

■ PART 3 ■

THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF POLITICS

Government does not work in isolation, unaffected by the society of which it forms part. Much of the variation in regime types, for example, can be accounted for in terms of the characteristics of society, especially its culture and level of economic development. This part examines the central links between society and state. Chapter 6 looks at the attitudes of people towards government, while Chapter 7 discusses their participation in it. Because of their growing importance worldwide, elections and voting behaviour are separately examined in Chapter 8. Particularly in liberal democracies, interest groups form an important link between society and government; they are the subject of Chapter 9. Parties are also central to the way interests and preferences are placed on the political agenda, though parties select and combine demands where interest groups express them. Chapter 10 examines parties.