



Transformative places and the citizenship experience: A dynamic perspective of disasters, transitional servicescapes, and place attachment

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ABSTRACT

A city can be regarded as a servicescape, serving its citizens by providing the opportunity to co-create and experience services, such as in the retail or hospitality sectors. In case of a disaster and the collapse or (partial) destruction of a city's servicescape, the connection of citizens to place, i.e., their place attachment might be impeded, transformed or lost as might be their usual citizenship experiences. The present paper fuses the domains of Transformative Service Research (TSR), environmental psychology, disaster science, and citizenship experiences. Via an exploratory qualitative investigation it finds that transitional, i.e., temporary servicescapes which are put into place until more permanent servicescapes can be rebuilt, can be transformative places in regard to co-creating novel citizenship experiences to "re-attach" residents to their city.

1. Introduction

The world is a disruptive and disrupted place, due to anthropogenic, natural and hybrid disasters, such as COVID-19 (EM-DAT, 2023; Finsterwalder and Kuppelwieser, 2020a; Sawang et al., 2023). This paper focuses on earthquakes as a type of disaster and particularly their aftermath, using the city of Christchurch, New Zealand, as empirical context. Two severe earthquakes disrupted and uprooted people's lives in 2010 and 2011, followed by 14 months of aftershocks. The second earthquake caused significant damage to the city's central business district (CBD) and its suburbs. Up to 100,000 buildings were damaged and 10,000 demolished, including significant landmarks (RNZ, 2021), amongst them major retail spaces, hospitality venues, sports arenas and other consumer-facing facilities. While, after a phase of earthquake recovery, a regeneration phase was instigated to rebuild the city, it has been an ongoing process and taken years to restore most of the CBD and its consumer-facing servicescapes. Place attachment, that is, the feeling of belonging to a place (Zhe et al., 2023), such as a city, is closely related to both the material and immaterial aspects of wellbeing, which are at stake when people feel uprooted (Berg, 2020; Lomas et al., 2021; Majeed and Ramkissoon, 2020; Rosenbaum et al., 2017). This notion is in line with work on place attachment in a Transformative Service Research (TSR) context where Rosenbaum et al. (2007, p. 55) encourage scholars

to use service frameworks to investigate "person-place relationships in order to develop a transformative service research paradigm [and] how service establishments, intangible exchanges, and humanistic and social elements within servicescapes promote consumer welfare." This study therefore recognises two aspects of post-disaster regeneration, a *physical one*, concerned with the *material aspect* of infrastructure and urban design, and a *social one*, relating to the *immaterial aspect* of improving the wellbeing and quality of life of residents and temporary migrants (Finsterwalder and Hall, 2016).

Person-place relationships are particularly pertinent to disaster settings (Silver and Grek-Martin, 2015). Shortly after the earthquakes and due to health and safety risks, parts of the Christchurch CBD were cordoned off and citizens were unable to enter the city, and service providers' premises, such as retail shops, entertainment venues, hospitality and leisure locations, were largely unavailable to enter because of damage. For the individual citizen this might not only have disrupted consumption opportunities (Grimmer, 2021) but also the "positive connection or bond between a person and a particular place" (Williams and Vaske, 2003, p. 831), that is, between them and their city of residence and its servicescape (Rosenbaum et al., 2017). This paper advances that this bond or *place attachment* (Chen et al., 2014a; Xu et al., 2022) can be maintained or re-mobilised by providing ample opportunities for citizenship experiences (CZX) (Klaus, 2022; Zhe et al., 2023)

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through the transformative potential of transitional servicescapes. A *transitional servicescape* enables a temporary, and at times reoccurring, usage of, and interface between, space and scape (Finsterwalder and Hall, 2016) to facilitate citizens' everyday experiences or *citizenship experiences*, and outcomes (Klaus, 2022), such as their wellbeing. This aligns with Rosenbaum et al.'s (2017) notion of how servicescapes can promote consumer welfare and with the TSR concept of elevating the human experience by Fisk et al. (2020). Without discriminating by experiential magnitude, Fisk et al. (2020, p. 616) define the human experience as "the totality of each person's experience with service systems as they seek to meet their basic human needs across their life journey". Citizens are part of multiple service systems, one is the servicescape "city" with its material and immaterial aspects. By changing the city and people's relationships to the servicescape "city", earthquakes can impact both aspects and affect basic human needs of bonding, connecting, and belonging (Chen et al., 2014a; Finsterwalder, 2010). Therefore, this paper aims at answering the following research questions (RQs):

RQ1. How do citizenship experiences and place attachment change in the aftermath of a disaster and a subsequent city rebuild?

RQ2. What are the roles of transitional servicescapes as transformative places to co-create novel citizenship experiences and maintain or rebuild place attachment and wellbeing in a post-disaster context?

To answer the RQs, the article is structured as follows. The paper commences with a literature review of extant work on TSR, CZX, transitional servicescapes and place attachment. The next section outlines the methodology before results are presented and subsequently discussed. Implications, limitations, future research directions are then outlined before the article concludes.

2. Literature review

2.1. Transformative service research and transformative places

Along with other emerging concepts in the service discipline (Kuppelwieser and Finsterwalder, 2016), Transformative Service Research (TSR) has been the fulcrum of service scholars' focus at the intersection of service and wellbeing (T. Chen et al., 2021). It aims at bringing "uplifting changes and improvements in the well-being of individuals (...), communities, cities, (...) and ecosystems" (Anderson et al., 2011, p. 3) and "advocates for personal and collective well-being of (...) citizens and the entire global ecosystem" (Rosenbaum et al., 2011, p. 3). Some of TSR's promoters who coined the term in earlier work (Rosenbaum et al., 2007), urged scholars to investigate person-place connections to develop a TSR perspective and how service entities, interactions, and the physical and social cues within servicescapes can facilitate consumer wellbeing. Subsequently, Rosenbaum and co-authors engage in TSR work on "third places" – locales of casual life – and investigate attachment to, social support in, and the restorative potential of a variety of these third places, such as shopping malls, diners, cafés, grocery stores or healthcare clinics and their impact on wellbeing (Rosenbaum et al., 2007, 2009, 2016, 2020; Rosenbaum, Kim, et al., 2021). However, while the connection of wellbeing and attachment is important, the focus of the present paper is more closely centred on place attachment and the link to transitional servicescapes as replacement of elements of a city's scape post-disaster. More recently Rosenbaum, Edwards, et al. (2021) investigate temporary retail scapes, a form of transitional servicescapes. However, while their study does not have a TSR focus it finds that the reasons for the use of so-called retail pop-up stores are to create connections with potential and existing customers, to improve brand awareness, and/or to launch or stage a new brand, product, or service to consumers. The transitional servicescapes installed post-earthquake in the city of Christchurch had a similar but more focused intentionality (Finsterwalder and Kuppelwieser, 2020b) and function, but on a

different scale as will be explained below.

From a TSR perspective, Rosenbaum et al. (2017, p. 281) view place "as a repository of resources that are potentially available to consumers through exchange processes. These exchange processes, and the complexity of the offered resources, influence consumers' relationship with a locale as well as their sense of well-being." We adopt this view in line with the process of regeneration outlined above (Finsterwalder and Hall, 2016). We relate the characteristics of servicescapes (Bitner, 1992) to the dimensions of place attachment (N.C. Chen et al., 2014a, 2021) and detail these below. In light of the importance of a particular servicescape having the potential to transform a space and the people in such a locale, we label these activated space-scape combinations *transformative places*.

2.2. Citizenship experience (CZX)

A customer experience is extremely dynamic (Klaus and Kuppelwieser, 2021). Research highlights that "physical context [e.g., a city's servicescape] still significantly impacts the customer experience" (Klaus, 2022). In a disaster setting the physical context can become a source of anxiety and stress (Silver and Grek-Martin, 2015). Klaus (2022) advances that extraordinary experiences have been over accentuated in research and customers' everyday lives and experiences, such as the ones disrupted by disasters, should receive more attention. He refers to these experiences, which can create enduring influence via their regularity and connection to all areas of one's everyday life, as *citizenship experiences* (CZX) and these are crucial for citizen outcomes (Klaus, 2022), such as wellbeing. As stated above, this conceptualisation aligns with TSR's notions of servicescapes promoting consumer welfare (Rosenbaum et al., 2007) and elevating the totality of the human experience whether mundane or remarkable (Fisk et al., 2020).

Citizens residing in a city are part of a multitude of service systems, one of which is the socio-spatial servicescape "city" with its material and immaterial dimensions. Earthquakes can impact both material and immaterial and affect basic human needs of food, water, shelter but also bonding, connecting, and belonging (Chen et al., 2014a, 2014b; Finsterwalder, 2010). In such cases, restoring the opportunities for citizens to meet their basic needs has to be achieved through the (re-)creation of touchpoints to (re-)enable customer experiences and the reformation of place attachment. Several studies have indicated a link between customer experience and place attachment (Shoukat and Ramkissoon, 2022; Vada et al., 2019; Zhe et al., 2023).

In the unique circumstances of a disaster and due to the fact that significant infrastructure in the service sectors might be destroyed or damaged, alternative pathways have to be found to create the "physical containers" that can house residents' experiences with their city until more durable solutions have been found, that is, until more permanent servicescape structures have been built. However, citizens might not feel comfortable coming back into a city to satisfy their basic needs with everyday experiences, if a) the city cannot logistically cater to such experiences and b) the city does appear very extraordinary in its reduced servicescape due to the damage incurred, not signalling that any ordinary experience is possible. This is where temporary structures as *transitional servicescapes* come into play and where space-scape combinations could be transformative by connecting the extraordinary with the ordinary.

2.3. Transitional servicescapes as transformative places and the 3Ps of physical evidence, process, and people

The notion of servicescape has been part of service scholars' discourse since Booms and Bitner (1981) introduced the term to denote the environment in which the service is brought together for the customer and where they interact with the service provider. A servicescape usually comprises the facility's exterior (e.g., parking and landscape) and interior (e.g., interior design and layout), plus additional

elements, such as stationary or employee uniforms (Bitner, 1992). A servicescape can also be a virtual one with its tangible aspects, such as a brand portal or a social media page (Ballantyne and Nilsson, 2017). However, this description of a servicescape heavily centres on *physical evidence*, one of the service marketing mix's extended three Ps (Booms and Bitner, 1981).

Due to the characteristics of a service and the importance of the *process P* in service research (Booms and Bitner, 1981), recent work focuses more on processual aspects of service (Kuppelwieser et al., 2023) which enable value co-creating interactions between provider and customer within a servicescape. Moreover, service marketing's *people P* (Booms and Bitner, 1981) is reflected in the servicescape framework (Bitner, 1992) as relationships between the actors are very important. There are social interactions which are embedded in the physical (or virtual) environment of the (spatial) servicescape. Toms and McColl-Kennedy (2010) add that interactions do not only occur between service provider staff and customers but also amongst customers (or citizens) themselves.

Traditionally, servicescapes have been investigated in their usual surrounding and stable environment and very little work exists where disruptors, such as disasters or crises in conjunction with servicescapes have been investigated. Some work studies smaller interferences, such as the disruptive power of e-tailing servicescapes on place attachment to retailers (Horáková et al., 2022). Other work cautions to reconsider the way forward for service providers in the retail sector after more significant disruptive events, such as the COVID-19 disaster and to "reassess the servicescape and consider more permanent changes to consumer behaviour [...] and to reimagine the 'next' retail servicescape" (Palakshappa et al., 2022, p. 584, 585). Equally applied to a COVID-19 disaster context, work has focused on safety perceptions of servicescapes to keep customers protected in their usual environment (Tiwari and Mishra, 2023). While these are important wellbeing considerations in a disaster context (Finsterwalder and Kuppelwieser, 2020a), they do not connect to place attachment. Being more pronounced in terms of operating in unknown environments during crises, Kuppelwieser et al. (2023) study the uncertainty of servicescapes in crises, i.e., humanitarian ones, and the instability of the external environment as well as how service process volatility impacts front-line employees. However, while earthquakes impact both service staff and customers, the focus of the present paper is on *customer-citizens* in uncertain and often rapidly changing post-disaster servicescapes. For such context, Finsterwalder and Hall (2016) introduced the term "transitional servicescapes".

The label derives from the notion of temporary architecture which has long been prominent in other disciplines (Trisno et al., 2023) and has also been applied to disaster settings (D. Chen et al., 2021). For such impermanent structures within urban environments, terms such as "pop-up" (Rosenbaum, Kim, et al., 2021) or "temporary/temporal" (Trisno et al., 2023) have been used. In connection with cities, "temporary city" (Dovey, 2014) or "temporary urbanism" (Bragaglia and Caruso, 2022) have been employed. Relevant for the present study is the term *in-between use* (Bragaglia and Caruso, 2022) which relates to temporal spatial gaps in urban *spaces* and opportunities for temporary *scapes* to fill these. The interim use of such gaps "suggests a fluidity of temporality" (Till, 2011, p. 106) explained below.

Using both *scape* and *space* ad interim is "the temporary activation of vacant land or buildings" (Blumner, 2006, p. 4) and both "derive unique qualities from the idea of temporality" (Haydn and Temel, 2006, p. 17). Given that servicescapes have a temporal component, Finsterwalder and Hall (2016) define a transitional servicescape as a temporary, and at times reoccurring, usage of, and interface between, space and scape. In line with Blumner (2006) they distinguish temporality of space and scape, which has also been noted in disaster settings (Silver and Grek-Martin, 2015).

Temporality of space: Temporality of space denotes that space in a built environment might only be available for a certain period of time. For a city or other urban area, it indicates that spaces can become

available due to, e.g., removing permanent structures for a rebuild. The occurrence of such vacant land varies across a city and is intrinsic to urban change and renewal. Thus, there is a certain *fluidity of space* apparent due to the changing nature of its availability across a defined geospatial area (Finsterwalder and Hall, 2016).

Temporality of scape: Equally, scapes can be temporal. In a built environment, empty spaces might become available to house (new) scapes. When structures are not permanent, they can serve to be temporarily placed on vacant blocks of land. While some temporal servicescapes might remain in (or return to) one dedicated empty space for a certain period of time, others might move across different empty spaces, depending on the availability of space. Temporal scapes can thus be time restricted substitutes for, or supplements to, permanent scapes, i.e., be transitional, or can potentially become permanent scapes themselves at some point. For example, the ferris wheel London Eye was originally intended as a five-year temporary attraction. While temporary scapes may be installed as a one-off occurrence, others can be re-used. Some temporary scapes can also be designed to alter their shape to fit different spaces. Therefore, the temporal dimension of a servicescape captures the *fluidity of scape* and its characteristic of being more easily assembled, disassembled and altered (Finsterwalder and Hall, 2016).

Overall, temporal servicescapes can locate in spaces as novel *physical evidence* and create opportunities for interactions amongst *people* and ensuing *service processes* within these spaces. It is to be shown in this research whether they are also capable of functioning as placeholders that can facilitate place attachment and thus function as transformative places where novel space-scape interactions occur for people to experience. Novelty of such a space-scape combination, together with its evocation of emotion, surprise, engagement, social connections, all of which are aspects of memorable characteristics of service experiences (Moliner-Tena et al., 2023), as they are of certain transitional servicescapes, as will be shown below.

2.4. Attachment to place via physical place, psychological process, and person

Place attachment has developed as a concept from geography and environmental psychology literatures (Hidalgo and Hernández, 2001; Williams and Vaske, 2003), and has been applied in various contexts, including service environments (N.C. Chen et al., 2014b, 2021; Dwyer et al., 2019; Huang et al., 2022; Lu et al., 2022; Prayag and Grivel, 2018). As indicated previously, place attachment comprises an affirmative association or link between a person and a specific place (Williams and Vaske, 2003; Zhe et al., 2023). Thus, it is "formed by an individual to a physical site that has been given meaning through interaction" (Milligan, 1998, p. 2). Place can be conceptualised at different scales ranging from a house to a landscape or region (Hidalgo and Hernández, 2001; Zhe et al., 2023). Environmental psychologists have aimed at capturing such bonding at different levels, i.e., individual-individual, individual-community, and individual-place for the place scales mentioned above (Kyle et al., 2005) and when such bonding is lost due to disasters (Silver and Grek-Martin, 2015). Unsurprisingly, place attachment has also been operationalised using different dimensions (Chen et al., 2014a; Raymond et al., 2010), including *place identity* reflecting self-identification in relation to place; *place dependence* indicating the reliance on amenities and resources provided by the place; *affective attachment* as the emotional bond; *social bonding* indicating social ties within a place; *natural bonding* as the bond to the natural environment; *place memory* and *place expectation* reflecting past experiences and memories and expected future respectively (Chen et al., 2014a; Kyle et al., 2005; Zhe et al., 2023).

Clarke and Schmidt (1995) make an early case for the importance of the embeddedness of servicescapes in a place and the latter's importance for one's roots. Conceptualised in the service literature, physical evidence (i.e., (in a) place) binds people and processes (Bitner, 1992) and this is similar to the tripartite person-process-place (PPP) framework by

Scannell and Gifford (2010). The PPP framework synchronises and unifies different conceptualisations and operationalisation of place attachment (Hidalgo, 2013). Despite the contextual differences, the PPP framework's focus is similar in inner logic to the servicescape model as well as the extended three Ps of the service marketing mix.

Place: As stated above, similar to the denotation of physical evidence, place attachment is examined at a specific physical scale, e.g., a neighbourhood or a city (Hidalgo and Hernández, 2001), and/or to natural settings (namely *natural bonding*) (Zhe et al., 2023). In particular, physical features of a place have implied (symbolic) meanings that drive the formation of place attachment (Stedman, 2003). For instance, one is often attached to the physical climate of one's hometown because it represents a *place memory*. This further strengthens the relationship among the physical settings of a place, place attachment, and citizenship experience (Klaus, 2022). In addition, *place dependence* largely derives from the physical characteristics of a place, e.g., how the amenities and resources of a place meet one's needs (Zhe et al., 2023). These physical characteristics combine into the specific meaning of the place, representing *place identity* (Manzo, 2005).

Process: Process in place attachment emphasises people's psychological interactions that occur in the environments leading to sense of place in terms of affect, cognition, and behaviour (Scannell and Gifford, 2010). Via a value co-creation processes, person-place interactions drive emotional responses (Manzo, 2005) building the *affective attachment* dimension of place attachment (N.C. Chen et al., 2021). The interactions also create place memories, meanings, knowledge, and beliefs (Hay, 1998), enabling *place memory* but also forming *place identity* (N.C. Chen et al., 2021), and regulating proximity-maintaining behaviours (Hidalgo and Hernández, 2001). Person-place interactions that are usually relevant to the physical or social features of a place as in "place" influence self-definition, leading to social identity construction (Sampson and Goodrich, 2009).

Person: An actor's attachment to a place is formed via individual and collective experiences related to the place (experience-in-place), which construct integral place meanings (and *place memory*) (Manzo, 2005), and further reflect and contribute to the sense of self (as in *place identity*) (Speller et al., 2002). Similar to the emphasis on people in service, the impact of the human factor cannot be overstated. This is the case for both place attachment formation and place meaning construction, particularly in terms of culture (Devine-Wright and Quinn, 2020) and religion (Mazumdar and Mazumdar, 2004). It also drives dynamic psychological place connection, such as expectations of continuous high-quality person-place interactions, namely *place expectation* (N.C. Chen et al., 2021). As place attachment is also formed due to the social features of a place, the local social system plays an important role in creating regional sentiments and ties, reflected in *social bonding* and networks (Scannell and Gifford, 2010). Accordingly, place attachment comprising of place, process and person is highly related to individual experiences with a place.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research context: Christchurch and its transformative places

Following the 2010 and 2011 earthquakes, approximately 70% of the CBD's buildings in Christchurch had to be removed (Anderson, 2014), which opened up gaps in the built environment as rebuilding commenced. These temporary empty spaces served as opportunities for transitional servicescapes. Some examples shall illustrate the above mentioned notions of temporary space-scape combinations in a disaster context.

In 2011, due to the fact that most of the retail precinct was inaccessible, and based on an initiative by the Central City Business Association, a pop-up retail venue called Re:START Mall was built to attract shoppers back into the city. It consisted of stackable shipping containers and enabled shops and eateries to be housed. The modular concept of the

shipping containers permitted easy assembly and disassembly, i.e., a *fluidity of scape*. It also allowed changes to the layout of the mall. In 2014, when parts of the original shopping mall were rebuilt, elements of the Re:START Mall were relocated to a vacant site nearby, which showcases the *fluidity of space* in connection with scape liquidity (Finsterwalder and Hall, 2016). Fig. 1 shows an impression of the Re:START Mall.

Other initiatives were launched, such as the Gap Filler project, to populate the empty spaces with art installations, such as arcades or graffiti; interactive games, such as a super-sized PacMan game; or engagement platforms, such as the Dance-o-Mat, a laundromat-turned music box located on a concrete slab with four speakers, so that citizens could dance (Gap Filler, 2023). Gap Filler's transitional scapes could usually be moved to other spaces and adjusted should a rebuild be started, demonstrating the *liquidity of space and scape*.

Private business owners who lost their premises, also started up their own transitional servicescape projects. An example of this is Smash Palace, a scape that was started after a pub's original premises became unavailable. The main element of Smash Palace is an old bus converted into a bar that can be driven around to a different vacant space if other spaces are repopulated with permanent structures. It is still in operation at the time of writing making it a candidate for a more permanent feature. Fig. 2 shows Smash Palace in its current location.

However, while the examples show initiatives to enable citizens to reconnect with their ordinary experiences of shopping and leisure activities (Klaus, 2022), the context in which transitional servicescapes were established can be regarded as extraordinary and hence citizen-consumers might have experienced the scape located in a space where the impact of the earthquakes was or still is visible as being far from ordinary. Therefore, citizens might have experienced "ordinary" service experiences as embedded in extraordinary servicescapes as a sum of all experiences meant to reconnect them to the city and elevate their wellbeing (Fisk et al., 2020). Such context provided a suitable scenario for data collection to advance the topic of place attachment and citizenship experiences in connection with transformative places.

3.2. Data collection

Qualitative methods have been highlighted in TSR as an important and useful research method when investigating vulnerable participants and to study unexplored research contexts. This includes analysing



Fig. 1. Pop-up retail precinct Re:START Mall in the CBD from 2011 to 2019 (Source: authors).



Fig. 2. Smash Palace, established in 2012, at its present location in the CBD (Source: authors).

people experiencing natural disasters, such as earthquakes (Dodds et al., 2023) and particular in connection with work on transitional servicescapes which has not been empirically investigated. While digital data collection methods have advanced in recent years (Wordsworth et al., 2021), particularly during COVID-19 (Dodds and Hess, 2021), they might exclude participants with no Internet connectivity (Dodds et al., 2023).

Therefore, qualitative research involving face-to-face researcher-participant interaction was the preferred method chosen for this research project by employing interviews to elicit rich information through people’s own stories about their sense of place. University Human Ethics approval was given for this research. The study employed convenience sampling as a means to identify participants (Stratton, 2021) but also to test and adjust the interview guideline. Participants were recruited in two ways. An advertisement was posted on virtual noticeboards and social media. For participants responding to the ad individual interviews were arranged at the participants’ convenience in terms of time and location with most of the interviews conducted at the universities of the researchers. In addition, participants were physically recruited on the street. To achieve this, a central intersection in the CBD’s main mall was selected. During the regular working week, the researchers set up their interview stand at the intersection of the city’s main shopping street - in view of the Re:START Mall - and a walkway along the river. Participants would walk past the researchers, either on or from their way to work, lunch or the shops. Due to being at the intersection of mall and river walkway, the researchers were placed in a suitable spot which encountered high foot traffic during peak hours. People who read the researchers’ sign advertising for research participants, and were attracted by an NZD 20.00 (approx. USD 12.00) shopping voucher promoted as inducement to be received upon completion of the interview, could approach the researchers. The vast majority of participants was interviewed in the inner city of Christchurch while others, who had responded to the virtual ad, were interviewed at the researchers’ universities. Prior to the interviews participants signed a consent form giving them the choice to be recorded or notes to be taken of the conversation.

The number of suggested interviews is around 12 to allow for data saturation (Guest et al., 2006). Saturation describes the threshold in an analysis where any additional data collected does not add any new knowledge to the topic under investigation. The lack of meeting saturation influences the quality of the scholarly inquiry (Guest et al., 2020; Saunders et al., 2018). The number of 12 was well exceeded as 20

interviews were conducted. This was done to have sufficient raw data available should a number of interviews not be useable due to poor data quality or lack of useable responses. Furthermore, for the purpose of this research only residents were interviewed who had lived through the earthquakes and not left the city since. This was to make sure of a continuity in presence in the city, an opportunity to analyse the reasons why these residents had not left, and their connection to place and the role transitional servicescapes may have played. Recruitment and interview processes were managed over a period of five months, to allow diversity of participants in terms of demographic, geographic, and residential profiles. Interview data indeed reached saturation until no significant new information was found and coded (i.e., in the case of interviewee P04 who was lastly interviewed chronologically). The quality of interview data met and exceeded the expectation of a research design for 12 interviews (Guest et al., 2006) during the data collection period, and all interviewees answered all questions with no missing information. Thus, all interview data was included in data analysis with no cases that had to be deleted.

The descriptive statistics show that 13 interviewees identified as female and seven as male. The average age was 51.95 years (females:

Table 1
Interviewee profiles.

Interviewee ID	Gender	Age	Length of residence in years
P01	Male	74	70
P02	Male	39	32
P03	Female	77	31
P04	Female	68	68
P05	Female	57	19
P06	Female	58	20
P07	Female	57	19
P08	Female	40	15
P09	Female	60	30
P10	Male	73	47
P11	Female	26	8
P12	Male	63	30
P13	Female	59	37
P14	Female	22	22
P15	Female	58	22
P16	Male	28	8
P17	Female	52	16
P18	Male	64	25
P19	Female	27	9
P20	Male	37	13

Table 2
Keywords and quotes reflecting place attachment.

Dimension of place attachment	Keywords from interview data	Quotes from interview data
Place identity	Cantabrian; citizen; belong; lifestyle	<p>“It has definitely made me feel like a part of it.” (P07, 57 years, female)</p> <p>“I feel I belong here.” (P18, 64 years, male)</p>
Place dependence	Working; settled down; comparison	<p>“I have been working in the central city since 2001, (...), so yeah it’s basically home.” (P13, 59 years, female)</p> <p>“This is the first city I have adopted, and I do feel an attachment to it. I go to other cities and it is not Christchurch.” (P18, 64 years, male)</p>
Affective attachment	Proud; pride; like; love	<p>“I like Christchurch and all my friends are here, family is here so that is where I want to be.” (P10, 73 years, female)</p> <p>“Lots [of attachment] ... Love it.” (P17, 52 years, female)</p>
Social bonding	Family attachment; friends; colleagues; Riccarton Cricket Club; mother; husband	<p>“[The family] they were here, we did lean on each other.” (P03, 77 years, female)</p> <p>“I like Christchurch and all my friends are here, family is here so that is where I want to be”. (P10, 73 years, female)</p> <p>“My family, my mother and my husband and his family they are all here ...” (P15, 58 years, female)</p>
Natural bonding	Flower; plant; natural	<p>“I am attached to the empty lots that had hundreds of wildflowers in them and had medicinal plants.” (P19, 27 years, female)</p> <p>“I still love the natural environment.” (P20, 37 years, male)</p>
Place memory	Historic attachment; past	<p>“Even though in my mind it was 50 years ago now, it was a pipedream, it’s happened, so I have connected with that.” (P01, 74 years, male)</p> <p>“We used to come here and got to the movies and go to dances. There is such an attachment, like the good old days.” (P04, 68 years, female)</p>
Place expectation	New; going to be; growth; expectation; faith	<p>“It is going to be a dynamic, young, vibrant city again – that is the attachment.” (P05, 57 years, female)</p>

“I loved the old buildings that were originally in Christchurch but at the time there were some areas of Christchurch that were ... a little bit grungy, ...neglected and not working for the city properly ... The earthquakes have propelled us more into the 21st century ... into the future and it has given us a clean slate and we can now create this city the way we want [and the experiences we want].” (P07, 57 years, female)

“The loss of open places ... have forced the powers that be to think of these places as spaces rather than places where they can erect another building, which may or may not help the city.” (P01, 74 years, male)

4.3. Rebuilding place attachment and CZX via transitional servicescapes

From the interview data and the thematic map transitional servicescapes emerge as an essential theme in relation to Christchurch and its perceptions of a city of permanent buildings combined with the

transitional projects. Data analysis shows that routine CZX were disrupted by the damages due to the earthquakes in the CBD. Nevertheless, transitional servicescapes filled the gap for people to reconnect to the city providing access to amenities and resources (Rosenbaum et al., 2017), as pointed out by interviewees:

“The temporary buildings, for example, the Re:START Mall or the Gap Filler projects or any other art installations have ... kept people ... involved.” (P09, 60 years, female)

“The temporary buildings, art installations are quite impressive, ...Re: START Mall was quite helpful for girls or whoever loves shopping, still can go there shopping as well, ... and a lot of activities around the Riverside, you can even play table tennis there, it was quite a lot of fun in and around the city.” (P08, 40 years, female)

Transitional servicescapes successfully re-enable person–place interactions as replacement of elements of the city post-disaster (Rose-nbaum et al., 2007), strengthening place dependence as one reflection of place attachment in terms of reliance on amenities and resources (Zhe et al., 2023; Rosenbaum et al., 2017). Data analysis further shows that place attachment is maintained and re-mobilised via sentiment attachment formation in the replaced citizenship experiences, as the above quote shows:

“The temporary buildings, art installations are quite impressive, ...it was quite a lot of fun in and around the city.” (P08, 40 years, female)

Transitional servicescapes created interpersonal interactions amongst citizens and between citizens and service providers (Tombs and McColl-Kennedy, 2010), as the following quote signals:

“It’s helping to encourage more socialisation.” (P07, 57 years, female)

Accordingly, transitional servicescapes facilitate rebuilding place attachment via place, process and person (Scannell and Gifford, 2010), as well as enabling novel CZX. The scapes also contribute to residents’ wellbeing (T. Chen et al., 2021; Klaus, 2022; Rosenbaum et al., 2007), besides fulfilling their commercial service and/or retailing function:

“Pop-up structures like Re:START Mall, Gap Filler projects, Dance-O-Mat, other art installations and projects in the city play a positive role and they help keep the city feeling alive.” (P02, 39 years, male)

“The temporary buildings ... made people feel a little bit more secure.” (P05, 57 years, female)

5. Implications, limitations, and future research

5.1. Theoretical implications

To augment theory, this empirical paper has taken Rosenbaum et al.’s (2007, p. 55) call to action and investigated “person–place relationships to develop [the] transformative service research paradigm” of *transformative places*, introduced in this paper. By empirically analysing transitional servicescapes (Finsterwalder and Hall, 2016) in a disaster setting which has disrupted residents’ pursuance of everyday citizenship experiences (CZX; Klaus, 2022) and their place attachment (Chen et al., 2014a), this research shows that enabling the return to consumers’ everyday lives and experiences, such as shopping and leisure activities amidst extraordinary circumstances, can create a level of normality (Finsterwalder, 2010). However, while these experiences are deemed “everyday”, in an earthquake context residents’ lives have been altered. Embedding everyday experiences in novel transitional servicescapes appears to have engaged people and “re-attached” them to their city and to one another, and lifted their spirits and wellbeing (N.C. Chen et al., 2014a; T. Chen et al., 2021; Rosenbaum et al., 2007). These are important findings to extend existing literature by adding to the bodies of research on customer experience dynamics (Klaus and Kuppelwieser, 2021), CZX (Klaus, 2022), particular in regard to consuming in the inner

city (Grimmer, 2021); and post-disaster literature on people–place interactions (Silver and Grek-Martin, 2015). Moreover, this work advances knowledge on the dynamics of place attachment (N.C. Chen et al., 2021) in the interplay of changes to the environment (disaster) and subsequent changes to the built environment (destruction of servicescapes) and implications for human actors' continued or renewed place attachment.

From a TSR perspective, in addition to the above mentioned introduction of *transformative places* this paper has augmented the knowledge base in regard to the dynamics between attachment, experiences, transitional servicescapes and wellbeing. Furthermore, transitional servicescapes, although only temporary, can be viewed as important repositories of resources (Rosenbaum et al., 2017) available to consumers through interacting in these novel space–scape resource combinations (Finsterwalder and Hall, 2016). These resources have been found to improve residents' sense of wellbeing (Rosenbaum et al., 2017).

Adding to the body of conceptual developments, by using the tripartite PPP framework by Scannell and Gifford (2010) connected to the place attachment dimensions as advanced by N.C. Chen et al. (2021), the PPP were aligned with service research's notion of servicescapes and the extended service marketing mix (Booms and Bitner, 1981). Equally, this work has also added new knowledge to the emerging topic of uncertain servicescapes (Kuppelwieser et al., 2023) by focusing on the affected population.

5.2. Practical implications

This paper puts forward that the concept of *transformative places* should also be applied to other contexts where wellbeing and maintaining a sense of place are crucial. These could be both disaster and non-disaster related. For example, in a disaster context temporary scapes could be used to create temporary hubs for residents where they can meet and resources are distributed, such as after a flooding. The *practicalities* of material resource provision (*place dependence*) in such a hub can be combined with immaterial *pleasure* advancing attributes to strengthen *place identity* during such uncertain times and uncertain servicescapes (Kuppelwieser et al., 2023). Here, transitional scapes as social anchors could also be offering elements of psychological relief through *social bonding* with other members of the community to enhance wellbeing. Equally, transitional servicescapes can also be used in a non-disaster setting to enhance place attachment. For example, when a new housing subdivision is built without having the complete infrastructure at the ready, although residents are already moving into their homes, temporary meeting points or stalls can be set up. These can be pop-up canopy tents on yet vacant sub-division greens, manned with volunteers and branded with the sub-division logo on tent fabric and volunteer outfits, to bring people together and start creating a sense of local placeness. When engaging with the new residents in the transitional servicescapes, this can be achieved by, for example, co-designing a model version of, or giving suggestions for, what a community area on the green should look like.

Moreover, city planners elsewhere should be made aware of the important nature of transitional servicescapes for both disaster and non-disaster contexts and transitional scapes' leverage in regard to residents' attachment, wellbeing and citizenship experience. For non-disaster contexts, this can be put into motion by forming associations of city planners and servicescape owners, such as retailers, to not only jointly map out where in the city their own pop-up scapes could supplement their permanent scapes but also where other temporary servicescapes could be placed (Rosenbaum, Kim, et al., 2021). This is to cater to citizens' consumption needs and drive better customer experiences (Grimmer, 2021; Klaus and Kuppelwieser, 2021, 2022), but also to create a more balanced tapestry of transitional scapes across a city that attracts people to different areas, some of which might not have received as much foot traffic as others. Equally, for disaster settings, such

association can plan ahead to map locations for safe spaces (Finsterwalder and Kuppelwieser, 2020a) where transitional servicescapes, e.g., hubs for police, firefighters, first aid, distribution of food, clothes, blankets, and pop-up shops can be established.

On government or city council level, policies and frameworks should be updated to define requirements and design standards for a range of transitional servicescapes for different contexts. These requirements and standards should relate to the fluidity of scape in relation to space (Finsterwalder and Hall, 2016) and consider a) dimensions and spatiality, i.e. scape size and shape in relation to space size; b) colour schemes and branding; c) dismantlability and adaptive recomposition ability, i.e. ease of (dis- and re-)assembly and flexibility in altering shape; and d) enablement of human interaction.

6. Limitations and future research

The study has been undertaken in a specific context and city servicescape. Replicating the study in other settings might result in different findings. Moreover, this study has focused on one group of citizens only, namely residents which had been present throughout the earthquakes and not left the city. Investigating other citizens, such as former residents, returning residents, new residents or even visitors might return different levels of attachment. These and other groups should be investigated in future research to compare the dynamic nature of place attachment as well as the role transitional servicescapes might play for these individuals. Equally, the organisations and initiators that have intentionally put into place these transitional servicescapes (Finsterwalder and Hall, 2016; Finsterwalder and Kuppelwieser, 2020b), require further analysis to better grasp their understanding of place attachment and subsequent transitional servicescape design intentions.

Moreover, as this research is exploratory in nature it thus follows similar pathways in terms of its generalisability compared to other qualitative research. In other words, its generalisability is limited but results are indicative. Any intention to generalise the results for a different or wider population, a more expansive qualitative research in other comparable contexts would have to be carried out to solidify the results. Equally, a subsequent quantitative study for the focal context should be instigated by carefully designing and employing the survey method for this vulnerable earthquake setting.

7. Conclusion

The present study has empirically revealed the crucial role of transitional servicescapes in maintaining or re-energizing individuals' sense of place and place attachment. By connecting research streams from disaster science, environmental psychology, TSR and customer experience, a novel TSR paradigm labelled *transformative place* is suggested that binds together the disciplines to enable in-depth investigations into the changing nature of attachment, citizenship experience and wellbeing in disaster contexts. Providing and viewing activated space–scape configurations as resources enables citizen-consumers to (re-)connect with the city via ordinary interactions and experiences, at times these might occur in extraordinary circumstances, such as disasters, but might equally occur in other contexts where citizens and their cities need to reconnect.

Declaration of competing interest

The co-authors declare no conflict of interest.

Data availability

Data will be made available on request.

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Appendix. Interview guideline

- Details of the interviewee:
 - What is your first name?
 - How old are you? What is your gender?
 - How long have you lived in Christchurch?
 - Where do you live?
- How were you affected at the time of the two major earthquakes?
- Why did you stay when so many people left the area in the months following?
- How have you been personally affected by the rebuild of Christchurch?
- Can you please describe how you perceive and feel about Christchurch?
- How would you describe your relationship with Christchurch? How has it changed since the earthquakes?
- What role have the landmarks and buildings that were lost during the quakes played for you in relation to Christchurch? Can you explain why you feel that way?
- What role have the temporary buildings (e.g. Re:start Mall), art installations or gap filler projects (e.g. Dance-o-Mat) played for you in the aftermath of the earthquakes? Can you explain why you feel that way?
- Can you please talk about whether you feel attached to Christchurch? Why do you feel that way?

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