

A rustic wooden sign with the word 'WELCOME' in white, block letters is mounted on a teal-painted wooden plank wall. The sign is made of weathered wood with a rough, splintered edge. It is held in place by two small wooden pegs. A red rose with green leaves is tucked behind the sign on the right side. A piece of twine is attached to the top of the sign, forming a triangular shape that hangs from a small metal fastener on the wall.

WELCOME

American Culture 1

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UNIT 3: TRADITIONAL AMERICAN VALUES AND BELIEFS



Discussion

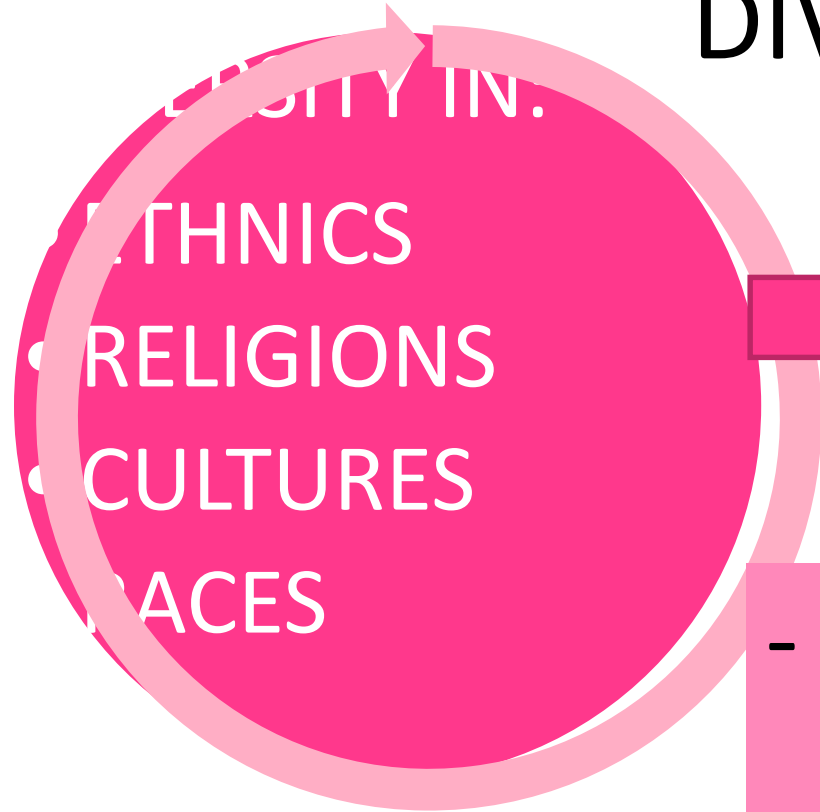
If Americans had to pick a value of their country that they are most proud of, over 90 percent would choose *freedom*. What value are the majority of Vietnamese proud of?



Source
4a.

A. Introduction: the context of traditional American Values

DIVERSITY



Only a practical choice

- Accept diversity or pluralism
- ➔ Strength of the nation
- Cultural pluralism

Not a melting pot but a salad bowl

How could a nation of such enormous diversity produce a national identity?

- Americans share a common set of values
- What holds the US together **is a common set of VALUES**

SIX AMERICAN TRADITIONAL VALUES AND BELIEFS

"... all men are created equal, they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness."

The Declaration of Independence (1776)



INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM
EQUAL OPPORTUNITY



EQUAL OPPORTUNITY
EQUAL PROTECTION



INDIVIDUAL WEALTH
INDUSTRIAL WORK

Rights

- Individual freedom
- Equality of opportunity
- Material Wealth

Responsibilities

- Self-reliance
- Competition
- Hard work

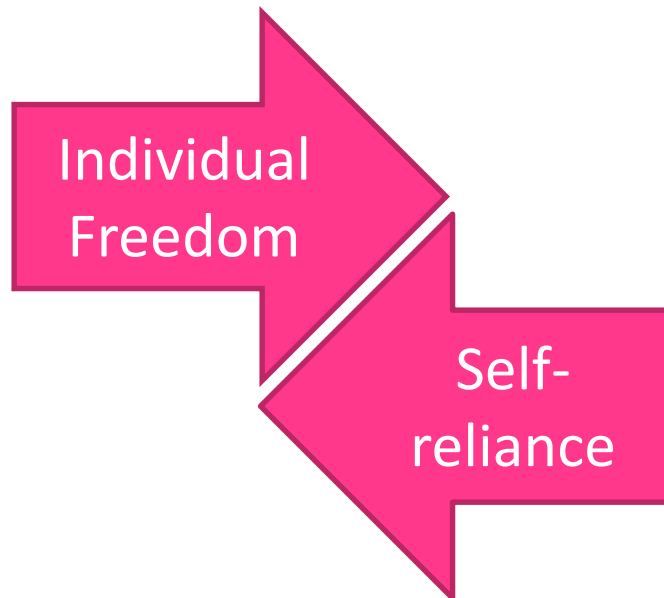
The Constitution

- When was the US Constitution written?
- Written in 1787
- Separated church and state
- Forbade titles of nobility → no ruling class of noblemen in the new nation

Who is considered as the father of US Constitution?

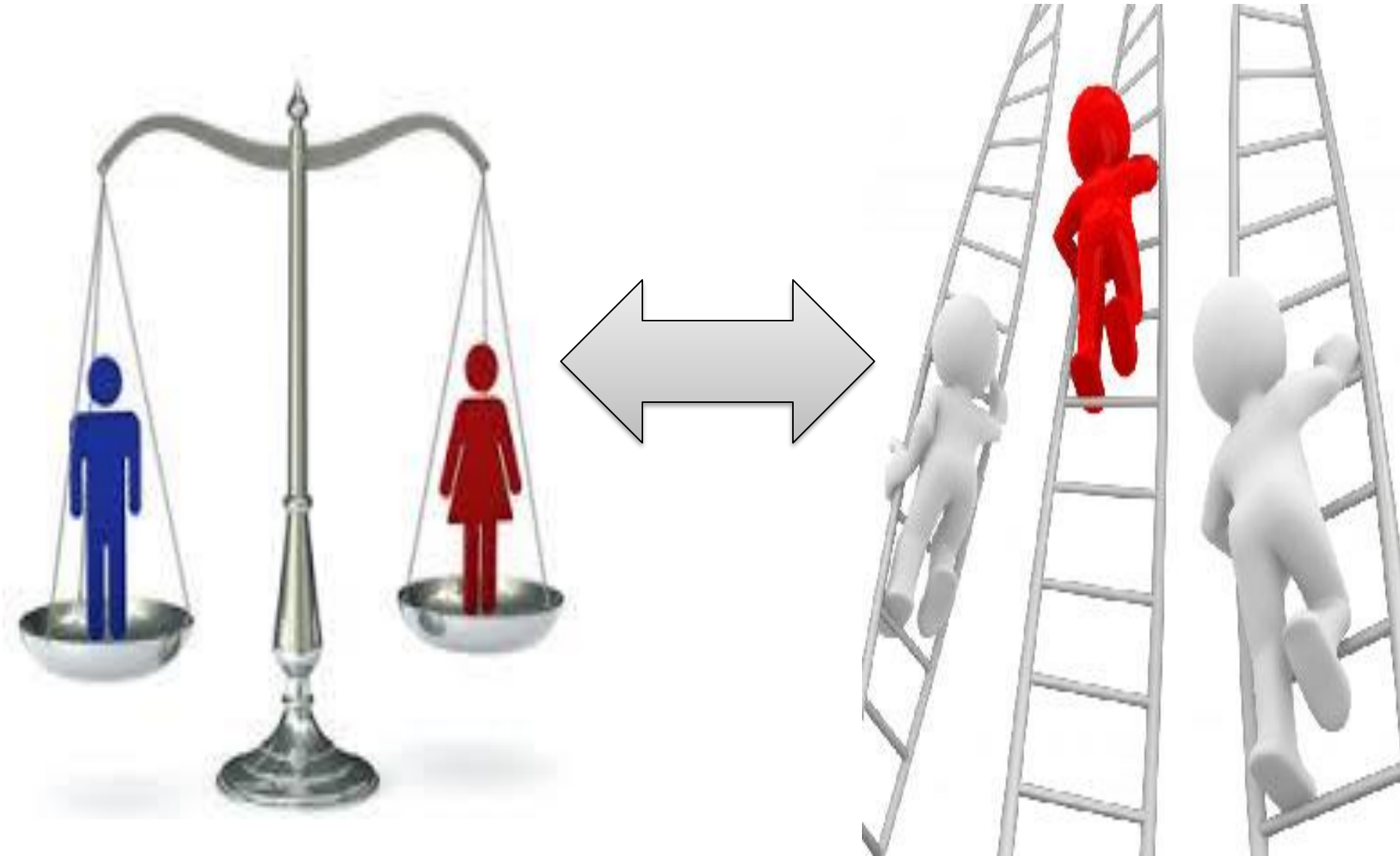
James Madison
(1751-1836)

B. Individual Freedom and Self-reliance

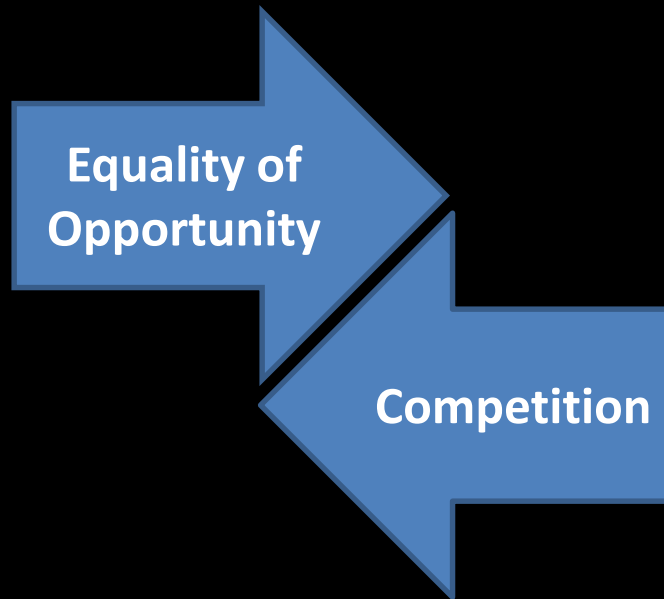


- I.F. = the desire & right of all individuals to control their own destiny without outside interference (government, ruling noble class, the church, etc.)
- Price: Self-reliance—people must take care of themselves and be independent, or risk losing their personal freedom.
- Everybody should stand on their own feet.
- E.g. at 18-21 years old, Americans are financially and emotionally independent from their parents.

C. Equality of Opportunity and Competition



EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY AND COMPETITION

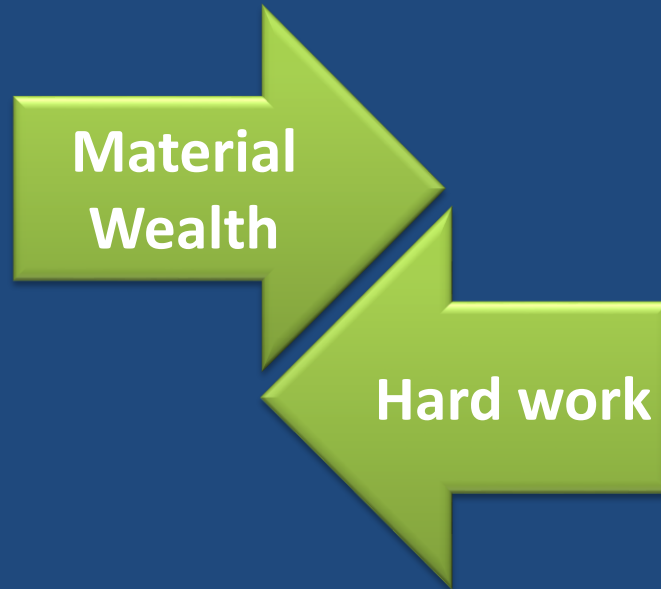


- Equality of Opportunity= everyone should have equal chance to succeed.
- Rooted in early immigrants belief that everyone has a chance to succeed in America and many proved their dreams were fulfilled.
- Price: competition. This makes Americans are urged to match their energy, intelligence, and creativity with their neighbors. They honor 'winners' but despise 'losers'.

Pressure of competition

- From childhood until retirement from work
- ➔ Learn to compete successfully is part of growing up

D. Material Wealth & Hard Work



- Material Wealth = the indicator of one's social status in society (due to the rejection of hereditary aristocracy and titles of nobility)
- Price: hard work. This makes some Americans work compulsively and become workaholics.
- Americans viewed their material possessions as the natural reward for their hard work
- Belief in the value of hard work: it was necessary to work hard to convert natural resources into material goods
- Americans can raise standard of living because of the abundant natural resources

E. American Values and the State of the American Dream

- Slogan of American Dream: Going from rags to riches
- Many Americans believe that with hard work their dream of success can come true

Are American values idealism or reality?

The American values are not always put into practice

- Equality of opportunity: some have better chance for succeed (born in rich family, inherit money , race and gender)

In reality, such American values as Equality of opportunity, and self reliance are only partly carried out in real life,

Many traditional values are ideals, but they still influence almost every facet of American life

Thank
You

