

The pharmaceutical industry's influence on the United States' trade policy resides in its ability to develop strong and convincing economic arguments. As an interest group, it has been playing a decisive role in convincing the American government to include strong intellectual property rights clauses in the bilateral and multilateral trade agreements it negotiates, arguing that strong foreign patent protection is necessary to finance the industry's research and development efforts. The implementation of foreign patent protection has enabled the industry to increase its exports and foreign direct investments, and fragment its production process abroad. The industry has also managed to maintain its monopoly on the United States' imports of pharmaceutical products, by arguing that foreign drugs are of poorer quality and by giving campaign contributions to legislators who support that argument.

The dissertation includes four papers. Its approach is both theoretical and econometric, and belongs mainly to the fields of research on political economy and international trade.