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# Using Ideas Strategically: The Contest Between Business and NGO Networks in Intellectual Property Rights

Susan K. Sell, Aseem Prakash

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Whose ideas matter? And how do actors make them matter? Focusing on the strategic deployment of competing normative frameworks, that is, framing issues and grafting private agendas on policy debates, we examine the contentious politics of the contemporary international intellectual

property rights regime. We compare the business victory in the establishment of the 1994 Agreement on Trade-Related Intellectual Property (TRIPS) in the World Trade Organization with the subsequent NGO campaign against enforcing TRIPS to ensure access to essential HIV/AIDS medicines. Our analysis challenges constructivist scholarship that emphasizes the distinction between various types of transnational networks based on instrumental versus normative orientations. We question the portrayal of business firms as strictly instrumental actors preoccupied with material concerns, and NGOs as motivated solely by principled, or non-material beliefs. Yet we also offer a friendly amendment to constructivism by demonstrating its applicability to the analysis of business. Treating the business and NGO networks as competing interest groups driven by their normative ideals and material concerns, we demonstrate that these networks' strategies and activities are remarkably similar.

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