (2023). *Map showing the extents of the post-shipyard area in relation to the city centre*.

Figure 3. Author. (2023). *Timeline outlining the history of the site relevant for this research, from the establishment of the Young City to the liquidation of the Gdańsk Shipyard, and the subsequent history of public engagement in the shipyard area after 1989*.

Figure 4. Author. (2022). *View of Hala Trasernia (Eng. Tracer Hall) and cranes*.

Figure 5. Biuro Architekta Miasta Gdańska. (2022). *Map of the area showing the former industrial sites, new official area names, and new commercial developments*. [translation added by the author]

Figure 6. Z Photography. (n.d.) *Promotional graffiti for one of the shipyard's clubs, showing a crowd of figures*.

Appendix 1 – Interviews

number	profession	affiliation	date
1	Architect	Inicjatywa Miasto	24.08.2022
2	Community coordinator	Europejskie Centrum Solidarności	29.08.2022
3	Architect, activist, NGO co-founder	CUMY	05.09.2022
4	Researcher, activist, urbanist	University of West Scotland	19.09.2022
5	Cultural researcher, activist	-	21.10.2022
6	Project manager	Stocznia Cesarska Development	07.11.2022
7	City Architect	Municipality of Gdańsk, Gdańsk University of Technology	23.12.2022