Toward Exploring Sense of Place in the Context of the Military: A proposed Conceptual Model for Future Research

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Abstract

This article explores the concept of "sense of place" within a military environment, an approach that has received limited attention among scholars. While negative assumptions or connotations about the military environment are often held (i.e., dangerous, and stressful), this article aims to reach a common ground for the definition of what constitutes sense of place, including its features and its performance in the specific context of the military. To address this gap, the paper proposes a conceptual model of sense of place in the context of the military that consists of physical attribute, meaning, and the aspect of activity and socializing with respective sub-dimensions of landscape and housing type, identity, and socializing and active engagement. This suggested framework will advance the concept of well-being, which can be applied to stimulate new research to partially explain challenges and problems that may impact military members after leaving the military environment.

1.Introduction

The military environment consists of a large population of members around the world. For example, approximately 20 million people in the USA, belong to the military as active-duty personnel and Veterans (Allen, 2020). This wide group and their different experience in comparison to civilian life are the motivating reasons for this study. The military environment often appears to have a firm organizational structure full of uncertain missions, an uncomfortable working environment, and overcrowded dorms (barracks) without privacy. All these factors depict the military as a non-friendly environment for its users and their satisfaction.

Among these negative depictions, this article contributes to the idea of what the military environment builds and provides for those that exist within it. For this approach, the present inquiry, with the help of literature, reviews the sense of place and its components from rich and diverse perspectives. In tandem, by reviewing the outlook of the military environment, this inquiry establishes a model for exploring the relationship between sense of place and the military environment to reach a common ground for the definition of what constitutes sense of place, including its features and its performance.

2.Military Environment: A Brief Introduction

The military environment includes a wide diversity of genders, creeds, races, ethnicities, and sexual orientations. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the United States Armed Forces consists of 1.3 million active-duty personnel and 17.4 million Veterans in the Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, Navy, and Coast Guard branches with their subunits (Redmond et al., 2015). This large organization is like a symphonic orchestra with different sections, each playing its part, with different instruments and melody lines (subcultural aspects). However, every branch of the military cooperates in the same context and goal, to protect the entire nation from an external invasion and engage in domestic missions such as government disaster relief and control of civilian disturbance (Caforio, 2018).

Historically, the military's perspective was dominated by the friend/foe binary logic (Caforio, 2018). Now, with the diminishing of the East-West conflict, the development of technology, and people's changing mindsets about war, the number of active hostilities around the world has decreased. Still, the modern fuzzy logic of "friend/foe/non-foe" instead of the old binary logic of "friend/foe" brings more uncertainty and hides danger and risks (Caforio, 2018). Accordingly, preparation for these unexpected situations via socialization, structure, discipline, and constant training is the leading military focus (Cunha & Curran, 2013; Redmond et al., 2015).

The military shows itself via two faces, a 'cold' and a 'hot' side (Caforio, 2018; Soeters et al., 2006). The cold side, which includes exercising, practicing, and preparing for action, mostly resembles ordinary public organizations with a real bureaucracy, hierarchies, and strategic planning. The hot side includes real missions where responses follow what was built and trained on the cold side. The hot side conditions are full of friction, complexity, battles, unpredictable situations, and difficult living conditions such as poor air quality, uncomfortable sleeping situations, overcrowded and dirty environments, and no personal privacy (Caforio,2018; Cunha & Curran, 2013).

Although each branch of the military has its own culture and rules, to accommodate the needs of the hot and cold sides, the military has an integral culture that is relatively persistent and changes slowly (Caforio, 2018). The military culture includes strict values, norms, virtues, habits, beliefs, and regulations, as well as punishment and rewards. This culture is based on hierarchy, structure, conformity, and comradery, which provid clarity and direction (Cunha & Curran, 2013). Emphasizing the core values of the military is a foundational part of military culture. The key values are placing the mission above all else, not accepting defeat, not ever quitting, Stoicism (Controlling emotions, where the inability to control them may count as a sign of weakness.), and unit cohesion (contributing to and desiring the success of the mission and unit, never leaving a man behind) (Cunha & Curran, 2013). One aspect that shows unit cohesion in the military is ceremonial discipline, like marching and exercising together. Ceremonial discipline is more present in the military environment than in other organizations and shows another important aspect of military culture. This group-wise appearance and etiquette embody the cooperative efforts of the military personnel, helping them to pass through the moments of loss and pain more easily (Caforio, 2018).

However, in the military environment, typically, cultural orientation is more toward coercive bureaucracies, which include a rigid hierarchy of authority and regulations, rather than more flattened and egalitarian bureaucracies (Caforio, 2018). In the military, members are told exactly what to do, when to do it, and how to do it, and they comply (Romaniuk & Kidd, 2018). Caforio (2018) claims that anyone that cannot adapt or fit in should leave the military voluntarily or will be pushed away. Formalization of military courtesies by reinforcing disciplines and chains of command and their extensions are practiced in the everyday military culture to prepare its personnel for the unstandardized, unpredictable situations where any small wrong action or decision can cause a large negative consequence.

The unique blend of personal and professional aspects in the lifestyle of the military personnel within its hierarchical structure makes the military environment distinct from other organizations. Despite part-time jobs in the military environment, such as reservists who work based on the government's requests or outsourced workers, the military environment often is a 24-hour responsibility that extends to the life of military personnel. Most of the people in military organizations do not only work but also live together (Cunha & Curran, 2013). The military lifestyle mostly includes geographic mobility and deployment, separations along with hard training that make the personnel live in situations that isolate them from ordinary life, such as living on garrisons and bases, sailing on vessels, or during deployment on missions, anywhere in the world.

Being part of the military comes with the giving up certain freedoms and rights and following a new lifestyle that is characterized by high mobility, stressful and dangerous responsibilities, uncertainty, and risk of death.

However, it is unclear if this perception about hardship in the military is commonly shared among military service members. To better explore what, if any, bond exists between the military environment and its personnel, the sense of place concept will be applied to the military environment in the following section.

3. Place and Sense of Place:

The study of place has always has used different definitions and been explored through different approaches among philosophers, human geographers, phenomenologists, environmental psychologists, anthropologists, sociologists, and architects, among other interdisciplinary scholars. Some examples of these usages include:
[t]here is no place like home (attachment, identity), Barcelona is my kind of place (geographic locale, culture), she put him in his place (social hierarchy), an event took place (temporal), and he is in a bad place (psychological emotional distress). (Stern, 2017, p. 20)

Understanding a place requires looking at it as a combination of tangible and intangible qualities of the place. It can be a specific space where one stops, settles, experiences, and evokes feelings and emotions; or it can describe something more far-reaching than a physical surrounding (Scannell & Gifford, 2014). From the view of German philosopher Heidegger, place is beyond merely an existing or physical presence (Stern, 2017). As described by Frumkin (2003), the antecedent Latin term for place, "genius loci, referred not to a place itself but to the guardian divinity of that place. In modern, more secular times, the term connotes the atmosphere of a place, the quality of its environment" (p. 1451).

Hinging on this, in the 1980s and 1990s, environmental psychologists were drawn to a topic that stressed the interactions between the environment and feelings it evokes in people, calling it sense of place (Canter, 1997; Scannell & Gifford, 2014). In this concept, place refers to the environment that embraces all tangible and intangible qualities (from color and landscape to sensory perception and emotions), which are made meaningful through the presence of people within it (Hashemnezhade et al., 2013). Having a sense of place enables a person to recognize the differences and similarities betweeen places, and without it, all places look the same to us. This sense of place often shapes and grows with a person's experiences and conceptions about a certain place (Redmond et al., 2015).

Yi-Fu, an influential scholar of place and sense of the place, believed that a sense of place, besides a feeling a person has towards the place, is an experience and network of practices that shape interactions between a person and the place (Garity, 2014).

The concept of sense of place tries to explain why people feel a deep connection to their place; for instance,why, they feel homesick when they leave their hometown, or, why people do not abandon their locations in worsening conditions such as natural disasters, floods, and earthquakes (Scannell & Gifford, 2014). Furthermore, sense of place has an impact on well-being and life quality. Sense of place can create a sense of security, happiness, and emotional awareness for the individual (Ramadhani et al., 2018; Williams& Patterson, 2008). For example, a place that a person is tied to, like home, can offer stress relief after a long day of work and increase an individual's life satisfaction (Scannell & Gifford, 2014).

However, while places like churches with a strong sense of place can promote mental health and well-being, in places where the sense of place gets worse and the relationship between humans and place is inferior, the possibility of mental issues, such as depression symptoms, increases (Agyekum & Newbold, 2016). For example, research with Korean students who left their home country to study in the United States demonstrates their attachment to their home (place attachment); separation from that accompanies the experience of "placelessness[1]" and adversely impacts their mental health (depression) (Lee & Qin, 2011).

Accordingly, sense of place can serve as a concept that explains both the holistic relationship between an individual with their environment and the effect of separation from it. The following paragraphs will examine this concept in detail in the context of the military environment and its personnel.

4. Sense of Place in the Military

The military environment is a complex place with a firm organizational structure and culture, an often-uncomfortable working environment, and a likelihood of uncertainty and the possibility of dangerous happenings. Accordingly, the military may not appear to be a pleasant environment for its personnel. And it is not surprising that the majority of the research about the military and related topics is based on the negative impacts of the military environment on its personnel, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), combat-related stress, and the psychological toll of military service (Lipov et al., 2013; Tanielian, 2008).

However, studies show that while leaving the military and returning to civilian life is not often a relief for military personnel and it is also one of the most challenging transitions among Veterans and is associated with negative outcomes (Parker&Igielnik, 2019; Pietrzak et al., 2015). Whilst the military environment creates a bond among its personnel (Gariety,2017), the separation from this environment disturbs this relationship; by entering into the civilian environment, military personnel may experience a sense of placelessness. For instance, the following quotations reflect military personnel's feelings about leaving the military environment:
"-It's really hard to put in words, but I just miss the environment. I miss the common goals" (Romaniuk & Kidd, 2018, p.69).
- "I was busy, I was in a demanding professional role, as well as I felt isolated and alone as if my identity had somehow dissipated into the air" (Wilson, 2019, p.1).
- "There is no stronger and better friendship than the one made in the army" (Romaniuk & Kidd, 2018, p.67).
- "It just seemed foreign; disconnection was more profound, and things just didn't 'taste' or 'feel' the same. I missed my uniform, and I missed the feeling of identity and pride that it provided. I missed the honor of being part of something uniquely special." (Wilson, 2019, pp.2-3).

Sometimes, even the sense of place within the military can extend beyond the military and its dependents. A longitudinal study by Thanner and Segal (2008) about the presence of a sense of place among the residents of the local community of a later-ceased military operation in Maryland shows a good bond created between the military and the residents. This bond brought the feeling of safety, socialization, job opportunities, and business revenue during the operation of the military base. However, this bonding after the closing of the military operation in 1998 was disturbed and negatively affected the community. Consequently, the inhabitants who share their neighborhoods and spaces with the armed forces can also experience a sense of place associated with the military (Salcedo, 2014).

Despite these studies, the term 'sense of place' is still a new concept in the military field. Salcedo (2014), one of the few scholars in this area, describes a sense of place in military life events in urban spaces of a city in Colombia. He explains that a sense of place is an emotional connection to a place where a person currently lives, or has lived previously, and shared cultural expressions that connect a group of people to a historically inhabited territory.

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[1]Placelessness (Edward Relph, 1976, as cited by Hashemnezhad et al., 2013) when a person is faced with a new place, especially by force, without feeling of a connection to it. Often accompanied by sadness or even depression symptoms (Hashemnezhad et al., 2013).

For him, a reflection of a sense of place in military life comes from the rootedness of rules and values in the military, as well as how these rules and values appear in public spaces. For example, the physical presence of soldiers walking the streets with similarity in their dress in the urban and public spaces of that city, or the visibility of the military infrastructure in the urban spaces that bring security for that neighborhood, represent a sense of place in that city (Salcedo, 2014). This sense of place can work as a memory in the urban history of that area and serves to create images of a secure or violent space (Salcedo, 2014).

One mattering issue in explaining the military environment and sense of place is mobility. However, a study done in Sweden among frequent travelers and non-travelers showed that the sense of place for mobile people is the same as for settled ones, except the definition of the home has a larger scale, such as whole countries, for mobile people (cited by Shamai, 1991). Garity (2014) tried to explain a sense of place based on mobility in the context of the military. He conducted open-ended interviews with twenty military dependents, and concluded that frequent moving and not belonging to a specific geographic area does not change the persistence of the sense of place in the military. Frequent moving because of military missions is accompanied by the awareness of the place and is part of the relationship between the military environment and its personnel. Similarly, Mcanallen and Voigt (2019) tested this concept via both surveys and in-person interviews with 200 participants who were either military personnel, affiliated with the military, or civilians. The study found that mobility does not make any difference between military and civilian personnel in shaping their sense of place, confirming the previous findings.

The following section discusses how the current inquiry developed a model of sense of place in the context of the military.

5. Adapting a Sense of Place Model to the Military Environment

5.1. Sense of Place Models and Components

The sense of place is a broad and ambiguous concept that describes the all-inclusive relation between a person and a place. This wide spectrum has led researchers and scholars to define the sense of place concept to suit their specific study focus. For example, Steele (1981) classified sense of place in two subdomains of physical characteristics and cognitive factors (Figure 1a). This model is used by architects and urban designers for whom the physical aspect of a place constitutes a large portion of their research focus and a predominant emphasis in their study results (Hashemnezhad et al., 2013). In some research, the focus specifically is on the subconcepts of sense of place such as place attachment and place dependence. In the model adopted by Gokce and Chen in 2021, sense of place and its indicators are defined via the subconcepts of place attachment, which refers to the positive attachment of a person to a specific physical area (Figure 1b).

Other scholars try to categorize sense of place into several complementary factors (indicators) to explain and cover the relationship between a person and their place (Mcanallen& Voigt, 2019; Shamai, 1991). Among these, one of the widely accepted theoretical models is the model of David Canter, a pioneer of conceptual studies about sense of place. His model, which is used as a foundation in the present inquiry, expands sense of place into three comprehensive factors of form, meaning, and activities (Canter, 1977). These three components are involved in creating a sense of place and encompass all possible environmental interactions that happen between a person and his/her place (Ramadhani et al., 2018). The comprehensive nature and efficiency of the Canter model led other scholars to use the model as well as create modified versions of it for their studies (Figure 2).

In the Canter model, sense of place relates to three main categories: physical attributes form (physical attributes), meaning, and activity(activity and socializing), which are equally weighted among all possible environmental factors in the interaction between a human and place (Ramadhani et al., 2018). The form/physical attribute of a sense of place encompasses the visible and tangible sensory perceptions from the environment, such as landscape, location, light, color, and decoration. The category of meaning in Canter's sense of place theory is the perception of environmental factors which are not tangible and are associated with feelings and psychological aspects of the environment, such as feelings of security, empowerment, and happiness. Finally, the activity and socializing component of the sense of place is considered as a container for cultural, social, and individual relationships that shapes patterns of community activity, physical experiences, and daily routine within it (Hashemnezhad et al., 2013; Ramadhani et al., 2018; Stern, 2017).

5.2. Investigating the Model of Sense of Place in the Military

Sense of place in the military is more than a specific physical and geographical environment and flows throughout the military and its individual personnel. Mcanallen and Voigt (2019), in their study about the military and the existence of the sense of place in it, highlighted three important questions first posed by Cuba and Hummon (1993): "Who am I?" "Where am I?" and "Where do I belong?". These questions assisted Mcanallen and Voigt in exploring the sense of place in the military. Furthermore, as described previously, the sense of place model by Canter (1997) is classified into three factors: meaning, physical attribute, and the aspect of activity and socializing. In this inquiry, the Canter model was used as the base model to situate the three main questions: Who am I? Where Am I? Where do I belong? (Mcanallen &Voigt, 2019).

The following sections explore combining these three questions with the Canter model in the context of the military environment.

5.2.1. Category of Meaning: "Who Am I?"One of the primary contributors to the sense of place is place identity, which is shaped by specific circumstances and personal interpretations (Nanzer, 2004). Likewise, the military environment as a reflection of the individual gives military personnel a sense of being able to get things done and gives them a sense of distinctiveness in personal and collective ways (Altman & Low, 1992). This perception of self and formation of identity "Who am I?" with the place as a catalyst, puts this question into the category of meaning/perception in Canter's model.

A critical aspect of the military environment is identity shaping (Romaniuk & Kidd, 2018). Garity (2014) shows that the identity built in the military has a great role in shaping the sense of place in the military. The military is described as a competent, motivated, and efficient environment, amplifying the development of self-concept. The personal level identities in the military are formed through training and mission experience and are fortified by the military's structure and culture (Romaniuk & Kidd, 2018). Identity shaping starts from the first weeks of attending the military. In this training period called "warrior week," leaders deconstruct the civilian status of new recruits and give them a new identity. This process occurs by teaching new recruits the military norms, language, codes, and ways to control their emotions (Redmond et al., 2015; Soeters et al., 2006). Regarding collective identity, the military's hierarchical structure builds up a person's identity in the group. For example, the military ranking system indicates the authority and power of each military personnel (Redmond et al., 2015). This collective identity shapes the military individuals' sense of who they are, based on the similarities and distinctions among their community memberships in the military (Pickering & Lam, 2020).

Along with identity within the military environment, personnel's military identity can also be shaped outside of the military environment. Military personnel are often respected by society for their presence in the military and for choosing to sacrifice themselves under the tough conditions of the military to protect society (Salcedo, 2018). This military identity is highlighted by the identical uniforms that make military personnel highly visible, distinguish them from most other workers, and bring them prestige and a unique identity in society (Caforio, 2018; Salcedo, 2018; Soeters et al., 2006).

5.2.2. Category of "Physical Attribute": "Where Am I?"Based on the physical attribute of the sense of place model that encompasses the question of "where am I?" defining the specific location and its physical characteristics as perceived by its personnel is different for the military environment than the civilian environment. Although most civilian occupations have a single working environment whose characteristics are defined by a set of typical surrounding conditions (such as layout, air quality, noise level, ergonomics and design of the equipment, and lighting, etc.), it is not the case for the military and military personnel (Hiatt & Rash, n.d.). Regardless of which branch military personnel serve, the military environment is not limited to a specific location or geographic area. Garity (2014) believes that frequent moving due to various missions contributes to an increased sense of place awareness and shapes the bond between the military and its personnel.

Despite frequent moves, the military environment is defined with comprehensible codes which deliver a consistent, transparent message to its users within its surroundings. Just as the uniforms create a similarity among dressed bodies and visually code a relationship of continuity between individuals and the military environment, the military's physical environment, such as buildings, is consistent across most parts of the military. This approach stimulates continuity and a secure feeling for military personnel during different missions (Salcedo, 2018). While military buildings are generally built based on unique needs and operational purposes and follow specific layouts and designs, some common patterns and features are seen among them. These common patterns and features include: Security by applying a fence or restricted access (Baird, 2017); functionality based on operations and personnel needs rather than aesthetics and comfort; durability for potential threats such as harsh weather conditions or attacks; standardization in space layout to use resources efficiently (Fitzsimmons & Parker, 2015); using modular construction or partitions that can be reconfigured and bring flexibility to respond to any future needs; and integration with advanced technology from security to communication and energy (Chang et al., 2018; Huston, 2016).

One tangible example reflecting continuity and familiarity in the military is the living place, especially for those who live on a government installation such as a base or barracks (communal living). In the military, the living place maintains a similarity in structure, layout, and design arrangement. The living place also provides the feeling of security and amenity. For military members and their dependents, a living place means more than a specific dwelling location. The living place changes based on different missions but not to an entirely unknown environment because the same amenities, activities, and programs are provided in each move (Garity, 2014; Caforio, 2018). For example, gated military bases are like company towns with a sheriff, judge, banker, grocer, etc., trying to keep their uniformity to help the military and their family's adaptability after each move.

Streets have similar names, and neighborhoods are sectioned based on the household military rank (Caforio, 2018). The grocery stores and supercenters like Walmart, called commissary and post exchange, are located next to each other and in the neighborhood of the gasoline stations within the gated area of an army base (Garity, 2014). Everything that is needed for living is available in this gated area, from a bank, post office, hospital, and schools to libraries, parks, gymnasiums, and museums. Additionally, on-base childcare, low-cost and free entertainment, and some free house maintenance are provided inside the base. Despite these facilities, some military personnel decide to live outside the gated community (off base), which is more similar to civilian living conditions. This living option offers variations in amenities, housing styles, and sizes, with less uniform and regulation than gated military living.

No matter where military personnel live (on base or off base), familiarity and continuity are reflected inside the personnel's living area. The interior setting and objects greatly shape the physical aspect of the sense of place (Miller, 2001). The military's living area is designed based on its residents' tastes. The military personnel live there until the end of their mission and then move to another base. However, these military personnel and their dependents try to keep their house decoration constant in each move by keeping the same physical elements such as memorable photographs or symbols, trinkets, clothes, appliances, furniture, and interior decorations (Garity, 2014). Using the same arrangement and decoration of the interior and keeping some objects that have their own story, such as some antiques, in each movement of the house, helps the military family to feel that they are still in their previous house and brings them positive emotions (Garity, 2014).

Besides the buildings, nature and connection to nature are also considered as another physical aspect of the military environment. The military's interactions with nature include more than providing shelter or creating installations on its land. Nature provides the military with a platform for training, physical demonstrations with obstacles, and advantages through camouflage and protection (Salcedo, 2018). Connection to nature has a great effect on shaping a sense of place (Scannell & Gifford, 2014). The study of Krasny et al. (2010) demonstrated the positive effect of connection with nature on soldiers' resilience during service and their well-being after discharge, and according to a study conducted in Australia, the degradation of natural surroundings can harm the residents' attachment to their surroundings or sense of place. (Connor et al., 2004). Additionally, Ali andMckinlay (2019) examined the principle of biophilic design, which focuses on fostering a stronger connection with nature in the military establishment. This study showed that using natural scenery helps reduce stress, experience mental rejuvenation, and increase military personnel's cognitive function.

5.2.3. Category of "activity and socializing": "Where do I belong?" (Group Affiliation) In the sense of place theory, the place is a context of activities where an individual feels s/he fits in and belongs; it is a space where social interaction happens and creates a bond through shared experiences, similarities, support, closeness, and engagement (Mcanallen& Voigt, 2019; Scannell & Gifford, 2014). The socializing/ activity component of the sense of place embraces the question of "Where do I belong?"

The military culture reinforces this bonding by emphasizing unit cohesion and collectivism. Unlike civilian workplaces, which often focus on individualism and individual achievement, the military stresses that the unit's goals should always be ahead of one's personal goals (Cunha & Curran, 2013). Furthermore, the evidence shows that a robust social tie in a communal place enhances the place's attractiveness and decreases the attention of its personnel to the place's disadvantages (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). Despite the diversity among military personnel, the team-oriented culture of the military helps its members to build strong companionship and supportive space (Kidd & Romaniuk, 2018). Military traditions such as marching and exercising in the military environment have a big role in building a military relationship (Caforio,2018). In these cultural dynamics, in addition to the common activities related to the individuals' jobs, such as educating and training, these individuals wear the same attire, eat, drink, and do sports and games together. These cooperative efforts bring more connection and help them carry through the hard times that they face during their service in the military more easily. Similar activities and locales are also provided for military families, especially in the bases, to adapt faster during their deployment. Accordingly, **f**or some military personnel, the military environment is a big family with members who understand each other and belong. They believe they cannot find a similar relationship in the civilian world (Cunha & Curran, 2013; Kidd & Romaniuk, 2018).

Conclusions

Sense of place in this inquiry focuses on the bond between military personnel and the military environment. The present study tries to shed some light on the undiscovered potential of the military environment by descriptively analyzing the relationship between the military environment and sense of place, and examining the definition of the sense of place in the context of the military.

Sense of place is a complex and broad concept which is challenging to interpret in a specific context. The expressions of place, sense of place, and characteristics of sense of place among researchers of different disciplines (e.g., geologists, sociologists, environmental psychologists) are still blurred.

However, based on the available academic evidence and resources on the military domain, which was explained earlier, the presented model of a sense of place from Canter (1997; with dimensions of meaning, physical attributes, and socializing) was adopted and modified in this study. This revised model now includes three additional sub-dimensions: identity, landscape and housing type, and socializing and active engagement, to effectively capture the military environment.

The meaning category of the sense of place (Who am I?) translates to the "identity" that is shaped by the military. The physical attribute (where am I?) translates to the "landscape and housing type" of the military personnel, i.e., on a base, communal or individual housing, and connection with nature. Finally, the activity and socializing category (Where do I belong?) refers to being social and actively engaged in the military, this definition is brought into the model by the term "socializing and active engagement." (Figure 3).

Sense of place, which is beyond physical framing, forms based on how people interact with their environment and holds an important role in individual satisfaction and well-being (Ellis & Albrecht, 2017; Williams & Patterson, 2008). Although limited research exists on the sense of place in the military environment, this conceptual model can serve as a basis for a preliminary agenda for future research evaluating and implementing the factors of sense of place in the military context. By incorporating a sense of place in the military, scholars may find a different angle for understanding some mental illness factors among military personnel after separation from the military. Also, the defined conceptual model in this study can be further developed to answer the unmet needs of Veterans after leaving the military environment. For example, the extracted dimensions of the sense of place (landscape and housing type, identity, socializing and active engagement) can open opportunities for environmental psychologists and designers to examine the physical environment needs of Veterans more comprehensively and apply these dimensions to design and equip their civilian environment. In summary, this paper suggests a framework for relating the military environment with the sense of place concept as a basis for further investigation.

Figures:
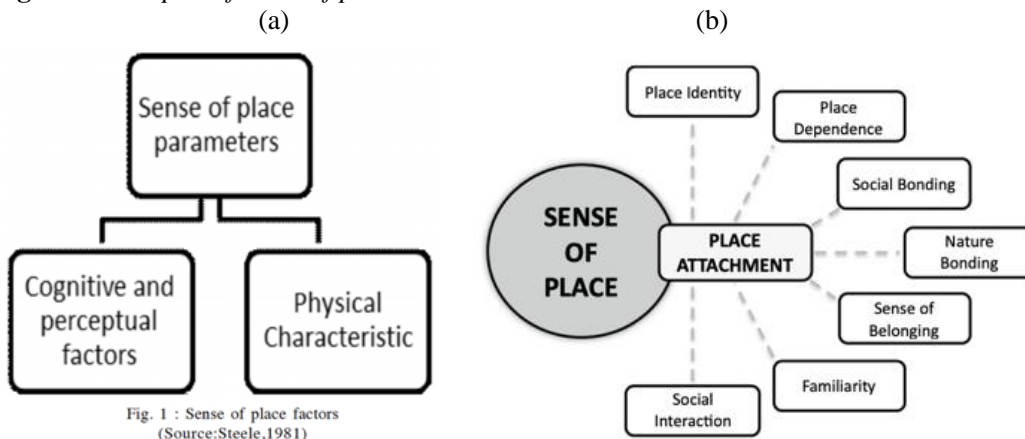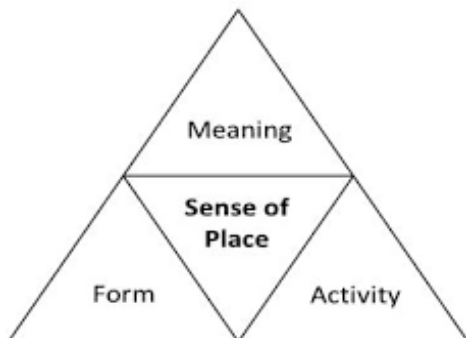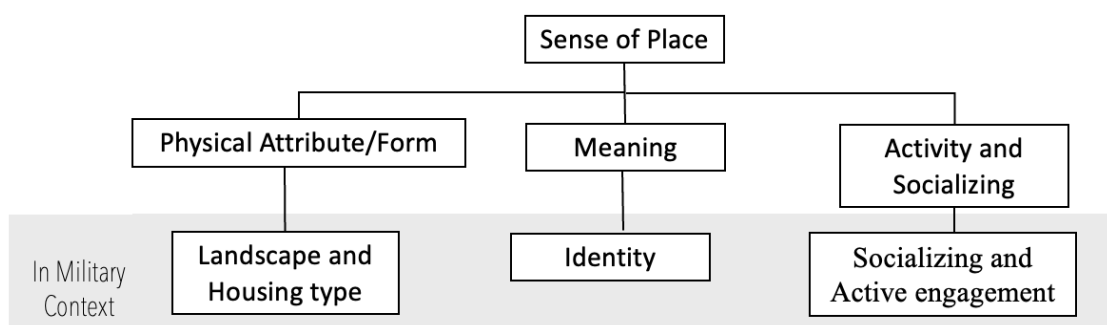
Figure 1 *Examples of sense of place models.*

Source: (a) Hashemnezhad, et al., 2013; (b) Gokce& Chen, 2021.

Figure 2 *Sense of Place Model originate from Canter (1997)*

Source: Ramadhani et al., 2018

Figure 3 *Conceptual Model of Sense of place in the Military Context.*

Source: Author

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