



Authors: ALLEN J. SCOTT
Clark, Gordon

Keywords: Economy

Issue Date: 2006

Publisher: University Press

Description: The concept of the division of labour in production has a long genealogy stretching back to the seventeenth century and before, and it recurs repeatedly in the writings of economists and other social theorists down to the present time. In economics, the concept plays a major role in studies of industrial organization, productivity, and trade. In sociology, it has been of major significance as the linchpin of the distinction first proposed by Durkheim (1893) between mechanical and organic solidarity in society. More recently, sociologists have also made considerable use of the concept in studies of the ways in which the division of labour is intertwined with phenomena like race, class, and gender (e.g. Mies 1998; Waldinger and Bozorgmehr 1996). Over the last couple of decades, geographers, too, have made numerous forays into questions of the division of labour and much research has been accomplished on how it relates with various kinds of spatial and locational outcomes (Massey 1984; Sayer and Walker 1992).

URI: <http://10.6.20.12:80/handle/123456789/17796>

ISBN: 978-0-19-928430-6

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