

Fukushima Daiichi as a heterotopia

Dark tourism in dystopian places

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This thesis deals with tourism to Fukushima. Specifically, it examines how traditional tourism and dark tourism shape the identity of Fukushima. In order to do so, the thesis has adapted Digital Methods, particularly by using web crawlers, and visual qualitative content analysis of pictures complemented with word clouds to reveal how Fukushima is conceptualised on different tourism websites. Three “traditional” tourism sites were chosen together with two “dark tours” sites. Moreover, National Geographic is integrated into the analysis for its role in influencing perceptions of geographical areas around the world. Adapting Foucault's “heterotopia”, to study Fukushima Daiichi as a possible dark tourism site and therefore a place of ‘otherness’, the thesis found that traditional tourism sites direct attention away from the disaster while dark tours sites embrace it. The thesis also found that traditional tourist sites and dark tour sites keeps distance between themselves and use different visual strategies to promote Fukushima. This paper concludes that Fukushima can be considered a dystopian heterotopia whose stigmatisation affects all of Fukushima prefecture.

Keywords: Fukushima, Heterotopia, Tourism, Dark tourism Digital and visual methods.

I recall my first contact with the 3/11 disasters in Tohoku, Japan. Just a month after the disaster happened, I was supposed to go to Akita in Tohoku for a semester of exchange studies. I had planned and prepared that stay since the previous year. In the midst of fear-mongering and actual fear of radiation, the Swedish government advised me to not go anywhere in northern Japan. I was given the same advice from the Japanese Government. My University was advising me to not go while the exchange University told me everything was calm, there was no danger of radiation. In the end, I choose to go for the fall semester instead, when things might have gotten quieter. I arrived in Akita and was met with occasional power shortages as a result of all the power plants in Japan being shut down. The food in the cafeteria was screened for radiation, and every item on the menu had its place of origin written out. There was always news about Fukushima in the background, on tv, on the radio as a white noise in daily life. I don't recall having many discussions about the power plant. There had been volunteer trips the semester I passed on, but they were fewer when I arrived. Overall, it seemed like life continued outside of Fukushima and people did not want to talk about it. That was my first contact with the Fukushima disaster and it has shaped my notions and perceptions about Fukushima.

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Table of contents

1. Introduction.....	1
1.1 Research Area and aim	3
1.2 Research question	3
1.3 Disposition	4
2. Methodology.....	5
2.1 Website content analysis.....	5
2.1.1 Websites.....	5
2.1.2 Tourism websites	5
2.1.3 <i>National Geographic</i>	7
2.1.4 Dark tours sites	7
2.2 Analysing websites	9
2.3 Visual analysis of website pictures	11
2.4 Qualitative content analysis of websites	11
2.5 Limitations	12
2.6 Reliability & Validity	13
2.7 Ethical considerations	13
3. Literature review	14
3.1 Dark tourism	14
3.1.1 Early dark tourism publications	15
3.1.2 2010 - Onwards.....	17
3.2 Dark tourism and Fukushima.....	18
3.3 Hiroshimas and Nagasakis nuclear past.....	19
3.4 Tourism and dark tourism in Hiroshima and Nagasaki	20
4. Theoretical framework.....	23
4.1 Heterotopias	23
4.2 Heterotopia in dark tourism setting.....	24
5. Analysis.....	27
5.1 Web crawlers	27
5.2 Visual analysis of pictures and tourism websites.	30
6. Conclusions.....	39
References.....	42

1. Introduction

The disaster on March 11, 2011, had several severe impacts like power shortages and destruction of transport infrastructure for the northern Tohoku region of Japan. While other areas of mainland Japan as well as Hokkaido were affected, the main destruction occurred along Tohoku's east coastline. The earthquake and following tsunami caused disruption of several economic and social sectors in Fukushima, Iwate, Aomori and Miyagi prefectures. Most of those problems have been dealt with during the post 3/11 reconstruction of the affected prefectures in Tohoku, but the issues and controversies around Fukushima Daiichi, the severely damaged nuclear plant, are still difficult for food products and tourism. Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) issued a special report in 2014 stating that Fukushima prefecture faced more problems than just destroyed infrastructure and industries, namely a lingering fear of radiation. This is largely a result of the shared name between the prefecture and the power plant.

The word "Fukushima" has become associated with nuclear radiation and many consumers of food products and potential visitors are still unsure about the safety of purchasing and consuming products from Fukushima or to visit the prefecture (METI 2014; Sho 2017:276; Yamakawa & Yamamoto 2017:5,100). This has many implications, most severely on people in and from Fukushima, who live with the fear of suffering from the same illnesses that the survivors of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings suffered from. People in Fukushima also risk facing social discrimination just like the survivors from Hiroshima and Nagasaki does. Discrimination can vary between being bullied in school or difficulties marrying due to the radiation stigma that comes with the Fukushima name (Tanaka 2013:12). While this thesis does not deal with the direct sorrows of the people living in Fukushima, by analysing aspects of tourism, it draws attention to one of the many mechanisms on how the problems of Fukushima citizens are kept alive and aggravated.

Japan's tourism sector recovered quickly after the disaster. It was more difficult for the northern prefectures to retain their visitors and Fukushima prefecture still struggles with attracting potential visitors (Nguyen & Fumihiko 2017). But according to Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO), the company in charge of the operations at Fukushima Daiichi and many other power plants, Fukushima Daiichi attracts an increasing number of visitors (TEPCO 2017:41).



(Source: Nevada NC clean energy 2018¹)

Tourism in Fukushima has been an important income factor for the province. The Japanese government is promoting tourism to Tohoku and Fukushima because it was an important economic sector before the disaster (Nguyen & Imamura 2017:40-41). Two broad kinds of tourism to Fukushima exists today. The tourism that focuses on Fukushima before the disaster and tourism that embraces the dark heritage that comes from the nuclear meltdown. For example, there has been officially sanctioned plans by the Japanese government to let a small group of academics: scholars, architects and philosophers to turn Fukushima Daiichi into a

¹ <https://nevadanscleanenergy.org/fukushima-nuclear-power-plant-map/inspirational-fukushima-nuclear-power-plant-map-collection/> [08-05-2018]

“tourist village”. The “Fukuichi Kanko Project”, the name of the project to turn Fukushima Daiichi into a tourist attraction, aimed to open in 2036 after decommissioning and decontamination of Daiichi and the surrounding area would have finished. The aim was to give Fukushima a similar status as Hiroshima and Nagasaki (Johanson 2013; Ryall 2013) Furthermore, some private companies arrange their own private tours to areas around the power plant and other evacuated areas. When mass media becomes aware of such tours, journalists usually question the idea of tourism in these areas and frame them as dark tourism. Despite the field of “dark tourism” still being theoretically weak, it appears that areas that get the “dark tourism” stigma are controversial places. Tourism companies, local authorities and, governments must deal carefully with such sites.

1.1 Research Area and aim

The “dark tourism” stigma ties into the perception of a place. In the case of Fukushima, the stigma creates difficulties for Fukushima the prefecture and Fukushima the city. The word “Fukushima” is today connected with the meltdown at Fukushima Daiichi (Nguyen & Fumihiko 2017:55-56). There is resistance against dark tourism, as most local people and authorities do not always want to embrace it and want to emphasise the other aspects of Fukushima and why it is worthwhile to visit it, including hot springs, hiking in the mountains and enjoying local food and cuisine. Consequently, this thesis works with the hypothesis that conflicting identities around the word Fukushima exist and tourism plays a role in influencing and directing those contested identities. The aim of this thesis is to shed light on how a place struggles against the label of a dark tourism site with all its morbid implications and “sensationalisation” of catastrophe and suffering, and how it attempts to establish a brighter label for itself. By applying Foucault’s concept of heterotopia and bringing these efforts of identifying and re-identifying a place against the background of tourism, the thesis contributes to dark tourism studies

1.2 Research question

When it comes to Fukushima being discussed from a tourism perspective, we find conflicting identities on display catering to different visitors. this leads to the question sentence: *What is the*

*difference between traditional forms of tourism to Fukushima and dark tourism to Fukushima?
How does this affect the place Fukushima? Can both images be reconciled?*

To be able to answer the research questions we need some clarifying sub question:

1. What is Fukushima's place within the context of dark tourism studies?
2. How is the tourism image of Fukushima conceptualised on main Japanese tourism websites?
3. How is the dark tourism image of Fukushima conceptualized on dark tour websites?
4. How do both types of tourism websites about Fukushima contribute into rendering Fukushima into a heterotopia?

To answer these questions, the thesis draws on the analysis of five English-language Japanese tourism websites catering to foreign tourists to find out how they present Fukushima as a desirable traditional and dark tourism destination. For the analysis of Fukushima's 'dark' identity, the thesis furthermore draws on English-language online articles and images from *National Geographic*, an influential source when searching for information about a possible vacation destination for many people, and which focused on the Fukushima disaster. By comparing the findings of those six sources, processes of identity making of Fukushima will be laid out and analysed.

1.3 Disposition

In the introduction chapter the aim of the thesis is presented together with the research questions that will be answered subsequently. The methodology used for the thesis is presented in chapter 2. This thesis has adopted digital methods, specifically the use of web crawlers and visual content analysis of websites to answer the thesis questions. Chapter 2 also discusses the limits, reliability and validity of the thesis. Chapter 3 reviews the literature of the dark tourism field and contextualises Fukushima within the history of dark tourism, and nuclear tourism and dark tourism in Japan. Chapter 4 discusses heterotopia, the theoretical framework used to analyse Fukushima in a tourism perspective. In chapter 5 the analysis of the different websites is presented. Conclusions are presented in chapter 6.

2. Methodology

For this thesis, I relied on websites, magazines and, literature about tourism and Fukushima as primary sources for my thesis. Digital methods are used to collect data for this thesis. Snee et al (2016) define digital methods as ‘the use of online and digital technologies to collect and analyse research data’ (1). Digital methods are suited for research of objects that are natively digital, meaning objects that only exist on the web, like websites (Rose 2016:289). *National Geographic* is not digitally native, the ordinary magazine is still the main platform and there are traditional forms of tourism promotion for Fukushima, like flyers and tourism brochures. However, it makes sense to focus on the websites, as internet and websites have become the primary tool for tourism promotion today. Not only private companies but also government controlled National Tourism Organizations (NTO’s) have realised how important a well-designed website is when consumers are seeking information about a destination (Bowen & Clarke 2009:115-116; Horng & Tsai 2010:75). In addition, a website is better for promoting a destination. Websites are cheaper to maintain and better at reaching potential visitors than traditional forms of tourism promotion are. A well-run website is also accessible 24/7 (Horng & Tsai 2010:76).

2.1 Website content analysis

A qualitative study of websites portraying Fukushima was done for this thesis. As will be presented shortly, *National Geographic* will be one such site together with three websites focusing on promoting traditional tourism in Japan and two websites arranging “dark” tours to Fukushima Daiichi. The criteria for choosing the tourism websites was that they would be Japanese and only focus on Japan as a place to visit and that they would be in English. There are other websites that rank high in search results when searching for information about travelling to Japan. Sites like TripAdvisor and Lonely planet are common but not used here since Japan is not their exclusive destination.

2.1.1 Websites

The traditional tourism websites chosen are as follows: Fukushima guide, Japan guide and Japan's National Tourism Organizations (JNTO). The three tourism websites present

different national, regional and local perspective on tourism to Fukushima. They are also some of the first websites one comes across when searching for information about travelling to Japan or Fukushima. *National Geographic* has a more neutral perspective when it comes to Fukushima. Real Fukushima and Voyaging represents the websites that conceptualise dark tourism to Fukushima.

2.1.2 Tourism websites

Fukushima guide

This is the tourism site for Fukushima city.² Fukushima guide is a local government site focusing on the city of Fukushima. As such it does share some information with other governmental websites but limits itself to the city and the immediate surrounding area. Fukushima guide provides detailed information about local attractions and events around Fukushima city.

Japan's National Tourism Organization

JNTO³ is the website of Japan's National Tourism Organization. JNTO was created in 1964.⁴ JNTO's website is the most important of Japan's official tourism websites. It represents both Japan and specific regions of Japan. Some prefectures have their own official tourism portals, but Fukushima has not, neither does it have an official reconstruction plan for its tourism sector. The regional government in Fukushima has opted to cooperate with JNTO to change its negative image (Nguyen & Imamura 2017:53). Therefore, JNTO's website represents both a national and regional view on Fukushima tourism.

Japan guide

Japan guide⁵ is one of the biggest non-government websites for tourism in Japan. It was originally created in Vancouver but moved to Japan in 2003.⁶ Japan guide has a special section for Fukushima prefecture⁷ as well as the for the city of Fukushima.⁸ In addition to this, Japan

² <https://fukushima-guide.jp> [16-03-2018]

³ <https://www.jnto.go.jp/eng/> [15-03-2018]

⁴ <https://www.jnto.go.jp/eng/about/index.html>

⁵ <https://www.japan-guide.com/> [16-03-2018]

⁶ <https://www.japan-guide.com/blog/schauwecker/> [16-03-2018]

⁷ <https://www.japan-guide.com/list/e1208.html> [16-03-2018]

guide has a special section for the Tohoku tourism recovery process blog that, for now, has been updated every six months since 3/11 2011.⁹ That means that Japan guide takes an interest in issues that have befallen areas in Tohoku.

2.1.3 *National Geographic*

There are many general tourism sites such as TripAdvisor, Lonely Planet, however, for the purpose of this paper I chose to analyse *National Geographic*.¹⁰ *National Geographic* is not a tourism website or magazine in the traditional sense, but it can be seen as a media for travel. *National Geographic* with its yellow cover and well-researched content has become one of the most well-known magazines for information about places around the world. Across all its US-based platforms, *National Geographic* reaches approximately 39 million viewers (Statista 2018).

National Geographic shapes perceptions of destinations and places (Bowen & Clarke 2009:119; Chen et al. 2014:858-859; Rose 2016:99). The wide geographical coverage of *National Geographic's* articles means it is less influenced by how specific destinations want to market themselves (Chen et al. 2014:859).

National Geographic presents an important and influential outside view of Fukushima as a tourism destination. In comparison with the induced image a tourism website promotes, *National Geographic* portrays a more organic image, which means that it can be perceived as more credible for tourists since it is unaffected by tourism promotion (Bowen & Clarke 2009:112; Chen et al. 2014:858).

2.1.4 Dark tours sites

Two websites that arrange “dark” tours to Fukushima Daiichi were selected. Tours to more controversial and unsafe dark sites often have problems regarding legality and authorisation from state authorities. The legality problem makes it difficult to find dark tours promoted openly. Word of mouth seems to be common for promotion in these cases (Yankovska & Hannam 2014:933). It makes it more difficult to find dark tourism sites compared to traditional tourism sites. While media reports on private tours arranged to the evacuated areas of Fukushima can be

⁸ <https://www.japan-guide.com/e/e7725.html> [16-03-2018]

⁹ <https://www.japan-guide.com/blog/recovery/> [16-03-2018]

¹⁰ <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/> [08-03-2018]

found on different online news outlets, such as *The Telegraph*¹¹, *Daily Mail*¹² and *International Business Times*.¹³ There are also cases of volunteers and official local tour guides arranging tours (Hasegawa 2013; Hutchinson 2014; Leadbeater 2016). Four websites were found arranging tours to the disaster zones in Fukushima: Real Fukushima, Voyagin, Japan Wonder Travel¹⁴ and GEEF.¹⁵ Real Fukushima and Voyagin were selected since they were the clearest websites.

Real Fukushima

Real Fukushima¹⁶ makes quite a statement with its name but works with the regional government of Fukushima. Real Fukushima arranges custom made tours as well as educational tours for students and researchers that researches the accidents and its social impacts in Japan. Real Fukushima only focuses on Fukushima Daiichi and surrounding the disaster zone, it is arguably a dark tourism website. Real Fukushima seems to be a recently created site with most of its dated content starting at the end of 2017.¹⁷ The site focuses on the educational aspects of what can be learned from the Fukushima Daiichi disaster, promising to provide a sobering experience for visitors.

Voyagin

Voyagin¹⁸ does not only focus on Japan as a destination, neither is Voyagin a fully “dark tourism website”. While the “Japan focus” was important for the traditional websites, some leniency was allowed for websites of dark tours since they are less common to find. Voyagin is a Japanese

¹¹ www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/japan/10251717/Japans-tsunami-hit-Fukushima-nuclear-plant-to-become-tourist-attraction.html [13-04-2018]

¹² http://www.dailymail.co.uk/travel/travel_news/article-2860422/Japan-s-latest-tourist-attraction-Locals-offer-sightseeing-trips-Fukushima-amid-claims-contamination-levels-low-whistle-stop-visit.html [13-04-2018]

¹³ <http://www.ibtimes.com/japans-crippled-fukushima-nuclear-plant-could-become-tourist-attraction-23-years-1391403> [13-04-2018]

¹⁴ <https://japanwondertravel.com/products/fukushima-disaster-area-day-tour-from-tokyo-within-20-km-of-fukushima-nuclear-power-plant> [28-03-2018]

¹⁵ <http://geef.a.la9.jp/index.html> [28-03-2018]

¹⁶ www.real-fukushima.com [29-03-2018]

¹⁷ http://real-fukushima.com/projects/ukedo_es/ [29-03-2018]

¹⁸

www.govoyagin.com/activities/japan-fukushima-see-fukushima-daiichi-power-plant-with-your-own-eyes/3365

company though. It is possible to buy a tour to Fukushima Daiichi on the Voyagin website, but the website offers other tours in Fukushima prefecture as well.¹⁹

2.2 Analysing websites

All of the websites chosen for the study, to varying degrees, follows Krug's "Don't make me think" (2014) framework for how a successful website should be designed. One of the most crucial points is that users do not read websites for information, they skim websites. Focusing on keywords and phrases is quicker and helps omit information that is unneeded. This is typical when searching for information outside the web as well (22-23). Because of this the "billboard design" is getting more common for websites today. Typically, it advocates clear visual hierarchies, simple words and phrases that lead to specific areas like "Activities", "Transport", "Eat/Food, etc. and a visual background, preferably a picture (29-38). As such the tourism and dark tours websites can be seen as effective in providing the information that a potential visitor would like to find when it comes to visiting Fukushima. *National Geographic* has a very similar design to the tourism websites.

Websites do not exist by themselves on the web. Websites are connected by hyperlinks which can be examined by web crawlers to place, and visualize, websites within a network and space on the web (Rogers 2013:5). Web crawlers are good tools to use when studying websites since it automates the examination of websites by retrieving all pages on a website through following internal hyperlinks or external hyperlinks to other websites (Ackland 2013:87). Two different web crawlers were used to analyse the websites. The Issue crawler²⁰ developed by Rogers was used to analyse hyperlinks between the chosen websites. The Issue crawler is used to examine how web pages network with each other through hyperlinks by measuring link strength and depth. Hyperlinks not only show the value of a website and how it ranks on the web but also shows 'politics of association' (Rogers 2013:5). 'Politics of association' refers to websites that exist in an "Issue network", the websites share a common issue like environmental issues or similar topics. Issue networks can be representations of public debate or arguments on the web (Ackland 2013:83).

¹⁹ https://www.govoyagin.com/things_to_do/japan/fukushima [29-03-2018]

²⁰ <https://www.issuecrawler.net/index.php> [26-02-2018]

The Issue crawler visualizes Issue networks and works by starting with a “seed” of URLs (For example websites that share an issue); it has three approaches for examining hyperlinks. First, co-link analysis only includes websites that receive two links from the original seed websites. In addition, seed sites that do not receive links from at least two other seed sites are excluded from the final issue network. This approach is useful to see if the seed sites are part of a larger network that shares an issue. As an example: this approach would show if regional NGOs concerned about humans rights link to the UN, Human Rights Watch etc. The absence of links can show (among other things) that the regional NGOs are suppressed by regional authorities from connecting to global initiatives for human rights (Rogers 2013:5-6).

Second, the Snowball-analysis approach works like snowball sampling. Snowball-analysis focuses on out-links (one link is enough) from the seed sites and then crawls the found sites in up to three separations from the seed sites (Ackland 2013:87-89). This is a way to find a large number of associated sites to the original seed, but it can be time-consuming. Finally, the last approach is “Inter-actor analysis” which visualizes a network only among the seed sites, if it exists, thus showing if the seed sites share a common issue (*ibid*). For this thesis, the Issue crawler is used to visualize the larger network tourism sites that share Fukushima as an issue are a part of. Links to environmental sites, as an example, can indicate that environmental issues are a problem for tourism to Fukushima.

The TouchGraph crawler²¹ was used to find more sites associated with the original three tourism sites and *National Geographic*. Whereas the Issue crawler is static – one starts the crawl and waits until it is done – the TouchGraph is more exploratory. Starting from one single seed URL, which shows the closest related sites, the researcher can then click the related sites to find their related sites and so on. The results are based on keywords and instances of co-linking, meaning that two websites that link through a third website are deemed to be connected. This creates an aggregated non-objective view, which means that the researcher decides how large the final visualized network is, of how actors relate to each other in a network. It is a useful tool for understanding how websites cluster together around different issues and where they possibly link, if at all (Hine 2015:142-144). TouchGraph is used in this thesis to explore the network around themes like “Fukushima tourism”, “Fukushima dark tours” etc. TouchGraph shows which actors are most active around these topics and locate more websites that are of interest for

²¹ <http://www.touchgraph.com/navigator> [26-02-2018]

the analysis. TouchGraph in this sense is used for a controlled snowball sampling. Issue crawler fills this purpose too but can potentially generate too large results that are difficult to examine.

2.3 Visual analysis of website pictures

The use of pictures on the selected websites is important in order to analyse how Fukushima is conceptualized in different tourism contexts. Pictures are a primary tool on websites to portray and convey a feeling about an event, place or destination. The use of pictures is essential in tourism promotion and usually manages to attract and motivates visitors far better than only written texts can do (Bowen & Clarke 2009:117-118; Horng & Tsai 2010:82; Chung et al. 2015:135). Therefore, understanding how images are used to promote Fukushima is essential.

The kinds of pictures used vary between the official websites, *National Geographic* and websites focusing on dark tourism to Fukushima. The denotation of a picture is the primary or literal meaning of a picture in relation to a target audience (Noble & Bestley 2016:70). A picture of a sushi plate, for example, is a picture of traditional food in Japan, but on a tourism website, it has a more specific role of attracting visitors to come and experience the food culture of Japan and acts as a symbol for Japan (Horng & Tsai 2010:79).

While visual material can cover entire study projects themselves, they also work well as complements to other forms of research material like text or content analysis to make illustrations better (Fors & Bäckström 2015:14-15). It is important to understand what social practices are behind the creation of certain images (*ibid*; Rose 2016). In this thesis, pictures on tourism websites will be analysed in their role to attract visitors, a method that is used to study tourism advertisement (Bolan & Williams 2008:383). *National Geographic*'s pictures, while not created for the purpose of tourism promotion, are a very influential way to cater to potential tourists. In this thesis, the pictures presented on different websites are used to analyze what kind of perceptions different websites want to convey towards visitors to Fukushima.

2.4 Qualitative content analysis of websites

Websites are regarded as virtual documents which makes them eligible for quantitative and qualitative content analysis, but it is still important to be critical of the purposes of why a website has been constructed (Bryman 2016:556-557). It is important to consider whether a website is

governmental, private or commercial when doing research, not just for a content analysis. A qualitative content analysis search and discover underlying themes of the content being researched *ibid*:563; Rose 2016:87). “Word clouds” were used for this thesis content analysis. The “WordClouds²²” generator was used since it is free to use and offers the ability to generate clouds without frequently-occurring stop words like: and, or, in etc. WordClouds also offer post generating options to change the layout and design of the generated cloud. Word clouds were used for a qualitative content analysis because it is a straightforward way to visualize themes on websites. A word cloud was not possible to generate for Japan guide despite trying different browsers and computers. WordClouds’ FAQ nor forum could give an answer or solution to this problem.²³ For this thesis the generated word clouds are used to present general themes on websites, the content they focus on when promoting Fukushima, and what issues they are concerned with. Although tables could be used instead to show the exact number of word occurrence, the visualization aspect of word occurrence in a cloud seemed to be more appropriate for this thesis. Word clouds show themes better by making keywords larger than less occurring words, tables don’t provide this immediate visualization of important themes.

2.5 Limitations

Tourism websites for the study based on a google search were selected. The most common search engine to use today is Google, google search results can be influenced by previously done searches. I have therefore involuntarily “co-authored” the search results by what Rogers calls the inculpable or personalization of search engines (2013:9). Earlier searches I’ve done influence the later search results I receive. Therefore, the websites I gather from the google search might not be considered the most accurate information. The searches can be influenced or biased by social notions that surround subjects like Fukushima in different cultural perspectives. To remedy this the browsers used were purged, and the searches remade. In addition, the same searches were made at different school computers as well as my personal computer. With smaller variations, the same websites were among the first ones to show up, JNTO and Japan guide always showed up. Rogers also claims that how we query a search engine is not the only thing deciding the ranking or hierarchy of the results/sources received. Many aspects determine the order of the

²² <https://www.wordclouds.com/> [24-04-2018]

²³ <https://www.wordclouds.com/faq/> [24-04-2018]

results and sources received during a search query and these results also carry social significance, they change over time with falling or rising interest in a subject. This also changes between distinct local domains for search engines (Rogers 2013:3-6). The same search can, therefore, yield different results if another local domain of Google is used.

2.6 Reliability & Validity

Reliability

Reliability refers to what degree it is possible to replicate a study. Reliability is difficult to achieve in qualitative research (Bryman 2016:383). A similar research done with the same tools would present comparable results. Since the thesis adopts a qualitative study analysis of web pages, however, the interpretation of the results would differ from mine. Based on previous knowledge, background and research questions, other researchers can come to different conclusions while using the same methodology that is applied here.

Validity

According to Bryman internal validity, the connection between research methods and results, and external validity which refers to the generalization of results is important to consider (*ibid*:384). Relying on websites is valid for examining different perceptions and notions about destinations. Most promotion for tourism takes place on websites today, both governmental and private (see for example Bowen & Clarke 2009 and Horng & Tsai 2010). The findings of this study cannot be generalized outside a dark tourism setting and are also difficult to compare with other dark tourism sites. Each dark tourism site is unique, figures in different cultural contexts and have a wide range of meanings (personal, political, cultural etc.). Even within the dark tourism field, nuclear accidents make sites like Fukushima different from other dark sites.

2.7 Ethical considerations

My research would be what Ackland calls an unobtrusive online research, adopting a web content analysis for gathering data (2013:46-47). With the development of Web 2.0 and social media and other forms of obtrusive/unobtrusive digital approaches, there are ethical discussions emerging regarding what should be considered private and public in digital methods. In addition,

developing guidelines for informed consent, withdrawal & debrief procedures and secure participants confidentiality needs to be considered mostly but not only for doing research with and about social media (Hewson 2016:219).

My primary concern is what is considered private and what is considered public information. In offline research, the distinction between what is considered private or public is more defined. The difference between private and public is less clear in online research, this is because aspects of communication online are done in public spheres/spaces but with a private intention (Ackland 2013:45). *National Geographic* and tourism websites can be considered public if there is no password protected content used. Comments on websites or online news articles can be private even if they are expressed in a public forum. Therefore, I was careful about using comments from online news articles or “reviews” because they can voice strong sentiments that originally were not considered public outside of the comment section. In online settings, informed consent is not always necessary, but anonymity/confidentiality always is (*ibid*:44). Using crawlers have considerations as well. The way crawlers work and how they are configured before a crawl can make them consume bandwidth from the host of the crawler service and the sites being crawled. This can potentially be an issue in areas with lacking sources for maintaining a website (like developing countries) and for smaller actors (*ibid*:90). While considered unobtrusive, web crawlers can still act in an obtrusive way by draining bandwidth for websites. Web crawlers, therefore, need to be used responsibly.

3.Literature review

This chapter will present some of the major works and themes within the dark tourism field and dark tourism research in Japan, focusing on Fukushima, Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

3.1 Dark tourism

Dark tourism is considered to be the act of traveling to sites with dark heritages associated with death, disasters or suffering (Stone 2011:319; Yankovska & Hannam 2014:931). Dark tourism is a form of tourism that makes the visitor feel *uneasy* about the visit and experience of the site (Sharpley & Stone 2009a:59 emphasis added). Dark tourism gets a lot of attention within academic circles, both within Tourism studies but also in other fields of study such as cultural

and heritage studies which, today, turns dark tourism into an interdisciplinary field (Hooper & Lennon 2017:5). Dark tourism is also gaining attention outside of academic writing, to a large degree because the term is sensationalistic and “eye-catching” and popular to use in mass and popular media (Lennon & Foley 2000:5-6; Sharpley & Stone 2009a:7; Kang et al 2012). The field was introduced two decades ago (Hooper & Lennon 2017:5) and was dominated by a few authors for nearly a decade, authors like Stone, Sharpley, Lennon, Foley and, Seaton are some of the most quoted names within dark tourism. The field today has many names such as dark tourism, grief tourism, thana-tourism, morbid tourism, macabre tourism, usually it is the preference of specific authors that decides what name is used. It is also highly debated among scholars what a proper term should be but “dark tourism” is today the most common term to use (Kang et al. 2012:257).

3.1.1 Early dark tourism publications

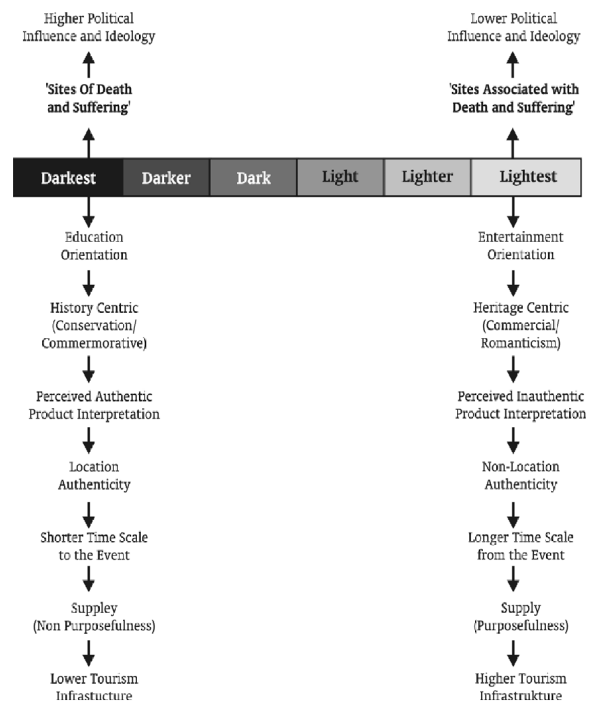
Lennon and Foley introduced the term “dark tourism” in 1996 and subsequently initiated the dark tourism field in 2000 with their book *Dark Tourism: The Attraction of Death and Disaster*, this brought dark tourism into broader attention and popularized the field among scholars and non-scholars (Stone & Sharpley 2008:576). Earlier, Rojek focused on what he named ‘black spot tourism’ (Sharpley and Stone 2009:13; Yankovska & Hannam 2014:931) and contemporary with Lennon and Foley are Blooms “morbid tourism” (2000) and Seaton’s ‘thana-tourism’ (1996). Lennon and Foley’s book was controversial when released since the book presented an alternative reality when it came to tourism. Dark tourism was a form of tourism not in line with the hedonistic notion of tourism. Dark tourism was seen as the opposite of hedonism with travelers showing interests in macabre or morbid experiences. Early studies of dark tourism focused on the sites and the commercialization of death and suffering for tourists (Sharpley & Stone 2009a:59).

Being the first major publication in the field, Lennon and Foley have been criticized while the field has progressed. Some of the critiques have been that their book is too descriptive and mainly focuses on the supply side of dark tourism. The focus lies primarily in the sites themselves and the interpretation and narratives of those sites. Lennon and Foley’s analysis does not specify on the demand side of dark tourism, *why* tourists are motivated to visit these dark sites (Sharpley & Stone 2009a; Skinner 2012:3-4). Yet, Lennon and Foley laid down major

foundations that were important for an understanding and analysis of dark tourism. For them and later authors, global communication media plays a significant role in creating interest in and awareness about dark sites and events. Global media also lets us relive and remember these sites repeatedly and endlessly (Lennon & Foley 2000:11; Stone 2006:150; Yankovska & Hannam 2014:936; Sho 2017:278). Lennon and Foley also state that dark tourism sites represent anxiety around the project of modernity, and can be linked, for example to the industrialization of killing in modern wars and the Holocaust (2000:11). Lastly, Lennon and Foley also claim that the sites' political or educational meaning can be blurred or distorted since the sites are being commodified and sold as products to tourists, thus the site of Kennedy's assassination has not only touristic value but is also of political significance, for example (*ibid*:11; Stone 2006:149).

An important aspect for Lennon and Foley is also the timeframe. Dark tourism is a contemporary modern form of tourism, which means that the event a dark tourism site is based upon must have taken place in the living memory. If enough years pass, then identity and memory of a dark tourism site become historic and ceases to be dark (2000:11-12). Other authors disagree with this analysis. Seaton (1996), for example, argues that the concept of dark tourism (Seaton prefers the term thana-tourism) has been a part of human travelling since the middle ages and that people always travelled to mediate on death (Stone & Shapley 2008:578; Skinner 2012:4). Seaton's position is to try to understand dark tourism from a larger social perception on how to deal with death in various societies. Seaton places thana-tourism under a subfield of social science: Thanatology (Skinner 2012:4).

However, many dark tourism scholars would agree that Lennon and Foley's chronological distance is important for how "dark" a site would be. The closer in time after a disaster, the fresher is the horror and macabre experience of a dark site (Stone 2006:149, Stone and Sharpley 2008:578-579). While early studies



(Source: Sharpley and Stone 2009:21, Original from Stone 2006:151)

primarily state if a site would be a dark tourism site and why. More recent works focus on how dark tourism sites are of different “shades of darkness”. A major addition to the field has been Stone’s (2006) ‘Dark tourism Spectrum’ which locates different sites and attractions within a spectrum of lightest to darkest (or shades of darkness) with different attributes of “darkness” being connected to where on the spectrum a specific site or attraction is. Stone draws inspiration from Strange and Kempas’ (2003) interpretation of how narratives at famous prisons (Alcatraz and Robben Island) differ and are handled in different ways by tour guides. Strange and Kempa finds that Robben Island is interpreted as a darker “shade” than Alcatraz. Thinking in different shades in dark tourism takes a step away from the static interpretation of dark tourism sites that were common in earlier works. Stone’s spectrum would make it possible to identify motivations of visitors to dark tourism places, which at the time was an unexplored area in dark tourism studies. (Stone 2006:151; Sharpley & Stone 2009a:21).

The dark tourism field got another major publication in 2009 with Sharpley and Stones: *The darker side of travel: the theory and practice of dark tourism*. The book addresses some of the key issues that have been left unanswered since Lennon and Foleys first contribution and the successive additions to the field since 2000. The main focus of *The darker side of travel* lies in tackling the weak theoretical frameworks that surrounded the field. Moreover, Sharpley and Stone evaluate ethical and interpretation issues, both for visitors and suppliers, that faced dark tourism sites. They also deal with the key question that Lennon and Foley asked earlier but did not answer in their primary work namely what is the “*attraction of death and disaster*” (249 emphasis added) and find that there is a rise in both demand and supply which justifies the study of dark tourism. Sharpley and Stone conclude that in their endeavour to address some of the questions, more questions emerged that need to be answered to better understand dark tourism. Understanding what experiences visitors have at dark tourism sites is such a question (2009).

3.1.2 2010 - Onwards

Skinner's contribution to the dark tourism field addresses some of the questions about motivations and experiences for the traveler at dark tourism sites. Skinners publication is a collection of ethnographic case studies, thus approaching the dark tourism field more personally

than previous studies (Skinner 2012). Other authors also argue that this approach is important for a better understanding and theorization of the dark tourism field (e.g. Ashworth & Isaac 2015).

White and Frew (2013) furthermore add to the field by focusing on a previously unaddressed area. Their focus is dark tourism and place identity issues (1). From the perspective of visitor motivation, destination management, and place interpretation they address what happens when the fields of dark tourism and place identity meet. Studies in tourism have shown that different heritage attractions are important for creating a national identity. White and Frew try to apply the importance of dark heritage sites for national identity creation as well (2).

One of the most recent additions to the field is Hooper and Lennon's "*Dark Tourism - Practices and interpretations*". Hooper and Lennon focus on how dark tourism sites are managed but also how dark tourism sites are perceived by visitors and in society. The book is multi and interdisciplinary with experts from various fields contributing to the chapters. Many of the case studies are done by interviews or questionnaires and consider both the motivations of visitors but also the sites themselves as important for the overall understanding of dark tourism (Hooper & Lennon 2017:4-5). Finally, a recent change is an increase of dark tourism literature focusing on sites outside of US and Europe. Earlier, there has been a narrow focus on western sites but there are contemporary studies focusing on sites outside a western geographical context. Before moving on it is worth mentioning that dark tourism largely sounds controversial, ghoulish in its darkest forms and is considered a 'touristification' of places associated with death and suffering. But dark tourism can be a way of treating collective trauma (see for example Nagle or Egan in Skinner 2012) or a way for victims (as tour guides) of various disasters to cope and talk about their suffering (See for example Wu et al 2013; Yankovska & Hannam 2014; Thunbridge & Ashworth 2017)

3.2 Dark tourism and Fukushima

When I started this thesis, it was difficult to find literature about dark tourism written by Japanese scholars and, moreover, those that were translated into English. Until now there is not yet many academic papers written about Fukushima from a dark tourism perspective, at least translated from Japanese to English. The papers are few and the biggest interest has so far been from the small group of scholars, philosophers and, writers that were allowed by the Japanese Government to turn Fukushima into a tourism village. These plans have been heavily criticized

and for now, are not further pursued (Justice 2016). The same group of scholars and philosophers are also responsible to arrange trips to Chernobyl for Japanese travelers. (Ryall 2013; Sho 2017:280-281)

Sho has addressed Fukushima and dark tourism but her chapter is more a response to the project group that wanted to turn Fukushima into a tourism village. Her article adds little to the field but points out how controversial these sites can be, and she has in previous studies argued about the “neocolonial power” Tokyo has used to put nuclear power plants in rural areas in Japan, like Tohoku, to keep the risk of accidents away from Tokyo. Her argument is that this has put these rural areas at risk on the behalf of the economic and political centers of Japan. Because of this, Fukushima the power plant was controversial even before the meltdown(s) occurred (Sho 2017:276; Bricker 2014).

According to Hara, the lack of written material on Fukushima and dark tourism from Japanese academia can be explained with little interest in Tourism studies in Japan, with few publications each year and even fewer translations into English (2014:5-11). Many scholars within dark tourism usually also describe dark tourism as a primarily western phenomenon (e.g. Lennon & Foley 2000, Stone & Sharpley 2009) with the center for dark tourism studies in the U.K meaning that most of the academic texts come from a western scholarly tradition (Sharpley & Stone 2009:6). Dark tourism is not unknown in Asian settings but the main focus for a long time has been on dark sites in Europe and the US (Yoshida et al. 2016:333). When dark tourism is applied in a Japanese setting it is usually done so with the focus on Hiroshima and Nagasaki because of their Dark heritage from the dropping of the atomic bombs at the end of ww2.

3.3 Hiroshima’s and Nagasaki’s nuclear past

Nagasaki and Hiroshima are the only two cities that have experienced the intended destructive power of nuclear power. This history is today a distinct part of both cities identities and in many ways, they have been promoted as such. Post ww2 Hiroshima and Nagasaki have become important places for commemorating the end of ww2 and both cities, although Hiroshima to a larger extent, have been associated with anti-nuclear movements (Wu et al.2013:547). Sites like Hiroshima and Nagasaki that arguably have dark pasts and heritages suitable for dark tourism often face difficulties when it comes to objective accounts and interpretation. This has been part

of dark tourism studies since Lennon and Foley introduced the field. The interpretations become political and ideological and lead to controversy and revisionism (Lennon and Foley 2000: 103-104). This is also the case with Hiroshima and Nagasaki. While Japan was largely an aggressor during the war and the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are by some seen as a measure to end the war in Asia, it is mostly understood to be a gross violation of human values.

According to Saaler, Hiroshima is today seen as a symbol for Japan's pacifist policy after the war and opposes any claims that Japan's role in the Pacific was justifiable (2014:145). Mayors from Hiroshima (and also Nagasaki) have several times spoken out against the arms race between Russia and the US or the global increase of nuclear weapons. These statements are considered to give a voice for the *Hibakusha*²⁴ (McCurry 2015; Kyodo 2017; Germanos 2017). UNESCO has also designated Hiroshima's A-bomb zone as a world heritage site and a global symbol for peace (Saaler 2014:145). Interestingly, tourism has had a key role to play in both rebuilding and creating the memories of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

3.4 Tourism and dark tourism in Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and other places

Hiroshima and Nagasaki are the two primary or most well-known examples of dark tourism sites in Japan and have received recent scholarly attention. Hiroshima is the biggest international tourist destination in the Chugoku region in Japan (Wu et al. 2013:546). The peace museum in Hiroshima is attracting more than 1 million visitors each year and Hiroshima and Nagasaki are considered “must visit destination” when promoting Japan (Schäfer 2016:351; Yoshida et al. 2016:334).

One of the most prominent features of visiting Hiroshima or Nagasaki is the presence of Hibakusha, the “living memories” of the bombings. The Hibakusha have been an important part of telling the history of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but now, 73 years after the bombing, the numbers of Hibakusha are dwindling and soon there will be a new host community that will manage the memories and heritage of the bombs. This is what Wu et al (2013) focus on in their study of Hiroshima. They present an interesting view and contribution to the dark tourism field since they take a step away from the touristic side of dark tourism and focus on the local people

²⁴ The Hibakusha is the survivors of the atomic blasts of Nagasaki and Hiroshima. They were directly exposed to the radiation from the bombs but also affects the children of those exposed. Today they are a decreasing (because of age) social class in Japan that have been cared for by the government but usually faced discrimination in the Japanese society since they are seen as “unclean by radiation”. (See Ikeda:163 in Gill et al. 2013)

in Hiroshima. Most dark tourism studies focus on the tourists' experience on the site or the tourism industry's management of dark tourism sites, but little attention has been given to host communities of dark tourism and dark heritage. Wu et al. contribution to the field is the understanding of how host communities rebrand and manage sites with a dark heritage, this is a process that occurs for narratives of dark heritages when the political or social context of a site changes with time (Sharpley 2009:163). It means that the way the memory of the bombings is transferred will change since the Hibakusha will perish of natural causes. In the Hibakushas place will be the local community in Hiroshima, those that did not experience the bomb but now live with the memory of the bomb. The local people must deal with this dark heritage in some way and most likely it will be a form of rebranding the image of Hiroshima into something "lighter, more fun" (Wu et al. 2013:554). Dark tourism is not necessarily something that local people want. Dark tourism can be a disturbance in the locals daily life, especially if they themselves were not part the event that created the interest for dark tourism (*ibid*:548; Hooper & Lennon 2017:9).

The connection with dark tourism for local people becomes difficult because tourism has played an important role in creating the memory around Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Schäfer argues for the important role tourism had in the overall creation of Japan's atomic bomb memory. Officials in Hiroshima created larger institutions like the A-dome and park as spaces for commemorating the bombing and suffering after the war ended. The creation of commemorating institutions was, officially, to care for the feeling of loss and the need for peace among people in Hiroshima.²⁵ In addition, the memorials of the bombings were an unplanned but worthwhile source of income for Hiroshima for the purpose of reconstructing and tourism development. Organizing trips for international tourists to the bomb ruins became city policy already in 1948 for Hiroshima (Schäfer 2016:354). Schäfer further discusses how the prospect of tourism in Hiroshima became highly controversial at times. Newspapers have since 1948 directed critique against the city for turning their suffering into a tourism product. The critique has usually focused on the moral and ethical dilemmas of commodifying the bomb ruins for the sake of tourist development. The tourist development has been seen as the opposite of the memorial service the A-bomb dome and peace park was supposed to represent, at times forcing the Mayors

²⁵ This caused anger among some groups, for example, Koreans who saw that Korean slaves who were also killed in Hiroshima were not represented in the memorial. Affected Koreans are still fighting for recognition today. See for example Choe 2016

of Hiroshima -and also Nagasaki- to redirect focus towards the anti-nuclear movement and try to keep the tourism at arm's length (Schäfer 2016:358-360).

Hiroshima and Nagasaki embraced and commemorated their dark heritage from the bombs but did so differently, resulting in Nagasaki being less “tied” to the memory of the bombings. Yoshida et al. describe in their article how there is a darker aspect to Hiroshima’s identity. More people died in Hiroshima and Hiroshima was struck before Nagasaki, resulting in Hiroshima being more in the spotlight of the a-bomb memory even today.

Hiroshima’s memorials are concentrated around the “ground zero” of the bomb, with the iconic A-bomb dome in the middle. In comparison, Nagasaki's memorials are spread out throughout the city and thus becomes less concentrated and mixed with other aspects of Nagasaki's identity. Hiroshima was also considered more “Japanese” than Nagasaki. Nagasaki was before the bombs considered to be more international, a port out to the rest of the world, while Hiroshima was considered a classical and traditional city of Japan. The destruction of Hiroshima was therefore seen as a stronger blow against Japan's national identity. (Yoshida et al. 2016).

In addition to Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and Fukushima there are other places in Japan that could be considered dark tourism sites. One example is the Aokigahara forest, ‘the suicide forest’ close to Mount Fuji. Aokigahara was recently in the media spotlight after a controversial visit by the ‘YouTube star’ Logan Paul. However, Aokigahara has had the ‘suicide’ moniker for decades. Today there are signs in the forest entrance reminding visitors that life is a precious gift and that it is better to reach out for help than suffer alone (Nedelman 2018). In this sense, Aokigahara can be seen as a very dark form of tourism. Both because people travel there to end their lives but also because of people traveling to Aokigahara for the sake of visiting a place where hundreds of people have committed suicide. So far there seems to be little academic interest about Aokigahara from a dark tourism perspective.²⁶

This thesis is situated within research concerning place identity (White and Frew 2013) of dark tourism. It is not the first academic work that focuses on Fukushima in dark tourism, as Sho has given a critical response to Fukushima (Daiichi) as a dark tourism village. This research

²⁶ There seems to be a growing interest in media for suicide tourism as an arranged form of “assisted suicide” but that is not adaptable for Aokigahara. See <https://www.medicaldaily.com/assisted-suicide-tourism-right-die-387577> or <https://edition.cnn.com/2014/08/20/health/suicide-tourism-switzerland/index.html>

is the first work that focuses on the controversies around the name Fukushima and that highlights how tourism increases stigmatization. Fukushima is special, just not in tourism, being one of only two well-known places for serious nuclear plant disasters, the other being Chernobyl.

4. Theoretical framework

This thesis uses an adapted version of Foucault's framework of 'Heterotopia' to understand the identity of Fukushima Daiichi. Understanding a dark tourism site as a place of "otherness", a place that represents dystopia, has first been done by Stone to interpret Chernobyl as a place that is not aligned with the social order and time to the rest of the world. Chernobyl is: 'a ritual space that exists outside of time' (Stone 2013:80). In this sense, Chernobyl has been identified as a place that is unaffected by what is going on in the rest of the world, time is irrelevant at Chernobyl and the surrounding 'dead zone'. But Chernobyl, seen as a heterotopia, does affect the rest of the world and stands as a reminder of the utopian (but failed) ideals of the Soviet Union but also nuclear technology generally. Foucault passed away before the Chernobyl disaster and could never comment on Chernobyl being conceptualized as a heterotopia place. However, while the concept of heterotopia can be difficult to employ, it does offer a way to interpret and read 'different spatial and cultural constellations' (*ibid*:82). The heterotopia framework is therefore used to analyse Fukushima in a dark tourism setting.

4.1 Heterotopias

Foucault introduced the term 'Heterotopia' in a lecture about architecture in 1967. Although it was a short mentioning, the concept of heterotopia has been widely applied in studying subjects regarding architecture to the Internet (Handlykken 2011; Sarapina 2016). However, due to its nature as a lecture note, the concept of heterotopia and its principles always find themselves at the whims of the researcher who applies them (Stone 2013:81,85). In the lecture, Foucault pointed out that our perception of spaces is heavily influenced by relations between different sites. Some spaces are different and separate, for example, private space and public space or cultural space and useful space. There are 'rituals' one does in some spaces but not in other spaces. During the lecture, Foucault focused on what he called external spaces and his interest was in a specific external space, namely spaces that are linked to other spaces but that

simultaneously contradicts other sites. There are three types of these: utopias, dystopias, and heterotopias.

Utopias and dystopias are sites that essentially are unreal. Utopias are ideas of the perfect society, while dystopias imagine failed social orders but no place like those exists in reality. Heterotopias are places that do exist, they can be located in the real world, but they are different from all other spaces. Foucault presented six principles that outline his idea of heterotopias (Foucault 1967:16-22). The next subchapter will explain more closely the principles and how they are used in a dark tourism setting.

4.2 Heterotopia in dark tourism setting

Heterotopias of Crisis and Deviation

All cultures have heterotopias, but they take varied forms. In heterotopias, we find a difference between crisis and deviation heterotopias. Heterotopias of a crisis were reserved for individuals suffering from a state of crisis. Foucault's examples are menstruating women, elderly people or pregnant women (Foucault 1967:16). Foucault's explanation is vague but individuals that needed a place, an "elsewhere" to tend to their crisis went to this heterotopia of crisis. The crisis was dependent on the society and environment the individuals lived in. Crisis heterotopias were forbidden 'places' reserved for people in social, cultural or political crisis (Stone 2013:87). However, in our contemporary societies heterotopias of Crisis are disappearing and being exchanged to heterotopias of deviation.

Heterotopias of deviation are places reserved for individuals with deviant behavior compared to the norm. Examples of this are prisons, mental hospitals or perhaps retirement homes (Foucault 1967:16-17). Stone argues that Chernobyl is a case of both crisis and deviation heterotopia. Chernobyl, and subsequently Fukushima, is a place of both political and socio-cultural crisis but of the post-Cold War world. Tourists to Chernobyl can relive and consume past crises of technological failure and political division and failings. Simultaneously, tourists are connected to the contemporary world and can connect the crises experienced at Chernobyl to contemporary issues and crises. But tourists being present at Chernobyl, or another place of crisis can be seen as a form of deviant behavior or deviant leisure. Deviant leisure is seen as a way for tourists to contemplate on taboo topics like death, decay and, causes of various disasters (Stone 2013:86-87).

Heterotopias of Functionality

Each heterotopia is based on the society they exist within and has a precise function within that society. The function can change over time (Foucault 1967:17). For Chernobyl the primary function was to provide USSR with power, that is, after all, the function of a power plant. But for tourists, Chernobyl functions as a place to learn about their contemporary world by visiting the collapsed ruins of the old-world order. In this sense, Chernobyl becomes a separate space, separated from the rest of the world. One enters the zone and then there is just what is inside the zone and what is outside (Stone 2013:88). The way Stone describes it sounds like entering the zone around Chernobyl is like stepping into another world, a time capsule, a world where there no longer exist any specific places outside of the zone, no countries, just a space outside the zone. This is, of course, a mental construction, as there is a living and thriving world outside Chernobyl, but it becomes barely relevant when experiencing the zone. Stone furthermore mentions that Chernobyl functions as an icon for the failed political ideals of the Soviet Union. Chernobyl is thus a symbol of the utopian ideas of the endless power the nuclear power would provide for the Soviet Union and at the same time a symbol of the disaster humans can bring to later generations (*ibid*).

Heterotopias of Juxtaposition

Heterotopias can juxtapose several space or sites that are incompatible in a single place. The garden can represent a heterotopia of juxtaposition according to Foucault. For example, traditional gardens in Persia were a sacred space with four separate areas of different flora in a rectangular shape, all coming together in the middle at the water source (Foucault 1967:18). A modern example can be a greenhouse in a botanical garden, where it is possible to create diverse ecological systems, caring for fauna that by themselves cannot exist in the same area, but can do so under one roof artificially. Chernobyl is a space of juxtaposition because of its ruins, giving a perception of death and decay which is brought back to life by the presence of commerce through tourism and returning residents or wildlife. What tourists experience though, is not a place of life but a post-apocalyptic dystopian world. In the closest town, Pripyat, which was abandoned during the disaster, visitors can discover remnants of a ruined Soviet city, thus Pripyat becomes an alternative space (Stone 2013:89).

Heterotopias of Chronology

Heterotopias have close relationships with different slices of time. Visiting a heterotopia represents a break from traditional time. Two examples of heterotopias of chronology are museums and libraries. Museums and libraries are examples of heterotopias that accumulate time. By preserving books and trinkets, archives of different time eras are created. There are also heterotopias that are in a transition of time, like temporal fairgrounds on specific times of a year (Foucault 1967:18-19). Stone argues that Chernobyl represent both chronological heterotopias of accumulation and transition. Chernobyl is treated like a museum that is untouched by time and human interaction. Therefore, tourists experience the disaster and its political, economic, cultural and social implications in addition to also experiencing the era when it occurred. It is possible to see Chernobyl as a heterotopia of transition time as well. Tourist visits are regulated to short, fleeting moments in which tourists temporarily witness the time accumulated at Chernobyl but then the tourists move on (Stone 2013:90).

Heterotopias of (De) Valorisation

Heterotopias are usually not freely accessible like public spaces. Sometimes a visitor needs permission or to perform certain rites or purifications to enter the heterotopia. Foucault uses military barracks and sacred religious areas as examples. Despite following these rites and purifications there are still cases when one is excluded despite entering said heterotopia, entering the heterotopia is a matter of illusion according to Foucault (1967:19-20). Chernobyl involves certain rites or purifications to enter, yet arguably it is only an illusion one enters. A general image is the need of a Geiger counter to enter Chernobyl and its surrounding area in a safe manner together with other medical and safety equipment. Before entering Chernobyl, a visitor needs to pay the fees needed to get temporary access, later the visitor must also pass through several checkpoints. (Stone 2013:91; Yankovska & Hannam 2014:930). Even after paying the fees and getting access it is forbidden to enter Chernobyl without the presence of a guide that can lead through the dangerous areas (Yankovska & Hannam 2014:930). Leaving Chernobyl is also conducted by passing through checkpoints, medical ones this time. Even then Stone argue that a tourist never visits the real Chernobyl, thousands of people have visited since the disaster and left their print on the site (Stone 2013:91).

Heterotopias of Illusion and compensation

Foucault's final principle is that heterotopias create illusions of a place that is 'other' from all other places. The created illusions are used to compensate for the failings of all the places that are not the heterotopia. Foucault's notion is that heterotopias of illusion would be perceived as "perfect" places (Foucault 1967:20). Chernobyl is not an illusion of a perfect place. Chernobyl creates a place where what is real and surreal or utopian and dystopian meets. Visiting Chernobyl is described as a surreal experience. The illusion is an attempt by state authorities to convince visitors that Chernobyl is controlled and safe. Chernobyl offers a safe glimpse into a post-apocalyptic world, at the same time, this "safe" nuclear environment exposes contemporary concerns about large-scale disasters, and our inability to stop them (Stone 2013:91-92).

In the analysis, I focus on all heterotopia categories. Stone used Foucault's principles to create a framework for examining Chernobyl and to show how a place of disaster can be consumed and interpreted in a tourism context. Unlike Stone, this thesis analyses the representations of Fukushima as a utopia (paradisical tourist destination) as against dystopian places as measures of having claims on the Fukushima's identity.

5. Analysis

5.1 Web crawlers

Initial attempts with the Issue crawler to examine the hyperlinks between JNTO, Japan guide, and Fukushima guide yielded a "no network" result, indicating that no issue network existed between the websites, neither were any of them part of a larger issue network. The crawls showed that there was no co-linking to other mutual websites shared among the tourism sites. Surprisingly, there was no inter-actor link (just between the seed sites) between them either. Two of them, JNTO and Japan guide, are substantial websites for Japanese tourism and have existed for a long time. Manually examining their hyperlinks shows that there are websites that they both link to, one of them is Fukushima guide, another is the government website for Fukushima

prefecture.²⁷ Adding *National Geographic* to the same crawls did not alter the negative results. There is a chance of a bug causing the “no network” result according to the FAQ for the Issue crawler. Several retries (the recommended action) in addition to trying with different browsers and computers did not change the results.

While the lack of results is problematic, the lack of a network sharing an issue among the traditional websites is a finding in. The lack of a network can be because JNTO, Japan guide, Fukushima guide (and *National Geographic*) are different organizations and different kinds of organizations tend to link differently. Governmental websites tend to link to other ‘.gov’ (.go in Japan) sites while non-governmental sites are less rigid in who they link to. Corporate websites tend to not link at all (Rogers 2013:28).

JNTO is a government website and so is Fukushima guide while Japan guide is a company website. Accordingly, under normal circumstances, there would be little linking between them, but the assumption is that the Fukushima disaster would be an issue connecting them. The simple answer for the absence of links and a larger network is that there is no common issue of the Fukushima disaster between the tourist sites. It is also possible that the Issue crawler is more capable for “contemporary issues”. Today though, Fukushima is no longer presented as an issue among traditional tourism sites, despite Fukushima still being a contemporary issue outside of tourism.

However, despite this JNTO²⁸ and Japan guide²⁹ carry information about the radiation and exclusions zones currently in place at areas close to Fukushima Daiichi. Thus, although there is an issue with Fukushima, that is also recognized on traditional websites the information about radiation is more hidden or linked deeper down. The Fukushima crisis is not on the websites’ front pages anymore even if Japan guide and JNTO hint at that there are still concerns about radiation. The latest information about the radiation and exclusive zones is dated to 2017 on Japan guide. Fukushima guide does not seem to comment on the nuclear radiation at all, omitting any reference to the Fukushima disaster from their website. Among the sites arranging dark tours, there were similar negative results for the Issue crawler, there is no co-link results or issue network between Real Fukushima and Voyagin. The negative results are less surprising since

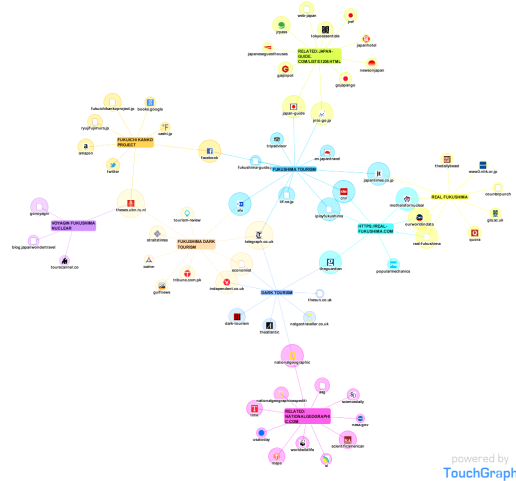
²⁷ <http://www.pref.fukushima.lg.jp/site/portal-english/> [01-05-2018]

²⁸ https://www.jnto.go.jp/eq/eng/04_recovery.htm [02-05-2018]

²⁹ <https://www.japan-guide.com/list/e1208.html> [02-05-2018]

Real Fukushima and Voyagin focus on the more controversial aspect of Fukushima tourism, to the powerplant and the evacuated areas. Real Fukushima and Voyagin's tours are focused on the nuclear disaster and its consequences.

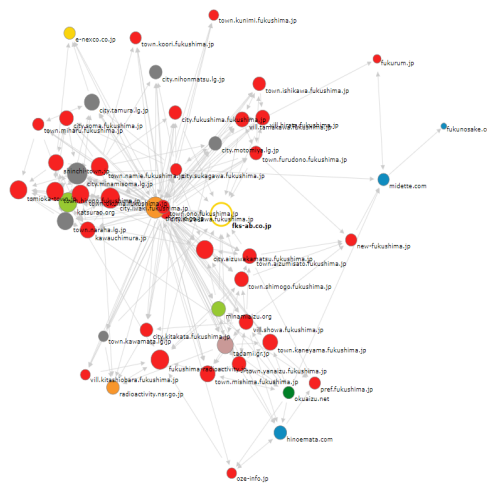
Using the TouchGraph web crawler yielded slightly different results compared to Issue crawler (See TouchGraph cluster). TouchGraph is, as mentioned, less rigid than Issue crawler and more of an exploratory tool used by the researcher to manually map and expand a network which creates a subjective and summarized search result. The results support the findings from Issue crawler, however, in that there are no clear connections between Japan guide, JNTO, and Fukushima guide. If the Fukushima disaster is an issue, it is dealt with separately, but it is not a shared concern or does not result in shared links among the chosen tourism websites. Since TouchGraph creates networks based on related pages from a single search it also shows that there is no relation between traditional tourist sites and dark tourism sites, neither is there a connection between Voyagin or Real Fukushima.



What the TouchGraph search does show though is that in the case of dark tourism (overall and for Fukushima) as well for Real Fukushima but less so for Voyagin is that their closest related websites often are online news outlet sites. The media connection would support the original notion from Lennon and Foley that dark tourism is dependent on mass media to keep the interest about the sites up (2000:11). The search also revealed some sites that were not apparent in the initial searches for tourism websites for Fukushima. Tourism information Fukushima³⁰ (TiF) is such a site.

³⁰ www.tif.ne.jp [06-05-2018]

While recent studies (Nguyen & Imamura 2017) have stated that Fukushima prefecture does not have a specific portal for tourism, TiF seems to have the role of a tourism site for Fukushima prefecture; TiF is associated to Fukushima's prefectural government. Adding TiF and the prefectural government site of Fukushima to the Issue crawler and doing a co-link analysis (every site needs two links to show in the final network) together with the traditional websites yielded some results (See Issue crawler cluster diagram). However, the original tourism sites, as well as TiF, was absent from that network. Most of the sites showing up in the results were local towns in Fukushima (red dots), indicating that Fukushima's prefectural government site created these results rather than the tourism sites. Interestingly, just examining some of these prefectural and town websites shows that the issues of contamination, radiation monitoring and revitalization in Fukushima are still present.³¹ While the Fukushima disaster is still a concern around local towns in Fukushima, this does not become apparent in the traditional tourist sites.



5.2 Visual analysis of pictures and tourism websites

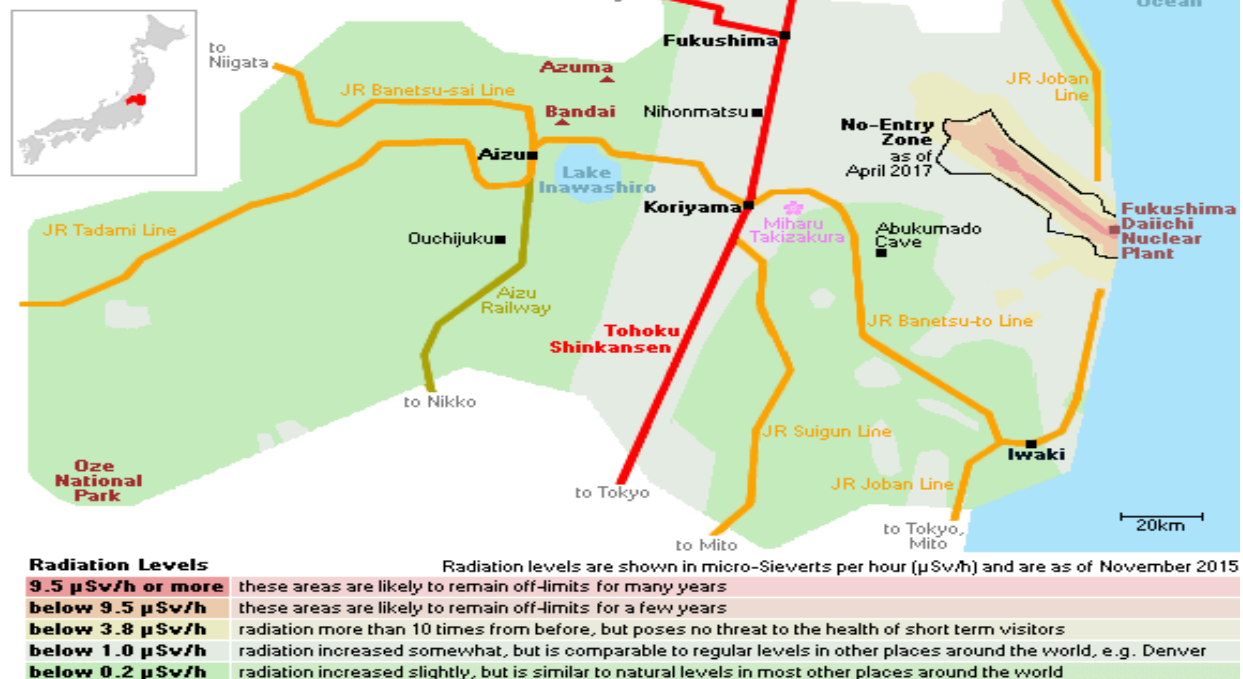
When it comes to pictures, there is a difference between what kind of pictures and content the traditional tourism websites use compared to the pictures used by websites arranging dark tours and the ones presented at *National Geographic*. For the traditional tourism websites, it is possible to make out some general themes among the pictures presented when examining the Fukushima specific images of JNTO and Japan guide and for Fukushima guide. Most of the pictures used would give a viewer the connotation of traditional Japan with focus on themes like

³¹ See for example the town websites of Sakagawa, Tomioka and Shirakawa:
<http://translate.google.com/translate?ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8&u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.city.sakagawa.fukushima.jp%2F&langpair=ja%7Cen&hl=en>

<http://translate.google.co.jp/translate?hl=ja&sl=ja&tl=en&u=http://www.tomioka-town.jp/>

[https://translate.google.co.jp/translate?sl=ja&tl=en&js=y&prev=_t&hl=ja&ie=UTF-8&u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.city.shirakawa.fukushima.jp&edit-text=\[09-05-2018\]](https://translate.google.co.jp/translate?sl=ja&tl=en&js=y&prev=_t&hl=ja&ie=UTF-8&u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.city.shirakawa.fukushima.jp&edit-text=[09-05-2018])

Map of Fukushima Prefecture with radiation levels



(Source: Japan guide 2018³³)

Besides these two central pictures, there are pictures associated with the top destinations in Fukushima. In this sense, Japan guide presents a conflicting view of Fukushima catering for traditional tourism but also reminds a visitor that there are areas that are off-limits for tourists and Japanese people or at least not accessible without special permission. The off-limits areas and need for permission could interpret Fukushima as a heterotopia of valorisation and of crisis based on Stones framework (2013:86,91). Certain areas in Fukushima is no longer accessible without permission because of the radiation. The map as an illustration in normal cases it might provide less effect than a picture, but here it represents the perceived areas of radiation which has quite an impact.

JNTO depicts Fukushima prefecture with similar pictures as Japan guide, with panoramic pictures of natural areas and subsections of various activities and natural spots that is possible to visit. There is no reference to the Fukushima disaster on JNTO's Fukushima section. JNTO rather caters for a traditional view of Japan. JNTO's word cloud to a large degree informs of similar themes as those presented in Fukushima guides word cloud.

³³ *ibid*

chronology. Stone discussed Chernobyl as a heterotopia that both accumulates (creates a time capsule of a society of the past) and transit time (tourist visits quickly, consuming the accumulated time for a short notice). Fukushima acts in the same manner but it is probably too early to speak about Fukushima as a time capsule for a Japanese society of the past even if one can argue about a post 3.11 Japan.

Voyagin



Voyagin has fewer pictures and while Real Fukushima present some pictures about the life after the 3.11 disaster, Voyagin's four pictures focuses on a ruined pier, abandoned areas, a picture of a distant Fukushima Daiichi and a close-up picture of barbed wire around the power plant; all giving connotations of closed off or forbidden areas. The trip arranged by Voyagin is a boat trip that will go 1,5 km outside of the power plant and promises to be an experience not possible anywhere else in the world.³⁸ In addition, the

tour involves visiting abandoned areas and examining them with a Geiger counter to see how the radiation has spread. Voyagin does not offer an “educational tour” like Real Fukushima does. It is a package tour from Tokyo which involves the following highlights: catching fish outside Fukushima Daiichi to see how contaminated the fish is, a tour in the abandoned areas, and a final stop at an onsen to heal one's body after an intense tour. Some of the themes presented at Voyagin's website refer to the disaster and the word “Daiichi” is a strong marker. Voyagin have another emphasis than Real Fukushima though. Some of the themes from Voyagin's word cloud speaks of a “on-of-a-kind” experience and attraction, a more sensationalistic feeling is portrayed.

While Real Fukushima and Voyagin have similar designs, shows comparable pictures, and provide similar time limited-tours, they seem to express the darkness of Fukushima Daiichi differently. Real Fukushima's interpretation of Fukushima, which is being presented to visitors is more educative while Voyagin is a shade more provocative and sensational. Using Stone's dark tourism spectrum from 2006 (see literature review) Fukushima Daiichi and the evacuated areas could be located in the darker shades of dark tourism.

³⁸ <https://www.govoyagin.com/activities/japan-fukushima-see-fukushima-daiichi-power-plant-with-your-own-eyes/3365>

The accident itself is not “fresh” but as mentioned before, arguably dark tourism to places of nuclear disaster is different from other sites of dark tourism, the issue of radiation does not go away for several generations. There is little infrastructure that caters to tourism and Fukushima creates political, economic and social contemporary problems for Japan. How Fukushima is interpreted and presented makes a difference in how the meaning of Fukushima is presented to a tourist (Sharpley & Stone 2009b:113).

Without interpretation or with poor interpretation, Fukushima Daiichi will lose its value as a tragic but important site with a dark heritage. Real Fukushima, with its local guides and focus on what we can learn from Fukushima is more serious than Voyagin. Voyagin is commercial, it promises a seamless booking in less than two minutes and for only 450 USD a visitor gets to experience the wake of a nuclear disaster, catching a fish and lastly a trip to an onsen, it is a contrasting experience. It creates a “kitschified” perception around the arranged tour. On the other hand, Real Fukushima is arranged by locals, in collaboration with the local government seems to do more to commemorate Fukushima and portray it as more personal, authentic. Despite Voyagin’s more commercial focus, it does not take away the dystopian portrayal of Fukushima. Voyagin presents a stark contrast of Fukushima in their tour. Catching a “radioactive” fish outside Daiichi (in itself a macabre and deviant behavior) invokes an image of a dystopia but later on, the visitor leaves the dystopian place and returns to reality. The bath in the onsen gives the time of self-reflection of what was just experienced.

National Geographic does not promote traditional tourism or dark tourism to Fukushima but as mentioned, it has a key role in shaping perceptions about places. Only the word “Fukushima” was used as a search term for examining *National Geographic*’s website. It resulted in 41 hits divided between articles and photographs. Some of the hits were just references to Fukushima, and some of the links were missing. The missing links were retrievable but would only inform about the headlines present in the links. The photograph section contains a lot of photographs taken by private people whose relationship with *National Geographic* is not professional. I here focused on the available articles and the professional pictures in those.

Most of the articles focus on the Fukushima disaster, therefore creating a perception of Fukushima that is more in line with a dark tourism site and possible to analyse through a heterotopia lens. Since there is a considerable emphasis on the disaster in Fukushima, it is portrayed as a place of political or socio-cultural crisis. Other forms of heterotopias are also

identifiable. Nunez, among others, discusses the evacuated areas as a heterotopia of chronology, a place outside the time frame of the rest of the world, a place where time is accumulated. Houses in the evacuated areas contain instruments for measuring time, like calendars or clocks which now have stopped (2017). Thus, creating a feeling of a place separated in time from the rest of the world. The pictures used by *National Geographic* are more directed towards destroyed or contamination compared to Real-Fukushima or Voyagin. Pictures associable with forms of radiation or decontamination are common.³⁹

There is also a presence of staff in protective clothing that are in various processes of cleaning up the debris within the space of Fukushima Daiichi. This marks another difference from the dark tours sites, as *National Geographic* uses pictures from within the ruined nuclear power plant. As a large media outlet, it has better access to such pictures and can, therefore, denote a stronger connotation of ruin and disaster. In this sense, Fukushima is portrayed more as a post-apocalyptic dystopia where it is possible to get a glimpse of a world that has ended. Fukushima's function is to teach about the consequences of large-scale nuclear or industrial disaster. Fukushima thus becomes a symbol for the failure of nuclear power, just like Chernobyl did for the utopian ideals of nuclear power in the Soviet Union. Pictures taken outside Daiichi power plant also give a connotation of a space of crisis and space where society has failed. A potential visitor using *National Geographic* for information is met by eerie pictures of people in ordinary settings but with protective gear against radiation.⁴⁰ Ghost towns⁴¹ and closed off, evacuated areas, are also pictures that can induce a feeling of anxiety.⁴² These pictures could be related to several mentioned principles of heterotopia, but to address the final heterotopia mentioned by Foucault: *Heterotopia of illusion and compensation*, pictures of closed off areas and personnel handling debris can invoke an illusion of control (Stone 2013:91-92). The Japanese authority in fact controls the disaster areas of Fukushima by closing them off.

³⁹ <https://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/energy/2011/11/pictures/111111-nuclear-cleanup-struggle-at-fukushima/> [06-05-2018]

⁴⁰ <https://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/energy/2011/11/pictures/111111-nuclear-cleanup-struggle-at-fukushima/#/43453.jpg> [06-05-2018]

⁴¹

https://news.nationalgeographic.com/content/dam/news/2016/03/11/fukushima5yrs/05_fukushima5yrs.adapt.1190.1.jpg [13-05-2018]

⁴²

https://news.nationalgeographic.com/content/dam/news/2016/03/11/fukushima5yrs/05_fukushima5yrs.adapt.1190.1.jpg [12-08-2018]

around the safety concerns about monitoring radiation, rebuilding after the disaster. Thus, showing that Fukushima Daiichi plays a great role in shaping Fukushima's identity.

6. Conclusions

Thus, what is Fukushima's place within the context of dark tourism studies? While Fukushima is today compared to Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Fukushima, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki are in fact different sites. Hiroshima's and Nagasaki's bombings were intended, Fukushima was an accident that spiraled out of control. The survivors from both instances, nuclear bombing, and nuclear accident, however, face a difficult "radiation" stigmatization. Thus, the word Fukushima has become associated with stigmatization, that is partly increased by dark tourism but that is also addressed by victims by engaging in dark tourism. Due to the special nature of 'nuclear tourism', the only other site to which Fukushima can be compared to being Chernobyl, Fukushima also takes on a place that is difficult to define.

Traditional tourism sites conceptualize Fukushima with focus on traditional values and aspects of Fukushima. Pictures of natural and historical sites, art, hot-springs, and food are some of the images used to create a positive image of Fukushima. JNTO, Fukushima guide, and Japan guide all focus on aspects that were there before the Fukushima disaster took place. They portray Fukushima as a traditional and calm utopia. But Fukushima is not a perfect utopia. For JNTO and Japan guide the utopian image becomes flawed since JNTO and Japan guide still occasionally comment on the remaining concerns around the Fukushima disaster. The lack of a network among the traditional tourism sites, I propose, indicates a suppression of the Fukushima disaster topic. 7 years after the Fukushima disaster there is no longer a need for the traditional tourist sites to keep updated information for tourists on the website front page anymore. Neither is it necessary for traditional tourism sites to participate in a larger network that informs of the issues of the Fukushima disaster. Therefore, by focusing on a traditional utopian Fukushima, the disaster aspect of Fukushima is absent and suppressed among JNTO, Japan guide, and Fukushima guide.

Real Fukushima and Voyagin conceptualize Fukushima's dark tourism image with a focus on the Fukushima disaster. Fukushima becomes a place of crisis, inaccessible without the right permission, a place to temporarily gaze on the consequences of the nuclear disaster, a place

of “otherness” within Japan. Fukushima becomes a dystopia; the presence of tourism invites for deviant leisure and reflection of the contrasts between the otherness of Fukushima and the outside. Media outlets like *National Geographic* also portray Fukushima as a dystopia. In fact, *National Geographic*'s portrayal of Fukushima is more in line with promoting Fukushima as a dark tourism site rather than a normal tourist destination. Real Fukushima, Voyagin and *National Geographic* direct the identity around Fukushima towards the disaster aspects.

There are conflicts regarding identity in how Fukushima is conceptualized on traditional tourism websites, dark tours websites and by *National Geographic*. The portrayal of Fukushima between these different sites portrays two polar opposites of heterotopia, a utopian Fukushima and, a dystopian Fukushima. Therefore, tourism can shape the identity of Fukushima.

Outside of tourism, the people living in Fukushima are still suffering from the fear of radiation. Local towns and Fukushima prefecture keep monitoring the radiation. In this context, dark or dystopian tourism is closer to everyday life in Fukushima since the contemporary issues are not neglected. Dark tours arranged by sites like Real Fukushima can be central strategies for directing memories and the perception of the Fukushima disaster. Local people can arrange dark tours to have a forum where they can speak about daily struggles and hardships. But dark tours can also aggravate the current issue by a bad interpretation of the disaster.

Hiding or suppressing the disaster is an understandable strategy when promoting for a more utopian Fukushima. But JNTO and Japan guide create conflicting perceptions of Fukushima. As mentioned, the general fear of radiation affects all of Fukushima prefecture. Directing attention away from the disaster, therefore, seems counterproductive in traditional tourism promotion. Fukushima is already stigmatized; no advertisement will overshadow the connotation Fukushima has with nuclear disaster. Both traditional tourism and dark tourism render Fukushima as a heterotopia but in polarized ways. Dark tourism embraces the nuclear disaster while traditional tourism suppresses the nuclear disaster. But by suppressing the disaster attention is directed towards it.

Adapting Stone's framework shows similarities and differences between Fukushima and Chernobyl as heterotopias. Fukushima is a contested utopian and dystopian heterotopia among the websites chosen for this study. The name Fukushima refers to a larger area than just Fukushima Daiichi. Chernobyl does not share a name with a larger area; therefore, Chernobyl does not have a competing utopian image. Adapting Stone's framework to Fukushima creates a

more complex relation between Fukushima as a dystopia contra utopia. The thesis primarily draws conclusions from how Fukushima can be interpreted as a place for tourism, just like Chernobyl has become a tourist spot. While this paper is not a direct comparison between Fukushima and Chernobyl, a comparison between Fukushima Daiichi and Chernobyl as tourism sites could indeed progress the dark tourism field further.

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