

Amos Zehavi: Recent work and interests (March 2011)

My general field of expertise is comparative social policy and political economy. Most of my work is dedicated to the following topics: the boundary between **private and public** production and how it is determined; the impact of partisan politics, on the **left-right dimension**, on policy; the role of **religion** and religious organizations in the **welfare state**; and how **policy reform** is brought about. Most of my research combines these different interests.

In terms of substantive policy domains, my research is relatively broad. I have published with Danny Breznitz (Georgia Tech) an article centered on the appropriate role of the state in guiding **R&D policy** ("The Limits of Capital: Transcending the Public Financer – Private Producer Split in R&D," *Research Policy* 39, 2010) and I am currently collaborating with him on a project concerned with how partisan right-left orientation impacts R&D policy across and within OECD countries.

Several of my research projects focus on the **education** field. I have written about the differences between right and left in terms of their approach to partial privatization in primary and secondary education (Old and New Politics in Privatization of Delivery: Linking Program Constituencies to Left and Right," *Comparative Political Studies*, forthcoming), and about the shortcomings of institutional explanations for explaining the size of the private school sector in Anglo-Saxon countries ("Veto Players, Path Dependency, and Reform of Public Aid Policy to Private Schools," *Comparative Politics* Forthcoming). I have also written an article that explains the differences in regulatory development associated with the private school sectors in Australia and Israel ("Policy Instruments, Target Groups and the Elusive Goal of Government Control: Introducing New Accountability to Non-government Schools," *Regulation & Governance* forthcoming). A new research project, in which I collaborate with Marius Bussemeyer and Raphaella Schlicht (Konstanz University), studies the politics of regulation and the application of new accountability to primary and secondary schools in different OECD countries.

In the **healthcare** field, I studied the politics of mental healthcare reform in the US arguing that reform in small policy domains involves a very different dynamic than is indicated by theories that have been studied and developed primarily in large policy domains ("A Reform Less Ordinary? Historical Institutionalism, Punctuated Equilibrium and Mental Healthcare Privatization," *Administration & Society* Forthcoming). I am currently collaborating with Baruch Levy, whom I supervised in his masters' thesis, on a study of the diffusion of Nurse Practitioner reforms across the OECD countries ("Delegation of physician authority, administrative culture, and the dynamics of policy transfer"). In the near future, I will begin a study, with Noa Samburski (a masters' student), of the distributive effects of international medical and student tourism on societies in countries that offer "international" medical and academic services.

In my dissertation, I explored the determinants of **prison** privatization. Following a request for advice concerning the moral limits of privatization made by the legal advisor of the Israeli parliament (the Knesset), I wrote an article about the normative limits of privatization that makes use of two case studies for illustration: **incarceration** and **Private**

Military Companies. This article is currently in R&R at *Politics, Philosophy and Economics (PPE)*.

Much of my recent work is dedicated to understanding the relationship between **religion and ethnicity** on the one hand, and the **welfare state** – or at least specific welfare state programs – on the other. In one article, I argued that the rise of faith based organizations in the US and England should be understood not only in terms of the religious mission of politicians and organization leaders, but also as a new instrument that liberal welfare state employ to reach out to excluded minority communities (“The Faith-Based Initiative in Comparative Perspective: Making Use of Religious Providers in Britain and the United States,” *Comparative Politics* 40, 2008). A recent paper concentrated on the theorization of trends in welfare state-religion relations with respect to politics, service delivery, and service funding (“The End of the Affair? Religion and the Western Welfare State in Hard Times,”). I argue that liberal and Christian Democratic welfare states have responded very differently to recent trends in welfare management and politics that is expressed in a growing presence of religious welfare providers in the former and a gradual decline of the same in the latter type of welfare state. A third paper explores the religious character of welfare state institutions (e.g., hospitals, schools, welfare agencies). It argues that secularization or saclarization (i.e., becoming more religious) trends on the social-individual level lead through various mechanisms to corresponding trends in state-funded – but not necessarily owned – welfare state institutions (“Moving in opposite directions? Religious involvement in welfare provision in Israel and the Low Countries,”). Two other papers touch on religion but are more closely associated with ethnicity. In one paper, I employ an Israeli case study to explore whether strong inter-ethnic tensions undermines cooperation on social issues as much of the welfare state literature predicts. I find that cooperation based on enlightened self-interest can bring together even the worst enemies in the welfare field (“Who Needs Solidarity? Ethnic Diversity and the Israeli Welfare State”, currently in R&R at *Social Policy and Administration*). A different paper, also based on an Israeli case study, puzzles over a paradox: in recent years tensions between the Jewish majority and Arab minority have intensified and this has been most evident in the political sphere. Nevertheless, a succession of Israeli governments has made progress, albeit modest at that, in narrowing the gap between Jews and Arabs in terms of state allocations in the social field. This study singles out external pressure, cooptation, the rise of Arab civil society, and elite normative change as the main reasons for this surprising outcome (“From marginalization to inclusion...and back? The Arab minority, the struggle for social rights, and the Israeli welfare state”).