

*How can spatial proximity create a
more performative NGO community?
A study of Development House*

Doing a development dissertation in
the UK

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Introduction to the dissertation

How can spatial proximity create a more performative NGO community? A study of Development House

- Development House, 1 mile north of the City of London
- Clustering of development NGOs – interaction and benefits for organisations' performance
 - Communal and office spaces within the building
 - Networks and institutions across London NGO community
- Focus on efficiency and efficacy of NGOs – maximising resources



Why do it in the UK?

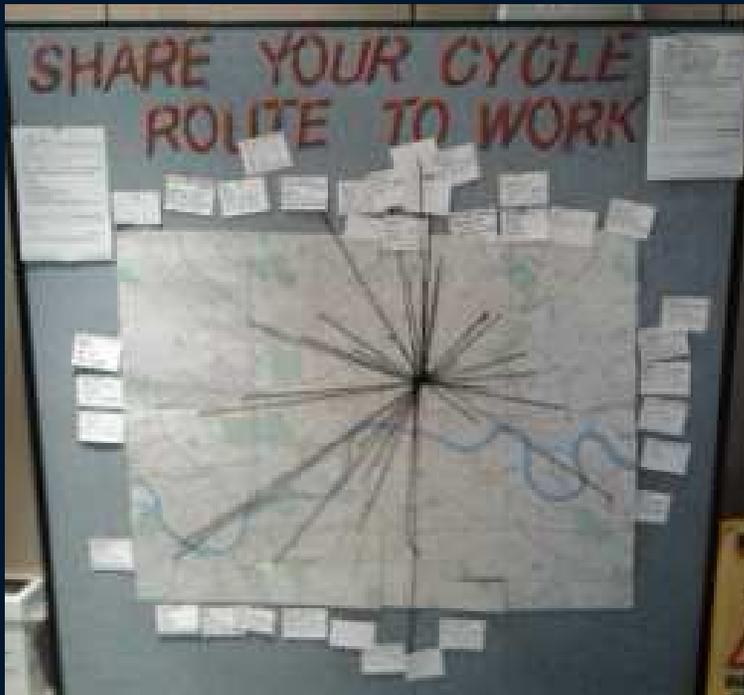
1. **Cheaper** and/or less reliant on funding
2. Research abroad is not always **practical**, and does not guarantee a great dissertation
 - “Don’t find an excuse for a holiday!”
3. **Interesting** areas of research in the UK
 - a large part of development work happens in Global North countries
4. Offers **other experiences**, in addition to the dissertation

Initial ideas

- Idea came from 'Spaces of Uneven Development' module studied
- Drawn from ideas of trading within a cluster and common identity and purpose facilitating sharing
- Tutor explained about Development House – initial connection
- Argument – how the ideas translated to development management where they are so relevant



Developing a focus

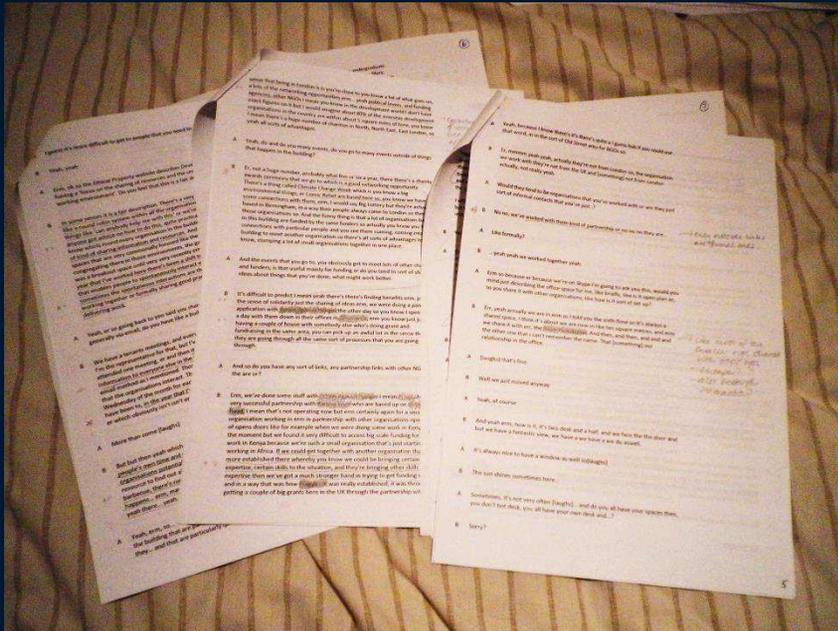


- Important not to limit reading to within the discipline
 - Business clusters
 - Development management
 - Psychogeography
 - Communication studies
 - Network theory
 - Knowledge management

- These informed themes used to research
 - Office spaces
 - Communal spaces
 - External spaces
 - Employee mobility

Gaining access

- Contact in building
- Attended one of organisation's event and spoke to directors
- Established 'gatekeepers' through email and meetings
- Email and phone
- Let organisations know how they could benefit



Data collection



- 11, 30-minute interviews - in offices and over Skype
- Secondary data
 - Building plan from council
 - Ethical Property documents published on the website
- Observations from visiting the building and various offices
- Keep going – get as much information as possible

- Equipment used
 - Voice recorder
 - Interview schedule (annotated according to interviewee)
 - Consent form
 - Summary of research and contact details

Writing up the dissertation

- **Methodology** and **literature review** written first
 - Write literature review before results, discussions and conclusion – help to clarify ideas in academic debate
- **Conclusion** was written after results and discussion – by then arguments and key themes much clearer
- **Introduction** and **abstract** written last of all – simplifying and summarising
- Get people to read it, and from different perspectives
- Leave plenty of time for references, double- and triple- checking through, formatting, pagination and additional submission forms, and of course printing and binding

To conclude...

- Researched alongside internship
- Interesting areas that are more easily (and cheaply!) researched
- Establishes contacts with organisations, and potential employers
- Useful insight into development careers and organisation operations
- Research has potential for practice use in NGO management – not just academic

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A study of clustering in Development House

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Any questions?

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