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**BEING COMFORTABLE: HAVING AND MAKING A COMFORTABLE
COGNITIVE AND ENVIRONMENTAL HABITAT: A GROUNDED THEORY
ON THE MEANING OF HOME**

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Abstract

Prior research on the meanings of home represents a rather fragmented set of studies. The present research utilises phenomenology and aims to create a grounded theory on the meanings of home which is explorative, participant-led and integrates the current state of home research. 15 participants singularly took part in semi-structured interviews, including myself as a participant-researcher. The interviews were audio taped but not transcribed. The interviews were then analysed qualitatively as per grounded theory methodology. Participant's interpretation of the word home was both construed as having a spatial definition, and varying along a continuum from home as a house to a more subjective definition of home. The core code that the data generated on the meanings of home was that home was primarily about being comfortable. The basic social process of making a comfortable habitat was the main axial code. While the idea of comfort held strong between participants there was much individuality as to what was comfortable and which particular strategies were employed to make home comfortable. The result was a grounded theory about person environment interactions in the field of home, a cognitive and a physical habitat. Implications of this theory are discussed in relation to current and future home research as well as suggestions for practical applications.

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