

Deborah Stone's Analysis of Perspectives

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The basic question is how the dichotomy of perspectives on theory building presented by McCourt relates to the dichotomy of perspectives on the social world presented by Deborah Stone. Are their views parallel, contradictory, or simply incompatible? That is the focus of the last forum for Topic 2: Relation of McCourt and Stone.

In her preface before describing her perspective on how society works, Deborah Stone outlines her 4 critiques of the standard policy book. First, she says that “if one reads or talks very much about policy in academic settings, one can’t help but notice a profound rejection of politics in favor of rational analysis.”

She continues:

Second, the field of policy analysis is dominated by economics and its model of society as a market. A market, as conceived in classical microeconomics, is a collection of atomized individuals who have no community life. They have individual preferences and their relationships consist entirely of trading with one another to maximize their individual well-being...I wanted a kind of analysis that began with a model of political community, where individuals live in a web of dependencies, loyalties, and associations, and where they envision and fight for a public interest as well as their individual interests.

She then proceeds to compare the economists' view of the world as a “market” with her political perspective of the social world. What does she name these two contrasting perspectives of the social world? What are the key concepts or features that differentiate these two perspectives?

For a brief presentation of D. Stone's perspective, see the resource below: Stone Text. When you click on the resource you will be given a sample page. If you go to the end of that page you can then go to the file that lets you enlarge the text. Using that text and the sections given above, as Team 2 list Stone's key terms with brief definitions in the forum for Topic 2 named “Stone's Dichotomy of Perspectives.”