

The White House vs. U.S. Congress: A Case Study of the NAFTA Issue

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Abstract

On December 17, 1992, the United States, Canada and Mexico signed a historic trade accord. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is the most comprehensive free trade agreement ever negotiated between regional trade partners. This study examines the ratification of NAFTA from executive-congressional conflict perspective.

The first part of this study analyzes congressional assertiveness on the NAFTA issue from the perspective of institutional and electoral motivations. The second part of this study examines the background of the NAFTA negotiations and likely impacts of NAFTA on U.S. economy in the future.

The NAFTA issue demonstrates another case that Presidential preferences prevail over those of Congress. The third part of this study analyzes strategies and tactics used by the Clinton Administration to win congressional approval of NAFTA in 1993.