

A Conference Viewing Two Decades of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)

“NAFTA at 20: Effects on the North American Market,” held June 5–6, 2014, brought together leading academic and government researchers for a conference that explored the realities of the landmark trade agreement. The gathering was sponsored by the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, the U.S. International Trade Commission, Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD), Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía and El Colegio de México. The conference was held at the Houston Branch of the Dallas Fed.

This volume contains summaries of papers and studies presented during the conference. The articles reflect the presentations as they were given during the meeting and the material has not been updated. However, in some cases, subsequent developments provide new context for the presenters’ work. Several reference the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), an agreement that was to have included 12 Pacific Ocean-bordering countries, among them Mexico, Canada and the United States. The TPP accord was scuttled in the early days of the Trump administration.

NAFTA remains a subject of intense interest not only to the academic community but also to governments, businesses and the citizens of the three countries who have been most directly affected by it. Many elements of modern trade and technology were not yet established at the time the agreement was concluded. The internet had not become a mainstream tool of commerce along with a range of products, many within the realm of intellectual property. Ongoing negotiations around a new NAFTA may come to include them. This volume seeks to inform discussion about the agreement’s salient features and outcomes and to provide a basis for policy making as well as further study and analysis.

Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, Research Department, November 2017