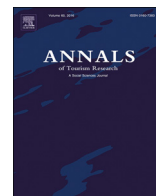


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## Thinking rhizomatically about communist heritage tourism

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## ABSTRACT

Communist heritage tourism in central-eastern Europe is part of a stale process of decades-long transition from centrally-planned to market-oriented societies. We deploy Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the 'rhizome' to disrupt understandings of static hierarchies between post/communist histories, places and peoples. Experiences and memories of communism between 1944 and 1991 together with current touring performances of communist remnants are heterogeneously connected in a multidirectional network. Via the rhizome we explore this network as shifting connectivity rather than a confined and permanent construct. Thus, locals' post/communist experiences are roots and shoots which associate with other elements of the past, and with tourists' heterogeneous performances of communist places. We, therefore, explain ambivalences towards communist heritage and simultaneous dis/inheritance through tourism in these places.

## Introduction

This is a conceptual paper in which we draw on the notion of the 'rhizome' to critically debate and understand communist heritage tourism. We claim that the concept of the rhizome allows for communist heritage tourism to be understood as a shifting network of heterogeneous connectivity between histories, peoples, and places, instead of a stable, confined, and permanent construct. As a botanical term, rhizomes refer to continuously growing horizontal stems which put out lateral shoots and adventitious roots at intervals. From botany, the notion of the rhizome is introduced in the social sciences by French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1987, p. 5) in the book *A Thousand Plateaus* to explain "connections between semiotic chains, organisations of power, and circumstances relevant to the arts, sciences, and social struggles".

Deleuzian and Guattarian concepts from *A Thousand Plateaus* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) have been given some attention in tourism studies to critique the persistence of linear, binary, and arborescent theorising. One such example is the Deleuzian concept of territorialisation – with its two interrelated processes de-territorialisation and re-territorialisation – employed to problematise one-sided comprehensions of tourism as a predominantly social phenomenon (Gren & Huijbens, 2012). The authors argue for a critique of the social as "a separate plane of reference" and argue for "gradually introducing theoretical strands that put question marks around such [one-sided] theorisations of the social" (Gren & Huijbens, 2012, p. 156; Xie, 2015). Furthermore, a rhizomatic view positions tourism as a form to territorialise touristic site as places of geopolitical resistance (Hipwell, 2007).

Wider rhizomatic approaches adopted by other authors move beyond viewing tourism and tourism development as neatly ordered, and hierarchical to understanding it as "non-linear, random and unpredictable" (Pavlovich, 2014, p. 7). The tourism industry itself needs to be re-conceptualised as relational, fluid and frequently ephemeral (Saxena, 2015). Elements of the rhizome have been

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deployed to challenge the notion of “stable and discreet individuality” of tourists with strict boundaries between “the self and the world” (Saxena, 2018, p. 101). Instead, the boundaries between the selves are dissolved and replaced by a relational field of mutually constituted tourist bodily flows and their environment in a process of becoming multiple (Matteucci, 2014; Saxena, 2018).

In the wider field of heritage tourism studies, there seems to persist the critique that enquiry into heritage and tourism so far has been fragmented and lacking in strong theoretical background (Garrod & Fyall, 2001). Constrained traditional views of travel and tourism obstructed the development of “new directions in culture, heritage and tourism” (Jamal & Kim, 2005, p. 57). Much of our understanding of the world comes from arborescent and sedentary viewpoints (Deleuze & Guattari, 1984); thus heritage tourism is still being conceptualised in unidimensional, static and supply-demand terms (Jamal & Kim, 2005).

The sub-field of heritage tourism has matured from descriptive empirical case studies to become a conceptual arena of negotiation of personal and national identities (Butler et al., 2014; Gravari-Barbas, 2018; Noy, 2009; Timothy, 2018). Recent debates in heritage tourism studies point to the experiential nature of heritage, but not immediately accessible to tourist's bodily senses (Noy, 2009; Timothy, 2018). Also, socio-cultural production of heritage is thus “contradictorily transitive, imaginative and persuasive” (Skinner, 2012, p. 109) and necessarily constructivist (Meyer & Port, 2018). This is echoed in the calls for the replacement of the “imaginary lineage of heritage” (Huang, 2017, p. 116; Landzelius, 2003), and in the desire to move beyond the binary understandings of consumption - production, dominance - resistance, especially in post-conflict heritage (Zhang, 2017).

Consequently, the rhizome is proposed as a new route to disrupt the static arborescent model of heritage tourism and conceptualise it as an active model of fluid meaning-making. Such a rhizomatic route shifts the orientation of heritage from the past into the future (Russell, 2010) to a “rhizome history of disinheritance” (Landzelius, 2003, p. 211), and to a process of “simultaneous validation of inheritance and disinheritance” (Huang, 2017, p. 121). The rhizomatic decentring of heritage tourism is particularly cogent to the study of post-totalitarian contexts, as it is often difficult for societies in transition to confront their recent past, especially when the recent past remains very much present (Forest et al., 2004; Huang, 2017; Sima, 2017). To that end we deploy the concept of the rhizome to discuss communist heritage tourism as an ever-shifting network of connectivity and heterogeneity that forms multiplicity between histories, peoples, and places.

Our conceptual paper develops at the confluence of two established fields of research: heritage tourism studies and socialist studies. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to review these two extensive fields of research, our focus on communist heritage tourism is anchored in debates in both heritage tourism studies and socialist studies. Existing research into communist heritage tourism mostly incorporates the intersection between tourism, problematic pasts, and heritage, mostly in eastern and central European countries such as east Germany, Poland, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria (deTar, 2015; Iankova, 2017; Knudsen, 2010; Light, 2000b; Sima, 2017). In particular, the focus of the existing studies is on destination marketing strategies to either capitalise or disassociate destinations from their recent communist pasts (Adie et al., 2017; Coles, 2003).

Other aspects refer to the transition from centrally-planned to more market-oriented capitalist economies, the underlying dimensions of governance, and urban transformation (Adie et al., 2017; Hall, 2004). Some attention is given to international tourists engagements with unwanted communist heritage in Poland, and Hungary (deTar, 2015; Knudsen, 2010), to visitors of contested communist sites (Ivanov & Achikgezyan, 2017; Light, 2000a), and to the history of domestic tourism in former Yugoslavia during the communist regimes (Duda, 2010; Tchoukarine, 2010; Yeomans, 2010). The Soviet understanding of heritage, and the public perception of communist heritage in post-communist Albania are also recently tackled (Deschepper, 2018; Iacono & Kelliçi, 2016).

Research thus far regarding communist heritage tourism is empirical, case study based and firmly rooted in post-communist understandings of heritage as unwanted by the local population. Post-communism refers to the drastic structural political, socio-cultural, and economic changes from communism to democracy in eastern and central Europe (deTar, 2015; Ivanova, 2017). Specifically, the post-communist period of 1989 onwards, encompasses the transition and transformation of the countries beyond the Iron Curtain from state-owned economies to modern market-driven democracies. An important part of the transition process is the seemingly stark disassociation from and refusal of communist socio-economic and geo-political ideologies following the collapse of the communist regimes, including of the Berlin Wall in 1991. This encompasses the local destruction of memorials and sites associated with the communist regimes. Yet, international demand for tourism in these post-communist places has challenged the notion of a complete break with the communist past (Ivanova, 2017). Thus, post-communist understandings cannot sufficiently explain the observed ambivalences towards communist heritage and simultaneous dis/inheritance through tourism in many eastern and central European post-communist countries (deTar, 2015; Huang, 2017).

Our conceptual paper, therefore, draws on the rhizome to understand communist heritage tourism as multidirectional network of dynamic heterogeneous connections between locals' lived communist experiences, memories of communist pasts, and performances of touring communist remnants. In the following, we outline rhizome's key principles of 1) connectivity and heterogeneity; 2) multiplicity; and 3) asignifying rupture in three sections. Each section below is composed of two main parts, one presenting conceptual explanations of each key principle, and one illustrating each key principle in communist heritage tourism discussions. Thus, Section II.1.a. presents *Principles of rhizomatic connectivity and heterogeneity*, followed by II.1.b. *Illustrating communist heritage tourism via rhizomatic connectivity and heterogeneity*. This is followed by Section II.2.a. interjecting the *Principle of rhizomatic multiplicity*, and then Section II.2.b. *Illustrating communist heritage tourism via rhizomatic multiplicity*. Finally, the *Principle of rhizomatic asignifying rupture* is presented in Section II.3.a, while Section II.3.b *Illustrating communist heritage tourism via rhizomatic asignifying rupture*. Each principle is first theoretically presented, afterwards mapped onto debates of communist heritage tourism so as to offer clear and robust illustrations of such abstract, if not complex, Deleuzian and Guattarian concepts. To support readers navigate the concept of the rhizome we propose a table schematically presenting its first four key principles, accompanying terms used by the two French philosophers to explain the rhizome, and illustrations with examples from communist heritage tourism (see Table 1 below). We conclude the paper with a brief summary of the key ideas, limitations of the paper, and further research avenues.

**Table 1**

Four key principles of the rhizome.

Source: Authors, June 2020.

4 key principles of rhizome	Explanatory terms	Illustrations of communist heritage tourism
<p>1. Connectivity</p> <p>Explains that any node of the rhizome can be connected to any other part of the rhizome, and no single node has priority over any other.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ahierarchical – connections within a rhizome organised multidirectionally and horizontally.</li> <li>● Node – a point in a network at which lines or pathways intersect or branch.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Post-communism hostile local attitudes of destructing communist heritage are connected with nostalgia about the communist past in countries like Bulgaria, Romania, and in eastern Germany. This can be understood via connectivity of past-present, and tourism supply-demand whereby local visitors, regional and international tourists visit communist remnants specifically to witness or re-live this past.</li> </ul>
<p>2. Heterogeneity</p> <p>Explains that a rhizome makes connections between widely different things.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Difference – connections between qualitatively diverse nodes that produce something new.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Different and dispersed elements of communist heritage tourism such as 'western' European curiosity, memories of communism, locals' nostalgia, trauma of the communist past can be connected via heterogeneity.</li> </ul>
<p>3. Multiplicity</p> <p>Explains the complex structure – of determinations, magnitudes, and dimensions – created by many connections between widely different things. Multiplicity is in its noun or substantive form (in the grammatical sense), rather than an adjective.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● the One and the Many – connections do not involve subsumption, meaning that 'the many' do not subsume or absorb 'the one', the many is a reflection of the one.</li> <li>● Determinations – types of connections between two nodes determine a range of actions performed.</li> <li>● Magnitudes – degrees of actions performed by connected nodes.</li> <li>● Dimensions – number of connections determining the type of connections (determinations) and the range of actions they can perform.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Multiplicity explains the co-existence of the heterogenous assemblage of post/communism remnants such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Communist labour camps in most eastern European countries e.g. Vojna Memorial in Czechia, or the forgotten labour camp of Belene in Bulgaria;</li> <li>○ Memorials of anti-fascists struggle during World War II e.g. Petrova Gora monument in Croatia;</li> <li>○ Sites and monuments glorifying the communist ideology with art and propaganda artefacts e.g. the ones in the Museum of Socialist Art in Sofia, Bulgaria.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>4. Asignifying rupture</p> <p>Explains the process by which the rhizome shatters or breaks static 'territory.' It resists attempts to be used as a confined signifier - that is to be labelled as static - causing connections between nodes to shatter – deterritorialise – and reassemble elsewhere – reterritorialize.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Deterritorialisation – networks and connections between nodes can be shattered.</li> <li>● Reterritorialisation – networks and connections between nodes start up again, after being shattered or deterritorialised, and reassemble themselves elsewhere and at another time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Communist heritage tourism via socio-political forces re-territorialises as, or becomes something else, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Dark heritage and/or dark tourism especially in places associated with the communist dictator in Romania Nicolae Ceauşescu because of their associations with the most violent anti-communism revolution in eastern Europe.</li> <li>○ Memory and nostalgia, especially the Buzludzha building in Bulgaria – a dilapidated monument, left unattended because of its association with the communist regime. Yet, it remains a site for yearly celebrations of the major political Bulgarian parties, and many attendees have fond memories of the period.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Key principles of the rhizome

In *A Thousand Plateaus*<sup>1</sup> the two French philosophers define the rhizome along six key principles: 1) connectivity; 2) heterogeneity; 3) multiplicity; 4) asignifying rupture; 5) cartography; and 6) decalcomania. For the purpose of this paper, our attention

<sup>1</sup> Deleuze and Guattari wrote the collaborative book titled *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* with two volumes *Anti-Oedipus* (1972) and the second one *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987). In *A Thousand Plateaus*, itself written rhizomatically, the concept of the rhizome is introduced and conceived as an open system consisting of a series of plateaus that can be read in any order and draw from a variety of disciplines such as art, music, biology, linguistics, to name a few (Holland, 2013). The reader is invited to follow the rhizomatic structure of each of the volume's fifteen plateaus with each plateau proposing a novel concept such as body without organs in plateau six, faciality in plateau seven, or becoming-animal in plateau ten. Indeed, the stated goal of the authors is to invent concepts that "do not add up to a system of belief or architecture of propositions...but instead pack a potential in the way a crowbar in a willing hand envelops an energy of prying" (Massumi, 1987, p.xiii).

turns to the first four key principles. This is because our focus is untangling communist heritage tourism. We propose that a rhizomatic lens allows us to examine communist heritage tourism as multiplicity of individual and collective lived experiences and memories of the past connected via both tourists' and locals' heterogeneous performances of authoritarian communist regimes of 1944–1991 in central and eastern Europe (Naimark, 1997; Tonelli, 2003). The rhizome is not organised along hierarchical lines, it is a-central, without a single organising principle. Rhizomes generate “transversal, even alogical, connections between heterogeneous events” (O’Sullivan, 2016, p. 84); indeed, they map out temporary patterns of authentic complexity. The rhizome, moreover, is multiplicity that creatively brings together the object and the subject into a whole: “[a] multiplicity has neither subject nor object, only determinations, magnitudes, and dimensions” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 8).

For Deleuze and Guattari rhizomes refer to:

*networks, which cut across boundaries imposed by vertical lines of hierarchies and order, and build links between pre-existing gaps between nodes that are separated by categories and order of segmented thinking* (1987, p.6).

The rhizome is proposed to challenge what Deleuze and Guattari (1987) refer to as ‘arborescent’ thinking so embedded in ‘western’ European societies. This arborescent thinking reproduces a model of tree-like ideas developing chronologically from a distinct beginning with a central trunk and linear connections (branches). They critique such forms of thinking as privileging linear origins and dualisms or binary styles of thinking and logic (Pringle & Landi, 2017). Thus, rhizomes are proposed as subterranean stems assuming shapes from branched surface extensions in all directions to bulbs and tubers: “the rhizome includes the best and the worst: potato and couchgrass or the weed” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 5).

Through the rhizome, Deleuze and Guattari approach knowledge as transformable, malleable and producing new ways of thinking or knowing, while the ‘arborescent’ approach generates linear knowledge reproduction (Pringle & Landi, 2017). Thus, thinking rhizomatically acknowledges the multiple meanings of communist heritage tourism dependent upon the heterogeneous connections forged between people, histories, and places (Saxena, 2018).

Via the rhizome, Deleuze and Guattari invite the readers not to re-think the world, but rather to create multidirectional understandings of the world that overcome the “ontological iron curtain between being and things” rather than to reinforce it (Guattari, 1995, p. 8). Analysing communist heritage tourism as rhizome means to ceaselessly establish connections between narratives that are in flux, organisations of power, and circumstances relevant to socio-political contexts. It means to avoid thinking in terms of original, intended meaning or narrative, but instead of power takeover of established narratives in a political multiplicity (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Thus, a productive way to critically unpack heritage is through the lenses of the rhizome which allow for major socio-political, economic and tourism narratives to connect in creative new productions. To that end, we proceed examining the first two principles of the rhizome.

### 1a. Principles of rhizomatic connectivity and heterogeneity

The principle of connectivity of the rhizome can be visually represented as network of roots and shoots where each node in the network associates with many other elements (Jensen, 2003). Nodes in the rhizomatic network are formed through bundling of connections that are mutually interdependent, internal, and formed through flow (Pavlovich, 2014). Knowledges are no longer organised along systematic hierarchical principles, stemming and flowing from the one root system or between existing dualisms, but become ruptured (Viveiros de Castro & Skafish, 2014). A rhizome is an ahierarchical network of nodes that ceaselessly establish connections because “any point of the rhizome can be connected to anything other and must be” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 5). The rhizome in its visual representation of roots and shoots creates a network understood as a “way of inscribing and describing the registered movement of a thing” (Jensen, 2003, p. 227).

The principle of heterogeneity further expands on the characteristics of the rhizomatic network, emphasising that it is the widely diverse elements being connected that have tendency towards change to create something new (Adkins, 2013). Via rhizomatic thinking, alliances are forged between seemingly disparate disciplines such as geology, physics, and literature using imagery and analogies to create new understanding without any single element having priority over any other (Pringle & Landi, 2017). Through rhizomatic approaches, heterogeneous fragments or nodes can be connected as is illustrated via language as a rhizomatic mixture of words, things, power, geography (Adkins, 2013; Bogard, 1998; Pavlovich, 2014; Saxena, 2015; Templeton, 2007). While the rhizome forms connections between nodes, the principle of heterogeneity privileges internal, individual, and qualitative differences, instead of differences based on similarity or variations of sameness (Parr, 2008).

In tourism studies, this is exemplified in Pavlovich (2014), who investigates the relationships between touristic organisation at destinations and applies the first two rhizomatic principles both to the connections between touristic organisations, and also to the qualitative difference in the types of organisations that form the rhizome. The connections between heterogeneous fragments within the rhizome can arise spontaneously, indeterminably and without order. The rhizome incorporates the possibilities of both ties and ruptures, breaks and discontinuities, the connections within rhizomes being temporary (Pavlovich, 2014; Saxena, 2015, 2018).

To summarise, the rhizome is an ahierarchical network of promiscuous connections established between heterogeneous elements to produce something new (Adkins, 2013). Next, we illustrate how these principles of connectivity and heterogeneity help us understand fascination with the communist past intermingling with disassociation from communist heritage.

### 1b. Illustrating communist heritage tourism via rhizomatic connectivity and heterogeneity

Illustrating communist heritage tourism as connected network of heterogeneous elements, we understand what communist

heritage becomes through its association with tourism. We examine the relationship between communist heritage and tourism to overcome a simple dualistic and hierarchical understanding of fascinating past versus unwanted past in post-communist countries. Communist heritage tourism has not remained fixed or geo-politically uniform, but heterogeneous, dynamic, and mutable, constantly in the process of rhizomatic becoming. Eastern and central European post-communist countries have undergone complex processes of cross-pollination between them driven by international tourism. As such, a rhizomatic connectivity and heterogeneity approach to communist heritage tourism explains how to embrace such dynamic complexity. Existing communist heritage studies establish a uniform desire of these countries to rid themselves of the communist pasts. Communist heritage is often an unwanted past for locals in many post-communist countries, such as Romania and Bulgaria, whereby most locals display feelings of animosity, rejection and even hatred towards any communism related aspect (Ivanova, 2017; Light, 2000b).

For most post-communist countries in central-eastern Europe, communist heritage is rendered as 'controversial' and politically sensitive (Iankova & Mileva, 2014; Ivanova, 2017). This is because it incorporates distorted representations of geo-politically sensitive images, local and regional identities related to communism (Rátz et al., 2008). When entering global tourism markets, many post-communist countries perceive that the only way to be successful is to free themselves of their/our communist past (Czeczpeżyński, 2016; Smith & Puczkó, 2010). This process of removing references and memories of the communist past is understandable, and somewhat expected in countries with traumatic events and wishing to reinvent their identities (Ashworth & Tunbridge, 1999; Evans, 2002; Lowenthal, 2009). Such approaches are rooted in post-communist understandings of the political development in central-eastern European countries with their "more or less unified sets of characteristics that puts all post-communist countries on the path of 'western' capitalist democracy" (deTar, 2015, p. 136).

It is argued that the destruction of communist heritage is contested by both international tourists who are interested in something new and unfamiliar to them, and also by the private local or regional tourism sectors which want to readily meet such a demand. The 'western other' desiring to gaze upon communist heritage, is implicated in the development of an unwanted and uncomfortable form of communist heritage tourism, often against the wishes of the local populations (Balockaite, 2012; Light, 2000b; Young & Kaczmarek, 2008). The development of such a tourism product is the result of tourists' desires to look back to the past that has superseded the excitement for a 'tidy' future in 'western' societies since the 1980s (Huysen, 2000). The disappearance of communism as an alternative political system within Europe has produced a renewed interest for the vanished political alternative (Knudsen, 2010). The 'western' tourist gaze upon former communist countries is exoticizing and othering (even as far as creating new 'orientalism' within Europe) as it isolates and focuses on a past unfamiliar to them with remaining traces of different/other socio-political structures, obvious in central-eastern European cityscapes, for example (Knudsen, 2010). Understandings of post-communism, thus far, presume homogenous, consistent, and permanent experiences of both pre- and post-communism periods in eastern and central Europe. The practice of communist heritage tourism, moreover, pitches the interests of local populations, against those of the private tourism industry, and 'western' tourists.

We challenge the notion of a unified, singular, and linear post-communist experience of the central-eastern European countries. Instead, we show that these countries have complicated often contradictory and evolving relationships with their recent past. In countries like Bulgaria, Romania or in eastern Germany, the initial hostile local attitudes have begun to soften and co-exist with a more nostalgic look towards the past. In many post-communist countries the promises of democracy have given way to exhaustion and cynicism of the transitional period, and people have started to question the 'benefits' of democracy with its neoliberal model (Ivanova, 2017). Despite the lack of consensus on the role of communist heritage in Bulgaria, for example, several museums of communist heritage and socialist arts have opened in the last five years (Ivanov & Achikgezyan, 2017).

Similarly, the ambivalent relationship between communist and contemporary politics in Hungary is identified. This can be illustrated in Hungary's Statue Park (Szoborpark), also known as Memento Park or Memorial Park, an open-air museum of 42 communist statues and monuments collected from the streets of Budapest after the fall of the Iron Curtain. The Statue Park in Budapest "represents conflicting and unresolved features of Hungarian national identity and politics" (deTar, 2015, p. 135). Also, in Poland, ambivalent and complex nostalgic feelings are experienced when on a walking communist heritage tour in Kraków, known as a city of resistance to communism, and as a place of "local belonging after the silence of the 1980s and 1990s" (Knudsen, 2010, p. 151). Even in the case of Germany, that is usually given as an example of a country embracing the development of communist heritage tourism, the process of the creation of the memorial sites such as Checkpoint Charlie has been problematic (Light, 2000b, 2017).

Another example of the complicated nature of communist heritage comes from Romania where the very existence of communist 'heritage' is questioned (Ivanov, 2009). The questions and debates surrounding communist history and its place in post-communist societies in Romania make it very much a 'present' issue (Forest et al., 2004). Sima (2017) examines the very present nature of key moments of communist and socialist history in Romania:

The healing process appears to be taking very complex and unusual forms. Romanians do not appear to view communism as history but as present, and they appear to be, for lack of a better expression, 'stuck in a time loop'. Therefore, promoting communist heritage is a 'tall order' (p. 201).

This further challenges extant understandings that communist heritage tourism is a hierarchical system in which the demands from 'western' European tourists overcome the wishes of locals. A rhizomatic view encourages us to move beyond such dualistic notions and make sense of communist heritage tourism as new cultural production. Thus, the interest of 'western' tourists creates opportunities for local populations to produce new and creative ways to reckon with the recent and often traumatic past (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998; Russell, 2010). There are rhizomatic connections between the seeming interest of most 'western' tourists and the inclusion of communist heritage sites in the tourism offer. Such an interest does not overpower but instead contributes to the ongoing debates in central-eastern Europe about the fate of communist heritage sites by providing socio-economic values to such sites.

The process of providing a ‘second life’ to sites associated with communist pasts as touristic spaces (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998) also drives a re-evaluation of the importance of such sites in society making them visible and valuable. The presence of communist heritage in the national discourses, and in the physical spaces connects with the emerging nostalgia towards the past in central-eastern European countries. The visibility of communist heritage sites also presents a space for reliving or coping with trauma - the possibility of both individual and national reckoning (Eaton & Roshi, 2014). This multidirectional connectedness of the heterogeneous elements of communist heritage tourism is exemplified in the commonalities and differences between Polish communist heritage walking tours, Hungary’s Statue Park, and Romanian narrative stuck in the communist time loop, as presented above.

### 2a. Principle of rhizomatic multiplicity

Multiplicity is arguably the most important concept that Deleuze and Guattari propose in relation to the rhizome, and also the most difficult to grasp because of the many ways in which they put it to work (Roffe, 2010). From the previous two principles – connectivity and heterogeneity – we know that the rhizome makes connections between widely different things to create complex structures. The principle of multiplicity further explains how any “complex structure is multiplicity which means it does not reference a prior unity” (Roffe, 2010, p. 181). This relates to the idea of ‘the one and the many’ which operate as part of a greater arborescent whole (Adkins, 2013; Colebrook, 2006).

For Deleuze and Guattari (1978) multiplicity does not involve subsumption, meaning that ‘the many’ do not subsume or absorb ‘the one’, the many is a reflection of the one. This Deleuzian idea of ‘the one and the many’ can be usefully mapped onto the individual and collective lived experiences and memories of communist pasts to understand communist heritage tourism as rhizomatic multiplicity and not as single-unit construct. The collective within the lived experiences of communist locals reflects the individual experience or memory, but it is a sufficient whole in and of itself.

Moreover, Deleuze and Guattari (1987) state that “multiplicity has neither subject nor object, only determinations, magnitudes and dimensions” (p.7). This further adds to understandings of rhizomatic networks by explaining how connections between heterogeneous elements work. To illustrate what is meant by determinations, magnitudes and dimensions, Adkins (2013) deploys the example of the way the arm is attached to the human body. The way the arm of a body connects to the torso by ball and socket joint determines the range of an arm’s motion, and is one determination in a multiplicity that a body is (Adkins, 2013). However, the fact that the arm can move in a particular way does not mean that the arm performs that motion continuously, but only to a certain degree. The degree to which the arm is exercised exemplifies a magnitude (Adkins, 2013). The dimension of a multiplicity then describes the number of connections to other multiplicities that are made possible by its dimensions and magnitude (Adkins, 2013; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) (see also Table 1 for more schematic explanations of these terms and some illustrations or examples from communist heritage).

Any situation comprises of multiplicities that “form a kind of patchwork or ensemble without becoming a totality or whole (Parr, 2008, p. 181). Rhizomatic multiplicity situate relationships to one another dynamically, and thus cause present realities to fluctuate. The result is that new concepts grow and proliferate, coming together to create contemporary collections of ideas and concepts viable in particular contexts or only for a limited time. This helps understand situated, relative experiences, as what happens in one post-communist local context may not necessarily happen in another.

### 2b. Illustrating communist heritage tourism via rhizomatic multiplicity

Multiplicities are conceivable for any event or idea, which provides creative possibilities to explore communist heritage tourism (Colebrook, 2001). One such creative possibility brings communist heritage together with tourism in a multidirectional rhizomatic network encompassing individual and collective memories, lived experiences, as well as communist traumas and nostalgia for communism. There is not a singular communist tourism heritage but a patchwork (multiplicity) of diverse and different, even opposing elements such as memories, experiences, sites, histories, and heritages. Each of these elements connects to each other to continuously re-create what communist tourism heritage is or could be. Each of these elements has the potential to form new relationships, and by doing so changing what we mean by communist heritage tourism.

Rhizomatic multiplicity helps us resist fixed, generalised understandings of communist heritage tourism. Communist heritage is felt individually and collectively by locals when it is exhibited, or neglected, or even destroyed in one country. Yet, this does not necessarily mean that such feelings are transferable to other communist contexts. Communist heritage tourism as multiplicity helps us move away from the issue of defining communist heritage as a rigid, static, and singular construct. The definition of communist heritage tourism as “the consumption of sites and sights associated with the former regime and its downfall” (Light, 2000a, 2000b, p. 148) has been widely used in most studies dealing with the heritage of this historical period. What is needed to better understand communist heritage is further reference to the more complex nature of the specific workings of communist regimes in eastern and central European countries. We need to take into account the multiple and different Stalinist, Maoist or Trotskyan ideologies that shaped particular periods within the communist era of 1944–1991, as well as the focus on socialism as an intermediary step in achieving communism.

It is, therefore, difficult to discuss about communism in the singular as there are many different communisms shaped by the local social, cultural, historical and geographical characteristics (Jankova, 2017). Local experiences of communism in Romania, especially under Nicolae Ceaușescu, are significantly different from experiences of the softer version of communism in Bulgaria, or in Poland. Another differing aspect refers to the complicated relationships each communist country had with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), and later with Russia (Jankova, 2017). In examining communist heritage, such complexities have been largely

ignored, communism and socialism are used interchangeably, or at best linked to the same time period of individual countries' history.

To better understand communist heritage, differences must be identified based on the purpose with which certain places, buildings, monuments and other artefacts were created. Communist heritage was built incorporating 'red symbols' of the communist ideology both as monuments for visitation, and as sites for daily activities of the communist parties, such as The House of the People (Casa Poporului) in Romania, or the Monument House of the Bulgarian Communist Party in Buzludzha, a historical peak in the Central Balkan Mountains in Bulgaria. The becoming of communist heritages cannot be understood separately but rhizomatically in the ways they connect, influence, and inform one another. Indeed, communist heritage tourism can only be understood as multiplicity.

Communist heritage sites are in different stages of destruction such as the Monument House of the Bulgarian Communist Party in Buzludzha, or heritagisation such as the factory where the 1983 Noble Peace Prize winner, and the first democratically-elected President of Poland Lech Wałęsa worked. These are examples to illustrate multiplicity in communist heritage tourism. Communist heritage itself is a disperse assemblage of nuanced places, buildings, and sites some associated with death and suffering such as the communist forced labour camps in most eastern European countries. Notable examples are the Vojna Memorial in Czechia, or the forgotten Bulgarian labour camp in the Belene town, as well as memorials of anti-fascists struggles during World War II like the Petrova Gora-Peter's Hill monument in Croatia. Some sites and monuments glorify the communist ideology with art and propaganda artefacts like the Museum of Socialist Art in Sofia. International tourists, thus, are drawn to visit these (dark) tourism places of communist suffering, or of communist glorification. Some tourists want to experience everyday communist life touring around failed industrialised sites, and organised tours are offered in Bratislava and Sofia.

Thus, communist heritage tourism lends itself to considerations of multiplicities, which shift and realign depending on the connections established between sites, tourists, and locals. Examining 'communists heritages' (in the plural) and tourism we appreciate that there is not a singular way to define what constitutes that type of heritage, and there is not a fixed or correct way in which that communist heritage is experienced (Sima, 2017). Communist heritage tourism is multiplicity driven both by 'dominant' or 'main' representations offered by the private and public local tourism sectors, and also driven by international tourists' own desires and curiosities visiting communist heritage. Communist heritage tourism as multiplicity encompasses numerous tensions that are not fixed and consistent. Even the notion of 'dominant' representations is questionable as it suggests a clear top down hierarchy of power. We do not claim that hierarchical structures are impossible or do not occur in a multiplicity. Power take-overs that create discrete static unities can be present in a multiplicity, but its dimensions and magnitudes are then restricted, as is the case with the narratives of destruction of communist heritage (Adkins, 2013; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Saxena, 2018).

There is not a stable vision and interpretation of communist heritage tourism. Current representations do not reflect past ones, and they do not necessarily indicate the future becoming of communist heritage through tourism. There is not a singular agent that drives or shapes the process of becoming since there is not a singular process of becoming but many. Communist heritage tourism encompasses becomings happening simultaneously and changing through associations with different agents, different socio-political, economic developments and localities. These create roots and sprouts, nodes that go in different directions, merge in different ways to create new offshoots that intersect, disappear and again emerge in changed forms (Holland, 2013).

Rhizomatic multiplicity proves helpful in making sense of communist heritage tourism as complexities in flux that form all those interlacing, overlapping, and diverging lines of understandings. The increasingly nostalgic views towards communist heritage that manifest as increased acceptance of the heritage-cum-tourism product observed in Bulgaria and Hungary, for example, do not replace the remaining negative attitudes (Ivanova, 2017; Sima, 2017).

### 3a. Principle of rhizomatic asignifying rupture

Asignifying rupture refers to the fact that a rhizome may be broken, thus networks and connections between nodes can be deterritorialized or shattered, but the rhizome will reterritorialize – meaning it will start up again and reassemble itself elsewhere and at another time (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation are part of the vocabulary to express how the rhizome breaks out of its boundaries and then re-collects itself often assuming a new form or identity. Asignifying rupture is the tendency of the rhizome to (dis)connect from how things are towards creative mutations that are not simple "inversion of the past" (Lorraine, 2005, p. 145). Deleuze and Guattari (1987) explain asignifying rupture as the way concepts create shapes and lines in the forms of networks (territorialise) and how these shapes break down (detrterritorialise). The patterns of rhizomes breaking and re-assembling might be observed whenever and wherever activity may occur. The resulting temporary patterns of the rhizome help explain how connections form between and across systems, people, and ideas, and open the possibility of change.

The rhizome is not always open, dynamic, mutable and malleable network (Saxena, 2015, 2018). The rhizome can also be confined and strictly delineated in real and imagined divides or disassociations. Within the rhizome such divides "can be adjured from restrictions and boundaries of controlled networks by shattering the established connections and spreading and reforming seemingly chaotically" (Saxena, 2015, p. 109). Through asignifying rupture it becomes possible for the rhizome to proliferate and accrete in new, exploratory and unconventional ways of experiencing the world (Saxena, 2015). The rhizome within its connections between nodes has paths of change, places of mutation that were previously implicit, and can actualise in creative shifts giving rise to new possibilities. Any connected node in the rhizome can open up to such transformation into something else (Colebrook, 2001). The rhizome structure and design can be destabilised through territorialising flows and movements' which 'glide between rigidities' and segments (Saxena, 2018, p. 102).

Every rhizome is territorial – it sustains connections that delineate it, but is also composed of lines of deterritorialisation that run

through it, that weaken obsolete relationships and carry it away from its current form (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Rhizomes are defined as “the limit by their outside”, by the links that connect them outside themselves and transform them (Holland, 2013, p. 39). Through the process of asignifying rupture rhizomes can become creative metamorphoses of multiplicities and undergo shifts that give rise to new possibilities for existence (Winslade, 2009). However, we are cautioned that the transformations of the rhizome can become ineffectual or even lead to regressive transformations that reconstruct highly rigid segments, or just become destructive (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Deterritorialisation does not take place without some form of re/territorialisation (Gren & Huijbens, 2012; Saxena, 2015). Deterritorialization refers to the erasure (physical or psychic) of the territoriality (actual or imagined) of a group or an individual in order to enable its reterritorialization by another (Hipwell, 2007). While Deleuze and Guattari (1987) advocate for the transformative power of the rhizome the authors never minimise the risks the pursuit of such line entail (Parr, 2008).

### 3b. Illustrating communist heritage tourism via rhizomatic asignifying rupture

To illustrate communist heritage tourism via asignifying rupture means to be aware both of the ways things connect and break, as rhizomatic connections are capable of being severed or disconnected, creating the possibility of ‘other’ differing connections (Linstead & Pullen, 2006). Asignifying rupture helps explain communist heritage tourism as processes and acts of deterritorialisation weakening obsolete relationships, while reterritorialization “reinforces those coordinating the create of new social configurations” (Saxena, 2015, p. 111).

Communist heritage tourism, with its influence to order post-communist European societies through discursive worldmaking, acts as a territorialising force in the process of asignifying rupture (Franklin, 2009; Gren & Huijbens, 2012; Hollinshead, 2009; Xie, 2015). Communist heritage tourism encompasses visitation of sites of destruction, silence, nostalgia and rejection of communist ideology. Through tourism, communist heritage decontextualizes sites of remembrance and of nostalgia to incorporate locally held attitudes of rejection of some communist values and symbols in the early post-communist years (Iankova, 2017; Ivanova, 2017; Light, 2000a; Xie, 2015). Tourism acts as a territorialising force for communist heritage, meaning that tourism opens up communist heritage to the complexity of human experiences, emotions and other-than-conscious affects, and memory (Buda, 2015; deTar, 2015; Iankova, 2017; Ivanov & Achikgezyan, 2017; Knudsen, 2010; Xie, 2015). Communist heritage tourism through different geographical, socio-political forces territorialises as, or becomes, dark heritage and dark tourism (Lema et al., 2010).

For example, the sights and sites associated with the former communist leader/dictator in Romania Nicolae Ceaușescu can be considered communist heritage but are often presented as dark heritage because of their association with one of the most violent anti-communism revolutions in eastern Europe (Light, 2000a, 2000b; Light & Dumbrăveanu, 1999). In other instances communist heritage territorialises as art, memory, nostalgia, and even desires for a simpler life. An example here is the Buzludzha building in Bulgaria; the monument is dilapidated as it was left unattended because of its association with the communist party and regime (Ivanov, 2009). However, it remains a site for yearly celebratory meetings of some of the major political parties in Bulgaria, and many attendees have fond memories of the period (Poria et al., 2014). To make sense of the processes of asignifying rupture of communist heritage we need to consider the connections that are continuously created or broken between heritage sites, people's lived experiences and memories, national ideals and aspirations. Thus, communist heritage driven by local post-communist governments and the tourism industry undergoes dynamic processes of territorialisation along sometimes creative, sometimes destructive lines. Communist heritage rarely just ‘is’ but seems to be constantly in the process of becoming.

The rhizomatic becoming of communist heritage through tourism presents creative opportunities beyond only heritage. Indeed, heritage is sometimes viewed as “a mode of cultural production in the present that has recourse to the past. Heritage thus defined depends on display to give dying economies and dead sites a second life as exhibitions of themselves” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998, p. 7). We move beyond such explanations of heritage sites as ‘dying sites’, that are only exhibition of their former selves. Instead we show that such sites can be reterritorialized through tourism in their second lives as something that is creative, alive, and new.

Tourism in its constructive powers deterritorializes heritage sites along creative lines into dynamic spaces of re/imagining the communist past. A rhizomatic view of communist heritage tourism makes space for the rejection of communist ideas and the dedication to new values, as well as national catharsis, and the inclusion of international tourists' views to be incorporated into such sites (Knudsen, 2010). This is illustrated in the case of Nowa Huta-The New Still Mill in the easternmost part of Kraków, Poland, is a sprawling concrete suburb designed during the communist regime as the model proletarian city. This suburb is also a major stop of communist heritage themed tours. In Nowa Huta, the Crazy Guides Kraków Communism Tours offer visitors Kalashnikov shootings, Trabant car hires, and communist disco, amongst others (CrazyGuides, 2020). They recreate the place as an “important site for communism ... [and] resistance towards communism and as a place of new local belonging” (Knudsen, 2010, p. 151). The tours also offer international and domestic tourist opportunities for nostalgic experiences, not for the particular past, but for the remembered or even imagined past. Heritage sites, thus, bring together individual and collective lived experiences with memories of the communist past in new forms of economic and cultural sustenance. The process of de-territorialization then is a transformative process in which the signification of communist heritage tourism sites is altered (Xie, 2015).

## Conclusion

The aim of this conceptual paper was to interject into tourism studies the first four key principles of the rhizome – connectivity and heterogeneity, multiplicity, and asignifying rupture. In doing so we focused on illustrating communist heritage tourism as multiplicity that productively brings together heterogeneous connections between locals' lived communist experiences, memories of communist pasts, and performances of touring communist remnants. Such elements of communist heritage are reminiscent of



1944–1991 in central and eastern Europe (Ekiert & Hanson, 2003; Naimark, 1997), and also of individual and collective first-hand experiences of authoritarian communist regimes. Communist heritage tourism, thus, is not a simple inversion of the past as ascertained within a post-communist lens, but a dynamic network that connects things in creative mutations (Parr, 2008).

Illustrating communist heritage tourism through the lens of the rhizome provides a novel conceptual approach to make sense of its ambivalent, contested, dissonant, temporary, and changing natures. It enables us to understand the complex processes of becoming that communist heritages undergo with the constant states of flux, flows, and fluidities in and through tourism. Via rhizomatic debates of communist heritage tourism we intended to untangle its contradictory and contested nature. In this way, the paper moves away from post-communist understandings of rejection of communist heritage. It was not our intention to establish a definition of what communist heritage tourism is, as this would present static and rigid understandings. Instead, we examined what communist heritage tourism does and the processes of its becoming via rhizomatic thinking, which enabled us to understand that difference of static versus fluid and changing heritage.

Rhizomatic thinking allowed us to bring together, explore and expand communist heritage with tourism, but the rhizome has a much wider use, or indeed applicability, in tourism studies. The rhizome offers a different way to think and feel through the world around us beyond the entrenched often binary, hierarchical mode of representation. The rhizome invites to examine what is diverse, interlinked, overlapping and fluid. Rhizomatic thinking presents an opportunity to destabilise what is considered ‘dominant’ and ‘mainstream’ in tourism studies, disrupt it and re-create it in alternative, creative and fluid ways.

While our approach to problematise confined understandings of communist heritage tourism via the notion of the rhizome generates dynamic insights, our work has limitations. We need to be mindful that rhizomatic thinking does not displace arborescent thinking, both can coexist even within the rhizome; the rhizome can “oscillate between tree lines that segment and even stratify them, and lines of flight or rupture that carry them away” (Gilman et al., 1989, p. 589). Furthermore, we conceptually examine four of the six principles of the rhizome and how they map onto communist heritage tourism, the remaining two principles of cartography and decalomania have similar potential to generate important understandings of shape-shifting nature of communist heritage tourism. The final two rhizomatic principles, thus, present fruitful avenues for future research. More generally, we invite tourism researchers to engage with Deleuzian concepts such as chaosmos, body without organs, emotions and affects as possible counters to hierarchical and binary understandings in tourism research.

Another productive avenue for future research is to examine emerging thinking on ‘red tourism’ in relation with communist heritage (Li et al., 2010; Zuo et al., 2017). ‘Red tourism’ refers to visitation of sites related to current communist regimes in countries like Cuba, North Korea, and China whereby communist ideals are still openly celebrated and revered. Thus, a productive avenue for tourism studies is to compare and contrast the contemporaneity of the ‘red tourism’ phenomenon in China, North Korea (Buda & Shim, 2015), or Cuba, with the historical implications of post/communist heritage sites in central-eastern Europe. Investigating such comparisons as nodes in global rhizomatic networks of communist heritage tourism and the dis/connections with central-eastern European counterparts, has the potential to generate novel insights. Future empirical and theoretical rhizomatic work on communist heritage tourism would be remiss to not consider them.

Thus far, in the wider social sciences, the rhizome is employed to explain innovative approaches in qualitative research (Douglas-Jones & Sariola, 2009; Masny, 2013; Matteucci & Gnoth, 2017; Murakami & Siegel, 2018); novel pedagogical understandings in education (Gregoriou, 2013; Taylor and Harris-Evans, 2018; Cormier, 2008); insights into gender beyond binary definitions in cultural studies and gender studies (Gherardi, 2019; Linstead & Pullen, 2006); and as ways to define human habitat while tackling the heritage-making dilemma (Markeviciene, 2008). Such engagements necessarily need to be further explored and expanded into tourism studies.

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## Declaration of competing interest

None.

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