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Article

Transforming Spatial Practices Through Knowledges on the Margins

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Abstract
Drawing on knowledges of spatial practitioners in Slovakia and Czechia, as well as those of feminist science and technology studies and actor-network theory, the article explores the benefits and importance of bringing diverse knowledges into spatial practice. More specifically, it focuses on the issue of including voices, perspectives, and knowledges in the construction of space other than those of status quo often implicated in the (re)production of social injustices. It proposes to look at the margins as a site of potential resistance to find spatial *practices/know-hows* and *visions* that actually contribute to the creation of spaces for good lives of marginalised communities. Leaning on the experiences of practitioners on the margins, the article presents portraits of two organisations to explore in detail what spatial practices they employ to materialise their marginalised visions. Building on an analysis of these case studies, the article closes with a description of three transformations of spatial practice that are needed for better involvement of marginalised visions in spatial production: addressing a more complete image of the world, conceiving of space as multiple becoming, and participation as a matter of care.

Keywords
actor-network theory; architecture; Central and Eastern Europe; margins; planning; science and technology studies; spatial knowledge; spatial practice; standpoint theory

Issue
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1. Introduction

Creating better environments for the good lives of diverse communities has been an ongoing goal of socially-oriented architects and planners for decades. More specifically, the issue is the inclusion in the construction of space of the voices, perspectives, and knowledges of actors other than just those in power—actors without capital or expert knowledge. The ongoing socio-spatial exclusions of many, especially socially disadvantaged communities, documented through research (for instance Musterd, 2020) and manifested through events like the London riots in 2011 (Kawalerowicz & Biggs, 2015), suggests that the question of how to include the voices of marginalised communities and create better spaces for/with them remains relevant despite 50 years of academic debates on inclusionary planning (Angotti, 2020; Blundell Jones et al., 2005; Davidoff, 1965; Healey, 1997; Innes, 2010; Lefebvre et al., 1996; Wates & Knevitt, 1987) and the accompanying myriad of realised spatial projects (Ermacora & Bullivant, 2016; Krasny & Fitz, 2019; Petrescu & Trogal, 2017). To contribute to these debates, this article presents learnings from spatial practitioners "on the margins" in Slovakia and Czechia, highlighting the transformations of established spatial know-how that would be necessary for the positive inclusion of marginalised perspectives in our shared world.

This study follows feminist scholar Sandra Harding's (2015, p. 34) call to "start research from outside dominant conceptual frameworks…[which] can enable the detection of the dominant values, interest, and assumptions that may or may not be widely prevalent, but which tend to serve primarily the most powerful groups." Planning and architecture mostly rely on/are linked to powerful groups—state, capital, societal majority—which influence the way they approach marginalised groups and create spaces with/for them. By looking "at

the margins," a term borrowed from bell hooks (1989), this study hopes to find practices that resist the reproduction of the status quo which contributes to the social injustices that they hope to alleviate.

The focus of this study is on actors on the margins of spatial practice in Slovakia and Czechia, located at the intersection of two "sites." One is the field of *visions* and *perspectives* on the margins of a planning agenda, like those of people without shelter or other socially disadvantaged communities. The other is the spatial *know-hows*/*practices* developed by practitioners outside of planning professions. Here I share the perspective with Awan et al. (2011, p. 28) that "spatial production belongs to a much wider group of actors—from artists to users, from politicians to builders—with a diverse range of skills and intents." In this article, I refer to these diverse actors actively shaping the built environment as spatial practitioners. Moreover, Czechia and Slovakia, with their relatively short history of democracy, could be considered as further margins, as the dominant Western participatory practices of including marginalised perspectives entered this region only recently and are therefore not entrenched in their spatial practices.

Leaning on the experiences of two organisations in particular, the article seeks answers to the following questions: How do spatial practitioners make marginalised visions matter? Do they create better spaces for the thriving of diverse marginalised communities than the status quo? What transformations of planning and architecture, as usual, are necessary for the positive inclusion of these knowledges—*visions*/*perspectives*, and *know-hows*/*practices*?

The article builds on Davoudi's (2015, p. 318, emphasis in original) categorisation of spatial knowledges as "knowing *what* (cognitive/theoretical knowledge), knowing *how* (skills/technical knowledge), knowing to *what end* (moral choices) and *doing* (action/practice)." Mirroring this with the double margin at/from which the spatial practitioners act—marginalised *visions*/*perspectives* and marginalised spatial *know-hows*/*practices*—the article conflates Davoudi's four categories into two that guide the text: knowing *what*—*visions*/*perspectives* that integrate cognitive/theoretical knowledge and moral choices so that an answer to *what* necessarily contains an answer to *why/what end*; and knowing *how*—spatial *practices*/*know-hows* to materialise and shape these visions. The article shows how both of these interlinked kinds of spatial knowledges—*visions and practices*—have to be expanded and transformed for the creation of good spaces for marginalised communities.

Harding's (1987) and Haraway's (1988) feminist critiques of scientific knowledge and objectivity provide a departure point for the reflection on spatial knowledges. The first part of the text draws parallels between spatial knowledges shaping the built environment and their constructivist understanding of knowledges as always partial, constructed/perceived from a certain position/body. Central to this article is the attention they bring to the importance of *practices* through which *what* we know is constructed, as well as their argument for epistemic preference of marginalised knowledges to those of the status quo. The structure of the article is inspired by the edited volume *Feminism and Methodology* compounded by Harding (1987), which brought together research in social sciences that gave voice to women—a marginalised group. She concluded the volume by stating three necessary transformations of the *practices* of social sciences in order to actually give space for these marginalised *perspectives*.

This article similarly draws on an analysis of empirical case studies that make marginalised *perspectives* matter to propose three transformations of spatial *practices*. To this end, it presents a brief overview of various styles of socially engaged planning and architecture making marginalised perspectives matter, as well as learnings from spatial practitioners in Slovakia and Czechia. The core of the empirical section is portraits of two organisations: Čierne Diery (Black Holes) and DOM.ov (*dom* = house, *domov* = home). Through the optic of actor-network theory (ANT), the descriptions try to pay attention to all kinds of components of their spatial *practices*, to find aspects involving marginalised perspectives that were perhaps until now overlooked in planning/architecture. The article closes with three transformations of spatial *practices*/*know-hows* that follow from the case studies, connecting them with concepts that provide theoretical and methodological guidance for achieving these transformations.

1.1. Socially Constructed Visions and Critical Standpoints

Through postmodern, feminist, and postcolonial critiques of planning, an understanding of knowledge as socially constructed has found its way also to planning and architecture (Davoudi, 2015; Rydin, 2007; Sandercock, 1998). In this paradigm, truth is not simply out there to be discovered by scientific methods, technology, and reason. It is constantly constructed through multiple technologies and influenced by power structures. In this article, I borrow Haraway's (1988) metaphor of knowledge as embodied *vision*. I find it particularly fruitful for planning and architecture, whose primary task is to envision futures. The double meaning of *vision* as the power to see with our eyes and to anticipate futures speaks of worlds envisioned from the perspective of a particular body. In spatial practice, it is mostly that of a planner or architect. Visions, like knowledges, are thus always subjective, partial perspectives of the world now and in the future. They are influenced by technologies such as "ways of life, social orders, practices of visualisation," writes Haraway (1988, p. 587). Consequently, the spatial knowledge/vision of planners or architects of *what* is suitable housing for certain people or *what* is the right way to treat a ruin are matters of personal and societal views as well as education and discipline's

canon, whose correctness is justified by the status quo of the discipline.

The constructivism of knowledge, like the multitude of technologies influencing it, is unavoidable. What can be avoided is the promotion of a single vision as the truth under the cloak of objectivism. This, in Haraway's (1988, p. 584) words, is to play the "god tricks" that "make it impossible to see well." Feminist critiques show how the dominant vision is, and throughout modern history has been, that of the white Western bourgeois man. He—the Vitruvian man or Modulor—stands rather prominently also in the centre of architectural theory and practice. The inadequacy of god's view and his blindness to social realities were disclosed especially by the failure of modernist spaces planned mostly according to Modulor's body and vision, promoted largely by Le Corbusier's (1954/2004) work. The critique took place in the streets and in academia and led to the inclusion of different voices—especially those of locals—into planning and architecture. This gave rise to diverse forms of socially-oriented spatial practices, thematised briefly below, aimed at creating spaces for various visions in spatial production and consequently the world. Though there is much to be criticised about participatory processes, countless examples do show that the inclusion of other visions than those of planners does often contribute to better spaces than those envisioned solely from the view of the planning disciplines.

Furthermore, Haraway (1988), Harding (1987), and other feminists argue for the preference of marginalised visions on epistemic grounds, claiming that they can provide a less distorted image of the world than the status quo. In Haraway's (1988, p. 584) words, it is "because in principle they are least likely to allow denial of the critical and interpretive core of all knowledge….The subjugated have a decent chance to be on to the god trick and all its dazzling—and, therefore, blinding—illuminations." Importantly, their epistemic advantage is not a question of identity per se but of a standpoint from which they are able to "see" and critically reflect knowledges. Such a critical standpoint is, in Harding's words, shaped "through the struggles they wage against their oppressors" (Harding, 1987, p. 185). Proven by critical reflection, their knowledges are based on, measured against, and contribute towards a more complete/less false image of social reality than the status quo playing the "god trick." Since it is not about identity but struggle, anyone can learn to see from the position of the marginalised or, more generally, develop a less false vision. Building on this premise, the article investigates *how* and *to what extent* the spatial practitioners described here succeed in doing so and if this leads to the construction of better spaces for marginalised communities.

1.2. Adding Visions, Transforming Practice

One way to include marginalised visions is to simply "add" them. I borrow the term from Harding (1987), who outlined three ways through which it was attempted to add the views of women into social sciences, though these mostly did not lead to the actual inclusion of their views. Parallels can be found in architecture and planning: (a) Bringing architects or planners from marginalised groups into existing power structures often gives the persons little manoeuvring space for actual changes and bringing forth their views. Furthermore, having been educated in professional institutions, their disciplinary knowledge is often closer to the status quo than to marginalised perspectives. (b) Focusing on the experiences of marginalised groups without changing one's visioning apparatus will only disclose views useful for the sustainment of the status quo rather than for the benefits of the marginalised. (c) Treating marginalised groups as victims strengthens stereotypes of inadequacy and denies their visions any agency independent from the system that has excluded them in the first place, which is therefore perpetuated.

These additive approaches are not to be dismissed completely. Often, they did contribute towards challenging the core knowledges of planning or architecture and the subsequent creation of better spaces according to previously marginalised perspectives. Gender mainstreaming is perhaps the best-known case. However, as Haraway (1988) and Harding (1987) show in their respective feminist critiques, more fundamental transformations of the scientific (and planning) *practice* are needed for actually making marginalised visions matter. "*For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house*. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change," to borrow from Audre Lorde (2003, p. 27, emphasis in original). Scientific and design practices/know-hows were developed by those whose visions they are to promote or, in the case of planning, materialise to further sustain their position of power. When aiming at actually including marginalised *visions*/*perspectives* in spatial production or elsewhere, it is therefore important to pay attention not only to *what* needs to be included but also *how*.

Marginalised visions in planning and architecture are included through a wide range of participatory practices and socially-oriented styles of planning. Most of these have their origin in the above-mentioned critique and fall of modernist planning and architecture. Advocacy planning (Davidoff, 1965), transactive planning (Friedmann, 1973), community architecture (Wates & Knevitt, 1987), collaborative planning (Healey, 1997; Innes, 2010), and different kinds of transformative planning (Angotti, 2020) all place the perspectives of various stakeholders, among them marginalised groups, in the centre of spatial production, while often critiquing the status quo of neoliberal planning. These practitioners have created or appropriated a multitude of tools like design workshops, questionnaires, round tables, or spatial interventions, to create spaces for perspectives outside of the planning disciplines. These are new

know-hows compared to the models, sketches, and drawings coded in expert language typically used in planning and architecture to make space matter. These new tools are furthermore accompanied by transformations in the skills and role/standpoint of practitioners. This reflected their changing relationship with their new clients—marginalised communities. Deliberative planner (Forester, 1999), crossbench practitioner (Miessen, 2010), or Till's (2013) dependent and contingent architect are just a few role models that hint at the importance of positionality and standpoint from which the tools and *know-hows* are employed to actually make marginalised perspectives matter.

These practices often do create better spaces for the communities in question, but as outlined at the beginning of this article, they have not solved the issue of including marginalised perspectives once and for all. By negotiating between diverse experts and lay knowledges, they face a multitude of issues of whose knowledge counts and *how*. The following aims to contribute to these dilemmas with learnings from Slovakia and Czechia by investigating what kinds of *know-hows* spatial practitioners employ to gain/construct and consequently materialise marginalised *visions*, from what standpoints they practice, and if this leads to the creation of better spaces for the marginalised communities than those of the status quo.

2. Spatial Practices in Slovakia and Czechia

Both countries are part of Central and Eastern Europe—a region often described through the post-socialist prism, but otherwise largely missing from planning discourse, especially the one outlined above. Due to its short history of participatory planning and architecture, investigating it could be fruitful to identify practices that include marginalised perspectives in different ways than those in the West. Looking at the spatial practices in their own right and not through the usual lens of transition towards Western democracy, which underlines the practices above, could furthermore yield findings beyond an "additive" approach that strengthens the vision of the West.

2.1. Seeing the Field

The authors of the fieldwork on which this paper draws—myself and my colleague Lýdia Grešáková—are spatial practitioners active in Slovakia and Czechia, which defined the choice of the research field. Our position is influenced by our work in the collective Spolka, whose agenda is to engage diverse marginalised visions in the co-creation of cities. This influenced our view of this field, as our interest was to learn from these spatial practices as well as to find allies in expanding the visions that shape the built environment beyond those of the status quo. At the same time, my own vision is heavily influenced by Western theories and practices since I was educated exclusively in Western Europe. In this article, I hope to see from the outside in and from the inside out; understanding both, to paraphrase hooks (1989), while acknowledging the power imbalance, as most of my theoretical knowledges utilised to analyse and explain the field stem from the West.

The objective of the study was to identify formal and informal organisations that create spaces for visions that are on the margins of mainstream spatial production. The organisations of most significance were those which develop their own (often changing) agenda and do not make it solely dependent on external factors, like saving a particular building or protesting against a certain development. The latter organisations often cease to exist with the (often literal) disappearance of the external factor. Those with their own agenda continue their struggle, through which they strengthen the critical standpoints from where they ongoingly construct various spatial knowledges to better articulate and materialise their visions. The organisations we identified can be labelled insurgent and/or advocacy planners, often combining both. The former are those who are themselves marginalised and aim to materialise their own visions (Miraftab, 2009), and the latter work on behalf of marginalised communities (Davidoff, 1965). In this article, I focus on two organisations practising mostly advocacy planning. Their positionality is similar to that of most planners and architects, as they do not belong to the marginalised communities they plan with/for, and their learnings could therefore be easier to translate.

The aim was to explore and identify diverse components/know-hows of organisations' spatial practices that contribute to making marginalised visions matter. Therefore, we expanded the traditional understanding of space as a container and spatial practice as only consisting of know-hows from architectural and planning canons. We shifted our attention from buildings to all kinds of spaces and treated all activities of organisations as interconnected aspects of their spatial practice. To do so, we borrowed the optic from ANT that is gradually finding its way from science and technology studies to the architectural analysis of space (Hansmann, 2021; Latour & Yaneva, 2008; Yaneva, 2009). ANT invites us to see space as a dynamic process constituted by all kinds of actors—humans, non-humans, materials, as well as concepts—and especially by relations and networks between them. Consequently, we could perceive buildings, workshops, books, loans, people, written and told stories, as well as different visions, knowledges, skills, and their interdependencies, as aspects of space and its construction. ANT here was not used as a strict methodology, but rather, drawing on Haraway (1988), as a technology to expand our visioning apparatus beyond what is typically considered spatial practice in architecture and planning.

2.2. Uncovering the Iceberg

Through snowball sampling via email extended by desk research, we identified nearly 200 organisations that

according to us and our informants—activists, architects, social workers, artists, and engaged citizens active in Slovakia and Czechia—materialise otherwise marginalised *visions* and *perspectives* through their spatial *practices*. We investigated 20 in more detail through interviews with a member from each organisation and analysis of their work available online. The latter provided some views of the marginalised communities—the "clients" of these organisations—whose perspectives are here otherwise largely underrepresented. The selection aimed to capture a wide range of practices along three axes: different marginalised visions described below, a range of spatial practices/know-hows from temporary interventions to education and lobbying, and location in cities and on peripheries.

The field of marginalised perspectives covers a wide spectrum. The largest section consists of visions of local, mostly middle-class people concerned about their immediate environment: public spaces, bicycle and foot mobility, specific buildings often marked by socialist stigma, parks, forests, fruit trees, or biodiversity. In a context with few opportunities for participation, even these views can be considered marginalised, as they are not included in the planning. These actors mostly represent their own perspectives on the issues but sometimes also those of children or non-human critters. Some but not all practices are underlined with post-capitalist or degrowth visions. Frequent also are advocacy planners who materialise perspectives of shelterless people, many from marginalised Roma communities. The visions overlap and intersect in the activities of each organisation, as illustrated in the two cases below. Furthermore, even within this small field, what is marginalised in one context does not have to be in another. For instance, industrial buildings, according to Lipták from Čierne Diery, have long been on the agenda of Czech protection institutions, while in Slovakia they still decay.

Each organisation employs and seamlessly combines diverse spatial know-hows across various scales, sometimes also shaping national regulations to ensure systematic change. They shape physical spaces through short- and long-term spatial interventions, performances and festivals, technical drawings, or zoning plans, as well as constructing virtual spaces through social media, websites, printed media, talks, conferences, or exhibitions. Such a range of practices and their combination is possible due to the inter- and transdisciplinarity of nearly all organisations. Their members collectively bring a wide spectrum of disciplinary perspectives and know-hows from arts, social work, geography, journalism, sociology, architecture, design, and planning, though mostly they could be best described as engaged citizens. Their disciplinary backgrounds become visible only upon closer inspection. Then it also becomes apparent that there are architects in many organisations, especially those with particularly interesting spatial practices. However, unless it is an architectural collective—which is not the subject of this article—those with expert/disciplinary spatial knowledges are not in a leading role, giving generous space to other knowledges.

The study uncovered only a small portion of a larger iceberg of invisible visions, to use the analogy of Gibson-Graham et al. (2013). In other words, the number of organisations/people is not sufficient to materialise all missing perspectives. The representatives of the DEDO foundation, for instance, voiced their wish and identified the need to focus on affordable housing, but their agenda to end homelessness is not yet sufficiently supported by the planning system. The environmental movement Limity Jsme My recently shifted its focus, after the Czech government committed to stopping coal mining, which was the main agenda around which the movement assembled. Now they enable, promote, and envision post-coal economies in the mining regions. The shifting focuses of the organisations gradually uncover parts of the iceberg, while at the same time hinting at the many visions that still remain hidden and insufficiently materialised, i.e., are on the margins of planning and architecture.

The two organisations described in detail below develop the most interesting spatial practices for illustrating the above and exploring the entanglements between marginalised *visions*/*perspectives* common in the field and spatial *practices*/*know-hows* to materialise them. However, these practices should not be taken as *the* representatives of materialising particular marginalised perspectives. The visions of the Romas living in a housing estate in a city on the Czech-German border are different to those living in illegalised sheds on the peripheries of small villages in Eastern Slovakia and so are the spatial practices to materialise them. Following Haraway's call to avoid the risk of essentialising any standpoints, the text invites the reader to pay attention to the situated relationalities of each practice.

2.3. Čierne Diery

What started as a group of friends interested in abandoned buildings in Slovakia grew into a known name with nearly 50,000 followers on social media. This informal collective of individuals with expertise in journalism, industrial history, architecture, urbanism, and design has in their five years accomplished, among others things, the following: published and sold out two books about abandoned historical industrial buildings, most of them located in Gemer and other poverty struck regions in Slovakia; commissioned, exhibited, sold out, and also auctioned some of the over 210 prints of these buildings created by local young artists; collected thousands of euros for reconstructions of abandoned buildings and diverse social projects like supporting teachers in these regions; funded and organised the placement of a forgotten modernist sculpture into public space; created documentation of buildings for The Monuments Board of the Slovak Republic; funded research on modernist buildings at the Slovak Academy of Sciences; collaborated on

architectural competitions and reconstructions; and, in cooperation with local architects, designed and built a forest sauna and a tourist accommodation in an old mansion. Their know-hows are mostly of artistic and journalistic nature combined with community building on a large scale.

2.3.1. Vision of the World

Building a relationship of people with abandoned buildings and their diverse historical layers of architectural as well as intangible cultural heritage is what Martin Lipták from Čierne Diery describes in our interview as their aim. It could also be termed as bringing forgotten buildings, stories, and regions into the public and making them matter by sparking the same interest they have for them in others. "We try to change the optics of how society sees these buildings because if people don't value them, any protection is useless," says Lipták. Through their interest in saving abandoned buildings, they uncover the complexity of the social reality in which these buildings are embedded, which in turn influences their spatial practice. They focus on previously wealthy post-mining regions, with lots of interesting built heritage from times when this region belonged to Austria-Hungary, which poverty "protected" from development. When the land was exhausted, the production stopped, and people moved elsewhere. Left behind were few people, most of them Romas, deteriorating infrastructure, environmentally damaged land, no jobs, and buildings of the Hungarian past with lower architectural value than their modernist cousins, which already occupied the small number of historians in Slovakia. Lipták reports that many would rather keep their properties unused than have Romas moving in. The issue is thus not only deteriorating architectural heritage. It is also the economic unattractiveness of the region, racism against Romas, difficult relations of Slovaks with anything Hungarian, brain drain, and an understaffed Slovak protection office. Importantly, it is all those things together, and making these buildings matter requires engagement with all these entangled aspects of reality through the wide range of practices outlined above, as none of them would be sufficient alone.

2.3.2. Spatial Practices/Know-Hows

Their activities, like their perspective, developed gradually, as they saw what resonates with the public, says Lipták, and so they gradually learnt through practice *how* to materialise their vision. Their approach to simultaneously address the above-mentioned entangled fields can be partly illustrated by their most recent architectural project—a tourist accommodation built with the money from prints and book sales in a deteriorated mansion in the town of Jelšava. The project is embedded in the ecology of their other activities, like prints, books, stories on social media, and guided tours which already bring tourists and their capital to this region, that, however, lacks the necessary infrastructure. In the role of both investor and client, Čierne Diery collaborated with the Slovak architectural office named 2021 to create a partial renovation by carefully inserting a timber structure into the most damaged wing of the mansion. The intervention adds new materiality and function while keeping the histories present and alive, weaving together contemporary minimalism with original facades and marks left by socialism. "It is a metaphor," says Lipták, "that one can work with the building also otherwise." Waiting for funds for a complete reconstruction is, in this region, futile and Čierne Diery shows that other ways are possible. In the construction, they also involved local companies and individuals, especially Romas, giving work to the locals most in need. Also, the modus operandi of the accommodation should contribute to strengthening the local economy. At the time of writing this text, the accommodation is finished, but not yet running. Lipták signals that its operation will be similar to that of their earlier project—a sauna in Spišský Hrhov, built in 2018 with the help of a local municipal company employing mostly Romas. After its completion, they donated it to the village, which has operated it since then on a donation basis and it is booked out for months in advance.

2.3.3. Qualities of Created Spaces

Their work receives many positive comments on social networks. People thank them for their work, voice their own stories connected to the forgotten places, and locals treasure the tourists now present in their area, as well as the new perspectives they gain on their surroundings. The forest sauna won the public vote for the Slovak architecture award CE-ZA-AR in 2020 and Lipták mentions that many people contacted them to build one also in their village. Tourists visit the region and some buy and develop properties there. Čierne Diery's vision/optic of these places seems to resonate with many and shifts from the margins towards the centre. While materialising their vision, they also pay attention to actually improving the lives of the locals. They invest all profits generated through their activities back into the regions, building diverse infrastructures for and with local communities. Lipták is also aware of the dangers of tourism and Čierne Diery therefore carefully chooses what to talk about and how. According to him and their social media, their future activities should focus on social and educational projects in the region, like creating affordable housing for disadvantaged people and thus constructing additional spaces for the good life of local communities.

2.4. DOM.ov

This organisation assists people from marginalised Roma communities with housing needs. Their main product is a year-long programme centred around constructing single-family houses built into private ownership by their

future owners with the help of the NGO and the community. They are active in Eastern Slovakia in different villages, where many Romas settled during socialism and where others moved after their eviction from the regional capital since the 1990s. The current spatial practice of DOM.ov was developed over 17 years and builds on three previous projects with the same aim, one doctoral dissertation (Sládek, 2016), one habilitation thesis (Smatanová, 2020), and several student projects. What started as an experimental solution to house a single Roma family being evicted from their illegalised home grew into an NGO uniting two NGOs and a bank. They employ several social workers and collaborate on a regular basis with architects, planners, lawyers, and bankers. The spatial practitioners are mostly from the white educated majority, but some of them have been active in the field for many years and some belong to the marginalised community in question, which contributes to an inside-outside positionality of the organisation.

2.4.1. Vision of the World

For DOM.ov, the vision of good life for marginalised Roma communities is grounded in good housing, to which people from these communities have limited access. Their poor housing situation has historical roots interlinked with ongoing racism. In 1958, nomadism was illegalised and nomads, most of them Romas, were given land on which they should settle. With the end of socialism, however, this land was given back to its owners, the houses became illegal, and many had to move out with no real options provided by a state undergoing rapid privatisation. Many built make-shift shacks on the peripheries of villages and towns. Others were housed in rental state housing in estates on peripheries, often leading to spatial marginalisation intersecting with segregation from necessary social infrastructures (Sládek, 2016; Smatanová, 2020). These rental buildings were unkept for decades and are today gradually being demolished due to supposedly bad structural conditions, with little or no alternative housing provided. The bad state of the housing is used to perpetuate a narrative of Romas as dirty, messy, misbehaved, and, thus, undeserving, which complicates the provision of new housing by municipalities based on the votes of white people. The now shelterless people often join their families in make-shift settlements or abroad, as their access to other housing options is limited due to a shortage of social housing, their low/no income, inherited debts, and racism. Romas in these marginalised communities are affected by multiple interdependent negative factors like racism, generational poverty, social exclusion, insecure housing, bad access to health provision, low literacy, and difficulties to enter the job market (Radičová, 2001), which perpetuates their lack of access to decent housing and good life. Building houses is for DOM.ov a tool for addressing the housing problem and with it at least partly other issues. In a TV report, their clients (a term used by DOM.ov) describe their motivations to build their house with a vision of better life, especially for their children (Rozhlas a televízia Slovenska & Jakhetane-Spolu, 2021). It would bring them stability, knowing they will not be thrown out and can arrange the home as they want.

2.4.2. Spatial Practices/Know-Hows

DOM.ov provides a framework/space for enabling their clients to achieve a vision of better life materialised in their own house. Interested people must enter and actively participate in a yearlong programme organised in cohorts. These result in the construction of a whole street with five to 15 houses, creating a new neighbourhood as an integral part of a growing ecosystem of existing villages. DOM.ov communicates with the village to secure public land for the houses that the families then buy or get to rent long-term. They also organise the drawing up of new zoning plans in collaboration with planners. For clients, they organise educational workshops about planning and construction as well as home finances. Throughout the year, all clients must save €50 per month. Those who succeed are assisted by DOM.ov in getting microloans with a payback of 13 to 15 years from the partnered bank. Clients can then choose from six catalogue houses with a 30 to 110 m^2 habitable, sometimes expandable, area designed by the organisation. Saving and staying motivated is difficult for many, and not everyone completes the programme and builds their house. Social workers support the families throughout this process, help them with finances, encourage them to overcome difficulties and support them also after the completion of the house. All these practices/know-hows are intertwined and necessary for the materialisation of the vision.

2.4.3. Qualities of Created Spaces

According to Ondrášiková from DOM.ov, whom we interviewed, nearly 70% of the new homeowners are employed and their children go to school even beyond primary education. “If you have your own house, your thinking changes, one feels better than when knowing that you constantly have to repair things,” says one of the clients (Rozhlas a televízia Slovenska & Jakhetane-Spolu, 2021, 24:00). “Wherever there will be such opportunity, everyone should use it, build a house,” says another (Rozhlas a televízia Slovenska & Jakhetane-Spolu, 2021, 23:39). The positive results seem to create a snowball as they motivate more people from marginalised Roma communities to join the project as well as villages to choose this programme over construction of usual rental housing. In March 2022, DOM.ov announced on their social media that 54 families had entered the new cohort in a village where, in November 2021, the construction of eight houses had started. All this suggests that DOM.ov does materialise their visions well, although what this good life consists of and the path to it can be critically

questioned. It mirrors that of the status quo middle-class dream: saving through hard work and discipline, getting a loan, choosing a house from a catalogue, and building it for your family. It is, however, audacious, as probably only a few would envision this for anyone from marginalised Roma communities. The standardisation of their mass product could also be criticised. Yet, it supports their efforts as their clients and villages can better see what to expect, which makes them more inclined to adopt the materialisation of the vision DOM.ov offers. Furthermore, standardisation allows rapid replication, which has enabled DOM.ov to build already in over 30 villages.

3. Learnings and Transformations of Spatial Practices/Know-Hows

Drawing on the two case studies, at least three aspects, that are rarely found in planning and architecture as usual, emerge that seem to be essential to *how* these practices make marginalised *visions*/*perspectives* matter. The text below outlines these learnings and connects them with concepts that can provide theoretical and methodological guidance on how to transform spatial *practices* for the positive inclusion of marginalised *perspectives* in order to create good spaces for marginalised communities. The aspects are interdependent and in no order of importance. They focus on positionality/standpoints and know-hows of spatial practitioners while acknowledging that larger changes in the systems in which spatial practices operate are necessary. The focus on the individuals rather than the system reflects the above practices, which transform, first of all, their practice and through that drive forth also systemic change.

3.1. Addressing a More Complete Image of the World

Both practices engage with the entanglements of social realities and intersectional issues as they strive to build good spaces for marginalised communities. Through diverse know-hows, multiple material engagements, and interventions, they gradually gain a more complete image of the world and uncover yet invisible parts of the "iceberg." DOM.ov sees the housing issue and its solutions as entangled with racism, generational poverty, and ownership, while Čierne Diery sees the reality of abandoned buildings together with that of the perceptions of people, local economies, and infrastructures—they both see more than just buildings. Situated in their constantly developing understanding of the world are their visions of *what* good spaces are and *how* to construct them. Judging on the positive receptions, their spaces constructed with a more complete image of the social world are better addressing reality's complexities than the solutions conceived from the "god's view" by the status quo—unkept rental housing for marginalised Roma communities or inactivity in poor regions.

Transdisciplinarity—a common feature of nearly all investigated organisations—appears to be one important ingredient of such practice. Individuals from different disciplines that are an integral part of the organisations, or their collaborators, enable the teams to perceive a given situation and consequently define the problem from multiple angles. Transdisciplinarity does not require that the practitioners give up on their knowledges—*know-hows* and *visions*—but that they question and transform it. This seems to contribute to the development of a critical standpoint, from which they can construct less false social realities. The knowledges of the locals also enter the process and challenge disciplinary knowledges, as well as being transformed by them—whether concerning construction methods or identity. Furthermore, various disciplines bring their own tools and methods to address the problem, which gives rise to transdisciplinary spatial practices seamlessly blending architecture, journalism, artistic practice, or education, which in turn enables the creation of the diverse spatial components discussed below. Architecture and planning are transdisciplinary practices in their nature, as Doucet and Janssens (2011) show in their edited volume on the topic. The practices above underline this and encourage the expansion of knowledges included in spatial production.

3.2. Space as Multiple Becoming

The various aspects of space employed by the practitioners—from brick and mortar, zoning laws, and microloans, to diverse people, graphics, histories, and narratives—as well as the *know-hows* used to shape it, can only be integrated and brought together in a concept of space that allows for their perception. Keeping the still common perception of space as a container obstructs seeing and working with its other aspects, which, as shown above, are all important for supporting the good life of the communities. Building a house is not sufficient. It is just one of many infrastructures, to borrow from Easterling (2016). New sources of local income or loans as economic infrastructures or narratives, education and cultural capital as social infrastructures are equally crucial for supporting a good life. Conceiving space as a construction of multiple expanding infrastructures is not something the practitioners explicitly mention, but it is one way to describe the spaces they create.

Furthermore, the spaces these organisations create are never finished but are constantly "in flight"—an ANT perception of buildings by Latour and Yaneva (2008). Such a vision of space allows the perception of the process of making, as well as "life" after the construction of individual components. The practitioners of DOM.ov continue to support the families after the houses are erected, and the built houses with their satisfied inhabitants play a role in encouraging others to join the project, while Čierne Diery ongoingly shapes the region through various interventions. The spaces for the good

life of these communities are thus in constant becoming. Conceiving of space as an ongoing process creates necessary opportunities for new *visions*/*perspectives* and *know-hows* to continually enter and change the spaces and practices.

3.3. Participation as a Matter of Care

The visions of the marginalised communities and other disciplines are not "added" to spatial production through formal participatory tools like questionnaires, round tables, or co-design workshops since many from these communities would lack the necessary resources to join in on. Instead, spatial practitioners engage with them through diverse activities that are an integral part of the practice. Social work, guided tours, or talks with mayors are all ways of getting to know the visions of the various actors. The kind of activities does not seem to matter as much as the desire of the practitioners to actually see from these diverse positions while transforming their own. In other words, their activities are a means of developing critical standpoints that allow the organisations to see simultaneously from the inside and the outside, understanding both and thus gaining a less distorted image of the world. While the practitioners do not provide many clues on how to develop such critical standpoints if you are not already inclined to help others, the work of Maria Puig de la Bellacasa could offer some guidance.

De la Bellacasa (2017) builds on science and technology studies and the ANT debates sketched above to introduce the notion of "matters of care." She draws on Fisher and Tronto's (1990, p. 40) definition of care as "a species activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our 'world' so that we can live in it as well as possible" and invites us to think with care in each situation. Such thinking is intended as a situated method of inquiry, rather than a normative stance generating ready-made solutions:

> Fostering care should not become the equivalent of an accusatory moral stance—if only *they* would care!—nor can caring knowledge politics become a moralism disguised in epistemological accuracy: Show that you care and your knowledge will be "truer"….I suggest rather that it can be about a speculative commitment to think about how things could be different if they generated care. (de la Bellacasa, 2017, p. 60)

The spatial practitioners described here provide some concrete situated answers to de la Bellacasa's call. By asking oneself the easy, yet complex question "how to care?" in each situation, all spatial practitioners could gradually develop "critical standpoints that are *careful*" (de la Bellacasa, 2017, p. 60) from where they could see better, and consequently construct better, more caring spaces for diverse communities.

4. Conclusion

The article discussed in detail spatial practices/know-hows of two organisations that materialise diverse marginalised visions—merging theirs with those of local communities. Čierne Diery strengthens local economies in abandoned regions and DOM.ov provides stable homes for marginalised Roma families. The positive reception of these spaces by the communities demonstrates that they do materialise their visions well, even if more voices from these communities, as well as the test of time, are needed to provide better evidence. Although these practices are situated in specific socio-material realities, my analysis of their approaches points to aspects that are transferable to other contexts. These cannot simply be added to spatial practices as usual but require their transformation: enlarging the palette of spatial components beyond those conceiving of space as a container and combining know-hows from multiple disciplines in transdisciplinary practices to employ diverse aspects of space simultaneously; employing multiple disciplinary optics to perceive and consequently better address complex social realities; striving for the development of critical careful standpoints through critical reflection on knowledges—*visions* and *know-hows*—by asking oneself how each situation could generate care. These aspects can be integral to any spatial practice to better involve marginalised perspectives and reduce rather than reproduce the injustices caused by the status quo. The task of creating good spaces for diverse marginalised communities thus does not have to rest on the shoulders of a few engaged actors but can be on the agenda of all spatial practitioners. That said, there are multiple structural obstacles which are not discussed here, like the reliance on capital, that could be the subject of further study. Meanwhile, the practices above point to creative solutions to overcome these obstacles in their specific contexts, for instance by generating their own capital.

The above shows that spatial/geopolitical, social, and disciplinary margins are valuable fields of investigation to find spatial *know-hows* and *visions* that contribute to better spaces than those built by the status quo. Spatial margins in particular appear to be a good location for such practices. Both case studies are located on the spatial margins of Slovakia, in poor peripheral regions. State or capital have little/no interest here, which possibly leaves more material and political space for other visions—a dynamic known by urban pioneers. The *visions* and *know-hows* developed on the geopolitical margins of Western Europe in Slovakia and Czechia are perhaps not so radically different to those on the margins in the West. Yet, as the article aimed to show, they can advance debates in planning and architecture as well as provide inspiration for practices in the West, especially for situations where marginalised communities are not able to participate in collaborative dialogues due to a lack of resources.

Learnings in this article hope to also contribute to shaping the Central and Eastern Europe context. Nearly all interviewed practitioners mentioned the need for good case studies as the most important thing that would help them to promote their visions. It is, therefore, crucial to bring these learnings there. This academic article will most probably not reach the field. Hence, other formats of dissemination like workshops, an exhibition, or a publication targeting the local audience would be more appropriate and are currently in planning. They should contribute to the efforts of DOM.ov, Čierne Diery, and other organisations in shifting knowledges in the region and influencing the technologies and optics through which planners and architects think, design, and build spaces.

This article aimed to explore and demonstrate the benefits and importance of bringing knowledges into spatial practices that are typically outside of planning disciplines. This was reflected also in the theoretical framework of the article. It was only by changing the visual apparatus of seeing space through ANT that the complexity of these spatial practices could be explored. Thinking through knowledge perspective with the help of feminist science and technology studies facilitated reflection about how other visions can enter and influence spatial production. The article hoped to show how these could be useful tools for reflection in the construction of spaces for the good lives of marginalised communities. Exploring these thinking technologies further could yield findings of other crucial transformations of spatial knowledges for enabling the creation of better spaces for the good lives of diverse communities.

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Conflict of Interests

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