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Strategic planning : vector or substitute for metropolitan institutional integration.  
Lessons from Italy.

In Italy, a legal framework providing tools for the political and administrative integration of large cities exists since the beginning of the 1990's. The communes that forms a conurbation can create a "Metropolitan City" that substitute to the upper tiers, the province. Nevertheless, due to the extreme political difficulties that implies the creation of such structures (the agreement between communes and the Province but also the Region), a significant number of Italian cities have privileged alternative ways to metropolitan integration or inter-municipal cooperation. One of these ways is strategic planning. By generating shared cognitive frames about territorial competition stakes, about the assets and weaknesses of the cities, by mobilizing organisations of the local civil societies, the strategic planning processes is supposed to generate incrementally a pressure towards political cooperation and institutional integration. The outputs of this strategy are ambiguous. On one hand, they can generate cognitive shifts among political actors and they can settle cooperation routines between officials and administrations. But on the other hand, since those processes do not generate any new institutional frames, they are unable to develop any redistributive policies which happens to be an obstacle at this moment to a broader integration of policymaking at a metropolitan scale.