

Laudatio of the Prof. Dr. Horst Albach

Magnificence,

Expectability,

Your Excellencies, Your Excellencies, Your Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

Distinguished colleagues and friends,

Distinguished members of the University Administration,

Distinguished Alumni,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Lieber Prof-Albach, Liebe Frau Albach

Today's event is undoubtedly a more realistic vision of what the university institution is, its real dimension and scope, than the dimension reflected in its daily, multiple and dispersed operations. It is therefore a source of deep satisfaction to have the opportunity to take part in this institutional event in which the University, in its natural and universal sense, reflects its human and social greatness by celebrating a well-deserved tribute to one of its most distinguished members: Professor Horst Albach.

I

On the occasion of this first investiture of Dr. h. c. of the Faculty of Economics and Business Studies of this University of Alcalá in the person of Professor Dr Horst Albach, I would like to highlight, first of all, the institutional dimension of the University itself.

The ability of a society to progress economically, socially, politically and culturally depends on the contributions of university institutions. The transition from a closed society to an open and competitive society, from a nationally oriented society to an international society, poses a serious challenge to all institutions. Particularly for university institutions.

The opening up of society and its economy means new organisational forms characterised by a greater commitment to decentralisation and delegation. This decentralisation and delegation require a clear recovery of the institution as a key factor

for the integration of man, as the bearer of the knowledge, skills and behaviour that make up the institution.

The University, as an institution that integrates men and women, teachers and students, strongly identified, assumes a growing role in an open society.

As Honko pointed out magnificently in Bonn on July, 6 on the occasion of a tribute to Professor Albach, the presentation of his scientific contribution and his knowledge is in serious contradiction to the very essence of the economist's work. Economists always have to deal with problems concerning the management of scarce resources. In the case of Professor Albach's presentation, it is the not easy task of dealing with resources that are too abundant.

To attempt to analyse and present to you the fruitful contribution of Horst Albach is a very difficult task. Precisely because of its abundance and its strong diversification, it is difficult to understand how one person in three decades can accomplish such a task.

There can be no doubt that Horst Albach's unique and profound university key is his ability to work, his human capacity, his working techniques and, above all, his profound willingness to contribute, to cooperate, to offer and to unite. Professor Albach's contribution can only be understood from this individual perspective, in solidarity with the university institution.

II

Since 1959, when I met Professor Albach at Professor Erich Gutenberg's seminar at the University of Cologne on the occasion of his doctoral thesis, I have had the opportunity to perceive this permanent institutional process throughout his university work.

Since 1960 he has been working at the Universities of Graz (Austria), Kiel and Bonn, where he remained for 30 years before moving to the University of Berlin. He is also in demand at the Universities of Graz, Münster, Karlsruhe and Brussels. In 1987 he made a decisive contribution to the establishment and development of the Wissenschaftliche Hochschule in Koblenz by creating its Faculty of Business Administration.

His constant concern for the contribution of the university to business, for the transmission of its knowledge to business reality, led him to create the Universitätseminar der Wirtschaft (USW), the key institution in the German economy

for the training and further training of its managers, an institution strongly differentiated from its European counterparts (in 1968-1971).

In the same institutional line, he acted as an advisor to the "German Federal State Expert Group" (Sachverständigenrat) for the assessment of the development of the German economy (1978-1983) and co-chaired the "Institute for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises" of the German Federal Ministry of Economics (1982-1987). From 1987 to 1990 he founded and chaired the Academy of Sciences in Berlin.

His institutional contribution is reflected in his management skills in the field of research in the many positions and functions he has held. In various scientific societies such as the "Verein für Social Politik", the Association of "Professors of Business Economics", the Scientific Council of the "European Institute for Advanced Studies in Management in Brussels" (1974-1984). He has always left a deep mark.

This institutional reflection is reflected in his great work as editor of the German journal "Business Economics" (ZfB) since 1979, as well as the journals "Long Range Planning" (1963-1983), "The German Economic Review" (1963-1977) and "Management Science" (1970-1980).

I understand that he continues this institutional university work by promoting and creating IFSAM, the "International Federation of Scholarly Associations of Management" in June 1990 in Frankfurt. For the first time, the university work of 20 countries has been consolidated in the field of our disciplines, which means institutional internationalisation. The creation of ACEDE, the Spanish Association integrated in IFSAM, is also due to its unconditional support.

III

His international dimension has been reflected in his many activities since the beginning of his university career. Sharing and promoting international relations is a constituent part of Professor Albach's personality. The German business world owes its international presence to Professor Albach. His appointment as a member of the "Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences" (1989), of the "Finnish Academy of Sciences" (1990), of the "Italian Academy of Business Economics" (1990) and of the "European Academy of Sciences" (1991) reflect this international recognition of Professor Albach's constant and fruitful work.

His presence at numerous forums and conferences in Japan, Korea, China, Russia, Chile, the United States and many other countries reflects his interest in this international cooperation. Since 1960 his collaboration with Spain has been permanent, which is reflected in his lecture tour of Bilbao, Madrid and Barcelona as early as 1963, which has been followed by permanent visits to our country and multiple publications.

IV

A third dimension to be highlighted is his deep concern for the contribution of the University, of business economics to business reality.

He has understood, as very few others have, that it is precisely a strong technical deepening that constitutes the best contribution to the solution of real problems. Science, correctly promoted and developed in research and teaching, is the best contribution that the University can make to the world of complex business practice. Business economics is not merely a short-range instrumental apparatus, it is not a mere learning of skills - however important they may be - but a system of scientific knowledge that contributes thought, ideas, criteria and behaviour to the reality of business.

Professor Albach has belonged to many business institutions to which he has contributed through training, as in the case of the USW, or through his continuous presence in business forums with his experience as a result of his participation in many Supervisory Boards of large and medium-sized companies, such as Deutsche Bank, AEG, Mercedes, Treuarbeit, among others.

This deep concern to contribute efficiently to the resolution of real economic and business problems is one of the basic pillars of his extraordinary theoretical contribution.

V

As a disciple of Erich Gutenberg, Horst Albach began his great scientific contribution to business economics as early as 1959: his efforts to systematically introduce quantification into traditional German business economics, whose serious methodological debates were not far away at that time (1956). With his doctoral thesis on "Econometric calculations in the face of uncertain expectations" and his professorial

thesis on "Investment and liquidity", Albach made a great effort at quantification, which was unheard of at the time.

His fields of research are as diverse as the breadth of business economics itself. It is difficult to find a field of business economics in which Horst Albach has not researched and published. But all his fields of research have two common characteristics.

He always acts innovatively: he likes to innovate, Horst Albach likes to enter unknown fields, or to break with existing schemes, in order to shed new light, new ideas, new answers, even by taking up old problems. But he also has a second characteristic: he is always at the forefront, both in research and teaching and in university activity itself.

Within the diversity of its research activity, the following stand out: on the one hand, the fundamentals of business economics, counteracting the tendencies towards increasing specialisation, in the form of a dynamic development of the macro structure of business economics as a science; on the other hand, its favourite and ongoing field of research, the institutional dimension in business economics, which is manifested:

- in the theoretical development of business growth
- in the theory of the firm and
- in the very configuration of the business institution.

This trajectory began in the 1960s with the preoccupation with investment theory and the dynamic theory of the firm, giving way later to the field of organisation and competition.

In a challenging attempt, no doubt, to group his more than 400 publications into thematic areas, the following can be highlighted:

1. The theory of investment decisions

He introduces linear programming in the field of investment with his contributions on "Econometric calculations for uncertainty situations" (1959), "Investment and liquidity" (1962), "Tax system and investment policy in the firm" (1970) and "Profitability and security as criteria for investment decisions" (1975).

2. Production Theory and Production Planning

His research on "Production planning on the basis of technical consumption functions" (1962) shapes the wide-ranging, ongoing and current debate on the choice of adaptation processes in the firm. Another important work is "Relation between production theory and investment theory" (1962), culminating in the contribution in 1981 on "Nature of the firm. A production theoretical Review", in which he lays the foundations for the scientific analysis of the firm.

3. Theory and empirical analysis of company growth.

He developed empirical research as early as 1965 by means of the so-called "Bonn Model" for the development of the company, a global model in which he includes the approach of the theory of growth. He enriches his theoretical approaches from an empirical point of view.

4. Strategic planning and competition theory

From his preoccupation with the problem of forecasting (1962) to his many contributions to business planning, this area of research, then unpublished, is one of his unique contributions to new business approaches.

5. Organisational theory.

From his contributions to the "coordination of planning" (1974) and his contribution to the "theory of business organisation" (1959), he developed new concepts around the decentralisation of business management, making a significant contribution to the problem of transfer prices as an instrument of business management. His contribution to the concept of transaction costs provides a significant insight into the need for a new development of the theory of business organisation.

VI

But it is difficult to understand all this without considering the humanistic dimension of Horst Albach.

Both his university career and his research and teaching work are imbued with a personality strongly rooted in human values. His willingness to put his knowledge and skills, his information and his relationships, his readiness to promote and integrate ideas and people within a framework of sincere friendship, at the service of the institution and the people, is one of his most profound merits.

In his dense, almost impossible schedule of activities and commitments, there is always room for colleagues and students, for conferences and contributions, without ever sparing any personal effort.

And in all this, his wife Renate Albach, whose friendship I have always enjoyed and to whom I would also like to pay tribute for her contribution to Horst Albach's great work, which would have been impossible without her and without her constant openness and cooperation, undoubtedly plays a decisive role.

I would like to take advantage of this act of investiture of Professor Horst Albach to pay my most moving tribute to your father, Professor Erich Gutenberg, to whom we all owe so much, both as a professor and as a man endowed with that great university humanism. We remember him with gratitude and deep friendship.

VII

This investiture is not only recognition of Horst Albach's scientific work, but also of his great contribution to the Spanish University and, in particular, to this University of Alcalá.

Horst Albach has been awarded the Dr.h.c. degree at the Universities of Helsinki, Graz, Kiel and Bielefeld. Now it is the University of Alcalá that distinguishes him with this investiture.

Since 1960 Horst Albach has been collaborating with Spanish universities both with his publications and his lectures. But, above all, it has been 30 years since the single market began for us - as he points out - and before the Erasmus programme, students have always been exchanged, and many doctoral theses have even been completed jointly. In fact, the first doctoral thesis read in this Faculty was that of a student of Professor Albach.

This process of collaboration has allowed us to exchange ideas, students and professors in a very easy collaboration. The internationalisation of business economics approaches, a vital element in the development of our faculty, is largely due to the magnificent contribution of Horst Albach.

It is undoubtedly a source of satisfaction for this University and this Faculty to be able to convey with this investiture our recognition and gratitude for Professor Albach's contribution to the international development of business economics and of this University. His career and his example as a universal university man is undoubtedly a reference that makes this University and all of us proud.

I would therefore like to thank the University of Alcalá, its Rector and its Academic Authorities, as well as the Governing Board of the University, the Faculty Board and the Department of Business Sciences for unanimously awarding an Honorary Doctorate to Professor Horst Albach.

Thank you very much