



Studying multinationals: from Groningen, via Seattle to Sydney

In her research, Marloes Korendijk focuses on Corporate Social Responsibility within multinationals. Since she studies working relationships that cross countries, it was only logical for her to also take this international, cross-cultural approach in her entire PhD trajectory. She thus decided to go for a Joint Doctorate and is a PhD candidate at both the Faculty of Economics and Business in Groningen and Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia. Recently, she also visited the University of Washington in Seattle as a research scholar. Soon, she will go on to Sydney to finish her PhD. FEB Research talked to Korendijk about her research, her experiences abroad and the importance of embedding yourself in other cultures as a researcher.



Marloes Korendijk

Can you tell us a little bit about yourself?

“I am a 3rd year PhD student at the University of Groningen and the Macquarie University in Sydney. I started my academic career as a business administration student at the University of Groningen, after which I did the International Economics and Business master and the research master at the Faculty of Economics and Business. During the research master, I was selected to pursue my PhD at FEB as well. I am currently in the faculty’s Department of Global Economics and Management. On a more personal note, I enjoy doing sports and cooking for my friends and family. If I am not working at the office, you can find me in the gym, running across the city, or at the market on the hunt for fresh ingredients for a nice home-cooked meal.”

What is the focus of your PhD-research?

“I focus on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) within Multinationals, and specifically its performance differences within multinationals. In my PhD, I take a macro, meso, and micro approach to capture and understand these CSR differences. In my first paper, I focus on country-level influences, in my second paper I examine organization- and CEO-level influences, and in my third paper I delve into the individual-level mechanisms behind relationships within multinational enterprises by means of interviews with sustainability managers of four large multinationals.”



Can you tell us more about your research visit to the US?

“I am currently a visiting scholar at the University of Washington that is located in Seattle, Washington. My host is Abhinav Gupta, a full professor that I met at a conference in Paris back in 2022. As his research interests are similar to mine, I was naturally interested to spend time at the university where he works to talk about his perspective on my PhD, and research in general. Furthermore, my supervisor, Alan Muller, is from Seattle and has worked at the University of Washington as well. He helped me further introduce myself as a potential visiting research scholar at the university.”

What did you do in terms of research at the University of Washington?

“I worked on my own PhD and side projects there, whilst following a course on leadership and employee interactions to broaden my research knowledge and learn more about organizational behavior. Furthermore, during several meetings with Abhinav Gupta, I was able to discuss research ideas and the research process in general, and was given

the opportunity to present my second paper to their strategy department. They provided me with a lot of helpful feedback, for which I am very grateful, and which will help me to further strengthen the paper. I really enjoyed working there as the campus is extremely beautiful, the facilities are outstanding, and the department itself is small but friendly and collegial.”

What have you learned in the US that you have brought back with you?

“The research process is relatively different there, as it is more focused on already starting to publish in the earlier phases of the PhD trajectory. I have learned that a paper or idea does not have to be perfectly polished before showing or submitting it somewhere, as each journal will have a different approach and perspective on your paper. There is actually no such thing as a perfectly polished paper. In the US, the focus is more on publishing papers, already starting in your first PhD year. This perspective allowed me to critically assess my current projects, and helped me realize that some of these papers were ready to submit.”





What is next, after your research visit to the University of Washington?

“I am going to Macquarie University in Sydney this August to start my fourth and final year of the PhD. Since 2022, I am participating in the joint doctorate programme between our university and Macquarie University, which means that I have supervisors at both universities, write one thesis and hopefully will receive two degrees. This opportunity was brought to my attention by a PhD friend I met at a conference. With the help of Rina Koning and Rian Drogendijk, I managed to get the contracts sorted out. With this new contract, I am the first of the faculty, but hopefully not the last that will conduct their PhD at both universities. I will finish my PhD in Sydney, and work with my new supervisor Jaco Lok to write my qualitative paper.”

Why is this international approach to your PhD so important to you?

“My research focuses on multinationals, which means I am interested in working relationships that cross countries, or even continents. I believe that, in order to truly understand different cultures, one has to live and embed themselves in that very culture for a longer period of time. For instance, by living in the US for this short period of time, I noticed and understood the different sustainability focuses of American subsidiaries better.

For instance, the American sustainability culture is focused on philanthropy, which means that it is more common here to showcase sustainable behavior on behalf of fund raising and charity giving relative to the Netherlands. In addition to gaining these insights with regards to sustainability perspectives across the world, I enjoy traveling and meeting/working together with different people. By going on this research stay in the US, and by pursuing my PhD at two universities in two continents, I can truly combine my work and personal interests to become a better educated and connected person and academic.”