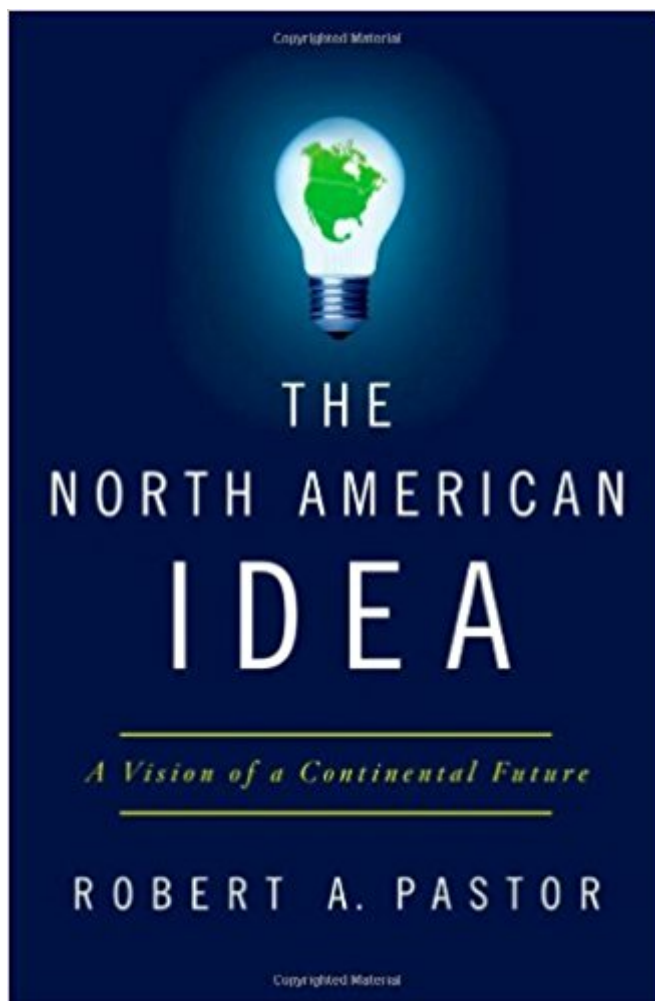


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The North American Idea: A Vision Of A Continental Future



Synopsis

In its first seven years, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) tripled trade and quintupled foreign investment among the U.S., Mexico, and Canada, increasing its share of the world economy. In 2001, however, North America peaked. Since then, trade has slowed among the three, manufacturing has shrunk, and illegal migration and drug-related violence have soared. At the same time, Europe caught up, and China leaped ahead. In *The North American Idea*, eminent scholar and policymaker Robert A. Pastor explains that NAFTA's mandate was too limited to address the new North American agenda. Instead of offering bold initiatives like a customs union to expand trade, leaders of the three nations thought small. Interest groups stalemated the small ideas while inhibiting the bolder proposals, and the governments accomplished almost nothing. To overcome this resistance and reinvigorate the continent, the leaders need to start with an idea based on a principle of interdependence. Pastor shows how this idea--once woven into the national consciousness of the three countries--could mobilize public support for continental solutions to problems like infrastructure and immigration that have confounded each nation working on its own. Providing essential historical context and challenging readers to view the continent in a new way, *The North American Idea* combines an expansive vision with a detailed blueprint for a more integrated, dynamic, and equitable North America.

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Customer Reviews

Since NAFTA was passed in 1994, the idea of an integrated economy between the North American countries of the United States, Mexico, and Canada has suffered in the aftermath of 9/11 and the United States' policy to circle the wagons rather than work with its neighbors on trade, security, and immigration. Into this breach comes Mr. Pastor's book reminding us that the idea of a North American community is new and still has potential to change the economic and political game. I think his argument, that all three countries have more to gain from cooperation and collaboration, is both sound and common sense in spite of the hysterics of TV pundits. I just wish he could've made a more persuasive argument. The book is sound, but I doubt that it is going to change the minds of those who oppose increased economic integration. Still, there are some fascinating facts such as the fact that ports like Los Angeles and Long Beach have reached their maximum capacity and the U.S. will have to rely on ports like Tijuana to feed the West Coast's demand. Or how statistics have shown that more people than you would think (but not a majority) think of themselves as a citizen of their country and North America. He makes a relatively persuasive case that the ideals that the countries hold dear, based on similar histories, are converging rather than diverging. In short, while this is a solid short read, it's doubtful that many people will change their minds about NAFTA after reading this.

This book was required for a college course teaching about "Continental Americans." Pastor is a clear & concise author. His ideas are great. I like that it shows a variety of perspectives in North America. Overall, I learned a lot from the class (I thought I would hate it). This was my favorite book because it showed a modern perspective of North "America" (USA, Canada, & Mexico).

The World is changing. With technology growing and business becoming more global, the future Economic and National Security of the US will be dependent on cooperation with our neighbors to the North and South. This book makes a compelling case for the future and while it might not happen in our generation, it will happen one day. The World is changing and we can't go forward and make progress as Human beings while being held back by arbitrary political borders and nostalgia for archaic Ideas such as isolationism and against globalization.

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