

J. TINBERGEN

The Hague, September 27, 1955
Sijzenlaan 41

Mr A. D. ROY,
University of Cambridge,
Department of Applied Economics,
Cambridge
England

Dear Mr Roy,

It seems to me that we know very little about the ways income is distributed over persons as a result of their participation in the economic process. I have constructed an abstract model producing, under fairly strong assumptions, an income distribution not too remote from reality. One version of that model is included.

Your paper on the distribution of earnings (Oxford Economic Papers 1951) has helped me to understand the importance of the correlations between the distributions of abilities over individuals, and also of different dispersions of various abilities. Both phenomena have been more or less assumed away in my model. I can only hope that the complications I introduced instead, such as the fact that every occupation demands several abilities at the same time, offer some compensation.

I have always supposed that your verbal exposition rested on a mathematical foundation too. May I now ask you whether this is true, and if so, whether you have a version of the mathematics behind your hunters and fishermen available? I should also be very grateful for any comments you could make on my own model.

Sincerely yours,

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