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Geographies of affect in places of death and disaster: Tohoku, Japan, after 3.11

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**Geographies of affect in places of death and disaster:
Tohoku, Japan, after 3.11**

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to obtain the degree of PhD at the University of Groningen
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and in accordance with
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CHAPTER 2

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CHAPTER 3

Martini, A., & Buda, D. M. (2018). Analysing affects and emotions in tourist e-mail interviews: a case in post-disaster Tohoku, Japan. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 1-12.

CHAPTER 4

Gasparri, D., **Martini, A.,** (2018). 'Amachan': Japanese TV Drama and Heritage Creation in a Post-Disaster Town. In C. Palmer, & J. Tivers (Eds.), *Creating Heritage for Tourism: Current Developments in the Geographies of Leisure and Tourism (Current Developments in the Geographies of Leisure and Tourism)*. London: Routledge.

CHAPTER 5

Martini, A., Minca, C. (2018). Constructing Affective (Dark) Tourism Encounters: Rikuzentakata after the 2011 Great Eastern Japan Disaster. *Social and Cultural Geographies*, 1-17.

CHAPTER 6

Martini, A., Gasparri, D. (under review in Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers). Miracle boats and other wonders: locating affect in the narratives of recovery and removal of Japanese post-disaster debris.

CHAPTER 7

Martini, A., Sublime tourism: geographies of affect and dark tourism in post-disaster Fukushima. Submitted to *Cultural Geographies*.

ABSTRACT

This thesis utilizes geographies of affect as a viable and useful frame to analyse the construction, management and experience of post-disaster tourism and heritage. Fieldwork for this research is the coastal area of the Tohoku region of Japan hit by an earthquake, tsunami and, in the southern prefecture of Fukushima, by a nuclear meltdown at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant. The thesis approaches the theoretical, methodological, and empirical issues raised by studies of affect in dark places, and considers a constellation of contexts related to post-disaster tourism in the region, specifically in: the town of Kuji, which used the disaster as a way to revitalize their traditional heritage; Rikuzentakata, a town trying to develop long-lasting international tourism; the Fukushima exclusion zone; and the case of post-disaster debris retrieved across the Pacific Ocean and brought back to Japan to be memorialized. In the theoretical approach used, dark tourism studies are framed within socio-spatial theories of affect, so as to better understand the affective layer of dark tourism, and how tourists' affects are negotiated in post-disaster tourism in Tohoku, Japan; how they are politically engineered by tourism workers and local stakeholders through processes of place-making; and the ways post-disaster sites are framed by news and information outlets to which the tourist has been exposed. Places of death, disaster and atrocities negotiate painful pasts, ethically problematic situations, and strong emotional and affective reactions from locals and visitors alike. Tourists' affective responses to death and disaster have not yet been studied in-depth by academics, but have the potential to elicit moments of intensity in the interaction with space, and such intensities can resonate with and be picked up by tourists. A theoretical and empirical work on affects in dark tourism places can also benefit geographies of affect, by offering insights in intensities of affect that can be more prominently expressed in places of disaster, such as hope, catharsis, and the experience of the sublime.