

# Standards and the distribution of cognitive labour

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## Abstract

We present a model of the distribution of labour in science. Such models tend to rely on the mechanism of the invisible hand (e.g. Hull 1988, Goldman & Shaked 1991 and Kitcher 1990). Our analysis starts from the necessity of standards in distributed processes and the possibility of multiple standards in science. Invisible hand models turn out to have only limited scope because they are restricted to describing the atypical single-standard case. Our model is a generalisation of these models to J standards; single-standard models such as Kitcher (1990) are a limiting case. We introduce and formalise this model, demonstrate its dynamics and conclude that the conclusions commonly derived from invisible hand models about the distribution of labour in science are not robust against changes in the number of standards.

**Keywords:** division of labor, simulation, Kitcher, scientific activity

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