

Honorary Doctorate conferred by Utrecht University

Acceptance speech by Carlota Perez

I am deeply honoured by this award from such a prestigious institution as Utrecht university, with almost four centuries of history in research and teaching.

This ceremony is taking place in dire circumstances for the world. The Covid-19 pandemic has made us all aware of our interconnectedness and our vulnerability. It has also revealed the consequences of a cost-based globalisation and laid bare the roots of populism in the destruction of jobs, skills and hopes for so many. These complex 'creative destruction' processes of the successive technological revolutions have been the object of my research for the past forty years. My main purpose has been understanding how society has handled such major transformations, especially how and when social progress happens and how the golden ages have occurred. The results are a source of hope.

Indeed, the theme of this Start of the Academic Year at Utrecht University directly fits those results. It is precisely by Sharing Science for Shaping Tomorrow that golden ages happen. It is when active governments have redesigned the context to redirect the new scientific and technological potential towards the benefit of all, that capitalism brings progress for the many and regains legitimacy.

We are now at the threshold of a golden age that can bring smart, green, fair, and global growth by guiding the Information Era towards a prosperous and sustainable world for all. It won't be easy. It will require as much boldness and imagination as that displayed by the creators of the Welfare State and the post-war golden age.

It will be a major transition changing innovation and investment directions, patterns of trade, and modes of consumption and lifestyles. Following the lessons of history, the time has come to set up a positive-sum game between business and society, between advanced emerging and lagging countries and between humanity and the planet.

Thanks again for recognising my work with this honorary degree. I value it immensely.