Geographies of ageing and disaster: older people's experiences of post-disaster recovery in Christchurch, New Zealand

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Abstract

It was 12:51pm on Tuesday the 22nd of February when a 6.2 magnitude earthquake struck the Canterbury region in New Zealand's South Island. This earthquake devastatingly took the lives of 185 people and caused widespread damage across Christchurch and the Canterbury region. Since the February earthquake there has been 15,832 quakes in the Canterbury region. The impact of the earthquakes has resulted in ongoing social, material and political change which has shaped how everyday life is experienced.

While the Christchurch earthquakes have been investigated in relation to a number of different angles and agendas, to date there has been a notable absence on how older people in Christchurch are experiencing post-disaster recovery. This PhD research attends to this omission and by drawing upon geographical scholarship on disasters and ageing to better understand the everyday experiences of post-disaster recovery for older people.

This thesis identifies a lack of geographical attention to the emotional, affective and embodied experience of disaster. In response to this the thesis draws upon qualitative material collected from a six months fieldwork period to better understand the ways in which everyday life is lived out in an environment which has been social and materially altered. This thesis identifies three main interrelated themes which are productive for advancing understandings of how older people are situated in a post-disaster context. The first is that the concepts of emotion, affect and embodiment matter as they help inform how disasters are experienced and negotiated and the implication this has on various social and spatial relations. The second is that the disruption of the disaster to everyday places has implications on senses of belonging which is illustrated in highly temporal and affective dimensions. The third theme highlights the importance of recognising mundane and everyday practices as a means of coping and persisting with ongoing impacts of the disaster. This thesis argues that older people should not be seen as passive or homogenous agents in a disaster context but, in fact, are experiencing highly emotional impacts of disaster.

Contents

ABSTRACT 2

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 5

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES 6

LIST OF APPENDICES 7

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION 8

1.1. ACADEMIC RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS 11
1.2. SITUATING THE THESIS: AN OVERVIEW OF DISASTERS AND AGEING 13
1.3. THE RESEARCH CONTEXT: THE CHRISTCHURCH EARTHQUAKES 19
1.4. RESEARCH AIMS AND QUESTIONS 23
1.5. THESIS OUTLINE 24

CHAPTER TWO: EXPLORING THE GEOGRAPHIES OF DISASTER 27

2.1. INTRODUCTION 27
2.2. APPROACHING DISASTERS: PREPAREDNESS, VULNERABILITY AND RESILIENCE 28
2.3. DISASTER PREPAREDNESS 33
2.4. GEOGRAPHIES OF VULNERABILITY 35
2.5. GEOGRAPHIES OF RESILIENCE 38
2.6. IMPACTS OF DISASTERS: SITUATING OLDER PEOPLE 42
2.7. OLDER PEOPLE AND THE CHRISTCHURCH EARTHQUAKES 50
2.8. CONCLUSION 55

CHAPTER THREE: EXPLORING GEOGRAPHIES OF AGE AND AGEING 56

3.1. INTRODUCTION 56
3.2. APPROACHING GEOGRAPHIES OF AGEING: HEALTH, MOBILITY AND PLACE 59
3.2.1. Geographies of ageing and health 59
3.2.2. Geographies of ageing and mobility 63
3.2.3. Geographies of ageing and place 65
3.3. RE-THINKING GEOGRAPHIES OF AGEING: LESSONS FROM CHILDREN'S GEOGRAPHIES 69
3.4. EMBODIED GEOGRAPHIES OF AGEING 71
3.5. EMOTIONAL GEOGRAPHIES OF AGEING 72
3.6. AFFECTIVE ATMOSPHERES OF PLACE 74
3.7. CONCLUSION 77

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCHING POST-DISASTER GEOGRAPHIES 79

4.1. INTRODUCTION 79
4.2. "DOING" POST-DISASTER RESEARCH 80
4.3. “"DOING" RESEARCH WITH OLDER PEOPLE 83
4.4. RESEARCHING EMOTION AND AFFECT 86
4.5. RESEARCH DESIGN: ORGANISATIONAL SPACES AND NARRATIVE INTERVIEWS 89
4.5.1. Entering the field 90
4.5.2. In the field 91
4.5.3. Leaving the field 99
4.6. ANALYSING QUALITATIVE DATA 101
4.7. RESEARCH ETHICS 103
4.8. CONCLUSION 105

CHAPTER FIVE: EMOTIONAL, AFFECTIVE AND EMBODIED ACCOUNTS OF AGEING IN POST-DISASTER CHRISTCHURCH **106**
5.1. INTRODUCTION 106
5.2. SITUATING EMOTION AND AFFECT 107
5.3. CONCEPTUALISING EMBODIMENT 108
5.4. AFFECTIVE, EMOTIONAL AND EMBODIED GEOGRAPHIES OF DISASTER 109
"It was like a horror movie…but it was real" *109*
"I want my old girl to be shining when she goes down" *116*
"That fear is something I will have for the rest of my life" *124*
"It's okay to cry" *128*
"It is only when you feel it that you know it has happened" *133*
5.5. AGEING AND POST-DISASTER RECOVERY 135
5.6. CONCLUSION 137
CHAPTER SIX: GEOGRAPHIES OF POST-DISASTER: ABSENCE, EMERGENCE AND LINGERING **140**
6.1. INTRODUCTION 140
6.2. "CHRISTCHURCH WAS THE ENGLISH CITY, THE GARDEN CITY" 141
6.2.1. City Centre: Absence *145*
6.2.2. City Centre: Emergence *150*
6.2.3. City Centre: Lingering *158*
6.3. "IT IS A HOUSE BUT NOT A HOME" 160
6.3.1. Home: Absence *164*
6.3.2 Home: Emergence *170*
6.3.3 Home: Lingering *172*
6.4. CONCLUSION 174
CHAPTER SEVEN: PRACTICES OF PERSISTING AND COPING WITH POST-DISASTER RECOVERY **176**
7.1. INTRODUCTION 176
7.2. GEOGRAPHIES OF PERSISTING AND COPING 178
7.3. NARRATIVES OF COPING WITH THE NIGHT-TIME 179
7.4. NARRATIVES OF GRIEF AND LOSS 184
7.5. EVERYDAY PRACTICES 186
Walking *186*
Singing and music *190*
Pet ownership *195*
Religion and spirituality *199*
7.6. CONCLUSION 203
CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSIONS **206**
8.1. SUMMARY OF CHAPTER CONCLUSIONS 206
8.2. REVISITING THE RESEARCH AIMS AND QUESTIONS 210
8.3. EMOTIONAL, AFFECTIVE AND EMBODIED GEOGRAPHIES 211
8.4. COPING WITH DISASTERS 221
8.5. THESIS REFLECTIONS AND AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH 222
APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET **226**
APPENDIX B: DETAILS OF RECORDED RESEARCH MATERIAL **230**
APPENDIX C: FIELD DIARY NOTES FROM A BUS JOURNEY **231**
REFERENCES **237**

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List of Figures and Tables

Figure 1: Aerial view of Christchurch 20
Table 1: Thesis Research Aims.. 80
Table 2: Research themes and interview questions 98
Figure 2: Building works in Christchurch's city centre 114
Figure 3: Christchurch City rebuild information centre.................................... 115
Figure 4: Derelict space in the city centre where buildings once stood 115
Figure 5: Emotional language in public space 129
Figure 6: Innovativeness and creativity in open space 131
Figure 7: What is our future? 131
Figure 8: Public Responses: 'What does public space look like?' 132
Figure 9: Streets once lined with house now remain empty 142
Figure 10: Demolition work in the city centre 142
Figure 11: Image of a ballerina similar to the one which was shared with Florence and the group 153
Figure 12: Disaster symbolism in the home 161
Figure 13: Jenny looking at a picture of old home before it was demolished . 164
Figure 14: A temporary garden: Plants in buckets.. 167
Figure 15 Grief and loss - field diary notes 184
Figure 16: The Rockers of Ages leaflet – Sing you way out of the earthquake blues.. 192

List of Appendices

APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET ...ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.

APPENDIX B: DETAILS OF RECORDED RESEARCH MATERIAL .... ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.

APPENDIX C: FIELD DIARY NOTES FROM A BUS JOURNEY .... ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.

Chapter One: Introduction

> We were trying to live life normally but we were under a lot of pressure because we didn't know if our home was going to be repaired or what they were going to do. We didn't know what the future was. There were thousands of major shakes even after the biggest one that everyone knows about in February 2011. Everything has just been so different since that day. *[Maureen and Pete, aged 74 and 78: Interview Extract, March 2015]*

> After the big one happened I was just in a constant state of shock…I was worse than I am now…every time the place started to rock…you were very, very conscious all the time of another one…and because of my age, I just wasn't sure how I was going to cope. *[Lucy, aged 82: Interview Extract, November 2014]*

> The Canterbury earthquakes of 2010–2012 have been generation shaping. People living and working in and around the city during this time have had their lives and social landscapes changed forever. [McManus *et al.,* 2015: 69]

Lucy, Maureen and Pete were describing their experiences of the Christchurch, New Zealand earthquakes and reflecting on how the impact of the earthquakes resulted in disruptions to their everyday lives, created uncertainty, and produced enduring emotional and affective responses. The story of Christchurch's most recent earthquakes and aftershocks began with a 7.1. magnitude earthquake at 4:35am local time on Saturday the 4th of September 2010. Commonly referred to as the Darfield Quake, this earthquake triggered clusters of aftershocks and, most significantly, caused the major earthquake of February the 22nd 2011. This occurred on a Tuesday at 12:51pm local time and devastatingly took the lives of 185 people. It also caused long-lasting damage to the city centre and surrounding areas. Since this event, Christchurch and the Canterbury region have experienced thousands of tremors and aftershocks which have halted and delayed the long-term re-development of the region. The impact of the earthquakes continues to affect and shape everyday social and political lives across all strata of individuals and communities within Canterbury.

The Christchurch earthquakes have been well documented in both popular media and academic scholarship. Multidisciplinary research has explored a number of topics, agendas, and the debates which emerged from these events. Geologists

and geophysicists have examined the geological setting (Browne *et al.,* 2012), historical seismicity (Downes and Yetton, 2012), and lateral spreading (Cubrinovski *et al.,* 2012). Interdisciplinary disaster researchers have explored concepts of resilience in relation to senses of place (Winstanely *et al.*, 2015), gender (Du Pleiss *et al.,* 2015), community and social memory (Wilson, 2013), and neoliberal governance (Cretney, 2014). The theme of disaster preparedness has been critically explored through analysis of Maori responses to the earthquakes (Phibbs *et al.,* 2015), support networks (Brogt *et al.,* 2015), and children with disabilities (Ronoh *et al.,* 2015). How vulnerability and resilience is experienced differentially has been addressed through writings on children and young people (Freeman *et al.,* 2015), teenagers (Pine *et al.,* 2015), and communities (Winstanely *et al.*, 2015). Scholarship has also captured urban and public landscape changes in Christchurch through work on urban sustainability and transitions (Wesener, 2015), public space (Brand and Nicholson, 2016), changes in retail shopping behaviours (Ballentine *et al.,* 2013), and tourism (Orchiston and Higham, 2016).

However, despite a proliferation of topics and agendas, there has been a noticeable absence of research that has focused on the lived experiences of post-disaster recovery in Christchurch for those of older age[1]. Nationally, New Zealand's ageing population is growing. In June 2017 it was observed that the growth of the broad 65+ age group was continuing to accelerate, up 25,000 on the previous year. The population of the oldest ages also continues to grow with the 90+ population estimated to be at 30,000 compared to 20,000 in 2007 (Archive Stats, 2017). The figures for Christchurch evidence that it followed similar patterns. The number of older people aged over 65 years is projected to more than double between 2013 and 2043, from 52,100 to 105, 700, and this will result in an increased dependency ratio (Christchurch City Council Figures, 2017). The growth in the ageing population has triggered a small number of reports that have documented and illustrated the need to ensure appropriate disaster planning. Davey and Neale (2013), for example, have used the Christchurch context to explore how organisations working with older people can

[1] In this thesis I use the term older age, older adults or older persons rather than the term 'elderly.' This is because the term elderly has been largely associated with ageist and homogenous perspectives and does not reflect the diversity and experiences of those in later life. See Avers *et al.* (2011) for a longer discussion.

implement age-appropriate forms of preparedness and public education, appropriate forms of immediate disaster response, short and long-term housing, support and care services, and measures to ensure social connectedness and psychological wellbeing. These concerns reflect the scholarship found within disasters and ageing more broadly which have typically explored the needs, capabilities, infrastructure required to support older people in disaster contexts.

Hewitt (1997: 14) argues that disaster research tends to privilege 'technical monologues'. While ageing and disaster research has ensured that there exist appropriate responses to age-related needs and requirements, such approaches have often resulted in an undermining of the value of understanding experience and has subsequently marginalised the lived realities of post-disaster recovery. Geographers have long recognised that people experience places differently on the basis of their age (Hopkins and Pain, 2007). However, within scholarship on the geographies of ageing there remains an absence of literature on how older people experience disasters and post-disaster recovery.

In this thesis I attend to gaps identified within the Christchurch earthquake literature, disaster scholarship, and geographies of ageing. This research examines the experiences of post-disaster recovery by older people in Christchurch. Informed by perspectives from social and cultural geography, I explore the everyday geographies of older people in a landscape which has been socially and materially altered as a result of a series of devastating regional earthquakes. Specifically, I examine the implications that the Christchurch earthquakes have had on the everyday geographies of older people and how these are shaped and made meaningful through emotions, encounters, practices, and spatialities.

This introductory chapter outlines the thesis research context and the research aims. First, I explore the overarching intellectual contributions of this research. Secondly, I provide an overview of disaster and ageing scholarship before presenting the research context in more detail. Thirdly, I discuss my three research aims. Finally, I conclude the chapter by outlining the structure of this thesis.

1.1. Academic Research Contributions

This doctoral research critically explores older people's experiences of post-disaster recovery in Christchurch and in doing so provides three novel intellectual contributions to existing geographies of ageing and disasters. This research aims to:

1. Enrich geographical understandings of age and ageing

Hopkins and Pain (2007: 287) acknowledge that there has been limited geographical attention to older people's lives; 'beyond mapping ill health and service provision, the critical literature on old age is miniscule'. The preoccupation of old age as a social problem, rather than a problematised identity, generates perceptions that the study of old age is conceptually and methodologically mundane (Pain and Hopkins, 2010: 79). Such perspectives have resulted in the geographical studies of old age being somewhat marginalised in comparison to scholarship concerning gender, race, ethnicity, and sexuality. While significant contributions can be found in studies of care (Milligan and Wiles, 2010), mobility (Schwanen *et al.,* 2011, 2012), and place and health (Andrews *et al.,* 2004), inroads are still required to mainstream the study of old age and ageing into the geographical research.

Old age and the experience of ageing are central to this thesis. Through examining old age in a post-disaster context, I explore old age in relation to everyday uncertainties and precarities, and examine what this means for affective and emotional accounts of ageing. I bring to the fore possibilities of thinking about old age and experiences beyond conventional social relations to encapsulate the experiences of old age in relation to manifold material, non-material, as well as human and non-human encounters and practices. Such an approach goes beyond thinking about older people as passive subjects in the context of wider social and cultural processes and provides an opportunity to consider how older people meaningfully and actively interpret and shape their everyday lives.

2. Develop greater knowledge of the emotional dynamics of post-disaster environments

The immediate disaster recovery phase which occupies the time-period following a disaster event is a subject of both political and popular attention while the

longer-term recovery process and the emotions involved appear to receive – in comparison – less consideration (Whittle *et al.,* 2012). Disaster studies, broadly speaking, transcend several disciplinary fields ranging from engineering research which considers the functionality of buildings and infrastructure in a disaster context, to anthropological research which considers the intersection of disasters and human-environmental relations with regard to social cultural changes (Oliver-Smith, 1996). A somewhat common feature found in disaster research literature is the emergence of a set of discourses framed around concepts such as 'disaster risk reduction,' 'vulnerability' and 'resilience.' While such terms certainly have a role to play, emphasis on the idea of resilience (for example see, Hayward, 2013 and Wilson, 2013) often serves to defend and strengthen the political economic *status quo* (Grove, 2013), creating discourses and analysis that frequently emphasise a reinstatement of order involving those very institutions and relations that helped to create the given vulnerability and instability in the first place (Cloke *et al*., 2017).

This thesis provides a critical reflection on such overarching concepts found within conventional disaster literature and attends to certain knowledge gaps which exist in understanding the geographical meanings of longer term recovery in a post-disaster context. In particular, I build upon the work of those social and cultural geographers who are interested in exploring the emotive meanings of post-disaster recovery (for example Morrice, 2013 and Adams-Hutcheson, 2014, 2017) to better understand the affective and emotional responses that occur in the mid-to long term recovery period. Such an approach not only adds value to the existent disaster scholarship but speaks to wider literature on emotional geographies more broadly.

3. Make methodological contributions to research approaches with regard to older people

This research is underpinned by a qualitative methodology. While qualitative approaches have become firmly embedded within geographical research, to date there remains limited discussion about the nuances of doing qualitative research with older people. Reflections which do exist voice the difficulties of conducting such research, for example, Higgins (1998: 858) states 'it should come as no surprise that conducting research with elderly people can be challenging and problematic'. While there are indeed challenges which are outlined in Chapter

Four (and indeed challenges which can also be found across all different forms of social research), there are also opportunities. This involves thinking creatively about how the research is conducted, the nuances within the research process and what these might illustrate, and how relationality affords a set of discussions which are instrumental in shaping the research process. This thesis contributes to understanding the conducting of qualitative research with older people and explores what it means to conduct gerontologically sensitive research.

1.2. Situating the thesis: an overview of Disasters and Ageing

The thesis embarks upon the challenging task of exploring and integrating two currently distinct bodies of literature; the literature on disasters and the literature on geographies of ageing. Presently, both literatures are significant in volume and attend to a number of different intellectual trajectories. Exploring older people's experiences and teasing out the range of emotional responses is the motivation of this research and the disaster context is one which affords an opportunity to think critically about the role of place and experiences. This section now introduces key points concerning disasters and geographies of ageing. This section serves as a useful departure point for Chapter Two and Chapter Three which explore these themes in more detail.

Disasters

The study of disasters is an expansive field with concepts such as earth, natural, and environmental hazards often being used interchangeably with the concept of a disaster. The range of disciplines and experts who explore the themes, ideas and topics within this field are equally broad resulting in the ideas and concepts being interchangeably deployed. It has also meant that the study of disasters and hazards has blurred disciplinary boundaries. Dominey-Howes (2018) identify that the study of earth hazards is primarily concerned with the analysis of potentially hazardous events such as tsunamis, earthquakes, drought, hurricanes, bushfires and so on. Earth hazard experts employ analytical tools such as modelling, forecasting, observing, and measuring, to better understand predictability and the circumstances of the given event. Whilst recognising multiple and contested terms, hazards can be defined as:

> a process, phenomenon or human activity that may cause loss of life, injury or other health impacts, property damage, social and economic disruption or environmental degradation [UNISDR, 2017]

Disasters, however, are more generally understood in relation to:

> underlying social, political, economic, cultural, religious contexts, and other structures, processes, and conditions that operate in relational scales from the local to the global that result in potentially hazardous events becoming actual disasters [Dominey-Howes, 2018: 3]

As a result of its physical and human concerns, the study of disasters and hazards has long been embedded within geographical scholarship. However, in the dawn of the Anthropocene where the common discourse is that of catastrophe, crises, instability, and insecurity, or as Clarke (2014: 19) notes 'the Anthropocene could be the disasters to end all disasters', critical disaster scholarship continues to be of valuable significance. This research broadly utilises the notion of the disaster as opposed to understandings associated with natural hazards.

The origins of hazards and disaster scholarship lie in the pre-enlightenment era where extreme events were understood as punishable acts caused by God. While the intersection between science and religion caused tension and friction in this field, from the 17th century to the early 20th century the study of disaster and hazards witnessed rapid scientific research which led to the subject of geology emerging with scientific methods and models used to understand disaster events. From early to mid-20th century, disasters and hazards were exclusively understood in scientific terms. This was at least until Prince (1920) started to identify the role of human behaviour in disasters. This triggered the rise of socio-behavioural approaches in hazard and disaster research which started to examine the underlying vulnerabilities caused by politics, planning, economics, and other socio-demographic processes (Dominey-Howes, 2018). By the mid-20th century it was widely acknowledged that hazard and disaster scholarship was divided into two main paradigms; the hazards paradigm, and the alternative paradigm (Wisner *et al.,* 2014; Dominey-Howes, 2018). The hazards paradigm continued to place emphasis on the physical environment as a means by which to understand both the causes and processes of hazards. The alternative paradigm considered the broad field of social, behaviour, and political economy

science which, by and large, examined hazards and disasters in a societal context. The aim of examining disasters in a societal context was to consider how a range of social processes associated with economics, the political, and the social, influenced patterns of vulnerability and reduced resilience capacities. The broad and substantial field of human and social research continues to be multidisciplinary and thus produces conflicting and varied approaches to hazards and disasters.

The concepts of vulnerability and resilience continue to underpin much of the present scholarship on hazard and disaster, and it is rare to find writing concerning disaster research which does not consider these terms. Concepts of vulnerability and resilience themselves are contested and subject to multiple definitions. Chapter Two explores these in more detail. Nevertheless, common definitions include:

Resilience:

> the ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate, adapt to, transform and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions through risk management [UNISDR, 2017].

Vulnerability:

> The conditions determined by physical, social, economic and environmental factors or processes which increase the susceptibility of an individual, a community, assets or systems to the impacts of hazards [UNISDR, 2017].

The concepts of vulnerability and resilience are often represented in modular form to explore the interconnections between hazards and societal context (see, for example, Cutter, 2003). Over the years, models and diagrammatic representations have grown increasingly detailed in order to illustrate the complexity between natural environments and human society across scales; from local to global. However, the usefulness of such models, along with notions of vulnerability and resilience have been subject to broader critiques (Cretney, 2014; Chandler and Reid, 2016; Weichselgartner and Kelman, 2015). For example, Weichselgartner and Kelman (2015: 249) suggest that resilience as an 'all-encompassing idiom increases the danger that the term becomes an empty

signifier that can be easily filled with any meaning to justify any specific goal'. Coupled with this perspective, Cretney (2014) raises concerns about the use of the concept of resilience in political spheres where resilience as a concept has often been employed to justify particular actions, and projects which reinforce the political hegemonic *status quo*. In addition, producing diagrammatic representations of resilience and vulnerability leads to concerns about how individual experiences are represented and may obscure opportunities to pay attention to the narratives and practices associated with disasters.

The research for this thesis did not attempt to identify or situate itself with one or more of the many hazards or disaster traditions. Rather, the research acknowledges the scholarship on disaster and employs it as a leverage in thinking critically about environments in post-disaster recovery. More specifically, this thesis attends to the precarity and uncertainties produced by the many modalities of the disaster and explores how this shapes and influences everyday life. To attempt to move away from diagrammatic, linear, and rigid representations of disasters, this research qualitatively explores how older people experience disasters and post-disaster recovery. To focus on the nuances and complexities of experience this research employed concepts and understandings relating to emotion, affect and place.

Geographies of ageing

The study of age and ageing in geography emerged during the 1970s and 1980s and produced the sub-disciplines entitled 'geographical gerontology' and 'the geographies of ageing'. Around this time there was a set of dedicated publications in *Progress in Human Geography* which examined the migration patterns of the elderly (Warnes, 1981, 1990), phenomenological experiences of ageing (Rowles, 1986), and social constructions of old age (Harper and Laws, 1995). Being the first to consider ageing and old age beyond health preoccupations meant that these were considered landmark papers (Andrews *et al.,* 2006). Following the emergence of age as a geographical topic of study there has been a proliferation of topics, agendas, concepts, and theories within geography and ageing research.

Geographies of ageing looks at the 'reflexive, transactional, and mutually constitutive relationships between older people and the spaces and places in

which and through which age and ageing occurs' (Skinner *et al.,* 2014: 778). Scholarship which explores geographies of ageing is broadly concentrated into three distinct bodies of research. The first concerns the spatialities of ageing. Coupled with expertise from population and demographic studies, spatialities of ageing involve a number of different agendas. Topics include: exploring population trends, demographic profiles, and movements of older people (Warnes, 1981, 1990); identifying thematic concentrations including patterns of health and health care (Pickle *et al.,* 1999), and examining the varied settings and environments of old age and ageing, such as retirement villages (Laws, 1994; McHugh, 2003) along with the home (Pain, 2001). The aim of researchers looking at spatial approaches is to map out the terrain of ageing and to explore how these patterns can inform planning, policy and infrastructure developments. Such perspectives often highlight the uneven geographies of ageing and inequalities associated with access to health and care.

The second vector of research is that which concerns place embedded experiences of ageing. Contributions to place embedded experiences of ageing have emerged from perspectives such as humanism, feminism, and other critical theoretical lenses (Skinner *et al.,* 2014). They have explored ageing in relation to health, care, and wellbeing. Within these perspectives, research has explored the relationship between health, care-giving and care receiving, and a range of important questions have been asked relating to who is providing care, how is it formally and informally recognised, and what this means for the socio-spatial relationships in which caring practices are carried out (Dyck *et al.,* 2005; Milligan and Wiles, 2005). Adopting holistic understandings of health and wellbeing, geographers have also explored the role of place in the lives of older people and place as an important factor in thinking about living and ageing well (Kearns and Moon, 2002). Geographers' attention to the role of place has also been considered extensively in the context of ageing. Recognising place as dynamic, contested, problematic and so on, geographers have explored how everyday places such as the home, the community, neighbourhoods, and residential homes (Brickell, 2012; Dyck *et al.*, 2005; Lager *et al.*, 2013; Peace *et al.*, 2011; Williams, 2002; Andrews and Phillips, 2005), shape personal identities, senses of place, and experiences of ageing.

The bodies of research which consider the spatial patterns of ageing and the role of place in experiences of health, wellbeing, and ageing, have dominated much of the geographical discussions on ageing. However, there is also a third body of research found within ageing studies which is receiving growing attention. This is concerned with emotional and embodied accounts of ageing. The concept of the everyday is now common place in geographical scholarship. Everyday geographies recognise that it is not only the extraordinary or spectacular which must capture our interest but also the mundane and banal that are of critical importance (Skelton, 2017; Clayton, 2017). Studies of the everyday appreciate the prosaic moments of day-to-day life and recognise that these are valuable for understanding socio-spatial relations. Thinking, then, of everyday geographies in the context of older people has revealed that older people carry out full, emotional, and embodied lives. These perspectives have reflected on the idea that the home, for example, is not simply a place of dwelling but also a place of meaning, attachment and identities (Dyck *et al.,* 2005). This realisation has, therefore, moved focus away from perspectives of older people as passive subjects and instead recognises them as being active in the creation of meaningful socio-spatial lives. Emotions are also significant in embodied experiences of place (Anderson and Smith, 2001). The body as a micro-scale site has received increasing amounts of attention within geographical scholarship (see, for example, Longhurst, 1996, 1997) which has created opportunities to re-consider perspectives of the ageing body. Bodies of older age are often discussed in relation to fragility and decline. However, emotional and embodied geographies enable bodies of older age to be viewed 'in a myriad of ways, as discursive sites, as representation, and as a real corporeal surface for experiences' (Skinner *et al.,* 2014: 784).

While geographers have started to pay attention to the emotional and embodied experiences of ageing, the amount of research in this field to date remains rather limited. Whilst there have been explorations of emotional and embodied experiences across places such as the home, neighbourhood, and community, there has been less attention paid to the ways in which disruptions to notions of place, and the precarities which arise from this, shape individual experiences of ageing. Skinner *et al.* (2014) suggest that while the geography of ageing has progressed from its initial spatially-focused origins, its development does not

compare with the broader intellectual trajectories found within the discipline. The authors point to research associated with non-representational and more-than human geographies as avenues for thinking further about the complexities and experiences of ageing.

In this thesis I draw upon notions of emotion, affect, and embodiment to understand the experiences of ageing in a landscape of post-disaster recovery. In Chapter Three I expand on the geographies of ageing in more detail and suggest that perspectives can be adopted from those found in children's geographies which have considered the emotional, embodied, and non-representational accounts of ageing. Using the post-disaster landscape affords the possibility to think critically about everyday place in which lives are lived out and how uncertainties and precarities impact on how older people make sense of disaster and how this feeds into the geographies and practices of ageing.

Having outlined the overarching themes and perspectives in which this thesis is situated, I now turn to explore the context in which this research was carried out.

1.3. The Research Context: The Christchurch Earthquakes

Located in the Canterbury region in the South Island of New Zealand, Christchurch City and its inhabitants have become well acquainted with the frequent tremors and aftershocks created by the September the 4th 2010 earthquake. It has been long recognised that New Zealand is one of the most geologically vigorous landmasses in the world. Located on several active fault lines associated with subduction of the Pacific plate in the east under the Australian plate in the west, New Zealand regularly experiences mild to severe earthquakes. In the last 100 years, there have been several notable events including the 1929 Murchison (South Island) earthquake which had a magnitude of 8.2 and caused 9 fatalities, and the 1931 Napier (North Island) earthquake which was lower on the Richter Scale (magnitude 7.8) but caused a devastating 256 fatalities.

Figure 1: Aerial view of Christchurch

This thesis reflects on the more recent earthquake events which have occurred in the Canterbury region and the implications that these events have had on the city of Christchurch. Christchurch is the largest city in South Island and is the third largest urban area in New Zealand. At time of the 2013 census there were 436,056 people living in the greater Christchurch region. [2] The city is situated on the east coast of the country and is distinctively characterised by: the nearby Port Hills which straddle the city and Lyttelton Harbour, the Southern Alps mountain range in the backdrop, the Avon River which meanders through the CBD and the numerous recreational parks, gardens, and open space which give Christchurch worldwide recognition as the 'Garden City'. See Figure 1 which is an aerial view of Christchurch (photography by Lloyd Homer[3])

Since September the 4th 2010 - when the Darfield earthquake struck - the Canterbury region has been affected by several thousand quakes and aftershocks which have impacted the region. Every part of social and political life has been affected in one way or another. Adams-Hutcheson (2014) comments that the distinctive feature of the Canterbury quakes was (and is) the ongoing nature and plurality of these events. The temporality – when the quakes occurred – and plurality – the frequency of these occurrences – is extremely significant in

[2] http://www.stats.govt.nz/Census/2013-census/profile-and-summary-reports/quickstats-about-greater-chch/population-change.aspx
[3] Photograph available at: https://teara.govt.nz/en/photograph/4926/christchurch-rooftops

understanding the emotional journey of those who have been affected by the events and the everyday post-disaster geographies which continue to persist to the present day.

It was 4:35am on the 4th of September when the Darfield earthquake occurred. This event was not predicted and therefore came as a shock and surprise to geological scientists familiar with the area. The location of the earthquake was identified as being on an unknown fault 9km southeast of the town of Darfield which is located 40km west of Christchurch (Potter *et al.*, 2015). While this earthquake caused only a few injuries and no fatalities, it has had significant ongoing physical and emotional implications for the region. Following the Darfield earthquake, there were major flows of mud and silt from liquefaction and aftershocks have been strong and frequent (Potter *et al.*, 2015). Yet, more significantly, for those in the region, this was the beginning of 10,000 aftershocks which shaped a range of complex emotional responses to the shaking ground – such as the feelings of anxiety, fear, and helplessness.

The aftershock which occurred at 12:51pm on February the 22nd 2011 was both destructive and fatal. This aftershock struck approximately 6km southeast of Christchurch city and was extremely shallow, centred at a depth of only 5km on a previously unknown fault (Potter *et al.*, 2015). Most significantly, this event claimed the lives of 185 people and resulted in damage estimated at around $20-30 billion NZD. The event resulted in the loss of much of the city centre with main inner-city buildings weakened from the previous Darfield earthquake. Most notable was the complete destruction of the six storey Canterbury Television building, and the Pyne Gould Corporation building which both collapsed and caught fire. These two sites claimed over half of those who lost their lives as a result of the earthquake.

This event captured world-wide attention. The day after the event, the New Zealand government declared a national state of emergency. Authorities quickly cordoned off Christchurch's CBD and help centres were swiftly established in Hagley Park. The cordon remained in place in parts of the city until June 2013. Power companies restored electricity to 75 per cent of the city within three days, but re-establishing water supplies and sewerage systems took much longer.[4]

[4] https://nzhistory.govt.nz/page/christchurch-earthquake-kills-185

One implication of the disaster was the adoption of a range of different necessary practices. Due to the loss of water supply, damage to sewage systems, and loss of electricity, those affected were required to obtain water through tankers, desalination pots, and bottled water. Porta-loos, chemical toilets, and man-made holes in back gardens were also used by those in severely damaged parts of the city. Such activities became distinctive characteristics for those living in Christchurch and the surrounding areas. The emotional and heroic stories of this event have been well-documented (Hayward, 2013; Mutch, 2015; Gawith, 2011).

This thesis is an exploratory study of the experiences of ageing in a post-disaster context. Arguably, this research could have been carried out in a range of different settings that have experienced, or continue to experience, uncertain and unsettling impacts of disaster. However, this research was conducted in Christchurch for a number of contextual and pragmatic reasons. First, the temporality and plurality of the Christchurch earthquakes is a distinctive regional characteristic which is recognised both nationally and globally. The ongoing-ness of the earthquake events means that the earthquakes are not just considered as shocking one-off events that are viewed in isolation of day-to-day lives but, rather, due to their frequency have become embedded in everyday life. The distinctive temporality and plurality provides an opportunity to consider how ongoing uncertainties and precarities are lived out. Secondly, experiences of old age have been marginalised in this context. As outlined at the beginning of this chapter, the Christchurch earthquakes have been explored in relation to a number of themes and agendas yet experiences of ageing and old age in this context has not yet been addressed. This thesis therefore responds to calls made by the Women's Voices project (du Pleiss *et al.,* 2015) who have argued that dominant narratives, discourses and development initiatives are overarchingly masculine in focus. Such approach has meant that there has been an undermining of the roles women and other marginalised members of society in the rebuilding of Christchurch. Thirdly, Christchurch provides a useful context to consider how the experience of recovery for older people can be understood in relation to urban change. The topic of age friendly cities has been receiving increasing academic attention (Plouffe and Kalache, 2010; Buffel *et al.,* 2012). Age-friendly cities consider the ways in which places and spaces can be developed to ensure their accessibility and inclusivity for older people of varying needs. As Christchurch is

going through a rebuilding stage, the context provides helpful illustrations by which to consider everyday spaces and places for older people in the context of urban development. Fourthly, this research has been situated within wider collaborations between different academic institutions. Researchers at the University of Exeter, the University of South Florida, and the University of Canterbury have been developing initiatives to better understand the informal political arenas and landscapes of wellbeing post-earthquakes. This research has been developed alongside wider collaborations and has therefore been able to make intellectual contributions to ongoing debates and discussions about post-disaster recovery in Christchurch.

1.4. Research Aims and Questions

The main aim of this thesis is to explore the experiences of post-disaster recovery for those of older age. Despite the extensive body of research that has explored disasters and ageing from a variety of perspectives, little attention has been paid to the emotional and everyday realities of ageing in a landscape of post-disaster recovery. This research therefore has three main aims which each include a number of exploratory research questions:

Research Aim 1: **To better understand emotional, affective, and embodied accounts of disaster and post-disaster recovery.** This research aim explores several interconnected questions such as: *How is the concept of disaster understood, interpreted, and negotiated*? *What are the meanings of recovery and how are these spatially and temporally situated? What are the subjective understandings of ageing in a post-disaster context? What is the emotional language employed and how does this intersect with a range places? How can the disaster and recovery be understood as affective and embodied?*

Research Aim 2: **To better understand post-disaster geographies through the notion of place.** This research aim explores the interconnection between older people, place and disaster and address several questions such as: *How are places understood and made meaningful in a post-disaster context? How does the disaster disrupt understandings of home, city, neighbourhood and other significant places? Is there an emergence of new, unusual and unexpected encounters with places? What are the challenges and opportunities for sense of*

place and belonging? How does this feed into wider themes associated with disaster?

Research Aim 3: **To better understand the practices associated with post-disaster recovery.** This research aim brings together Research Aim 1 and Research Aim 2 to understand how older people 'do' post-disaster recovery. This research aim explores several questions such as: *What are disaster related practices? What are the meanings associated with these practices? What resources are associated with these practices? What role do these practices play for subjective meanings of recovery? To what extent are these practices emotional or (un)consciously performed? Is there a distinct spatiality to these practices?*

The research aims drove this thesis and the empirical chapters address the research questions that were asked. The research aims are interconnected with geographical concepts such as emotion, affect, and embodiment. These concepts are explored in more detail in the context of the empirical chapters. I now outline the structure of this thesis:

1.5. Thesis Outline

This chapter has introduced the research context, rationale for study, and the aims and questions which underpin the thesis.

In Chapter Two and Chapter Three I examine the key geographical, and wider social science, literature pertinent to this thesis. In Chapter Two I expand on geographical understandings of disasters and explore the ways in which disasters have been examined. This includes critically exploring concepts of preparedness, vulnerability, and resilience before exploring how older people have been situated in disaster literature. This chapter finishes with an overview of the Christchurch earthquakes and discusses studies which have looked at older people in the Christchurch context.

In Chapter Three I review the literature associated with geographical and theoretical understandings of age and ageing. In this chapter I outline significant gaps which exist within the geographies of age literature around conceptualisation of age, place, emotion, and practices. In an attempt to address such gaps I then explore the literatures associated with post-phenomenological,

non-representational, and children's geographies. I argue that these literatures offer opportunities to think critically about the experience of post-disaster recovery for those of older age as it expands the discussion to embrace alternative ways of understanding experiences such as defining experiences as developed beyond just looking at social relations to consider experiences shaped from beyond the human world.

Chapter Four outlines the methodological approach utilised in this research. In this chapter I outline the methodological considerations of doing post-disaster research, focusing on researching emotional and affective geographies as well as the nuances of doing research with older people. I then outline the research strategy adopted and discuss the practicalities of entering and leaving the field, conducting narrative interviews, and carrying out ethnographic research with Age Concern Canterbury. I then detail the analytical approach taken to analyse the qualitative material and how this informed the three empirical chapters. Integrated throughout this chapter are my own personal reflections of conducting this fieldwork and how I negotiated various expected and unexpected encounters. This chapter concludes with a discussion of ethical considerations.

Chapter Five is the first of three empirically focussed chapters. In this chapter I explore the emotional, affective, and embodied experiences of the disaster. I draw upon interview narratives and field diary extracts to examine the subjective understandings of the disaster and how these are represented as emotional, affective, and embodied. This chapter explores narratives recounting the days of the event and various moments and events which have occurred outside of the significant earthquakes. This chapter argues that: emotions serve as powerful tools in which to make sense of the complexities of disaster; geographies of disaster can be considered affective through atmospheres and bodily sensations; and that the body serves as an important register of post-disaster experiences.

In Chapter Six I explore the narratives of older people's encounters with various post-disaster places. In this chapter I focus on two particular post-disaster places: the city centre, and the home. Within each of these sites I explore the emotional and affective responses older people have with these places and how these extend beyond both time and space. Through looking at themes associated with absence, linger, and emergence, this chapter reveals a range of material and non-material encounters and provides a qualitatively rich discussion of what living

in a post-disaster landscape means as well as how this feeds into wider understandings of older people and place relations.

Chapter Seven explores the coping and persisting practices adopted by those I conducted research with. This chapter begins by exploring themes associated with coping with the night time as well as with grief and loss before examining understandings of how recovery is practiced and performed. This chapter moves beyond normative understandings of resilience and vulnerability as employed frequently in disaster research and provides an empirically rich insight into the mundane and significant practices carried out by those of older age. This chapter illustrates how the disaster continues to shape everyday practices.

In Chapter eight I summarise this thesis in relation to the research aims and key findings. In this chapter I discuss how looking at emotion, affect, and embodiment, can help to illustrate the lived experiences of post-disaster recovery and how it is important to consider ordinary and mundane practices as meaningful coping strategies. This chapter discusses some thesis reflections and provides some directions for further research.

Chapter Two: Exploring the geographies of disaster

2.1. Introduction

Geographers have contributed substantially to the intellectual understanding of disaster research with explorations of the geophysical dynamics of natural disasters and the social, economic, and political implications that natural disasters have on individuals, communities, and populations.

Agnew (2013: 455) outlines how disasters and their impacts intersect with a range of wider interconnected geographical processes and states that 'disasters just happen but catastrophes are made'. In other words, it is the chain of events and processes surrounding the disaster-event which results in the disaster(s) being recognised as catastrophic events. For example, disastrous droughts and crop failures become catastrophic famines when food-management systems fail to adequately respond to the challenges associated with drought. Agnew suggests there are two distinct views concerning disasters and catastrophes. The first favours a more pessimistic perception where disasters are considered to be natural events that are unavoidable and the consequences can be catastrophic extending all the way to complete social and political collapse. The second view recognises that disasters do not actually need to happen and are the result of human failure to prepare adequately for contingencies and that it is therefore possible to live in a world without catastrophe. The two opposing views outlined by Agnew (2013) illustrate the importance of geographical scholarship to explore the interconnections between the human and the physical and how various social and political processes shape and are *shaped by* disaster events.

This chapter expands on the key points concerning disasters outlined in Chapter One. This chapter explores geographical literature on disasters and addresses key concepts found within studies of older people in a disaster context. I begin by exploring general approaches to disasters before outlining three core concepts found within geographical discussions of disasters: preparedness, vulnerability, and resilience. I then go on to explore the overarching impacts of disasters on communities and individuals, addressing both the geographical unevenness of the impacts and the emotional geographies associated with such events. I then turn to research that identifies how disasters impact specifically on older people

and in doing so I highlight key concepts and omissions within this body of literature. Building on this foundation, I present an account of the Canterbury earthquakes exploring the geographic and social impacts of the quakes, and current understandings of older people's responses to living in a landscape of post-disaster recovery. The chapter concludes by highlighting the noticeable absences in these narratives about older people; the significance of emotion, place, and coping in a post-disaster landscape. Overall, the chapter provides the foundation for the subsequent account which explores in more detail the geographies of ageing and outlines what approaches can helpfully be utilised in a post-disaster context.

2.2. Approaching disasters: Preparedness, Vulnerability and Resilience

Disasters may be considered as out of the ordinary events which can do considerable harm to the physical and social environment (Erikson, 1978). While disasters often occur at a specific time and place, they are situated in wider networks and processes where their impacts – human and physical – can extend through time and space to have influence on a range of practices and processes such as political mobilisation and philanthropic support. When disasters occur, there is an urgent need to respond to them in order to maintain life, property, and infrastructure, and to attempt to retain a 'sense of routine and normality' (Bruhn, 2011: 102). Exploring what a return to routine and normality looks like in practice is helpful in thinking critically about the power and agency of individuals and communities, the social, political, and economic infrastructures involved in post disaster responses (such as governmental and financial organisations), as well as what post-disaster landscapes and recovery look like.

Disasters can refer to a range of events such as a financial crisis, events triggered through the war on terror, technological disasters, and natural disasters such as the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami, Hurricane Katrina in 2005, or the 2010 Haiti earthquake. This section briefly explores different perspectives on disasters and focuses particularly on geographical contributions to disaster research through concepts of preparedness, vulnerability, and resilience. These concepts helpfully clarify what currently constitutes disaster geographies. It is these concepts which are often employed when exploring older people in a disaster setting.

Disasters, in their different forms, are explored across a range of disciplines which contribute to the considerable scale, breadth, and depth of existent disaster research. The diverse disciplines include geography, anthropology, sociology, history, planning, science and technology (volcanology, geomorphology, seismology, engineering and other geophysical approaches), development studies, and health research. Definitions and approaches to disasters, of course, vary, and perspectives have also shifted over time. For example, Quarantelli (2001) illustrates how disasters have changed from being seen, historically, as *Acts of God* to *Acts of Nature* to *Acts of Men and Women*. In the 'aftermath of a disaster today, the finger of blame invariably points towards another human being. Government officials, big business or careless operatives are held responsible for most disasters' (Furedi, 2007: 483). While the disciplinary field of disasters remains diverse and complex, geographical approaches to disasters have considered a number of perspectives including physical, human, and more-than-human. This section continues by outlining some of the contributions made to these perspectives.

Pelling (2011) argues that a physicalist orientation – the concentration of managing the physical processes to reduce human and economic loss in the face of disaster – has come to dominate disaster management policies globally and as a result there is too little attention paid to human factors in disaster origins and outcomes. In addition, Hewitt (1983) identifies a noticeable gap in disaster literature – the absence of human experience and places. The tendency to focus on diagrammatic process and 'technological monologues' (Hewitt 1997: 14) has resulted in viewing human experience in isolation rather than paying attention to 'actual places or conditions and the material interactions or human experience involved' (Hewitt, 1983:13). Hewitt further argues that there are common trajectories found in disaster scholarship which continue to view disasters as an intractable issue that require scientific rationale and objectivity to address and solve the problems. Such an approach is often reflected in diagrammatic representations of disaster processes which tend to obscure the human and non-human experience, as well as the underlying processes of political power and the realities of the complex, temporal, and emotional experiences of post-disaster recovery. A result of a physicalist approach therefore gives rise to questions concerning the representation of disasters and their subjects whilst also offering

the opportunity to develop insights into the more personal and emotional experiences of post-disaster recovery.

To somewhat remedy the absence of human experience, sociologists have focused on the impacts of disasters on communities and societies. Erikson (1994: 147) describes the concept of disaster as:

> a distinct event that disrupts the accustomed flow of everyday life. They have a beginning, and a middle, and an end. They do not begin and end at random. They have a certain magnitude, yet are easily taken in by the eye.

The ways in which disasters shape everyday life is explored in sociological literature which focuses upon place and identity where the disruptive nature of disaster brings into question the bonds that people have with their socio-physical environments and how these can be fractured and rebuilt (Brown and Perkins, 1992) as well as patterns of responses and behaviours before, during, and after a disaster event (Barton, 1969). Sociological research has also explored how disasters are not always negative in impact as the social cohesiveness and collective actions which follow an event may help to promote a greater sense of belonging (Quarantelli *et al.*, 1977).

Recognising that much disaster research fails to adequately address the complexities of personal disaster experiences, Adams-Hutcheson (2014; 2017) employs scholarship from emotional, psychoanalytical, and affective geographies to disrupt mainstream disaster perspectives. Her doctoral thesis (2014) explored the relocation experiences of individuals following the Christchurch earthquake to the Waikato region of New Zealand's North Island. With much disaster relocation research focusing on health implications using social psychology models, there is a lack of understanding about the representation of places and the experiences of relocation following a disaster and the subsequent complexities that arise in relation to place, bodies, and materiality. Adams-Hutcheson (2014) addressed this absence, using psychoanalytical ideas of the unconscious and understandings of intersubjective space between perception and the body to examine post-disaster relocation experiences through three different lenses. First, an examination of the ways in which bodies continue to be affected by the earthquake. Adams-Hutcheson (2014) argued that the disaster experience hooks into, and remains within, bodies long after the event has taken place. Secondly, an exploration the ambivalence associated with relocating and

how this is reflected in different energies, moods, and strategies. Thirdly, the role of the built environment in creating and sustaining affective and emotional encounters with those who relocated, along with developing an understanding of how buildings continue to have a dynamic relationship with relocatees which is negotiated and shifts over time. The body and affect therefore became central components of Adams-Hutcheson's work. In her work, she illustrates how the body can simultaneously contain within, and radiate outwards, emotion and affect associated with post-disaster. These emotions and affects, which may manifest as tensions, fears, hopes, apprehensions and so on, all shape the negotiation of spaces (such as managing fear in public and private settings) and relationships with family members, strangers and material objects which continue through post-disaster relocation.

Approaches to disasters have been varied. Along with significant variations in how physical and social factors are emphasised within approaches to disaster, there are also important temporal differences embedded within such approaches. It is common that most of the research explores the immediate aftermath of the event in contrast to the longer recovery period. As Whittle *et al.,* (2012: 60) state:

> While the event itself, and the emergency response and rescue phase that occupies the days immediately following the crisis, are the subject of both popular and political attention, the longer-term recovery process, and the emotions this entails, tends to be ignored by the wider media and the policy debates that follow.

Whittle *et al.,* (2012) address the absence of the extended recovery phase in policy and research in the context of the Hull (UK) flooding events of 2007. These flooding events triggered vast volumes of reports as a part of the Flood and Water Management Act (HM Government, 2010) which outlined approaches to flood management. Yet rarely is longer-term recovery explored. While disaster recovery is at times explored in other documents (e.g. the Pitt Review, Cabinet Office, 2008) it is illustrated in rather misleading terms. The Pitt Review suggests that measurements of recovery can be mapped against the return to normality or even 'regeneration' which suggests a 'better' condition than previous. Whittle *et al.,* (2012:61) identify three compelling counter-arguments to how recovery was understood in this context. First, the authors argue that what exactly constitutes normality is not fully understood and therefore creates assumptions of what a normal context looks like and does not reflect the dynamics of celebration and

crisis which are a key feature of everyday life. Secondly, they reflect on the problems associated with using diagrams in disaster research. They argue that representation of recovery does not take into account pre-existing vulnerabilities that may act to produce the disaster and using a gradual upward curve to represent the recovery process does not reflect on the how ‘recovery is often a protracted, disjointed and frustrating experience with its own highs and lows’ (Whittle *et al.,* 2012: 61). Finally, there is an omission of recovery as a relative and contingent process which is both individual and context specific. Whittle *et al.* (2012) suggest that the gaps in longer term recovery understandings can be addressed through greater attention to emotion - and specifically emotion work - in post-disaster contexts. Such an approach provides a greater appreciation of how recovery is experienced.

While the critical disaster scholarship outlined above looks at the absence of the role of emotion and affect and the limited attention within existent literature to the longer-term recovery phase, other critics have raised issues about the anthropocentric orientation of disasters (Dominey-Howes, 2018). The arrival of the Anthropocene has reinforced such discussions. If it is believed, then the epoch of the Anthropocene:

> Is one in which for the first time in geological history, a single species—Homo sapiens— has emerged as a planetary scale force, shaping both the surface morphology of the planet and the functioning of the Earth system itself [Dominey-Howes, 2018: 1].

The Anthropocene is, as the name suggests, a human-orientated narrative. Clark (2014) and Dominey-Howes (2018) reflect on disasters in the context of the Anthropocene and point to a need to re-consider the role of inhuman and more-than-human. Due to giving preference to ourselves and our own needs in a disaster setting, there has been a marginalisation of more-than-human experiences of injustice and inequality. Gibson-Graham (2014) asks why it is that we give voice to some more-than-human species over others? The answer to this question is complex. However, marginalisation can be considered as a reflection of reinforced societal power structures where the emphasis is on reducing the vulnerability of human populations.

This section has briefly outlined different approaches to disasters. In so doing it has identified some omissions within existent disaster scholarship around longer

recovery processes and what this means for individuals experiencing post-disaster recovery, the nuanced political and social processes which are obscured in diagrammatic representations of disaster, and the personal and emotional accounts of post-disaster realities. The empirical chapters which follow within this thesis seek to address some of these omissions by exploring the emotional experiences of post-disaster recovery and how this is situated in relation to changing dynamics of everyday environments. However, before addressing such issues, this chapter first turns to existing literature on geographical disaster which addresses preparedness, vulnerability, and resilience.

2.3. Disaster preparedness

Preparedness names both an ethos and a set of techniques for reflecting about and intervening in an uncertain, potentially catastrophic future (Collier *et al.,* 2004). The emphasis within the idea of preparedness is to develop the capabilities necessary to respond to a series of disruptive future events (Anderson, 2010). Rather than seeking to stop an impending disaster, preparedness focuses its energies on preventing the disaster disrupting the 'circulations and interdependencies that make up a valued life' (Anderson, 2010: 791), and in doing so seeks to mitigate the effects of an event to enable certain process to continue so as to ensure that a valued life can be sustained. This section outlines key features of preparedness in disaster literature. It examines how geography plays an integral role ranging from understanding the geophysical landscape, the scales of preparedness (from the home, city to the international arena), institutions roles in implementing preparedness practices and how certain knowledges about context shape the way in which preparedness is constructed.

Preparedness finds its conventional home in discussions concerning disaster risk reduction (DRR) and Emergency Management (Sherman-Morris, 2010: 763; Tierney *et al*., 2001). Preparedness is incorporated into the commonly used emergency management model which consists of four phases that are argued to be 'interrelated, non-mutually exclusive and cyclic' (Sherman-Morris, 2010). The main objective of emergency preparedness is for households, businesses, and government agencies to develop suitable tactics for responding when disaster strikes. In other words, preparedness sits alongside mitigation, recovery and response. Mitigation considers the long-term view with regards to disaster

management and uses advanced forecasting models to ensure the collection of the most up to date information, as well as adherence to appropriate building structures, policies and programmes. On the other hand, preparedness focuses specifically on the activities undertaken to limit the implications of an unexpected event.

There is an obvious attention to scale in relation to preparedness. Preparedness activities at individual and household level include being well-resourced with, for example, food and water, a first-aid kit, sanitation supplies, batteries, torches, and a radio. At the community level, activities include the ways in which communities may be impacted by the event, efforts to protect local properties such as sandbagging, protection of the local population by, for instance, evacuation plans, and the management of local disaster response teams and resources. The extent to which preparedness at these levels is effective depends on a range of factors (Tierney *et al.,* 2001). These factors are primarily based on how information is communicated and received; for example, risk information can be unevenly distributed across society based on local community resources and access to media content through internet, radio and TV. In addition, individuals perceive and respond to information differently recognising that levels of threat are subjective and context specific and conflicting sources of risk information can cloud risk communication efforts. While the authors recognise that risk-information can be distributed through other channels such as informal networks, there is less attention given to the spaces in which these dialogues occur and what this means for human and non-human relations with space in the context of preparedness. Such omissions suggest a subtle privileging of top-down forms of knowledge and action without critical attention being given to the ways in which this reinforces pre-existing power dynamics.

Preparedness is a central feature in discussions of disasters with governmental and non-governmental organisations recognising the imperative to protect societies against potential catastrophes. Lakoff (2011: np) argues that while there is very little dispute about the necessity to be prepared, what is less equally shared and understood is '*how* to prepare and what we need to prepare *for'.* Lakoff (2011) uses Hurricane Katrina as a context in which to understand preparedness. He identifies that disaster preparedness and preparedness against a terror threat are addressed through the same governance organisations

and structures and, as such, preparedness for a disaster is often amalgamated with understandings of security. He suggests that there are two main ways in which to think about security. The first, is population security. This is a form of biopolitical security which aims to collect information about population such as health, age, and patterns of consumptions before advancing the implementation of appropriate techniques and infrastructures as a means to mitigate risks presented by natural disasters. This form of security is commonly found within emergency management frameworks. The second, is national security, which stems from Cold War defences and seeks to use military power to defend the territorial integrity of a nation-state against enemies and threats. The government's response to Hurricane Katrina received much criticism. Lakoff (2011) suggests this was due to the privileging of national security and the preparedness associated with defence against terror threats rather than population security which aligns with natural disaster responses. He therefore suggests there is a limit to the concept of preparedness and what it can achieve in a disaster context and further suggests that this is interconnected with diverse mechanisms of response.

The concept of preparedness therefore raises issues about what exactly do we need to prepare for, how do we do this, and what processes and tools are required. A lack of preparedness commonly equates to a greater destructive impact which therefore initiates conversations about the rationale behind preparedness activities, who is responsible for implementing preparedness strategies and who is held accountable when preparedness activities do not go to plan.

2.4. Geographies of Vulnerability

The concept of vulnerability is deeply embedded within disaster literature yet the concept speaks to understandings of precarity, uncertainty, and un-evenness within and between societies more broadly. Vulnerability can be a way of understanding experiences and causes people and organisations to ask, or to answer, questions on how it is that some people or regions are more vulnerable than others and what can be done to reduce or minimise vulnerable conditions. This section explores understandings of vulnerability from environmental and human geography perspectives and what this means for understanding disasters.

Vulnerability:

> broadly denotes physical, social, cultural and political conditions that affect the ability of individuals, families, households, communities and countries to prevent, prepare for, respond to, mitigate and recover from hazardous events and their associated disasters (Dominey-Howes *et al*, 2014: 908).

Accordingly, vulnerability finds its conventional conceptual home within physical and environmental geography where there has been much discussion about vulnerable environments which have an element of risk or fragility. Such perspectives feed into much disaster literature as a way of understanding how some environments, regions, communities, and individuals are more susceptible to adverse disaster impact than others. Cutter (2003: 6) examines the concept of vulnerability and its interconnections with geography. She suggests that vulnerability, or vulnerability science, 'helps us understand those circumstances that put people and places at risk and those conditions that reduce the ability of people and places to respond to environmental threats.' This includes considering the places in which people live and work, the structure of buildings, the frequency of environmental events such as heatwaves, eruptions and tidal waves, the services and infrastructure established to respond to a disaster event, as well as pre-existing social structures such as income/class, age, gender and race. The impact of disaster on different social groupings differ, with those deemed more marginalised in society being more negatively impacted by a disaster.

Geography and vulnerability was discussed in Watts *et al.'s* (1993) seminal research paper. Their research approached vulnerability by thinking about hazards and in particular the powerful structuring of the social and political forces which have the potential to transform disasters into human catastrophes, through processes associated with gender, race, ethnicity, economy and local politics. This perspective expands upon structural analyses of poverty (Sen, 1981) to consider not only how structural forces shape spaces of vulnerability but how these change over time and space in relation to capital and labour markets. Watts *et al.,* (1993) identified three research strands when exploring vulnerability. The first is associated with actual exposure to a potential hazard or crisis event, the second is the implications of being caught up in a crisis, and the third relates to the longer-term consequences of such events. Findlay (2005: 433) suggests that

this approach is helpful in thinking beyond just the natural event as the factor of triggering vulnerability but considers how vulnerability can be produced by the 'cultural, social and economic context in which the individual is situated'.

Findlay (2005) expands on the ideas presented by Watts *et al.,* (1993) and looks at how geographical thinking about space and place shapes understandings on vulnerability. He discusses spatial vulnerabilities - how vulnerability can be placed or situated by investigating spatial context and social relations which work to produce spatial vulnerabilities. In his analysis, Findlay (2005: 430) uses the term 'spatial' to denote the interconnection between society and space and he explores how every 'mapping' of vulnerability is 'fused' through with 'social meaning'. He acknowledges that while 'risk maps' (such as those advocated by Cutter, 2003) provide helpful illustrations of the context, there needs to be a deeper level of empirical analysis. He points to two agendas in particular. First, spatial contexts need to be recognised as not bounded and passive which simply await 'the crash of the gigantic waves on an unsuspecting shoreline' but can be made vulnerable through 'socially embedded positions relative to political, cultural and economic contexts' (Findlay, 2005: 436). Second, while geometries of power produce uneven geographies, social spatialities are also constructed through so-called imaginary geographies:

> By placing boundaries of meaning around individuals, these social spatialities locate people securely inside or insecurely outside circuits of dominant social power. These vulnerabilities are not only socially embedded but also embodied, producing internal vulnerabilities that are every bit as powerful as externally imposed vulnerabilities [Findlay, 2005: 436].

While this perspective should by no means belittle the influence that those in positions of power can have over vulnerable regions and individuals, it does demonstrate how some vulnerabilities might go unacknowledged. These can include embodied vulnerabilities or socially constructed exclusions that affect the weakest in society and this is important to note within the confines of this thesis because older people are predominantly viewed by society as vulnerable yet their embodied and emotional accounts of disasters are underexplored.

Geographers continue to ask questions on where vulnerability emerges from and how it is produced and reproduced (Philo, 2005), what an interdisciplinary or relational approach to vulnerability looks like (Hogan and Marandola, 2005), and

what this means for regions and societies in an ever changing and precarious world (Waite, 2009). Vulnerability is a way of not only understanding the implications of a disaster but also what this means for the individuals and communities which are a part of the disaster space. It is worth thinking critically, then, about the temporalities associated with vulnerabilities (how this shifts over time) and what this means for the ways in which everyday environments are experienced.

2.5. Geographies of Resilience

The term resilience is thought to have originated in physics or ecology (precise origins are contested) but the term is now widely employed in social psychology, disaster management, and organisational studies (Manyena, 2006). In addition it is a 'buzzword' used by government, international finance organisations, NGOs, community groups, and activists all over the world (Cretney, 2014). The ways in which people respond and manage adverse situations such as a disaster is currently best documented through work on resilience. The proliferation of the concept of resilience has not gone unnoticed. For example, Anderson (2015:60) notes:

> Resilience, whatever it is, appears now to be everywhere; the latest iteration of the promise of security, enacted in diverse policies and programmes, offered as a desperate hope of survival in a world of roiling crises, and demanded of subjects, populations and systems. From work training programmes that now teach 'resilience' as a 'business skill' for adjusting to precarious economic worlds (Coutu, 2002), to attempts by urban elites to produce 'resilient cities' in response to climate change (Braun, 2014), 'become resilient' is the refrain made and heard in a world of emergencies and catastrophes in which survival after events is always in question.

However, despite the abundance of its usage, there is little consensus as to what exactly constitutes resilience, what it looks like in practice, and what it means for those who are said to have (or not to have) resilience. A lack shared agreement about the definitions of the term added to a broad interdisciplinary reach presents an element of risk when employing the concept of resilience. Wichselgartner (2015: 1) recognises that 'while an all-encompassing, multi-interpretable idiom has attractions…there is an inherent danger that the term becomes an empty signifier' which can be used to justify a specific goal and for social and political gain. Additionally, Anderson (2015: 60) notes that while it is important to

recognise the diversity attributed to this concept, attempting to find a unifying consensus 'disrupts some of the emerging claims about how and why resilience has proliferated'. Much of the critique of resilience is found in relation to neoliberal ideologies and post-disaster politics where discussions of power, autonomy, and governance take precedent. This section will later reflect on this point however it first outlines the more common and dominant understandings of resilience as often employed in disaster literature.

The most high profile definitions of resilience employed in disaster literature are those provided by particular disaster management organisations. The Department for International Development (DfID) define resilience as:

> the ability of countries, communities and households to manage change, by maintaining or transforming living standards in the face of shocks of stress – such as earthquakes, drought or violent conflict – without compromising their long-term prospects (DfID, 2011: 6).

DfID highlight four common components integral to their thinking on resilience: context (social group, institution and so on); disturbance (natural hazard, conflict and so on); capacity to deal with disturbances (exposure, sensitivity, adaptive capacity and so on); and reaction to disturbance (survive, cope, bounce back, transform and collapse and so on). Following a similar train of thought, UNISDR defines resilience as:

> the ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate to and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions (UNISDR, 2007).

These definitions have become embedded in general civic understandings and are used across communities, nations and governance institutions.

Conventional definitions of resilience are frequently situated within broader understandings of social and ecological systems. Such understandings stem from resilience pioneer C.S. Holling whose work in the 1970s was considered a breakthrough in the field of ecology with regards to knowledge on ecological systems, stability and equilibrium. Holling's work contrasted with the dominant engineering perspective which considered resilience through the ability of a system to 'bounce back' to a steady point of equilibrium after it had undergone

disturbance. By contrast, Holling's perspective of resilience favoured the idea of a zone of stability rather than an equilibrium, the emphasis here being on the extent of disturbance that a system can absorb before the system changes in structure. In addition, Holling proposed that different points of equilibrium can be embedded within a hierarchy of systems. This promoted a greater awareness of the interconnections between social and environmental systems within resilience theory (Gunderson, 2000).

While ecologists have long since acknowledged the impact that humans and other actors can have on the environment, geographer Adger (2000: 348) claims that the concept of resilience has yet to be 'brought across the disciplinary divide to examine the meaning of resilience of a community or a society as whole'. Adger's analysis marries together ideas of ecological resilience with evolutionary systems of natural resources and assesses how they impact upon the communities which depend upon the resources. In so doing, he starts to ask questions about how social scientist can borrow the ideas of ecological resilience and apply it in social contexts.

The applicability of resilience to a range of contexts and situations has meant that resilience has generated much critical attention. Pink and Lewis (2014) use the context of Australian Slow Cities to re-think the concept of resilience. Slow Cities is a movement which is:

> characterised by a way of life that supports people to live slow. Traditions and traditional ways of doing things are valued. These cities stand up against the fast-lane, homogenised world so often seen in other cities throughout the world. Slow cities have less traffic, less noise, fewer crowds.[5]

The qualities of Slow Cities are the processual, relational, and contingent entanglements with a range of constituents of place where there is an interrogation of how the relationships between local groups and global movements are forged, conceptualised, crafted, interwoven, and traversed. In this context, rather than considering resilience as something pre-existing in an individual, community or place, the authors suggest that resilience is "made". By drawing on Tim Ingold's (2013) concept of 'making' the authors argue that resilience can be identified through the particular practices and processes which

[5] http://www.slowmovement.com/slow_cities.php

make up the Slow City movement. These include the strategies used, and the practices employed, to protect the ongoing uniqueness of place. For example, as part of reinforcing or embedding the concept of Slow City in a certain city or town, individuals and communities may take part in wider local, national and international negotiations regarding recognition and support for what makes up the Slow City concept. Such an approach is an illustration of how resilience can be considered processual; as part of a growing movement around change and ideology, affective; where resilience is part of a feeling and understanding of how place is made unique through memory, sensations and local knowledge, and as part of place; as embedded in the context and structures which constitute place. Their approach to resilience suggests a move away from just looking at resilience as an end goal which currently drives urban planning and policy makers to one that considers resilience to have a process which is deeply embedded in local context.

Anderson (2010: 791) suggests that a resilient system is one that can 'adapt, transform and recover post-events'. In the UK context, Anderson (2010) argues that resilience capacities have been built into the very life that strives to be secured. For example, maintaining the social and physical architecture required for humanitarian assistance and spaces which aim to sustain continuity of function and processes for business are part of making the city resilient in the face of unpredictable events. In his later work, Anderson (2015) reflects on connections between resilience and specific economic-political apparatus including neoliberalism. The interconnections between neoliberalism and resilience have received growing attention (see, for example, Anderson 2015; Chandler and Reid, 2016; Scott, 2017; Joseph, 2013; Fillion, 2013). Joseph (2013:38) suggests neoliberalism is a form of governmentality which 'places emphasis on individual adaptability [and] fits with neoliberalism's normative way of mobilising social agents'. Within these discussions there is much attention given to the idea of a resilient subject, an individual 'charged with the responsibility to adapt to, or bounce back from, inevitable shocks in an unstable world' (Anderson, 2015: 61). While ideas about resilience not only produce heterogenous subjects (through a normalised assumption that individuals have shared and equal capacities to respond), it also raises a complex dichotomy of the individual being burdened with self-responsibility and adaptability while

simultaneously being reduced of autonomy and agency (Chandler and Reid, 2015). These discussions about resilient subjects highlight how resilience can be viewed through a political lens and what this means for assumptions about individual capacities to “be resilient” whilst also being critical of the political powers which reinforce these discourses.

Cretney’s (2014) discussion of resilience literature identifies three key issues. First, resilience is often viewed as a framework. However what is more helpful is to consider the underpinning values and motivations of those employing resilience framework and the end goal to which they are applying it. This ensures that a resilience framework is not viewed in isolation but is considered holistically. Secondly, if resilience is held as an aspiration, it is not sufficient to focus solely on continuously preparing for, and recovering from, disasters. Thirdly, Cretney (2014: 637) argues that the ‘hegemonic use of resilience provides extensive grounds for concern’. The lack of understanding about the ways in which resilience is being used by those wishing to perpetuate neoliberal ideology raises concerns about exactly what purpose resilience serves and who for. Such gaps represent both a concern and opportunity for geographers and social scientists alike.

The idea of resilience, then, has been used to cover extensive ground within and between disciplines and serves as a useful point by which to consider society-environment relations. To follow a disaster where there is a shift in how politics and everyday lives are lived, provides fertile ground in which to consider what resilience means in both principle and practice. However, there is a danger in this context that dominant frameworks of resilience will continue to be employed without critical attention to the ways in which they are being ‘subverted for radical or countercultural causes’ (Cretney, 2014: 637).

2.6. Impacts of disasters: situating older people

Having discussed perspectives and approaches to disasters and expanded on core disaster concepts this section explores the apparent unevenness of disaster impacts. The concepts of preparedness, vulnerability and resilience all feed into understanding the differential impacts of a given disaster. For example, a key attraction of the vulnerability concept is that it provokes questions about the uneven effects of a particular disaster on differentiated members of societies

(Mustafa *et al*, 2015). By outlining the uneven impacts of a disaster, it begins to set the scene for the ways in which older people are situated in a disaster context as it is a reflection on how disasters can be experienced differently across social groupings as well as how disasters have the potential to reinforce or fragment pre-existing social inequalities. This section highlights how conventional disaster research using notions such as preparedness, vulnerability, and resilience, also have a tendency to dominate discussions of older people and influence how older people are characterised in terms of understanding disaster and their everyday experiences of post-disaster.

A somewhat commonality which is present in the work on old age and disasters is the intersection with dominant disaster concepts such as preparedness, vulnerability and resilience which, as highlighted earlier in the chapter, themselves have highly loaded and contested meanings. Such terms lack a degree of conceptual depth and results in a certain positioning of the subject as somewhat distant and detached from the context without a full appreciation of the complexities of post-disaster experiences.

Within disaster research literature it is largely acknowledged that impacts of disasters are neither evenly distributed nor uniformly experienced due to pre-existing inequalities and vulnerabilities (Finch *et al.,* 2010). Socially focused disaster scholarship reveals disparities by gender, ethnicity/race, class/income, disability, and age, where experiences differ through the various stages of the disaster cycle from impact through to recovery (see McEntire, 2001 and 2005 for a more detailed discussion). While disasters are experienced differently by different social groupings, it is also well-established that disaster impacts vary geographically across different regions, states, and nations.

The unevenness of disasters is reflected in a range of recent significant events. This section reflects on the 2005 Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans so as to understand some of the uneven impacts of disasters. Hurricane Katrina was one of the United States most catastrophic and deadliest disasters. Federal relief efforts received much criticism which was in part due to delayed and inadequate relief efforts and the insufficient funding that they received/that was targeted towards the area (Seager, 2006). However, Hurricane Katrina also provided fertile ground for wider conversations about the uneven impacts of disasters particularly along racial, class, and gendered lines. The scenes that emerged

from New Orleans shortly after Katrina struck showed pictures of predominantly African-American members of society dead or severely injured. Such images prompted tough and blunt questions from the media about why it was that the disaster impacted these members of the community the hardest (Seager, 2006). Yet while race captured much of the discussion, Seager (2006) also notes that gender impacts were unequal, with women experiencing many more adverse impacts than men. These social divisions are vitally significant and whilst the focus of this thesis is on social differentiation by age key lessons can still be seen to apply thematically if adapted for the different context

Older people are often represented as vulnerable in a disaster context and are therefore at a greater risk of being negatively impacted when a disaster strikes. There are a number of interconnected factors which account for this which vary from the immediate event to the longer recovery phase. Health and physical conditions determine not only the ability of older people to "drop, cover and hold" in the event of an earthquake but also their ability to quickly evacuate a building. Sensory impairments such as hearing and sight loss determine the ability to hear sirens, emergency instructions or navigate in dark or unfamiliar spaces. The longer-term issues are connected with lack of food, water, and sanitation, and how deficiencies in the provisions of such necessities can worsen pre-existing conditions. Social psychologist and health professionals have reported impacts on: morbidity and mortality; levels of stress, distress, depressive symptoms and anxiety; exposure to injury, loss and displacement. Additional factors such as living alone can lead to increased feelings of isolation and poor living conditions (for instance in older buildings), which may also impact negatively on older people following a disaster.

Help the Aged International[6] provides a set of guidelines to help reduce the vulnerability associated with ageing. The guidance includes: addressing older people's needs (including locating older people, consultation and assessment); meeting basic needs (shelter, fuel, warm clothing); mobility; providing them with equal access to essential services (including nutrition and health); social, psychosocial and family needs; and recognising and supporting the contributions of older people. The Help the Aged International guidelines are embedded within

[6] http://www.helpage.org/silo/files/older-people-in-disasters-and-humanitairan-crises-guidelines-for-best-practice.pdf

wider global contexts and issues associated with ageing. These include: global ageing populations, growing isolations and capacity of older people, and gender-based experiences and inequalities. This guideline is used to inform policy, guide service provision and includes a ‘vulnerability checklist’ to identify urgent needs.

While much disaster research explores negative impacts on older people, there is a small amount of research that has highlighted the extent to which older people can ‘cope and recover relatively well’ (Davey and Neale, 2013: 11), as well as the extent to which they can exhibit both vulnerability and resilience in the face of adversity. Kamo *et al’s.* (2011) research on older people following Hurricane Katrina highlighted the fact that although older people represented a high proportion of deaths associated with Hurricane and relocation induced high levels of stress, prior life experience provided them with tools and resources to cope well.

Researching the impact of disasters on older people is driven by the obvious need to ensure minimal impact following a disaster and ensure appropriate measures are in place to aid age-appropriate recovery such as community liaison officers and health care provisions. While there is much work on the immediate aftermath and short-term recovery, there is less which explores the longer recovery period (Raifey *et al.,* 2016). In addition, there is a tendency to employ ‘mainstream’ disaster frameworks and approaches such as vulnerability and resilience - the concerns of which have been illustrated in this chapter. There is, therefore, an opportunity to consider the longer-term post-disaster geographies for older people using approaches which consider more personal, emotional and place specific accounts of post-disaster geographies.

Older people and disaster

The experiences of older people in a post-disaster context is both limited and spread across a range of disciplines such as psychology (Rafiey, 2016; Phifer, 1990; Norris and Murrell., 1988), planning (Eisenman *et al.,* 2007; McGuire *et al*., 2007), policy (Ardalan *et al.,* 2011), and geography (Takahashi, 1998; Morrow, 1999). Such diversity brings with it a range of different perceptions and approaches which prevent the development of both coherent and critical perspectives of older people in a post-disaster context.

This section draws upon three studies which are helpful to understanding the existing empirical research and analysis of older people in a post-disaster setting. First, Howard *et al's.,* (2017) research on the role and value of older people in hazard prone areas in Australia. Secondly, Adams *et al's.,* (2011) research on the correlation between the ageing experience and post- Hurricane Katrina and thirdly, Hrostowski and Rehner's (2012) research on the resiliency of older adult Hurricane Katrina survivors.

In addition to the core research objectives outlined in each study, what these studies reveal is a tendency to orientate themselves around mainstream disaster concepts such as resilience, preparedness, and vulnerability. While this by no means undermines the research in question, it does offer an opportunity to think more critically about what post-disaster longer-term recovery means in the context of the everyday spatial and emotional lives of older people.

Networks, relationships and social capital

Howard *et al.,* (2017) explore older people in the context of natural hazards in Australia. Australia has, in recent years, experienced extreme weather events such as fires and flooding which has led to large scale natural disasters across different parts of the country. Consequently, these events have triggered policy recommendations and implementations based on the lessons learned to address how society can best prepare for, and recover from, such significant events. Within these policy recommendations, different population groups within communities are addressed to highlight areas of need, expertise, and skills to present a comprehensive picture of how that community can function in different stages of a disaster.

Howard *et al.,* (2017: 522) explore this in more detail by focusing on older people on the eastern seaboard of Australia. The premise of their research is a recognition that there has been 'little work done to include older people as agents of change in building disaster preparedness within communities'. Their research was part of a wider regional disaster preparedness project, and to identify their research site and population they used a two-fold approach. First, geo-spatial approaches were used to identify areas of extreme weather vulnerability. Secondly, in these identified areas 'a number of vulnerable populations were identified using demographic and health data' (523). The research then employed

qualitative methods to discern perceptions of risk, preparedness, and capacities to respond. The authors argue that the findings from their study challenge existing framings of older people as purely vulnerable and 'at risk.' They suggest that through networks and relationships – both formal and informal – older people play an integral role in 'generators and enactors of neighbourhood social capital' (532) and that consequently their role in community cohesiveness should not be overlooked. While it is indeed encouraging that this research recognises the contribution that older people can make in post-disaster recovery, it remains somewhat bounded and limited in exploring other possibilities. First, their approach to 'pre-defining' vulnerable populations foregrounds preconceived perceptions about what constitutes a vulnerable subject and how they should and should not be constituted. While the authors argue that older people are not always vulnerable, in doing so they are basing this against pre-established norms and expectations. Secondly, the research situates and explores older people in an array of networks and relationships. While the authors recognise networks and relationship can be both 'formal' and 'informal,' their work does not take into account the dynamics of relationship for example ad-hoc, fleeting, and persisting; this limits the discussion to people-people dynamics rather than also encompassing relationships with the material and non-human.

Ageing and recovery

In 2005 Hurricane Katrina caused unprecedented destruction across the Greater New Orleans area. It has been recorded as being the costliest natural disaster and one of the five most fatal disasters in the United States. Hurricane Katrina received intense media coverage with much emphasis on African Americans as a group disproportionately affected by the hurricane and its aftermath (Seager, 2006). The scholarship that has emerged from Hurricane Katrina offers illustrations of how older people have been researched in a post-disaster setting and what commonalities emerge through such research. Adams *et al.,* (2011) explore the role and position of older people in New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina and subsequent flooding. A key premise of their research was recognising that disasters are more than physical dimensions and that they are shaped by pre-existing social dimensions. The authors draw on Oliver-Smith (1996: 304) who describes disasters as a *crise revelatrice* (a revealing crisis) in which 'the fundamental features of society and culture are laid bare in stark relief by the

reduction of priorities to basic social, cultural and material necessities'. This research reported that it was apparent that older people were negatively affected in that it was members of their social grouping that were the first and most numerous to die. Similar to Howard *et al.* (2015), the authors also bring vulnerability into the discussion by demonstrating that increased vulnerability 'is reflected in experiences of evacuation, care and short term stabilization' (Adams *et al.,* 2011: 248).

The authors are also concerned with the temporal nature of Hurricane Katrina suggesting that 'disasters themselves 'age' in their human and material dimensions' (Adams *et al.*, 2011: 247). While New Orleans was post-hurricane – the time-bounded event of the storm – it was not post- Katrina. Using one of their participant's responses to illustrate this they contend that 'Katrina never really ended. The event, Hurricane Katrina, became the open-ended experience, Katrina"' (Adams *et al.,* 2011: 251). Recognising that recovery is a contentious as well as a temporal term, the researchers explore what this can mean for different age categories. The authors conducted qualitative research with hurricane survivors aged 40-98 and segmented this grouping into two - 40-64 and 65-98. The research lasted up to four years with each participant being interviewed at least three times at intervals of six-eight months. Their research illustrates key findings relating to resilience and adaptation. While older adults in the immediate aftermath were more vulnerable in relation to evacuation and health care needs, in the longer term they demonstrated greater resilience than those who were 'middle-aged.' This was primarily due to the former's survival of 'previous life challenges and knew they could survive, and be happy, with less material wealth' (Adams *et al.,* 2011: 255). In contrast, recovery for middle-aged participants in the study was shaped by ongoing battles with governmental bodies and insurance bureaucracies, caring responsibilities, and insufficient medical care leaving many of the latter 'middle-aged adults with a sense that their bodies and lives were breaking down under the strain on unending adversity' (Adams *et al*, 2011: 66).

This research raises a number of key issues for this thesis. First, it implies that vulnerability is not a fixed state which can be assigned to particular individuals; rather, it is more complex than this – changing over time and space. However, the author's understanding of vulnerability is neither explained nor critiqued.

Instead it is implied that vulnerability is intrinsically resource related, creating tensions around binaries of ‘withs’ and ‘withouts’ which obscure more nuanced practices and processes. Secondly, their reading of recovery through management of bureaucratic states presents dilemmas over power and control, situating the subject in opposition to the ‘power,’ and resulting in always having to (re)define their experiences through these controlled relationships. Thirdly, this research understands that recovery for older people is more nuanced than most research suggests. For example, their research suggests that past experiences play an intrinsic role in capacity to persevere yet does not detail exactly how past experiences are drawn on in everyday spaces and places. In addition, the authors use interview extracts to illustrate entanglements of disaster and ageing process. One quote in particular states: ‘There’s recovery from Katrina and there is the aging process. And it’s hard to tell which is which in terms of your emotions’ (Adams *et al.* 2011: 252). This touches upon the emotional complexities of both recovery and ageing yet there is no expansion on what exactly these emotions are; perhaps assuming a taken for granted assumption on what it means ‘to age’. This therefore presents an opportunity for this thesis to explore further the importance of emotion for both recovery and ageing and what this means for various practices, places, and process in everyday life.

The above studies all explore older people in a disaster context and move away from a focus on health and physical vulnerabilities which often define experiences. While these studies take into account a range of experiences and how these are shaped by social networks and past experiences, there are some omissions which warrant further attention. For example, generating more critical perspectives of vulnerability and resilience in the first instance in order to develop more comprehensive understanding as to how these concepts are understood and what implications this has on the research. Equally research needs to consider a broader understanding of networks. While this predominantly focuses on the social networks – both formal and informal – research could take into consideration the temporalities that exist in and between these networks, and the role of intangible flows associated with emotion, memory, and non-human relations (for example, pets and garden flowers). Thirdly, there is an exclusion of narrative from older people. With attention diverted to impact, process and outputs - ‘reports and studies have included strategies for better responses and

recovery from natural disasters' (Howard *et al.,* 2017: 518) - there is less attention on the actual narrative and process of meaning-making for those older people who are going through the process of post-disaster recovery. The studies focus particularly on the outcomes of living through such events and what this means for social and physical wellbeing. Such an approach is results driven rather than being based on a more qualitative approach and therefore it presents itself as conclusive and thus not subject to change rather than something which is fluid, processual, and dynamic. This therefore obscures the complexities behind these experiences and the narratives which reveal much more than what surface analysis suggests. I will return to these points in the summary of this chapter however, first, I turn to the Christchurch context.

2.7. Older people and the Christchurch Earthquakes

The 2010-2011 Canterbury earthquakes have been well documented in academic scholarship (see Swaffield, 2012; Hutcheson, 2013; McColl and Burkle, 2012; Crowley and Elliot., 2012; Gomez and Hart., 2013; Potter *et al.,* 2015) which has illustrated the range of social, economic and political impacts of the quakes (Potter *et al.,* 2015), and the emotional geographies associated with post-disaster experiences (Hutcheson, 2013; Adams-Hutcheson, 2017).

For geological reasons, it is unsurprising that the Canterbury region has been subjected to numerous earthquake events. The South Island of New Zealand is located on a zone of continental convergence where, under the northern parts of the South Island, the Pacific tectonic plate subducts beneath the Australian plate; the reverse happens under the southern parts of the South Island. The Canterbury region is particularly vulnerable to shaking and liquefaction due to the foundation of alluvial sediment deposited from rivers which flow from the Southern Alps to the Pacific Ocean.

The recent Canterbury earthquake journey began in September 2010 when a 7.1 magnitude earthquake occurred in the Canterbury Plains near the small town of Darfield. While this earthquake caused no fatalities, many older buildings and infrastructure was damaged causing injuries to over 100 people. This marked a bitter beginning for Cantabrians who would go on to experience over 10,000 earthquakes with approximately 400 of the earthquakes having a magnitude that was greater than 4 (see Wilson, 2013). The Darfield earthquake triggered many

aftershocks including the destructive and fatalistic February 22nd 2011 earthquake. This shallow earthquake had a magnitude of 6.3 and claimed the lives of around 185 people and caused much of the destruction of the city centre which continues to exist to the present day.

Potter *et al.,* (2015) illustrate several physical and social impacts arising from the series of quakes which highlight the distinct and emerging disaster geographies associated with these quakes. Physical impacts are extensive and include impacts on: ecology and biodiversity, water quality, air quality, increased flooding risk, earth movement hazards such as rock rolls, landslides and cliff collapse, waste and contaminated lands. Management of the environmental impacts is achieved through seventeen projects led by Environment Canterbury which aims to repair damage and improve the sustainability of the ecosystems.

The impact of the Canterbury quakes varied geographically and socially. Popular media and culture pointed to a ‘tale of two cities’,[7,8] reflecting the uneven impacts of the earthquake across socio-economic populations. The wealthier, less earthquake damaged areas lay in the western suburbs of the city while the ‘poorer’ (lower socio-economic) populations resided in the badly damaged areas in the eastern suburbs. In the latter districts frustrations, emotions and anger ran high in response to delayed action from government officials and civil defence staff. Blog sites were established which recounted the realities of these circumstances. For example, (Hyde, 2011: np):

> Their houses may or may not be intact. Their streets may be clear, broken, or full of silt, or sewage. There are no showers, or ways to wash clothes, or to wash dishes. Or to heat the “must boil” water that is available – assuming they can make it to the nearest water truck, day after day. No refrigeration. No working toilets and precious few portaloos. No face masks to defend against the blown silt. They have no internet either, and usually no phones. The official response has not been enough to contain the growing crisis.

The immediate aftermath of the February quake points to the ‘heroic and honeymoon’ phase (Gawith, nd) where ‘people were all working together with or without portaloos, dealing with aftershocks and liquefaction and cleaning up properties’. Communities were also united in a shared sense of loss, adjustment

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[7] http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/christchurch-earthquake-2011/9731273/Christchurch-A-tale-of-two-cities

[8] http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=11593195

and grief indicating a collective shared experience based on mutual understanding. However, as the blog quote illustrates, persevering through everyday life in these circumstances started to take, and continues to take, an enormous emotional toll for Cantabrians.

A striking feature of the Canterbury earthquakes is the architectural losses that occurred within the city centre. Around 850 buildings have been, or are intending to be, demolished. This has impacted a way of life whereby people no longer work, shop or pass through the CBD. However, this impact has also resulted in creative and enterprising new initiatives such as Gap Filler and Greening the Rubble. Gap Filler reinvigorated the empty spaces in the city centre by bringing together artists, community groups, designers and volunteers to create innovative projects in which members of the public could participate. This included an old-fashioned sports area, a dance-o-mat, a community pizza oven and a space for pop-up entertainment. Greening the Rubble had a similar agenda in which derelict spaces of varying sizes were transformed into community gardens, green spaces, and bicycle maintenance zones. These spaces are characterised by their temporary and transitory nature, as part of a city which is constantly evolving and transforming. An illustration of how these sites can be seen as markers of the continuation of the event of the earthquakes can be found in Cloke *et al.* (2017).

Researching older people and the Christchurch earthquakes

Narratives of older people's disaster experiences and processes of coping have remained surprisingly absent in the Christchurch context. There has been a small amount of empirical research which has explored preparedness (Davey and Neale, 2013), and direct earthquake experiences (Annear, 2014).

A research report produced by Judith Davey and Jenny Neale (2013) provides perhaps the most comprehensive overview of older people and the Christchurch earthquakes. Their report, which is developed from a range of sources, is centred on the concept of preparedness and recovery and is driven by a number of factors. First, is the recognition that New Zealand follows global ageing trends where there is an increase in ageing populations and also an increase in the number of those aged over 85. This growth triggers concerns about the appropriateness and availability of health and infrastructure services required to ensure optimum levels of wellbeing. They argue that planning for such growth

needs to also consider disaster relief and recovery. The second factor stems from recognising that while older people may be vulnerable and disproportionately affected in times of disaster, they can also demonstrate high levels of resilience. Considering this dualism, their report explores the necessity of taking a proactive approach to meeting the needs of older people and recognising their self-effacement and stoicism. Thirdly, they address how communities prepare for, and respond to, disasters such as the pre-identification of those deemed vulnerable, the dissemination of information, and the co-ordination of appropriate services. Their report aims to inform organisations concerned with disaster recovery in the context of an ageing population.

Davey and Neale's (2013) research is focused on three main agendas. First the immediate impacts of the earthquakes, secondly, the longer-term issues associated with recovery and thirdly, lessons for the future. The immediate impacts identified some core trends. These included a reluctance of older people to admit to experiencing difficulties, apprehension about leaving their homes and the knock-on implications of social isolation when surrounding neighbourhoods moved elsewhere, and an increase in reported health issues. Older people were part of the network of recovery efforts ranging from Neighbourhood Support Groups to Canterbury District Health Board and it must be identified that older people themselves were often part of the community co-ordination and support. While there were certainly difficulties associated with housing and health in the immediate aftermath, Davey and Neale (2013) observed that there was a clear commitment to ensure that the older people, where possible, were cared for and housed. The longer-term issues identified in the report are characterised by the delays and bureaucratic processes associated with insurance pay-outs and compensation. Here they identify that older people are becoming embroiled with uncertain promises, management of dubious tradesmen, and at risk of becoming socially isolated as communities fragment. The longer-term issues are associated with post-disaster recovery and include processing the loss of services and places with which they are familiar, and the rise in socially orientated events such as barbeques, shared meals, choirs and intergenerational events. This period is a complex time for managing difficulty and loss with changes and community support. The third section of the report illustrates the lessons for the future and is centred on disaster preparedness which includes appropriate communication, the

promotion of self-help, community development, and strengthening capacity at local and national levels.

This report provides thorough and appropriate evidence for thinking about the concerns and needs of ageing populations in a disaster context. However, there are opportunities to develop further some of the points identified in this research particularly through the lens of emotional and everyday geographies. While such an agenda was clearly beyond the scope - nor was it the intention - of this research, it is helpful to expand on this report to consider the more temporal, emotional, and spatial aspects of post-disaster recovery. For example, it was identified in this report that immediately after the quakes relying on other members of the community helped older people cope. This could be expanded to consider exactly how coping takes shape e.g. through informal, private or public spaces, what other resources are relied on as a means of coping, and whether coping practices differed as a consequence of other social, cultural and geographical factors. This report also explored the implications that the quakes had on mobility, recognising that mobility issues for older people differ compared to those of other age groups. In addition they also explored how older people are often dependent upon differentiated physical factors (such as the body), transport and location of services all impacted upon older people's mobility following the quakes. Again, there are opportunities for exploring these observations further. For example, how has restricted mobility shifted mobility practices and what does this mean for the everyday physical and social environments of older people. Furthermore, how do mobility practices change over time in relation to disaster recovery and other social and geographical factors, and how does this feed into, and shape, narratives of post-disaster recovery.

Another piece of work worth considering for the purpose of this thesis is the PhD research of Michael Annear. His project explores the interactions between ageing, local environment, and health behaviours. Annear explored the psychological and behavioural outcomes of the 2010 and 2011 Christchurch earthquakes among a population of older adults. His study involved researching how older adults responded and adapted to the Christchurch earthquake and in doing so, he concentrated his work on aspects of 'active ageing' – which is made up of elements such as the physical, civil, social, cultural and spiritual. His research involved older adults recording their day to day experiences of life

during- and post-earthquake. They did this through writing down notes and experiences in diaries which Michael later used to inform his analysis. While his research highlighted the seemingly obvious – that most older people suffered from traumatic stress and other shock related injuries, there was also evidence of the older people being highly resilient. Due to life experience, limited dependencies and so forth, some older adults were able to adjust in a surprisingly proactive way.

2.8. Conclusion

This chapter has explored the geographies of disasters and the Canterbury earthquake. It has illustrated that disasters continue to be a complex and diverse field of research. However, what remains on the periphery of disaster scholarship is attention to the personal and emotional experiences of disasters and what this means for everyday social-place relations in longer term recovery. The core concepts of preparedness, vulnerability, and resilience, have multiple and contested meanings yet it is these which continue to remain at the forefront of disaster scholarship. What these concepts illustrate first and foremost is a drive to protect human populations yet the underpinning processes which inform these frameworks such as knowledge, power, neoliberal ideologies uneven geographies, values and motivations have yet to be fully interrogated.

The uneven impact of disasters remains a pressing concern where it is regarded that 'minority' populations are those most affected. Here older people are identified as the most vulnerable and subsequently much research continues to address the health and psychological impacts of disasters. The Christchurch context demonstrates that while there has been work to address the preparedness and resilience of older people in a post-disaster context there is little which looks at the narratives of coping and what this means for everyday place relations. The empirical chapters in this thesis attempt to address these gaps in existing scholarship by exploring more thoroughly the emotional geographies associated with disaster, everyday post-disaster places, and practices of coping.

Chapter Three: Exploring geographies of age and ageing

3.1. Introduction

Cutchin (2009:440) noted that:

> The study of the geographical dimensions of aging has never reached its full potential. ... Only a fraction of the depth and scope of the collected theories, concepts, and methods of geography has been applied to gerontological thinking and research.

Using Cutchin's observations, this chapter explores geographical literature pertaining to the studies of age and ageing. In so doing it outlines the scope, opportunities and possibilities to rethink approaches to, and understandings of, old age and the experiences of ageing in a post-disaster context.

Chapter Two outlined geographical approaches to disasters more broadly and illustrated how older people have been positioned in a post-disaster context. The chapter demonstrated that older people and disasters are often explored in relation to pressing issues which require the identification of solutions that are focused on the short to long term following a disaster. These issues and themes are associated with health, mobility, and place, and include social and physical networks such as communities and neighbourhoods. The themes arising from studies of older people in a post-disaster context arguably map onto the profile of geographical research and ageing more broadly.

This chapter is divided into two overarching sections. The first explores geographical research on ageing through the themes of health, mobility and place. It is worth noting at the outset that these themes are, at times, intrinsically interconnected. For example, discussions of ageing in relation to health and place feature many overlapping concerns and debates. Geographical research on ageing is largely built upon positivist traditions as an attempt to explore long term concerns of old age and ageing (Skinner *et al.*, 2014). While there has been a move away from positivist perspectives towards phenomenological and experimental understandings of age and the ageing experience, the geographical study of ageing continues to be considered as 'conceptually and methodologically mundane, preoccupied with old age as a social problem rather than a

problematised identity' (Pain and Hopkins, 2010: 79). Such perspectives have implications on how older age is perceived and represented in a post-disaster context; as a social issue interconnected with orthodox understandings of vulnerability. The second part of this chapter uses research in children geographies as a leverage to explore old age and ageing in relation to embodiment, emotion and atmospheres of place. There is considerable value in employing such scholarship; it can develop and expand geographical approaches to age and ageing to better understand the post-disaster experiences for those of older age. Such approaches can expand the ageing discussion to incorporate geographical knowledge which considers the complexities of post-disaster experiences for older people beyond those offered by more orthodox perspectives associated with health, mobility, and place

Like other social identities, defining age and the process of ageing can be challenging. Yet rather than striving to reach conclusive definitions, it is worth acknowledging that it is within the array of perspectives that opportunities lie for critical engagement. However, how age is defined, how it is perceived, and the array of underlying perspectives that may exist, can have significant implications for those individuals and the contexts in which they age. Rather than setting out a definition of age and ageing to be employed in this thesis, this section outlines the common ways age and ageing have been defined. This reveals a breadth of perspectives in the age and ageing discussion which have been shaped by a range of factors including time (for example, how definitions of ageing have shifted over the years) and context (for example, geographical location).

In everyday society age and ageing possess the largest form of commonality but also have significant aspect of difference; commonality in that everyone ages and difference in that it can be an obvious marker of differentiation between different age groups: the young, the middle-aged and the old. Ageing is largely recognised as a biological process; where an individual undergoes processes of biological and physical changes from birth to the end of their lifetime. To mark these changes, this passage of time can also be defined chronologically, often with a distinct number: an age. Retirement age is an example of how age can be defined chronologically with many nations using the age of 65 as a guideline for retirement, thereby providing a label of when 'old age' has been reached. While biological and chronological understandings of age are the dominant narratives

in everyday discourse, age and ageing has been problematised by critics who instead argue that age, like other social identities such as gender, class and sexuality, is socially constructed (Harper and Laws, 1995). Recognising age as socially constructed means that understandings of place, representation and the body gain greater currency. Social constructionist approaches consider the ways in which identities are shaped on the basis of wider social, economic and political processes and relationships. This view considers how the body is materially and socially constructed 'through the everyday experiences of its physiological changes and [is] constituted through the discourses of power that define, articulate, and regulate what is "appropriate" and "normal" about it' (Del Casino Jr, 2009: 249). The bodies of old age are key markers of difference and dominant discourses of ageing associated with mental and physical decline are linked with the labelling and representations of the ageing body (Pain *et al.*, 2000). In other words, like other social identities, old age as a distinct category cannot be taken for granted but instead can be defined and understood through wider discourses, practices and relations. The established social norms ascribed to such identities shape how identities are depicted as belonging "in place" or "out of place".

While social constructionists' perspectives enable concepts of the body and place to come into being and disrupts assumed societal power-relations, scholars have issued caution regarding this approach. Bonnett (1999: 149) argues that this perspective tends to leave some categories unchallenged, for example, terms such as equality, racism and antiracism 'tend to appear in constructionist work, not as objects for scrutiny, or explicitly strategic essences, but as taken-for-granted foundations, providing 'commonsense' moral and political coherence and direction.' Biological, chronological and social construction understandings of age often appear as a foundational framework by which to consider the diverse understandings of age. Indeed, it is helpful to consider how these interpretations could shape perspectives of older people in a post-disaster context. For example: how they are expected to respond in a disaster context (based on assumed bodily capacities), who is identified as being of older age and how this translates into certain policy practices. However, these concepts and approaches do not take into full account emotional and spatial responses and practices and are thus not of themselves enough to fully appreciate and understand the complexities of the ageing experience within and beyond a post-disaster context. For this, it is worth

attending to discussions on emotion and embodiment which I undertake later in this chapter.

3.2. Approaching geographies of ageing: health, mobility and place

The study of geography and ageing is often referred to as geographical gerontology. Where the boundaries of geographical gerontology start and where it ends it hard to define. Noticeably, there have been few scholars who have attributed themselves to this sub-discipline. Early contributors include: Warnes (1981) who, with positivist theoretical underpinnings, examined the migration patterns of the elderly; Harper and Laws (1995) who situated themselves within post-structural perspectives and argued for an approach to ageing which took into account the intersection of age with other identities and social-cultural factors and thus highlighted the heterogeneous experience of old age; and Rowles (1986) who pursued humanistic approaches to studying the ageing experience. In the last forty years or so, there has been, therefore, a shift in ways of thinking; from examining the spatial patterns of the elderly to examining 'the ways in which age relations are socially constructed, embodied, and mutually constitutive of space' (Pain *et al.*¸2000: 377). The following section brings together themes from Chapter Two and explores ageing in relation to health, mobility and place. These themes which reoccur in post-disaster research also feature within geographical scholarship more broadly. Such approaches have a tendency to be confined to traditional empirical territories and therefore do little to challenge, critique and problematise the complexities of the ageing experience and what this means in relation to post-disaster geographies.

3.2.1. Geographies of ageing and health

The subjects of ageing and health are deeply interconnected where 'ageing shapes, and is shaped by, geographies of health' (Wiles, 2018: np). In a disaster or an emergency context the theme of health is a dominant feature, not just for those of older age but all population groups. Discussions of health emerge through understanding disaster impacts on population groups and the role of health service provision in responding to challenges of ill-health in emergency settings. Health and post-disaster geographies take into account the short-term

factors associated with the immediate aftermath of the event to longer-term factors such as persisting health conditions.

Wiles (2018: np) identifies that health geographers:

> Examine the relationship between people and their physical, social and symbolic environments. They focus on the distribution of and engagement with health, illness and a variety of resources for health, from the most intimate level of the body through to regional and global scales.

Health geographies are therefore recognised as significant and expanding sub-disciplines covering topics such as public health (Brown and Duncan, 2002), blue space geographies (Foley and Kistemann, 2015), mental illness and disability (Parr, 2008), formal and informal care in health settings (Andrews, 2006; Milligan and Wiles, 2010), health and bioscience geographies (Greenhough, 2011) and complexity theory and human health (Curtis and Riva, 2010). This section explores in more detail the interconnections between geography, ageing and health.

The study of health is a significant sub-discipline in geographical studies of ageing where early research inquiry focused on the health trends of older people, more recent concerns have paid greater attention to how older people co-experience their health and place. Wiles (2018) documents three dominant geographical approaches to the study of ageing and health: spatial approaches; relational approaches; and critical approaches. These three approaches provide an overview of the patterns and knowledges addressed within this sub-discipline and simultaneously highlight research omissions.

Spatial approaches align with the more traditional perspectives of ageing and health. These approaches rely on positivist foundations and involve measuring and understanding the implications of the changing distribution of ageing from global, national, regional and urban scales. Spatial approaches primarily concern the use of data sets to identify trends such as changing distributions of populations across different scales, access to, and availability of, health services, patterns of inequality in health distribution, quality of life in old age, planning for future needs, socio-economic factors, and patterns of morbidity, mortality and illness. Production of such information requires available and accurate data sets which is not consistent across geographical regions where wealthier regions

across the globe are able to access and benefit from such data, this is not the case for less developed regions. Nevertheless, available information has produced tangible evidence that illness, disease and morbidity rates are higher for older populations in less developed countries and that such populations also have lower life expectancies. In more recent times, spatial approaches to health have considered questions around proximity (Wiles, 2018). For example, improvements in technology has influenced health and care provision, knowledge, and the spread of information. Technology and health is not something that can be "mapped" in the same way as health care distribution. Rather, it must be considered how care can be provided across distance; for example, caring relationships can be managed and facilitated through video and audio technologies and health care technologies can promote greater autonomy and independence. In turn, these shape any reliance on state and private health care provision. Spatial approaches to health and ageing largely concentrate their energies on understanding processes, distributions, and implications. Such approaches privilege objective methods which encourage tangible outputs and outcomes which can inform planning and policy. What such an approach obscures is the nature of relationships and experiences associated with ageing and health and the emotional-spatial dynamics of health and ageing.

Relational approaches to ageing and health seek to understand older people's interactions with social and physical environments. These approaches claim that people and the environment cannot be explored in isolation and that 'every aspect of every older person must always be understood as embedded or situated in socially constructed, dynamic places' (Wiles, 2018: unpaginated). Relational approaches take into account qualitative understandings of ageing and health where the voices and views of older people are often accounted for, valued, interpreted and analysed. This approach focuses on the importance of place through the work on place attachment and place belonging as important and significant attributes in determining positive measures of wellbeing and health (Rowles, 1993; Wiles *et al.,* 2009). The views and experiences of older people which inform this body of work suggest that older people fare considerably better in places where they have a sense of attachment (be that physical, symbolic or emotional). While these views and experiences are often considered the primary driver in such work, recent criticisms have held government and policy makers to

account, as there is a tendency to use these findings as a way to reduce state or institutional care, with home care considered the more cost-effective solution, and to promote ideals of autonomy and independence. These perspectives align with wider neoliberal ideas around active ageing and the withdrawal of state care (see Stenner *et al.,* 2011 for a further discussion).

Critical approaches to ageing and health are concerned with challenging the normalised, and often negative, discourses around ageing. Critical approaches challenge the place-based literature, take into account the responses and agency of older people, problematise the stigmatisation of older age, and consider the heterogeneity of older age and how ageing bodies relate to and shape a wide variety of spaces and social contexts (Wiles, 2018). These approaches question the discourses around ageing-in-place; while it is commonplace for this to be used amongst policy makers, research has identified that those of older age do not associate with this concept and rather identify with the complexities around 'staying put' and what community means (Wiles *et al.,* 2011).

Critical perspectives to ageing and health may, at times, appear all-encompassing to cover the 'other' ageing and health perspectives that differs from the more commonplace positivist and experimental trend. What Wiles (2018) has identified as the critical perspectives indeed vary and the different strands each warrant further interrogation. In particular, critical perspectives start to ask questions on the responses and adaptive capacities of older people to manage their own wellbeing and health. Broadly, this asks questions about what it means to cope in changing circumstances and what resources (emotional, physical, material, symbolic, social) are employed (or not) to navigate change. In addition, critical perspectives recognise the contribution older people make to a variety of spaces and social contexts at different scales, which illustrate the importance of moving beyond the idea of older people as passive and dependent (both a societal feature and a trend in research generally) to consider the everyday geographies of older people as complex, varied and multidimensional.

Health geographies and ageing is an expansive field which considers geographical trends, societal influences, biomedical discourses, relationships and so on. It is neither possible nor realistic to cover all of these; however, this section has highlighted the key strands which feature in this sub-discipline. While critical perspectives begin to challenge the more dominant perspectives which

are concerned with trends, distributions and linearity between individuals and place, geography, ageing, health and disaster research remains dominated by these more orthodox perspectives, which can obscure the more emotional, complex and dynamic experiences of older people in a post-disaster context.

3.2.2. Geographies of ageing and mobility

Disasters significantly influence mobility patterns and behaviour for older people across a variety of geographical scales. Mobility – simply defined as the 'act of moving between locations' (Cresswell, 2006: 2) - is considered in relation to navigating the post-disaster landscape, both in the immediate aftermath which consists of rubble and waste, and the longer recovery period, where the relocation of shops and services shape patterns of mobility. The disaster can influence everyday smaller-scale mobility in relation to moving around the home and local community to larger events such as a home relocation. Mobility and ageing is, of course, discursively connected through understanding the physicality of the ageing body and the extent to which one is, or is not, mobile and what implications these have on the use and experiences of everyday spaces.

Like the theme of health, mobility has also attracted significant attention within geographical scholarship. Indeed, since Cresswell (2006: 2) argued that the concept of mobility remains 'unspecified' and 'as a kind of blank space' which needs examining, there has been a proliferation of geographical scholarship attending to such concerns. Most noticeably, this includes the number of Progress in Human Geography reports which revisit and interrogate the concept of mobility in relation to methods, the body, stillness, transport, animals and movement (Merriman, 2014; 2015; 2016; Cresswell, 2010, 2011, 2014). The scholarship on mobility is therefore extensive, covering topics associated with: globalisation; movement of people, objects and capital across the globe; forced displacement; and urbanism, technology and transport. Philosophically, mobility also asks questions of time, place, space and bodies to include the questioning of boundaries, territories and temporalities and embodied mobility practices.

Despite the extensive coverage of mobility, ageing and mobility research within geographical scholarship has remained rather limited. The extent to which ageing research has acknowledged, embraced or considered the 'new mobilities

paradigm' (Sheller and Urry, 2006) remains inconclusive. Studies of mobility and older people primarily focus on the challenges older people encounter during everyday movement in later life and the impact this has on their physical, social and mental wellbeing. Schwanen and Ziegler (2011) suggest that ageing research appears to have embraced a 'functionalistic' mobilities perspective which tends to examine linear movement from A to B. Emphasis on ensuring successful completion of the movement means that mobilities in ageing research are often considered a means to an end (Zielger, 2012). This obscures the complexity and diversity of movement and implies that the 'mobility turn' – defined as a shift from thinking about cultures as defined by 'roots' and towards a more cautious investigation of 'routes' (Cresswell, 2006) – has yet to become commonplace in geographical research on mobilities and ageing. This could be regarded as a missed opportunity given that mobility practice often changes in later life and this mobility offers countless prospects for investigating the social construction of ageing, identities and subjectivities (Schwanen *et al*., 2012).

Ageing and mobility research is often found in analysis and discussions of: migration and retirement patterns (Warnes, 1990,1994); transport and urban planning (Schwanen *et al*., 2010); movement and social relations (Burnett and Lucas, 2010); mobile methods and oral histories (Rowles, 1984; Bonnett and Alexander, 2013); and rhythms and neighbourhoods (Lager *et al.,* 2016). These studies focus on the different forms of movement in everyday space and how these patterns serve for wider understandings of ageing experiences and older people's mobility practices. While research by Bonnett and Alexander (2013) and Rowles (1984) interrogates mobility through forms of memory, the past and social settings, less attention has been paid to the type of emotional and affective responses which emerge through different mobility practices. Taking forward such perspectives in a post-disaster context could serve as a useful tool to understand the mobility practices which are routine, ordinary, unexpected, or random, yet have all been shaped by the effects of the post-disaster landscape.

Another important aspect to reflect on is reduced mobility and immobility. It is evident that mobility research is considered in relation to movement, dynamism, speed, flows, fluidity and so on. This focus would appear to privilege movement rather than the lack of, or reduced, movement. As old age is often associated with decline of the physical body and a shrinking of social and physical worlds,

common understandings of mobility do not necessarily align or accommodate much of the dominant ageing narrative and as a result older people are often viewed as passive and dependent. However, there has been a rise in research which interrogates ideas around stillness (Cresswell, 2012; Bissell and Fuller, 2011; Conradson, 2011), immobility (Adey, 2007), and power and unequal mobility patterns (Skeggs, 2013). Bissell and Fuller (2011) argue that stillness can be theorised as part of movement. Rather than stillness being considered as bounded, rooted or sedentary, forms of stillness give way to understandings of anticipation and processes; and spaces of waiting. Stillness, in addition to recognising that mobilities is not an equal concept, serves useful analytical purchase for considering mobilities, ageing and older age. Not only is it possible to consider the types of mobility practices of older people and how these shape their everyday geographies but to consider slower and alternative forms of mobility. When forms of mobility alter, for example after a fall or the relocation of a local service, it is worth considering what resources, mechanisms and practices are adopted to manage and cope with such change.

This section has provided a brief outline on geographical approaches to mobility and considered the ways in which mobility has been employed within studies of old age and ageing. The recent re-theorisation of mobility in relation to stillness, immobility and inequalities provides an opportunity to develop understandings of mobility in studies of old age and ageing. This is particularly worthwhile in a post-disaster context where mobility patterns are continually likely to be disrupted, reshaped and re-evaluated. This can help inform discussions on experiences of old age and ageing in a post-disaster context more broadly.

3.2.3. Geographies of ageing and place

Guided by the notion that 'place matters' (Massey, 1984), geographical scholarship has made a significant contribution to research on ageing and place. The significance of place informs and underpins much of the ageing research. Disaster-related research explores: the role of neighbourhoods and communities in overcoming the adversity associated with natural disasters (Morrow, 1999; Paton and Johnston, 2001); the implications fragmented communities have on an individual's sense of place and belonging (Chamlee-Wright and Storr, 2009); and the reconfiguration of everyday landscapes, such as the relocation of services,

infrastructure and institutions. This section explores the geographical scholarship on ageing and place and outlines opportunities to develop and further interrogate this concept in a post-disaster context.

The contribution to the study of ageing and place primarily derives from humanistic traditions which look at a sense of place (Buttimer and Seamon, 1980; Cresswell 1996; Jackson, 1994), place identity (Rose, 1995; Taylor, 2010) and place attachment (Brown and Raymond, 2007; Manzo and Perkins, 2006). Much of the purpose of this is research explores the interconnections between people and the environment though modes of feeling, emotions, sensations and experience. Within this body of work, there has been attention to places of varying geographical scales, ranging from the domestic home (Milligan, 2009; Brickell, 2012; Blunt and Varley, 2004) which illustrates themes around identity, relationships, care practices, materiality and meaning-making, to the role of social networks and communities as sites for examining the interrelationships between ageing, place and health (Gardner, 2011). Other places such as the body (Kontos, 1998), institutions (Andrews and Phillips, 2005) and retirement communities (Katz, 2005) also receive scholarly attention under the rubric of ageing and place.

Graham Rowles' extensive ethnographic research on older people and their community in Appalachia sets the scene for a well-documented body of literature which utilises and develops the concept of "ageing-in-place". Ageing-in-place research encourages enabling older people to remain in their homes and their local community as physical knowledge promotes a feeling of control, even when physical or cognitive competences are lowered (Gilroy, 2012; Rowles, 1978). This term supports the idea that independence, autonomy and social networks can be maintained by growing old in a place which is familiar. Such a concept becomes problematic in a disaster context where disruption and fracture to everyday social and physical spaces increases and therefore asks questions on how is it possible to "age-well" in a disaster context.

Gardner (2011) states that while there has been much attention to ageing-in-place, less attention is paid to the *places* of ageing. While the former attends to the above discussion, the latter focuses on identifying and understanding the important contexts of ageing. Gardner (2011) identifies that while ageing and home have been the focus for much research, public places – including

neighbourhoods – have received much less attention. Two studies illustrate the importance of neighbourhoods in the lives of older people. Gilroy (2012), from an architecture and planning perspective, employs De Certeau's concept of "everyday life" to better understand how older people in the Chinese region of Wuhan deal with and negotiate the social fabric of everyday life in the face of community destruction. Her research contributes to understanding the role of neighbourhood as a material experience and as a set of relational resources. Through participant observation, focus groups and questionnaires her research argues that older people in the Wuhan community rely on place and locale as an important source of wellbeing. Gardner (2011) also recognises that neighbourhoods are not just unassuming backdrops to life; rather, they should be viewed as processual in which social relations and identities are constructed and the material, cultural and social make-up of place is shaped by the power relations articulated through them.

It is worth reflecting on some of the critiques to ideas of ageing and place more broadly. Boyle *et a.,* (2015), for example, argue that in the ageing-in-place literature, place is limited by an obvious constraint of proximity, where too often the experience of ageing is solely examined in relation to the nearby physical spaces. Such a fixation on certain physical and material dimensions of place obscures opportunities to consider the multidimensional experience of ageing and place. Furthermore, the prevalent understanding of a two-way directional relationship between place and the experience of ageing does little to articulate how the ageing experience is situated in a post-disaster context where place experiences are based on an array of circumstances, encounters, transitions, power dynamics and embodiment.

In addition, it is worth problematising what we understand about integral places found in the ageing literature and to consider the extent to which such scholarship is derived from a pre-conceived understanding of what constitutes the home or neighbourhood. For example, in a post-disaster context where home relocation, loss of home and structural and/or material damage to the home are common features, it is worth considering what this means in relation to the ageing experience. This includes emotional accounts in relation to the fractures and ruptures to the home and the emerging practices associated with both the ageing experience and post-disaster recovery.

While it has not been explored in the geographical scholarship on ageing more broadly, the concept of the home as a fixed and bounded place associated with idyllic notions of care, safety and comfort has been challenged and critiqued. For example, Baxter and Brickell (2014: 134) discuss the 'unmaking' of the home, whereby the 'components of the home are unintentionally or deliberately, temporally or permanently, divested, damaged or even destroyed'. While research between older people and the home have strong interconnections, little explores the implications of the temporal fractures which occur between older people and the home space in the context extraordinary events. Baxter and Brickell's (2014) explorations on unmaking the home serve as a useful framework in contextualising the home space for older people in post-disaster recovery. The authors point to four main strands to consider with regards to unmaking the home. First, like people homes also have a life-course which is lived out in dynamic ways. Secondly, home making and unmaking do not function in isolation but instead co-exist and co-function simultaneously. Thirdly, while unmaking connotes a loss, it can also be used to understand mechanisms and processes of recovery where the unmaking of the home involves a displacement and replacement of objects and things. Finally, unmaking the home is not an all-encompassing process. Rather, the home can be unmade in some, rather than all, senses at any one time. Intersecting with this analysis of unmaking the home, the authors argue that four cross-cutting themes prevail: porosity, (in)visibilities, agents and temporality.

Adopting a similar approach, Wilford (2008: 648) draws upon understandings of materiality and the home in the context of Hurricane Katrina. He recognises that the loss of the home is one of the most emotionally devastating consequences of a natural disaster. He suggests that theories of materiality are particularly important as the material world and the physical world cannot be explored as distinct analytical spheres, but are intrinsically connected, which is heightened and amplified in a disaster setting. Wilford argues that looking at materiality in the context of disaster enables a close illustration of the material world as it comes into being with humans, reaffirming their understanding of what was previously familiar as now being alien. Bringing materiality into discussion disrupts taken-for-granted assumptions about the home and offers an opportunity to consider the ways in which the home is re-materialised following a disaster. This can have

significant implications for how we can understand ageing-in-place as the interaction between the human world and the material world gives way to rethinking the understanding of how day-to-day bodily practices can engage with the material, and what this means for ageing experience alongside the changing meaning of the home.

Unlike geographical studies of ageing in relation to health and mobility, research on ageing and place has embarked on many analytical traditions. Ranging from humanistic, cultural and materiality perspectives, much of the work on ageing and place recognises that older people cannot just be considered as isolated objects of study but in relation to their homes, families and networks (Hopkin and Pain, 2007). However, the extent to which this has been explored in a post-disaster context is unclear and therefore provides an opportunity to consider critically what places such as the home and neighbourhood mean in a disaster setting and how this shapes the ageing experience.

3.3. Re-thinking geographies of ageing: lessons from children's geographies

Skinner *et al.* (2014: 785) observed that 'uncovering the hidden geographies of ageing would involve extending the scope of research so that it reaches beyond the traditional empirical territories of human geography and social gerontology'. The authors suggest that to uncover the hidden geographies of ageing requires pursuing two directions of inquiry. One would be more empirically orientated, focussing on the contributions of older people to society (rather than as passive subjects), and the other would be theoretically orientated, which would involve expanding paradigms involved in ageing research. Another key observation is that geographical attention to the study of age more broadly has been unequal, with the subject of children's geographies attracting far more scholarly attention than older age geographies. This section reflects on the contribution to children's geographies and attends to the concerns of Skinner *et al.* (2014) concerns by exploring how embodiment, emotion, and affective atmospheres have the potential to take the study of old age in new directions.

While the study of old age is regarded as conceptually mundane, this does not ring true for those interested in children's geographies. Unlike research within studies of old age, geographical scholarship within children's geographies has

received substantial theoretical and empirical attention from a range of scholars, including those interested in post-humanistic, post-structural and non-representational accounts of the ageing experience. This is perhaps in part due to responses to calls made to the discipline by Prout (2005) on the need to tackle the prevalent nature-culture divide and in part because of criticisms the subject faced in the early 2000s about the lack of theoretical attention to the study of children's geographies (Kraftl *et al.,* 2014). This scholarly attention to the discipline remains stagnant within geographical research of older people yet in the context of a post-disaster landscape theoretical contributions from the children's geographies may serve a productive purpose.

Those interested in children's geographies have moved beyond varying spatial scales such as the home and educational spaces to examine the range of emotions, affects and materialities which make up the geographies of children's everyday lives. Kraftl (2013), for example, employs non-representational theory to examine 'more-than-social' children's geographies; Worth (2009) uses concepts of 'being and becoming' to theorise the experiences of youth transitions; and Evans (2010) considers the biopolitics of children's bodies (both the fleshy materiality of the body and the body which is interpreted and shaped by our social world) in relation to obesity policies, all in addition to a range of other conceptual and theoretical interests. The post-disaster landscape disrupts a somewhat certainty with place and thus calls for perspectives beyond those offered in the ageing-in-place literature. This analytical attention found in children's geographies serves suitable purchase for the study of older people in the context of a post-disaster landscape as it considers the multiplicities of the subjects' everyday lives and considers both the material and non-material world in shaping experience. Children's geographies also have a more developed agenda in relation to emotional and affective geographies and explores what this means for various practices associated with place. The prevalent disruption and uncertainty shapes how old age is experienced in a post-disaster context which has the potential to be explained by theories within and beyond the children's geographies literature.

3.4. Embodied Geographies of Ageing

The body and discussions of embodiment has received much attention within geographical scholarship. This section now explores the intersection of embodiment and ageing research. It suggests there is an opportunity to develop geographical understandings of ageing and embodiment and to explore how the event (the disaster) can continue to affect aged bodies and how aged bodies are represented in the disaster context.

Embodiment looks at the intersection between bodies, landscapes and materialities and recognises that bodily experiences are significant to understanding people's relationships with their physical and social environment (Longhurst, 1997). The concept of embodiment and ageing has been understood through care practices (England and Dyck, 2011), urban environments (Antoninetti and Garrett, 2012), technologies and body modification practices (Morton, 2015), and clothing and social identities (Twigg, 2015). Embodiement perspectives transcend disciplines both within and beyond geography and have been explored through theoretical lenses such as psychoanalysis, phenomenology, constructionism and feminism.

As Mowl *et al.* (2000) identify, scholarship on ageing and embodiment seeks to challenge the medical and dominant biological perspectives on the ageing body which are often associated with illness, decline and fragility. Alternatively, embodied geographies consider the role of the 'body in space, the experiential body, and the body being altered by and constituting space' (Skinner *et al.,* 2014: 485). Such perspectives enable bodies of older age to be viewed in multiple and alternative ways, as discursively produced, as inscribed, as representation, and as a corporeal register for experiences (Longhurst, 1997; Skinner *et al.,* 2014). Embodiment approaches therefore offer the opportunity to challenge the dominant discourses of older people in a post-disaster context as being immobile, fragile, vulnerable – as framed in relation their physical body – and to consider how their bodies intersect with the material, physical and social world to produce alternative representations of older people and to understand the ways in which the event can continue to affect, shape, and move bodies, which can determine everyday post-disaster geographies for older people.

While embodiment has been utilised to explore different aspects of social life, it is possible to consider how disaster survival itself can also be understood as embodied. Aijiazi (2016) explores this concept in relation to one individual who claimed the earthquake in Pakistan triggered her vision loss. The purpose of Aijiazi's (2016) research is not to explore whether this indeed is the case or not, but rather how post-earthquake experiences have become embodied in everyday life. This is compared against the nuanced aspects of daily life, including home, family, spirituality and the navigation of extreme climate conditions. Carrying out daily tasks with vision loss demonstrates the ongoing burden of negotiating post-earthquake experiences which means that 'the event will never be forgotten or rendered insignificant (Aijazi, 2016:106). This research challenges some of the disaster research which detaches the experiencing and lived body from the event and highlights that the disasters can be lived, experienced and embodied in multiple ways which continue to persist long after the event has occurred.

The concept of embodiment therefore provides an opportunity to think about the experiences of post-disaster recovery and how this intersects with the nuances of everyday life. It enables an opportunity to consider how the body can be a corporal register of experience, where the effects of the disaster can continue to manifest itself on the feeling and sensing body. Such an approach moves away from thinking about the aged, frail and vulnerable body but as body which is lived, experienced and made through material and cultural practices.

3.5. Emotional Geographies of Ageing

Disaster and post-disaster recovery is an intensely emotional experience where frustrations, anger, anticipation, hope, sadness and anxiety are just a fraction of the variety of emotions experience. Emotions are not fixed; they change over time and space, indicating that we live in an emotionally complex world. Although emotions are not tangible, measurable or, at times, identifiable, they do help in articulating the experiences of space and place.

The role of emotions in geographical scholarship is a significantly growing field. Largely in part due to the editorial 'Emotional Geographies' by Joyce Davidson, Liz Bondi and Mick Smith (2007: 4-7) which was produced from the understanding that, while visible in everyday life, emotions illustrated a scholarly absence within the discipline of geography. The edited collection of texts explores

the ways in which emotions can be located, related and represented. Drawing particularly on health care and embodiment, the papers first look at the ways which emotions can be located in 'other' bodies, which are differently experienced in different places. This location of emotions can be used to explore how emotions can be intrinsically connected to a diverse range of sites and contexts. Secondly, the texts examine the ways in which emotions can be produced in and through identities and social relations. What is located outside the self impacts profoundly on our emotional interiors and as such there is a recognition of boundaries between the body and other as being fluid and porous. In the ability for emotions to blur and disrupt these boundaries, it becomes productive to consider emotions intrinsically relational. Thirdly, these texts address the ways in which emotional geographies can be represented. Ontologically it is somewhat complex to represent emotion. To mitigate this, much work has turned to exploring practices which are profoundly emotional, such as dance and music. However, through work with discourse, text and narratives, it is possible to acknowledge the different types of representations of emotions and the ways in which certain practices can evoke emotion.

Anderson and Smith (2001: 7) argue that there has been a silencing of the role of emotions in public life, largely because emotion is considered irrational, subjective and 'clouds vision and impairs judgement'. The consequence of such actions means that a key set of relations through which everyday lives are lived and make up societies is not fully understood. However, the role of emotions is significant because,

> At particular times and in particular places, there are moments where lives are so explicitly lived through pain, bereavement, elation, anger, love and so on that the power of emotional relations cannot be ignored (and can readily be appreciated). (Anderson and Smith, 2001: 7)

The post-disaster landscape is a key site in which a range of emotions come together to shape a myriad of social and spatial relations. Anderson and Smith (2001) refer to such sites as 'emotionally heightened spaces'. Recognising the post-disaster landscape as an arena shaped and understood by a variety of emotions helps to understand the complexity of the post-disaster experience and how this shapes the everyday lives of older people.

Milligan *et al.* (2007) discuss the role of emotions in ageing. They suggest that there has been a side-lining of the role of emotions in later life, with general societal assumptions that older people, while they may display emotional stoicism and grief, are often not expressive with other forms of emotion, such as sexuality, humour and vitality. This is further enhanced through the tendency to 'objectify' older people, which undermines older people as thinking, feeling and emotional individuals. The authors argue that emotions play a significant role in understandings of space and place and that this should not diminish in later life. Rather, emotions need to be recognised as a way of responding to social situations, spaces and places and how this transforms over the life-course. Milligan *et al.* (2007) further maintain that emotions in later life are multifaceted, influenced not just through declining health and the age-related loss of spouses and friends but also by numerous other changes in familiar and wider social networks.

While it is important to recognise the significance of emotions in later life, it is also important to be careful to not homogenise the ageing experience through attributing emotions to older people more broadly. It is important to recognise that older people are a diverse population group who experience space and place differently on the grounds of life histories, social identities and relationships.

The role of emotions is helpful in thinking about the complexities of the post-disaster experience and to ask a range of questions including: what are the emotional experiences of disaster? How does this change? What does it mean to adjust to and cope with changes associated with disaster and/or age-related changes? What resources are depended upon? How are emotions associated with specific post-disaster places? These questions will be addressed and explored later in the empirical chapters.

3.6. Affective atmospheres of place

While emotions can be used to somewhat tangibly define feelings of different places, what becomes harder to describe are the feelings that cannot be put into words and how these 'affects' can also come to shape our everyday movements in and through space.

There has been a surge of scholarship in recent years within geography which considers the non-representational. A non-representational perspective concerns the subconscious and focuses inherently on what people feel and do as oppose to what they say. Championed by academics such as Ben Anderson and Nigel Thrift, affective geographies focus on 'bodily experiences and the ways in which this relates to the "more-than-human": in other words, how bodies, spaces and other objects are affectively intertwined' (Kearns and Andrews, 2009: 303). Affect is a concept where a simple definition is hard to come by; combining ideas from neuroscience and from phenomenology, geographers argue that there is an explicit link between the inner workings of the human mind and the social landscape and how it is organised spatially (Anderson, 2014). Affect is often understood to make sense of everyday life and takes into consideration the mundaneness of day-to-day activities; 'the point of research on affect is to offer careful, nuanced descriptions of life as it is lived that connect affective life to the range of forces that shape and condition it' (Anderson, 2014: 769). With regard to geography specifically, affective geographies seek to explore 'a different kind of intelligence about the world' that concentrates on the biological constitution of being a performative force, non-verbal communication and the openness of events (Thrift, 2004: 60; cited in Kearns and Andrews, 2010:303).

Encountering a disaster and living through its aftermath is a deeply emotional experience. The emotional experience can be tangibly understood, ranging from witnessing emotion (emotion which can be visibly displayed or vocally articulated) to quantifying emotion (a rise in use of therapeutic counsellors, for example). However, while emotions can often be clearly demarcated and easily represented, the ongoing nature of the event reveals something more fragile and more fleeting than emotion (Finn, 2016: 4). There are different modes of feelings which cannot be easily articulated yet have a profound way in shaping how places are felt and understood and negotiated across a range of different materialities and time-scales. Exploring the concept of 'atmospheres' and bringing in work concerning affect is helpful in trying to make sense of the intangible and immaterial processes which envelop and circulate the city.

The concept of atmospheres has been used to explain a range of geographical phenomena such as surveillance (Ellis, 2013), nationalism (Stephens, 2016), mobilities (Bissell, 2010) and engineering (McCormack, 2008). Reoccurring ideas

concerning atmospheres touch upon multiplicity, subjectivities and spatiality. Anderson (2009) employs affective atmospheres as a way of marking the distinction been affect and emotion, two concepts which have gained increasing attention within social and cultural geography. Anderson suggests that what is interesting about atmospheres is that they hold a series of opposites in a state of relative tension. The opposites include between absence and presence, subject and object/subject, and definite and indefinite. These series of opposites provide an opportunity to reflect on the affective experience 'as occurring beyond, around and alongside the formation of subjectivity' (Anderson, 2009: 77).

Shaw (2010, 2014) touches upon the role of understanding atmospheres in relation to the night-time economy and the implications this has for new forms of subjectivity. His research (2014) explores the assemblages of the night-time economy in Newcastle Upon Tyne primarily through alcohol - and leisure - related industries as a way of making sense of the affective and atmospheric dimensions of the city during the night. The night-time economy produces heightened senses through drinking and party cultures, crime, vigilance and sounds, and so on. Every-day places become visually and purposefully altered during the night and some hidden spaces become visible and vice versa. Consequently, Shaw argues, the night-time produces a space for people to experiment with new and alternative subjectivities, made possible because of the 'strong atmosphere created by the entrenchment of these affects within the night-time city centre' (2014: 92). For Shaw, the affective atmospheres of the city at night brings about questions of new subjectivities which are considered in relation to the more-taken-for-granted subjectivities produced during the day.

If affective atmospheres do demonstrate a potential to render different subjectivities, the question here is therefore 'in what ways do the affective atmospheres produced and shaped by the quakes change our understanding of a new type of (post-disaster) subject?'

Studying atmospheres throws understandings about spatiality into question. Shaw's empirical research with those involved in the night-time economy such as street cleaners and taxi drivers was carried out as a way of understanding the location of the affective atmospheres and understanding the ways in which these atmospheres were generated and spilled out into other dimensions of the city. Subsequently, Shaw viewed atmospheres as part of an assemblage – instigating

a particular emplacement of these atmospheres. However, such an emplacing of atmospheres in many ways contradicts its very purpose. Finn (2016) suggests therefore we need to reflect about where atmospheres emanate from. The interpretation of atmospheres as multiple suggests that individuals and collectives attend to atmospheres in a variety of ways. ‘To attend’ thus implies that atmospheres emanate from a particular ‘thing’ and it is this ‘thingness’ which Finn (2016:4-5) sought to address in particular:

> While it is perhaps more straightforward methodologically to attend to atmospheres (as-a-thing) themselves, it is also appropriate to attend to the range of bodies (human, discursive, non-human) from which atmospheres may be said to emanate.

It would be accurate to say that Canterbury has particular disaster-related atmospheres which are excessive and heightened as a consequence of the quakes. The atmospheres in question include (but are not limited to) hope, frustration, anxiety and uncertainty. While it seems ironic to be labelling these atmospheres, it is worth reflecting on the less tangible elements which continue to shape everyday life. The empirical chapters will therefore explore questions such as what atmospheres are said to envelop the city? How do these atmospheres affect and characterise the post-disaster landscape of Christchurch? How are affective atmospheres produced and how do they shape certain post-disaster spaces? How is affect mediated through memory, presence and absence and what does this mean for everyday post-disaster geographies of older people?

3.7. Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to explore geographical literature pertaining to the studies of age and ageing. As the previous chapter identified, there are particular orthodoxies which are prevalent in the disaster literature and of older people in a post-disaster context. Broadly, these map onto some of the key contributions made by geographers to the study of ageing, which include themes of health, mobility and place. These themes have contributed substantially to the ways in which we understand older people in society and how place makes a significant contribution to experiences, identities and wellbeing. Skinner *et al.* (2014) suggest that geographies of ageing have yet to fully emerge from its positivist traditions which have a tendency to objectify, demarcate and

homogenise older people. The post-disaster context is aa setting in which such approaches continue to exist and therefore there are opportunities to critically explore what it means to age in a post-disaster context.

Children’s geographies appear to have embarked on a critical journey of understanding the non-representational and embodied worlds of children and what this means for everyday space and place. Using themes such as embodiment, emotion and affective atmospheres as a way of developing understandings of the ageing experience, the empirical chapters seek to address three overarching research questions:

Research Questions:

- What are the emotional and embodied experiences of disasters for older people?
- What is the role of place in the context of everyday lives for older people in post-quake Christchurch?
- What are the coping and persisting practices older people adopt as a means of carrying on?

The empirical chapters use the qualitative material from the field to explore these above research questions. However, first, the next chapter turns to the methodological approach adopted for this thesis.

Chapter Four: Researching post-disaster geographies

4.1. Introduction

This thesis began with an introduction to the earthquakes in Canterbury, New Zealand, evidenced the rationale for such study and introduced intrinsic concepts and debates pertinent to this research. Chapters Two and Three then presented geographical literature relevant to the study of disaster and ageing and in so doing highlighted that, by considering old age in a landscape of post-disaster recovery, opportunities arise to explore the complexities and nuances of ageing and what this means for the emotional and affective geographies of post-disaster recovery.

This chapter explores the methodological approach and methods employed to conduct this doctoral research. It conceptually and empirically addresses how the fieldwork for this thesis was conducted; how and what research material was collected; and how this was analysed to produce the empirical chapters which follow. This chapter also specifically reflects on doing research in a post-disaster context and the experiences of researching with older people. Both these situations bring with them methodological complexities which require critical exploration to uncover the various challenges and opportunities which arise from this type of research. This process demonstrates that the methodology concerned is not only about the practicalities of conducting empirical research that is driven by the pre-determined research questions. Rather, it also involves a process of reflection on interactions in the field and how 'personal identities, emotions and values' (Cloke *et al.*, 2000: 365) shape the research process.

This methodology is situated in social geography perspectives, recognising that 'social geography is an engaged set of practices operating across a myriad of spaces' (Del Casino *et al.*, 2011: 126), where the researcher takes responsibility to eliminate hegemony and power inequalities inherent in the research process. This research operated across a range of spaces, such as charity spaces, cafés, buses and domestic homes, employing a range of talking and reflective practices to discern personal and subjective responses to the research questions. Talking methodologies and field diaries were the main methodological tools employed. Yet these approaches considered more than just the spoken word. Rather, this

type of methodology takes ‘into consideration the wide range of actors involved in the research process – from the emotions of both the researcher and respondent to the non-human subjects involved’ (Del Casino *et al.*, 2011: 127).

To explore how the research aims were addressed, this chapter weaves together reflections upon conducting this research, alongside the practices and spaces associated with the research process. It begins by exploring the conceptual and empirical negotiations of doing post-disaster research and research with older people. Important to both is the role of researching emotion and affect, which is then subsequently explored. It details the central component of this chapter, which is structured around *entering the field*, *in the field* and *leaving the field*. Each stage has a range of practical and reflective tools which are elaborated on in more detail, such as framing the field, recruitment, conducting interviews and wrapping up the fieldwork. Following this, I outline how I analysed the data and discuss the research ethics involved in conducting this fieldwork. A summary bringing together the key points concludes this chapter.

The methods used seek to answer the three research aims which drive this thesis (Table 1). This thesis is exploratory in nature and is narrative and experience driven. It therefore requires a qualitative approach, which is detailed in more depth later in this chapter.

Table 1: Thesis Research Aims

Research Aim 1:	**To better understand emotional, affective and embodied accounts of disaster and post-disaster recovery**
Research Aim 2:	**To better understand post-disaster geographies through the notion of place.**
Research Aim 3:	**To better understand the practices associated with post-disaster recovery**

4.2. “Doing” post-disaster research

This thesis is an accumulation of material gathered from six months of fieldwork in Christchurch, New Zealand. As outlined in the introduction, doing research in a post-disaster setting has been approached from a range of perspectives: from

conventional disaster relief work (Espia and Fernandez Jr, 2014) to examinations of the emotional and psychological responses following a disaster (O'Connell *et al.*, 2017). These perspectives are thus accompanied by diverse methodological approaches to conducting research. This section outlines some of the considerations when doing post-disaster research and reflects on some of the practical and contextual negotiations.

Calgaro (2015) recognises that the common challenges of doing fieldwork (e.g. access, codes of conduct, wellbeing and in-field practicalities) are amplified in a post-disaster setting. An overarching observation is the emotional and affective experiences for those doing research in a post-disaster context. Research (see Eriksen and Ditrich, 2015; Dominey-Howes, 2015) has identified the "vicarious traumatisation" resulting from conducting research in a disaster related context. To elaborate, the proximity and engagement with 'stories narrated by disaster survivors [which] are often elaborate, filled with suspense and emotionally charged' (Eriksen and Ditrich, 2015: 63) and can have negative implications on those conducting the research. Christine Eriksen reflected on her experience of conducting ethnographical research with wildfire survivors, firefighters and residents in New South Wales, Australia. Extensive fieldwork and continuous engagement with those affected by the events led her to experience symptoms of secondary trauma, such as increased anxiety, nightmares, headaches and anger arousal (Eriksen and Ditrich, 2015). An outcome of such experiences generated their calls for consideration of mindfulness practices which can act as a set of 'contemplation tools which can assist researchers to observe the feelings of external and internal trauma without forming attachment to the pain and suffering' (Eriksen and Ditrich, 2015: 64). The experience of doing research in a post-disaster context has thus called for consideration for not only recognising the impact research can have on participants but also on the researchers themselves and what possibilities there are to pre-empt implications of secondary trauma (Dominey-Howes, 2015).

While doing post-disaster research is evidently inundated with ethical complications and considerations (which are explored in more detail in the latter stages of this chapter), this is also a methodological concern. In qualitative research, the researcher acts as a methodological tool to obtain rich research material. The adverse implications resulting from conducting post-disaster

research can shape the capacity for the researcher to carry out the research and can result in their mentally or physically distancing themselves from the field. It highlights that 'not only does the researcher *affect* the research process, but they themselves are affected by this process (Widowfield, 2000: 200). Mindful of such potential implications, I ensured I was embedded in wider support networks throughout my time in the field, including geography researchers from the University of Canterbury, staff at Age Concern Canterbury, frequent online communication with my supervisors based at the University of Exeter and non-research related networks such as friends and family, both in New Zealand and at home. While this by no means prevented me from feeling emotional distress and anxiety, it alleviated the burden somewhat and enabled me to manage and negotiate various challenges associated with the fieldwork period.

This research was at times inherently sensitive in nature. Asking participants to reflect on their disaster experiences had the potential to unearth uncomfortable or distressing memories and thus required careful ethical consideration in advance of the fieldwork. Navigating and managing topics of sensitive nature is not new within social research. This research project required familiarity with the context to understand the range of issues participants faced and also the empathetic skills of the researcher to facilitate appropriate research with minimal distress to the participants. This empathy with the context is discussed in more detail in the body of this chapter.

Another outcome of a disaster setting is the rapid increase in interest to conduct research in a disaster context. One consequence of the series of earthquakes in Canterbury which began in September 2010 was the emergence of Christchurch as some form of 'research laboratory' (Cloke *et al.,* 2017). It has been argued that opportunistic researchers have attempted to capitalise upon the physical and social impact of the quakes. This 'data mining' has received much criticism (Gomez and Hart, 2013) and as such this has prompted calls for more ethically and contextually sensitive research in post-disaster landscapes. This research indeed acknowledged and taken into consideration such concerns. The mitigation strategy included close and collaborative working with Age Concern Canterbury to ensure an appropriate and sensitive approach to conducting the research and in addition I worked in close connection with geography researchers at the

University of Canterbury to assist and guide me through the nuances of researching within post-disaster Christchurch.

This section has outlined that conducting disaster research is context-specific yet requires careful reflection on the implications such a process could have on both the researcher and the participants. The disaster setting is one where emotions and feelings are heightened and intensified, which requires empathy from the researcher. While doing disaster-related research should by no means be avoided, it is important to think critically and reflectively about the range of issues which exist and the extent to which this shapes the research. My own personal reflections are explored in more detail in the discussion of the different stages of this fieldwork.

4.3. “"Doing” research with older people

The previous section outlined some of the challenges of conducting research in a post-disaster setting. This section starts to identify the unexplored opportunities of doing research with older people and suggests that, through reflecting on the dynamics and practices which take shape in the research encounter, it is possible to identify how research with older people can be made meaningful and, in turn, how this shapes the type of material obtained for this research.

There are numerous studies which concern themselves with research on older people, but to date there remains limited discussion about the nuances of doing qualitative research with older people. Reflections which do exist voice the difficulties of conducting such research; for example, Higgins (1998: 858) states ‘it should come as no surprise that conducting research with elderly people can be challenging and problematic’. Research with older people is often framed as difficult, challenging and riddled with ethical dilemmas. Such a perception relies on a pre-defined assumption of the subject. In other words, viewing older people as weak, frail and vulnerable influences the approaches researchers adopt. It is however important to recognise that this age category is extremely diverse and thus approaches are required to be flexible to recognise this. While this research did not involve particularly ‘vulnerable’ older people (e.g. no hospitalised or care-home participants), it was important to channel views and perceptions into the conduct of the research. To elaborate, I viewed and recognised these older people as individuals with rich life histories, vast and diverse life experiences, and

with creative, humorous and sensitive personalities. Such perspectives foreground the potential to obtain rich qualitative material.

I would argue that researching older people requires a particular set of research and personal skills that might not come naturally to all researchers. Particular issues frequently arise which may be frustrating to some researchers. This can include lengthy monologues which at times go off topic, a difficulty to reign a participant back to the topic at hand, a tendency to be equally interested in the researcher as the researcher is interested in them, and distraction in carrying out tasks alongside the interview, such as tidying, gardening, shopping and cooking. I have a background in care work with older people and was employed by Age UK for four years. This has equipped me with the necessary skills required to conduct such research. This includes conversational skills, intuition (e.g. knowing when, and when not, to 'assist' with certain tasks) and having a gentle manner in questioning and listening. These soft skills and a willingness and openness to engage with all possibilities of research with older people provides opportunities to uncover and witness the minutiae of everyday life and important life histories. These soft skills have not been critically explored in methodological framings within geographical gerontology yet opportunities exist for a better understanding of the relational and personal characteristics which can have significant implications for research outputs.

The particular temporalities associated with researching older people are significant yet also remained unexplored. However, rhythms and older people have been addressed in other contexts. Lager *et al.* (2016) discuss the interconnections between rhythm and neighbourhood to better understand older adults' experience of place. They argue that the everyday rhythms (how, when and why older adults move through place) of older adults in neighbourhoods differ from the rhythms of younger residents and subsequently this can create feelings of 'otherness'. The pace and duration of the interview opens up possibilities to extend discussions of rhythms and temporalities into the micro-space of the research encounter, where it is not just the spoken words which are important, but the flows of the research space and how this is managed and shaped by those involved. The rhythms and temporalities of the interview space, when and how certain topics emerge, the pauses and moments of contemplation and the setting in which the research encounter takes place all emerged as distinctive

features in this research. The concepts of temporality and rhythm therefore have a role in understanding the research encounter and what this means for those involved in the research encounter and at different stages of the life-course.

Another consideration which remains largely unexplored is the dynamics of conducting and being a part of intergenerational research. While the concept of intergenerationality has been a focus for numerous geographical studies (Tarrant, 2016; Vanderbeck and Worth, 2015) there has been little attention paid to the situated positionality of the researcher and participant in relation to aged identities. This doctoral research was an opportunity to think critically about how I impact upon the research and how my research participants position themselves in relation to me. There is a range of identities which intersect and perform across the research encounter yet of particular interest was how differences in age influence and shape the ways in which narratives are told and what this meant for embodiment intergenerationality (Richardson, 2015). In this research I was often seen as a 'granddaughter' figure where reference was made to either their own grandchildren or the fact that I was 'very young'. Often this recognition was done endearingly but with an element of surprise. Many participants were not expecting someone as young as I was. This was made explicit through references to my 'youthful' appearance, the body and the past orientated narratives. While the role of positionality has long been debated within geographical research, little has uncovered what this means in the context of intergenerational type research. According to Holstein and Gubrium (1995, cited Grenier, 2007: 716), the interview should be considered 'an active site where researchers and participants perform their stories, negotiate their identities' and where they construct 'meaning through interaction and interpersonal processes'. Opportunities therefore exist to consider what this means in the context of intergenerational research encounters and what implications this has on the type of material produced.

While diversity of methods of research with older people are somewhat increasing to include art-based methods, travel writing, biography, autobiography, life histories, reminiscence therapy, memoirs and works of fiction (Skinner *et al.,* 2014), there has not yet been an integration of diverse and innovative methods within geographical research. The uniqueness of the research encounter with older people provides many opportunities in which to capture everyday social life and to be reflexive on our approach as researchers. This can include: employing

new methods, recognising the different temporalities and flows of the interview encounter and development of new and emerging skills of researchers. This chapter reflects on these points in more detail at various stages of the research, yet it is the empirical chapters which follow that capture the possibilities which emerge from conducting research with older people.

This section has outlined some of the emotional and practical challenges in conducting research with older people and undertaking research in a post-disaster setting. This research was conducted three and a half years after the most destructive quake and as such there were limited logistical issues usually found in the immediate disaster aftermath. Rather, issues around sensitivity and empathy were paramount, as individuals and communities have slowly been adjusting practically and emotionally to the long-term effects of the disaster. In addition, this research offers an opportunity to consider the multiple dimensions and dynamics of the research encounter, which can be shaped by the relational and affective experience of working with those of older age. Complementary and pivotal to work on post-disaster and old age is the research on emotion and affect, to which this chapter now turns.

4.4. Researching emotion and affect

It is through affect and emotion that people are connected to the world around them and thus they are recognised as important dimensions of how space is experienced (Anderson, 2016: 183). Emotion and affect are simultaneously conceptually interrelated and disparate within geographical scholarship yet a commonality exists, with questions on *how* to conduct empirical research using these concepts. The study of emotion is situated in a growing interdisciplinary scholarship which looks to understand 'how the world is mediated by feeling' (Thien, 2005: 251). With its roots in psychological origins, affect is a tool to explore the 'how' of emotions (Thien, 2005: 451) where affect is a regarded as a 'sense of push in the world' (Thrift, 2004: 64). Emotion and affect occupy ambiguous boundaries between the material and non-material, subjectivity, relationality, human and non-human. In addition to being conceptually and theoretically ambitious, emotion and affect can be methodologically challenging. For this research it was important to understand *how* to research emotion and affect and the implications of this on the fieldwork process.

Researching in a post-disaster landscape involves recognising the highly charged emotional and affective terrain which shapes the experiences of everyday lives of people and places in Christchurch. Emotion and affect feed into the empirical chapters which follow and thus attention to the complexities of researching emotion and affect is required. In addition, not only does this thesis consider the highly charged affective and emotional landscape, emotions and affect are imbued in every stage of the research process. For example, emotions and affect are central components of my own research journey, from the moment I embark upon my doctoral research, to my time in the field and throughout the writing-up stages.

Researching emotion and affect is complex as it 'remains too slippery, fluid, mobile, and variable to be contained comfortably and completely within any symbolic frame' (Brown *et al.,* 2011: 496). Anderson (2016) identifies reasons why researching emotion and affect can be challenging. He describes emotion and affect as 'ephemeral' and because of this fleeting and transitory nature and their lack of observable material presence, researching emotion and affect can be complex. However, geographers are becoming well attuned to researching in less orthodox ways and have thus embraced the challenges of researching with emotion and affect. For example, researchers have come to develop methods through dance (McCormack, 2003), walking (Wylie, 2005), and street performing (Simpson, 2013) and to research in landscapes which require more than traditional research methods, such as orchards (Cloke and Jones, 2003), counselling (Bondi, 2003, 2005) and therapeutic spaces (Conradson, 2005). Using these methods privileges the mundane and goes beyond what is often taken for granted. In this context and that of other studies, it is apparent that emotion and affect can be explored in relation to a variety of methods such as interviews, ethnography, field diaries, participation-action-research (PAR), artistic practices, and focus groups; consequently, the emergence of emotion and affect as topics of study has invited questions on what constitutes an appropriate method (Anderson, 2016).

This thesis employed situated ethnographic research practices, using field diaries, participant observation and interviews to explore the everyday lives of older people in post-quake Christchurch. The intention was to explore the different emotional responses to places and experiences and understand how the

charged affective atmosphere of places shape experiences and practices. I encountered challenges and frustrations in pursuing such endeavours. For example, how exactly can the charged presence of emotion and affect be identified? Was I asserting my own subjective understandings of emotion and affect? How can certain situations be characterised – for example the ’feelings’ and atmospheres on the bus journeys which I was part of? How can I record and observe emotion and affect in the interview encounter? How can I monitor the temporalities of emotion and affect throughout my fieldwork period? What is my role as a researcher in interpreting such personal and inter-subjective encounters and what consequences does this have on my research participants and the material produced? Anderson (2016: 184) identifies similarities associated with such challenges:

> [Emotion and affect] will change, they may not be accountable by that individual or group, and they may be multiple, contradictory, or fragmented. Perhaps they may also blur the lines between the geo-historically specific names we have for different emotions – fear, hope, anxiety and so on – or not quite fit with any of the names that currently exist as part of our vocabularies for emotional experience. In other words, it is not only that affect and emotions are not easily identifiable, it is also that they may be interdeterminate as they change, as they mix with other things, and as they blur with one another.

For Anderson (2016), the challenges associated with researching emotion and affect are not dissimilar to conducting social research, which seeks to ‘get into’ and explore spaces and places and therefore should not be considered an obstacle in pursuing such research. Rather, clarity is obtained when theorising emotion and affect (for example in relation to non-representational and emotional geographies) as this enables the researcher to orientate themselves in the field.

I used reflexive and pragmatic strategies to better understand emotion and affect in the context in which I was working. The field diary served as the most valuable tool in which to record observations, including sensations and feelings in relation to that particular time period. This recorded my feelings and those of my research participants. It was important to record my own feelings and emotions as well those I am ‘researching’. As Bondi (2005: 443) notes, emotions are relational: ‘they arise and flow between people, producing as much as manifesting what may be felt to belong to one person or another’. My role in the research process was therefore influential in how emotions were uncovered, produced and made sense of. While the Dictaphone recorded the interview, it could not pick up on the

multiple emotions, tensions and actions in the research encounter. I therefore made reflective notes which made reference to emotions, tensions and actions at various stages in the interview and labelled these with an approximate time on the recording so that, when transcribing, I could connect the transcript to the feelings at the time.

Emotion and affect are, and will continue to be, challenging both theoretically and methodologically. This research recognises that emotion and affect shape patterns of everyday life and play a valuable purpose in understanding older people's experiences of post-disaster recovery. Inspired by research which has gone before me, the challenge of researching emotion and affect was embraced. Recordings made in my field diary and staying attuned to the wider emotive and affective atmospheres enabled emotion and affect to be a distinctive feature of this research process.

4.5. Research design: organisational spaces and narrative interviews

The research was designed to develop in-depth, personal and emotional accounts of older people's experiences of post-disaster recovery. While the motivation of the research was driven somewhat to better understand individual subjective experience, it also aimed to go beyond linear notions of people-place experience. It therefore attempted to de-centre the subject by considering the messy and entangled nature of human and non-human worlds in a post-disaster context. To achieve this, the research approach was inherently qualitative in design and employed integrated ethnographic tools such as participant observation and narrative interviews.

Qualitative research within human geography traditionally sits with humanistic approaches which look at how social research can capitalise upon the richness and complexities of human circumstances and meanings to generate descriptive generalisations and theories embedded in experience (Seamon, 2014). However, with the increasing number of 'turns' within geography (e.g. relational, material and performative) there has been a re-imagining of what constitutes qualitative research (Dowling *et al.*, 2016) and how this can take into consideration the complexities of people-nature relationships as contingent and layered processes. To elaborate, there has been growth in methodological tools within human geography beyond the more conventional approaches such as interviews and

focus groups. Rather, human geographers have begun to '*do* geography differently – to perform, to engage, to embody, to image and imagine, to witness, to sense, to analyse – across, through, with and as, more-than-humans' (Dowling *et al.*, 2016: 2). Through employing participant observation and interview methods, I recognised the potential for these tools to act as more than methods for simply obtaining observational and verbal information. Rather, these were social encounters that were rich with emotion, feeling and sensations that brought together participants' experiences alongside their social and material worlds. Recording these encounters was achieved through audio recordings and written notes (field diary).

Spatially this research was only conducted within Christchurch although, at times, interviews extended beyond the city itself to include the smaller periphery towns such as Rangiora and Kaipoi (both of which lie north of the city). Nevertheless, due to scope and magnitude, it is not possible for the research to be representational of the old age and disaster recovery agenda as a whole. Rather, this research provides an in-depth examination of certain processes and practices which can feed into wider narratives and scholarship of ageing and post-disaster.

In this section different stages of the fieldwork are outlined, such as 'entering the field', 'in the field' and 'leaving the field'. Within these different stages, a range of negotiations and encounters is discussed, as well as the methodological tools employed. I use this opportunity to illustrate my reflections on the journey of doing fieldwork. Reflexivity is an important tool for qualitative social research as it allows a conscious deliberation of what researchers do, how they interpret and how they relate to the research subjects (Baxter and Eyles, 1997). As a researcher I am a 'positioned subject' (Rosaldo, 1989) required to consciously think about what and where I am and how I do things. Importantly, I recognise reflection is not just something that happens at the end of the fieldwork but is woven throughout the research journey and is messy, emotional and continually re-negotiated.

4.5.1. Entering the field

The geographical location of my field site and the practicalities associated with the distance meant that forward planning was crucial. I began my doctoral programme in October 2013 and used the first twelve months to familiarise myself

with the key literature and to undertake any necessary research training. During this time period I began preparing for my fieldwork period where I explored duration options and key research contacts. It is understood that an extended period in the field enables the researcher to obtain more detailed and accurate information about the topic of research. Although bound somewhat by funding constraints, I recognised it was important to spend a lengthy period in the field in order to familiarise myself with the setting and immerse myself in the environments of those I am researching. In total I spent six months in the field, beginning October 2014.

Throughout my six months in Christchurch I conducted my research with consistently close links with Age Concern Canterbury. I contacted the charity prior to my arrival in the field. This started with an outline email with request for support and the option for the co-creation of the research agenda. This initial email instigated the communication between myself as the researcher and Age Concern Canterbury as the organisation to informally support this endeavour. Further exchanges of information followed and logistical arrangements were made in the build-up to my arrival in New Zealand. It is well understood that field work and research begins long before entering the field. As I had little research and personal connections to the field context, I recognised that it was essential to establish connections to facilitate the fieldwork. Yet, perhaps more significantly, this fieldwork relied on positive working relations with the organisation and those that used its services. Strong interpersonal skills such as developing rapport with a wide range of staff (such as volunteers and executive staff) and a gentle and considerate manner with older people were imperative to the fieldwork and the rich qualitative material collected is a testament to my ability to excel with such personable approach.

4.5.2. In the field

The previous section outlined the process of entering the field. This section now discusses the various strategies adopted in the field. Specifically, it focuses on two main ways of working. First it explores the process of doing volunteer research and secondly the conduct of narrative interviews. Both these strands require a different set of approaches and reflections but share the same purpose

of collecting rich qualitative research material integral to the research aims and objectives.

Reflecting on volunteer geographies

Following an initial meeting with the director of Age Concern Canterbury and the Head of Volunteering, it was agreed that I would take on a 'volunteer status' with the organisation. It is this volunteer function that was a key influence in shaping my methodological process and framing an insider approach to my data collection. The arrangement was that for two days a week I would assist with pre-organised day trips and café outings. This served as a productive opportunity for me to develop my network of contacts useful for the fieldwork and for interviews, but in addition the bus journeys were an opportunity to accompany older people through city. This movement through different places in the city enabled me to witness and share at first hand the responses older people had when encountering the post-disaster landscape of Christchurch. Such an approach reflects scholarship within volunteer geographies and mobile methods and this section continues to explore these in more detail. Throughout these bus journeys I kept a field diary to record notes and I used this experience to inform the interview questions which followed. An example of a diary entry illustrates this:

> The minibus ride today was with five ladies, all of [whom] I had met before. They all remembered me as I helped them onto the bus which is a relief and makes me feel settled. I sat in the back of the bus this time rather than the front to make engaging with conversation a little easier. They all knew each other well and there was a sense of familiarity amongst the group; individuals were asking after each other, about hospital appointments and about families. The bus was filled with good natured humour with all five ladies bossing the driver around and providing him with endless directions. At one point, we all drove past Greta's old house who is one of the ladies in the group. Her house had been demolished. Together the group all exclaimed and commented on the sadness of it to see it gone. *[Research Diary Extract: November 2014]*

This field diary extract highlights the convivial atmosphere present in the minibus. My role was to be 'an extra pair of hands' and to facilitate and support inter-group dynamics. I therefore helped with collecting participants from their homes and assisting them onto the bus. Often arms were linked as we made our way from

house to bus; hands were held as I guided participants to their seats and I assisted with fastening seatbelts. Although these are small and perhaps trivial tasks, in these moments slightly intimate, meaningful and significant exchanges were shared. The nature of assisting was carried out with gentle and light humour. For me and for the research it was extremely important that positive relations were established from the outset in order to gain trust and put the individuals at ease in my presence. This extract also demonstrates how the implications of the disaster continue to feed into and shape micro-spaces such as the minibus.

Undertaking volunteer geographies is gaining greater currency (see Smith *et al.,* 2010 and Conradson, 2003). Volunteer geographies engage with wider debates in geography which help recognise the dynamic, fleeting and excessive aspects of social activity, which help to elaborate the 'feeling of doing' in a different context (Smith *et al.,* 2010: 259). Volunteer geographies can not only be both a topic of research but also a methodological tool where the researcher employs an ethnographic approach "as a volunteer" to enable immersion into the everyday spaces of those they are researching. Taking on a volunteer status was simultaneously productive and challenging. Having a routine with the organisation and developing good social networks meant that I became embedded in the everyday practices of Age Concern Canterbury. Being in the office meant I was part of office conversations, privy to certain telephone calls, able to participate in shared lunches and so on. As the months progressed I became more resourceful as I understood more and became attuned to the organisational dynamics and practices. Developing such an embedded approach meant that I got to *know* the environment and become familiar with the everyday space, whilst simultaneously having opportunities to withdraw and remain somewhat distant from the empirical setting. Moments of withdrawal were important for periods of reflection. Such an approach was productive for developing my knowledge of the research context and it equipped me with the necessary emotional and empathetic skills required for the successful conduct of the narrative interviews.

While productive and imperative for the fieldwork, such an approach was also, at times, challenging. The roles of volunteer status and researcher can have blurred and uncertain boundaries. There was no clear distinction about 'when I was

researching' and 'when I was volunteering'. Instead, both were intrinsically entangled and thus it became difficult at times to discern different positionalities.

While I occupied an overt position with the organisation – where it was common knowledge that I was conducting doctoral research – my time facilitating the outings with the older people was a little uncertain. I worked alongside a friendly and enthusiastic driver who introduced me to the older people as a 'Scottish girl visiting from the UK doing research for her studies'. He informed the groups that I was interested in knowing about the earthquakes and their experiences and that I might ask some questions from time to time. While I recognised it as important to be open about my position, such exposure made me feel self-conscious. I was concerned this introduction would create some ambivalence and apprehension amongst the group and in response to this I worked hard to be friendly, approachable and open. I ensured there was a mutual flow of dialogue where I was willing and engaging to answer questions about myself in addition to the questions I asked individuals.

Participating in the bus journeys as a researcher, volunteer, companion, student and other was at times exhausting. This is evident in my field diary notes, which were at times limited and sparse, with comments on how I was feeling such as: tired, disengaged, frustrated, hot. At that moment in time I felt disappointed that I was not carrying out the research and fulfilling my own expectations to the best of my ability, but upon reflection such endeavours were always going to be challenging and, being gentle with self-critique, I learnt, was important.

Mobile Methods

As the previous section has outlined, I spent two days a week participating in bus journeys with a driver and a small group of older people. Sometimes these bus journeys were for the purpose of a café visit, and sometimes these were longer drives that took us around and outside the city. Other times they were to visit a 'host' who had prepared afternoon tea in their home. The bus journeys themselves foreground interesting analytical purpose in the fields of mobile methods, mobilities and people-place encounters. For this research, the bus journeys served as a productive for developing knowledge of the city and for inform interview material.

Sheller and Urry (2006: 209) point to a ‘new mobilities paradigm’ which is part of a broader ‘theoretical project aimed at going beyond the imagery of “terrains” as spatially fixed geographical containers for social processes, and calling into question scalar logics’. With this rise in thinking critically about mobility there has also been attention to the ways in which human geographers research mobility and how it is possible to conduct mobile methods. Sheller and Urry (2006) thus call for research to consider participating in patterns of movement, using time-space diaries to record patterns of movement, utilising technology to explore imaginative and virtual mobilities and exploring atmosphere of places and being more aware of feelings and affect.

Participating with the bus journeys was an inherently mobile process; from collecting participants, escorting them to the bus, travelling around the city, visiting places to eat and transporting participants back home. When it was possible I joined the passengers in the back of the minivan to engage with conversation. Often this was an opportunity for the passengers to tell me about their city and for me to ask follow-up questions about their thoughts, opinions and experiences. Evans and Jones (2011) argue that sedentary mobilities, for example, sitting on a train or a car, does not produce the same affective experience as explicitly mobile methods such as walking interviews. They suggest that being enclosed, rather than directly and physically moving through the landscape, filters out the multi-sensory stimulation of the surrounding environment. The arguments made by Evans and Jones (2011) present limitations for those people, such as older people, who might have mobility restrictions and therefore have a limited means to directly and physically move through the landscape. While sitting in the van could be regarded as a somewhat physical detachment from the setting, these bus journeys nevertheless produced a range of affective and emotional experiences that were connected to the variety of settings through which we travelled. Parts of the city acted as visual prompts (or oral prompts made by others for those with visual impairments) for personal reflections, memories and biographies. Thoughts and opinions were often vocalised and discussed as a group. The bus journeys therefore acted as a space in which knowledge was shared and meaning was co-created. There was a distinct temporality connected with this space where discussions ebbed and flowed dependent on where we were, where we were going, what time of day it

was and who was participating in the journey. This mobility through different spaces was a direct contrast to more sedentary interview spaces which themselves had a different form of temporality, yet the methods complemented each other by informing the material discussed.

While I did not have a role to play in selecting routes and where and when we stopped, the bus journeys helped with foregrounding the research context. For example, when travelling through the earthquake-hit city, it was made apparent that these bus journeys were one of the few times in which these older people witnessed the city centre post-disaster. Such knowledge was therefore useful in later interviews. Without this prior knowledge, it was possible I could have created certain assumptions about older people's engagement with the city centre, which could have hampered interview encounter.

Narrative Interviews

For this research I conducted interviews and these acted as the main source of material collected for this thesis. While there are critiques about the over-reliance on one particular method, the interviews conducted and the material obtained was in conjunction with the situated ethnographic approach I employed throughout the fieldwork period. This section explores the purpose of the interviews in more detail.

Most interview participants were recruited through my engagement with Age Concern Canterbury. As outlined earlier in the chapter, all of the participants in the bus outings were aware of my role as a researcher and following the conclusion of each bus outing I presented participants with an information sheet outlining my research, informing them I was seeking participants to conduct more in-depth interviews. Following the bus outing, I telephoned those who expressed an interest to be involved to arrange a convenient time and place. I conducted 40 in-depth interviews in total, ranging from 30 minutes to 3 hours long. Every effort was made to ensure a representative of both male and female participants but this proved challenging. Fewer men were registered on the Age Concern Canterbury database, which is a common factor amongst charities working with older age. This is interconnected with social isolation, the appropriateness of social activities, and gender and longevity. To mitigate this, I worked in

conjunction with the social network co-ordinator at Age Concern Canterbury to increase the number of male participants.

The purpose of a research interview is to 'understand the meanings people attribute to their lives and the processes which operate in a particular social context' (Valentine, 1997: 111). Interviews range in format, from structured interviews with a clear pre-defined set of questions, to unstructured interviews, where the interview is free-flowing, enabling the participants more flexibility with the topics they wish to discuss. The latter arguably provides interview participants more autonomy in the interview process and thus evens out power dynamics between researcher and participant which can often be inherent in the research process.

This doctoral research initially planned to adopt a semi-structured interview approach. The intention was to ensure key themes were covered in all of the interviews whilst ensuring there was enough scope for the interview to "go off track" to incorporate topics of meaning to the participants. Table 2 outlines the key themes which the interviews aimed to address, with some associated example questions. However, while this was the intention, in practice the interview format tended to be more narrative in approach. Jupp (2006) refers to narrative interviews as a form of interviewing which involves the generation of detailed "stories" of experience. Participants were briefed prior to the interview taking place (both written and verbally) and were therefore prepared for the various discussion topics (see the brief in the Appendix A). In most situations, rather than a question-answer approach, the interview period was more narrative in style. This was due to a few reasons. First, all interviews began with a general introduction where I explained a bit about myself and then asked participants to introduce themselves. This often started with where they were born, where they have lived and details about upbringing, family and homes. This provided detail on their experiences and was an insight into their life histories, which I used as momentum for the interview. Secondly, rather than a one-directional question and answer, the interview involved mutually working through various topics. Therefore meaning-making was produced and worked through collaboratively between myself and the participant. Thirdly, participants were frequently enthusiastic to know more about me. This turned the interview into a more of a conversation 'where rules of everyday conversation apply: turn-taking, relevancy, entrance and

exit talk to transition into, and return from, a story world' (Jupp, 2006: 1990). While such an approach resulted in perhaps excess information and material, it was nevertheless important for me to be attentive throughout the research encounter. While in most cases all the key themes were covered and explored, this was achieved through a more narrative style rather than a semi-structured interview, as originally intended. This change in interview style highlights the necessity to be pragmatic. While it is important to be prepared when conducting research it is, at times, also important to be responsive and adaptable to the situation faced.

Table 2: Research themes and interview questions

Theme	Example Questions
Place	How long have you lived here? Are you originally from Christchurch? Can you tell me a bit about living in Christchurch? Can you tell me a bit about day-to-day activities? What places are important to you? What are your feelings about lost and new places?
Recovery	Can you tell me about change – in you or with the places in which you are familiar? What have been the key difficulties? What have been surprises? What has helped in the recovery period? What have you learnt?
Ageing	What are your thoughts about ageing? What is Christchurch like as a city in which to grow old? What does ageing mean to you?
Relationships	Can you tell me a bit about important relationships e.g. pets, family, neighbours? What role do these relationships play?
Disaster	Where were you when the significant earthquake(s) hit? What were you doing? How did you feel? Can you describe the earthquakes to me?

With the permission of the participants all interviews were recorded using a Dictaphone. This is an obvious advantage for the researcher as it enables them to engage fully in the conversation as naturally as possible without the concern of missing information or taking rapid notes. However, as researchers extensively discuss, using a Dictaphone has disadvantages (Barnes, 1992; Emond, 2005; Hein *et al.,* 2008). I occasionally checked to see if the Dictaphone was still

recording and even in these moments participants often became instantly alert, for instance self-conscious that they were talking too much, saying the wrong thing or that I was wishing to wrap up. Such subtle moments have significant implications for the interview and tactics associated with humour and ambivalence were often used to try and mitigate any disturbances to the flow of the interview.

4.5.3. Leaving the field

The previous two sections on entering the field and in the field have highlighted the range of logistical and emotional considerations involved in conducting geographical research. It highlights that the fieldwork phase is more than just the employment of methodological tools to obtain material required for empirical analysis. Rather, it concerns the immersion of the researcher in a range of everyday realities. In other words, I became part of the workings of Age Concern Canterbury and a familiar and welcoming face to the large number of older people who used their services. This section highlights how I prepared for exiting the field and what this entailed, both logistically and personally.

The negotiation of exiting the field in relation to the gathering of sensitive and personal material puts both the respondents and the researcher in an ethically and emotionally challenging position (Caretta and Cheptum, 2017; Reeves, 2010). My fieldwork period lasted six months in New Zealand; from October 2014 to March 2015. Following the conclusion of my field work, I was not only leaving the field-site and my research relationships, but leaving the country altogether. Cupples and Kindon (2003: 198) notes that departing the field-site involves both a ‘physical relocation and a sociological transformation’ where researchers leave behind a ‘particular geographical space with which we have become familiar and distinct social spaces and relationships in which we have performed particular identities’.

There was a period of “winding down” in which I had to negotiate a range of different “exit” strategies such as leaving the bus journeys and the people involved – the driver and participants, leaving the organisation and perhaps most significantly leaving those with whom I conducted interviews. Researchers have identified that guilt can occur when research relationships come to an end (Burr, 1996; Cannon, 1992; McGarrol, 2017) and I felt such emotions intensely. While I

recognised it was possible, and indeed necessary, to keep in touch with Age Concern Canterbury, it was not as straightforward with my interview participants. Often access to email/technology was limited and telephone conversations and paper correspondence would be impractical. It has been noted that the process of leaving the field is not uniform and each researcher negotiates the situation per the context in which they are working (Maines *et al.,* 1980). As such, I composed a letter to everyone I interviewed, outlining my gratefulness for their participation in the research, my pleasure in meeting them and what was next for the project. My contact details (mail, telephone and email) were included with the invitation to contact me should they wish to follow anything up. This letter was posted to every individual with whom I conducted research.

There were several practicalities associated with leaving the field, such as the closure of my overseas IT account, leaving the house in which I was staying and transporting my belongings back to the UK. Throughout my time in the field, I had collected a wealth of material such as leaflets and documents which required scanning and safe transportation back to the UK. Whilst leaving the field was very much a practical journey, it was also a time for reflection. As the interviews had come to an end and I was gathering no 'new' material, it opened up a space in which to reflect on the closing stages of the research process:

> I am very proud of myself for spending half a year on the other side of the world! It has been tough at times, mainly due to lots of "thinking" time but I have on the whole learnt a great deal from this experience. Overall, I feel I conducted myself in a mature manner, especially with the older people I engaged with. I quickly became aware of what was appropriate and what wasn't. I didn't ask too much from people, gave what I could and made sure to be open and friendly. Given the task at hand I feel I paced myself well and I hope I have "enough" material. Now it is working out what to [do] with it all. As I am leaving the country, a concern of mine is that there are things I might forget – feelings and emotions which may get lost as a distance myself from the setting. [*Field Diary Extract, March 2015*]

This field diary extract was composed on my flight leaving New Zealand. It demonstrates a mixture of pride and anxiety; I was satisfied with the completion of the field work and how I conducted myself as a researcher but I was also apprehensive about the consequence of leaving the field and the impact that would have on my ability to feel and understand the research material.

This section has outlined the different stages on my fieldwork journey – from entering the field to leaving the field. Throughout the fieldwork period I had to negotiate a range of different emotional and practical considerations, which are part of the fieldwork process itself. While this section has been discussed in "stages", in reality it was much more interconnected, where material and processes informed and shaped different components of the research. This chapter now turns to how the material was analysed and the ethical considerations which were taken into account.

4.6. Analysing qualitative data

Like many other qualitative researchers before me, my experience of analysing the qualitative material was a challenging, messy and frustrating experience. All the material was collated, both electronically and in hard copy format; the field diary was typed up and all audio recordings were transcribed. Inevitably, the volume of qualitative material derived from six months of intensive fieldwork was substantial and therefore required a systematic, analytical approach to tease out the significant and relevant material integral for this research. With approximately 80 hours of recorded interview data and 50 days of ethnographic field notes, it was neither feasible nor realistic to process and analyse all the material. Rather, boundaries were drawn to focus specifically on the material linked with the research aims: the **emotional experience of ageing in a post-disaster context**, **encounters with post-disaster places** and the **practices associated with living in a post-disaster environment**. A consequence of "boundary drawing" meant that the small passing comments within the interview, and random exchanges, encounters and informalities were not included in the analytical process. Pinsky (2013) recognised such challenges in her research on Jewish feminists. While her central method of data collection was through pre-organised interviews, Pinsky realised there was considerable value in the information obtained beyond the interview itself. The ethnographic encounters such as the activities and moments that were not bound within the designated research period revealed rich and intimate information that was not disclosed within the confines of the interview. She argued that at the time of the interview, the process is constrained by a "positivist legacy", where the interview interaction is regarded as the sole site for data production. Incidentally, it appears that conventional interview design can be too rigid to recognise the fluidity of multiple actions and

words which straddle the allocated interview moment. Ultimately Pinsky believes researchers are trapped within the interview paradigm and much can be achieved through recognising the full powers of our own observations and analysis, which are vital in releasing the layers of the social context of study. This demonstrates that the boundaries of the interview period can become blurred when examined in relation to the interactions, encounters and feelings which are shared between the researcher and the participant. While I made note of these encounters and exchanges, they were not always analysed alongside my qualitative material. This does not mean they became redundant. Rather, these fleeting moments and encounters are valuable and intrinsic to the wider research setting itself. Engaging purposefully and meaningfully with these encounters – such as helping to make cups of tea, digging a hole in the garden to plant flowers, asking after friends and family and engaging with the pet cat – all facilitates positive and valuable relationships between the researcher and participant. A result of positive relationships is a productive and meaningful interview which produces rich qualitative material which informs the research.

The various research phases are not clearly demarcated. While the "end of my fieldwork" marked the beginning of the next stage of assembling and analysing the data, informally I began the analytical processes simultaneously to my time in the field. This was through reading and re-reading the notes and interview material along the way and making notes of recurring themes. However, to establish a set of coherent patterns and to examine all the material collectively, I used a three-stage coding technique. Coding is an analytical process by which qualitative (and quantitative) material can be categorised into themes to guide analysis. I carried out the first and second stage of coding manually using a range of aids such as Post-It Notes, highlighter pens and cut-out pieces of coloured card. In the first stage, I simply read through all the interview transcripts and highlighted words and sections of text which aligned with my research questions. This can be referred to as preliminary "open coding" useful for sifting through large volumes of data. In the second stage, I began the process of assimilating segments of the first stage to create several overarching themes. With these themes identified, the final stage of my coding was to use NVivo 10. This is software used for qualitative data analysis. The themes I had identified were established as "nodes" in NVivo 10. With all the qualitative material (interview

transcripts and field diaries) uploaded in NVivo, I re-read the material to allocate sections into the nodes I had created. Doing this latter stage was productive for three main reasons. First, it allowed me to 'revisit' my material at a distance. Reading through hard-copies of transcripts became a messy and frustrating process and at times I felt "too close" to the material. Using NVivo 10 created a different space in which to work through the data systematically. Secondly, it helped me refine my themes. At the beginning of using NVivo I had approximately 30 nodes. As the process developed, it was possible to amalgamate nodes together or create secondary nodes to reduce the number to defined and core themes. Thirdly, it provided an organisational space in which to manage the large volume of data, allowing me to revisit the qualitative material easily, as and when necessary.

The results of this coding process generated the empirically informed chapters which follow: Chapter Five explores the emotional, embodied and affective experience of ageing in a post-disaster landscape; Chapter Six examines narratives of post-disaster places; and Chapter Seven addresses the range of practices older people carried out following the quakes and how this feeds into understandings of coping and persisting. All interview extracts found within the empirical chapters have been directly transcribed and therefore grammatical "errors" may be found and style of words and language employed will be reflecting the spoken, rather than the written, word.

4.7. Research ethics

The expansion of humanistic geography and attention to qualitative questions such as lived experiences of space and place has meant that researchers have begun to pay greater attention to the ethics of diverse research approaches (Valentine, 2003). As with all social research, it is imperative to consider the research ethics at all stages of the study. This research was approved by the University of Exeter's ethics committee and complied with the ethical guidelines of the Economic and Social Research Council (the funder of this research). This research ensured that the conventional ethical research standards were addressed. Ensuring that ethical standards was conducted differed between the interview space and the volunteering space.

Doing post-disaster research and research with older people is tightly bounded by a range of ethical and professional codes of conduct which was addressed in my ethical compliance form as submitted to the University of Exeter's ethics committee. However, an overarching obligation was to ensure minimal distress and optimum wellbeing for all those involved in the research. While working with Age Concern Canterbury minimised the potential for any adverse situations of harm, I was extremely mindful that I was working on a sensitive area of research. Sensitive research is complex, as Culley *et al.,* (2007: 108) note 'what constitutes a sensitive topic in research is contextual and fluid: it is socially constructed and constantly changing'. I therefore ensured that, prior to meeting with individuals, I was appropriately equipped with any necessary background information and mindful and empathetic throughout the research processes to ensure that the sensitive context was appropriately managed.

Before consenting to take part in the interviews, I briefed all participants about the nature of the project, including what the research was about, who was carrying out the research, for what purpose this research was being conducted, the recording of the interview and what the material outcome of the research would be (publication, thesis, conferences). To assist with this, I constructed a summary information sheet (Appendix A), which covered all the relevant information, including a lay summary and contact details. This was handed to each participant for perusal; in instances where the participants had poor eyesight I read aloud the information sheet. This was an opportunity for participants to ask any questions. Before beginning an interview, I asked each participant to sign a form to state they understood what the research was about and agreed to participate. This ensured this research covered informed consent.

The information sheet covered aspects of anonymity. In addition to this, I explained to the participants that, in all the material produced, their identity and responses would be anonymised to ensure protection so that they felt confident to speak their opinions and views with the understanding that their identity would not be exposed. While most participants agreed with and valued such process, a few participants expressed disappointment with this measure. Indeed, they saw this an opportunity to have their opinions recognised and they wanted to be

identified with the story they were sharing. This inevitably produced ethical difficulties. In the process of anonymisation, their voices can become lost alongside the ownership of the research produced.

With each participant, I explained the process of confidentiality. All of the information they did not wish to share for the purpose of the research would remain confidential. However, I also explained that when information was given to me that suggested a harm or danger to the participant then I would have to inform the appropriate individual(s). The situations where this occurred were infrequent. As the majority of my participants were recruited through Age Concern Canterbury, the charity often explained to me in advance the situations that I may encounter with certain individuals. Therefore, when information was revealed that suggested a negative implication about a participant's wellbeing and when I followed through with these situations with the organisation, it was never new information. Nevertheless, it was still dealt with in the most appropriate manner by the organisation.

4.8. Conclusion

This chapter has provided an in-depth account of conducting qualitative research with older people in a post-disaster setting. The post-disaster context requires careful consideration of the range of emotional and methodological practicalities which may be encountered and as such it detailed potential issues and associated mitigation strategies as outlined by other, disaster-focused researchers. This chapter highlighted the complexities and opportunities of reflecting on (inter)generational research, which was a product of this fieldwork. Research on emotion and affect underpins this thesis and as such this chapter discussed the tensions and possibilities on how to research with more non-representational forms of social life. This chapter outlined the different stages of the fieldwork and focused particularly on personal and methodological reflections, which are valuable for capturing rich material and nuances about experiences of post-disaster recovery. It concluded with reflections on the analytical and ethical processes adopted. The study now turns to the first of the three empirical chapters, which addresses the emotional and embodied experiences of post-disaster recovery, illustrating the complex interlinkages with narratives of ageing.

Chapter Five: Emotional, affective and embodied accounts of ageing in post-disaster Christchurch

5.1. Introduction

This chapter builds upon the two conceptually focused chapters (Chapters Two and Three) and the methodological discussion (Chapter Four). It is the first of three empirical chapters which explore the range of themes that emerged from the analysis of the qualitative material obtained from the six-month fieldwork period. This chapter addresses knowledge gaps which have been identified in geographical discussions associated with old age, ageing and disaster. Specifically, this chapter attends to three interconnecting concerns. The first is the significance of emotions in helping narrate and define the interconnected experiences of disaster and ageing. The second concern explores how post-disaster experiences can be understood as affectual, and the third examines how the disaster can become embedded in the embodied experiences and practices of ageing. By addressing these three interconnected concerns, this chapter brings together an original dialogue between scholarship on emotion, embodiment and affect and ageing and disaster research. Empirical material explored in this chapter provides a context for the subsequent empirical chapters. The following chapters examine in more detail post-disaster places (Chapter Seven) and persisting and coping practices associated with post-disaster recovery (Chapter Eight) in Christchurch.

I begin this chapter by briefly exploring how scholarship of emotions, affects, and embodiments, can help to tease out the nuances and complexities of ageing in a post-disaster setting. Following this, I draw on empirical material to outline the diverse emotional and affective accounts of disasters. In particular, I focus on accounts which discuss the day(s) of the event as these illustrate a range of highly temporal, and context specific, affective and emotional responses. I continue the analysis by exploring the affective charge of the disaster which is registered through the experiencing body and how bodies alter the imaginative, affective, sonic and social qualities of the post-disaster space (McCormack, 2008). This highlights the significance of the body as an emotional and affective register where the sensations and feelings associated with the disaster continue to persist long after the event has taken place. I then examine in more detail the

emotional accounts of living through post-disaster recovery for older people and how this intersects with multiple dimensions of the ageing experience.

5.2. Situating emotion and affect

Emotion and affect are conceptual themes which run throughout this thesis – from exploring the scholarly contribution made by geographers, to situating emotion and affect methodologically, and interpreting and analysing empirical material. While geographical scholarship has made significant inroads into understanding how emotion and affect shapes everyday social and political life, Chapter Two identified that there are opportunities for further interrogation of the role of emotion and affect in the geographies of ageing. Emotions matter in geographical research, as Davidson *et al.,* (2005:10) comment 'our lives can be bright, dull or darkened by our emotional outlook' and these emotions can mediate diverse socio-spatial relations. It is apparent that emotions have indeed been explored in various geographical avenues associated with ageing, including care (Milligan *et al.,* 2007), relationality such as grandparenting and spousal relationships (Tarrant, 2010), and the body (Morton, 2015). However, there is still a need for further work on the role of emotions in the diverse geographies of ageing that will develop a much-needed critical edge to the studies of geography and ageing.

In comparison to the study of emotions in ageing research, the concept of affect in ageing has received less scholarly attention. This is perhaps due to the more 'experimental' perspectives that the study of affect tends to produce. For example, if affect research is concerned with 'exploring the possibilities of tapping the 'most impersonal' 'neural geographies', composed of neurotransmitters, hormones, pesticides, psychotropic substances and so on' (Jayne *et al.,* 2010: 542) then this is a radical departure from current geographical approaches to ageing. Exploring the concept of affect in relation to the study of ageing involves transcending a conceptual divide which is perceived as challenging yet, also, opportunistic. This is in part due to ageing research being primarily concerned with the tangible such as attention to resources, provisions, and infrastructure, and how these take shape across a variety of sites and scales. However, ageing research is also interested in experiences - such as the phenomenological studies presented by Graham Rowles (1989, 1990), and the relational (Hopkins and Pain, 2010), and it is within these perspectives where opportunities present

themselves to consider the affective geographies of ageing. Employing the concept of affect enables explorations of relations beyond people-place dynamics and the ability to consider human encounters with the other ‘things’ which are a part of the world such as non-human actors, technology, material and built environment (Anderson and Harrison, 2006). Current work on affect has the potential to expand understandings of ageing relations and experiences through incorporating the realm of experience beyond just the human. While emotion-focused scholarship explores what can be represented and expressed, affect examines the inexpressible and the previous methodological chapter illustrated the challenges of researching affect where it is understood to be non-cognitive (Pile, 2010). Employing understandings of affect enable discussions to take place that incorporate issues such as feelings, sensations, intuition, and movement that cannot be easily described or objectified. This chapter illustrates in more detail what the emotional and affective relations, encounters, and practices for older people in post-disaster Christchurch are.

There is an absence of emotion and affect in existing post-disaster scholarship; highlighted in Chapter Three. The post-disaster landscape is precarious, shaped by physical, as well as social and immaterial ruptures and fissures. Current research has not explored how this might take shape in practice and research on older people in a disaster landscape is constrained by pre-defined disaster related discourses such as vulnerability and resilience. Considering the role of emotion in a disaster context attends to concerns raised by Davidson *et al.,* (2015:5) who called for a greater understanding of ‘how emotions are embodied and located…in the context of typical and less typical everyday lives.’ Recognising that emotions and affect are connected to specific contexts and practices (Jayne *et al*., 2010) this chapter reveals how emotion and affect can produce distinctive post-disaster geographies.

5.3. Conceptualising Embodiment

Geographical research on bodies has considered issues relating to ‘ugly’ and abject bodies, pregnant bodies (Longhurst, 1997), the body and chronic illness, and the body and old age (Hugman, 1999). Bodies more generally have been conceptualised and theorised in geographical literatures in relation to biological, phenomenological, psychological, social and material perspectives; cumulatively,

this has produced vast and ranging debates on the geographies of the body. Chapter Three illustrated current work on embodiment and old age, drawing upon research which examines medicalised notions of the ageing body alongside that which sees the body framed in relation to socio-cultural norms and expectations. The binaries and tensions between medical and socio-cultural perspectives of the ageing body is at the forefront of the geographies of age literature where connotations such as decline and fragility often inform everyday perspectives of older people in both public and private spaces. This chapter illustrates the potential to move beyond the body as situated in demarcated spaces of the everyday and through so doing considers how the body can both affect and be affected by the continuity of the disaster event. When the earthquakes physically struck the city of Christchurch, it was not just buildings and materials which shook and fractured but bodies as well. This highlights the persistent endurance of the body to act and respond to multiple unexpected and unsettling processes. Indeed, it demonstrates the openness, permeability and instability of bodies and, as geographical scholarship has identified, 'our bodies are constantly being re-modelling and re-worked through our relations with the world around us' (Abrahamsson and Simpson, 2011: 337). Embodied geographies have the potential to continue to cover extensive conceptual ground and there are possibilities to do so within the context of post-disaster geographies and ageing. This chapter will illustrate the position of the body in relation to emotional and affective experiences more generally and through so doing highlights that the body can act as a powerful register and generator of experience.

5.4. Affective, emotional and embodied geographies of disaster

"It was like a horror movie…but it was real"

The fieldwork was conducted with the intention of obtaining rich qualitative material which details an individual's journey of living through the Christchurch earthquakes and to explore how this feeds into wider experiences of place, recovery and ageing. Therefore, somewhat pragmatically, most of the interviews began at 'the beginning' which involved individuals recounting their direct experiences of the earthquakes when they struck. Here it is important to reflect on and reiterate that the people of Christchurch experienced (and continue to experience) thousands of earthquakes and aftershocks. It is therefore

unsurprising that memories of different earthquake experiences may have blurred and become entangled. However, at the time of the fieldwork, references were frequently made to the 'three big ones' referring to the earthquake events of September 2010, February 2011, and June 2011, and it was possible to discern the overarching feelings, emotions, and experiences associated with these quakes that emerged from the interviews and field diary extracts.

The three significant earthquakes were exceptional events which are out of keeping with general day-to-day lives and the earthquakes therefore have profound implications for subjective experiences of post-disaster recovery. In the narrative interviews, I asked participants to recount their earthquake experiences in ways in which they felt comfortable. While there have been several earthquakes and thousands of aftershocks, participants often referred to the 'big' one of February 2011 in the first instance. The below extracts demonstrate the reality of the event when it happened:

> it was like a horror movie…but it was real. It was… there was nothing else to it. But there was nowhere you could walk. We just couldn't walk. The whole intersection was full of water and the water was still pouring out. You could see it…it was quite deep but the pharmacist kindly brought my brother-in-law and I home and, on the way home, we could see there was a man lying in the road, just exactly opposite Netherby Lane, inside the road way going east and there were several people standing around him. There was a bike in the gutter. I found out months later that he had a broken neck and he was very lucky that the right people were there and he was standing on his feet again…months later we found out. Even coming up the lane, we couldn't get up here to reach home. Luckily my brother-in-law had left his car back here but he said it took him about an hour and a half to get home, normally it would only take about a quarter of an hour…[*Julie: Interview Extract, January 2015*].

> it was terrible because there was nothing up and running and there was ambulances and fire engines screaming all over the place…yeah…but it was sort of like…you were looking at a film…you know? It was unbelievable that the cathedral could just go, all the churches in the town just went that you thought would be there for a looong time… I am just thankful that our houses weren't like the ones overseas where they just fall like sticks…yeah but they are not built properly…they have cut corners of the building of them and it's like gosh…if our house was like that…you would be

> well gone…nobody would have got out of it…[*Grace: Interview Extract, February 2015*].

> But the atmosphere there was quite extraordinary. In town it was really eerie. I had to leave the car quite far away from our daughter-in-law's house and walk and I remember walking down Gloucester Street which is quite a long straight street and…there was just a wail of sirens in the background like I had heard on the TV. I think there was three helicopters in the air and there were two or three fumes of smoke and the place was deserted except I think I could count fire engines down that street alone…this was four-ish in the afternoon and it was just so deserted and so…it was like those films you see about devastation and the aliens all coming up…it was an awful feeling…I just can't properly describe it [*Ken: Interview Extract, November 2015*].

The February 22nd 2011 earthquake caused significant city-wide destruction and led to substantial loss of life. The above narrative extracts all demonstrate the extraordinary nature of being in Christchurch at the time of the big quake. The extracts illustrate chaos and the meshing together of the human and physical world where; water was erupting, mobility was hampered, the kindness of strangers emerged in times of need, there was a sense of time being slowed down and different forms of emergency services on the scene undertook heroic recovery efforts. There are references to an emergence of an atmosphere which is somewhat hard to articulate yet is profound in providing a feeling, a memory, and a sensation of the event long after it has passed. These atmospheres can, therefore, be argued as being 'affective' in their capacity to exert powerful effects over bodies as demonstrated through their response to certain events (Anderson, 2009).

Affective atmospheres are understood to be tied to bodies, both human and more-than-human (Gallagher *et al.*, 2017; McCormack, 2008). The atmospheric qualities produced by the disaster event are recognised as highly visual and sonic experiences. The diversity of noises erupting from the disaster such as rubble falling, sirens wailing and the types of movements which occurred such as the ground shaking and juddering all shape and affect the responsiveness of bodies encountering the disaster event. The reverberations of these disaster atmospheres can be traced through individual human bodies and more-than-human entities such as animals, plants, buildings and so on over an indefinite period of time. For example, as this chapter will later explore, the body's

responsiveness and engagement to the event continue to reverberate long after the event has passed.

Though the atmosphere referenced here is associated with that particular moment in time, it is also the case that atmospheres are understood to be charged and dynamic and can, as a result, continue to persist over time. The persistence and enveloping of post-disaster atmospheres is discussed in Cloke *et al.* (2017) and Cloke and Conradson (forthcoming). Here, the authors examine how atmospheres of despair, anticipation and hope emerge from, and are enacted through, the multiple organisational and informal spaces associated with post-disaster recovery in Christchurch. The discussion of disaster atmospheres and subsequent geographical scholarship suggests that while atmospheres may be an intangible presence, their affective qualities are significant in shaping experiences of post-disaster recovery.

The above participants also described the event in relation to being part of a 'horror movie' or viewing it as a 'film'. Interestingly, this description was used frequently during my fieldwork period, not just in interviews but also in passing comments made in everyday settings with strangers and/ or newly formed acquaintances. This could perhaps, in part, be due to the production and nationwide release of the film: '*When a city falls*'[9] which then subsequently becomes interconnected with an individual's personal narrative however this can also provide helpful insights into perceptions and illustrations of the earthquake event. Using the phrase 'a film' suggests a sense of detachment from reality, dislocated from the setting and a blurring of the boundaries of what is real and what is not. Referring to the event as a horror movie provides a tool for participants to make sense of the extraordinary and disruptive nature of the disaster. Using horror movie as a reference provides useful illustrations of the emotional and affective experience of that particular setting and equips the individual with a particular earthquake narrative. The reference to 'film' produces a sensual and visual account of earthquake narratives.

[9] Gerard Smyth's acclaimed documentary about the Christchurch earthquakes is the story of people coping — for better or worse — with the huge physical and emotional toll that the quakes, and continuing aftershocks, inflicted on them, their homes and their city. It began as a home movie while the devastation of September was surveyed (with thanks given that no-one had been killed); but, as shooting of the recovery continued, the February quake compounded the destruction and claimed 182 lives (including their researcher and 16 colleagues at CTV). https://www.nzonscreen.com/title/when-a-city-falls-2011

Accounts of films have been explored in various aspects within cultural geography. For example, Pearson (2012:55) explores a multi-site, mediated performance entitled *Raindogs* which is set in the city of Cardiff and how the transient nature of such performances ‘pull into momentary focus aspects of the city’s fabric, its manifold temporalities and the diverse activities of its populace.’ While film in this instance was merely employed as a descriptive tool, it serves a useful analytical tool by which to understand the bringing together of the aesthetics of place with the multiple temporalities of the event. It provides an account of the heightened emotional and affective experience of the event which is suspended as a distinct episode in time whilst the emotions continue to persist.

While most of the data collection was organised around interviews and participant observation in distinct settings (arranged through Age Concern Canterbury), my own fieldnotes from my first few days in Christchurch illustrate synergies with observations made by my research participants:

> Today I walked around parts of the city centre for the first time and all I can really see is just lots of building works! My general observation is that it seems to be missing people. The people that I do see seem to be tourists. To me, there is still much going on in the city centre which is why this surprises me. I am wondering whether the locals perhaps feel absence profoundly and avoid the city centre while waiting for progress and change. Are ‘non-locals’ able to embrace this ‘in-between’ stage more? I then spoke to a lady working in a pop-up tent which shows the rebuild of Christchurch. She says people of Christchurch need to embrace this city as normal and to avoid ‘waiting for it to be ready.’ [*Field Diary Extract: Week 1, October 2014*].

Figure 2: Building works in Christchurch's city centre

I visited *Quake City* today. [10] I was the only one in the museum at the time and I slowly made my way around the exhibition space. It started by describing the physical geography of the Canterbury earthquakes before moving onto the personal stories about the earthquakes. There was a short film which I watched which laid bare the raw experiences of the disaster. Individuals were discussing their experiences of the earthquake and frequently the event was described as a horror movie alongside vivid descriptions of the earthquakes. Terms such as noisy, swinging, rippling, bouncing, folding, dust, mess, senses, motionless were all used frequently. There was also lots of questioning of actions, did they do the right thing or not? In discussing their experiences there was frequent reference to, 'you know when…' and I was thinking…actually, no I don't know when [*Field Diary Extract: Week 1, October 2014*].

[10] *Quake City* is a museum which tells stories of heroism, hope and loss from the Canterbury earthquakes. It explains the science and the phenomenon of liquefaction – when the shaking liquefied the ground and it bubbled up burying streets and sinking buildings. https://www.canterburymuseum.com/whats-on/quake-city/

Figure 3: Christchurch City rebuild information centre

Figure 4: Derelict space in the city centre where buildings once stood

The above field diary extracts and pictures illustrate my early experiences in a city and environment with which I was not familiar. These extracts highlight my unfamiliarity with the setting through the observation of building works and the lack of people. Yet such observations were also intrinsic for informing, and providing context for, my later fieldwork activities. In my early days in the city, I noticed and felt an absence of people and associated activities which led me to

question how the disaster impact on the city centre space was experienced differently by different people and how this might have shaped wider practices and geographies. My experience in the museum *Quake City* was another space in which there were references to the earthquake being similar to a horror movie. Here, I began to obtain a real sense of the sensation of the quake however what gripped my attention was the references to 'you know when…' as, having not experienced an earthquake personally, this was not something I could connect with directly and made me aware that such assumptions would need to be further unpacked in the context of doing narrative interviews.

This section has illustrated the highly charged experiences of the earthquake as they happened and the range of emotional affective responses that emerged directly. The earthquake experiences were described in highly visual terms, reflecting a range of sensations and emotions. While being mindful of situated positionalities, my fieldwork notes were helpful in illustrating that experiences of the quakes cannot be taken for granted and that assumptions about experiences and how these shifted over time and place requires further interrogation.

"I want my old girl to be shining when she goes down"

Due to the location of the epicentre of the February 22nd earthquake, much of the significant and immediate destruction occurred in the central business district with high-rise hotels, office blocks and entertainment facilities being reduced to rubble in a matter of minutes. The extracts in the previous section indicate the extraordinary experiences of witnessing and being part of such a catastrophic event. While discussions of the city centre at the time of the earthquake were frequent, the experiences of the earthquakes were recounted from a range of different spaces:

> When the 22nd of February one hit, I was preparing lunch…I was re-heating some home-made tomato soup and toasting cheese toasties…and of course the power went out and so when we realised we were hungry, at least Jim and I realised we were hungry, everybody else was too terrified!... We went out and I took all the food out to the outside table…that one there [points to outside table on the patio] and Jim and I were eating our cold toasties and warm soup! We didn't want to stay inside [*Doreen: Interview Extract, January 2015*].

> Aftershocks were occurring all the time, it was endless but when the big one hit…I knew it was bad. I was at home and my next-door neighbour Shirley… she came over and we hugged each other and I said, 'I think that's the main fault going this time!' Although I knew it was bad, I do not think I could ever be prepared for what we were about to go through [*Maureen: Interview Extract, December 2014*].

> The worst one was the February one…I was in a picture theatre by myself…sitting at the back wall watching…what was the name of the movie? *No Strings Attached*, I think it was and we had ten minutes to go before the end of the picture and then boy did it rock and roll! And I was on the seat going, 'oh my god, oh my god, oh my god!' [laughter] there must have been a wee guardian angel looking after me because a girl that was sitting along from said, 'are you alright?' and she helped me up…got me into her car at the park and she said, 'oh I will take you home.' There was water everywhere, glass everywhere and I thought if it hadn't been for her, I would never have got home because it was like a river and what usually took five minutes from The Palms to Cate Sheppard…took us an hour. When we got there, I thanked her profusely…and got out, there was water everywhere…my feet got stuck in the mud…I pulled them out and the manageress was knee deep in water…I got to my villa and there was a crack that way from the front to the back, right through the villa…and the silt…oh god! It was horrifying so then two or three hours after that, my daughter comes and says, 'come on, pack your bags. You are coming to stay with me.' And luckily her house wasn't damaged. She was opposite the Burwood hospital. And… so I stayed with them for three and a half years… yeah, it was really horrifying [*Daisy: Interview Extract, February 2015*].

The above interview extracts illustrate the experiences of the February 22nd earthquake from places including home and cinema, and the emotions of being fearful, terrified, frightened, and anxious, and how these all emerged as the interview participants described the moments of the event. These extracts all reveal an opening up of the unknown about the future and an anticipation about what might happen next. For example, Maureen indicated she had a feeling that the situation was going to get bad which suggests that a moment of shared intimacy with her neighbour was more than a simple hug but a reaching out for comfort and the acknowledgement of having experiences a mutual experience.

The above extracts also indicate a sudden shift in the changing meaning of home. Doreen indicated that, immediately after the earthquake struck, she and her

family attempted to persist with a sense of normality (such as eating their prepared lunch) yet they chose to eat this outside on the garden table rather than inside their home due to the understanding that their home might no longer be structurally secure. Daisy also illustrates how her everyday life associated with her home had been instantly disrupted as the February earthquake was a factor in her moving out of her damaged home and resulted in her living with her daughter for the following three and a half years.

The home is embedded with personal feelings and emotions and the disruption that the disaster brought to the home can have significant implications for an individual's emotional, social, personal, and physical ties to their home and the nearby setting. Geographical explorations of the home in a disaster context have been explored by Morrice (2013) who looks at the traumatic, complex and emotional experiences of individuals returning home following Hurricane Katrina. She indicates that returning home following a disaster should not be a taken-for-granted process but needs to acknowledge the emotional tensions that such experiences and process might induce. The following chapter explores in more detail how the home is situated in relation to wider material and social changes following disaster. However, as the above extracts illustrate, the home is significant in the emotional experiences of disaster.

Emotional narratives of the home are reflected through a range of experiences such as negotiating insurer pay outs and governmental schemes, residing in temporary accommodation, altering internal living arrangements, dealing with tradespeople, coping with uncertainty, and searching for new homes. The emotions associated with home in a disaster setting are similarly complex:

> But I was going back each day…luckily the Orbitor, the green bus was still running…so I could go from here…that's why I came to live here in the first place because the bus stop…the green bus stop around the corner and I thought well I can go from here to the…well I was doing this for weeks just bringing bags of stuff…you know…everything I could pack and urmm some days I would go three times a day! I would go early in the morning and then I would have a bit of lunch there and then come back…but the day of the February earthquake I was over there packing and the night before I had slept there…I thought I would risk sleeping here because my neighbours were still in the houses across the road you see? …everybody had to go back and pack! And one family across the

> road…they had three young children! You know… and he said 'oh well Patricia I will be around, he said…' [*Interview Extract: Patricia, November, 2014*].

Patricia's house was significantly damaged in the first quake of October 2011, to the extent that it was no longer inhabitable. At the time of interviewing, Patricia was living in rented accommodation while she searched for a new place that she could call home. In the above extract, Patricia highlights the complex emotional tensions of letting go of her home. She describes that she was consumed with a need to have to frequently go back to her house to organise her things and to pack up. Yet, the frequency with which Patricia visited her old home '*some days I would go back three times a day'* and the occasional risk of spending the night in her home which was declared structurally unsafe, indicates that Patricia was negotiating a complex emotional process of letting go of her home. This emotional process was managed through the collection of her belongings which themselves hold significant emotional ties. In addition, Patricia intentionally found rented accommodation within easy access to a bus route which would take her directly back to her old home. For Patricia, the emotional process of letting go of her home indicates that while a home may be physically lost (no longer a safe place of residence), the emotional bonds to the home continue to persist and define and shape Patricia's everyday post-disaster geographies and routines.

The process of letting go of home was not uncommon and it was understood that many individuals within Christchurch returned to homes which may have been declared unsafe or red-zoned. In the preliminary stages of my fieldwork I spoke with a small number of 'stakeholders' – those who worked directly with older people and/or had responsibilities in the management and processes of post-disaster recovery for older people. These initial conversations were an opportunity for me to gain an understanding of the diverse circumstances and the context which I was exploring. An early conversation was with a support worker at Age Concern Canterbury who assisted older people going through home relocation and the emotional and practical difficulties associated with this. The interview extract below illustrates a number of complex emotional points:

> I have another 83 year old with poor health…she had it anyway…she is in another part of town and her house had gone down…it had been demolished and they used the term gone…because it is like a ship going down because Connie…that

> is her name and I wasn't sure she was going to make the rebuild either…because of her poor health but anyway…I helped her move out into a rental…it worked out fine because friends offered her a rental so it has been a smooth process for her. However she kept on going back to her house, her old damaged house and one day I said to her why you are doing that because the power is switched off, the hot water had gone and she was going round with a bucket and polishing…sweeping the floors, polishing the bench…wiping everything down and I said 'Connie, why are you doing that because the house is going to be demolished?' and she said 'I want my old girl to be shining when she goes down.' [*Brenda: Interview Extract, October 2014*].

Similar to the interview with Patricia discussed above, Brenda narrated an emotional account of an older person who was in the process of losing their home. The extract illustrates the highly-charged emotional processes which this individual went through when relocating and how emotions associated with loss, sadness, grief and pride manifested themselves through a number of unusual and unexpected practices. Connie's actions of attending to her home through cleaning and polishing - despite impending demolition – highlighted the existence of a form of quiet resistance to change and was an example of the myriad emotional complexities of post-disaster recovery.

Brenda's comments illustrate a number of highly-charged emotional stories which were invaluable for providing me with context for the research. In turn, these insights helped to shape how I conducted the interviews with older people in Christchurch both in terms of the style of questions asked, and the manner in which I asked them. As Brenda's work dealt specifically with helping older people moving homes at the times of the quakes, she was able to illustrate contexts and experiences which I would not have had direct access to myself. In addition to experiencing the direct loss of a home, older people were also having to manage experiences pertaining to home repairs and renovations:

> My first story would be of an elderly lady I went to who had cardiac issues but her house was to be repaired. She had lived all her life as a loner…quite isolated and cut off, no significant family or friends…she had to engage with a community to get the house repaired so I was one who went to visit her and I found her quite aloof and shut down…very hard to engage with but we had to work through as the contractors were coming to repair her house. She was very stressed about leaving her house so I organised a team,

> a team of woman actually, to do her repairs. So…woman painters, a woman contractor and a woman assessor so they were working…over the four weeks of the repairs because her house wasn't badly damaged. She mellowed and the girls allowed her to stay in her property which at the time was unheard of…most people had to move out…these ladies allowed her to move from room to room and they worked around her and now I think it was because they were an all-female team and they were fantastic. So… I visited…she remained aloof and quite distant…but over time I noticed her mellowing and then on the last day of the repairs she actually put on an afternoon tea to thank the woman and she went to the garage and the girls thought maybe to get their presents and she actually dropped dead…she actually had a cardiac arrest and they tried to resuscitate her and that is how her story ended really. Her name was Joy and she was actually the most joyless person I have ever met…however over the journey of the repair she got a chance to live a different life. To be a different person so it was like a bitter-sweet story and so who is to say whether the earthquake had hastened her death or she would have died anyway but she was really stressed by that complete situation so I think it probably did add to her…I would say so anyway [*Brenda: Interview Extract, October 2014*].

There is a wealth of existing academic literature within studies of ageing and geography that explore the changing meaning of home in later life. Many of these studies are concerned with how the meaning of home can become disrupted when: a spouse has passed away, the resident experiences deteriorating health conditions, there is a need for internal home modifications, or when different forms of care (both private and professional) take place in the home and, through so doing, disrupt the boundaries between public and private space. Dyck *et al.,* (2005) explore the home in landscapes of care and pay attention to those microscale processes through which the home may be reconstructed as a care-giving space. They discuss how the home can be reconstructed physically, socially and symbolically through the social and material practices of care recipients and care givers.

The extract from the interview with Brenda draws upon some overlapping points found within Dyck *et al's.,* (2005) research. This story concerns an older lady's lived experiences of the home in post-disaster recovery and the social and material journey that this took her on. Brenda indicates that this lady (in her understanding) was initially detached from social contact and that, as a

consequence, negotiating and drawing on wider social support was a new and challenging experience for her. The extract illustrates how repairs to the home were carefully managed alongside ensuring that the everyday ongoing social and material practices for this older lady with an ongoing health condition were also addressed. While it was neither personal nor health care that was taking place in the home, similar boundaries can be broken and disrupted between personal and professional spaces. The primary meaning of the home has become contested when it becomes a site of labour and manual work (Chapman and Hockey, 1999). Nevertheless, this extract illustrates how despite the fact that personal and professional space can co-exist it can also be restructured and re-inscribed through new and emerging practices. The careful management of trade work in this context highlights the importance of ensuring that an individual's control over their home environment is maintained. As Dyck *et al.,* (2005:183) argue 'the integrity of self-assurances of security of the person – materially and in terms of social identity – must be maintained. As, too, must the preservation of ways of signifying the meaning of 'home'".

The Canterbury earthquakes significantly disrupted individual people's everyday social and material lives and the home is one place in which disruptions are significantly felt. The impact of the disaster fed into the ageing experience in the context of the home space in a myriad of differently ways. For example, later life is often a time in which the home and location of the home is re-evaluated alongside wider practical concerns associated with health and mobility. The earthquakes disrupted the home space and often resulted in housing decisions being made unexpectedly or somewhat prematurely:

> Jim was hoping we wouldn't be red zoned because he wanted to continue living in South Shore for always…and I was thinking…well this house was getting bit big for us…Jim had already had a stroke and wasn't able to look after the vegetable garden and looking after the big garden and the veggies, by myself and was looking after Jim…I felt that I had more than enough to cope with and I thought, well if we are red zoned…I would like to move to this side of town to be near my daughter and have a smaller house and a smaller garden…and this house was smaller! Although I don't think it feels smaller…It doesn't have as many cupboards to keep things in. And a smaller garden was more manageable to me…and just across the road is a supermarket! I mean the time might come…I have got cataracts in my eyes and the time might come when I can't drive

> and if I can walk to the supermarket…I can still survive! And in fact if we both get so crippled and we can't get up the stairs…our bedroom is downstairs…we can just live downstairs…our little den! [*Doreen: Interview Extract, January 2015*].

Doreen illustrates the tensions that exist between being red-zoned and wider narratives along with the processes of ageing. She discussed the fact that while her husband wished to remain where they were, she was concurrently already thinking about the advantages of relocating and how this was situated within lived experiences of ageing. For example, she recognised that she had to provide care for her husband who had experienced a stroke alongside undertaking practical tasks such as maintaining the garden and house which were perhaps too large for her to manage for much longer. Despite it being somewhat premature, being red-zoned provided an opportunity for them to adapt their everyday lives through relocating. Doreen's comments illustrated how relocating to a smaller house which was nearer to their family and facilities was advantageous in the context of growing old. While recognising that Doreen and her partner had the resources with which to make the most of such a situation, her comments also recognised how, for some individuals, such a choice and opportunity were not always possible. What this experience highlights is how the transition - the lifecourse and growing old - is not always a predictable and linear process but shaped by unexpected changes in circumstances. As Hopkins and Pain (2007:290) state: 'we live in dynamic and varied lifecourses which have, themselves, different situated meanings'. Relocating to a home that was somewhat more suitable for their needs was prompted by the earthquake. Life transitions such as moving home are always unpredictable but the earthquake is a way in which linear assumptions about life courses in old age can be disrupted. The earthquake was, therefore, an example of how life circumstances can be adapted and how such a process carves out how space and places gain new meanings and significance.

This section has illustrated the emotional experiences of the disaster in the context of the home. The home has gained much interested in geographical scholarship (see Blunt, 2005) with interest being particularly focused on how the home may interconnect with wider social and material lives and processes. This empirical material highlights the tensions of letting go of the home, renovating the home, and relocating, and how these can be situated within wider narratives of the lived experiences of ageing. The following chapter explores in more detail the

position of the home in relation to other spaces and therefore expands on some of these discussions.

"That fear is something I will have for the rest of my life"

As this chapter has illustrated, experiencing and living through earthquakes is inherently an emotional experience which is interconnected with wider physical, social, and material landscapes. The emotional geographies of post-disaster recovery are weaved through a range of spaces and places which are demonstrated in the following section and thereafter expanded in subsequent chapters.

The emotions associated with the disaster and recovery are outlined throughout the all the empirical chapters. Chapter Seven outlines a range of emotional and affective responses to post-disaster places: the city and the home. Chapter Eight demonstrates the mundane and everyday emotional practices of coping and persisting. Emotional accounts of the disaster demonstrate a range of emotional responses such as grief, loss, anger, sadness, frustration, hope, anticipation, and so on. These are interconnected to a range of circumstances such as loss of home, community, sense of place, certainty, and independence.

The interviews conducted illustrated a number of overarching emotions associated with the earthquakes:

> most of us around there had great cracks appearing in the ground and in the paths so that was a bit of a fear of that…much more [sighs]…dangerous in that…we could fall! If a new gap opened up or something and we didn't know about it…we had to be very careful, especially at night…[*Daisy: Interview Extract, February 2015*]

> I think all the time about what is happening and what is going to happen… Just when it happened I had a feeling it was going to be awful and I suppose being on my own, living on my own…it doesn't help. I felt quite alone. Mhmmm. I have good neighbours, very good neighbours…who have been great but at the end of the day…it is just me living here…with the cat [*Judith: Interview Extract, February 2015*]

> I am still frightened. I hear, from a lot of people from Age Concern…a lot of people are frightened…physically frightened of another one happening because no one can tell you…there won't

> be another earthquake tonight…can't be. Nobody knows! And that fear is something I will have for the rest of my life and I know…I think I am childish to be so frightened but no…a lot of people are truly frightened. Basically. [*Margaret: Interview Extract, March 2015*].

The above interview extracts all touch upon a range of emotions that were discussed with a variety of participants. Daisy discussed the emotional experience of fear and how that shaped her sense of security with the nearby environment. The fear of the ground opening up due to quake impact created a sense of uncertainty with regard to everyday movements as well as apprehension that fed into mobility practices and awareness of safety for the body. Judith illustrated how loneliness was something that she felt profoundly and, despite kindness and support from her neighbours, as she lived alone (with her cat) this was something that shaped her earthquake experiences. Margaret discussed how she continues to feel frightened and how she is somewhat reluctant to admit this and seems ashamed of this fear. Margaret also touched upon the theme of uncertainty whereby the unknowingness of what might, or might not, happen shapes her emotional experiences of fear. Margaret reflected on the fact that it is likely that this fear she has will remain with her in the last few years of her life.

Clearly the types of emotion experienced and the impact these may have on everyday spaces varies. However, some individuals discussed how they felt they were experiencing things differently to others:

> I wasn't scared! And this… I almost felt…what is the word I want…I almost felt like I was doing the wrong thing because I wasn't scared and everyone was scared so after that big one. I suppose I just got on with life, no point worrying! [*Natalie: Interview Extract, November 2014*].

Natalie discussed how she felt that she was in the wrong as she did not experience fear in the same way as the majority of people around her. Here, it would appear that Natalie was trying to rationalise emotion in relation to others around her and this chimes with Bondi's (2005:441) argument that emotions are 'inspired relationally and contextually'.

The interviews also highlighted the existence of a range of emotions and experiences which illustrated the humorous, convivial and somewhat intimate experiences associated with post-disaster. Such experiences highlighted the

forging of new meanings of material and social ties and showed how bonds and support can be forged though unusual and caring practices.

> When the February one started I hung onto the door and I could hear…oh! I heard all my nice cups and saucers which at the stage of life we had decided to start using them rather than have them on the shelf in the china cabinet so…I went and I stood at the kitchen door and I just laughed! What else could I do?! I just laughed! [*Natalie: Interview Extract, November 2014*].

> And I belong to a choir and at one session there was a poem that was read out about the loos about all the different loos in Christchurch…it was so clever…you could only appreciate it if you lived here…portaloos and garden loos and all the rest…we had such a good giggle about this! [*Jenny: Interview Extract, March, 2015*].

> After it happened, my niece said to come and visit her and she said bring your washing and have a shower…so I went up there and of course she said to me, one look at me…she said, 'you are not going home tonight.' So I don't know what I looked like! And anyway…she said, 'would you like a bath or a shower?' I said, look Dawn…I would love a bath but I can't get…I won't be able to get out of it! She said, 'I'll get you out…' so I had this bath. And I was in this bath for about half an hour and it was amazing and then when she comes to get me out…we were talking about it the last time I was up there actually…she just couldn't get me out like she thought she was going to. So, she had to roll her sleeves up and get in the bath behind me and to pull me out the water! And I said, well we can have a laugh about it…so I have had my last bath and gosh didn't I need it! [*Renee: Interview Extract, February 2015*].

The above extracts all illustrate elements of how intimacy, humour, and shared experiences are central parts of post-disaster experience. Natalie mentioned that she had only started using their china recently as they had got to the 'stage in life' where they were no longer just objects for decoration. However, when the earthquake struck, and the china started to smash and break, Natalie's response was perhaps unexpected as she stood, watched, and laughed. The act of laughing is often associated with humour with scholars such as Macpherson (2008) have associating humour with the coping mechanisms of individuals and groups when they are being marked out as different or 'other'. However, Emerson (2017:2094) argues that we need to think of laughter as a phenomenon beyond

that associated as/with humour and to consider laughter as an affective and transpersonal force where

> (e)vents of laughter themselves also emerge from simple movements, which implicate the geographies of the body: the locations of ''its'' subjectivities, ''its'' consciousness, and ''its'' emotions; but also, the ways in which it becomes orientated in relation to spaces, places, and other bodies.

Humour through individual practices and collective responses in Christchurch such as poems about the portaloos continue to be a distinctive feature of the post-quake experience. Recognising the qualities of humour and laughter and the ways in which they are similar and different opens up the dynamics of experiences and expands humour from being an emotional response to thinking about the affective qualities and how this shapes spaces, places and bodies.

The feelings and exchanges described above are all intensely emotional and affective experiences which are powerful in the make-up of a post-disaster setting. There is a layer of intimacy threaded through a sense of caring for others both family (in the case of Renee and assistance in the bath) and strangers. Scholarship on intimacy can be portrayed and manifest itself in a variety of ways. While it can often be understated, it is hugely significant. Thrift (2005:146) for example stated that intimacy and conviviality is important in relation to 'keeping cities resilient and caring'. For Christchurch, intimacy and shared experiences is part of the affective atmosphere of post-disaster recovery, and through which the city remains covered in a blanket of complex emotional and affective geographies which persist in a variety of formats and practices.

Gallagher *et al.,* (2017) identifies that affect is more than an emotion or a feeling and is better thought of as a force which impinges on bodies, which may or may not be felt. Emotions have been discussed in relation in to feelings of fear at particular times or associated with a particular place such as the home and processes of letting go. However, the interviews also discussed elements which were less tangible and somewhat harder to articulate. This were used to refer to a force that was not spatially fixed but inherently felt:

> What I have felt is, after all these aftershocks, something has all come out…the shaking of the ground has brought up all different emotional debris…its quite strange really how the quakes impacts us in so many ways [*Interview Extract: Grace, February 2015*].

Grace touches upon the affective charge created by the post-disaster environment. Grace comments that the disaster not only produced debris associated with material such the rubble from demolished buildings, fractured ground, and liquification, but that the shaking ground also produced a different type of debris; emotional and affective debris. The debris being discussed suggests a complex make-up of the social and material environment which has been fractured and disrupted as a result of the earthquake. This fracturing has released a charged emotional and affective environment which is being articulated as messy, disordered and impactful. This, therefore, offers compelling insights into the charged emotional and affective post-disaster environment.

Emotional accounts of the disaster help illustrate an individual's sense of being in the world following a disaster. These accounts demonstrate that this is more than just a linear and directional relationship between an individual's feelings and the world it mediates. The earthquakes created, not just physical aftershocks, but emotional aftershocks which are important in understanding the physical and emotional spaces of post-disaster. The nature of uncertainty about what might happen next is entwined with the physical spaces of post-disaster, and is complex in shaping experiences of long term recovery as well as feeding into many of the emotional experiences associated with the event.

"It's okay to cry"

The situated, temporal, dynamic, and relational nature of emotions emerged as a central theme during both the fieldwork and the analysis of the empirical material. Clear evidence of emotions were present in the interviews (as a descriptive tool and as part of the embodied and relational encounter), the bus outings I took part in with Age Concern, and the reflective notes that I wrote in my field diary.

The disaster landscape also produced an informal emotional discourse which was evident in public spaces. For example, following the Christchurch earthquakes a governmental initiative was launched called the *All Right*?[11]

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[11] All Right? Was launched in February 2013 to support Cantabrians to think about and improve their mental health and wellbeing as the region recovers from the earthquakes and related stressors. All Right? completes regular in-depth research into how Cantabrians are doing. This gives a wealth of up-to-date knowledge about how people are feeling and the hurdles they are

campaign which is centred on wellbeing values and the promotion of mental health support. An implication of this initiative was the public presence of emotional language in everyday space.

Figure 5: Emotional language in public space

Figure 5 demonstrates a visible presence of emotional language as displayed on billboards occupying an area of derelict space. These posters convey the message that it is okay if you are feeling frustrated, proud, overwhelmed, or 'over it.' Such messages have the potential to create a dialogue for those experiencing the range of emotional impacts that arose from the disaster. As one participant Renee noted:

> When we were out on the bus the other day, I couldn't get over the amount of containers out there …the shipping containers around the hospital…but they… it was amazing…the containers have on then messages such as 'it is alright for you to cry'…or you know…little things like that written on it. Those images have really stayed with me [*Renee: Interview Extract, February 2015*].

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facing. This research informs everything All Right? does – from raising awareness among community groups, organisations and businesses, to creating tools that promote the things we can all do to improve our wellbeing. The campaign is a Healthy Christchurch initiative led by the Canterbury District Health Board and the Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand. Source: http://www.healthychristchurch.org.nz/priority-areas/wellbeing-and-community-resilience/all-right-wellbeing-campaign

While I was able to witness the messages illustrated by the ‘All Right?’ campaign, as I was not part of the earthquake experiences, they could not have the same effect upon me as they did on individuals who were going through the social, emotional, and material impacts of the quakes. As Renee discussed, the containers lining the side of the hospital displayed diverse messages and such messages created a lasting impression on her and enabled her to connect her emotional experience of earthquakes across both time and space.

Another consequence of the earthquake was the emergence of new, innovative, and creative spaces. Throughout the city centre are products and sites created by initiatives such as Gap Filler which describes itself as a ‘creative urban regeneration initiative that facilitates a wide range of temporary projects, events, installations and amenities in the city’ (Gapfiller Online, 2017) and Greening the Rubble which is a charitable trust that emerged following the Christchurch earthquakes and aims to bring communities together in public green spaces to foster strong connections and wellbeing. Throughout my time in Christchurch I spent time walking through the city centre to explore the different spaces of creativity:

> It is my last week in Christchurch and a friend and I spent some time ambling our way through the city in which I had spent my last five months. We spent some time in the Plant Exchange site which had some pop up boards. On these boards people were invited to write their thoughts on what they felt their city should be like, how they were feeling and what governance meant to them. I spent time looking at the words people had written – fascinated by the range of thoughts and feelings discussed (some serious and other less so!) but I did not feel in a position to write anything myself. [*Field Diary Extract, March 2015*].

Figure 6: Innovativeness and creativity in open space

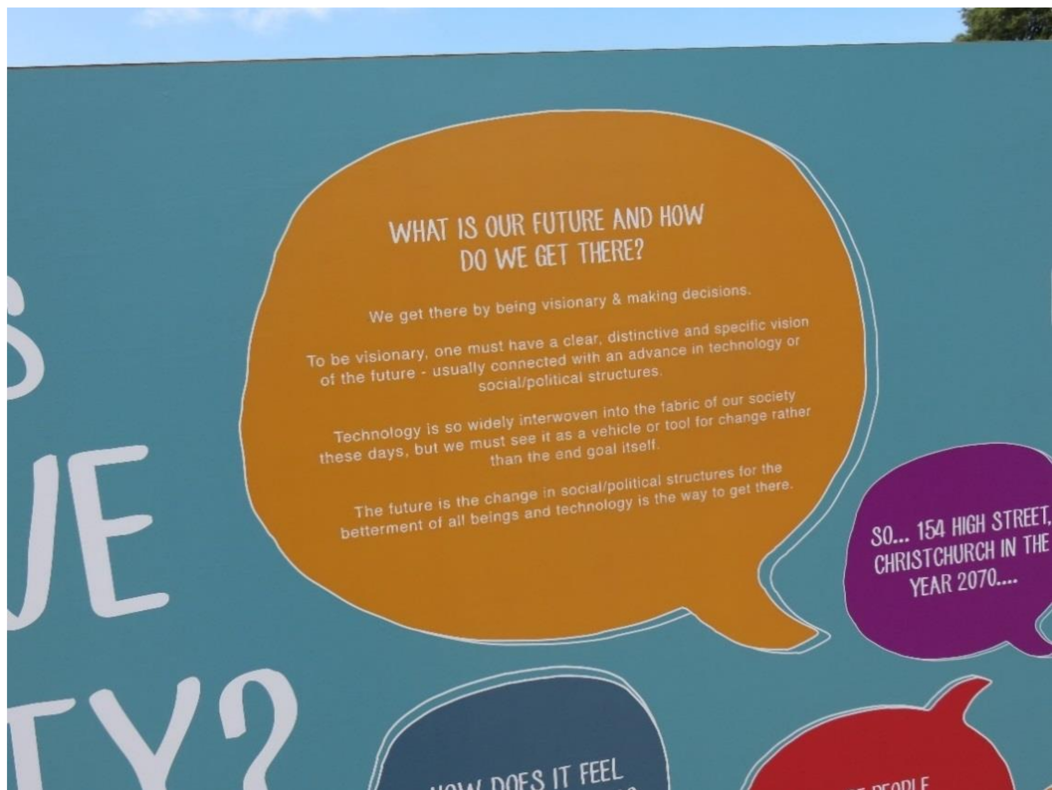

Figure 7: What is our future?

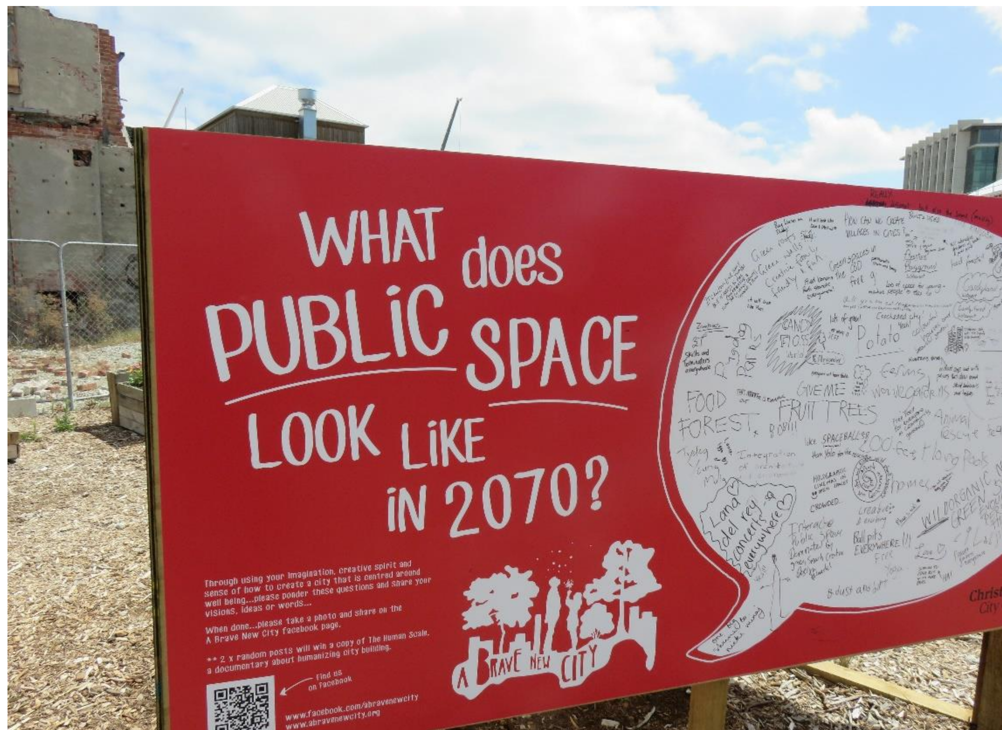

Figure 8: Public Responses: 'What does public space look like?'

The role of public space has been discussed in relation to emotions and experiences such as fear, difference, and belonging (England and Simon, 2010), as well as through discussions of how claims to space are produced through progressively diverse subjectivities (Valentine 2008). What the public space of Christchurch demonstrates is that emotions and discourses of emotions can be generated and embedded within and across public space. The emotional discourse created by the All-Right campaign and the persistence of change and uncertainty through signs of creativity and entrepreneurship suggest that post-disaster space is one in which emotions are tolerated, accepted, and discursively created. The visibility of emotional discourses through signs and posters suggest that the post-disaster landscape is producing emotional discourses which are being activity framed and encouraged to suggest a somewhat normalisation of emotions and feelings associated with post-disaster. Here, public space should not be seen as a passive backdrop in which everyday life is played out but rather as instrumental in shaping new meaning about people and places.

“It is only when you feel it that you know it has happened”

The chapter began by discussing empirical material and did so by outlining the witnessing of the event and what the implications of this had been for perceptions of being in place. Through references to film and sensations, the chapter demonstrated that disasters are often considered highly visual where there is a witnessing of a sudden and surprising material change. It then discussed the emotional experience of disasters ranging across difference spaces and in so doing also gave due attention to a range of different emotional experiences.

This section discusses how disasters can also be embodied where the material relatedness of the body acts as sensory register of experience (Thrift, 2007). The interview extracts below are embedded within wider narratives of the disaster yet they also demonstrate the body’s affective capacity to respond to the event and how this can blur the boundaries that exist between bodies and the event.

> I think with both of them, I sort of froze and…felt myself quite paralysed in the September one…looking back on it and I didn’t really know what to do or think to do and it was similar in the February one…I was watching the coverage of that…even though I thought the house can’t stand this…I still couldn’t move! [*Ken: Interview Extract, October 2014*].

> I woke…the noise woke me…it sounded like a train…it sounded almost as if it was going to come through the corner of my bedroom…I could feel hairs rising before the shakes… [*Lucy: Interview Extract, November 2014*].

> well it shook everybody up and I mean, I don’t know if you have ever experienced an earthquake but it does something to your insides when you hear a bang…you know…it shocks your whole system…hmm… [*Linda: Interview Extract, February 2015*].

> ahh the CTV building was dreadful…yeah…unbelievable…it made you blink. Were you seeing what you were seeing! Yeah… it is only when you *feel* it that you know it has happened…yeah… [*Linda: Interview Extract, February 2015*].

The above extracts discuss the pre-emotive space of sensing. To elaborate, they are illustrating the pre-cognitive and pre-subjective state of affect where that moment of feeling, responsiveness or engagement is hard to understand or articulate. The above extracts demonstrate an inherent connection between the body and the event through a range of sensations. Participants referred to a

range of diverse feelings and sensations and often used their bodies in the interview space to demonstrate exactly how it was they felt and how the responded to certain events; examples included instances of visibly shaking, hand gestures, tensing and so on. The sensations discussed included becoming immobile and being unable to move, tensing unexpectedly, feeling jumpy, hairs rising in anticipation of the next quake and connecting the *feeling* of the quakes to the reality of the actual event. McCormack (2008:1827-1828) explores sensing and affective geographies through the activity of dancing. He argues that:

> Regardless of what kind of dancing might have been taking place, the affective quality of the space in which bodies move is never something personal – it is a product of a complex mix between music (although music is not necessary for dance), light, sound, bodies, gesture, and in some cases, psychoactive substances (see Malbon, 1999; Pini, 1998). What is clear is that this affective intensity is felt – you can feel it in your gut (whether you like it or not is a different matter) – and that this felt sense can be modulated by changes in the level of those factors listed above.

There are parallels with arguments made by McCormack (2008) and this research. The interviews demonstrated that the disasters produced more than emotional geographies but a feeling and sensing space which is entangled with the complex mix of other factors such as sound and the physical environment. For Bunkše (2007:219) 'feeling is believing.' To elaborate, a sense of being in the world requires sensations other than sound or sight where there is a rich and symbolic language to enable articulation of subjective experience. By contrast, language associated with sensations is lacking: 'terms desert us, and such instantly recognizable experiences become barely articulated, or articulated barely' (Paterson, 2009: 766). Feelings and sensations are inherently bound up with wider changes in place which become disrupted and reconfigured as a result of disaster. The unexpectedness and chaos which comes with an event and what follows requires new and unfamiliar language which develops and takes shape over time. With reference to events in Christchurch this was illustrated in the following extract:

> I went up to Auckland and you didn't think you were affected by it…and you would be sitting on something and someone would go past and automatically…you tensed [tensing action]…you didn't know you were doing that…it took me a long time to get over that…when there was a shake you would just [jump] wait for the

> next one and…'oh that was someone just walking past' [laughs] [*Liz: Interview Extract, October 2014*].

Pile (2010) observes that emotion and affect geographies favour proximity and intimacy. However, the affective bodily experiences Liz described suggests that experiences of events and how that feeds into ongoing events cannot take proximity, or closeness to the site of the event, for granted. Liz described bodily responses to the event that still occur when she is not in Christchurch which highlights how the impact of the event can transcend time and places through the micro-register of the body.

The body's capacity to respond to, and to participate in, events gives the body great prominence in disaster research. Rather than bodies being considered as a stable thing or entity, bodies can be understood as processes which 'extend into and are immersed in world' (Blackman, 2012:1). As the extracts from interviewees in this chapter have demonstrated, bodies are seen as open and can be defined by their 'capacities to affect and be affected' (Blackman, 2012:1). This suggests that the disaster event and the body are not detached entities but rather immersed together through porous boundaries in which the body gives rise to understanding and representing disaster experiences. In addition, this perspective enables views to be shifted away from more medicalised and passive notions of the ageing body to ones that focus on seeing the body as a playing a critical role feeling the disaster.

This section has illustrated a number of points relating to the embodied geographies of the event. These embodied geographies are highly charged, processual and temporal. While the significant event occurred three and a half years ago (however with numerous intermittent quakes since), the body continues to act as an affective register of the event.

5.5. Ageing and post-disaster recovery

This chapter has discussed a range of themes which emerged from the discussions that were undertaken with interviewees concerning their experiences of the disaster as well as those that arose from the researcher's own field notes. The chapter has highlighted that emotions play a significant role in articulating experiences which intersect with a range of places. The home emerged as an important site in the emotional experience of disaster. Throughout the interviews

I asked older people directly about their disaster experiences however I was more cautious (due to wider awareness of self-consciousness and respect) about directly asking them what this meant in the context of their own ageing. However, experiences of ageing in a disaster context very much emerged as part of wider narratives around change, time, and the body:

> Where we used to live…next to us on one side…she was very nice and she has moved over here too! Which is great! But she has got a bad heart now…but yes…on the other side it wasn't so good but…you keep away from that hmmm….and our church was down the road. We had a lot to do with it but…but now? I think it is a difficult area to break into? That is my feeling. It is easier when you are young and you have got children…you can make friends very easily that way but…we…we are older…it is a lot harder. It takes a lot more time…hmmm [*Linda: Interview Extract, February 2015*].

> ...because I have got younger friends on the east side and they got through it, handled it a lot easier…yeah but for older people, it is a lot harder…of course they said, they would be dealing with the older people and families first…it wasn't like that…but when we came over here…because there was nothing that we knew and we had to get used to…something all over again and that was so difficult… [*Maureen: Interview Extract, January 2015*].

Here Linda recounted her experiences of relocating and this directly intersected her experience of being old. Where she used to live she felt part of a community, was friendly with her neighbours, and part of a local church. She now lives in a new sub-division located to the west of the city centre and states that she feels that is much harder, compared to younger people, to integrate into a new area. When relocating, social ties and personal bonds are disrupted and the extent to which these can be repaired is complex. Maureen similarly echoed similar points by stating that it was much harder for older people. Maureen connected this through the experiences of having to get used to something new and almost start all over again.

> I thought I was looking after myself but I was bringing the rubbish bin back in after the earthquake and the ground was so bad, I tripped as I came round the corner with it and…down I went…fell against the house…it was concrete…urgh! It is a pain but yeah…you never forget…it is awful. I knew as soon as I had done

> it whether I had broken anything…hmmm [*Interview Extract: Renee, February 2015*].

After the quakes the ground had been severely disjointed and broken in places which shaped patterns of everyday mobilities. Here Renee discussed her attempts to ensure that she was looking after herself yet a fall on uneven ground resulted in bones being broken.

> I said to my husband… I am going for a walk… I want to see if anyone has lost their chimneys and of course down…that way [points] there are a lot of two storey houses and a lot of people had lost their chimneys and I remember, I met a man on the corner of St Albans Road and Papanui Road…and we were chatting about it and I said 'well…I have reached this age and I hope that is the only one…I will ever see' [*Natalie: Interview Extract, November 2014*].

Light touch references were also made to experiencing a quake so late in life. As Natalie mentioned, she hoped that, as she had reached a certain age, that would be the last experience of a quake that she would undergo.

5.6. Conclusion

Chapters Two and Three explored geographical literature on disasters and ageing respectively. Chapter Two highlighted that while disasters continue to be interdisciplinary in reach, there has been a noticeable absence on research which looks at the lived experiences of those in a disaster context. Such omission is unfortunate as narratives often provide the everyday realities of living through a disaster and what this means for individual identity and belonging, and emotional and affective experiences with place. Chapter Three explored geographies of ageing which showed similar tendencies towards the homogenisation of experiences of older people and highlighted how studies of health and mobility have a tendency to dominate discussions of ageing. Throughout the two literature focused chapters, I have explored how ageing and disaster research is often examined in relation to more orthodox perspectives which focus on the needs and capacities of older people following a disaster.

This chapter has attempted to readdress some of these omissions and the analysis of the empirical material shows that disasters can be experienced just as significantly in emotional registers and through visceral embodied experiences. In this chapter I have explored older people's emotional, affective

and embodied experiences of disaster and post-disaster recovery and I use this final section to reflect on the concepts of emotion, affect and embodiment and highlight key findings emerging from this empirical material.

Emotional geographies explore how people's emotional lives impact upon how they interact with and within the places they move through everyday day. Coupled with this, the way space has been organised and places shaped can impact on people's emotions (Davidson *et al.,* 2005). This research shows that emotions matter in the context of older people's experiences of post-disaster recovery. This is reflected through three key observations. First, emotions served as descriptive tools in the interview research and an array of different emotions were employed to explain and make sense of experiences. The three significant earthquakes were extraordinary events and making sense of the ways in which they impacted everyday lives is complex. Emotions therefore serve as a powerful tool to make sense of experiences during a period of significant disruption. Second, the disaster brought chaos and disruption to everyday places. Emotions were therefore used as a way to make sense of the city and the home in relation to this chaos and subsequently what this meant for everyday emotional lives. Third, the post-disaster landscape created a space where emotions are actively framed through public campaigns and are, therefore, not marginalised or seen as irrelevant but rather play an active role in the wider post-disaster environment. Exploring the role of emotion in relation to older people's lived experiences of post-disaster recovery helps to demonstrate that older people are not passive or homogenous agents in a disaster context but, in fact, are experiencing highly emotional impacts of disaster.

Compared to the concept of emotion, the concept of affect, in this context, is more ambiguous. The affective nature of disasters has not yet been explored however this research demonstrates that disasters are highly affective experiences in two ways in particular. The first, is illustrated through the concept of an atmosphere. In this research references were made to something that is rather intangible yet induces an indescribable feeling and holds a certain presence. This affective atmosphere initially emerged from the event but continues to affect bodies in ways in which are highly temporal such as during the night time or in particular places and across distance. The second, is through the body. This research demonstrated how the disaster produces a heightening of sensual experiences

which affect bodily sensations, movements and encounters. Here the body can be regarded as a register of experience where the impact of the disaster continues to reverberate through the body long after the event has passed. While this research highlights the clear affective geographies of disaster, there remains some broader empirical and conceptual concerns. Discussion of emotions were frequent in the interviews and I was able to discern individual narratives of emotional disaster experiences. However, affect is not a term which is used in everyday lay terminology and understanding and exploring affect was often in accessible in the narrative interviews and analysis. The affect related material which emerged was through occasional hints, glimpse and feelings.

Embodiment and ageing is often explored through medicalised notions of older age and how old age is socially constructed alongside wider societal norms and assumptions. As disaster and ageing research is primarily focused on health and wellbeing of older adults in the context of the disaster, the body is somewhat reduced to understandings associated with fragility and decline. While it is important not to dismiss or disregard the needs associated with ageing and the body, this research demonstrates that the body is a significant register in emotional and affective experiences of post-disaster recovery. How experiences are understood and articulated is through the body and the body's capacity to feel, sense and encounter impacts of the disaster. The body therefore should not be situated as a detached entity but, rather, needs to be recognised as embedded in the socio-cultural context of the disaster.

Overall, this chapter has provided an empirical context for the chapters which follow which discuss in more detail the post-disaster places in Christchurch (Chapter Six) and the persisting and coping practices associated with post disaster recovery (Chapter Seven).

Chapter Six: Geographies of post-disaster: absence, emergence and lingering

6.1. Introduction

The previous empirical chapter explored the importance of emotion, affect, and embodiment in recounting disaster narratives and shaping the ongoing lived experiences of disaster. The material drawn upon in Chapter Five illustrated a richness in the topics discussed by older people and highlighted how experiences of disaster are multifaceted and intersect with a variety of spatialities and temporalities. The empirical extracts discussed in Chapter Five often referred to distinct geographical locations such as the home, the city, and the neighbourhood. This chapter will draw upon the qualitative material obtained to explore the diverse geographies of post-disaster in more detail.

The post-disaster environment is an opportunity to critically engage with geographical understandings of place; exploring how particular places are felt, experienced, and made meaningful in a setting which has been altered, disordered, and disrupted. There are many places of varying scales which could be explored yet this chapter discusses two sites which were frequently discussed in the interviews with the research participants: the city centre and the home. This chapter attends to each place in turn and discusses the themes associated with absence, emergence, and lingering. Absence is primarily referred to here as a void, something that has disappeared or something that has been lost. An overarching observation is that places are felt differently in relation to absence (Moran and Disney, 2017) and this chapter explores, in more detail, understandings and observations of absence in a post-disaster context. The theme of emergence was discussed in relation to the new; things and places which have emerged post-quake and are identified as materially different from before. As such they involve a re-negotiation with the social and cultural landscape. Lingering is used to refer to places, materials, and things which have remained throughout the earthquakes, reflecting qualities and ideas around persistence and endurance in a disaster setting. Absence, emergence, and lingering highlight the temporal and affective dimensions of the post-disaster landscape and serve as productive in thinking about how this shapes sense of belong and experiences of place. These are not distinct themes to be considered

in isolation, rather they have interconnected tensions and points for further discussion. However, the order of discussing these themes is intentional. Aspects relating to loss was discussed first and foremost by the participants and references made to what was new or different in relation to the city centre and the home was discussed a bit further into the interview. Discussions about what remained often arose as a somewhat reflective afterthought. These themes, and the related topics which emerge from the discussion in this chapter, highlight the shifting geographies of post-disaster places and how older people re-negotiate their everyday geographies through meaning-making, practices and routines, as well as connections between the past and the present, and emotional geographies.

As illustrated in Chapter Five, Christchurch city centre is a central discussion point throughout this research and this largely stems from the significant destructive impact experienced therein and the subsequent effect this had on perceptions of place and everyday geographies. This chapter will demonstrate, through the themes of absence, emergence, and lingering, how older people have made sense of their city centre, and what implications this has on mobilities, as well as emotions and connections between the past and the present. The home is explored due to the author's/respondents' recognition of it being an important marker of an individual's identity and how many respondents recounted their earthquake experiences from being at home at the time of the quakes. Discussions of the home moves, however, beyond the physicality of the building and in so doing also considers the social conviviality and re-learning of both personal and physical space.

6.2. "Christchurch was the English city, the garden city"

The impact of the Canterbury earthquakes on the city centre of Christchurch has been documented in the popular press as significant, heart breaking, and life changing. Following the February 22^{n}, 2011 earthquake, the people of Christchurch were required to physically and symbolically recreate their broken city (Bennett *et al.,* 2014). Throughout my time in the field, Christchurch city centre was frequently referred to as a doughnut city; signifying the long-lasting damage of the city centre. The earthquakes resulted in a flattening of the city centre through the loss of high-rise buildings and an eradication of inner-city

infrastructure. At the time of the fieldwork - four years after the significant earthquake of 2011 - the city centre was still engulfed by a physical void.

Figure 9: Streets once lined with house now remain empty

Figure 10: Demolition work in the city centre

Reconceptualising a city centre following a natural disaster can attend to a vast array of debates including cities and cultural considerations (Boen *et al.,* 2005), and understanding political economies (Chamlee-Wright, 2011) and most commonly cities and ways of building resilience (Aldrich, 2012; UNISDR, 2015). The ways in which the participants spoke and engaged with the city centre was shaped around a physical loss. The loss of buildings and other facilities in the city centre meant that understandings and perceptions of the city centre became disrupted which conceptually connects with wider geographical scholarship concerning ways of knowing and meaning-making. I attend to discussions on the city centre through the chapter's themes of absence, emergence, and lingering, and in doing so I reflect on patterns of mobility, the significance of emotional geographies, and the connections that exist between the past and the present. However, before doing so I briefly reflect on the ways in which the city centre was perceived and used by my research participants prior to the earthquakes.

The majority of the narrative interviews took place four years after the significant quake of 2011. Narratives naturally tell a story of what is meaningful to that individual at that particular time and, as such, the accounts I obtained simply provided a snapshot of the thoughts and feelings of that moment. However, there were overarching commonalities for example the physical loss of much of the city centre was often referred to in relation to heartache, despair, and frustration. To better understand and contextualise these feelings and experiences, I asked participants to discuss their thoughts of the city centre pre-quake:

> Before the quakes I don't suppose I used the city centre that much… no…I think people were going away from the city centre…you only sort of went up there if you had to go to your solicitors or there was something like that or if there was a church service up in the square or something like that…you didn't…the city as such…was dying in comparison to the likes of the malls coming out…people didn't have to travel in so far and try and park…because that is what it all boiled down to and there was more and more malls being built…*[Diane: Interview Extract, November 2014]*

> I have only been here for…well since three years…I didn't go into the city very much so a lot of those buildings were not familiar to me. The malls were much more straightforward for me to get to so

> it was only occasionally that I actually went right into the city *[Anne: Interview Extract, January 2015]*

> To me, the city centre had lost its purpose. Of course, the Cathedral was there and the park but there wasn't much else going on really. I suppose it is sad in an iconic sort of way but really…it is one of those things…what is it? You don't realise you have it until it's gone…but now it is quite exciting, all that change that will happen…good change I hope! *[Judith: Interview Extract, February 2015]*

The above interview extracts all illustrated some discussion points which was rather unexpected and somewhat surprising to me. In advance of my fieldwork, my literature search had suggested that the loss of the city centre was significant because it disrupted and shaped people's everyday living and working lives. However, throughout the fieldwork period it was suggested that this was not the case. The extracts above suggest that the main shopping malls which line the periphery of the city have taken individuals away from the city centre and subsequently the city centre no longer served a purpose for everyday tasks and activities. It is therefore interesting that despite the narratives which follow describing the city centre in relation to a profound sadness and loss, this was not connected with wider practices and usage of the city centre itself (for example for shopping and leisure purposes). Indeed, fulfilled the needs of those whom I spoke with more than the city centre. The city centre thus remained the heart of the city in a symbolic sense rather than a needs or a practical sense.

Monnet (2011: 10) reflects on this symbolic nature of places and suggests that a place can be 'symbolic whenever it means something to a group of individuals in such a way that it contributes to giving an identity to the group'. While this symbolic nature of Christchurch city centre may be out of keeping with how symbolic places are usually understood (often explored in religious and spiritual terms), the remnants of the city centre has established a meaningful and imaginative space which appears conflicted between its current present-day situation, its past purposes, and its future ambitions. Amongst the older people with whom I carried out research, there was a form of collective acknowledgement that the city centre provides some meaning to them and in part forms an intrinsic part of the Christchurch earthquake identity experience.

6.2.1. City Centre: Absence

I outlined at the beginning of this chapter that the city centre and the home will be explored in relation to themes of absence, emergence, and lingering. I now turn to discussions of absence in relation to the city centre and explore what this meant for the everyday geographies of older people in Christchurch.

Physical absence, disorientation, past and present

Daisy was one of the interview participants and who lives in a retirement home. As a result of the earthquakes her home in a residential village became inhabitable along with all the other homes in that vicinity. She moved into a retirement home somewhat prematurely for her age and ability but now lives in close proximity to the city centre. Here she discusses her feelings of living in Christchurch:

> I love Christchurch. But the city as it is now, is not Christchurch…it is…well Christchurch has gone…that's gone, the cathedral has gone…we have got a cardboard cathedral now but my daughter when she came over last year she wanted to see it but…it has an eerie feeling, you know? There is no sort of 'oh well the bank used to be there…or that used to be there.' You forget what was there…and street names, you just don't recognise it. But gradually…we are getting there. Putting up new buildings and actually they showed us a new building on the TV the other day, about a few weeks ago…and if we get another big earthquake…it is allowed to shift that much forward so it moves in an earthquake. But it's the other generation that will get the benefit of it…of the new city…but we just remember it as it was. [*Daisy: Interview Extract, February 2015*]

From the beginning to the end of the above quote, Daisy touched upon many relevant points regarding this research which will be explored throughout this chapter such as physical absence, temporality, feelings and sensations, and connections between the past, present, and future. Daisy outlined physical absences in the city centre of Christchurch such as the loss of shops and facilities and mentions the temporary structures of newness such as the cardboard cathedral. She reflected on her uncanny sensations of the city centre through illustrations of her being unsettled or disturbed by not knowing or forgetting where things used to be. She used connections between the past and present to

illustrate entanglements of absence and presence.

Daisy also outlined many of the key themes which dominated discussions pertaining to the city centre and outlined her observations of the gradual changes towards a more established Christchurch city centre. Most significantly she reflected (as do many of the research participants) on her age and, due to the length of the recovery process, realised that she might not be around to witness a ‘new’ city centre. Not being part of a future Christchurch rendered her comments even more significant because of the meaningful temporal-spatial relations which have emerged from the quakes.

As Daisy’s testimony demonstrates, discussions about the city centre commonly focused on what was not there. Individuals spoke frequently about a loss of buildings such as shops, theatres, post office, libraries and so on. However, it is not just a loss of physical amenities but also a loss of the social relations and practices associated with that physical space.

> I don’t go into the city centre, well…not right in…I am just disappointed with it because…well the bus routes are all different…you can’t really do much, everywhere you go there are road works…you don’t know… and because I am finding it hard to walk, I can’t get round everything so…I have just got to be careful where I go [*Julie: Interview Extract, November 2014]*

Julie discussed how the absence of bus routes and other activities associated with the city centre prevented her from visiting it. The increased road works associated with rebuilding and recovery affected her confidence and ability to walk through parts of the city centre. The changing physical space and the absence of familiar bus routes all shaped and impacted Julie’s mobility patterns. Such comments highlight the fact that absence is not just a physical loss but also results in a disruption and hampering of mobility practices.

Through discussing what used to be in the city and what was no longer there, participants brought the concept of the past into focus. The earthquake resulted in a radical and sudden change in the physical landscape which required

individuals to draw upon a range of tools and resources as a way of making sense of their new city. An example of the type of resources included photographs:

> It is a shame but oh well there are plenty of photographs about how it was and how it is now…yes now it looks like a bomb site, it still is…and you forget what it is like. It's like when they take down a shop, you think…oh what used to be there…you forget what used to be there…it was a beautiful city…garden city but not the same now *[Diane: Interview Extract, November 2014]*

In the above extract, Diane discussed how photographs help in remembering what used to be in the city centre but the photographs by no means serve as a replacement for fully understanding the city how it is today. The interviews with Diane, Julie and Daisy all reflect on a sudden loss and the impact that has on making sense of the city centre and the social relations which are a part of this. Here it is helpful to reflect on geographical approaches to the past, geographies of memory and how this connects with the theme of absence.

Hill (2015) provides a discussion on the geographies of the past in relation to the flooding disaster in Lynmouth which is located in Exmoor, Devon. In her discussion she reflects on how much of what remains of the past is through representations. Indeed, as Diane above noted, photographs and images of Christchurch serve as representations of the past and these are situated in contrast to present day Christchurch. However, Hill (2015) expands the point on representation by considering the more-than-representational forms of the past. In doing so, she forges connections between material remains, archival sources and present day Lynmouth. In particular she reflects on the sound of water and how its reverberations serve as a connection between the past and the present. Hill (2015: 821) therefore argues that 'traces of the past are encountered through changes in our capacity to affect and be affected, and that affect, where it is felt, is irreducible to either a symbolic or emotional register.'

In continuing with the notion that the more-than-representational is helpful to understanding absence and the past, it is worth considering the notion of memory. The participants above all discuss elements of forgetting or not remembering what used to be in the city centre or, indeed, used memory as a way of connecting the past and the present:

> I used to frequently visit the city centre as a boy and a teenager…and there was a very good bookshop there and an excellent sweet shop. The sweet shop doors were just so colourful! Although these are now gone, I can still go into the city centre and remember where they were… I suppose the brightness of those doors helps *[Ken: Interview Extract, October 2014]*

There is a significant absence which shapes the city centre. How this absence is understood and negotiated is nuanced and complex. The more-than-representational perspectives can help better understand these complexities and how this feeds into and shapes multiple emotional and affective registers. Using the concept of memory is one possibility in which to further our understanding of the past and present in the context of substantial social and material change.

Geographers have fluctuated in their exploration of the relationship between memory work and geographical space. This remains surprising given geographers' attention to non-representational geographies and the subsequent examination of forms of affect, emotion, (un)consciousness, thought and language (Jones, 2011). The role of memory is significant as it asks provocative questions about the self; where Jones (2011:1) claims 'we are conglomerations of past everyday experiences, including their *spatial textures and affective registers*'. Despite the role of memory having an intrinsic relationship with the past, becoming and the self, little has been explored around the role memory plays in the co-construction of the ageing experience in relation to particular places and events.

This research highlights that the role of memory could be extremely useful in connecting the ageing experience with particular places and events. The Christchurch earthquakes provide a context in which to critically explore how memory connects with the past, feeds into the present and, in doing so, the experiences can be practiced and performed in particular emotional and affective ways. By exploring ideas of memory in relation to the event we can see how something which happens in the 'the past' can come to be implicated and made explicit in the 'now' through act of remembering and the 'domestic time-space through the organization of affect' (Anderson, 2004:4).

An immediate assumption is that loss and absence is somewhat finalised state. Indeed, the absence discussed above has come to be a key characteristic in

defining the current state of the city. However, through memory and ongoing emotional and affective practices absence is continually in a state of becoming rather than a finished state. This section has highlighted how absence shapes understandings of the past and ongoing social and spatial relations which are a part of the city centre.

Emotional and affective responses to absence

Absences identified in the city centre also elicited a range of emotional and affective responses.

> I am pretty sad about a lot of things that I have known and it is hard for me to find my way round much of the CBD because it there are just so few landmarks there and…I am sad to see some of those familiar things gone [*Renee: Interview Extract, February 2015]*

> I am going to be interested to see what happens…because I am very frightened really that…there would be a lot of cheap buildings going up although I am starting to feel that there are signs that that won't happen…just cheap…nasty, quick…I think it is an exciting opportunity…an opportunity for exciting things to happen architecturally *[Ken: Interview Extract, October 2014]*

> I don't really go into the city centre but they took me round in the car the other day. Everything is gone…it made me feel terrible. It doesn't look a bit like home. I think, 'what is this?!' It makes me feel empty and it is a horrible feeling. I wouldn't want it to happen to anyone else *[Grace: Interview Extract, February 2015]*

The above extracts all illustrate a range of emotional and affective responses to the absences found within the city centre. This physical loss became central to defining experience and relations with Christchurch city centre. As a significant post disaster space in terms of scale this loss fed into and shaped a range of emotional and affective registers of the disaster event. While the absences in parts of the city were often discussed in the interviews in a way which suggested a detachment between the participant and the city, the extracts above suggest that the absences could be *felt* as Grace indicated, the absences left her feeling empty with a horrible feeling inside.

The absence of buildings, amenities and material space in the city centre can be viewed as intrinsically entwined with the self. For example, as Frers (2013: 3)

notes, absence can be experienced through its ‘embeddedness in the body, in bodily practices, sensual perceptions and emotions’. These participants demonstrated that absence is more than a physical loss, it is also an emotional and affective register which shapes the ways in which they came to negotiate their understanding of the city centre. While words are used to describe the individual research participant’s emotions and feelings, the post disaster space can be seen as an affective landscape where there is something more intangible prompting the emotional response. In other words, there is not only an emotional register associated with absence because it also becomes an affective register. To elaborate, the absence and loss can result in either a difficulty in walking around and movement through a city centre which is abundant with different type of absences and losses.

The absence in the city centre straddles an ambiguous position between the past, present and future. It serves as a reminder of what has gone before, sits as a temporary space, and waits in expectation for the future. These empty spaces do not exist in isolation but are part of an assemblage of unusual cartographies, ones which include “well-trodden, but not always visible, tracks … inhabited by increasing numbers of people, and … new circuits of belonging, fear and suffering” (Amin, 2007: 101). The ways in which older people have connected with the absence is not just through visually recognising empty spaces but through an emotional and affective geography which shapes new and emerging understandings of their city centre.

6.2.2. City Centre: Emergence

This section turns to the theme of emergence to explore encounters and understandings with the new. Specifically, this attends to emerging spaces, new facilities and parts of the city which are materially different from how they were prior to the earthquakes. This section explores emergence in three interrelated parts: first I look at new voids which have emerged in the city centre; secondly, I look at the changing aesthetic of place; thirdly, I turn attention to the ways of knowing and understanding place making and the types of practices which subsequently develop from such emergences.

Voids, vistas, and new possibilities

The physical absence of buildings and amenities has resulted in empty spaces in the city centre. The city centre has become characterised by a range of empty spaces which are waiting to be filled subject to the recovery planning agenda. In many of the interviews it became apparent that these voids shaped a range of emotional and affective responses. The physical voids, despite being primarily noticed for what is not there, at times gave way to unexpected surprises. In her interview Doreen discussed a journey through the city centre which took place when accompanying her husband to a hospital appointment:

> we drove right through town…we drove right down Papanui Road…and Victoria Street and then Durham Street…down to the Cashmere club…in South Colombo Street and as we were driving down Victoria Street…seeing the church almost finished and new buildings and then we came through where that big hotel was…that was removed…you know just next to the town hall…the town hall was still standing and there was this vast clear area…that big hotel had gone and it looked lovely! I thought if they don't build that hotel…it is a lovely vista from down Victoria Street and you can see that vista and it's just beautiful *[Doreen: Interview Extract, January 2015]*

The above extract illustrated a journey through the centre of the city and highlighted Doreen's observations throughout the journey. Doreen remarked upon a new open space which had emerged from a demolition of a large hotel. In this interview extract, Doreen was recounting her journey from a few months previous by specifically discussing the street names and landmarks. Doreen remarked about the appreciation of a view which had sprung up in the absence of a demolished hotel; the new (and perhaps temporary) space had provided an alternative lens through which to view the city.

In post-disaster studies, what is new is often spoken about in relation to the tangible, productive and material. However, Doreen recognised the significance of the intangible by observing how the absence created by the disaster had produced gaps in the landscape to view parts of the city in a different way than before. The closest existent academic illustrations to this analysis lie with McDonogh's (1993) discussion of the geography of emptiness. He suggests there is a complexity when considering emptiness as it is commonly denoted by terms such as vacancy, abandon and failure. However, an emptiness of space is more than something which lies vacant. It can also be considered as an openness

which can be re-made through power-relations such as ownership and management which can lay claim to unfilled spaces (Lynch and Hack, 1984). This is highlighted in Doreen's encounter where she reflected on how the empty spaces might be filled with new development which would obscure the nice view which she had discovered. This indicates how emergence is not just about the material and the tangible but also about how people respond to the opening up of particular empty spaces.

Aesthetics of place and place-making

While the emptiness found in the city centre is steadily being filled through the development of new inner-city buildings to replace those which were lost, enterprising initiatives have also moved in to capitalise on the available space. As such, there has been a changing aesthetic of the city centre landscape which requires an understanding of what this means for the older people who may or may not use that space. As discussed in Chapter Five, *Gap Filler* and *Greening the Rubble* are well known examples of initiatives which attempted to establish creative and aesthetic places amidst the ongoing recovery. Renee discussed these in relation to emergence in the city centre:

> It is all a mess in there but there has been lots of little gardens and that which have popping up in different places and statues and things popping up here and there but some of them I haven't seen [*Renee: Interview Extract, February 2015]*

There is also unconventional artwork in parts of the city centre which shapes and has been shaping the particular aesthetic of the given places. However, the extent to which these initiatives add a layer of understanding of the post-disaster city is ambiguous. This research involved an array of ongoing conversations with older people dealing with the earthquakes and below is a field diary extract from an afternoon spent at a barbeque in Burwood, a badly damaged part of the city. The barbeque was part of a resident's association initiative to bring the local neighbourhood together.

I started talking to Florence who told me a bit about herself. She told me she was originally from Duns in Scotland and she left school when she was 16 and got a job as a cleaner. After the war broke out she went into the army and from there she got offered the opportunity to go to New Zealand to work on the telephone network. She met her husband in New Zealand and she has been here ever since. She remembers she was the first person to live in the local area and the only person and house around for miles. She therefore remembers when all the new houses started going up. She was in Scotland when the earthquake hit and her first thoughts were friends, family and her house. An American lady joins in our conversation when she hears us talking about the earthquakes. Florence was saying she avoids the city centre as she gets upset when she sees the demolished buildings. The American lady agrees this is sad but points to the wonderful signs of creativity in the city centre. She produces her smart phone and shows Florence some pictures. Florence is surprised and gasps at some of the images, indicating how wonderful all the pictures are. Soon the phone is being shared around so others can view the images. The small group of four older ladies are all equally surprised as Florence and soon the discussion turns to the nice flowers which are emerging in the city centre, rather than the derelict buildings. [*Field diary extract, October 2014*]

Figure 11: Image of a ballerina similar to the one which was shared with Florence and the group

This conversation with Florence and the others in the group highlighted the ways in which we can understand and make sense of emotional landscapes through themes of material change and emergence. Florence indicated how she avoided the city centre as she gets too upset when she sees the demolished buildings. Her emotional response governed and shaped her engagement with the city centre. While accessing the city centre is not frequently required or done so, the emotions and feelings towards the place can dictate the frequency with which city centre is visited.

In her work on bereavement and mourning, Maddrell (2015) discusses grief maps. These provide insights into the relational spaces, emotional-affective geographies and therapeutic environments of grief. Her research explores how certain places evoke a range of emotions which intersect with the complexities of the grieving process. She argues that the experience of grief is produced through a nexus of self-other-place which subsequently have distinct spatialities. Yet these experiences she argues "shed light on the at once everyday and extraordinary, tangible and intangible, often ground-shifting experience that bereavement-grief-mourning can be" (2015:184). While Florence and the others in the group were not mourning a loss of a person, they were entangled in a grieving process in some form; one which, akin to Maddrell's (2015) research, produced distinct patterns and spatialities. While it is evident that there is particular emotional landscape around emotions of loss, grieving and sadness, it is worth noting that emotions are dynamic, fleeting, and contested. Emotions concerning loss and grief may appear at times when excitement and anticipation occur at others. It is therefore apparent that the city centre produced the 'emotionally heightened spaces' discussed by Anderson and Smith (2001:8) and in doing so produced a distinct geography of everyday post-disaster living.

In many ways the above exchange between Florence and the American lady could point towards scholarship on place making as there has been an exchange in knowledge and understanding about different perceptions of the city centre. Place making has been discussed extensively in geographical literature. For example Michel de Certeau's account of the modern city emphasises how residents 'do' and 'make' in an 'attempt render a city more amenable to an 'art' of resistance' (Duff, 2010: 881). Making places covers a diverse array of agendas such as social relations, structures, and bodily practices. Yet these conversations

demonstrate that place making can occur and take shape through mundane encounters. Place making, according to Tuan, (1980:6), can be effectuated by talk, story-telling, naming practices and gossip; 'city people are constantly 'making' and 'unmaking' places by talking about them'. It is not only physical changes which make and unmake places but the ways in which people talk about them. Much of the work in Christchurch and the surrounding area intentionally brings together a range of people (such as different governmental and non-governmental organisations) to discuss the ways in which locals can contribute to development planning. Many of these discussions centre on how to physically (re)make place. While these are indeed valuable, it is worth looking at how place can also be produced through mundane everyday conversations and practices in ways similar to Tuan's (1980) understanding.

Changing places and emerging practices

While the physical landscape is characterised by absence and in part by some form of newness, this is all seen as temporary. The city centre continues to remould itself into a new Christchurch and is referred to as a city in transition. What appears more permanent is the ways in which those I spoke to understood and related to this place. In part not being able to witness the 'new' Christchurch (Christchurch when it has completed its recovery processes) and a lack of independent mobility through the city centre results in a somewhat permanent fixture of the ways in which older people perceive the city centre of Christchurch. It was neither with profound sadness nor joy but rather with a visible recognition of the ways in which the landscape has shifted beyond recognition and how this shaped new practices and ways of knowing. As a result of changes to the city centre, new mobility practices and ways of understanding places have emerged:

> For me it has been the little things, you see…I have found it very difficult because I knew where I was going to go shopping and I knew about the bus things because I had been over here and…but they were all changed. To me, from my point of view…it was completely alien land. I couldn't, you know…I had to sort out buses and there weren't very many, at first. Shops and the various malls were not all open for a while and…yeah…you would go out and you still couldn't feel as if it was real. You know? It was really quite funny *[Margaret: Interview Extract, March 2015]*

In the interview extract above, Margaret discussed her loss of familiarity with the environment. Margaret had recently relocated to Christchurch but was somewhat familiar with the city due to family connections and as a consequence of having previously visited the area. Prior to relocating to Christchurch, Margaret had planned how she would navigate her everyday life through the city centre - the earthquake disrupted this. As outlined earlier in the chapter, first impressions of the city centre are littered by the physical absence of shops, buildings, and amenities. The loss of buildings and other significant places also comes with a loss of familiarity and a sense of 'knowing' about the place and people. Degnen (2013:554) explores the role of knowing as integral for understanding connections to people and place:

> Knowing thus reveals a set of practices of how people position themselves in multiple ways within overlapping webs of relations: relations with people, relations with places, relations with memory, relations with change and relations with the past.

Knowing and absence are pervasive features in thinking about the city centre landscape. Knowing is more than an exchange of information because instead induces a sense of familiarity with a place and shapes an individual's relation with people and place across time. It can therefore be temporally laden with emotions, experiences, and places (Degnen, 2013). Knowing about the city was characterised by a combination of understanding what remained and what was new. Knowing is not all about certainty. Rather, aspects of knowing can be explored through an individual no longer understanding or making sense of what they are seeing.

As the above narrative extract indicates, the turmoil the earthquakes created threw aspects of knowing into question. While Margaret was discussing shops and buses which may lie outside the geographical area of the city centre *per se*, she still made explicit the consequences of not knowing or understanding the post-disaster landscape of Christchurch. Referring to the place which she was familiar with as *alien land* implied an entrenched detachment between the individual and her surroundings which is not as a consequence of what is absent, what has emerged, and what currently lingers but instead falls within the entanglements of all three and the additional complexities in her surrounding

social-spatial relations. Again, geographical explorations of the ‘uncanny’ have been employed to explore such negotiations. Marinelli and Ricatti (2013:5) for example, look at Italian transnational spaces of uncanny perceptions, narratives, and identities. They refer to the uncanny as ‘the emotional reaction to something that is, at the same time, familiar, unfamiliar, homely and unhomely.’ For the research participants ways of knowing about a place fed into the emotional reaction of spaces which play a role in their everyday lives.

The changes to physical landscape impacted day-to-day activities. A re-learning of the landscape was a way in which there was a re-coding of one’s own subjectivity through taking on new and unfamiliar practice. For Margaret, it was also a re-learning of the everyday environment through first perceiving it as alien land through to discovering and making real the new places in her everyday geographies. However, although she was beginning to re-learn or make new practices she identified that these were not always straightforward:

> ah that’s right, I heard at the big conference thing that the age people had at Riccarton or wherever it was and I picked up from these people that were doing this sort of thing and they had a morning…talk…no from ten they had an exercise class which I knew I needed then they would have a talk in the afternoon and…but at that stage I was shopping on the Wednesday…then…I would go to the meeting, go to the shopping and then come home and then I would have the two boys here for the afternoon and it…and I was getting stressed a bit too much so I stopped going because…at that stage also they started doing a lot of alterations to the pipes and sewers and what not and getting through these places was getting a bit tricky so I was stuck. But, there is a lady there but once again…I remember not to be thankful for my blessings because the poor soul is slowly going blind… she is brave and independent person so anyway, we are going to catch this yellow bus to the theatre. I am going to drive to her place…she doesn’t like fortunately very far from the bus link so she can just walk round the corner and catch the bus so I leave my car at her place and go on the bus and it is just a short walk from the bus to the station…so that is another thing *[Margaret: Interview Extract, March 2015*]

The process of re-learning one’s everyday environment through negotiating the absence and uncertainties of knowing is demanding. Here Margaret discussed an overloading of activities as a way of immersing herself into a new environment. She attended a large expo event held by Age Concern Canterbury and subsequently embarked on a range of activities. Yet doing this alongside family

commitments and navigating her way through a landscape which had been altered as a result of attending to damaged sewers and pipelines became extremely overwhelming. While changes to infrastructure may be subtle, for Margaret these works had profound implications upon the ways in which she carried out activities in the city and with regard to her wider socio-spatial relations. However, Margaret indicated her adaption to these circumstances through forming new social relations. Margaret spoke with much joy when she discussed the theatre trip; she showed me leaflets and outlined the different performances they were planning on attending. For Margaret, forming new social relations and carrying out new activities was exciting yet it was also done through a careful orchestration of plans which was only achieved through attending to the needs and abilities of both ladies on the outing.

6.2.3. City Centre: Lingering

The previous two sections highlighted the myriad of experiences that have been felt regarding the city centre post-disaster through themes of absence and emergence. These themes highlighted how these experiences have shaped emotional affective geographies, patterns of mobility, ways of knowing, and connections between the past and present. What was absent and what had emerged were often discussed in relation to each other whereas what continued to linger appeared somewhat taken for granted. This section now briefly discusses what remains in the city centre and how this fed into understandings of the city centre.

Hertherington (2004) claims that social relations are performed in relation to not only what is there but sometimes also around the presence of what is not. While many of the participants indicated a disengagement with the city centre as it did not accommodate their needs or attend to their specific purposes, a small minority embraced their excitement of what remained. In the interview extract below, Liz discusses an afternoon adventure around the city centre. Liz outlined how the city centre was important to her due to the various amenities located there. Losing these amenities meant the city centre no longer held a specific purpose for her and therefore was not frequently visited. However, the extract below discussed an unplanned day out:

> on Sunday afternoon I was sitting here and I thought, I need to do something different…what am I going to do? And what I had been saying was, to people…I have lost all the places I used to go, because I used to always go into the city…to go to the cathedral…for all sorts of reasons…I used to go to the lotus restaurant which was in the square…I used to go to the library which was just in Gloucester Street, that was there…I used to go to fabric vision…it is a material place because I did a lot of sewing and they're now up in Northlands and I am not sewing anymore because of my fingers…and…and I thought, hang on a minute…I keep saying everything's gone and that has been really hard but I thought, hang on a minute…I am going to find out where everything…where these new things are and I am going to some reconnoitring…I am going to have a wander around the city this afternoon, so I parked my car near new regents street and I walked round the corner into there and all the way down one side and up the other side and the tram was sitting there! And I thought *Oh God! I haven't seen the tram going for ages* and so I went into the duty free and I said, 'I am so pleased see you guys' because I used to walk into the duty free which was all the way round the square and I said, 'I am so pleased to see you.' And they said, 'well it is so glad you have come' and so I turned around and I crossed over and the tram started coming towards me to go past me and [waving actions] *waving to the driver!! And I thought I wish I had a flag!!* [laughter] I was so pleased…so pleased so see you! And then I wanted to go to Victoria Square and Queen Victoria is in Victoria Square…and I had such a giggle there because some kind soul made me laugh so much…a little yobbo…climbed up, right on top and put one of these orange cones on top of her head! [giggles] and I thought…I wonder what she would think of that! [*Liz: Interview Extract, October 2014]*

In the above extract Liz discussed an adventurous journey in the city centre where she encountered new places and re-visited what remained. While Liz discussed her delight at enjoying the city centre, her journey focused on parts of the city centre which remained – rather than new places which had sprung up. The journey through the city centre was a way of affirming that not all was lost and that there was still a sense of familiarity to be found but as she stipulated, she needed reminding that there were parts of the city centre to be enjoyed. DeLyser (2001) talks about a heightened sense of past landscape and society. She suggests that this past can be powerfully evoked and reconstructed imaginatively precisely because its present state is a calcified relic from the past. Indeed, Liz's adventure through the city centre was an engagement with the past

and present and becomes meaningful largely as a result of the ambiguous present state of Christchurch city centre.

Having to comprehend a transitional city is complex. While many narratives indicate a sense of sadness associated with change and loss, Liz outlined that a sense of pride of being in the city was fundamental for ensuring some attachment to it. No longer having a purpose to visit the city centre could result in new everyday geographies and a re-imagining of the city centre. However, despite change there is a persistent endurance of the past which continues to linger within the city centre. What remains is a somewhat hidden discourse which is not discussed or referred to in the same way as absence and emergence. While none of these themes take precedent over each other it is worth acknowledging how dynamics of post-disaster landscapes can feed into wider understandings of older people's everyday lives.

This first section has highlighted the ways in which the city centre has changed materially and socially, and how this has various implications for older people's understandings of the city centre. This has been made apparent through discussions of absence, emergence, and lingering. They reveal patterns of re-learning everyday environments, connections between the past and present, and emotional and affective geographies. I now turn to discussions concerning the home space and how this is contextualised in a post-disaster context.

6.3. "It is a house but not a home"

Discussions of the city centre focus upon entanglements between the absent, emergence, and lingering. Within the discussions, comments about the home space also shed light on how older people engaged with and encountered the home as a post-disaster space. What follows highlights the ways in which home-space can be constituted as a post-disaster space and what this means for the ontological security and personal identity of individuals.

Figure 12: Disaster symbolism in the home

The home plays a complex role in an individual's sense of self and their wider relations with other individuals and places around them. I encountered many older people during my time in Christchurch who all had different stories of their home and living through the quakes. The interviews I carried out encompassed a range of living situations; rented accommodation, privately owned accommodation, retirement villages, co-habiting, and living alone. As discussed in my methodology chapter, narrative interviews were employed to tease out and explore the multiple realms of understanding of experiences. These were useful in that they 'provide us with useful insights into social and spatial process and event' (Wiles *et al.*, 2005: 90). Often interviews would start with questions about the home: how long had the interviewee lived there, when did they move, what did they like about it. Additionally, being in the home space provided a material landscape for the individual's personal life: participants were able to show me pictures, flowers, and many other items of personal significance ranging from ongoing craft activities to reading materials. This indicates that the qualitative material which emerged from discussions of the home was more than just 'talk'; rather, the home became materially and socially entwined with the wider research process, providing an opportunity to engage with the multiple realms of experience and understanding which this research set out to achieve.

Making and unmaking the home

Explorations of the home are significant in geographical research. For example, humanistic geographers such as Moore, (2000) make claims that the home is a site of authenticity and experience, enabling a sense of place and belonging in an increasingly alienating world. Understandings of the home have grown increasingly complex. By way of advancing such academic discussions, Blunt and Dowling (2006) proposed critical geographies of the home. In their work they suggest that three themes prevail in geographies of the home. First, the home is not just a physical location but also an imaginative and metaphorical space of emotion and belonging. Secondly, the home needs to be considered as experienced differentially according to diverse identities such as gender, class sexuality and ethnicity. Finally, they suggest that the home is not a fixed location but is a porous and boundless space which plays a part in an array of multiple public and political worlds.

Discussions of the home with interviewees elicited a range of emotions: frustration, sadness, anger, grief, confusion, and so on. Dealing with the consequences of an earthquake and how it affected the home was by no means a problem dealt with solely by a particular age group or other identity characteristic. Indeed, it extended across the city's whole population. However, despite the criticality of the home space emerging in geographical research (where the home is not always the idyllic haven which is so often portrayed), in the context of older people the home continues to be seen to be of central importance to living well and the promotion of independence in later life. While this research did reveal the significance of the home space in such understandings of security and personal identity, it also revealed how the quakes impacted on the home and in so doing opened up a range of additional and un-foreclosed experiences.

Due to close personal ties, the home space was inevitably a central discussion point when talking about disaster experiences. The home is part of a complex network of social-spatial relations which can be laid bare and exposed in the context of a disaster. In addition to the work developed by Blunt and Dowling (2006), much emerging research on the home refers to home making practices where the home is understood to be part of productive relations and process

which contributes to the forming of social identities, relationships and materialities (see for example Sandu, 2013 and Walsh, 2011).

However, Baxter and Brickell (2014:134) ask whether, if we are so fixated with the productive qualities of making a home, 'where does home unmaking stand?'. They explore the unmaking the home as referring to the 'components of the home [which] are unintentionally or deliberately, temporally or permanently, divested, damaged or even destroyed'. While research between older people and the home shows that the two have strong interconnections, little current research explores the implications of the temporal fractures which occur between older people and the home space in the context/as a consequence of extraordinary events.

The home can be unmade for a variety of reasons. Brun and Lund (2008) and Morrice (2013) look at the unmaking of the home in the context of natural disasters where, as a result of a given event, the home becomes fractured socially and physically. While this research evidenced elements of the home space being unmade, there are also additional circumstances such as personal events which can contribute to the unmaking of the home. While it is possible to look at home making and unmaking in isolation, it is also worth looking at how making and unmaking of the home can happen simultaneously/concurrently. The insights provided by Baxter and Brickell (2014) on unmaking the home serves as a useful framework for contextualising the home space for older people in post-disaster recovery. The authors point to four main strands to consider with regard to unmaking the home. First, like people homes also have a lifecourse which is lived out in dynamic ways. Secondly, home making and unmaking do not function in isolation rather they co-exist and co-function simultaneously. Thirdly, while unmaking connotes a loss, it can also be used to understand mechanisms and processes of recovery where the unmaking of the home involves a displacement and replacement of objects and things. Fourthly, unmaking the home is not an all-encompassing process. Rather, the home can be unmade in some rather than all senses at any one time. Intersecting with this analysis of unmaking the home, the authors argue that four cross-cutting themes prevail: porosity, (in)visibilities, agents, and temporality.

This section provides an extension of this understanding of unmaking the home through bringing together key themes which form part of this research. Like the

city centre and other post-disaster spaces, I argue that concepts of materiality, assemblage, and practices and performances help in fleshing out the nuances which exist in a complex post-disaster landscape. All these concepts shape how we understand place and all have a different contribution to make to improving an understanding of the home and what that means in the context of post-disaster recovery. The narrative interviews illustrated that parallels exist with the city centre where what is absent, what is has emerged, and what lingers, play intrinsic roles in understanding the make-up of places and the emotional responses that people may exhibit to such landscapes. This chapter therefore recognises that the home space is not complete in any sense and is made and unmade in the context of post-disaster recovery.

6.3.1. Home: Absence

Gardens, friendships and familiarity

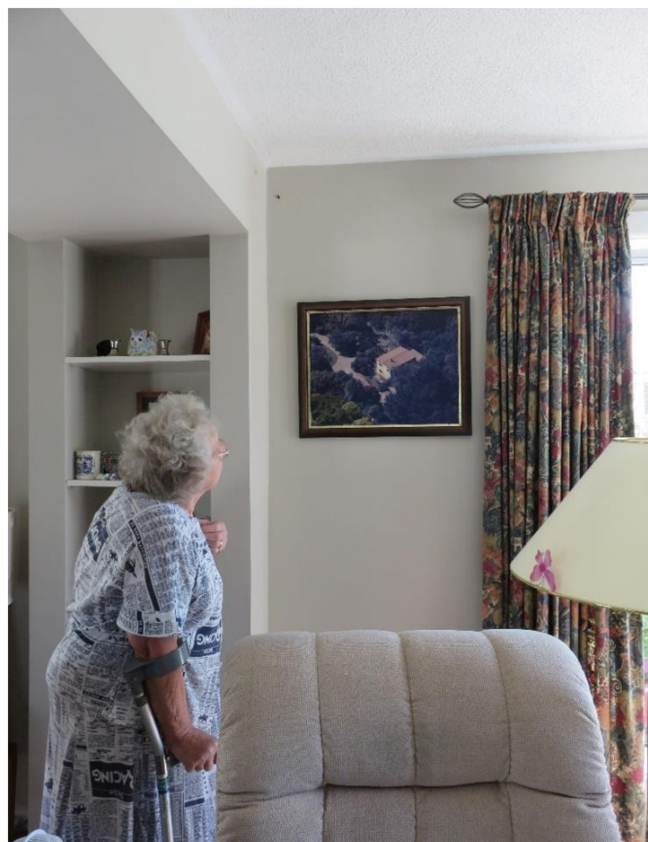

Figure 13: Jenny looking at a picture of old home before it was demolished

> We lived there sixty years…my husband built it in 1951…1952…we moved in, in '53…almost sixty years… It was a beautiful

> house…the demolition people said…'what a beautiful house.' It was not meant to withstand earthquakes. You didn't have too…there were certain rules that you had to abide by but not very strict ones…they didn't expect any earthquakes in Christchurch *[Jenny: Interview Extract, March 2015]*

It is possible to talk about many absences with regard to the home in the context of post-disaster recovery. Materially, absence may vary in scale for example from the loss of the entire physical structure of a house, to the loss of furniture and personal possessions and so on. In addition to the absence of the material, there is also an absence of former social practices which invite one to think of ways of thinking about the rebuilding of new and different social lives. Similar to discussions about the city centre, narratives of the homes were dictated by a profound sense of loss - an absence of what was there previously. Due to the February 2011 earthquake occurring around midday, many of the older people with whom I carried out interviews stated that they were in their homes when the earthquake hit. Consequently, there was an immediate witnessing of what might be lost and later there was an opportunity to explore whether this loss served as permanent reminder of what was absent. Reoccurring themes about what remains absent in the home space included the garden, social relations, personal belongings, a sense of security, and issues pertaining to comfort.

> My house? It was lovely! It was just right for me. It was just super. Double garage and lovely kitchen…it was all just lovely and I had trees all round over there when I bought the place. I just loved it there because it was a pretty street and I knew everybody so that was nice. The hard part was losing my garden. I had a lovely garden. It was just upsetting to lose. It was a huge shock. Not just for me but for everybody [*Judith: Interview Extract, February 2015*]

Many older people had to vacate the homes in which they had spent many years – perhaps raising a family, living with a loved one, witnessing tragic events, and building up social networks. Gardens are an important part of the home environment and the interview material demonstrated that gardens played a significant role in the relocation experience. The role of gardens has attracted increasing attention within geographic literature (see for example Christie, 2004). Gardens are sites where nature is nurtured and gardening practices are often meaningful and symbolic for those which participate in them:

> '[Gardens are] where people plant, weed, prune, and harvest flowers, fruit, or vegetables; raise and slaughter animals; sit alone or chat with friends; where the old teach the young how to plant, how to cook, how to eat, how to survive, how to be. There, people cultivate not only plants and friendships but also values and tastes. Gardens help people feel peaceful, self-sufficient, useful, healthy, and in touch with the living earth. They give people something to look forward to, a sense of ownership and responsibility. Garden products go far beyond edible plants to include social networks and healthy environments, economies, and people' [Christie, 2004: iv]

The circumstances by which individuals lost their gardens were often the same circumstances whereby individuals had to permanently relocate. Losing a garden which had been cared for over a considerable period of time feeds into wider home unmaking activity.

Not only did the loss of the garden mean a reduction in gardening activity, it also shaped other practices such as meal preparation and eating where produce from the garden was fundamental to these practices. As Baxter and Brickell (2014) identify, unmaking the home can be part of the recovery process where there is a re-arrangement of people and things. This concept/concern was reflected in the field diary extract below:

> I am with one of the age concern employees and a group of four older ladies. Everyone is really excited as we are visiting Penny's new apartment for the first time today. I have been told that Penny has recently moved out of her home into a retirement block. All the other ladies in her café group have been aware of this move and have been eagerly awaiting news of how Penny has been getting on. Instead of visiting a café, Penny has invited the group to her new apartment for afternoon tea. We arrive at the retirement block and head to the reception. The receptionist is expecting us and she rings Penny to come to collect us. Penny arrives to collect the rather excitable group of ladies and we slowly walk to her apartment. Penny provides a guided tour on the way to her apartment. Once inside her apartment, everyone remarks at how lovely it is furnished. I help her put the kettle on and note that Penny has laid out what appears to be her finest crockery. After much talk, the discussion turns to Penny's garden. The other ladies note how lovely Penny's garden in her old home was. Penny confesses she was upset to lose all her beautiful flowers but she proudly takes the ladies to the step just outside her apartment. Here is a 3-ft tree with bright red leaves, standing proudly in the sun in a golden brown pot. She tells me this plant used to be in her old garden but was the

> only garden item which was moved when she relocated. She is delighted at how well it has coped with the move [*Field Diary Extract, February 2015]*

The above field diary extract illustrates a convivial afternoon where those present had a mutual understanding of Penny's relocation experiences. Penny was not the only participant to take part of her garden with her when she relocated. Doreen also took me on a tour of her garden and showed me some of her trees which she had uprooted from her old garden and replanted into her new one. As the picture below highlights, elements of one's garden can also feature as part of the temporary relocation experience.

Figure 14: A temporary garden: Plants in buckets

While the garden itself serves as something which is absent from the home and thus feeds into emotional responses around loss and grief, gardens can also be broken down and relocated along with the individual so that parts of a previous home life move forward with them. This suggests that the home space can be unmade and made simultaneously and that absences feed into and shape a range of understandings concerning the post-disaster space of the home.

While the loss of gardens may contribute to a physical absence in the home space, the loss of the home also creates other absences in an individual's life. For example, social relations and connections which are intrinsic parts of an

individual's personal identity also become threatened in the context of a loss of home:

> I think I have coped alright…but…it is what you have lost. I am not talking about things…I am not talking about things. It is your home…your friends, people who…you know I used to work in a little community shop over there…meet all the people from around and I miss all that. All the clubs have disbanded you know? So…you know, you lose your friends, the people who worked in the shops…some went to Rangiora, some went up to Nelson…some have gone down to Timaru…some have got to Ashburton…one or two went to Dunedin. That's your neighbours and friends. You know? People you have known for years *[Lucy: Interview Extract, November 2014]*

In the above extract Lucy commented on her experience of coping with absence. She reflected that it was not just the material loss of the home but the connections she had with the places around her home - such as the community shop where she had worked and developed friendships that had been lost.

Like gardens, friendships and social activities takes time to develop. Bunnell *et al.* (2012) discuss how studying friendships can be significant in geographical thinking as it speaks to work on emotion and affect, and research on children and young people's geographies, as well as geographies of mobility. As Bunnell *et al's*. (2011) research indicates, much of the understanding of friendships and their particular geographies takes place within the lives of young people where friendships are part of the wider understanding of spaces of youth and young people: schools, homes, cafes, cinema, and the wider interconnected and globalised world. The geographies associated with friendship in later life has, to date, been somewhat marginalised. However, this research shows the importance of friendships in lives of older people and how they feed into wider everyday geographies and social and spatial relations. The disaster had an impact on friendships. As Lucy mentioned, the relocation of individuals following the earthquakes impacted on social relations and had resulted in friendships being shifted across time and space. Pursuing social activities and maintaining connections and friendships can be challenging but is made even more so in the unpredictable context of disaster. As Judith indicated:

> [My life] was busy and I had quite a lot of friends but they have gone but they have not been in the phonebook which I think is awful and they don't

> know where I am… and I don't know where they are. It has been hard *[Judith: Interview Extract, February 2015]*

In later life social connections and networks surrounding the home become increasingly valuable as a source of comfort, companionship, and support. Changing the location of a home has inevitable implications on social networks. Rebuilding or coming to terms with these changes has frustrating and emotional consequences which shape later life experiences where rebuilding social connections cannot be taken for granted.

While the absence of former domestic gardens and social networks can be understood in a tangible sense, what is absent can also be understood in relation to the non-representational; the intangible qualities which define place. Patricia is one interview participant who had to relocate after the quakes. Her story with her home echoes that of many others who discussed the home in relation to letting go, loss, adjustment and adaptation:

> Patricia: so it's just…I don't know…it doesn't have that security somehow…you know? I don't know what it is but I certainly don't sleep like I used to
> Interviewer (Sarah): did you used to be quite a good sleeper?
> Patricia: well I had a goodnights sleep, yes. You know? And if I did wake up…I knew the house so well I could get up and almost work in the dark…you know? And I would get up…the house was so cosy. I would make myself a cup of tea…and if I wasn't sleeping I would make myself a cup of tea… and as you say…you know your neighbours…you know? [*Patricia: Interview Extract, November 2014]*

Of all post-disaster spaces, the home is perhaps the most complex of spaces. This is largely because of the complex and at times conflicting emotions which can come to be constituted in the home space. Questions of ontological security and comfort become paramount in discussions of the home. In amongst the array of emotions – loss and grief become tangled up with ideas around comfort and security. As Patricia indicated, she found her old home to be of comfort – using the word 'cosy' to describe her experiences of waking up in the middle of the night to make a cup of tea. Her movement around a dark space was linked to familiarity and intimacy with her surroundings. Geographers, anthropologists, sociologists and historians have recognized 'comfort' as more than just an emotion through which we understand the world; rather, through its presence, absence and pursuit

worlds are actively made and un-made (Price *et al.,* 2017). Comfort for Patricia is thus relational and part of an assemblage. It is understood in relation to absence – her home and the surroundings she has lost. Yet it is also constituted in the make- up of the material, affective and physical home space.

What is absent in the home in the first instance often privileges the material and tangible losses such as the physical loss of the home and personal belongings. However, the home sits in a wider network of absences which must be taken into consideration as these have a variety of implications of social practices and affirmation of belonging to the place in which people live.

6.3.2 Home: Emergence

Change and adjustment

Following the earthquakes, the home space had been materially altered. In some circumstances this was a new home entirely, in others it was new floors or paving stones which had implications for small practices; for example, avoiding walking a particular route in the home or protecting belongings in a particular way:

> I went to visit my friend in Auckland and noticed her kitchen and felt that it was a bit different! It was full of shelves filled with valuable antiques and I said, 'Jocelyn, don't you put a bit of wire in front of that stuff?' and she said, 'what for?'….'so it doesn't fall off in earthquake…' and she said, 'we don't expect an earthquake here…ever.' That made me realise how we had been doing some things differently *[Renee: Interview Extract, February 2015]*

Renee discussed how she observed subtle changes in the home when comparing her environment to that of her friend's in Auckland. Renee illustrated how the earthquakes required a new way of doing things and strategies to protect her belongings. These post-earthquake strategies had become so engrained in her behaviour that it seemed somewhat of a surprise to discover that these practices were not uniform across the country. The strategies which emerged were part of a wider process of adaptation:

> Well you had to adapt…it is more the matter of adapting because you are either going to like it or don't like it and a lot of people don't like it and I say, it is not my home but the thing is…it is a roof over your head *[Daisy: Interview Extract, February 2015]*

New practices became embedded in the home as a consequence of a changing

understanding about the wider landscape and the home-space itself. There arose an awareness of the necessity to adapt but adapting to changing circumstances, as Daisy indicated, did not necessarily feed into a sense of belonging or attachment to the home.

Feelings of belonging in the home were also entwined with the new elements and circumstances which emerged from the post-disaster space. Linda discussed her home relocation experience and how this had triggered new sensory experiences. Linda and her husband, who is an Alzheimer suffer, moved from the east of Christchurch to Wigram on the west of the city:

> Here there isn't a lot of trees because it is a new area and when the wind really blows…it howls! It really does. You can hear it rustle around. There were was plenty of trees where we were at home….yeah and now Frank would wake up because he can hear the noises and he would say, 'I don't know where I am!' and I would have to tell him he is at home….but not where we used to live. [*Linda: Interview Extract, February 2015]*

The change of landscape shaped a new sensory register of experience. The absence of trees in their new home environment was a marker in what was different from before and while it might not be considered a significant change, it had an impact on patterns of sleeping as well as upon wider feelings of being in the home.

Interview participants also remarked on change in relation to social networks and the new practices which emerged from these. For example:

> I think there was a bit more coming and going…I was a bit surprised that even then one of our neighbours came in and used our wheelie bin, without asking…we were out for the day…I don't know what it was but we came home and found that it wasn't there…hmm…when he had finished with it and the collection had gone and said, 'thank you very much!' [laughter]…I don't think that would have happened before…you know…that sort of openness and ease for help and it is not a big change in what happened but I think there is quite a change in attitude…[*Anne: Interview Extract, January 2015]*

> well I think, in terms of our little group…we were a lot closer and much more open to each other…we didn't live in each other's pockets or houses or anything but I think we were much more open about what was happening because there was this constant thing of…when are your repairs happening, what is your insurance company doing…I think we had an openness…I think it took down

> some of the walls and garden fences so I think there was quite a change in our community and…[*Diane: Interview Extract, November 2014*]

In the above extract Anne and Dianne illustrated changes in attitudes and behaviours within the vicinity of the home space. Their discussion showed an emergence of an openness and willingness to help each other out. This therefore suggests that while some social networks have been lost, others have emerged in new and unexpected ways. The subtle conviviality between neighbours and communities shaped a new understanding of what the home and the neighbourhood is like post-earthquakes.

6.3.3 Home: Lingering

The post-disaster space can be understood both through what is absent and what has emerged and this can give insight into the ways in which older people connect with their everyday environments. Like the analysis of what lingers in the city centre, what lingers in the home space is also hard to identify and disentangle.

What lingers in the home space was discussed in the interviews through a sense of familiarity with materials and objects. In some instances, what lingers took different material from that pre the quakes:

> On the 4th of September earthquake, we nearly lost all our china that was there…cups and saucers and plates that I had since my twenty-first birthday and we lost a lot of that stuff. It was sad because we had it for so long…it was lovely stuff and yes…so a friend of mine took some of it away and made a mosaic heart with all the bits. I have that now *[Suzie: Interview Extract, November 2014]*

In the above extract Suzie discussed how the loss of china which was meaningful to her had been recreated in the style of a mosaic heart. This heart is located in the bedroom of the home and functions in a symbolic rather than a practical sense. It is symbolic in that is made up of pieces of china which were had been in Suzie's possession since her 21st birthday and had moved with her throughout her life. Now this mosaic heart sits as a reminder of past times but also how the event of the earthquake changed and altered the material make-up of the home, where the home was unmade and made through various practices as part of the

recovery process. This china is no longer in the same material state as it was pre-earthquake but the materials themselves linger and subsequently so do memories.

Jenny also discussed what remains in her home. Jenny had to relocate as her house was demolished and red-zoned following the quakes. Her relocation experiences involved various movements between different parts of the city to try and find a place where she could settle. In the following quote she discussed the living room in which we were having our discussion:

> Whatever you see, was in the old place. And I had nothing to do with arranging this…I was in Auckland I think or Tauranga when they bought this…and my nephew's wife…my niece and my nephew's sister…my other niece…the two of them…laid the carpet put the chair here, put my round table there and when I came in a week later…it was all laid out for me…'how we though you would like it…' and of course I couldn't have done anything else…it is the only place you can put a chair, you know? You are limited to the space you have got…but it was…when I walked in….it was home [*Jenny: Interview Extract, March, 2015]*

While lots of people in this research talked adamantly about how the things which were lost were just 'stuff', these materials served as an important part of their sense of identity. As Jenny demonstrate, it was not just her relocating but all her personal possessions as well. The importance of being with personal items resonates with the research conducted by Graham Rowles, as discussed in Chapter Two. This research stipulates that autobiographical insideness (the items and belongings which are important) is transferrable; where the items relocate alongside the individual there is a greater likelihood of a sense of place following a relocation of the home.

The materiality of the home space is more than just the bricks and beams which hold up the house. It is also important in thinking about belonging and identity. This section has explored the home as a post-disaster space through themes of absence, emergence, and lingering, to identify a range of practices, routines, and materials, which are significant in the post-disaster geographies of the home. The home includes many materials which amalgamate to form an understanding of domestic life. These materials play an important role in the use of the space, they are relational, and they are part of the meaning which makes up that place. It was the materiality of the home space which shifted significantly following the quakes;

items became unusable, lost or broken. Simultaneously this brought into the spotlight emerging materialities which start to play a prominent role in the domestic home. The home space is thus a complex environment where individuals negotiate a sense of place in a changing landscape and is also one which is linked in with wider processes of emotional change charged by the implications of living in a post-disaster environment.

6.4. Conclusion

The study of place in ageing research has received considerable attention. The work of Rowles (1989, 1990) and Andrews *et al.* (2005) have explored the significance of place in the experiences of ageing, arguing that place is an intrinsic part of individuals' personal identities. Exploring place and ageing helps to map the spatialities of ageing; exploring particular places such as the home, residential care, and health institutions. Relations to place change as we age but the ways in which places materially and socially change, and the impact this has on everyday geographies and senses of belonging has not been thoroughly examined.

The narrative interviews touched upon a variety of places across different scales and time periods. Places were helpful in illustrating the contextual and lived experiences of post-disaster. This chapter focused on two places in particular: the city centre and the home. While it might appear that this could be a privileging of some places over others, it was these places that were the focus of much of the individual discussions held between the author and the interviewees. By way of conclusion, this chapter advances a number of useful observations.

First, is that how post-disaster places are understood, negotiated, and experienced is through a range of emotional and affective encounters which themselves have distinctive elements of temporality. Emotions are used to convey experiences of changing material and social landscapes whereas affect is recognised as something that is somewhat intangible but shapes a particular atmosphere along with feeling of the place. While emotion is something that is easier to articulate and identify, affect is somewhat more problematic to distinguish. This resonates with the conclusions made in Chapter 5 that using affect as an analytical and empirical tool can be problematic as it is hard to identify through interview material.

Secondly, is that a post-disaster landscape is complex. It is made up of multiple shifting geographies of varying scales. To make sense of the post-disaster context was not something that was easily articulated in the interviews. Rather, interview participants explored a range of themes to help make sense of the changes and disruptions that they had experienced. The city and the home were therefore explored through themes of absence, emergence, and lingering, and this highlighted tensions between the past and the present, materiality, other spaces, and relations.

Thirdly, the changing nature of the city and the home feeds into wider practices and understandings about older people's everyday geographies and demonstrates how these are interconnected and interlinked across time and space. For example, it helped to illustrate the motivations or reluctance to visit the city centre and how this was a result of the disaster.

Overall, this chapter has highlighted how connecting these places to post-disaster narratives produces a number of conceptual themes that are useful for wider geographical understandings of ageing and disaster. This includes connections between the past and the present, new mobility practices and emotional and affective geographies of place. This chapter has attempted to contextualise the real and everyday role of place in a post-disaster context and in so doing provides a useful purpose for the following empirical chapter which considers the geographies of coping and persisting with post-disaster recovery.

Chapter Seven: Practices of persisting and coping with post-disaster recovery

7.1. Introduction

Having explored the realities of everyday post-disaster living in Christchurch for older people and how this connects with a range of social and material spatialities (Chapter Six), this chapter addresses the ways in which older people have responded to the challenges of living through this event. While parts of the Introduction and Chapter Three fleshed out the debates around concepts such as vulnerability and resilience, this chapter focuses on concepts of persisting and coping which emerged as central themes from the fieldwork and analysis period. This examination is done so through a lens of practices where practices can be understood as the 'primary generic social thing' and thus serves as a 'dynamic connection between individuals and social manifold' (Schatzki, 2001: 1, 8).

Practices provide useful analytical purchase for understanding the everyday and how people re-appropriate themselves in certain situations (De Certeau, 1980). However, Merriman *et al.,* (2008: 195) comments that practices (and performances) are usually discussed in relation to the 'exceptional and rarefied moments' rather than the monotony which make up everyday life. To elaborate, discussions of practices refer to situations such as political performances, dance and art rather than classical and more orthodox moments of the everyday. Cresswell (2008: 195) uses his parents as an example, where everyday life for them 'entails washing the dishes, going to work, doing the garden, things like that'. He thus speculates on the attention – or lack of – geographers have given to the practices of the ordinary and the mundane. Through research on allotment practices, Crouch (2010: 5-6) also identifies opportunities to better understand familiar practices through habits; 'even in familiarity and habitual rhythmic engagement, the meaning, our relationship with things, can change in register', where minor changes in feeling can correlate to an alteration in degrees of significance. In other words, our relationships with things and places are never static and empty but become meaningful through temporal knowledge, action and production.

This chapter outlines the different practices older people have adopted post-earthquakes and explores how this can be understood in relation to persistence and to coping strategies. This chapter will trace the range of practices and their intersections with routines, emotions and place. Recognising Christchurch as a city which continues to be affected by the eventfulness of the earthquake, we can reflect on a 'landscape as being informed through combinations of different times and life durations and rhythms, different registers and intensities of experience' (Crouch, 2011: 13), of which the earthquake and its subsequent reverberations are a part. The different registers and intensity of experiences are manifest in the types of practices and routines which this older age group are (and are not) adopting. Through examining these practices, it is possible to better understand how living through a significant event such as the earthquakes can continue to shape the ways in which everyday life is carried out. It also presents an opportunity to challenge assumptions about old age practices and meanings of everyday life.

Chapter One illustrated the post-disaster setting in relation to the changing material and social structures of Christchurch. This set the scene for the conceptually focused chapters, geographies of disasters and geographies of ageing. This has provided a foundation in which to explore the empirical material. Chapters Fix and Six explore emotional, affective and embodied accounts of ageing in relation to the disaster and encounters with the post-disaster places respectively. This chapter now explores a range of practices adopted to cope and persist with such circumstances. Having already provided an outline of what is meant by practice at the beginning of this chapter, it follows on by introducing the concepts of persisting and coping pertinent to this research. To provide some context, it introduces material which outlines different circumstances in which strategies of coping and spaces to persist are manifest. In more detail, it explores narratives of 'the night-time' and 'grief and loss' which emerged as recurring features from the fieldwork. Following this, it then presents a range of practices which illustrate how coping and persisting can be spatially embedded, habitual, temporal and mundane. By way of concluding this chapter, I argue that these activities are carried out with a sense of ordinary purposefulness but the meanings associated with such practices are a product of the distinctive characteristics of the post-disaster landscape.

7.2. Geographies of persisting and coping

To persist is to continue with an opinion or a certain action in the face of adversity. To persist implies a challenge for the individual, for example persevering against the hegemonic status quo with the potential to expend energy and resources in the process. This could refer to a range of situations, for example farmers persisting through an agricultural crisis (Salamon and Davis-Brown, 1986), households in the UK managing and negotiating the micro-level implications of Europe's economic crisis (Andres and Round, 2015), the experiences of individuals living with long-term fatigue-related illnesses or in other states of chronic persistence (Evans *et al*., 2008), and shift workers and other occupations which require individuals to work through the night (Akerstedt *et al*., 2008). This thesis has at times illustrated the range of challenges and situations which has emerged from living in a post-disaster landscape and how this affects patterns of mobility and belonging but now goes into more detail about the certain conditions in everyday environments where individuals negotiate different forms of persistence. This chapter contends that persisting, as such, is rarely a blank state of continuation, but an assortment of active strategies, habits, and routines which shape and are shaped by the post-disaster context. This chapter demonstrates the complexities and varied forms of persistence which individuals endure through daily life, both mentally and corporally.

I refer to the tactics which individuals employ to persist as coping strategies. General understandings of coping refer to the ability of an individual to deal with a difficult situation effectively. The term 'to cope' implies the individual is able to look after themselves, to manage, to survive, to get through and to carry on. To examine practices of coping enables us to consider the emotional accounts of performing such practices and what this means for the wider spatial context in which these practices are carried out. General practices such as walking, shopping and cooking can manifest themselves as habits which allow us to cope and go on with the world; how these tactics are heightened and made meaningful is part of a wider affective response to the disaster landscape and is the emphasis of this chapter. This chapter illustrates the range and type of resources older people employ to cope, the type of human and non-human relations which constitute parts of the coping strategies, and what meanings and situations derive from the range of coping practices.

By focusing on elements of persisting and coping it is possible this generates ideas which place human agency and consciousness at the forefront and marginalise attention to wider social structures. Such an approach could receive criticisms like those faced by humanistic geographies, which would argue that it could not adequately attend to 'how human action, consciousness and individuality are produced and shaped by non-conscious, non-individual and non-human processes' (Bondi, 2005: 435). Yet this chapter demonstrates how persisting and coping can address such concerns by locating intention and consciousness in bodily awareness and sensation rather than cognition. Further, this chapter illustrates the significance of the material and non-human in shaping post-disaster geographies of everyday coping and persisting and can thus attend to debates found in non-representational and more than human-geographies.

7.3. Narratives of coping with the night-time

This thesis has illustrated that the Canterbury region has been subjected to numerous shakes. While the earthquake of February 2011 continues to capture much of the popular interest, the earlier quake of September 2010 renders itself particularly significant in relation to individual narratives of older peoples' disaster experience. Their recollection and memories of the September quake experience was highly vivid, emotional and affective, where individuals were often extremely expressive in their demonstration and re-telling of this particular event. Patricia, for example, was one of the first participants interviewed during the fieldwork and began her earthquake story with the experience of the September shakes:

> You see the street lights were out…it was pitch black and, well, I was just lying in bed there and I was gripping...I was lying like this [does action – curls on the side of the sofa with her hands placed on the edge in a childlike pose]…you see…I didn't have anything to hold on to! So I was just gripping the edge of the mattress like this [holds onto the edge of the sofa with her hands very tightly] and yes…and I couldn't get out…what could I do? So you just have to lie there and it would ease a minute and then it would be THUMP! And it was all coming up out of the ground you see…up underneath. The bed moved forwards but of course I didn't know it was moving forward there was so much else going on… I didn't…I didn't realise it was an earthquake. I just didn't think…as I said…I hadn't experienced an earthquake…and yes…anyway…as soon as it was a bit daylight…I got up and thought well I suppose must get dressed… [*Patricia: Interview Extract, November 2014*]

Patricia's narrative of the September earthquake was powerful. The affective energy with which she recounted and detailed her experience of this event is one which remained with me throughout my time in the field and is one which I will continue to remember. What Patricia describes is a very engrained sensory experience that happened in a short space of time but which holds long-term significance. Her recollection of the event illustrates the different dimensions of actual experience, highlighting how experience is multidimensional, multiscale and multisensory, where 'remembering is conceptualised as a set of practices that take place through an embodiment which is folded into the world by virtue of the passion of the five senses' (Thrift, 1999: 314, cited in Anderson, 2004: 4).

With the earthquake occurring in the dark (in the early hours of a spring morning), it produced a heightened affective space that continues to have implications for the ways in which individuals have negotiated and persist with night-time spaces and practices. As a consequence of geographers' motivations to explore the everyday*,* there has been a lack of empirical and conceptual focus on the geographical experience of the night (Kraftl and Horton, 2008). Conceptual material which emerged from this research demonstrates the importance of considering the night-time and what this means for emotions, materiality and a sense of self. Patricia outlines the sudden uncertainty which has entered her home space. The disrupted patterns of sleeping indicate how in darkness individuals are no longer within the protected bubble of lightness, but in fact start to lose their sense of the other and subsequently reduce their sense of the bounded self (Shaw, 2015). Patricia's description of the movement in her home indicates that the spaces and objects of the home become somewhat lost and disjointed in darkness and as a consequence our surroundings and the spaces of the home become a 'fluid spatiality in which the internal and the external more readily intermix' (Shaw, 2015: 590).

Shaw (2015: 591) highlights that, unlike public and open spaces in the dark, in the home space, 'due to our familiarity with the micro-geographies of the space, we may be able to gain control over our experience of darkness'. However, there are factors that fall beyond a capacity of control and thus renders the home space, perhaps temporally, less secure. As Patricia states, 'I was just gripping the edge of the mattress like this [holds onto the edge of the sofa with her hands very tightly] and yes…and I couldn't get out…what could I do.' Her physical

inability due to the force of the shaking and being in the uncertainty of darkness rendered a sense of powerlessness within the home space. The unbounded nature of darkness and the porosity which it brings produces multiple vulnerabilities that, while disaster- and time-specific, also feed into wider understandings of night-time geographies.

There continues to be an engrained sense of fear and anxiety about the occurrence of an earthquake at night. An interview with one participant demonstrated her internal emotional conflict about the (ir)rationality of being fearful of earthquakes:

> During the day I am okay…reading, going out…if I can't stand it any longer inside I will go out…and I can still do that and I think how lucky I am that I can still do that…as it is as at the moment, I am mobile…I can go where I like…but going to bed at night…and I think…oh I hope there isn't going to be another quake tonight…but they are just as bad in the night as they are during the day, it is no different during the day…[*Jenny: Interview Extract, March, 2015]*

Jenny discusses her emotions associated with an earthquake during the day and an earthquake at night. Jenny continues to live in fear of another shake occurring. During the daylight hours Jenny finds that she is able to cope with such fear through reading practices, mobility and leaving the home space. However, at night she finds it harder to cope. Discussions of fear within geographical scholarship are often situated in studies of the urban (England and Simon, 2010) with emphasis on the gendered, aged and sexualised geographies of fear (Pain, 2001; Valentine, 1989). This research demonstrates that fears manifest themselves in many ways and, for Jenny, the implications of the earthquakes have become entangled with the home space and shape her mental map and, hence, her everyday geographies. This map is a construct which informs her daily decisions, including her leaving the home and the practices she adopts at night to cope and persist.

The night-time and practices associated with the night continue to shape present-day practices which feed into understandings of persisting spaces and coping practices. In the narrative interviews, discussions of the night-time emerged when individuals reflected on the September quakes and when reflecting on how they continue to manage day-to-day life. Lucy recounts her experiences of managing the night-time:

> If I woke during the night…I am not so bad now…but the first few years if I woke during the night…I would lay there and listen, 'what the hell what woke me up' I would just lie there listening…waiting for something to happen…that is about the only…you are more aware…I take time to go to bed at night…I have a set routine and I have got to make…if anything that is out on the bench which is likely to spill…I put it in the sink…just little things, silly things. I usually try before I go to bed to make sure I have got the dishes all done up…I take my handbag…it goes to bed with me. I usually put it in a certain spot beside the bed…but it is something I have never done, I have never done that sort of thing! *[Lucy: Interview Extract, November 2014]*

It was not unusual to hear about the routines older people adopted as a way of managing their everyday lives. Growing older appears to come with a set of vulnerabilities which can be managed through discreet habits and routines or coping strategies. Yet, these habits appear to extend beyond the realm of managing the experiences of ageing and become entwined with the lasting effects of the earthquakes and thus become disaster-specific practices. In the above interview extract Lucy illustrates the coping strategies she has adopted to manage and cope with the night-time which enable her to persist through this particular time and place. While the routines and habits she adopts can be considered mundane, there are many factors which make these mundane routines significant. First amongst these is the sense of temporality; how the earthquake is managed and experienced fluctuates in relation to time – time being anything from years to the diurnal cycle of night and day. Indeed, Lucy indicates that it was waking up in the middle of the night that was most unsettling to her in the first few years following the quakes and while she is 'not so bad now' the experience still lingers. Yet, while Lucy appears to register that she is 'not so bad now', it is worth considering how in fact the unsettling experiences may be ingrained within her night-time experiences, suggesting that familiarity could be replacing uncertainty and the heightening of vulnerability which the night-time brings. Secondly is the notion and experience of stillness and waiting. When Lucy suddenly woke up in the middle of the night, she claimed she would simply 'lie there listening…waiting for something to happen'. Interview participants frequently described the sounds relating to the quakes, referring to them as 'like a train' or a 'low rumbling' or a 'like a truck driving past'. During the night, these sounds which become associated with the earthquake are situated alongside a sense of stillness and anticipation. Conradson (2013: 72) explored the concept

of stillness in relation to spiritual retreats and claims that 'stillness is understood here as a subjectively experienced state of consciousness characterized by calmer mental rhythms and a shift in attention from other places and times towards the present moment'. This embodied experience of the earthquake is not unusual; the ways in which the event continues to filter through into patterns of everyday life trigger various degrees of affective responses such as an unexpected tension in the body or a sense of unexpected anxiety. Thirdly is the routine and process of getting ready for bed; this is a slow and timely activity which in some part is to do with age and the slowness of the body but also a way of ensuring a sense of orderliness to manage a potential unsettling time of the day. The routine which comes with it – the organisation of the kitchen and, more significantly, taking her handbag to bed with her – suggests a sense of engagement with her possessions that extends to ideas of security and comfort. The way Lucy describes her handbag having a particular spot in her bed makes renders this practice even more significant. The practices adopted by Lucy during the night demonstrate her embodied relationship not only with the environment but also the material textures of place (McNally, 2017).

This section has outlined how the night-time produces a distinct space where older people are adopting a range of different coping and persisting practices to enable them to keep going in moments of difficulty. The experience of the night is heightened by the implications of the thousands of shakes felt both during the day and at night. Yet this research also demonstrates the significance of the night-time for understanding the bringing together of the material and non-material worlds and the emotional complexities involved with managing the night-time (such as fear, anxiety, anticipation and uncertainty). It also raises questions around the bounded and rational self and what this means for people's relation to place and being in the world. The night-time is a distinctive space which is personal and intimate and thus little research has been conducted to explore the ways in which it shapes micro-geographies of individual lives. In addition, because of the attention paid to the everyday, the night-time becomes marginalised, but avenues remain for better understanding emotional and affective experiences and temporality.

7.4. Narratives of grief and loss

Narrating grief and loss emerged as central components of the fieldwork and serve as productive foundations for understanding practices of coping and persisting. During my fieldwork, I attended an event put on by Age Concern Canterbury which discussed grief and loss. Age Concern Canterbury, through their visitor services, recognised that many of the older people they supported were struggling to cope with grief and loss to varying degrees. It was apparent that the earthquake(s) had a significant impact on this social group where older people experience a range of different losses. Collectively, the group attending the event was required first to discuss the range of losses they felt. While the discussion initially felt a little tentative with comments slow to be put forward, soon the group was discussing a range of different losses as listed in the fieldnote diary below:

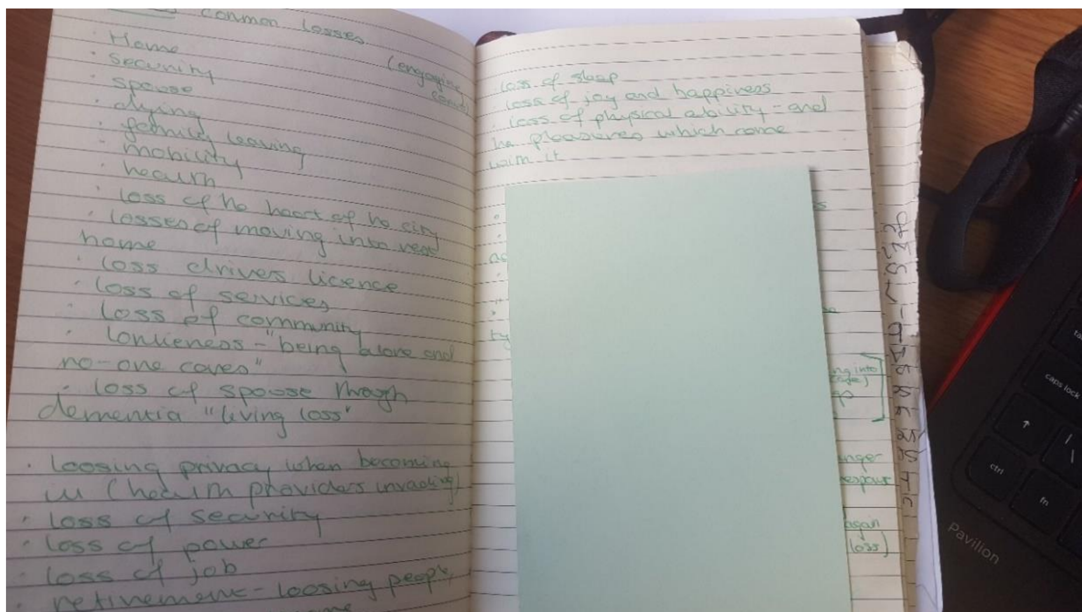

Figure 15 Grief and loss - field diary notes

The group outlined a range of losses which were both material and non-material. The material losses ranged from the loss of home, job, services and city centre to intangible, non-material losses such as security, power, joy and happiness. This discussion outlined that loss for this group of people is an entanglement between disaster-specific losses and age-related losses which can make negotiating these losses a complex task. The group related these losses to the

process and experiences of grieving. The losses these people are grieving are all embodied emotions that are connected to specific sites and contexts (Bondi *et al.,* 2005). For example, the loss of the community often means that other places take on new and heightened significance. Maddrell (2016) has explored the geographies of grief, mourning and bereavement. To distinguish between the three interlinking terms, Maddrell (2016: 166) recognises grief as 'a deep felt or violent sorrow or keen regret, the experience of which is referred to as grieving'. The group illustrates how managing loss and grief can be individual and collective, temporal and discontinuous and intersects with a range of other embodied emotions.

Maddrell (2016) identifies relationality at the heart of the grieving process, where new bonds can be formed with a range of different individuals and groups. This process can also include psychotherapy. Although it was encouraging to see this particular group of people defining their losses in this shared space, the ability to talk and express grief and loss through therapeutic cultures such as counselling and support is a relatively uncommon practice. It has been broadly recognised that while counselling and therapeutic practices are utilised by younger people, this is not the same with regard to older people. This is in part due to a lack of recognition about the heterogeneity of older people's needs but also blurred boundaries between mental, cognitive and physical health (Pohlmann *et al.*, 2014). There appeared to be a reluctance to engage with therapeutic practices and this resulted in high number of people choosing 'just to get on with it':

> It wasn't very nice but still…. you overcome these things, you have got to! You have got to carry on… you don't look back, you look forward…hmm, that is the thing to do. [*Daisy: Interview Extract, February 2015]*

> You just had to get on with it…or you would go nuts. You do! And then it is on your mind or on the back of your mind all the time…nothing sticks…nothing was finalised for three and a half years…it was stress on top of stress. [*Linda: Interview Extract, February, 2015*]

Loss and grief are complex emotions which are spatially and temporally situated. Such emotions become even more heightened by post-disaster space and the process of ageing. To better understand how loss and grief is managed requires one to go beyond grief as understood in relation to therapeutic spaces and to understand how they are lived out in everyday life. Understanding the practices

adopted by older people in this research helped to flesh out the realities of living through, and recovering from, an earthquake. This chapter now weaves together a range of practices which all illustrate the temporal and situated nature of post-disaster recovery and what it means to cope with, and persist through, such an event.

7.5. Everyday Practices

In this section I now illustrate the everyday practices which were adopted by the research participants as a means to persist through, and cope with, the everyday following the disaster. The range of practices were at times unique to the individual but all have connections with wider emotional responses, corporality, materiality, and spatiality.

The ways in which these practices were discussed within the research period was *ad-hoc* and at times, fleeting. The discussion of practices often followed on from the insight provided by individuals on their narratives of the disaster and their changing environments which continued to emerge throughout the longer recovery period. How individuals continue to negotiate the everyday environment often manifested itself through a range of practices which they often stated was 'different from before' or 'was new' and 'something they had never done in the past'. As such this was a process by which individuals were re-learning embodied knowledge and re-understanding their everyday spatialities. While themes of persisting and coping emerged primarily as part of the individual's reflective process of managing change, discussions of the environments in which they continued to persist, and the coping strategies employed, sometimes emerged on a fleeting and ad-hoc basis. For example, when making cups of tea and showing me around their home and garden. Therefore, while I centred the interview research around the post-disaster landscape and individual's experience of post-disaster recovery it was not always within the specific research period where such critical themes emerged and were identified.

Walking

As discussed in Chapter Four, the narrative interviews were conducted with a range of older people who lived in different parts of the city. In one of the latter interviews in my field work period I spoke with Sally and her husband Martin. They both lived in a 'back flat' where their home was tucked behind a front flat and

therefore set further back from the main road. Martin was experiencing decreased mobility associated with old age along with other age-related changes. Sally was therefore assuming an increasing care giver role and was more physically active than her husband. Within the narrative interviews Sally discussed elements of change and her negotiations of those changes:

> One thing that changed was that… well I would go for a walk every day and I used to for an hour, round through the park and when the shakes happened I decided I would stay closer to home so I would just walk around the street and because we are a back flat we didn't really get to meet people…you don't see people unless you happen to be out so we hadn't met many people… So I began walking again. It would take me ten minutes to walk down the street so if I walk for an hour I do it six times. And I do it every day and at the party down the road somebody said, 'everybody knows you Sally!' [laughs] because I wave to them all! And so I have got to know them. So it is really good *[Sally: Interview Extract, March 2015]*

The above narrative extract provided by Sally demonstrates elements of persisting and coping and also highlights how the practice of walking is a material, embodied, affectual and social experience (Middleton, 2011). Sally acknowledged how the earthquakes influenced a change in walking practices in her everyday life. Her perseverance with walking activities despite the uncertainties and insecurities produced from the earthquakes demonstrated her attitude to persist. In other words, Sally's motivation to continue walking in the face of adversity was witness to her persisting. Sally's discussion also illustrated how elements of coping and persisting can be entwined. While persisting is recognised through continuing with walking practices amongst change, uncertainty and insecurity, walking practices can also be viewed as a way of *coping with* the change. Sally's act of walking itself has not altered. However, *where* she walks, *when* she walks and *why* she walks have all changed and her walking practices have gained new significance in the process. These walking practices are viewed as meaningful in a different way than before and the practice is now disaster-specific. A significant element which has emerged from the new walking practices is that they have established a new set of spatial-social relations. Walking through a different environment and engaging in a range of social encounters in the process means that a new layer of relations has been created that, though not replacing previous ones, has become part of the place specific post disaster experience.

While this thesis only conducted research post-earthquakes and is therefore unable to fully comprehend the meaning of Sally's walking practices pre-earthquakes, it is worth reflecting on Sally's conscious reflection that her social-spatial environment might not have manifested itself in such a way as walking and could have been considered a trivial (but no less meaningful) part of everyday life. In this regard, it is worth acknowledging that the post-disaster landscape and the event-space in question brings to the surface these experiences and produces an affectively and emotional heightened space in which various social and spatial relations become more apparent and meaningful.

Persisting here is illustrated in the habit and routine of Sally's walking practices. Sally has a routine which she adheres to when walking. She walks the same area, 'down the street' and is conscious of the duration 'ten minutes' and she walks up and down the street 'six times' to ensure that she walks for 'an hour' each day. Practice has long been associated with understandings of repetition and of people actively doing things in the world (Hui, 2013: 889). Repetition means that they draw upon the interconnected 'elements' which make up the pattern such as the 'forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, 'things' and their use. This, in turn, provides a background knowledge of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge (Reckwitz, 2002: 249).

Sally's walking practices are also interconnected with senses of security. As Sally illustrated, after the quakes happened, she no longer felt comfortable pursuing her usual walking route which took her further away from her home. While the quakes did not prevent her from continuing her daily walking pattern, being closer to home provided her with an extended sense of ontological security (Giddens, 1991, 1996). The post-disaster space therefore shifted Sally's everyday landscape and where ,spatially, she feels secure.

This walking practice is a fragment of activity which enables persistence with the everyday. Yet it is not a simply persisting with a changing landscape but a way of persisting and coping with challenges faced by old age and changes in mobility. Walking activities were and, still are, common practices carried out by older people and align with the 'active ageing' agenda. This research revealed that walking practices take many forms. While Sally's walking practices are an individual activity, other individuals discussed being part of a walking group and sharing such walking practices together:

> We meet something like quarter to 9 in the morning and we walk around the mall…we go upstairs and walk around and have a cup of coffee…rather than walk in the street when it can be busy and windy, we do the malls *[Natalie: Interview Extract, November, 2014]*

> We used to go on the Port Hills a lot but so many of the tracks are closed…I think some of them have reopened again but…well the ramblers of course stopped for a while after the quakes. We started again but our walks haven't been so adventurous and we do a lot of walks in town, by the river, in town…so we do go into town a lot…we go through the parks…we go through the botanic gardens…and Mona Vale…Riccarton Bush…you know Riccarton Bush? In fact, there was one time we were in Riccarton Bush and there was a five-point-three quake and all these trees were all wobbling [laughter]! But I felt okay! They had been there for hundreds of years…they should stay up! *[Doreen: Interview Extract, January 2015]*

The interview extracts above demonstrate walking practices that are part of a collective activity which take place across different parts of the city. Natalie discussed the perhaps slightly unusual practice of walking in a shopping mall but situated this with rationales of comfort, security, and accessibility. Doreen also discussed walking in a group and while they walk outside, their walking routes and practices have been disrupted by the earthquakes. Doreen indicated that she is frustrated about the lack of adventure:

> I have been asked to lead a walk in the avonhead about three times since the quakes and I think, 'oh avonhead…grrr…not again' so the last time, I know quite a lot of nice places and I got the map out and I saw all the parks in the area with our house in the middle and I joined the dots and we walked through parks and along stream sides and places and we finished up here for afternoon tea…we did 14km…because I have got a cellphone which tells me how far we have walked…[*Doreen: Interview Extract, January 2015]*

Both Natalie and Doreen demonstrated how their walking practices are a way of engaging with and understanding parts of the city such as the shopping mall, parks, and neighbourhoods. Doreen's walking practices have been shaped by the disaster as the group no longer walk in more 'adventurous' locations and instead prefer to stay confined to places which are familiar. Doreen discussed her resistance to such change and highlighted how she managed this change in practices by constructing her own route through nearby parks.

These walking practices can be seen as ways of coping and persisting with the effects of the earthquakes. This material also feeds into wider discussions about the geographies of walking (Middleton, 2009, 2011; Lorimer, 2010). Persisting and coping are entwined through walking practices and bring spatial-social relations and the body into being. Walking produces a certain set of experiences which may be discussed individually whilst simultaneously adding to wider debates and discussions around individuals and everyday geographies of persisting, coping, and walking. This highlights the importance of considering the why and how of walking to understand why people do things as well as the heterogeneity of walking practices.

Singing and music

The previous section discussed how walking activities are significant and meaningful practices which can act as a means of coping and persisting with the changes to everyday environments that occurred as a result of the earthquakes. Walking practices were carried out individually and collectively and this material demonstrated an entanglement between social-spatial relations, the ageing body, and post-disaster experiences. This section now turns to singing and music practices as means of persisting and coping for older people in post-disaster Christchurch.

Walking activities demonstrated repetition, routine, and habit, and in so doing identified this activity as a practice associated with persisting and coping. Singing and music activities discussed by the research participants did not illustrate such obvious patterns in terms of regularity and routine in day-to-day life. However, those who participated in such activities still saw these activities as meaningful practice whether it was singing in the kitchen, an informal choir group with friends and acquaintances, or a regular day or evening music group at a local community centre. The embeddedness of singing and music practices in wider social worlds and the association that they produced with various times and spaces shaped by the disaster indicate that singing and music activities can be disaster specific practices. As the narrative extracts below demonstrates, these practices can also be associated with means of persisting and coping.

I interviewed Susan who lived in a retirement complex in the centre of Christchurch; a small site made up of one- or two-bedroom apartments with

facilities in place designed for the requirements of those who live there. Susan discussed the day of the 22nd of February, 2011 – the day when the most devastating quake hit the city. She described the noise and the intense shaking and her fears about the stability of her accommodation. Susan described the urgency with which she evacuated her home and how she headed for a large green space in the centre of the complex. Her rationale was to get as far away as she was able to from all the buildings. There she found her neighbours and other people who shared the complex with her. All of them were shaken, perplexed, and uncertain about what was to come next. Susan described that what she felt was a bold impulse. She stated:

> I got some chairs and put them in the centre of the grass, away from the flats so we were actually right away from any buildings and we all sat around in a circle singing hymns and saying the Lord's prayer and that comforted us [*Susan: Interview Extract, February 2015*]

Here Susan demonstrated how the disaster space was a space which could bring people together in unusual ways. Susan indicated the immediate affective response of the disaster; where individuals were *pulled* away from their homes and brought together collectively with a shared charged energy and complex emotional states. Her rationale for bringing people together and singing collectively cannot be explained or rationalised other than by reference to a need and desire for a sense of comfort and orderliness amongst the chaos that emerged.

While persisting literature indicates the importance of persevering with an activity over time in the face of change, there is little qualitative or quantitative indication as to what constitutes that particular time frame. Susan and the group were together singing and collectively persisting through an extremely short but intense moment of change. Together the group created a shared space in which they continued to persist with a sense of rationality and calm through being together and singing. The ways in which they persisted and coped with the ongoing change was by creating a shared space and activity. This persisting space was created through shared action and mobilisation of bodies in a circle on the lawn. While this was intended for the purpose of comfort and conviviality, the bringing together of these bodies created a quiet and gentle politics of persisting. At a lecture in Venice in 2011 Butler conceptualised the body in relation to persisting

and political protests, and argued that these bodies are not ‘mute life-forces that counter existing modalities of power. Rather, they are themselves modalities of power, embodied interpretations, engaging in allied action’. The demonstration of persisting as discussed by Susan resonates with Butler’s argument where their bodies and selves are embodied participatory forces in the wider event-space.

The momentary act of singing and being together created an informal space of persistence which enabled those individuals to cope with the drastic circumstances that they were experiencing at that moment in time. However, a wide range of activities established across the city in response to the earthquakes could also be viewed as spaces of persistence and managing change. For example, The Rockers of Ages is a choir which was established after Canterbury’s earthquakes to provide an opportunity for older people to be part of something positive and enjoyable.

> With all the stresses and disruptions caused by the earthquakes, it’s important that people have the opportunity to come together for positive activities that strengthen our community connections and resilience [*Canterbury DHB health promoter: Diane Shannon*[12]]

Figure 16: The Rockers of Ages leaflet – Sing you way out of the earthquake blues

12 http://christchurchmusic.org.nz/news/rockers-ages-elders-choirs

Diane placed emphasis on the rationale behind the choir's formation. The choir was established as a direct consequence of the quakes and as the leaflet in Figure 16 highlights, being part of the choir was an opportunity to 'sing your way out of the earthquake blues'. The Rockers of Ages highlights how spaces of persistence can be created and shared. The convivial act of singing reinforces, creates and shapes mutual bonds of social relations and collaboration. Yet this choir is *more than* a space of shared general mutual interests but is a space which has *emerged from* and continues to be *shaped by* the events which occurred in Christchurch. Within the space individuals are able to reflect on their disaster experiences through performative practice and as the event continues to affect the city individuals can continue to re-negotiate their disaster experience alongside their participation in the choir.

Liz was one participant who made use of Rockers of Ages. Her reflection on being part of the choir illustrated some key points which are pivotal to understanding experiences of coping and persisting, as well as understandings of age more generally. In the narrative interview, Liz discussed her emotional and physical journey following the quakes. She frequently touched upon having to move home and changes to her physical mobility. In a period of reflection Liz discussed that she had always loved singing yet in the past she had lacked the confidence to join a choir and pursue this passion. However, following the quakes Liz recognised the opportunity to join Rockers of Ages. She stated:

> So I went and joined a choir. Thinking I can get on with my life now. I found myself sitting on the front row singing tenor. And…fix it! Fix it by Coldplay was one of our big ones and we did a flash mob in The Palms and we sang…but we called it fix it…you know? Because it was all to do with the quakes…we didn't want to fix you…we wanted to fix it. And fix you is very controlling, you know? [*Liz: Interview Extract, October 2014*]

As this empirical material has highlighted, the earthquakes opened up a space in which opportunities to join a choir became more feasible and realistic than previously. While Liz did not have the confidence to attend a choir in the past, attending Rockers of Ages was done in the knowledge and comfort of mutual and shared experiences.

Liz narrated the story of Rockers of Ages doing a flash mob. Flash mobs are defined generally as a large and unusual piece of apparently random activity which is performed in a public space where the performance is out of keeping with the use of that space. Flash mobs are usually considered energetic performance pieces conducted by younger members of society. The flash mob described by Liz which involved a large mass of older people singing a contemporary song challenges such perceptions of what constitutes a flash mob as well as general societal norms of older people as being out of touch with reality (Tidd, 2004).

The practice of singing and music for Liz (and other members of the choir) was a disaster-specific practice and a way of demonstrating persistence through unsettling change, as well as representing a strategy of coping with uncertainty and unpredictability. The rationale of why the choir was established and the choice of song for this particular flash mob was intrinsically related to the disaster. In addition, the choir space was an opportunity for individuals to manage and assert authority over their earthquake experiences as demonstrated in the amendment of lyrics of the well-known song 'Fix-You' by Coldplay. Unlike the persisting space of singing hymns as discussed by Susan earlier, this space of persistence was more public, with the individuals in question exposing their vulnerabilities and precarities in the public space of the shopping mall.

The choir can, therefore, be regarded as an affective and embodied space where music, sounds, rhythms, beats, instruments and even the audible volume of the music is experienced through the bodies and particular spatial environments of participants (Taylor *et al.*, 2014). For Liz (and others), participation in this choir had implications for general wellbeing. Through engaging with and creating practices linked with this setting, Liz was able to start a healing process that was part of her reflective management of the post-disaster recovery period. The act of singing is an embodied process where the individual can let go of tension, use their voice, move their body, be with others and share the atmospheres and affective energies associated with the particular context. This process of healing and 'feeling better' resonates with work developed in 'therapeutic geographies' which looks at therapeutic practices across a range of places (Gesler, 1992; 1998), spaces (Kearns *et al.*, 2003), and networks (Williams, 2002; Milligan *et al.,* 2004). In this instance the choir, the social relations, and the embodied practice

of singing, enabled it to be perceived as a place beneficial for one's health and wellbeing.

The role of choirs is gaining increasing momentum in academic discourse. Choirs have a long history associated with shared belonging, from collective spiritual workshop through to political activism. Studies which look at group singing practices recognise that there are significant physical, psychological, and emotional health benefits for those who engage with these practices (Clift and Hancox, 2001). Social researchers, including geographers, have gone beyond looking at choirs in relation to how voices are expressed to recognising that choirs and singing can be about something else; for example, wider issues of social justice and exclusion, conflicts and solidarity, past and present political climates, austerity, citizenship and nationhood (Bramall, 2015; Falconer *et al.,* 2014). While choirs are often considered in relation to established and organised social activities, the act of singing lends itself to understanding a wide range of practices such as football chants, anthems at sporting events, and the teaching of children from a young age to sing together.

This research material demonstrates how choirs and the general act of singing are embodied practices which serve as a means by to which to persist through and to cope with post-disaster recovery. The act of singing and being in a choir is a space where disaster experiences are defined and re-negotiated and this indicates the ongoing entanglements of the everyday and the disaster event.

Pet ownership

The previous two practices of walking and singing focused on the social relations and environments in which individuals continue to persist, and what specific coping strategies were employed to deal with, manage, and negotiate, the uncertainties and unsettledness associated with change. Social relations are considered intrinsic and valuable for an individual's sense of self and belonging within a particular place, and meaningful social relations can have productive implications for how individuals cope with, and mange, difficulties and uncertainties. However, relations can extend beyond the norm of human-human relations and can include human and non-human relations. In so doing they can extend what it is understood as 'the social' (Buller, 2013). This section outlines the role pets and pet ownerships play in shaping micro-scale strategies for

coping, and how these relations are productive for creating a sense of persistence with the everyday. This intersects with scholarship found in animal geographies which looks at how 'we develop our knowledge of and relationships with nonhumans in order to consider the ways in which social and practical networks shape nonhuman spaces and practices' (Johnston, 2008: 633). This section first outlines the ways in which post-disaster spaces reveal how pets and animals can demonstrate their agency, intentionality, and subjectivity (characteristics normally associated with the human). The second section attends to how human and non-human relations are, through practices of coping, co-constitutive of events, places, and behaviours (Haraway, 2008, 1989, 2003).

Pet ownership can often be a significant part of an older person's s life. In many of the narrative interviews, pets appeared quite naturally into the discussion scenario (space) as they wandered into the room curious about the visitor. A variety of cats sat on my lap or slept on settees, dogs eagerly licked my hands and barked upon my arrival, and their owners often referred to their pets and how they responded when the ground began to shake. Not all the research participants had pets. Yet often individuals looked after a neighbour's pet or watched certain cats and dogs play outside their window or watched the birds that roamed the trees and thus also had a shared bond with animals which were not necessarily their own. While the discussion of pets and animals was not a central part of the initial interview agenda, pets became common features of the fieldwork and the practices and relations which emerged, and the spatialities associated with them, were valuable for understanding emotional and affective responses of living through the post-disaster recovery.

Ingold (1988) highlights that humans and nonhumans share the same capacities of agency, emotion, and consciousness. Indeed, this was reflected in some of the discussions when participants outlined not only how they responded to the quakes but also how their pets responded:

> Other cats…they went. He did the first time. He went. That is why I put him the car…I wanted him with me and he cried…he didn't like being in there but he learned, somehow, he learned to stay put through them and it affected him when he was at home [*Liz: Interview Extract, October 2014*]

> It was all very difficult and the dog peed in the middle of the dining room and she couldn't take it anymore…that was after three

> days…she [the dog] was obviously upset about everything… [*Jenny: Interview Extract, March 2015]*

The ways in which the participants discussed how their pets responded to the earthquakes utilised emotional and affective language which is commonly attributed to humans. Liz outlined how, initially, her cat ran away when the earthquakes happened but eventually returned. When the earthquakes began to happen again she wanted to keep him safe in the car and he cried as a consequence of this. Similarly, Jenny discussed the emotional anxieties of her dog when moving homes during the earthquakes and the trauma and disturbance this had had on her dog and how this had led the dog to unexpectedly urinate. The unsettledness is grounded in spatiality where the pets demonstrated emotional anxiety associated with changing spatialities due to the quakes. The attentiveness of the participants to their pets' emotions highlighted the reciprocal relationships between pet owner and pet. It demonstrated an entanglement of experiences where the individual's post-disaster experience also took into account the experiences of their pet. Recognition of the entanglement of emotion and experiences is a productive resource for thinking through the practicalities of post-human perspectives in the reality of everyday lived relationships (Fox, 2006:529) which, in this context, was part of the post-disaster experience.

While pets certainly had lived and embodied experiences of the earthquakes which expand our understanding of human-nonhuman relations, pets also played an intrinsic part in coping strategies, enabling individuals to persist through times which were challenging. Within the spectrum of human-animal relations, pets arguably occupy a 'liminal position on the boundaries, appreciated by their owners as 'minded individuals' or friends, capable of rational thought and emotion' (Fox, 2006: 526). Below Diane and Judith identified the value of their pets:

> I think having the cat, it had kept me going. It is amazing what an animal can do [*Diane: Interview Extract, November 2014*]

> well here is where I am… [Judith talks to her cat – telling her how marvellous she is] I couldn't do without her…she is an unusual cat…I just fill the time talking to her…that is my companion there [points to the TV] and the cat! [*Judith: Interview Extract, February 2015*]

Pet ownership and positive ageing have a well-established positive correlation; it enables individuals to feel more secure and comforted. Pets are seen as good companions and they help older people feel happier within their community and neighbourhood (Putnam, 2000). Diane highlighted the role of her cat in helping her persist through the quakes and placed meaningful value on her cat's ability to support her. Judith additionally referred to the cat as her companion, and in so doing recognised the value of her presence and noted how she talked to her throughout the day. The presence of a pet provides companionship and a sense of stability. The position of the pet is bound up in wider relations around the home, care, family, and intimacy. While the relationships with pets existed prior to, during, and post-quakes, the difficulties that arose as a consequence of the earthquakes meant that pets gain renewed significance that embedded them in the wider experiences of post-disaster recovery.

Some individuals went into more detail about the role that their pets played in times of difficulty. Margaret outlined how she found her time post-quakes difficult with changes to the city, her home, and her friends and family. She referred to depression talks as mechanisms by which to manage emotional stress. She stated:

> I did all mine [depression talks] through the dog…I talk to the dog. He knew if I got upset. Sometimes I did have a cry and I thought, well I will let it out…so you would sit down have a bit of a cry and he knew…he would come up and look up at me and he would frown and you can tell when he frowns because his little face…you know…and he would look at me and I would say, it's okay Pippin…we'll go for a walk later on…' You know*?* [*Margaret: Interview Extract, March 2015*]

In this narrative extract Margate illustrated the emotional and affective bond she has with her dog Pippin. Rather than employing more conventional methods associated with healing and therapy, Margaret outlined her coping strategies as talking things through with her dog. This process of talking, sharing, and being with the dog is an example of the ways in which human and non-human relations come into being, and can also be meaningful, and blurred.

Animal geographies enables us to take the 'nonhuman seriously, as an active, conscious partner who we can communicate with, and in whose relationship we can trust' (Johnston, 2008: 646). In an attempt to go beyond these structural

notions of pet-human binary, recent work within animal geography has recognised the value of non-human actors in the fabric of everyday social life and has thus opened up an opportunity to examine these non-human lives. Animal geographies is an emerging discipline as a result of materialist (Whatmore, 2006), and relational (Jones, 2009) turns, yet it remains an ontologically and epistemologically complex and contested area of study (Buller, 2013). This research demonstrates the significance of pets in enabling a sense of persistence with the everyday as well as their active role in wider coping strategies. While there remain debates around the hierarchy of animals; where pets are regarded as having a status similar to humans and other animals are considered more as 'things' and used for exploitation (Fox, 2006), pets and their owners are recognised to engage in a process of identity construction (Sanders, 1993) where:

> Owners attribute 'personhood' to their pets through several mechanisms, including the recognition of subjective thought, the possession of individual personalities, likes and dislikes, seeing the animal as emotional and capable of engaging in reciprocal social relationships and affording the animal a social place as a member of the family or close friend (Fox, 2006: 227).

Animals and pets are a part of the subjective nature of disaster experience where individuals can come to define and understand their disaster experience and process of recovery through their relational ties with their pets. It is therefore worth reflecting on the importance of understanding pets as more than just 'animals' but as something which are part of an intimate and emotional human-pet relationship and in this case, serve as purposeful practice of persisting and managing difficulty throughout the earthquakes and beyond.

Religion and spirituality

This chapter has outlined a range of practices which are employed to persist through, and to cope with, the implications of living in a post-disaster landscape. The research participants came from a range of backgrounds with a variety of personal interests and therefore they collectively drew upon a wide range of resources with which to cope with the everyday. This final section outlines how religion and spirituality emerged as an intrinsic coping strategy for many of the research participants. While faith practices were part of the entanglements of

coping and persisting, it is worth also acknowledging this in the context of a changing material landscape of religious spaces in Christchurch. Following the Christchurch earthquakes, the *Christchurch Press* published an article discussing the churches in the city. They questioned the 'state of faith in the city' where many churches had been severely structural impacted; 'they had taken a battering over the past few years with many lying broken and in pieces' (Ward, 2013:2). The most iconic of which is Christchurch Cathedral which remains structurally damaged due to the repeated earthquakes. There has been ongoing conflicting dialogue about its future in the city with debates straddling views about its purpose as a place of worship and its significance as an icon for the city. In the meantime, the cathedral community has worshipped in the Cardboard Cathedral, a key feature of the city in transition. This section now looks at the role of faith as a means of coping and persisting by exploring three sub themes: faith spaces and routine, faith as a healing space, and faith in informal spaces.

As outlined at the beginning of this chapter, practices of coping can be shaped by routine and habits. Faith and spirituality is linked to routine and temporality. For example, the frequency of worship and prayer, the time of day and the days of the week that these religious practices are carried out, and how long for, all have embedded and subjective meaning for those who carry out/partake of these practices.

Ken outlined his post-disaster experiences through changes in his wider faith landscape:

> That might have actually been a place where I felt most…changed…most disengaged…that is not quite the word I want…a breaking or reordering of things. Because we were in a building that was very different…instead of going to church at nine o clock in the morning we were going at two o clock in the afternoon…it changes the whole routines…a lot of things about Sunday…were routines which had to be broken and changed and attitudes changed…we weren't in our own place…you know…even though I wasn't very involved with the organisation…you were aware that certain things were actually changing [*Ken: Interview Extract, October 2014*]

Church is a place which, for many, offers a routine on a Sunday. The loss of buildings and a change in structure affected how religious practices were carried out. While the change of routine did not cause significant distress to Ken, he

discussed how the church community, the building itself, and the Sunday routines had been disrupted. He referred to this as a '*breaking or reordering of things'* which highlighted how consistent practices such a worship is often taken for granted and thus becomes difficult to sustain through the event of a disaster. This disruption had implications for Keith's subjective post-disaster experience as he indicated that he felt disengaged and changed with the religious space. Crouch (2010) refers to the disruption of a rooted sense of place as a feeling of being detached which involves reaching for a landscape which is not quite there.

When participants outlined their quake experiences, they inevitably revealed times of difficulty and strain. In a follow-up to this acknowledgement I often asked questions concerning how they felt they had coped, and what they had found helpful following the quakes. Faith, religion and spirituality were identified as significant during these times. As Linda stated:

> I think our faith…yeah…it has had its moments but it always felt, God only gives us as much as we can carry and if it's too much then he will remove some…so we just keep going [*Linda: Interview Extract, February 2015*]

For Linda, faith provided her with a rationality to keep going and carry on. Her belief in how much God will give her to carry, shapes her understanding of the means by which she continues to persist through times of difficulty. The findings of this research has parallels with research by Williams (2016) who examined the role of faith and spirituality for marginalised and vulnerable populations. His findings, which are similar to work in this thesis, suggests that, during times of difficulty, individuals can depend on a 'presence of a profound and inexplicable *something*...that is materially absent but deeply powerful and viscerally felt (Williams, 2016: 45). Such embodied and affective feelings of a powerful absence-presence shaped Linda's feelings and capacities to persist. This suggests that often it is not just the tangible resources which are relied upon but something other and more-than which shapes persistence with the everyday.

Mary discussed in more detail the role her faith played as a healing and comforting space in the times following the quakes. She outlined:

> initially after the earthquakes…like everybody else…you weren't but you didn't actually express it for a time so that is when I think truth came in very helpful in that when we went to church…it was the acknowledgement from the pastors to say, it is okay for you to

> feel the way you feel…however that is and that too me was quite comforting because I thought…hmm yes…I know I am a little bit fearful because…you would be silly to say that you weren't…because that is a lie for a start…you could cover it up and make it like that everything is alright but I don't see the point in doing that…you know…it was just the fact that…acknowledgement was given that…of where you are…and it is not abnormal to feel still anxious and uptight and that was quite healing and quite releasing. It was quite good to hear somebody say, 'it is okay to feel like that' instead of the others that were to say, 'oh just come on now…it is over now…come on…pull your socks up, will ya?' you know…having that space to feel whatever you are feeling…everybody was different…that in itself is quite healing…you know to help get on with things*… [Mary: Interview Extract, February 2015*]

Mary categorised her faith and the presence of her church as part of the process of healing. She acknowledged that for some time she found it difficult to express or come to terms with how she was feeling. While attending church, and having a faith has been a long (although at times discontinuous) practice for Mary, this space became entangled with wider practices of post-disaster recovery. Mary described this process of healing through faith as an emotional and embodied experience. She referred to feelings of fearfulness, anxiety, and being uptight, as being associated with her post-quake experiences and how the church and her faith were a space in which she could feel release from these emotions. The mundane yet significant acceptance of 'it's okay to feel like this' demonstrated a powerful discourse which had become somewhat marginalised in Mary's life. As part of the process of healing, Mary recognised that this realisation enabled her to 'get on with things.' In other words, she could persist and cope with the everyday. The bringing together of emotional release and healing with spaces of spirituality feeds into understandings of therapeutic landscapes where emotion and faith shape experiences of recovery.

Processes of coping and persisting can also be found in informal spaces of faith and spirituality. Maureen and Pete had to relocate their home in the quakes and struggled in adapting to a new community in their new neighbourhood. Yet what was continuous was their scriptures group which provided an informal and convivial space in which to come together:

> coming from spirituality…and sharing that with other people and sometimes we met as a scriptures group…we all know each other

> well and we can talk very openly…not just talking about scriptures by any means…we could talk very openly and honestly about our feelings: how are we coping? What is going on? That kind of thing…being able to pour things out and listen to others who are at least as bad…and then looking for solutions that can be shared…that helped…the sharing, and then some prayer and then talking…very open kind of prayer about what was going on [*Maureen: Interview Extract, March 2015]*

Maureen outlined the therapeutic qualities of this informal and personal faith-based group. The convivial nature of the group enabled honesty, openness, emotional exchange, and vulnerabilities to be exposed. While Maureen indicated that the group came together to discuss scriptures, the group became more than a space solely for religious practice. It became a space where the group could discuss explicitly how they were coping, and what resources and practices were required to enable persistence. This illustrates the porous nature of this informal faith group; where it became entangled with the wider post-disaster landscape. The sharing of stories, feelings, and anxieties brought together a range of subjective experiences of post-disaster recovery and enabled the space and the practices associated with it to become a resource in which persistence with the everyday was made possible.

Geographies of religion and faith feed into wider understandings of politics, governance, care and healing. This research demonstrates the importance of religious practices in understanding temporality and routines, and what this means for subjective experiences of place. The research participants illustrated that faith shaped and embodied an emotional account of persisting through the quakes and how, within religious spaces, there are tangible and intangible resources in which strategies for coping can be found.

7.6. Conclusion

This chapter opened with a discussion of the geographies of practice as a means to conceptually situate the empirical material and bring together themes of persisting and coping. As De Certeau (1980) has argued, exploring practices of everyday life helps to illustrate how people re-appropriate themselves in certain situations and the strategies and tactics that are employed to navigate certain social structures. Practices are a fundamental part of social life which produce meaning about landscapes, place and people, and objects. Practices are made

meaningful through ongoing engagement and reciprocal relationships with the material, non-material, and non-human world.

This material has demonstrated that practices can help illustrate that older people are not passive in a disaster context and that, through a variety of everyday and mundane practices, older people are able to make disaster experiences their own. Such perspectives demonstrate the heterogenous experience of disaster recovery and how this is situated within, and amongst, wider socio-spatial relations.

This chapter placed themes of persisting and coping as pertinent to this research. While persisting and coping have yet to find concrete conceptual roots within geographical literature, this research demonstrates how persisting and coping serve as productive analytical tools for understanding experiences of recovery. This research demonstrates that persisting is not a blank state of continuum but rather highly subjective, embodied, and temporal. In turn, this helps to understand the multiple and diverse meanings of recovery. This chapter embedded the concept of coping strategies to understand the very tangible and intangible strategies which older people employ in their everyday lives.

Following the discussion of practice, this chapter explored two themes of ‘coping with’. The first was coping with the night-time. This illustrated how the night-time creates a distinct space where older people are required to persist and employ different coping strategies. The research pertaining to the night-time revealed a heightened emotional and affective place which brings past experiences and the present together in unexpected and tangible ways. The second looked at grief and loss. This was situated in wider narratives of the event and then illustrated through fieldnotes and diary extracts pertaining to how the emotions of grief and loss are spatially and temporally situated, and how they also involve entanglement between ageing and post-disaster processes.

This chapter then outlined four practices associated with persisting and coping: walking, singing and music, pet ownership, and religion and spirituality. While all the distinctive practices took shape, and meaning in different forms, they all shared similarities in their wider emotional responses, corporality, materiality, and spatiality. These practices are by no means exceptional. Rather they are

persisting and coping practices carried out with a sense of ordinary purposefulness that fleshed out the realities of living in a post-disaster landscape.

This chapter therefore opened up very real and meaningful narratives of the subjective, emotional, and embodied experience of recovery which adds much needed value to debates generated around the binary and hegemonic terms of vulnerability and resilience. Material from this chapter suggests that terms such as coping and persisting are more helpful than concepts of vulnerability and resilience as they enable older people to discuss the disaster experiences on their terms and connect them to their everyday lives.

Chapter Eight: Conclusions

Disasters are always going to occur and perhaps even more so due to us living in an increasingly volatile world. Therefore, the need to explore and better understand the extraordinary and somewhat ordinary impacts of disasters and the diverse experiences of post-disaster recovery cannot be underestimated. Similarly, the biological process of ageing will continue and will be experienced by all of us. The interrelation between experiences of disasters and ageing is complex and requires attentive investigations into what these mean, individually and cumulatively, for experiences of place as well as social-spatial relations.

The purpose of this research was to explore and examine the narratives of everyday post-disaster geographies of older people in Christchurch, New Zealand. By drawing on in-depth qualitative material carried out during a six-month fieldwork period, this thesis has critically investigated the nuances and complexities of ageing and the experiences of being of older age in a setting which has experienced significant material, social, and environmental changes. In doing so, this research has responded to broader intellectual discussions found within distinct and interconnected geographical scholarship on ageing and disasters as well as to wider literatures concerning emotional, affective and embodied geographies.

In this final chapter, I explore and reflect on five overarching concluding points. First, I provide a summary of the chapter conclusions. Secondly, I revisit the research aims which have guided this thesis. Thirdly, I draw upon a broader set of conclusions which have emerged from this research. Fourthly, I turn to some limitations and reflections within this research and based upon those factors I finally provide some suggestions for future research.

8.1. Summary of chapter conclusions

The opening chapter of this thesis introduced the theoretical and empirical research context and discussed the research aims which have guided this thesis. This chapter set the scene for the thesis as a whole and evidenced the gaps which exist in existing literature and research with relation to older people’s experiences of post-disaster recovery in Christchurch.

In Chapters Two and Three, I explored the wider geographical literature in which this research is situated. Recognising the broad and interdisciplinary reach of both the fields of disasters and ageing was challenging. However, I attended to each discussion by exploring a number of sub themes. In Chapter Two I examined the disaster literature in relation concepts of preparedness, vulnerability, and resilience and, thereafter, critically assessed how these concepts have been used as well as the limitations of employing such well-known terms. Chapter Two also situated older people in the post-disaster context by looking at a number of studies both within and beyond the Christchurch setting. This chapter concluded by suggesting that there has been a lack of attention to the personal accounts of disaster and it was noted how emotional and embodied perspectives of disaster have been obscured in favour of more orthodox approaches to disaster.

Chapter Three turned to the geographies of ageing and opened with a review of current geographical literature before exploring geographies of ageing in relation to health, mobility, and place. Through so doing, the chapter revealed that geographies of ageing continue to be dominated by positivist traditions which marginalise emotional and embodied accounts of ageing. The chapter then reflected on childrens' geographies as a means to illustrate how geographies of ageing have been approached in relation to younger people and in order to showcase where knowledge and opportunities can be learnt for advancing discussions associated with geography and older age. In this chapter I identified vectors that would be taken forward in this research including; attention to emotional, embodied and affective accounts of ageing and a consideration of the relations that exist beyond those associated with human-human and human-place relations.

Chapter Four outlined the methodology and methodological approaches employed in this research. It began by outlining the nuances and sensitivities of researching in a disaster context as well as those pertaining to undertaking research with older people before discussing the considerations that arise as a consequence of researching emotion and affect. The chapter then outlined the research design and discussed how the research was carried out. It did this through discussing the fieldwork in three stages: entering the field, in the field, and leaving the field. Such an approach provided the author with an opportunity

to consider the intricacies found in different stages of the research process. Chapter Four concluded by discussing the ethical considerations which were taken into account in the collation of primary data that underpinned this research.

Chapter Five was the first of three empirical chapters. This chapter was an opportunity to introduce the rich and varied qualitative material which arose from the fieldwork. Drawing upon interview extracts and field diary notes, this chapter connected the impact of the earthquakes with the experiences narrated by older people. This chapter illustrated the affective nature of the earthquake through the notions of atmosphere and the experiencing body. It highlighted that disasters are highly sensual and visceral experiences which have not been considered in relation to affective geographies. This, it was suggested, was surprising given the ample attention that has been previously been given to affect in in relation to sound (Gallagher, 2017), movement (McCormack, 2008), and encounters (Tolia-Kelly, 2006; Wilson, 2016). The affective energy produced by the earthquake highlights the highly temporal and multi-dimensional experiences of the disaster and how this brought older people into the disaster setting as fully interconnected and experiencing subjects. The disaster was also discussed as being highly emotional whereby individuals reflected on emotions such as fear, sadness, uncertainty, and anticipation. The emotional experiences of the disaster brought forward a range of issues pertaining to places and other entities. These, in turn, highlighted the significance of emotion in narrating experiences and connected with place. The embodied nature of the disaster was highlighted through the sensing and experiencing body and this, as discussed, suggested that older people's bodies do not need to be considered simply as frail and weak. Rather, older people should be seen as active participants who register multi-dimensional experiences. This chapter highlighted the significance of emotion, affect, and the embodied nature of the disaster and, in so doing, served as a productive introduction to the following empirical chapters.

Chapter Six explored the post-disaster geographies of Christchurch. The significance of individual places in a disaster setting emerged through the discussions which took place in the field as well as the analysis of the qualitative material that followed the conclusion of the fieldwork period. The findings of this chapter highlighted how places were often discussed by the interviewees in relation to exploring the impacts of the disaster. This chapter focused on the city

centre and the home because these places were frequently discussed by the interviewees when they were processing experiences and meanings of disaster. However, places such as the city centre and the home cannot be taken for granted with the purposes that they serve. Rather, they need to be considered in relation to a range of material, emotional, temporal, and socio-spatial geographies. The themes of absence, lingering, and emergence were used to highlight the ruptures that had taken place with regard to everyday places, and how these had impacted of personal identities, emotional experiences, and everyday geographies. While the city and the home were used to explore the entanglements that exist between the past and the presence, the discussions highlighted the interconnections that exist between these places as well as with other sites such as the garden and the neighbourhood. This chapter concluded by suggesting that it is important to not only continue to consider the role of place in the context of ageing but also that a post-disaster setting is one which enables an appreciation of how place is experienced in relation to uncertainties and precarities. This critical reflection upon the role of place in the context of ageing expanded existing ageing-in-place discussions and through so doing challenged taken-for-granted assumptions about the home (for example) and the bounded materialities of place. Such reflection is unique angle and significant contribution of this thesis.

The final empirical chapter used the concept of practice to explore how the disaster has impacted on everyday lives and what this means for understandings of living through events. This chapter used the concepts of coping and persisting to illustrate the very ordinary yet purposeful ways in which day-to-day activities were carried out. These practices included walking, singing, pet-ownership, religion, and spirituality. These practices differ in how they emerged from the disaster event and/or have been affected by the impact of the disaster. Findings from this research which were illustrated in this chapter highlight the importance of paying attention to the trivial and mundane as well as the need to consider the everyday in relation to the emotional and more-than-human relations.

This concluding chapter now turns to some of the research aims and the key themes which emerged from this research and reflects on those themes in the context of ageing and disaster research.

8.2. Revisiting the research aims and questions

The aim of this research was to critically explore older people's experiences of post-disaster recovery. This research responds to missing gaps found in three distinct bodies of existent literature. First, despite a wealth of research which emerged following the three significant Christchurch earthquakes, there was an absence of accounts which explored how older people fared and made sense of the disaster. Secondly, disaster literature has a tendency to represent older people in a disaster context in relation to health, mobility, and age-related needs and capacities. While such research is imperative to ensuring minimal negative impacts on older people, it does not take into account the personal, emotional and temporal experiences of ageing in a place which has been socially and materially disrupted. Such accounts, therefore, have a tendency to detach older people from the disaster setting and do not pay attention to how older people actively and meaningfully co-create disaster places and their everyday geographies. Thirdly, this thesis drew upon research found within the geographies of ageing. There has been a tendency for geographies of ageing to focus on the spatial patterns of older people and the place embedded experiences of ageing. Accordingly, geographies of ageing have, by and large, been considered conceptually and methodologically mundane and, as a result, there has been an underappreciation of the role of older people in society and the ways in which they are part of a myriad of social and spatial relations (Pain and Hopkins, 2010). This thesis attends to such omissions by exploring the lived experiences of older people in a post-disaster context. This thesis has, in so doing, addressed three main research aims and interconnected research questions:

Research Aim 1: **To better understand emotional, affective and embodied accounts of disaster and post-disaster recovery.** This research aim was explored by using several interconnected questions such as: *how is the concept of disaster understood, interpreted, and negotiated*? *What are the meanings of recovery and how are these spatially and temporally situated? What are the subjective understandings of ageing in a post-disaster context? What is the emotional language employed and how does this intersect with a range places? How can the disaster and recovery be understood as affective embodied?*

Research Aim 2: **To better understand post-disaster geographies through the notion of place.** This research aim explored the interconnection between older people, place and disaster and addressed several questions such as: *How are places understood and made meaningful in a post-disaster context? How does the disaster disrupt understandings of home, city, neighbourhood and other significant places? Is there an emergence of new, unusual and unexpected encounters with places? What are the challenges and opportunities for sense of place and belonging? How does this feed into wider themes associated with disaster?*

Research Aim 3: **To better understand the practices associated with post-disaster recovery.** This research aim brought together Research Aim 1 and Research Aim 2 to understand how older people 'do' post-disaster recovery. This research aim explored several questions such as: *What are disaster related practices? What are the meanings associated with these practices? What resources are associated with these practices? What role do these practices play for subjective meanings of recovery? To what extent are these practices emotional or (un)consciously performed? Is there a distinct spatiality to these practices?*

Each empirical chapter looked to address an overarching research aim in turn. However, the analysis and discussion of the qualitative material highlighted how the research aims and questions cannot be clearly defined and bounded to distinct chapters, rather the discussions arising from the aims and associated questions were interconnected, spreading across all three empirical chapters. I now turn to some overarching conclusions as a way of responding to these aims and attending to the knowledge gaps.

8.3. Emotional, affective and embodied geographies

The findings from this research highlight that emotion, affect, and embodiment are important conceptual tools for thinking about ageing and disaster. This research has demonstrated that the concepts of emotion, affect, and embodiment matter to understanding older people's experiences of living through the Christchurch earthquakes. Moreover, through using these concepts this research has highlighted how this brings a range of spatialities and relations into being.

This section now examines each of these concepts (emotion, affect, and embodiment) in turn and draws on some key examples of older people's experiences and responses to discuss how these can be better understood through emotional and affective perspectives.

Emotional Geographies

The significance of emotion is now common place in geography and as Davidson and Milligan (2004: 254) state, emotions matter:

> They have tangible effects on our surroundings and can shape the very nature and experience of our being-in-the-world. Emotions can clearly alter the way the world is for us, affecting our sense of time as well as space. Our sense of who and what we are is continually (re)shaped by how we feel.

Emotions have been examined within a number of geographical studies. This includes scholarship exploring geographies of the home (Twigg, 2000); health and illness (Dorn 1998; Wilton, 1996), and institutions (Philo and Parr, 2000). In disaster research emotions have been used to explore decisions to return home following a disaster (Morrice, 2013), trauma (Adams-Hutcheson, 2017), and in the context of carrying out fieldwork (Whittle *et al.,* 2012; Dominey-Howes, 2015). What these studies show is that living through a disaster is a highly emotional experience which shapes people-place relations and interactions. How this differs across different social groupings or across different spaces has not yet been thoroughly explored. Therefore, there is little understanding about either how the emotional geographies of disaster may differ, or the implications that these have on everyday geographies. Emotional geographies and ageing have also received little scholarly attention, though Rowles (1978) reflected on the emotions of older people in the context of place attachment, and more recently, Milligan *et al.* (2005: 50) have stated that there is a:

> Sidelining of older people's emotional distress…they are, at times, treated as objects that generate tasks for those responsible for providing and delivering care. Objectification of the older person renders unnecessary any concern for their dignity and self-worth, undermining the status of both the care professional and the elderly patient as thinking, feeling and emotional individuals

The findings from this research highlight that emotions serve as significant empirical and conceptual tools for understanding older people's experiences of disaster. There are three reasons that they help to illustrate this.

The first is that emotions serve as a useful language and discourse for helping to articulate experiences. The Christchurch earthquakes and the subsequent impacts were chaotic, disturbing, and unsettling experiences. The earthquakes threw into turmoil what was previously understood as normal and disrupted established as well as clearly defined socio-spatial relations. Making sense of the impact of the disaster and how this has come to shape everyday life is complex and, at times, challenging. Throughout the narrative interviews commonly understood emotions such as fear, anxiety, sadness, hope, and so on were used by older people to reflect on their experiences and highlight to me, as the researcher, the diverse emotional geographies associated with post-disaster. Here, it is important to recognise that emotions themselves are socially and culturally constructed and, therefore, cannot neither be reduced to a uniform or common understanding nor used to assume socio-spatial relations (Ahmed, 2004). However, as Askins (2016: 217) observes, 'the analytic utility of emotional geographies is in its attention to the range of emotions in societal relations and how they do different kinds of work in different contexts' and in this research context emotions served as an important tool to interrogate new, disrupted and lost socio-spatial relations, assert meaning to earthquake experiences, and better understand the impact that the disaster has had on issues of belonging and the personal identities of older people.

The second reason is that the findings from this research show the significance of emotions in shaping everyday post-disaster geographies and feed into wider understandings of mobilities and belonging. The analysis of the research material highlighted how emotions such as anxiety, uncertainty, loss, and sadness were often factors in shaping where older people chose and chose not to go in post-disaster landscapes. These research findings add value to wider geographical scholarship that has explored the emotional experiences of fear and how that influences patterns of mobility in the city such as that previously undertaken by Bannister and Fyfe (2001) and Pain (2001). This research shows that it is important to consider mobility in a manner that is wider than merely looking at physical mobility. Indeed, there is also a need to view it as a practice which is

inherently emotional and shaped by the ongoing impacts of disaster. This research also highlights how emotions are a factor in shaping senses of belonging to the city and to other places such as the home. Wood and Waite (2011: 201) argue that 'belonging is a dynamic emotional attachment that relates people to the material and social worlds that they inhabit and experience'. This research highlights the dynamic nature of belonging alongside the impact of the disaster and how emotions constitute part of people-place and non-human relations.

The third reason is one which is much broader in reach and scope. The findings from this research highlight that post-disaster Christchurch is a space in which everyday emotional geographies can be heightened; where the impact of the disaster creates ongoing emotional geographies which exists across multiple spatialities and temporalities. The findings from this research suggest that the disaster has created a layer or blanket of emotional geographies which cover the city in a myriad of ways. For example, through the representations of emotional discourses as illustrated through public campaigns to fleeting encounters with other people, places and things which are themselves highly emotional engagements with the post-disaster space. This shows, and reinforces the notion that emotions are not fixed or static entities but shaped over time and space through the ongoing impacts of the disaster.

This research project is one of the few studies which explores older people's post disaster experiences beyond associations with health and wellbeing implications. The empirical chapters illustrated a variety of experiences and responses older people had to the Christchurch earthquakes. Employing emotional perspectives on this occasion was helpful as it enabled a consideration of the complexities and nuances associated with experiencing disaster and post-disaster recovery. The empirical chapters touched on a variety of experiences and considered these experiences in relation to emotional perspectives and in so doing highlighted that older people's experiences can be considered more than that associated with binary notions of recovery (particularly around assumptions of ill-health and fragility) but as highly temporal and rich that bring together an assortment of people-place relations. This section now turns to some examples to illustrate how emotional perspectives can better inform older people's post-disaster experiences.

The domestic home was identified as important site in which to consider a range of post-disaster experiences. The significance and value of the home has been extensively explored in geographical scholarship; recognised for its significance in personal identities and socio-spatial relations. This research shows that the domestic home is a valuable place in which to consider the multiple experiences of post-disaster recovery. The findings from the research show that the home serves as a pivotal point in which to better understand older people's disaster experiences such as loss, care, purposefulness. Older people experienced a range of different losses associated with the home. This included physical loss such as complete destruction of the home where it was no longer inhabitable or partial loss of the home such as the loss of the garden. Understanding the impact of physical losses associated with the home was better understood through emotional perspectives. By using the concept of emotion, the analysis of the narrative interviews was able to discern how older people experienced and responded to the home in a post-disaster setting. For example, while home circumstances differed for everyone, what was shared was a new and different bond with the home which was shaped around themes relating to uncertainty, insecurity, personal belong and identity. The emotions which continued to emerge from connections with the home in a post-disaster setting highlighted a variety of new and emerging practices which inform how older people continue to experience post-disaster recovery. For example, the role of the garden in some instances demonstrated emotions and practices associated with caring and caring for the other.

The experiences and responses associated with the notion of transition is another example in which emotional perspectives can help better understand older people's experiences of post-disaster recovery. The empirical chapters reflected on a range of experiences associated with change and transition, particularly in relation to the city centre's ongoing material and social change. It was observed in this research that older people were experiencing a particular type of post-disaster experience through understandings of transitions which was better informed through emotional perspectives. Due to the rich life histories that older people have, emotions associated with memories, nostalgia, and the past were significant in understanding and informing the emotional responses older people had to ongoing changes associated with the city centre, This research highlights

that while a city can be in transition and is primarily focused on the future, older people are engaged in a different type of temporality. This is a type of temporality which had stronger associations with memory and the past.

Emotional perspectives help to illustrate that older people may experience disasters and post-disasters differently to other social groupings. Employing the concept of emotions allow a rich reflection on the range of different experiences older people have and how that shapes and is shaped by different places and temporalities. Emotional perspectives allow an opportunity to present older people's geographies as rich and vivid, perspectives which are not often considered in relation to binary perspectives commonly associated with health and fragility. This section now turns to affect geographies and explores, through examples from this research, how affective geographies can help to better understand older people's post-disaster experiences.

Affective Geographies

The study of affect in geographical scholarship has received a surge of interest in recent years. The concept of affect has been approached through an array of theoretical and philosophical traditions. While it was not the intention here to explore perspectives of affect geographies in substantial detail, the findings from this research have highlighted the possibility that older people's post-disaster experiences could be considered to be more than simply emotional as a consequence of their being shaped by something more-than, other or something unidentifiable. Anderson (2006: 736-737) differentiates *feeling* from *emotion* where the former attends 'to proprioceptive and visceral shifts in the background habits, and postures, of a body' and the latter considers 'those intimate, distinctly personal, ways of being' which can be socio-linguistically conceptualised. The impact of the disaster has been recognised as a rupture, a disordering of things, and an unsettling of normality. Such impacts produce charged energies that are disaster and context specific. The fieldwork demonstrated the affective experiences of disaster through discussions of atmospheres and the sensing body. These are all intrinsically connected and are reflected upon in turn.

Anderson (2009: 79) recognises that atmospheres are 'always in the process of emerging and transforming' and can therefore be considered as unfinished and pre-consciously felt. The findings from this research highlight how disaster

landscapes present opportunities to consider the ways in which older people are a part of the ongoing affective nature of a disaster. The earthquakes produced a distinctive quality which affected those who were part of the earthquake experience and the concept of atmosphere can be used to help better understand the relationships between space and bodies and how changes to the constitution of space impact the affective experiences of such spaces (Shaw, 2014). The term atmosphere was used to describe the immediate aftermath of the event but through the sensing body and changing materialities of space it is possible to consider the ways in which older people continue to be affected by the changing atmospheres associated with the event which cannot be isolated as a singular emotional quality.

This research also demonstrates that the body serves as an important register and generator of post-disaster experiences. Older people frequently discussed feelings and sensations, and through so doing highlighted how their bodies continue to feel the multiple affects of the disaster. Within and beyond the discipline of geography, research on the body, particularly the physical, material body, has produced diverse, detailed and (often) linguistically dense of literatures (Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy, 2010). The body has been explored in relation to affect, emotion, non-representational theory, health and disability, and performance and movement. Disaster scholarship has a tendency to focus on the macro and large scale place with little attention being paid to smaller scale sites. The findings from this research highlight how it is important to consider the body as a micro-scale site which serves as a significant register of post-disaster experiences and how, through sense, feelings, energies, and encounters, ways of being emerge from the material and sensory environments of post-disaster.

This research has demonstrated how older people's post-disaster experiences can be better understood through affective perspectives. Affective perspectives enable a greater insight into the multiple assemblages and relations which make-up older people's day-to-day post disaster experiences. Employing affective perspectives help to better understand older people's relationships with people, places, materials and objects and how these relationships can alter across time and space.

The empirical chapters all reflected on a variety of situations which can be better informed through affective perspectives. For example, Chapter Five and Six

discussed at various points the changing nature of the city including emerging artwork, creative spaces, flowers and temporary gardens. These elements of creativity which populate the city create a certain post-disaster aesthetic which affected older people's emotional and embodied response to the changing landscape. Affective perspectives presented an opportunity to highlight the feelings, emotions and connections older people have with the post-disaster landscape. Further, while these new and emerging spaces can be considered in relation to prompting certain affective response, it also invites questions about how these spaces are created. For example, who creates these spaces and for what purpose and whether this can be considered as construction of discourses about disaster resilience.

Chapter Seven was also an opportunity to think about how affective perspectives help understand older people's experiences of post-disaster recovery. Chapter Seven discussed an assortment of practices associated with coping and persisting. These practices included discrete and embodied walking activities, singing and music practices and caring for pets as part of people-animal relations. It was argued that these practices all emerge from and are characterised through the post-disaster landscape and, in addition, shape and are shaped by a range of affective geographies. These practices concern an assemblage of places such as the home, the neighbourhood, the church and involve a variety of social and personal networks which all play a significant role in the creation of intangible moments, memories and connections. These practices therefore illustrate the highly permeable networked and affective nature of space and place in a post-disaster setting and demonstrate how everyday experiences can be affected by ongoing change and significant events across a range of different scales.

Research concerning the affective perspectives on older people's experiences remain limited. However, this research suggests affective perspectives offer an opportunity to interrogate the mundane geographies of everyday life for older people and to consider, both sensitively and explicitly, how networks and places through time and space effectively make older people's lives. While affect geographies are helpful to consider the multiplicity and temporalities of disasters and the ways in which these factors may help to illustrate the dynamic and sensual experiences of disaster, it is worth presenting some interrelated critical reflections at this stage. The first reflection is a methodological one. The

qualitative research methods involved interviews and field diary extracts which recorded older people's experiences of disaster. It was my duty to record and reflect on these notes in the most honest and truly representational form possible. Emotions can be linguistically conceptualised and therefore serve as a useful tool by which to convey the social and spatial experiences of a given disaster. Examining emotional experiences of the disasters, while nuanced and complex at times, was reasonably unproblematic. Affect, on the other hand, is much harder to capture and relies upon reaching out for, or tapping into, the processes behind meaning making, pathways of feeling, and the process of crafting emotional responses. Through talking and observational methodologies this was rather challenging and I relied on witnessing bodily responses and identifying affective personal experiences rather than initiating discussions with the interviewees themselves about their 'affective experiences to disaster'. To take this point further, the notion of affect is not one which is used in relation to everyday lay understandings and terminology and, therefore, I consciously resisted the privileged position of the researcher and was thus reluctant to completely assert my thoughts with regards to affective geographies.

Embodied geographies of disaster

Embodied geographies look at the intersection between bodies, landscapes, and materialities as a way to help to understand people's interactions with the world. Embodied geographies have been discussed in relation to pregnant bodies and experiences of pregnancy (Longhurst, 1996; Longhurst, 2000; Davidson, 2001), experiences of people with physical impairments and the hostile built environment (Butler and Bowlby, 1997; Gleeson, 2000); urban walking (Middleton, 2010), geographies of exclusion (McGrarth *et al.,* 2008), and the urban environment in relation to sexuality (Valentine, 1993). Embodied geographies of ageing have been considered in relation to the embodied experiences of space, and how those experiences are spatially and socially constructed. The attention to embodied geographies of age has primarily focused on children and young people in the context of growing up and becoming older and the implication this process has on the experiences of everyday places (Horton and Kraftl, 2006). Embodied experiences of old age have received less attention with contributions focusing on the embodied and emotional experience

of care work (England and Dyck, 2011), gender and embodiment in later life (Clarke, 2012), and clothing and personal identity (Buse and Twigg, 2018).

Advancing academic knowledge, this research highlights the importance of recognising the embodied experience of disaster and post-disaster recovery. During the actual earthquake, the body was often identified as the primary source through which people connected with the event for example with regard to physically evacuating a building, the need to move to a different part of a room or how to protect the body from impending harm. In the context of the disaster there was a heightened awareness of the body which interconnected with a range of emotional and affective responses. However, this research has shown that post-disaster recovery can also be an embodied practice which cannot be limited to objective dimensions or social and cultural dimensions. Rather, the experiences of recovery can be regarded as embodied through a variety of different everyday practices such as walking, looking after pets, getting ready for bed and so on. Everyday engagements with post-disaster space and with an array of materials as well as emotional encounters highlight how the embodied experience of recovery is multi-sensual.

It has been observed that disentangling the emotional, material, and affective in the context of embodied geographies can be problematic (Middleton, 2010). This research resonates with such challenges. While this section has addressed emotion, affect, and embodiment in isolation, in practice they are much more nuanced and intrinsically connected. However, what this research highlights is that it is important to consider the body in the context of disaster and what role it plays in understanding experiences of recovery. Often disaster research focuses on macro sites and processes yet this research highlights that is also important to consider the micro-scale and how this feeds into everyday experiences of post-disaster recovery.

While emotion, affect, and embodiment are concepts which are more rooted in academic literature than policy related material, at a time of heightened threat from disastrous events it is critical that geographers and environmental social scientists continue to work with policy makers to develop new agendas and ways of thinking about the diverse impacts of disasters. Taking forward findings generated through an emotive and non-representational lens could help to further inform the type of methods employed to better understand disaster settings (for

example it could encourage a move away from more 'top-down' form a research to consider methods which more collaborative and participatory) and can also assist both academics and policy makers to move away from assumed ideas about older people in a disaster context (such as fragility) to recognise older people as fully experiencing and embodied subjects. Emotional and affective perspectives also present an opportunity to consider the richness and diversity of older people's experiences outside of disaster setting and to consider how everyday life continues shape everyday life.

8.4. Coping with disasters

Chapter Two explored existent disaster literature and critically reflected upon the concepts of vulnerability and resilience. In Chapter Two I explored how the concept of vulnerability is developed on pre-existing assumptions about people and places, and how they are expected to respond in difficult circumstances. In the review of disaster literature I also raised questions about the different meanings of resilience and the extent to which the concept can be helpful in understanding the lived experiences of disaster. Findings from this research suggest that while the concepts of resilience and vulnerability matter in shaping and driving disaster related agendas, they might not always be appropriate when one is trying to understanding what it means to experience and recover from such an event.

The in-depth qualitative research was an opportunity to thoroughly explore the day-to-day realities of how older people managed the impact of the Christchurch earthquake disaster. Chapter Seven reflected in great detail about how older people have coped and persisted with the disaster. This empirical chapter highlighted that there is substantial value in recognising the very ordinary and mundane practices carried out by older people. These activities which may, or may not be, disaster specific revealed that the ostensibly banal, low key, everyday things and events matter profoundly. By briefly exploring some of the geographical literature on coping, it can be suggested that coping has been discussed in relation to two main perspectives (Crooks, 2010). The first perspective refers to problem focused coping which involves engaging with certain activities in day-to-day living as a strategy for managing change and adjustment. This includes finding time for rest, adapting walking routes, and

drawing on certain social and material resources. The second perspective concerns emotion focused coping which 'centres on managing one's inner states, and thus developing ways to come to terms with one's altered life, sense of self, and place in the world' (Crooks, 2010: 57). These approaches are certainly not mutually exclusive and as findings from this research highlight, the emotions are altered when people experience things that change and/or transform their lives (Bondi *et al.,* 2005).

It is important to reflect on coping in the concluding chapter as this research has highlighted some points which could be useful when considering how we can best understand older people's experiences of disaster. Disasters are often discussed in relation to the macro level where research is often undertaken to inform policy and future planning. The attention to the 'big' can often obscure more grainy and micro-scale contexts which are valuable for considering how exactly disaster is experienced and lived out. Employing the concept of coping in the context of disaster research is an opportunity to better connect with the realities of the disaster and presents individuals with an opportunity to articulate their experiences on their terms rather than in relation to assumed definitions associated with vulnerability and resilience.

The concept of coping also offers much potential to understand everyday geographies more broadly both in relation to empirical research and with regard to theoretical considerations. Coping naturally involves reflecting on and drawing upon materialities, places, habits, routines, emotions, and relations. As a result it can be helpfully considered in relation to a range of precarious and ordinary everyday situations. In relation to geographies of ageing, using the concept of coping offers an opportunity to not only critically explore ageing in and beyond place, but may also contribute to much needed theoretical developments. Exploring the geographies associated with coping and coping practices would be one way in which to take forward material produced from this research.

8.5. Thesis reflections and areas for future research

The development of thesis has been a conceptual and personal journey where the ups and downs cannot never be truly explored within the confines of the completed document. However, this final section draws on some reflections which include a few overarching limitations. Discussing the limitations inevitably

comes with a risk of being overly critical however it is within these limitations that opportunities lie for further development.

One critical reflection identified is a methodological one which is associated with representation. The methodological approach which was employed focused on obtaining in-depth qualitative material. This approach enabled a richness and depth of empirical material which provided the researcher with an opportunity to dig below the surface and explore underlying feelings and perspectives relating to the disaster and day-to-day experiences. Such an approach inevitably meant that it was only possible to capture a small percentage of the overall elderly population of Christchurch. In addition, the majority of research participants became involved in this research through their connections with Age Concern Canterbury. I am therefore acutely aware that it is possible that particular older age groups - such as those most isolated or in poor health and/or individuals who do not have need or a requirement to be involved with Age Concern, were unintentionally excluded from this research. Furthermore, there are social and cultural variables which, of course, affect the ways in which disaster is experienced. For example, social identities such as gender, ethnicity, and sexuality, and the intersection between identities all shape the differential experiences of disaster recovery. Interrelated to this, financial resources and social means also have the potential to impact how individuals recover from a disaster.

The methodological approaches used in this research coupled with the pragmatics of conducting fieldwork with a community I was unfamiliar with meant that obtaining a representative sample was always going to be challenging. However, it was never the intention to produce a model account of how exactly older people recover from disaster and how this might vary across different groups and settings. Rather, this research was concerned with the wider narratives and meanings associated with the older peoples' experiences of disaster and how this can inform broader debates within disaster and geographies of ageing. To this end, there is a possibility that further research could explore the differential experiences of disaster for older people in relation to other social identities.

On a personal note, and in relation to efforts of representation, my time in the field was enjoyable yet was at times exhausting: I was conducting interviews

which sometimes lasted for several hours and which took place as many as three times a week. This was coupled with attending bus outings with Age Concern Canterbury a couple of times a week. When conducting the fieldwork I was traveling around the city via bus and bike which, while a great adventure, was time consuming and tiring. I therefore have to recognise that while all research sets out with the best of intentions, it is important to be realistic as to what is achievable.

My position as an 'outsider' could, at times, be considered a somewhat limitation. Staying in Christchurch for the six-month fieldwork period was the only time that I spent visiting the area. I had no prior familiarity with Christchurch or the country. In addition, prior to my stay in Christchurch I had not experienced a disaster and, therefore, I had very limited personal experience of a disaster of any kind. Throughout my time in Christchurch, it became apparent that those who were a part of the earthquake experience had deep contextual knowledge of the impacts of the disaster and had extremely nuanced understandings of the everyday social and political impacts of the ongoing earthquakes. Whilst I was never ignorant to these circumstances, it did result in me feeling 'on the back foot' and this impacted my confidence with regard to being able to fully appreciate the complexities of the situation. However, amongst this uncertainty, I had to remind myself that being an 'outsider' can have its values. For example, I was able to interrogate things and conversations with no prior assumptions and identify moments and elements which might have been taken for granted by others who were more familiar with the study area. Further research could, nevertheless, explore the insider/outsider dynamics in a post-disaster setting in more detail.

The nature of doing post-disaster research caused me to critically reflect on how social researchers can best engage with the dynamics of researching disaster and post-disaster. Since departing Christchurch, the earthquakes have continued along with other notable disaster related events. While the impact of these events have been considerably less that than the February 2011 quake, they are nevertheless continuing to shape ongoing experiences of recovery. These events include: the 2016 7.8 Kaikoura earthquake which occurred 180km north of Christchurch and triggered a tsunami risk for regions in and around Christchurch, the 2017 Port Hills fires which destroyed nine houses and caused hundreds of people to be evacuated, and the 2018 flooding in the wake of Cyclone Gita. These

events highlight the dynamic and ongoing nature of disasters and recovery. The findings from this thesis research teased out the nuances in the temporal experiences of disaster and how, through the ongoing re-negotiation of the disaster impacts, disaster experiences can be emotional, affective and embodied. The findings from this research can therefore helpfully inform how we best understand the range of disasters affecting our society and how we can consider them in relation to temporal and multiple dimensions. Future research could perhaps take forward these themes and consider them in relation on other forms of crises such as technological disasters, refugee crises and international political tensions. Additional geographical concepts could also be added to such discussions such as the concepts of proximity and distance as these would help explore what it means to be embedded in the crises and how can we best understand ongoing disasters 'at a distance'.

In concluding this thesis, my final argument is that it is important to consider the emotional, affective, and embodied experiences of post-disaster recovery. This approach enables research and understanding to shift away from modular and hegemonic narratives to consider the meaningful and personal experiences of how individuals manage and negotiate post-disaster recovery. The attention that this research has given to older people in particular was in response to gaps within existent Christchurch earthquake literature and disaster scholarship more broadly. However, the drive in exploring older people was also fuelled by a commitment to developing and challenging existing research concerning the geographies of ageing. I hope that, by focusing on older people as emotional, embodied, and experiencing individuals, geographies of ageing can embark on new and challenging directions of research.

Appendix A: Participant Information Sheet

University of Exeter Research

Understanding the gerontological experience of post-disaster recovery

Research by **Sarah Tupper**

Information Sheet

You are invited to participate in my research which concerns post-disaster experiences of those of older age. Before you agree to take part in the research it is important to understand what the research is about and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information and if you have any questions please ask me. I have also provided my contact details at the bottom of the page and details of my supervisor, should you wish to obtain further information about me or the research.

1. **What is the purpose of the research?**

Hello, my name is Sarah Tupper and I am a doctoral student studying human geography at the University of Exeter, UK. I am supervised by Professor Paul Cloke and Dr Jennifer Lea. This PhD is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and is supported by Age Concern Canterbury. In this project, I am interested to find out about older people's experience of the earthquakes and how living in Christchurch has changed. I am interested to hear your stories about what is important to you, what memories you have and what your thoughts are about the future.

2. What will the research involve?

If you would like to participant, you would be agreeing to take part in some informal interviews with me. The purpose of the interviews will be to find out about individual experiences of living in Christchurch post-earthquakes. The interviews will be very informal in nature (more like a conversation) where I will ask some general questions about yourself (I will also explain a bit about me as well!). Once we have found out a bit about each other, I will ask some questions about your earthquake experience and what day-to-day life is like in Christchurch. You can

discuss whatever you feel is important to you – there are no right or wrong answers. I have provided a general interview schedule below as a guideline.

The interviews will be recorded (with your permission) with a voice recorder. This is so I can listen back to the interview at a later date and so I am able to fully engage in our discussions without having to write a lot down!

You will be asked to sign a consent form if you do wish to participate. This consent form will make sure you have understood what is involved and that your information will be kept confidential. You are free to withdraw from the research at any time should you wish

3. **What will happen with the information?**

All information collected during the course of this research will be anonymous and kept confidential. Supervisors may request to see interview transcripts; however your personal details will be removed from the transcript so you will not be identifiable.

4. **What will happen to the research findings?**

The information collected in the interviews will be used in the PhD thesis; in conference presentations; and in any publications that emerge from the research. All information will be anonymous in these disseminations.

5. **What if I decide I no longer wish to have my interview used for the research?**

You are able to withdraw from the study at any time with no explanation. Should you wish to withdraw, all information you have provided will be destroyed.

6. **What if I am affected by discussions in the interview**

Discussing experiences relating to the earthquake and other events associated with it may be distressing. For this reason, I will provide you with information not just about the project but also about free support services available for people affected by the earthquake.

Contact details

Researcher

Sarah Tupper - Phone: xxxxxxxx Email – st***@exeter.ac.ul

Supervisor

Professor Paul Cloke – Phone: xxxxxxx Email: p.cloke@exeter.ac.uk

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Interview Schedule

Interviews can take place anywhere, at any time – what suits you best. Interviews will ideally be about an hour long but sometimes they can go over if we have lots to talk about or sometimes they are slighter shorter. The interview will generally be informally but it could follow the following structure:

- **Part 1: Tell me a bit about yourself…**
    - *E.g. Have you always lived in Christchurch, what are your strong memories of Christchurch, who do you live with, what do you do, what do you enjoy…*
- **Part 2: Tell me a bit about your Christchurch earthquake experiences…**

  4 September quake? 22 February quake? 13 June quake? 23 December quake?
    - *E.g. where were you, what were your thoughts, how did you respond, what was important to you, how did the community respond…*
- **Part 3: Tell me a bit about your day to day life now?**
    - *E.g. what is your day to day life like now, has it changed? If so, in what way? What have you learnt from the quake experience? What are your aspirations or concerns?*
- **Part 4: Tell me a bit about the future?**
    - *E.g. has your outlook in life changed, how do you think your future changed, what do you think about the future of Christchurch*

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Consent Form

Research project: Understanding post-disaster experiences for older people

1. I have read and understood the information sheet about the research project which examines the post-quake experience of living in Christchurch

2. I understand my participation is entirely voluntary and should I wish to withdraw from the study at any time there will be no consequences

3. I understand that anything I say will be kept anonymous and my identity will remain hidden in all aspects of the research

4. I have received a copy of the consent form and the accompanying information sheet

Recording of the interview:

I agree to interviewed for the research

I agree to be recorded using a voice tape for the research

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Contact Details:

Appendix B: Details of recorded research material

Details of recorded research material					
Research	Name	Location	Date	Type	
Interview	Mandy	Eldernet/met at café Mosaic	16.10.2014	Contextual/policy	F
Observation	Parklands BBQ	Burwood	19.10.2014	Everday	mixed
Interview	Emma - Christchurch City Council	Central City - bulding communiti	22.10.2014	Contextual/policy	F
Interview	Brenda/Age Concern	Age Concern - earthquake supp	24.10.2014	Contextual/policy	F
"go along interview"	Jamie/ Age Concern	N/A	30.10.2014	go along	M
Observation	Minibus tour	N/A		Everday	mixed
Interview	Natalie	St Albans	04.11.2014	Older people - narratives	F
Interview	Patricia	Papanui	05.11.2014	Older people - narratives	F
Interview	Kathleen	Rangiora	10.11.2014	Contextual/policy	F
Interview	Anne and Ken	Transcription/Text	11.10.2014	Older people - narratives	mixed
Interview	Liz	Sydneham	12.11.2014	Older people - narratives	F
Interview	Pauline	Sydneham	12.11.2014	Older people - narratives	
Interview	Veronica	Central City	18.11.2014	Contextual/policy	F
"go along interview"	Jamie/ Age Concern	n/a	06.11.2014	go along	M
"go along interview"	Jamie/ Age Concern	n/a	13.11.2014	go along	M
Interview	Ron	Sydneham	19.11.2014	Older people - narratives	M
Interview	Sally and Martin	Spreydon	26.03.2015	Older people - narratives	mixed
"go along interview"	Jamie/ Age Concern	n/a	20.11.2014	go along	mixed
Seminar/Obsv.	n/a	n/a	25.11.2014	Contextual	F
Interview	Rob	Spreydon	03.12.2014	Older people - narratives	M
Interview	Renee	Spreydon	28.02.2015	Older people - narratives	F
Interview	Joan	Spreydon	25.11.2014	Older people - narratives	F
Interview	Mary	Spreydon	29.02.2015	Older people - narratives	F
Interview	Lucy	Linwood	08.11.2014	Older people - narratives	F
Interview	Diane	Mairehau	09.11.2014	Older people - narratives	F
Interview	Linda	Bryndwr	10.12.2014	Older people - narratives	F
Interview	Doreen	Avonhead	31.01.2015	Older people - narratives	F
"go along interview"	Jamie/ Age Concern	n/a	19.01.2015	Older people - narratives	M
Interview	Susan	Spreydon	05.032.2015	Older people - narratives	F
Interview	Penny	Riccarton	10.02.2015	Older people - narratives	F
Interview	Margaret	New Brighton	10.03.2015	Older people - narratives	F
Interview	Jenny	Hoon Hay	11.03.2015	Older people - narratives	F
Interview	Suzie	Burwood	09.11.2014	Older people - narratives	F
Interview	Julie	Shirley	12.12.2014	Older people - narratives	F
Interview	Trevor	Spreydon	12.02.2015	Older people - narratives	M
Interview	Liz	Sydneham	03.02.2015	Older people - narratives	F
Interview	Judith	Papanui	17.02.2015	Older people - narratives	F
Interview	Grace	St Albans	19.02.2015	Older people - narratives	F
Interview	Daisy	Hornby	03.03.2015	Older people - narratives	F
Interview	Maureen and Pete	Burwood	26.02.2015	Older people - narratives	Mixed
Interview	Senior Chef	Princess Margaret Hospital	25.02.2015	contextual	F
Interview	Janet	Burwood	09.02.2015	Older people - narratives	F

Appendix C: Field diary notes from a bus journey

Friday the 16th of January: Host visit

9:00 AM

Driver: Marc

I arrive at the Age Concern office. It is quite quiet as it has not reached 9am. I make my way to Emily's desk and find no-one there. I take a seat. A few moments later she appears and tells me Marc will not be too long. There are two outings today: a café outing and a host visit outing. Emily is usually in charge of the café outings and David in charge of the host visiting outings but since David is slightly unwell; Emily has been managing both for two days.

The café driver turns up first and Emily explains to him that he will need to take a small car as the van is not working. It is going to be a tight squeeze but they all know each other well and it will be good fun, she laughs. She explains to him about Pam and how she is the only one with a stick but assures that she is more capable than she looks. She gardens on her knees a lot, Emily says. Wow she can do my garden sometime the driver responds, impressed. The atmosphere is generally quite light and relaxed.

The driver goes and Emily and I remain while the other Marc (who I am going out with today) turns up. I flick through some 'mini-bus document' leaflets absentmindedly and she explains she made them up for the induction event for drivers, hosts and volunteers. She said she borrowed information from the Accredited Visiting Service (AVS) information book. Take one, she says. And I do. We look through who is attended the outing today and I recognise the names. I have been on an outing with them before. I felt initially a little disappointed since none of the individuals seemed interested in having an interview with me and one later rejected me. But I didn't say this and I knew it would be fine. I mention in conversation how one of the ladies last time expressed concerns about the duration of the outing and often feels nervous about needing to visit the toilet. Emily seems slightly surprised that she hadn't thought about that. Since she attends groups in public spaces, the case of needing to go to the bathroom is never an awkward or embarrassing moment. We discuss how this is different going into someone else's home – the host house. She says this in an important point and perhaps at the beginning of each visit the hosts should point out where the bathroom is and that they are welcome to use it should they need to. She makes a note of this on a post-it and says she is going to mention that to David.

The driver arrives and says he has some issues to discuss. I am not entirely aware of the situation but something to do with payments (not relating to volunteering, I believe). He seems good natured about it but obviously wants to sort out the situation as urgently and Emily sends him off to the relevant person. The issue is then somewhat resolved and we introduce each other. He initially thought he had seen me before and that I had come on one of his buses in the past. I tell him, I don't think that is the case but give him the benefit of the doubt. Although I am certain we have never met before. He seems very friendly and

happy to have me on board so I relax a little. Being relaxed enables me to process information a little easier and pay attention to detail. Where should we go? He asks me. I tell him, I am not sure – he is the driver. Although I did mention that last time I was with this group we went to Sumner so perhaps they might like to do something a little different? Hmmm, he responds. Maybe we will go into the city centre to look at what's left, have a drive around there, he says. Then perhaps we can go and look at the oval being built. [Hagely oval being built for the cricket world cup]. I tell him that is a great idea. I always like going to the city centre as it often generates discussion. I tell him that I have booked tickets to the cricket world cup. We then all have a discussion about cricket and other sporting events which are happening in the area.

We get going just before 9:30. We are picking all the people up from the same place which is easier and also means that we have more time to drive. I know this is perhaps more practical on behalf on age concern but I do wonder whether this limits opportunity for people of that retirement village to meet others outside of that village. However, it may mean they get to know the people in the complex pretty well.

As we set off on the drive Marc asks me about my purpose. I explain to him that I am doing some research looking at older people's narratives of post-disaster recovery. He nods and smiles and seems to like the project idea. This sometimes generates mixed reactions. He begins to tell me about how he lived and worked in the city centre for 30 years and says he knew every inch of the area. Now, he says, he just doesn't recognise it. He says he gets frustrated with people saying, that will be it, we will not have another big one. He says, this is ridiculous and we shouldn't be saying things like that. He says older people are sitting in their homes, terrified about when it is next going to happen. He was angry with this prospect.

We drive into the complex and Marc notes how they are all waiting in the living room and stand up immediately as the van drives in. Once the van has stopped, we get out the car and start preparing the van for people to get in. This involves unloading the step and putting an additional step at the bottom. Two ladies who live together get in first. I watch how the more 'capable' one assists with the other, helping her get in and the moving away her walking frame to place in the reception before bounding in herself – denying any assistance from either Marc or myself. Next goes in Lindsay who Marc is familiar with through horse racing. They get on well have some general banter with one another. Lindsay hands me the money for the trip and we assist her in the van. Two other ladies follow suit before we assist the only gentleman in the van. Russell has difficulty and Marc assist him a great deal but uses encouraging words to help in and the general atmosphere is quite jovial. Russell sits alone in the front row. A couple of ladies have difficulty with their seatbelts so I ask if I could help them and they agree. I pass the seatbelts over their shoulder before they then continue to put it in themselves. Nel mutters to me that she never wears frocks and is quite uncomfortable in the van. I tell her she looks lovely and that she fortunately has the best seat in the van s she can stretch her legs out, so she should not need to worry.

Marc pokes his head in the van before shutting the door and tells everyone the agenda for the morning: a drive through the city centre to see what is there and off to the Hagley Oval. No one seems to respond although there is a slight murmur in the van. He asks if any of the ladies used to play cricket – no one seems to respond immediately but that someone says they used to play rounders. We begin to drive and Marc starts to talk. I am sitting in the front with him. This is not an ideal seat as you can't quite engage with the older people in the back but I get the impression Marc wants company in the front. And he is saying some interesting stuff. I begin to record his narratives. He is describing how the city is completely flattened and destructed. He makes frequent mention to the loss or the appearance of international hotels. I wonder why. I find out later his daughter works for an international hotel so perhaps that is why. We drive around in a few circles and have a look at what is there. I turn to look back in the van to see what people were saying/doing. Generally not much is said and they are all looking out of the window. We drive past an open space and Marc turns to the back and asks you ladies must remember what was here and they all recognise it as the old dance hall space. We drive around Hagley park to look the building of the cricket ground. We drive into the car park and we can see the construction work being done. I take some pictures.

We then begin to drive out towards the host house for tea. Marc continues to talk about various aspects and I continue to record and take notes. He discusses how his house was okay after the quakes since his house was built on rock. Yes he felt it shake he said but it had no damage. We drive through an area near his house.

We drive to the hostess house for tea. As we pull alongside the house, I notice an old man sitting in the porch of the house. He waves to the van. Marc parks in the drive way and get out of the van and start assisting people out of the car. Marc says that the van would be locked if the ladies would like to leave their handbags in the car. He also jokes that there are machine guns on the house that would fire if anyone attempted to take their belongings. All the ladies take their handbags anyway. We assist people out one by one. Most of the ladies make their way in independently (apart from the two ladies who live together who hold onto one another). One lady jokes her knees don't work anymore. I say who needs knees anyway and we both laugh. We assist Russell out who takes his time and Marc insist there is not rush. As Marc and Russell makes his way, the old man gets up join them (I presuming he is the husband of Doreen). They all have a joke about age and how Russell being 85 is practically a baby. Together the assist each other and walk in slowly. I hang back as not to ruin what looks to be a nice moment. The man (I soon find out he is called Luke) comes over to me and I introduce myself. S-A-R-A-H, he spells my name out. Yes, that is right, I tell him. I notice he smells of tobacco. Together we all walk into the house. The house is lovely and spacious. I notice some glass squares in the floor and realise that shows through to the level below. I feel a bit weird about this – almost as if I would fall through. I join the others in the kitchen/dining room. I notice two tables have been put together with food on them. A mixed assortment of chairs are arranged around them with plates laid out. I introduce myself to Doreen the host. I explain who I am and when she starts talking I notice she is speaking with a soft Scottish

accent. I recognise it as somewhere near Edinburgh and I tell her that is where I am from. She says she is from Queensfery and I smile, that is not too far from me. I ask if she needs any help but she gestures from me to sit down. I move to sit next to Russell as I realise he is sitting by himself. However, when she motions for her husband to sit down I realise that it is better if I move for ease of access. I move to the other end of the table and Luke follows and sits in the spare sit next to me instead of next to Russell. Russell is by himself again and I feel sad about this. Marc asks for coffee and tea orders. No one puts their hands up for coffee however Doreen says Luke will have one. I realise Luke is probably suffering from Dementia and has hearing loss. Everyone else has tea apart from the two ladies who live together where one has warm water and one has cold water. Russell has a black tea and takes his first. Doreen then goes round the table to ask how they take their tea and whether they like trim or blue milk in it. I think this is very generous of her offering a choice of milk but then she explains she likes blue milk in coffee and green milk in tea. We all laugh. We amicably pass around the food on the table. I feel a bit self conscious being offered food as I don't feel like I deserve any as I am just tagging along. But I don't say this. I offer cakes to the people around me.

I engage Nel in a conversation as she is sitting to the right of me. She is a very sweet lady and tells me she just had the most wonderful Christmas. The best Christmas in a long time she says. I tell her I am so pleased for her. I genuinely am as I worry that many older people are left isolated at that time of year. She said she spent it with her son where they went to church and then in the afternoon her daughter surprised her with a visit. She was most pleased. Her son and daughter both have grandchildren themselves and she realises this is quite a busy time for them. She has 7 great grandchildren ranging from the age of 21 to 2 and she says she can hardly remember their names let alone their birthdays. She likes spending time with her son and daughter and says another opportunity will come up when she turns 90 at the end of the month. I tell her congratulations. It is a little hard listening to Nel as Marc is speaking very loudly to Luke so he can hear.

The conversation runs smoothly talking about the following points:

- The location of the retirement village in which all the residents belongs
- Places in Scotland
- Technology: Doreen is pretty techy savvy. Says she uses "map my walk" on her iphone to monitor the distance she walks.
- The others say they can't use technology but they are very impressed with Doreen's ability

Nel talks to me about the toffee cream rolls she likes. She takes another and gives herself a mock slap on the wrist. I joke and say nobody noticed anything. I tell her I don't really like cream but it looks nice.

I notice Russell doesn't say anything the whole time. But he seems to be listening and nods his head in agreement when saying he can't use technology.

We start to pack up to leave. Some of us organise plates into piles. Nel goes over to Luke to shake his hand and says thank you. Luke seems a little startled but pleased. He says he hasn't done anything and is a bit useless. Nel smiles nicely and disagrees. She says him being there is an important thing. I have come to realise old people are very good at managing each other. They realise quickly people's ailments and natures and most usually respond in a very respectful way. He smiles. We all make our way out. Lindsay attempts to do a little thank you speech to the hostess however many people have left the room. I am listening and soon, so does the hostess. She thanks them for providing food and excellent company. She said they all had a really good time and she wishes them all the best for 2015. Doreen smiles and says thank you coming.

I ask Doreen how long she has been hosting for. She said this is her third time. She said she came across the opportunity at the age concern exbo event (this was held in October 2014 before I arrived in the country). She said she had received a lot of help since Luke had his stroke and she said this was her way of giving back just a little. I smiled and said that was very kind and she was very good at it.

I am the last to leave the room and as I do so I comment on those glass squares in the hallway. Doreen smiles and tells me to follow her. She takes me down some steps which is lit with a small light. It is quite dark and she takes me to a cellar. It is designed as a wine cellar. I am very impressed. She said they have only been living in this house since she was red zoned in the earthquakes. Marc soon comes down the stairs to see where I am. I joke that I have been kidnapped. She shows him the cellar and he is also impressed. She says her granddaughter counted all the wine holder spaces but she says she will never be able to fill them all. We joke that she can at least try. She points out some bottles of water standing on the floor and says, in case of an earthquake. As we move up the stairs, I tell her I am interested in talking to some people who have been relocated. Especially, older people. I ask if she would be interested in perhaps talking with me at some point and she said she would love to. I say I will ring her as I am able to get hold of her contact number. She tells me to wait and she goes to retrieve a business card of her details on it. I am extremely grateful and I say I will her contact her.

Drive home:

- Talk of earthquake being on a movie set (this has been mentioned a few times)
- **M.** Put the stool in the front – my legs are okay to be bashed against he says
- **M.** Calls me his assistant
- **M.** How he became a volunteer when life became quite difficult for him
- Says old people are wonderful and have wonderful stories. One time they drove past this airfield and a voice pipes up in the back: that is where I got my pilots licence. It was an 88 year old lady. Was quite incredible. **M** emotional

- Discussion about how young people are only now starting to appreciate older people as they realise that they themselves will become old one day as well.

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