

A Transdisciplinary,  
Engaged,  
Phenomenological  
Investigation of  
Dwelling and  
Landscape Language



# A Transdisciplinary, Engaged, Phenomenological Investigation of Dwelling and Landscape Language

By

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## **PART 1**

### **INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK AND POST-PHD RESEARCH**

## FOREWORD

In everyday English language, ‘dwelling’ means the process of living in a explicit environment, which may be predominately natural or constructed<sup>1</sup>. This book concentrates on the former, whereas publications about phenomenology of built place tend to emphasize the latter<sup>2</sup>. A researcher (or just a friend) could ask someone to explain the nature of their mode of dwelling, the practical aspects of their environment and how they feel about dwelling in that place. Drawing pictures, showing photographs, or acting out some scenario might help, but mostly this requires language using words. This presents difficulties when the lifeworld and language of the dwelling person differ significantly from those of the person asking the question, such that understanding is restricted. Hence sophisticated ethnographic methods are required to research key aspects of dwelling, involving more listening and watching and less questioning. This book defines such research as ‘ethnophysiology’ and discusses how such a topic/question may be investigated using a comprehensive research methodology drawn from multiple traditions, including phenomenology.

The book is a capstone publication summarizing results of decades of collaborative research investigations by the author, at multiple institutions, and within, and between, numerous disciplines. This very long-term research activity sought to integrate traditional scientific and socio-cultural (humanistic) approaches, considering both cognitive and affective aspects. This research used single discipline, multi-disciplinary, inter-disciplinary and finally trans-disciplinary methodologies, across very many fields of study. It featured high-level theoretic discussions, complex methodological considerations and practical results and outcomes for research participants and their communities.

The focus was on integration of paradigms and maximum involvement of individuals and communities from as many different dwelling circumstances as possible. Other major considerations have been maintaining the highest

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<sup>1</sup> Oxford dictionary definition of dwelling (verb): “to live somewhere”.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. Seamon, D. (2018) *Life Takes Place: Phenomenology, Lifeworlds, and Place Making*. Routledge.

level of ethics and detailed and thorough reporting of research practices and results to the widest possible audience, across many disciplines. This reporting has involved oral and PowerPoint presentations, conference papers, journal articles, book chapters, books, and PhD dissertations. The author has produced more than one hundred publications.

This book seeks to inform (and hopefully also entertain) both academic and non-academic readers, involved in a wide variety of activities: research; teaching; communications; media; information and communications technologies; and other real-world everyday undertakings. The book summarizes the author's second PhD (Murdoch University, 2020) regarding a phenomenological investigation of dwelling, using a transdisciplinary, case study and literature review methodology. It proved that phenomenology can be used as an over-arching transdisciplinary paradigm for studies of dwelling. This was achieved via investigation of cognitive and affective concepts regarding landscape as place, and how these are organized as ontologies and represented in landscape language.

Although a large proportion of this book is based on the PhD dissertation, it is not so constrained in terms of its purpose and form. The dissertation described the PhD investigation in a manner required to prove that it was sufficiently extensive, in terms of research effort and outputs, and adequately the work of this author, within the PhD regulations, while essentially a collaborative project. The PhD investigation also must have been carried out with sufficient rigor and reported in understandable detail. The dissertation served that purpose. It was examined and the PhD awarded late in 2020. This book has a somewhat different objective and so the dissertation text has been adjusted in ways that suit this book. It also responds to detailed advice provided by Professors Bruce Janz and Nick Enfield.

The PhD research involved detailed interdisciplinary, collaborative case studies of two Aboriginal languages (*Yindjibarndi* and *Manyjilyjarra*) in the north of Western Australia, the latter involving people living in a remote desert environment. Each case study involved input from a linguist and resulted in a pictorial landscape language dictionary. The twin objectives were to demonstrate a detailed methodology for understanding of some non-European languages, in the context of landscape, and to highlight the depth of knowledge embedded in Australian Indigenous nations.

As well as summarizing this author's very detailed (second) PhD dissertation, the book includes three new chapters describing key aspects of research since 2020. Chapter 1 introduces the contents of the book. Chapter 2 focusses on links to Australian Aboriginal culture, as a means of identifying language, psychological and phenomenological aspects related to dwelling by all peoples, everywhere. Recent research has focused on the impact of Aboriginal law and lore (called (*T*)*Jukurrpa* in some languages) and how this equates to Heidegger's notion of 'topology' (Turk, 2021). The intention is to assist non-Indigenous people to understand the very deep nature of Aboriginal dwelling. As Indigenous (First Nations) people they say they are the land (Muecke, 2005a; b). This is of critical importance for management of important day-to-day issues for Aboriginal people, such as caring for areas of land where they have traditional responsibilities (their 'country') and conducting ceremonies at sacred sites. Their nature of dwelling also includes the incidence of social problems resulting from colonization, which frequently fractured the link with their land.

Brierty and Muecke (2024) explain the relationships between landscape and law (topology) involved in Australian Aboriginal 'Dreaming', which refers to: "a time before time in which ancestral spirits gave form to a formless world by bringing Country into living motion as a body of relations. That body, those bodies, of Country are made of places, peoples, animals, plants, matter, and energies, and they are bound together through Law (e.g. *Jukurrpa*), which keeps everything moving" (p. 4). They suggest that non-Indigenous Australians have similar stories which sustain their form of society. For instance, regarding Englishman Captain James Cook and his supposed 'discovery' of the East coast of Australia in April 1770. This is part of 'colonial dreaming', which formed the basis for imposition of British law and land claims by colonists, which is still active today within non-Indigenous people's notions of Australian landscape as place, regulated by updated versions of British property law.

This power of 'whitefella dreaming' is despite the "dominance of positivism in whitefella culture (which) means (that) it is busy pretending it does not have vast metaphoric resources" (Brierty and Muecke, 2024, p. 5). The set of 'whitefella dreaming' notions, operating within a "cult of forgetfulness" (Stanner)<sup>3</sup> (p. 9), ensure the on-going power and consequences of Captain Cook's proclamation of British possession. Brierty and Muecke (2024)

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<sup>3</sup> Stanner, W. E. H. (2010) The Boyer Lecture: After the Dreaming, In: *The Dreaming and Other Essays*, p. 138.

suggest that this power is reinforced via its connection to the much older, more extensive, and powerful mythological legal notion of *terra nullius* (land belonging to no one): “The dreams awoken by Cook must have carried within them the dreams of colonization that were to follow. And within that, they must have carried the dreams of today” (p. 11). It is impossible to understand Australian Indigenous current sense of place for their ‘country’, without factoring-in the often-catastrophic consequences of this colonial ‘whitefella dreaming’. The challenge is for non-Indigenous Australians to finally understand, critique and respond to their ‘dreaming’. This gives a new meaning to the famous line from the 1997 Australian TV comedy *The Castle*: “tell him he’s dreaming”.

In this book, Australian Indigenous notions of place, like meanings of ‘country’ are discussed because they show clear instances of phenomenological concepts like ‘topology’. However, versions of such concepts also apply to non-Indigenous Australians and to peoples everywhere.

Chapter 3 details recent developments in phenomenology theory and practice. It discusses Engaged Phenomenology, an innovative extension of phenomenology’s family of approaches, detailing ways it can be utilised in social science investigations. Hence, this chapter will be of interest to philosophers wishing to understand the application of phenomenology in a situated and engaged manner. It also discusses the relationship between phenomenology and linguistics, using examples from the ethnophysiology case studies. Chapters 2 and 3 cite key recent publications.

The remainder of the book is a somewhat reduced version of the Turk (2020) PhD dissertation. Chapters 4 to 12, provide most of the content of dissertation Chapters 1 to 9, with editing to reduce repetition. Chapter 13 is a reduced version of the 16 PhD dissertation appendices, with sufficient detail to indicate the nature and purpose of each appendix. Readers who wish to see the full details are advised that they can download the full PhD dissertation from the Library of Murdoch University (Western Australia), at no cost.

This book will be useful for those wishing to apply strong interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary methodologies to integrate qualitative and quantitative approaches to social science research. This will facilitate improvements in collaborative research practice. This book is especially valuable for researchers interested in ‘place’, as it includes about one thousand two

hundred references, from many relevant disciplines, which, together with an index to key terms, completes the book.

The contents of this book are summarized by the five Ethnophysiography Investigation Models (A, B, C, D, E) below. Aspects of *Topographic Environment* (Model A) are combined with the characteristics of *People in Place* (B) to produce *Landscape as Place* (C). Investigation of various methods of *Communication and Representation of Landscape* (D) is accomplished by using a suitable (bespoke) contingent, transdisciplinary methodology, using Phenomenology as the meta-paradigm (PTM-ECS). Case study results can be recorded and compared using the Ethnophysiography Descriptive Model (EDM) developed during the *Investigation of Ethnophysiography (Landscape Language)* (E) in this book.

## **Ethnophysiography Investigation Models (A, B, C, D, E) - Factors/dimensions, with example classification options**

### ***EIM-A Topographic Environment [Ecology; Ecosystem; Ecotopes]:***

- Latitude (polar; mid; tropical)
- Climate (extreme; mild)
- Continental Location (island; coastal; inland)
- Terrain (hill; valley; cliff; waterway; swamp; plain)
- Affordance (positive; negative)
- Flora (forest; shrubs; grassland; crop; desert)
- Fauna (native; introduced; livestock)
- Ecotope (area with predominance of particular flora, fauna, terrain, etc.)
- Built Environment (industrial/mining; settlement; town; city)
- Transport (trail; road; highway; railroad; boat)
- Category (wild; countryside; urban)

### ***EIM-B People in Place:***

- Population density (crowded; medium; sparse)
- Cultural Diversity (Indigenous; colonial; multi-national)
- Spirituality (traditional beliefs; organised religion; insignificant)
- Languages (single; multiple; numerous)
- Industrialisation (heavy; mid; sparse)
- Agriculture (natural; intensive; crops; stock animals)
- Socio-Political Structure (tribal; democratic; communist)



***EIM-C Landscape as Place [A + B]:***

- Atmosphere (calm; welcoming; forbidding)
- Scenery (beautiful; stark; sinister)
- ‘Lifeworld’ (hunter/gatherer; agricultural; industrial; administrative)
- ‘Taskscape’ [locations of activities] (few; routine; varied; numerous; boundary/horizon)
- Topo/socio/cultural Mode of Dwelling [TSC-MOD] (traditional; modern; integrated/multicultural)
- Heideggerian topology (holistic; required; informal)
- Songlines (linking cultural/spiritual sites and narratives)

***EIM-D Communication/Representation of Landscape:***

- Cognitive (concept; category; model; ontology; commensurability)
- Images (drawing; diagram; animation; painting; photography; video; multimedia)
- Maps (sketch; topographic; network; thematic/choropleth)
- Text (notes; narrative; story; novel; play; poem; vignette; biography; dictionary)
- Speech (talk; monologue; conversation; discussion; performance; ceremony)
- Language Type (Indigenous; colonial; international)
- Toponyms [Placenames] (Indigenous; colonial; linked)
- Gesture (individual; interactive; group performance)
- Affect (feelings of comfort; emotion; nostalgia; exclamation)
- Sense of Place (topophilia; home-land; alien-land; taboo)

***EIM-E Investigation of Ethnophysiography (Landscape Language):***

- Ethnography (observation; interview; thin data; rich/thick data; text; audio; video)
- Restrictions of use (none; open; restricted closed)
- Case Study (single language/community; multiple languages/communities; sequence)
- Geographic Information System (GIS) (text; images; animations; multimedia)
- Experiment (quantitative; qualitative; mixed; social sciences; physical sciences)
- Data Structure (ETIC; EMIC)
- Ethics (approvals; contract; monitoring)
- Phenomenology (lifeworld; individual and communalized intentionality; authenticity; care)
- Hermeneutic Analysis Procedures (potentially multiple phases)
- Ethnophysiography collaborative study (relationships with non-urban landscapes of all types)

- Urban Landscape Language Study (relationships with buildings; groups of structures; mining sites; factories; roads; railways; bridges; etc.)
- Ethnophysiography Descriptive Model (EDM) [Andrew Turk - PhD and book] (for recording details of case studies and comparing results between case studies)
- Contingent, Phenomenology-based Transdisciplinary Methodology for Ethnophysiography Case Studies (PTM-ECS) [Andrew Turk - PhD and book] (holistic methodology using qualitative and quantitative methods synergistically)

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- Carmelita Topaha and other *Navajo (Diné)* participants.
- *Juluwarlu* and *Yindjibarndi* elders and other participants.
- *Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa* and *Manyjilyjarra* elders and other participants.

Various researchers have provided valuable input to the author's research, during and after his PhD, including:

- Kathryn Trees
- Bruce Janz
- Nick Enfield
- William Mackaness
- Jessica Stanier

# ANDREW TURK - BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

*See Colour Insert*

Figure 0.1: Andrew Turk (1971) - surveying at Osprey Reef, Coral Sea

*See Colour Insert*

Figure 0.2: Andrew Turk (2022) - beside painting *Yimiri* [2019 Thelma Dundan (Ngarga Judson) *Manyilyjarra*]

Andrew Turk has degrees in Surveying [1971 – the University of Queensland], Applied Science (Cartography) [1980 - RMIT] and Arts (Psychology Honours and Philosophy major) [1992 – The University of Melbourne], a PhD [1992 – The University of Melbourne] and a second PhD [2020 - Murdoch University].

During his Surveying degree studies, Andrew was employed on cadastral (property boundary) surveying, mine surveying and topographic mapping projects during vacations. In the 1970s and early-1980s he worked for the Australian Government Division of National Mapping (Natmap) producing topographic maps, involving surveying fieldwork in remote areas. This included surveying of mountain ranges hundreds of km south of Mawson in Antarctica, in the summer of 1973/4. Andrew completed a vast number of astronomical observations to position survey marks and was lucky to survive a helicopter crash at Burke Ridge in January 1974.

Andrew commenced his research activities, from 1970 to 1983 at Natmap (Melbourne office), via a formal employment role (in addition to his usual surveying and map production activities) and development of a set of research procedures and documentation. This research was to facilitate his map production efforts, especially via adaption of new technologies. It included evaluation of new techniques in terms of the 1:100,000 topographic map specifications and the potential use of mapping data in innovative ways. His research topics included: establishment of mean low (and high) water lines via infra-red aerial photography (with field verification of method); photo-mapping (using photographs from 42,000 feet altitude); digital mapping via digitization at stereo-plotter (example digital 1:100,000 topographical map produced – first in Australia); use of

successive generations of satellite photos and imagery to augment conventional aerial photography (including practical accuracy tests); early geographic information systems GIS applications; etc.. During his time with Natmap, he also completed a B. Applied Science (Cartography) at RMIT.

In 1983 Andrew left the mapping department and commenced teaching and research at The University of Melbourne regarding GIS and design and production of tactual (raised-line and low-vision) maps and other graphics for blind and partially sighted persons. He completed this project in 1987 and, while continuing with his teaching and research activities, he commenced his BA studies, which he completed in 1992. Andrew also carried out research on human factors aspects of GIS for his PhD, which he completed in 1992, titled: *GIS cogency: Cognitive ergonomics in geographic information systems*.

From his student days in the late-1960s, Andrew was a member of the Institution of Surveyors Australia, and later, also a member of the Institute of Cartographers. He was very active in both organizations, rising to President of the Victoria Branch, a member of Federal Council and a Fellow of each organization, simultaneously. He sought to harmonies programs between these organizations, especially in the context of development of GIS and the rise of computer science as a new discipline. At this time there was also a huge increase in managerialism and commercialization of previous government departments. Each of these developments challenged the role of surveyors and cartographers in their efforts to ethically drive innovation and public service in their disciplines (professions).

From 1993 Andrew worked at Murdoch University, Western Australia, teaching human factors aspects of Information Systems to undergraduate students and supervising postgraduate students. He carried out research and consultancy projects specializing in design and usability evaluation of user interfaces and websites, ethnographic and socio-technical methodologies for developing information systems, GIS, human factors aspects of interactive television, and cultural and ethical aspects of Information and Communications Technology.

From 1993 Andrew also worked on Native Title, community development and cultural information and media research projects with Aboriginal communities in the West Pilbara and the Ngaanyatjarra Lands areas of Western Australia. From 2000 his research has concentrated on ethnophysiology (cultural / linguistic aspects of conceptions of

landscape), including an ethnophysiography case study with Yindjibarndi people (Pilbara, WA), with US geographer David Mark, resulting in publication in 2008 of the *Illustrated Dictionary of Yindjibarndi Landscape Terms*. He was also involved for several years in another ethnophysiography case study with *Navajo (Diné)* native Americans (led by David Mark, with assistance from Carmelita Topaha and others from the Navajo Nation).

Due to ill health, Andrew retired from teaching in 2007 but continued for a couple of years with PhD supervision. He continues to conduct research and consulting activities as an Adjunct Associate Professor at Murdoch University.

From 2007 to 2020 Andrew carried out research for a second PhD regarding philosophical approaches to concepts of place, part-time because of consulting activities with various WA Aboriginal communities and with some breaks due to illness. From November 2010 to July 2011 Andrew worked for the Western Desert Lands Aboriginal Corporation on an education project with the Martu people, assisting them to make an informed decision regarding the proposed uranium mine at Kintyre. In 2012 and 2013 he worked with the *Martu* cultural and land management organization *Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa* helping to deliver cultural awareness courses to mining company personnel and others for one week per month. He has also completed several other consultancy projects with Indigenous organizations in the Pilbara and Kimberley regions of Western Australia.

Andrew carried out a five-year landscape language (Ethnophysiography) case study with Manyjilyjarra (Martu people in the WA Western Desert), in collaboration with linguist Clair Hill and the Martu cultural preservation and land management organization *Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa*. This resulted in publication in 2016 of the *Manyjilyjarra - English Pictorial Dictionary of Landscape Terms*. He continued with other consultancy and research activities, including a four-year Rotary funded project developing and evaluating pilot curriculum materials for Perth secondary students regarding Wadjak Noongar history, culture, and issues, which was completed in 2015.

Andrew completed his second PhD research dissertation *Understanding Modes of Dwelling: A Transdisciplinary Approach to Phenomenology of Landscape* in 2020 and the doctorate was awarded. The dissertation

proposes that a form of phenomenology is appropriate as a transdisciplinary paradigm for landscape language (ethnophysiology) research.

In August/September 2022 Dr. Turk completed a seven-week research trip in Europe. The highlights were:

- Discussions with Tone Saevi - Phenomenologist (Norway).
- Engaged Phenomenology II Conference: Explorations of Embodiment, Emotions and Sociality. Andrew Turk paper: “Transdisciplinary Landscape Language Research with Engaged Phenomenology as Meta-Paradigm”.
- 6th International Symposium on Phenomenological Research in Education: Realities - Humbolt University.
- Presentation at University of Edinburgh: “Transdisciplinary Landscape Language Case Studies, Using Phenomenology as Meta-Paradigm”. Discussions with William Mackaness (Professor of Geography, Uni of Edinburgh).

In 2023 and 2024 Andrew was involved in various face-to-face and online workshops, seminars and reading groups with different inter-disciplinary clusters. He was also working on preparation of this book.

Since 1978 Andrew has continuously published books, book chapters, journal articles, conference papers and research reports (totalling more than 100 items). Since this manuscript was submitted in May (and revised in August) 2024, Andrew has continued working on academic publications and plans for on-line and conference presentations, as well as poems, short stories, memoir, and plays.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

AFOR	Absolute spatial frames of reference
AT	Name given (for cultural reasons) to Andrew Turk by Aboriginal communities
AURA	Aarhus University Research on the Anthropocene
CA	Conversational Analysis (technique used in ethnomethodology)
CIRET	Centre International de Recherches et E'tudes Transdisciplinaires
DPPM	Descriptive Phenomenological Psychological Method
EDM	Ethnophysiology Descriptive Model
EM	Ethnomethodology
EP	Engaged Phenomenology
ESF	European Science Foundation
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
IEK	Indigenous Ecological Knowledge
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
KJ	<i>Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa</i> (Martu cultural and land management organization)
LACOLA	Language, cognition and landscape: understanding cross- cultural and individual variation in geographical ontology research group (Research project: Lund University, Sweden)
LGBTIQ	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and questioning (gender)
MPI	Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics (Nijmegen, Netherlands)
Natmap	Division of National Mapping, Australian Government
NSF	US National Science Foundation
PBL	Project-based Learning
PTM-ECS	Phenomenology-based Transdisciplinary Methodology for Ethnophysiology Case Studies
SCS-MOD	Socio Cultural Spiritual - Mode of Dwelling
SUNY	State University of New York (USA)
TD	Transdisciplinary (ity)
TSCS-MOD	Tope Socio Cultural Spiritual - Mode of Dwelling

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK

### 1.1 Overview

This chapter provides a brief overview summary of the book, which includes two other recent contributions (Chapters 2 and 3) and a detailed reduced version of the author's (second) PhD dissertation, titled: *Understanding Modes of Dwelling: A Transdisciplinary Approach to Phenomenology of Landscape* (Turk, 2020), in Part 2. That Part includes selected, edited sections from PhD dissertation Chapters 1 to 9 (renumbered as Chapters 4 to 12). Book Chapter 13 briefly summaries the extensive PhD dissertation Appendices 1 to 16. Provided in Part 3 is an index to key terms used in the book chapters and a very extensive list of references to about one thousand two hundred publications, from many disciplines.

Chapters (2 and 3) provide more detailed discussion of specific parts of recent investigation into modes of dwelling. The first concentrates on Indigenous aspects and the second on developments in phenomenology undertaken as part of the overall research investigations, which facilitate discussion of dwelling for different types of people and landscape. These chapters include discussion of some recent relevant publications by other authors. The remainder of this chapter will concentrate on an introduction to the PhD investigation, discussed in book Chapters (4 to 13), with a more detailed summary provided in Chapter 4.

The transdisciplinary PhD addressed the research question: *Can some form of phenomenology provide an effective over-arching paradigm for transdisciplinary research in ethnophysiology?* The overall question was broken down into eleven detailed questions (see Chapter 4, Section 4.2). Ethnophysiology (Section 1.2 and Mark and Turk, 2003a; 2016) studies the way people within a language community conceptualise natural landscape, including terms for landscape features and toponyms (placenames) (Blair and Tent, 2021; Kratochvil et al., 2016; Tent, 2020). Dwelling in place involves conceptualizations and affects regarding

physical, utilitarian, cultural, spiritual<sup>1</sup> and ethical relationships with landscape. Landscape terms reflect detailed ontologies of parts of the landscape, in terms of their relevance to everyday and special (e.g. ceremonial) activities, i.e. ‘taskscape’ (Ingold, 1993; Gruppuso, and Whitehouse, 2020).

It was not possible to define the research objectives in detail at the beginning of such a project. A phenomenological approach to problem-solving is not deterministic, rather, it must be emergent, with observations from initial investigations informing future methods and re-analysis of past data. This does not mean that the research can in any way be disorganized; indeed, there is a greater need for a comprehensive, contingent, many-faceted, and detailed methodology, continuously refined during the investigation. Good research is not just about achieving useful and valid results; it is also about learning. The research methodology must include effective evaluation of the research itself and produce detailed recommendations regarding how to improve future research projects (see Chapters 12 and 13).

This research integrates different types of disciplines, some more scientific, but is not fundamentally quantitative in nature. However, it does involve a synergistic use of quantitative and qualitative phases. This approach is especially suited to interdisciplinary research into ‘messy’ or ‘wicked’ physical-socio-cultural situations, and especially so for transdisciplinary investigations. It is why phenomenology was chosen as the most suitable metaparadigm for this research, given that it provides methods at different levels of abstraction and involves various forms of data generation and analysis. As discussed in Chapters 2, 6, 7 and 12, this is in line with Edmund Husserl’s intention in developing phenomenology as a meta-science. Different published methods from phenomenology were used, as appropriate, and new methods were developed.

A phenomenographic method of data analysis was used for the rigorous examination of past publications, and new data from ethnographic interviews and discussions. This involved preparation of dozens of tables, that are provided in the main text and/or in the 16 appendices in the PhD dissertation (Chapter 13 in this book). This included a clear indication of the source (reference) for each concept or recommendation included in the tables. The detailed research approaches used in the PhD are a major

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<sup>1</sup> In this book it is considered most appropriate to separate ‘spiritual’ from other ‘cultural’ aspects of specific peoples, to provide more clarity and completeness of data, hermeneutic analysis and results.