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Continental Governance or Hegemonic Control: North America after September 11

Comparisons pointing out the similarities in demographics and economics between the European Union and the North America reregulated by the North America Free Trade Agreement are counterproductive when it comes to understanding the nature of continental governance in North America. Far from having a set of institutions which generate a common continental purpose and offset the power discrepancies between the larger and the smaller members as is the case in Europe, North American integration is increasing the asymmetries in power between the United States on the one hand and its two neighbours on the other. Far from evolving meaningful trilateral policy- and decision-making, the continent's governance is characterized by a reinforcement of the two dyadic relationships, US- Mexico and US-Canada. The paper will use dispute settlement, NAFTA Trade Commission performance, and the three governments' behaviour in the light of US crisis over non-state terrorism as its empirical data.