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Lithuanian diaspora: An interview study on the preservation or loss of Pre-World War Two traditional culture among Lithuanian Catholic Émigrés in Western Australia and Siberia, in comparison with Lithuanians in their homeland

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CHAPTER 5

METHODOLOGY

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Introduction

The concern of this study is the challenge presented to Lithuanian immigrants in Western Australia and Siberia and Lithuanians in Lithuania in regard to their maintenance of the pre-WWII Lithuanian culture over a period of fifty years while living in foreign lands or under foreign occupation. The main focus of this historical, empirical investigation is on the preservation or loss of those core markers which had been identified by the researcher to be the *essence* of the pre-WWII Lithuanian culture, and which have shaped the generation of the Lithuanian participants in the study. Moreover, this study focuses on the extent to which such cultural changes have taken place within the three communities and to what degree the members of each of the three communities investigated are able to speculate on reasons for such changes.

The phenomenon of retention or loss was examined through the use of quantitative and qualitative research methodologies and three detailed descriptive accounts were written, one for each group investigated. These draw attention to the difficulties and challenges that the participants of each group have encountered in the effort to maintain, adapt or inevitably lose the key markers of their original culture in the existing situation.

Moreover, this comparative study has determined the extent to which cultural practices, values and beliefs have been maintained or lost and has established to what degree the participants in the study have distanced themselves from their original culture. This study has sought to discover, within its transcribed interview data, the *essence* of the process each Lithuanian group engaged in as they tried to maintain their pre-WWII Lithuanian culture and adapt to a new environment and circumstances.

This chapter describes, using the context of the present study, the methods employed for data collection, data analysis and the writing of the descriptive accounts which have allowed the researcher to draw a comparison, embracing the differences and similarities in the preservation or loss of the key markers of the pre-WWII Lithuanian culture,

between the three distinctive groups. Issues of confidentiality and anonymity are also described and respected since the participants in this study revealed private and often personal and controversial political opinions related to the phenomenon under scrutiny. Political sensitivity has been dealt with according to each individual case.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

This study set out not only to determine the extent to which cultural practices, values and beliefs have been maintained or lost within the participants in the study. In order to determine to what extent each of these three groups may have changed culturally and to what degree individuals were aware of such changes, four hypotheses have been formulated by the researcher. Which were offered to illustrate the range of possibilities.

Hypothesis 1

Each group has retained a substantial common core of pre-WWII Lithuanian beliefs, values and practices, which each group would acknowledge and accept as the essential core of being Lithuanian. However, these three groups will have also slowly adapted to their new, and possibly very different, environments, changing in various ways over the last fifty years. This hypothesis was also expressed by Senn (1998) as illustrated in Chapter 1.

Hypothesis 2

These three groups have changed to the extent that they have drifted completely away from their original *essence*. Each group is now quite different from the others and none of the groups has retained anything of the original culture that is authentically Lithuanian. This assumption underpinned the line of thinking of Van Den Dungen (1996) as explained in Chapter 1.

Hypothesis 3

Some common *essence* of their original culture has been retained by the Australian and Siberian Lithuanians, which is not shared by the Lithuanian home group. The common *essence* may include strong religious beliefs and the retention of the language. There is, however, no significant similarity of religion and language retention between, on the one hand, the Australian and Siberian Lithuanians, and on the other, the Lithuanian home group. This shift should also be evident in some aspects of the pre-war Lithuanian customs and traditions.

Hypothesis 4

Only the Lithuanian home group has retained at least some characteristics of the pre-war culture. The Siberian and Australian groups have drifted from their original culture to the point that they have not retained any of the *essence* of their original culture.

Research Strategy

In order to test and validate these hypotheses the researcher, through an in-depth study of the works of authoritative Lithuanian scholars of pre-war period presented in Chapter 1, as well as of the British Diplomat James Harrison and the British Historian and traveller Owen Rutter, has identified a select number of customs and traditions, values and beliefs which are the chief characteristics of the pre-war Lithuanian culture. Subsequently, the data was collated and summarised in a table of customs and traditions, values and beliefs as shown in Appendix 3.

I then proceeded to collect empirical data from the members still living in the three present-day Lithuanian, Siberian and Australian population groups in order to obtain their first-hand recollections. The interview data within each group has also been merged similarly in the same table to facilitate easy comparison across the three study groups.

Developing a Working Definition of Culture

In order to design an interview method which focuses on the key cultural features of the pre-war Lithuanian culture it was necessary to establish a working definition of culture and its components. Traditions, beliefs and values are, according to the American psychologist David Matsumoto, the key components of a culture. Matsumoto in his work *Culture and modern life* defines culture as “a set of attitudes, values, beliefs and behaviours shared by a group of people, communicated from one generation to the next via language or other means of communication” (Matsumoto, 1997, p. 31). There are “no hard and fast rules” of how to determine what a culture is or who belongs to that culture (Matsumoto, 1997, p. 13). Individual differences in culture, it may be argued, can be observed in the degree to which the individual adopts and engages in those phenomena that by consensus constitute the culture. Matsumoto claims that if an individual does not share any elements of that culture, then he or she is not part of it (Matsumoto, 1997, p. 13).

Traditions

The American psychologists Jocelyn Linnekin and Louis Poyer in their work *Cultural Identity and Ethnicity in the Pacific* define **traditions** as a “body of practice passed down from one generation to the next” (Linnekin and Poyer, 1990, p.152). Linnekin supports Matsumoto’s views on culture while emphasising that traditions are continually re-interpreted and experienced by people in the present and are not passed down unaltered from one generation to the next. Linnekin argues instead that “tradition is a selective representation of the past, fashioned in the present, responsive to contemporary priorities and agendas, and politically instrumental” (Linnekin, 1992, p. 251).

Beliefs

In respect of beliefs, the American sociologist and psychologist Milton Rokeach in his work *Beliefs, Attitudes and Values* defines **belief** as “any proposition, conscious or unconscious, inferred from what a person says or does, capable of being preceded by the phrase, I believe that ...” and asserts that all beliefs are predispositions to action. Rokeach argues that such ideas or opinions are taken into account when an individual, a group or a nation, chooses a line of action (Rokeach, 1970, pp. 112-113).

Values

Conceptions of **values** will differ, depending on the ideological positions of those defining them. To a religious person or even to a secular humanist who believes that some aspects of life are eternal or ‘essential’ or ‘natural’, a value will have an uncontested status. To others who see life as culturally and historically produced and so relative and changing across time and culture, values will likewise be culturally and historically relative. In his review of values, Rokeach cites a 1918 study by the psychologists Thomas and Florian Znaniecki which argues for values as “a psychological concept, a natural object that has in fact acquired social meaning and, consequently, is or may be an object of activity” (Znaniecki, in Rokeach, 1970, p. 124). He continues on to offer his own definitions of values:

A type of belief, centrally located within one’s total belief system, about how one ought or ought not to behave, or about some end-state or existence worth or not worth attaining. Values are thus abstract ideals, positive or negative, not tied to any specific attitude, object or situation, representing a person’s beliefs about ideal modes of conduct and ideal terminal goals. ... A person’s values, like all beliefs, may be consciously conceived or unconsciously held, and must be inferred from what a person says or does. A value system is a hierarchical organization - a rank ordering - of ideals or values in terms of importance (Rokeach, 1970, p. 124).

Such definitions, whether stressing the individual or the cultural group, identify values as a core sense-making and internalised set of responses to the conditions, choices and actions which confront both individuals and social groups. For instance the conscious and unconscious ‘value’ attached to the land, the inherited language and cultural and economic practices and modes of organisation in rural Lithuania are clearly evident, in the lifestyle of the ethnic Lithuanian as analysed in this study.

The working definition employed in the present study is expressed operationally in the table of Appendix 4.

The Characteristics of Pre-WWII Lithuanian Culture

The key markers of pre-war Lithuanian culture that I identified from the works of Lithuanian scholars have been presented in detail in Chapter 6 in order to allow a comparison of the findings of the three groups under scrutiny. The first column of the

composite table provides a convenient base-line description against which the three present-day samples have been compared.

Identifying, Selecting and Negotiating Access to Present-Day Interview Samples

The participants in the study consisted of cross-sections of the present-day Lithuanian diaspora communities in Western Australia, Siberia and Lithuanians living in their homeland, each selected on the basis of specific criteria related to share personal characteristics and experiences which the researcher believed were of significance to the principal research question, namely the maintenance or loss of the pre-war Lithuanian culture.

Individuals in the three study populations whose parents were both of Lithuanian origin were the priority interest for the researcher, on the assumption that an individual who had been raised by two Lithuanian-born parents would more likely have gained a broad knowledge of and exposure to the pre-war customs and traditions, than would one for whom only one of the parents was Lithuanian-born.

At the time of the study the selected participants ranged in age between 75 and 85 years, a span expected by the researcher to maximise the likelihood that they will have undergone similar life changes and experiences. A clear and dependable memory was also considered important to the success of the study in order that the participants' reported recollections of events and aspects of their lives pertinent to the study would be both valid and reliable.

Being married to a Lithuanian partner and having had children was a condition that the researcher considered valuable in terms of potential for maintenance of the culture. Family without children presumably would have less opportunity, and possibly less incentive, to pass on Lithuanian customs and traditions, values and beliefs.

Having had at least some formal education in Lithuania before the time of migration was considered to be another attribute which would likely have helped the participants to develop, early in their lives, a more extended understanding of Lithuanian culture in a

more formal environment than would be acquired through the home and the family alone.

It was also considered likely that through formal education the participants would have acquired most of the important aspects of their cultural heritage. Moreover, those with significant formal education would presumably be able to express abstract feelings and beliefs with greater facility and openness.

From the key Lithuanian literature sources consulted for the study, it was evident that although there were a number of religious denominations extant in Lithuania during the period of Independence (1919-1940), the Roman Catholic Church always played a predominant and fundamental role in the maintenance of the Lithuanian ethnic identity. The life of the rural Lithuanian population in particular has always been deeply intertwined with the Church. For this reason, those in the *émigré* populations who had maintained a continuing relationship to the Catholic Church after their emigration were of priority interest to the study.

The access to participants in Western Australia, Siberia and Lithuania was gained through various organisations in the relevant countries and the researcher's personal contacts.

Contacts with the Lithuanian-Australian participants, all of whom were living in Perth, Western Australia, were established through members of the local Lithuanian Club, members of the Perth congregation of the Lithuanian Catholic Church, and through the researcher's personal contacts with key members at the helm of these associations.

Contacts with the Lithuanian-Siberian participants in Krasnoyarsk, Siberia were organized through the Department of Ethnic Minority in Vilnius and Mr Rimvydas Račenas, a member of "The Former Deportees Organisation" in Vilnius.

The contacts with the Lithuanian participants in Lithuania were made through members of the Lithuanian community in Perth, the Lithuanian Catholic Chaplain in Perth and the researcher's personal contacts.

Confidentiality and Ethical Clearance

Each prospective participant was contacted by the researcher who described the nature of the study, guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity and outlined the interview procedure. Participants who agreed to take part in the study were advised that their participation was voluntary, so they could withdraw at any time. Explicit consent was required for each interview, tape recording of the interview and field note-taking. Each participant who agreed to take part in the study was requested to sign a consent form that indicated that the information sheet had been read and that the consent was given. See Appendix 5.

All interviews were conducted by the researcher working alone, without the use of translators or other mediators. Interviews of the members of the Australian sample were conducted either in English or in the participant's native Lithuanian (a language in which the researcher is personally fluent) depending on the participant's preference and retained as English transcriptions taken from the interview tapes or the researcher's interview notes. While some of the Australian respondents were comfortable being interviewed in English, the majority of the Australian sample found they could respond more readily and expansively in their native language. I conducted the interviews with Lithuanian and Siberian samples in Lithuanian language and subsequently I translated into English language transcripts for inclusion in the primary data records of the study.

Additionally, I maintained a daily field notebook for recording relevant contextual details and situational nuances concerning individual interviews, and also my own reflective observations and tentative emerging interpretations as the study progressed. All consent forms received with the tapes of each participant interview and field notes were kept in safe-keeping throughout the period of the research and will be retained in secure storage for five years beyond completion of the study.

As soon as an interview had been transcribed, the actual names of the participants were replaced in the transcript with codes to preserve anonymity, and contextual information that may potentially allow inference of the identity of the interviewee was either modified or deleted. At all times, access to the identifying personal data of the

participants was restricted to the researcher alone. The Human Research Ethics Committee of the Notre Dame University granted ethical clearance to the study.

Within the text of Chapter 6, where interviews have been used to substantiate scholars' data, and in Chapters 7, 8 and 9 where the written accounts are presented for the three *émigré* groups investigated, the assigned transcript codes for the participants have been replaced by first name pseudonyms in order to make the reading of the text more fluid for the reader. And, as noted above, because of the smallness of the Lithuanian communities in Western Australia and in Siberia, care was taken to exclude the possibility of situations being described in such a way as to make any participant recognisable to others through the context of the situation, thus further assuring anonymity.

Designing and Implementing the Interview Strategy

The data for this investigation was obtained through a combination of quantitative and qualitative data and methods of the kind advocated by Miles and Huberman (1984, 1994) for situations in which the purpose is to explore specific themes and develop arguments, rather than through more formalised and structured approaches used in approaches such as grounded theory development Corbin and Strauss (1997) and ethnography Spradley (1979).

The use of quantitative data was appropriate where my interest was in available census data which established the broad contour of migration, deportation, settlement or work pattern for Lithuanian immigrants in Australia and Siberia. Census statistics were useful sources of information about patterns in the life of Lithuanian *émigrés* and allowed the researcher to determine the configuration of the groups, their religious affiliations and educational levels in order to contextualize the qualitative elements of the research. For instance, it assisted the researcher to establish the ratio of males to females at the time of migration to Australia or deportation to Siberia, although these data alone did not provide insight into the inevitable stress and strain on relationships caused by separation. In order to explore the more complex aspects of this, the researcher relied principally on the use of in-depth, qualitative interview methods.

Although the study was not ethnography in the formal sense or in its purpose, the study used elements of the ethnographic interview technique formalised and described by Spradley (1979). Spradley is an internationally recognised ethnographer who has published original ethnographies from his own studies and also written extensively on ethnographic methodology, which he has developed and refined over many years. The open-ended interviews in the present study have incorporated Spradley's descriptive questions and contrast questions as appropriate. Of further value for the researcher was Spradley's technique for sequencing questions in the interview process. Spradley's sequencing technique, supplemented to some extent with the recommendations of Rubin and Rubin (1995) regarding the interview process, has been used as the principle logic underpinning the structure and assembly of the interview.

To develop the participants' accounts of how they have retained elements of their Lithuanian culture, the researcher enquired about the participants' present family life and cultural practices, and encouraged them to share their perceptions of which (if any) of their former practices have been carried forward and retained from their pre-WWII Lithuanian upbringing. Both the various practices and customs the participants believe have been preserved more or less intact, and those which have undergone substantial modification or adaptation over time and circumstance, have been considered. In addition, participants were invited to reflect on what had, in their perception, encouraged or facilitated the preservation or adaptation of any retained practices or, conversely, on what might have explained why other cultural practices of their original Lithuanian culture have been lost or discarded.

Some participants found these forms of reflective comparison difficult, especially if they were left to review their past essentially through the perspective of their current life experiences. In order to assist the participants in this regard, the researcher has attempted to 'take the participants back' in a psychological sense to situations and experiences of their childhood in pre-war Lithuania from which they had, and were prepared to reveal, personal vivid memories. See Appendix 6.

Through carefully chosen focus questioning, and structured prompting on the part of the researcher, the participants have been encouraged to describe concrete memories that were representative of real events, in real surroundings, with real people, and to share

what they believe was characteristically Lithuanian in those experiences and memories. The participants' memories of childhood experiences have been used as a recollected context against which the comparison between *'then'* and *'now'* could be drawn more readily. Having heard the recalled accounts, the researcher obtained a personalised context within which concrete prompts meaningful to the participants might be framed for the contrast questions.

The researcher has concentrated on the experiences that the participants would have had during their pre-war and wartime Lithuanian existence, and their experiences in the environments in which they have eventually settled. See Appendix 6.1 and 6.2. The questions encouraged the participants to focus and reflect on what may have influenced their lives at the time and induced them, voluntarily or involuntarily, to maintain their Lithuanian traditions or gradually drift away from them.

As recommended by Spradley (1979), priority in selecting participants was given to those able to make themselves available for the time required for the respondent-centred interview approach being used and who had evidenced a genuine interest in the study. Although the interviews would in principle require between one-and-a-half hours and two hours, participants were permitted to set their own time limits or to spread the interview over a number of shorter sessions, as most were elderly and often fatigued easily. From the outset it was assumed that the total interview time for most individuals typically would be in the order of two to four hours in aggregate, spread over two or three separate sessions. Beyond that, follow-up interviews were necessary in a number of cases for clarification of emerging issues or progressive refinement of the gathered data (Rubin and Rubin, 1995, pp. 150-152).

As the researcher was regularly involved in the social and religious activities of the Lithuanian community in Perth, direct observation of some participants was a significant additional means of data collection. As noted by Spradley (1979), researchers who have been able to enter the social environment of their participants are in a better position to observe, understand and interpret their culture. The researcher had decided to undertake the study after having already been accepted as a member of the Lithuanian community in Perth for other reasons, and thus was in a position to collect data as an observer already legitimately immersed in the culture of the group which had undergone and was

continuing to undergo change. Saville-Troike suggested that one of the advantages associated with studying one's own culture from the inside is the researcher's ability to use himself or herself as a direct source of information and a basis for valid interpretation of it (Saville-Troike, 1982, p. 114). In the present study, the researcher was clearly accepted as a bona fide and trusted member of the community and most participants appeared to be unconstrained in their reactions to the researcher and able to give their responses openly and freely.

In order to develop and validate the above interview methodology, the researcher conducted several pilot interviews among members of the Western Australian Lithuanian community. The participants included both males and females, and were interviewed at least twice, with each interview lasting an average of one-and-a-half hours. All questions were open-ended and had no time limits placed on them. Participants were asked to recall events of their childhood in pre-WWII Lithuania as well as to describe their present family life and cultural practices.

The participants were open and spoke freely with the researcher, and at no time appeared to feel uncomfortable about discussing their lives. Being herself fluent in Lithuanian helped the researcher to establish early rapport with the participants. At first the participants focused mainly on their own life stories, revealing in the process much information on their traditions and customs, but little on their beliefs and values. One early challenge for the researcher, therefore, was to find a way to encourage the participants to reveal or express these beliefs and values. After extensive trial and error and experimenting with both the interview technique and questioning format the researcher devised three different question types – descriptive, explanatory and emotive – to be employed in the interviews. See Appendix 7.

Descriptive questions encouraged participants to reveal information on particular events and practices. Questions focused on *what*, *when* and *how* certain traditional customs are still practised today and which of these, if any, have been ceased.

Example:

Researcher: *How do you celebrate Christmas?*

Participant: *Well, one of the things we do is to have a special traditional meal on Christmas Eve.*

In providing the answer, the participant describes a particular practice.

Explanatory questions stimulated participants to give reasons for the cultural practices described, and to explain *why* particular practices have either continued or ceased.

Example:

Researcher: *Why do you have this special meal on Christmas Eve each year?*

Participant: *Because it's something that my family always did when I was a child, and also it has a religious meaning, because the meal consists of twelve different dishes, which represent the Twelve Apostles that partook in the Last Supper.*

In this example the participant explains the particular practice, and in doing so reveals the importance of family values and religious beliefs.

Emotive questions were employed in order to stimulate participants to express *why* and *how* they feel about certain events or aspects of their culture. To the extent that these questions encouraged responses born of feelings of anger, frustration, joy and sadness, they often served to reveal or imply participants' underlying beliefs and values.

Example:

Researcher: *Do your children generally join in this meal?*

Participant: *No, because they are married to non-Lithuanians that are not interested in and don't really care about our traditions and religion.*

Researcher: *So how do you feel about this?*

Participant: *I'm quite sad and angry, because I know our traditions will be lost when I'm gone."*

In this answer, the participant reveals her emotions – sadness and anger – surrounding the underlying value –the importance she ascribes to preservation of her culture – and through the explanation offered she highlights why the matter is of concern to her – that others to follow her will not share the same commitment to that preservation.

Although all participants were willing to take part in further interviews, the researcher chose to pre-test the questioning sequence on one highly articulate 75-year-old female member of the community who had shown a strong level of personal interest in the research and was willing to participate in the development and refinement of the interview process. However, after four two-hour sessions of asking direct descriptive,

explanatory and emotive questions and intensive probing, the researcher was still finding it difficult to elicit responses that reflected or disclosed this participant's underlying feelings and values. Because the researcher's ability to uncover a participant's underlying feelings and values was central to the purpose and likely success of the interview strategy, the researcher decided to include what Spradley (1979) has termed "contrast questioning" as an additional element in the interview structure.

In **contrast questioning**, the researcher leads the participant to compare, or contrast, past practices with the way they express their culture today and, in doing so, to share their emotional reaction to any experienced changes. This strategy often helped to bring to the surface the participant's underlying beliefs and values, especially where the participant had not been consciously aware of these feelings and was unable to verbalise them in response to direct questions of the form *what/when/how* and *why*.

The combined use of direct and contrast questions proved successful in that the pre-test participant was eventually able to reveal (though not without some attendant stress and pain) her underlying feelings, thereby providing deeper and more meaningful information to the study. With practice, the researcher found that she was able quite easily and reliably to apply the contrast questioning technique to all three of the original question types – descriptive, explanatory and emotive – in order to provide the extended, more-deeply reflective responses being sought. For example, while most respondents in later pilot interviews found it difficult initially to express their underlying beliefs or values in relation to a specific matter such as family values, they found it relatively easy when asked to compare how a non-Lithuanian (for example an Australian neighbour) might feel about the same matter.

Language: Quotations and Translations

The participant data was collected through interviews. In most cases the language used by the Lithuanian-Australian population group was Lithuanian or broken English. For the Lithuanian and Siberian population groups the language was exclusively Lithuanian. The interviewer's language spoken was that of the interviewees.

For the purpose of this study translation was, accordingly, required of nearly all the material provided verbally by the participants. The researcher made these translations. All quotations presented in the text of the thesis are literal and absolutely faithful to the spoken text of the participant, albeit in translation to English.

It is therefore important to note that quotations and or extracts by participants disclosed in the text of the thesis are presented literally. That is, the literally translated English has not been modified or corrected by the researcher. It would be inappropriate to do so; and such corrections are deemed unnecessary for the reader to gain a clear sense of the participants' intended meanings.

Interview Settings, Timing and Locations

The researcher interviewed a total of fifty-four Lithuanians: of these three males and six females have been discarded. The transcripts of those rejected were discarded because, despite my frequent affects to guide the interview these participants insisted on redirecting everything to allow them opportunity to expand on their personal political views. Of the thirty-six Lithuanians interviewed that were left, twelve were in Perth, Western Australia, twelve in Krasnoyarsk, Siberia, and twelve in Vilnius, Klaipeda and Kaunas, in Lithuania. See Appendix 8. A minimum of ten participants for each of the target samples is normally considered a reasonable number for studies employing in-depth qualitative interviewing (Cresswell, 1998 p. 122).

Interviews of the Australian sample were conducted in Perth over a six month period in 2003. The twelve participants had come from a variety of different regions in Lithuania and had migrated to Australia in 1948 and 1949. The average participant age was 84 years. All were (or had been) married and with children. Most had received between seven and twelve years of schooling in Lithuania or in Germany in the Displaced Person camps prior to their arrival in Western Australia. Others had completed their education in Perth. Two of the participants, one female and one male, had come from rural areas.

The interviews in Siberia were carried out in the Altaj region of Krasnoyarsk in the northern summer of 2004. The researcher was able to spend a total of forty-five days in Krasnoyarsk, the maximum time permitted on the available visa. The average age of the

Siberian participants was 86 years, slightly older than their Lithuanian-Australian counterparts and slightly younger than the corresponding Lithuanians sample. The majority of the group had been deported to Siberia between 1946 and 1948, the only exception being one male participant who had been deported some years earlier in 1941. All had received between seven to ten years of schooling in Lithuania prior to their deportation and had come from different Lithuanian regions and rural areas. All of the males had met and married Russian women since arriving in their new homeland. Two participants had German spouses.

Interviews of the majority of the Lithuanian sample were completed in June 2004 in Vilnius, Kaunas and Klaipeda, the balance having been interviewed one year earlier during a preparatory visit by the researcher. The average age of the Lithuanian participants was 88 years. All the twelve participants come from different regions, villages and towns in Lithuania. All were (or had been) married, with an average of two children. Most had received between seven and fifteen years of schooling. With the exception of one male participant, the rest of the participants were practising Roman Catholics.

All the interviews of the Lithuanian sample were conducted in the living rooms of the participants' homes. While signing of the consent form had been accepted without hesitation by the Western Australian participants, five of the Lithuania sample and six of the Siberian sample felt uneasy and nervous about signing and initially were disinclined to participate in the study. Although the researcher attempted to allay the concerns to the best of her ability it was clear that any strict insistence on signing the forms would threaten the viability of the samples. Accordingly, where there was clear reluctance to sign, the researcher chose not to insist and instead to accept simple oral consent. Evidently, the hesitancy was a reluctance to sign anything on paper, and not an unwillingness to participate in the study per se.

Most participants in the three samples were happy to have their interviews taped for the researcher's personal use, with the necessary assurances that the content would not be disclosed to any other individual or agency in a way that would leave participants individually identifiable. However, there were four instances (two in Western Australia and two in Siberia) in which the participants refused to have their interviews recorded

and asked also that the researcher not take notes either. The researcher in these cases kept the interview relatively short (not more than an hour) and immediately after the interview wrote notes from her direct recollections of what had been said. The recurrence of political issues was a common feature in all interviews. Most participants evidently found it difficult to refrain from offering political observations and commentary during the interviews, and most also requested that the recording be stopped, at least temporarily.

Most of the interviews lasted between one-and-a-half hours and four hours. All participants were interviewed twice, primarily to keep the duration of individual sessions to a level more comfortable for and less tiring to the participants. Obtaining as much data possible in the time available was the main concern of the researcher with the participants in Siberia and Lithuania, whom it was thought may not have been able to saturate the categories which were examined. This recurring concern was documented repeatedly in the researcher's field notes from the early stage of the interviews.

Although the majority of the interviews completed in the study provided the researcher with important insights into the life experiences of the participants, the narratives shared were often distressful to the participants as they recalled details of their sometimes traumatic earlier experiences. In some cases the distress was sufficient that the participant spent quite some time crying, which required that the interviews be terminated prematurely. To lower the emotional tone of the interview in these obviously sensitive and distressing cases, the researcher usually attempted to direct the conversation back to earlier topics that had been discussed and asked for further information (Rubin and Rubin, pp. 137-138). The stages of an interview are shown in Appendix 9.

Data Analysis

Preliminary data analysis commenced more or less immediately, even while the interviews were still in progress. After completing each interview, the direct transcription of the English language of the interviews in Australia and the transcription and translation of the Lithuanian language interviews in Siberia and Lithuania, the researcher proceeded to identify and select a number of customs and traditions, values

and beliefs that have been identified as being the core markers of the pre-WWII rural Lithuanian culture through in-depth study of the various Lithuanian sources identified in Chapter 1.

The researcher then analysed each interview transcript in detail to identify, in the recorded testimonies of the participants, occurrences or absences of each of these previously identified core cultural markers. For each sample group, the resulting data were then pooled for that sample as a whole in order to establish the frequency across participants of the occurrence of each of the core markers. As will be seen in subsequent chapters, this analysis allowed the researcher to develop individual descriptive profiles for each of the three sample groups to characterise the extent to which the defining attributes of the pre-WWII Lithuanian culture have been retained, transformed or lost since the time of the diaspora. Moreover, by comparing the cultural profiles of the three samples it was possible to discern the extent to which the patterns of retention, transformation or loss have been similar or different for the three diaspora samples.

To facilitate these comparisons, the researcher assembled a table consisting of separate columns for each of the groups, each column profiling in summary form the cultural characteristics of the group it represents, with the entries in each profile recording the presence or otherwise of each of the cultural markers of interest. Included also was a separate column that summarised in terms of the same markers a description of the pre-WWII Lithuanian culture. In constructing the table it was necessary to divide the descriptions of the Lithuanian and Siberian samples each into two component columns to provide separately for the rural and urban sub-groups in those two samples. This was not necessary for the Western Australian sample. The six-column table, included in Appendix 3 of this report, highlights the significant similarities and differences in what has been retained, lost and modified of the key features of the pre-WWII Lithuanian culture in the three communities studied.

Chapter 6 provides a detailed description of the customs, traditions, values and beliefs which the researcher has identified as the key characteristics of the pre-war Lithuanian culture. This data have been used to lay the foundation for the comparative table described in the foregoing paragraph.

Chapter 7, 8 and 9 present for each of the group samples in turn what the researcher has discerned from the interviews. The data obtained has been collated into the comparative table to facilitate the comparisons between the cultural characteristics of its sample and the characteristics of the pre-WWII analysis.

Conclusion

This chapter has described the way in which qualitative and quantitative methodologies has been used to determine the extent of the retention or loss of those core markers which constitute the *essence* of the pre-war Lithuanian culture.