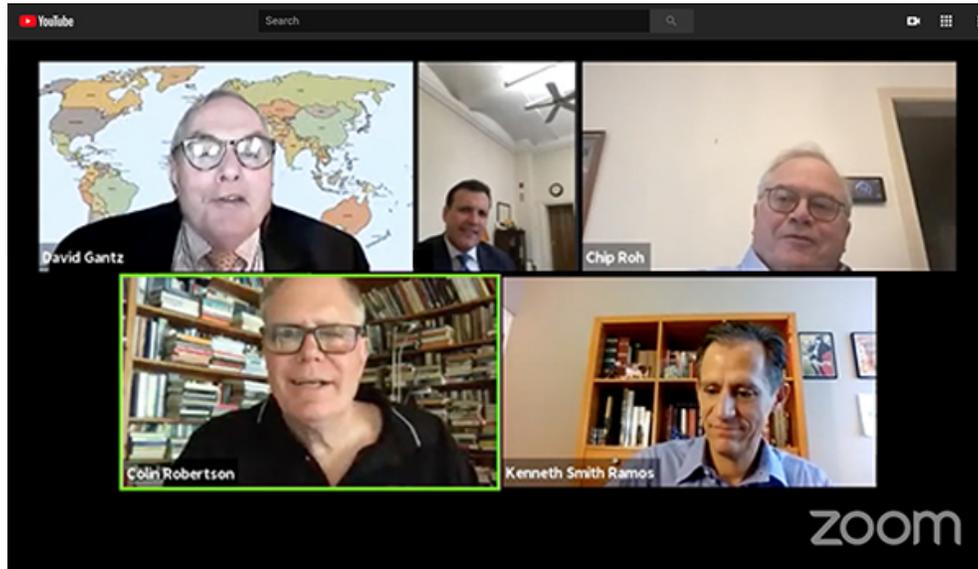


RICE UNIVERSITY'S
BAKER INSTITUTE
FOR PUBLIC POLICY

News, Research and Events

July 2, 2020



USMCA's entry into force: Prospects and challenges for North American trade

The United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), the successor to NAFTA, took effect on July 1. To recognize this turning point, the [Center for the U.S. and Mexico](#) hosted a webinar with key negotiators of NAFTA and the USMCA, who provided insights into the new trade agreement and the challenges that may arise as it is implemented. The webinar was moderated by [David A. Gantz](#), the Will Clayton Fellow in Trade and International Economics at the Baker Institute.

[Charles "Chip" Roh](#), the former assistant U.S. trade representative for North America and the former deputy chief negotiator of NAFTA, and [Colin Robertson](#), a former member of the NAFTA negotiation team for Canada, discussed issues that arose over investor-state dispute settlements, labor rights, and the rule of origin for automobiles. [Ambassador C.J. Mahoney](#), the Deputy United States Trade Representative for Investment, Services, Labor, Environment, Africa, China, and the Western Hemisphere, emphasized his belief that the USMCA will be more enduring than NAFTA, as it provides important updates and was passed with broad support from all parties of Congress and all three member countries. Representing Mexico's perspective, Kenneth Smith-Ramos, the former chief negotiator for the modernization of NAFTA for Mexico, brought the discussion back to the current economic crisis caused by Covid-19. According to Smith-Ramos, the USMCA will be an anchor of free trade during the crisis that can help to remedy supply chain disruptions, especially for items like medical supplies and personal protective equipment. To learn more, watch the full presentation on the [event page](#), and check out this [series of reports](#) about the USMCA by David Gantz.

“CEOs need to partner with public health officials and health care providers in their home towns to develop strategies to control the spread of disease.”

Vivian Ho, James A. Baker III Institute Chair in Health Economics,
in “CEOs Need to do More for Covid,” published by The Hill



Women’s grassroots mobilization in the MENA region post-2011

A recently published [series of issue briefs](#), edited by [Kelsey Norman](#), the director of the [Women's Rights, Human Rights and Refugees Program](#), addresses the gains made by women’s movements in countries across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) as well as the challenges that women in this region still face. The briefs are based on the “Women’s Grassroots Mobilization in the MENA Region Post-2011” workshops held at the Moroccan Institute for Policy Analysis in Rabat, Morocco and the American Center for Oriental Research in Amman, Jordan in February and March 2020.

Using detailed case studies of specific countries and movements, the contributing authors—who include scholars and activists from Morocco, Tunisia, Lebanon, Turkey, Palestine, and Jordan—examine which spaces for women’s mobilization have opened and which have closed off. They look critically at how women’s grassroots movements become adopted into formal politics and policy, and to what effect. They also question the nexus between social movements and outcomes such as legislative reform, asking how participants are able to develop measures that ensure the transformation of demands into law and effective implementation. Lastly, the authors demonstrate that grassroots mobilization on a variety of topics related to women’s rights—from ending sexual harassment and domestic violence to implementing inheritance laws that are gender-equal—has continued from below, putting pressure on governments, institutions and societies to make meaningful strides toward gender equality. You can read the full series [here](#).

Covid-19 updates from the Baker Institute Blog

Covid-19 Updates: By the Numbers. Vivian Ho, the James A. Baker III Institute Chair in Health Economics; Kirstin Matthews, fellow in science and technology policy; and Heidi Russell, associate professor at the Baylor College of Medicine, provide up-to-date information about the number of Covid-19 cases, vaccine development and global policy interventions.

Browse the Baker Institute [research library](#) and the [Baker Institute Blog](#) to keep up with the latest research and news on the coronavirus pandemic.

Upcoming Events

Webinar — Police violence and ending the War on Drugs: A path toward structural change. Katharine Neill Harris, the Alfred C. Glassell, III, Fellow in Drug Policy, discusses how ending the War on Drugs is one of the many steps necessary to address systemic racism in the criminal justice system.

July 7 | 1:00 pm

Webinar — Examining the new environment for renewable energy in Mexico.

A panel of experts examines setbacks in Mexico's renewable energy policies and how the country can avoid falling further behind in a sector that may hold the key to a more livable planet. **July 8 | 11:00 am**

Visit our [events page](#) for a complete list.

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