

Internship Report

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Duration of the internship: 01-02-2017 – 31-07-2017

Supervisor: Boudewijn de Bruin

Work placement coach: Danielle Essink

Proposed deadline: 16-06-2017

1. Introduction

As part of the master *Philosophy and Society*, I am currently doing an internship at Robeco in Rotterdam. Robeco is an international asset manager that strongly believes in – and stands for sustainable investing. The department *Governance and Active Ownership* is about focusing your rights and using your influence as owner of shares or credits and has two major components: voting and engagement. My internship is on the engagement side. Robeco engages with 200 listed companies to address Environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues and business strategy. The objectives are: improvement of corporate behavior and a better risk-return profile of the company. The team also engages with public policy makers to improve market practices. My internship report will consist out of two aspects: a practical report and a research report.

The internship will take place over a period of six months and will result in a practical experience and an internship report, which will be the basis for my thesis.

2. Implementing the work placement plan in the practical report.

In my work placement plan, I have described the placement as following: At Robeco, I will support the environmental, social and governance analysis to help improve dialogue with different companies in which Robeco has invested. This will happen through research and the attendance of the engagement process. In addition, I will perform a research into the necessity of privacy and freedom of expression as an issue which companies need to start taking seriously.

The learning objectives are:

- Gain experience in researching ESG issues
- Enhance my ability to apply textbook knowledge about applied ethics in a working environment
- Practice different skills as: communication, teamwork and time-management

The resources and activities have been discussed as:

- Weekly meeting with my supervisor
- Conference calls with companies
- Contribute to research and engagement about ESG issues
- Research privacy and freedom of expression as a larger project throughout my internship

The internship will take place between 1st of February – July 31st. In this time I will carry out my research for the ESG themes, work on my internship paper and research the privacy and freedom of expression theme.

At Robeco, I will have weekly meetings with Danielle, my work placement coach. And I will contact my supervisor, Boudewijn de Bruin, whenever necessary but at least once a month.

3. The progress of the learning process in the practical report.

In order for my supervisor to get a clear idea of the realization of the internship, the report will discuss the following:

- A. The way in which the work placement is being implemented, or (as the case may be) the progress of the learning process:
- In terms of duties, problems, corrections and supervision
 - The required and acquired experience with regard to editorial, organizational, social and/or research skills.
 - Other ways in which the work placement is contributing to the student's development as a philosopher in terms of understanding, and theoretical and practical training.
 - Contributions to and changes in philosophical understanding in response to work placement experiences and/or research progress.
 - Contributions to the philosophical understanding/theories/reflection is making to the working methods of the organization.
- B. Aims, structure and functioning of work placement organization.

This part of the report serves to highlight the activities that I will carry out within Robeco and explain how the activities possibly relate to philosophical topics or understanding. My research on Privacy and Freedom of expression will be a more in depth paper where I embed philosophy in an engagement theme.

4. Risk anticipation.

Incorporating philosophy into the themes at my internship may be an interesting challenge. Throughout the internship I will be working on two bigger themes: 1. Privacy and Freedom of Expression. 2. Hidden sugar. The first theme has a more obvious relationship to philosophy and particularly social and political philosophy. For the second theme it would be more obvious to apply a philosophical methodology to conduct research, but this may prove challenging. I do not expect this to be a big problem, for the first theme will have plenty of room for a philosophical analysis.

For Boudewijn, the academic year comes to an end on July 1st. We have to consider a strict deadline for the evaluation of the report. I have proposed June 16th, which gives Boudewijn over a week to assess it, this may not be enough, so we will have to discuss this. After this there will be an evaluation with Danielle, Boudewijn and myself. After the evaluation, I hope to have concluded my internship with a positive result. The internship will still carry on for one month.

5. Research report proposal.

One of the ongoing themes that Danielle is focused on, is that of privacy and freedom of expression. Within this theme there are four objectives:

1. Policy. Companies should implement comprehensive human rights policies that relate specifically to risks relevant for data privacy and freedom of expression. The policy should apply to the company and, where appropriate, its supply chain. The policy itself should also identify a number of targets that lead to the effective prevention of (future) breaches and the policy should be effectively implemented.
2. Risk management. Companies should assess human rights risks related to data privacy and freedom of expression and have a strategy for communicating the results of these risk assessments. Risk assessments should be an on-going process at the start of a new activity; a new business relationship; major change in business; or changes in the operating environment. Afterwards, measures to mitigate the identified risks should be implemented.

Those measures could for example include training of employees working closely with sensitive customers' data.

3. Transparency. Under this objective we will monitor the efforts to improve transparency and disclosure in relation to the assessment and management of risks related to data privacy and freedom of expression. Where companies have been the subject of allegations relating to data privacy and/or freedom of expression, we will seek evidence of a response to these allegations and determine whether remedial measures have been implemented.
4. Partnerships and collaboration. We expect companies to collaborate and build partnerships with key players from across the ICT sector, including peers, vendors, business partners, customers, NGOs and government organizations to work together to manage human rights risks relevant to data privacy and freedom of expression.

During my internship I will support Danielle with the research into various companies in the Telco industry. On the basis of this research and our objectives, we will engage with the companies. This task is something that will happen on a weekly basis.

In order to get a more in-depth discussion with our investors and the companies in which we engage, I will construct a research into the topic of privacy and freedom of expression. Danielle and I have signed up for the EDX course: Freedom of Expression in the Age of globalization.

This course discusses many topics that are very relevant for our research. Some of the literature that is used:

John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (1859), Chapter Two, 3 ed., (London: Longman, Green, Longman Roberts & Green, 1864), accessed 19 September 2016, Gutenberg.org, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/34901/34901-h/34901-h.htm>

- Holmes J., *Abrams v. US* (dissenting opinion), 250 US 616, 630-1 (1919)
- Vincent Blasi, "Free Speech and Good character: From Milton to Brandeis to the Present," in *Eternally Vigilant: Free Speech in the Modern Era*, ed. Lee C. Bollinger and Geoffrey R. Stone (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002) pp.60-72
- Lee Bollinger, "An Agenda for the General Tolerance Theory" from *The Tolerant Society: Freedom of Speech and Extremist Speech in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp.237-248. By Permission of Oxford University Press. This book may be purchased here.

Lee Bollinger, "Enslaved to Freedom," in *The Tolerant Society: Freedom of Speech and Extremist Speech in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 23-28. By Permission of Oxford University Press. This book may be purchased here

- Amartya Sen, "Democracy as a Universal Value," *Journal of Democracy* 10, No.3 (1999) pp. 3-17
Supplementary Readings
- John Milton, *Areopagitica*, A Speech of Mr. John Milton for the Liberty of Unlicenc'd Printing to the Parliament of England (1 ed.) (London, 1644), accessed on 19 September 2016, archives.org <https://archive.org/details/areopagiticaoomiltuoft>
- Karl Marx, "On Freedom of the Press: Censorship", *Rheinische Zeitung*, May 15, 1842, accessed 19 September 2016, <http://marxists.catbull.com/archive/marx/works/1842/freepress/cho5.htm>
- Alexander Meiklejohn, *Free Speech and its Relation to Self-Government*, 1948 (Harper, 1948) accessed on 19 September 2016

- Jeremy Bentham, *Liberty of the Press and Public Discussion (Letters)*, (1843), accessed on 19 September 2016
- Lee C. Bollinger and Geoffrey R. Stone, *Eternally Vigilant: Free Speech in the Modern Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002)
- European Convention on Human Rights, 1953
- Dirk Voorhoof, "The Right to Freedom of Expression and Information under the European Human Rights System: Towards a more Transparent Democratic Society" (EUI RSCAS; Centre for Media Pluralism and Media Freedom, 2014/12) accessed on 19 September 2016

This literature, some of the course movies and additional literature will form the basis for the research. Because Robeco is an asset manager, it is important to also highlight the topic from an investment perspective. Morgan Stanley has already conducted useful information on this topic. It will also be useful to have discussions with the investors at the department about certain risks.

The end project will be the article that will be published on Robeco's website. I expect the article to be around 1000 words.