Reading Tips and Study Questions: Session Two

Required reading:

Friedmann, PPD, pp. 19-29, 37-48, 51-85.

Martin Meyerson and Edward Banfield, *Politics, Planning, and the Public Interest* (New York: Free Press, 1964), "Note on conceptual scheme," pp.303-329.

Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (New York: Anchor, 1999), Preface and pp.3-11.

Tips and questions

In Session One, we used the Rebuild LA case as a window on some core themes and dilemmas facing planning. We'll revisit and re-analyze RLA in this session but also move beyond it, considering distinct traditions of planning as a way of understanding the field and its development. This sets up Session Three, which will focus on dilemmas and highlight the central dilemmas in the three cases to come.

1. **Friedmann** provides a sweeping history of major traditions. OK, it's not page-turning beach reading, but the history of ideas here is very valuable and very compact, considering his scope. Identify the core motivation behind each tradition, as well as links among them. How does each illuminate problems faced in rebuilding LA, as well as opportunities for constructive action?

2. **Meyerson and Banfield** outline the foundations of the rational model of decisionmaking, which underlies planning's policy analysis tradition in particular. This is a classic reading in the field, in part because so many critics have responded to it, as we'll see in Session Three. What are the model's core assumptions? How well do they apply to decision-making in the Rebuild LA case? Does the model capture the way you've made important decisions in your personal or profession life?

3. What does the traditional conception of "development" ignore, according to the brief excerpt by **Amartya Sen**? Sen is a respected and influential economist whose book outlines important limits of traditional, economics-driven thinking about the good society and how to promote it. Are Sen's arguments at odds with those of Friedmann, i.e. about what various conceptions of the good society imply and how they play out in practice?