

Abstract

Anti-hegemonic social movements have historically had a complicated and conflicting relationship with mainstream media, as it consistently undermines the emancipatory potential of these grassroots revolutionary movements, hence serving the interests of the dominant social forces of the hegemonic order. This work develops a comprehensive and critical analysis of the agency of mainstream media throughout the coverage of Occupy Wall Street (OWS) to understand how and why it consciously and relentlessly worked to neutralize the true dimension of the movement and its occupations, and thus to preserve the neoliberal capitalist world order from the ideological threat and the revolutionary challenge that OWS posed to it. Employing a historical materialist approach based on Gramsci's theory of hegemony - and the emphasis in the consensual aspect of power in the production of the hegemony that it entails - and its use in the study of world orders grounded in social relations, this work aims to investigate the mainstream media's active role in the building of the current neoliberal capitalist historic bloc, and its subservience to the hegemonic social forces throughout every stage of the coverage of OWS and its occupations: from the deliberate lack of interest and the total indifference in the movement to the attempts to manufacture its own condescending and dismissive narrative of OWS and to constrain the occupiers' claims and grievances within the existing institutionalized framework of representative democracy, which ultimately blocks any genuine social transformation in capitalist relations.

Keywords

Occupy Wall Street, OWS, mainstream media, hegemony, cultural institutions, civil society, historic bloc, organic intellectuals, neoliberal capitalism, counter-hegemonic movements