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Experimental politics

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Human intrinsic intuitive interpretation of the world is circumscribed by a boundary that has been called Aristotle's barrier. A model of the world, reality, within Aristotle's barrier is simple, easy to human comprehension, yet probably far away from capturing the intricacies of the world. Experimentation (which nowadays also includes computer modeling) may be the only way of how to overcome the limits. In fact, human experimentation is an emulation of the procedure by which knowledge has been gained and steadily increasing in biological evolution. Natural sciences, thanks to the experimental method, had long abandoned Aristotle's intuitive physics or biology, but cultural (*i.e.* human and social) sciences continue to substantially rely and refer to Aristotle's views on human behavior, society, institutions, politics (1). Because of the virtual absence of experimentation, cultural sciences may have turned for centuries in vicious circles of speculations and have exhibited little cumulateness. Yet, history as a whole may be considered as a set of experiments and analyzed as such. In a study on natural history of Communism, Communism has been investigated as a gigantic unintended social experiment that eventually failed (2). It has been inferred that the failure falsified some fundamental hypotheses on human nature and on social dynamics on which the Communist project had been based. In contrast to Communism, democracy has not been a human project but it is an evolutionary institution, an outcome of trials and failures and selection. Its stability may have been due to its conformity with Jaynes' principle of minimal prejudice. However, in view of rapid progress of knowledge and destabilization of traditional value systems the spontaneous adaptability of democracy may no longer be sufficient. Experimentation may be needed not only to speed up comprehension of the dynamics of democracy but also to accelerate the spontaneous dynamics itself. The European Union, with its unique polymorphy, appears to be particularly well suited for political experimentation: each member state may function as an independent experimental laboratory and unified, centralized policies should only be adopted *a posteriori*, after the evaluation of the variegated experiments.

(1) Kováč, L. (2002) Two cultures revisited: new widening gaps. *World Futures* 58, 1-11

(2) Kováč, L. (2002) Natural history of Communism. I. II. *Central Europ. Polit. Sci. Rev.* 3, 74-110, 111-164