

tions of the weakening and the breaking of social bonds. Giddens characterised this state of affairs in the framework of his theory as the processes of *detraditionalisation*. These processes, as he claims, bring us to the *post-traditional society*, which in Giddens' words is "an ending". What is (was) a traditional society and how it is understood after its "ending" may be reflected upon through a number of contemporary authors such as, for example, anthropologist Benedict Anderson, historian Eric Wolf and especially the French sociologist and philosopher Pierre Bourdieu. In those societies, including industrial ones, where many traditional institutions are functioning in any form of rituals or through ideological patterns, social uncertainties are recognisably lower than in a so-called risk society as defined by Ulrich Beck (1998). This means that the traditional political cultures maintain social bonds in such a way that an individual (without any thought of doubt or in a conscious renunciation of a part of their autonomy or freedom) gets "in exchange" a well-defined position in the society. Additionally, an individual gets "safety" within such institutions as family or church and within other forms of collective life, which differ according to a society's cultural determinants. In general, the socialist states were an attempt to create "safety" and stability through an economic system that comprised of full employment of the population. However, this attempt failed at the very beginning, which could explain why these societies actually and paradoxically finally promoted a set of traditional values. It is, of course, doubtful that traditional societies (all of which transformed and adapted their rituals throughout history) always functioned in such a way as pictured by nostalgic traditionalists looking back from a context of modernism or post-modernism. Therefore, it is quite right to ask a complicated question regarding a problem of how much the notion of tradition explains anything at all about the time in history when nations and linguistic communities took shape.¹

Culture and Transition

Some of us in contemporary Europe remember the period of socialism because we happened to live in one of the countries, which called itself "so-

1 Traditions, as an invention of culture that took shape in the period of growing literacy, needed to find roots in communities of the past, and so it created the past "by itself". Thus, as characters in the renaissance pictures of religious events from the hazy beginnings of Christianity are dressed according to Florentine or Venetian fashion, the past is "redressed" repeatedly, when a new identity demands it to be changed in the name of the present and the future.