

**Module 8: Politics**  
**Topic 1 Content: Public Policy and Public Opinion**

**Introduction**



**Demi Tracy:** Welcome to another episode of WUSG News. Any discussion of the political process needs to mention public policy and public opinion. Glover Mint will be reviewing these important parts of the political process.

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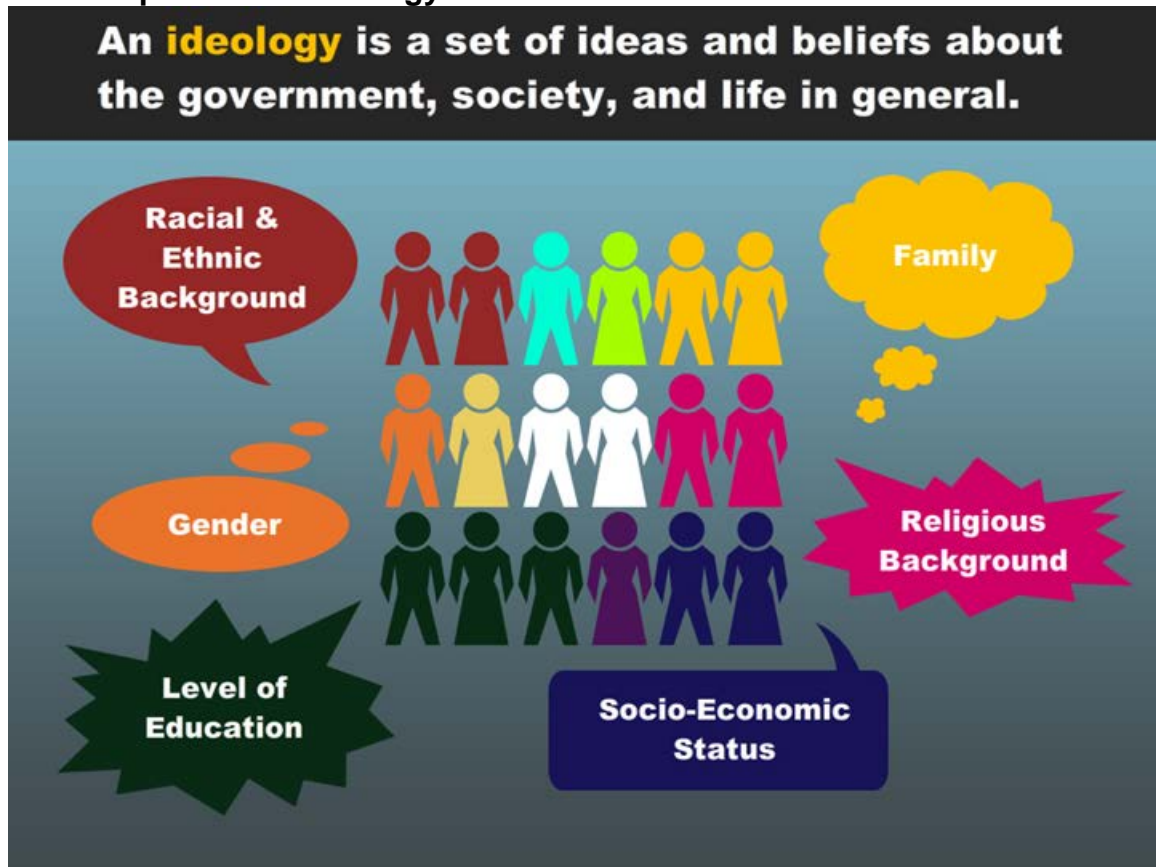
**Public Policy and Public Opinion**



**Glover Mint:** Public policy refers to the actions a government takes to maintain stability and respond to the needs of its citizens. Public opinion refers to the popular views held by the general population. Public policy and public opinion are closely related and influence each other directly. For example, a negative public opinion of the American government's actions can result in changes to public policy. Conversely, a popular American president can declare support for a particular government action, leading to a positive public opinion of that public policy.

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**Public Opinion and Ideology**



**Glover Mint:** When referring to public opinion, it is easy to picture the public as one centralized group. This is especially true in discussions about a single issue. Public opinion is actually much more complex and is composed of many different communities, groups, and individuals, each of whom holds a different opinion about the government's role in public policy. This is primarily because of different ideologies. An ideology is a set of ideas and beliefs about the government, society, and life in general. People with different ideologies often have different values, and view the government and public policy in different ways. An individual's ideology may be influenced by a number of things, including his or her level of education, religious background, gender, racial and ethnic background, family, and socio-economic status in society.

## Module 8: Politics

### Topic 1 Content: Public Policy and Public Opinion

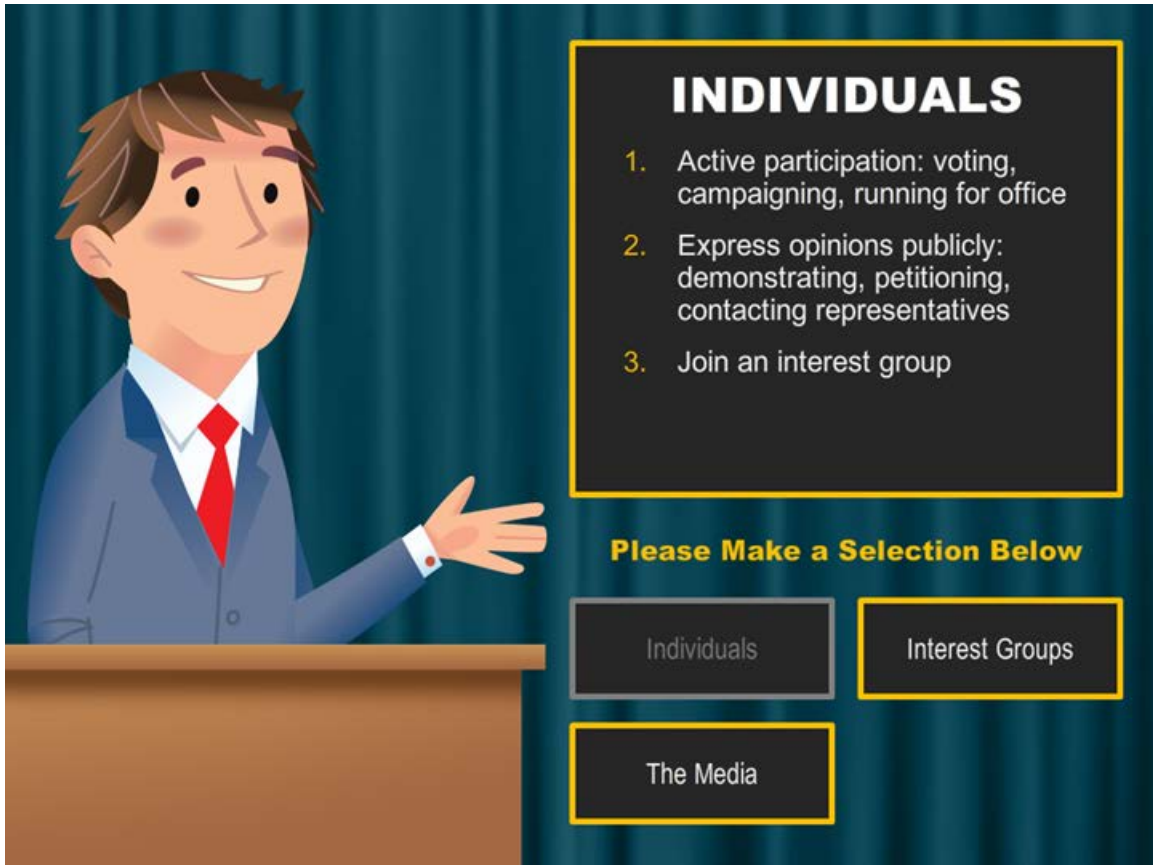
#### Influences on Public Policy



**Glover Mint:** Public policy is shaped by important government officials and public opinion, but these are far from the only contributing factors. Individuals, interest groups, and the media all play a significant role in shaping public policy.

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**Individuals**



**INDIVIDUALS**

1. Active participation: voting, campaigning, running for office
2. Express opinions publicly: demonstrating, petitioning, contacting representatives
3. Join an interest group

**Please Make a Selection Below**

Individuals      Interest Groups

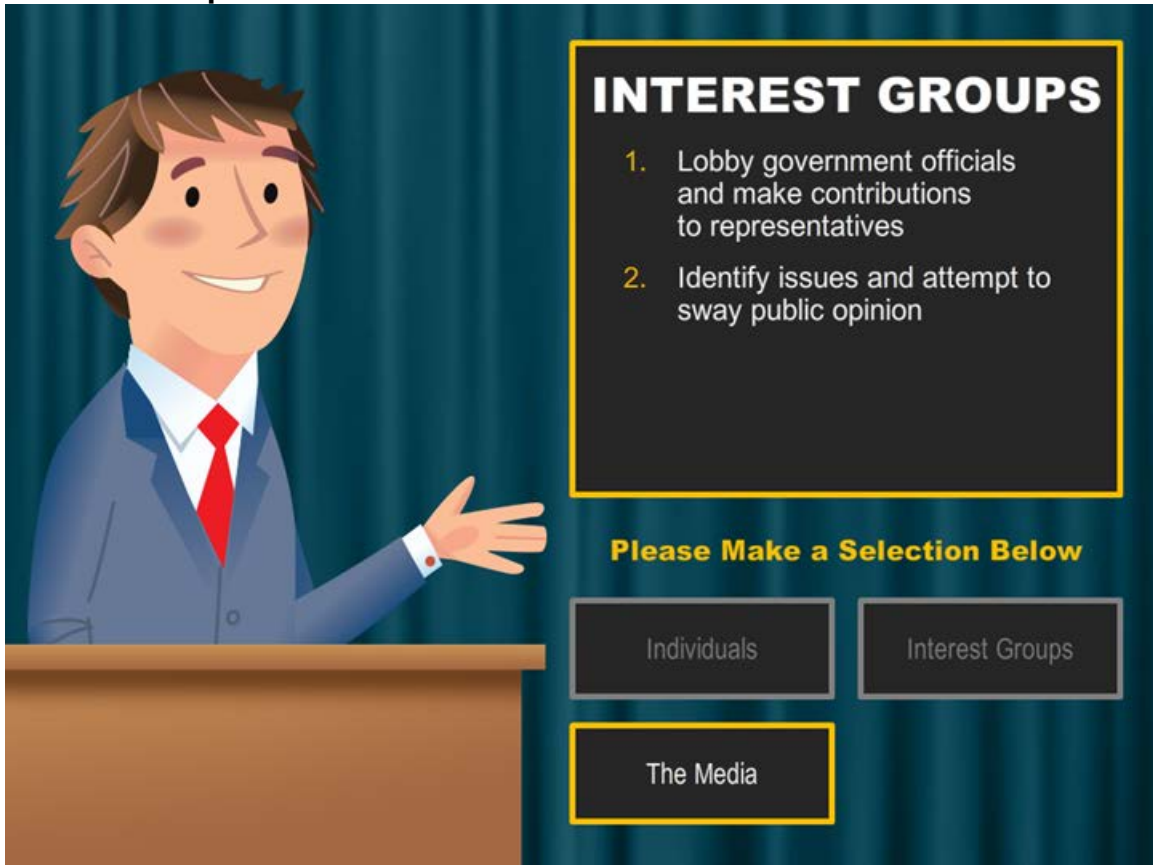
The Media

**Glover Mint:** Individuals shape public policy in three ways:

1. They may actively participate in politics by voting, campaigning, or running for office.
2. They may express their political opinions through different actions like demonstrating, petitioning the government, or contacting their representatives.
3. They may join an interest group.

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**Interest Groups**



**INTEREST GROUPS**

1. Lobby government officials and make contributions to representatives
2. Identify issues and attempt to sway public opinion

**Please Make a Selection Below**

Individuals      Interest Groups

The Media

**Glover Mint:** An interest group is an association of like-minded people who join together to influence public policy in one of two ways:

1. By lobbying government officials and making contributions to those representatives that support the interest group's agenda; or
2. by identifying issues and attempting to sway public opinion, causing government officials to support the interest group's agenda.

If an interest group focuses solely on one particular issue, it may be referred to as an issue group.

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**The Media**



**THE MEDIA**

1. Primarily an indirect influence
2. Shapes attitudes and beliefs
3. Focuses on particular issues
4. Helps determine public agenda
5. Provides important information

**Please Make a Selection Below**

Individuals      Interest Groups

The Media      **Next**

**Glover Mint:** The media's influence over public policy is primarily an indirect influence. The media in America does not force people to choose one side over another, but it does shape the attitudes and beliefs of its audience. The ability to focus on particular issues can help determine the public agenda by swaying public opinion. The media also provides important information to both policymakers and voters.

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**Ending of Episode**



**Demi Tracy:** Nice job, Glover. We sincerely appreciate you joining us for today's episode. See you soon!