Varieties of Regionalisation: The Impact of Regionalism on the Car Industry in the EU

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This paper presents preliminary findings of my dissertation which explores how political regionalism impacts regionalisation by car manufacturers in different regional regulatory regimes. Regionalisation signifies the regional (re)organisation of firms’ activities within a supranational, regulatory regime (e.g. EU, NAFTA); political regionalism is the formal integration process created by states by means of treaties and/or institutions. The impact of regionalism is examined on some of the more complex indicators of regionalisation: locational choices. It is argued that a combination of negative and positive integration effects and region-specific legacies inherently lead to a decentralised/fragmented-type regionalisation in the EU. The firm-level analysis of ‘home region’ and ‘foreign’ firms together with the strong role of negative integration effects suggest that the process could lead to similar outcomes in different type/intensity regionalisms, i.e. NAFTA.