

P A R T 2

Societies and Markets

**Workers, Peasants, Labor Unions,
Associations, Community Organizations**

The first part of this work has brought out the differential effects of the pressure of European rules on the formation of states after 1989, based on an examination of the forms of transformation of public property, welfare systems and public administration. Though sometimes reduced to playing only a limited role alongside certain international bodies, the EU has managed to appear as the central actor on several occasions: when it has been able to provide the missing references and the corresponding action repertoires (e.g., where some privatization institutions are concerned); when it has been able to function to safeguard the continuity of exchanges, particularly in terms of providing legal safeguards; and when it has imposed its rules as the condition for membership (by reference to the *Acquis Communautaire*). In this way, the EU has played an active part in the redistribution of powers and the establishment of new forms of governance. These conclusions are in keeping, overall, with those that emerge from examining the processes of the EU15, which very much give pride of place to public policies, with the specific difference here that, in the cases we examine, *politiques* have also been impacted to a great extent by the EU.

There then remains the question that has also received little attention in the West, which relates to fields other than policies: this concerns the Europeanization of intermediate actors such as labor unions, associations and parties. Do we see a redistribution of powers at this level, and the reinforcement of labor union, associative, and political behaviors? The findings of the literature on EU15 are ambivalent on this point.¹ The originality of the East European situations lies in the fact that it is not a question either of examining the formation of social or political networks on a Union-wide scale or of assessing the possible retroactive impact of such networks on national organizations. It is much more a question of identifying how the European challenge determined the formation and functioning of these intermediate organizations or, in other words, how

the former actors adopted and adapted the new constraints upon them, and how the new contexts enabled “new” actors to emerge, whether in phase with the new types of pressure or not.

Before examining the organizations, it is appropriate to look into the occupational groups that traditionally make them up: workers and peasants. This approach is all the more justifiable for the fact that the analysis of institutions is inadequate for accounting for local behaviors. It is one thing to adopt a set of rules and sectoral regulations, another to deduce from it the coordination and adjustment of behavior at the base of organizations. In other words, European Union pressure had massive effects on states, since they were expected to submit to common regulation by adopting it legislatively. This was the minimum condition for aspiring to membership of the EU. But the process of Europeanization cannot be reduced to a “top-down” dynamic that merely expresses the basically juridical pressure exerted on national states by the Union. Alongside the examination of the impact procedures of the European rules, we have at the same time to examine the modalities of their acceptance or rejection on the part of the different social groups, which were able to exploit various registers of resources the better to take advantage of—or, at times, forearm themselves against—them. Though history counts, it does not simply have effects advantageous to states or territories. The *longue durée* is registered in occupational practices, in the skills and informal rules which structure societal equilibria, just as much as do the formal rules. In this regard, the strategies of recomposition, defence and negotiation were very different between the industrial enterprise (chapter five) and the agricultural concern (chapter six), or between social organizations (chapter seven), citizen groups (chapter eight) and parties (chapter nine).