

# **Social movements and social systems: community, individualization and collective action**

By

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## **Abstract**

*During the last three decades, in the sociology of social movements a 'normal science' asserted itself. McAdam (2005) defines it as paradigm of structural factors of mobilization. This 'normal science' forms through converging some theoretical orientations: the political process theories, the resource mobilization theory, the studies about the relationship between social networks and political mobilization. The paper advance a theoretical basis complementary to the main perspectives of the sociology of social movements, looking for analytical paradigms which could open new perspectives for defining the concept of social movement. Following the central thesis of the theory of systems, which states that the basis of a system is founded on the differentiation from its environment, social movements will be defined as systems that see the social system as their environment. On this basis, two main characteristics of social movements are individualized. First, the differentiation of a system-movement from the environment-society is based on the supremacy of *communitas* over *immunitas*, that is the reversal of hierarchies that characterizes civil order, political power and production system. The second characteristic of system-movements is the removal of ties between subjectivity and civil order. Two basic elements of the relationship between individuals and modern social systems – the negation of immediacy and the alienation from the organic connection with others and with itself – are reused by movements as a differentiation from social systems. That is, as a differentiation from that form of identity and that kind of connection with others and with itself that, following Luhmann and the theories of philosophical anthropology, characterize immunitarian systems in the modern society.*