Week 2 Discussion 1: Political Systems

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In a world where resources are finite and social objectives of human beings remain in conflict, it is natural to have questions arise that seek to answer what is paramount. These differences give rise to social and political ideologies, such as conservatism and liberalism, within our systems of government.

In the U.S. political system, socialism became incorporated as a concept initially through a range of social-welfare programs which were financed by the federal government. Public and collective funds were used to fund healthcare for the population that were at-risk. In the 19th century, socialism emerged as a rival ideology to classical liberalism or libertarianism, in response to poor conditions of the labor class under the capitalist systems, and demanded greater rights, representation and benefits for the working class (Magstadt, 2017). Programs such as Medicaid and Medicare are examples of socialized healthcare. Socialism is highly influenced by the theories of Karl Marx with regards to class struggle, yet, socialists are split into communists, Marxists or socialists, in which the latter prefers working within a liberal and constitutional democracy instead of a pure Marxist form of government.

In contrast, modern American conservatism became popular after the second world war, however, it was built on some of the ideas that were used to build America. Conservatism seeks to conserve established values which lead to a functional and orderly society. Human nature is respected and an individuals’ ability to respect the mutual rights and freedoms of others is recognized. Conservatives oppose socialism due to the expanded role of government within it, and advocate limited government. Moreover, self-reliance and private funding is preferred to social welfare, and entrepreneurship and private property is preferred to federal planning and regulation (Farber, 2010). The movement is also marked by a visibly strong anti-communist stance.

Political ideologies like socialism, liberalism and conservatism help shape and influence people’s stances on the role of the government in social and economic issues. They serve as a ‘social cement’, and bind people together with shared values and beliefs together.

# References

Farber, D. R. (2010). *The rise and fall of modern American conservatism : a short history.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Magstadt, T. M. (2017). Comparative Political systems: Models and Theories. In *Understanding politics : ideas, institutions, and issues* (12th ed., pp. 49-159). Boston, MA: Cengage Learning.