Arguments against referendums:

Low turnout levels
Very few people tend to vote in referendums (especially small scale ones) which means that the results aren’t representative of the people as a whole.

Voter Fatigue - a lack of interest or emotions towards elections and referendums. Thought to be cased when the people are asked to vote too frequently.

- Yes / No campaigns are often more complicated than they appear. Few political issues are so simple and there are lots of factors to be taken into account. They also don’t allow for compromise.
- The government can influence the outcome of referendums by altering the timing and the questions to their advantage.
- Some argue that political issues should be left to MPs, who vote in the interests of the nation as a whole rather than just to themselves.

Referendum costs
Postage, venues, printing, conferences, lighting, photography, equipment. The wealthier side may get a better campaign result.

How political participation can be increased (Typed up under DLB?!) 

- Make voting compulsory
- Reduce the voting age to 16
- Make voting easier by introducing text/internet voting
- Introduce citizenship lessons in school
- Reform the electoral system
- Make better use of the internet and online polls
- More extensive use of referendums
Insider Pressure Groups:

- Pressure groups that operate inside the political system through contact with ministers, MPs, peers and official committees. They are regularly consulted by Government because they provide useful information (The Confederation of British Industry, for example)
- Some groups have permanent seats on Government policy committees and agencies
- Some groups have been set up by government and may be funded by taxpayers (Commission for Equality and Human Rights - CEHR)
- Select committees in the Houses of Parliament investigate the work of government departments and produce reports of policy proposals.
- Some groups have/need insider status at a local, regional and European level.

Although insider status may appear to be an enormous advantage for those groups, they must act responsibly. There is also a danger that they will lose their independence and take on the beliefs of their political contacts and their membership may feel they are no longer truly representative.

Outsider Pressure Groups:

A group may not have insider status because:
- They want to retain their independence and freedom of action (this applies to Greenpeace, for example). This independence allows them to undertake acts of civil disobedience and as a result, they may feel as though they can make more of an impact by remaining as outsiders.
- Alternatively, some pressure groups would like to have insider status but have not been invited into the governing process. These are known as aspiring insiders - the Association of British Drivers is an example of this.

The most important factor in outsider status is whether or not there is conflict between the pressure group and the Government. Trade unions, for example, enjoyed their insider status throughout the 1900s but found themselves to be complete outsiders under Thatcher.
NSMs:

During the 1980s, New Social Movements began to increase in numbers - they were a new kind of political action group that didn’t fit into any of the existing pressure group classifications.

It should also be noted that NSMs, like other types of pressure group, can have insider or outsider status.

Characteristics
- Broadly based and informal
- Emerge on the political scene fairly rapidly around a particular issue
- Organise mass demonstrations and media campaigns that are designed to create maximum publicity and put pressure on decision makers
- They are concerned with a narrow range of issues
- Often temporary, especially when they achieve some success
- Methods are striking and flamboyant - often include some civil disobedience
- Their followers tend to have an intense attachment to the issue.

Technology has helped NSMs to develop as it enables communications and opinions to spread rapidly.

Examples:
- 2000, sharp rises in fuel prices led to the formation of the People’s Fuel Lobby (included farmers, motorists etc) who blocked main roads and fuel depots to publicise the issue. Their tactics were criticised but the Government cancelled the tax increase on petrol that year.
- 2007, the Association of British Drivers was able to muster 1.8million signatures on an e petition that was protesting against a road pricing scheme. Here, it was technology that enabled a small organisation to mount a rapid and effective campaign.

Campaign for better transport, Anti-Poll tax Federation, People’s Fuel Lobby, Anti Globalisation Movement.