The China Factor in Mexico-U.S. Relations
LASA Section for Asia and the Americas

Panel 2: Policy. As China’s trade and investment relations with the United States intensify, Mexico’s advances, mistakes, and prospects in raising tariffs and building a “strategic partnership” with China may harbor useful lessons. U.S. policymakers may also draw lessons from the inability of their Mexican counterparts to stem the inflow of Chinese contraband, including via the United States. Is there any substance to recent media reports that this phenomenon is linked to the trafficking of arms into Mexico, and of drugs and people to the United States? How might policymakers in Mexico and the United States seek to harness the entrepreneurial capacities and international networks of resident Chinese communities for national benefit?

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Panel 1: Trade. In 2010, Mexico recorded a $93 billion merchandise trade surplus with the United States, a $40 billion deficit with China, and a $3.3 billion deficit with the world overall. Critics of NAFTA argue that overdependence on exports to the United States has impeded industrial innovation in Mexico and prevented Mexican authorities (public and private) from formulating coherent policies toward China. This panel examines how China’s international trade and investment strategies are influencing Mexico’s position in global production networks, how this is impacting U.S.-Mexico economic cooperation, and whether NAFTA may offer much-needed opportunities for improved trilateral cooperation engagement.

Getting Around
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