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## **Social Theory and the World Views of Alterglobalist Activism: A Historical Perspective**

Social movements are always shaped by the historical context that they operate in. On the other hand they also strive to reshape this context. They are historical projects that scrutinize the established ways of political thought and practice, in addition to creating new possibilities and utopias. Furthermore, they often have a significant role in the processes in which scientific ideas are transformed into social and political notions. These movements criticize the predominant techno-economic paradigms, inspiring alternative mindsets and models of operation.

The paper discusses these issues from a historically comparative perspective. It examines the change in alterglobalist activism in Finland from the end of the 1960s to the present day by contrasting the contemporary Attac movement with Tricont, an earlier (1968-1973) Third World oriented solidarity movement. The paper analyzes the continuities and discontinuities in the movements' world views, including the dimensions of motive, theoretical anchorage, conception of the structure of the world system, utopia, central object of criticism, reference group and view of the significance of knowledge in social change. In order to understand the conditions in which these world views have developed, the paper also delineates their historical, economic and political contexts.

The paper concludes that both of the studied movements are civil society responses against global economic practices regarded as amplifying poverty and inequality on the global level. However, a major shift has taken place concerning the role of social theory in the movements' world views. In the 1960s social theories were rather directly transformed into political agendas, whereas within the present alterglobalist movement theoretical ideas have gained little importance. This difference is also reflected in the movements' conceptions of the structure of the world system, their utopias, central objects of criticism and reference groups. The paper illustrates these changes in alterglobalist activism and assess their implications for the current discussion on social movements in the national and global arenas.