

## **Pittsburgh for Taranto: striving for participatory and inclusive governance in changing steel cities.**

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Once famously labeled the American 'hell with the lid off', the city of Pittsburgh in United States has undergone a significant transformation. Today, it serves as a model for new sustainable development trajectories, inspiring – among others – steel cities in crisis like Taranto. The latter, in Italy, is best known for the various problems (environmental, economic, social) associated with its steel industry despite a millennial history as the capital of Magna Graecia or as a Mediterranean port, prompting a demand for transformation. However, the 'modeling' in question occurs without proper investigation, neglecting crucial issues such as gentrification in Pittsburgh and social exclusion among African Americans, other than the prevalence of working poverty in post-industrial contexts.

This study critically investigates participatory urban governance in Taranto and Pittsburgh, with a specific focus on the processes of change affecting both cities' steel industries. In particular, it aims to analyze the participation of socioeconomically vulnerable segments of the population in the processes of urban regeneration and economic reconversion that have taken place and are taking place in both cities.

Initially, attention is directed towards urban governance, often touted as 'participatory,' despite cities increasingly prioritizing the expansion of capital's reproductive and profit-making capacities (Sassen, 1993; Harvey, 2013). Subsequently, the cases of Pittsburgh and Taranto undergo analysis to ascertain the experiences of participating citizens and the contextual conditions influencing their involvement. Finally, a comparative examination of the two cases ensues, facilitating a broader contemplation of participatory and inclusive urban governance, transcending mere rhetoric.

Semi-structured interviews, participant observation activities and analysis of secondary sources were carried out for the study of both cases. Specifically, over a total period of five months, the field study carried out in Pittsburgh involved 35 people including academics, activists, policy-makers and other citizens. The Taranto study can be regarded as a native ethnography involving entrepreneurs, workers, activists, policy-makers, third-sector practitioners and other citizens, for a total of 52 subjects.