

## SPOTLIGHT ON FACULTY RESEARCH

**A Q & A with Assistant Professor Stuart Shapiro on “Regulation from Clinton to Obama” and his recent article, *Presidents and Process: A Comparison of the Regulatory Process Under the Clinton and Bush (43) Administrations* Journal of Law and Politics (Fall 2007) XXIII:393**

**Q. How did you become interested in the politics of regulation?**

I worked for five years at the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA), the epicenter of the regulatory world. I worked under the Bush and Clinton administrations and became fascinated with the interaction between substantive policy and politics. I began to realize that no matter the rhetoric or the party, when politics and policy conflicted, politics usually won.

**Q. In this particular article, you compare rule-making during the Clinton and Bush Administrations. How did you conduct the study?**

I collected data on all regulations issued in comparable periods in President Clinton's second term and President Bush's term. This data was all available on the Internet. I collected data on over 900 regulations. Many of the variables I collected had to do with the regulatory process. How many comments did agencies receive on their proposed regulation? Did the agency do a cost-benefit analysis on the regulation? Did the agencies make any changes between proposing the rule and finalizing it?

**Q. What were your primary findings?**

The regulatory process looks remarkably similar regardless of who the president is. Both academics and politicians spend a lot of energy arguing about the regulatory process and whether it should be changed. But if the process is used the same way by presidents with different ideological agendas, what difference does it make? Maybe we should stop complicating the regulatory process if it can be used equally well by presidents committed to regulation and to deregulation.

**Q. Based on this research, how do you expect bureaucratic rulemaking to change or stay the same under the new presidential administration?**

The Obama administration has some fascinating choices to make. The Bush Administration added more steps for agencies to undertake than any President since Reagan. President-Elect Obama will have to decide whether or not to keep these steps in place (including requiring peer review of information supporting regulations and requiring agencies to submit guidance documents to OIRA for review). I would argue that few of these steps will have much effect on policy but some of them could seriously lengthen the regulatory process.

#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

**Assistant Professor Stuart Shapiro** joined the Bloustein school faculty in 2003 after five years in the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) at the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in Washington. In OIRA he analyzed and coordinated executive branch review in the areas of labor, health and social policy. Prior to working at OIRA he received his Ph.D in Public Policy from Harvard University where he studied how political factors impacted changes to child care regulations in eight states. He has taught courses at Harvard, Georgetown, and the USDA Graduate School.

To read Dr. Shapiro's Journal of Law & Politics article, [click here](#)

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