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Paradoxes of Modernity in International Political Theory:  
inquiries into the nature of certain problems  
(Critique of Simplifying Reason II)

For my grandson  
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## FOREWORD

This study is part of a larger research project entitled “Critique of Simplifying Reason”<sup>1</sup>. It is based on the principle, which has been duly explored by Enrique Dussel<sup>2</sup>, according to which the formation of the current global *Grand Système* (to use a Balandier title<sup>3</sup>) was the result of cleavages that, in their critical, enmeshed moments, always offered a relatively wide variety of alternatives. These alternatives have, however, been systematically obliterated by reductive thought that tends to simplify reality. In other words it looks at immediate feasibility in the management of the social system while rejecting countless possibilities and variables by suppressing community and society issues that are richer in the different cultures. This simplification has also been occurring in the theoretic field. This book addresses the relative paralysis that has overrun international political theory and upholds that this paralysis is due to the failure of prevailing contemporary political ideological frameworks, which correspond to an evolution of modernity that has partly belied its utopian, universalistic, promises. It is therefore essential to examine the problematic legal and political issues of this time in history in the awareness that a critical discourse is only possible if it avoids political absolutes in the construction of new paradigms forming complex societies.

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<sup>1</sup> See S. DA ROCHA-CUNHA, *Crítica da Razão Simplificadora: escritos sobre poder e cidadania numa era de compressão*, Ribeirão, Ed. Húmus, 2015. This study was conducted at the Center for Political Science Research – center evaluated with excellent (UID / CPO / 00758/2013), University of Minho and supported by the Foundation for Science and Technology and the Ministry of Education and Science through national funds.

<sup>2</sup> E. DUSSEL, *Ética de la Liberación en la Edad de la Globalización y de la Exclusión*, Madrid, Trotta, 1998.

<sup>3</sup> G. BALANDIER, *Le Grand Système*, Paris, Fayard, 2001.

I. THE ALWAYS PROBLEMATIC NATURE OF THE “SOCIAL SCIENCES” IN  
GENERAL AND THE PROBLEM OF REFLECTING ON THE NATURE OF POLITICS.