

# Propaganda and counter-propaganda in the official press during the Spanish Transition (1975-1978). Arriba vs. Odiel

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**English Version:** Propaganda and counter-propaganda in the official press during the Spanish Transition (1975-1978). Arriba vs. Odiel

## Abstract

This manuscript aims at unveiling whether the newspapers *Arriba* and *Odiel* went on being propaganda organs during the Spanish Transition, or if they assumed their role as political agents. To carry out this research, we have applied content analysis to opinion texts published in them since Franco's demise (November 1975) up to the referendum on the Constitution (December 1978). This study provides evidence of that *Odiel*, being one of the smallest dailies within the Movement Press' chain, did not follow the dictations coming from the national reference newspaper, *Arriba*, and, accordingly, shows the lack of a homogeneous discourse.



## Keywords

Communication History in Spain, Political Communication in Spain, Communication and Francoism, propaganda and counter-propaganda, Spanish Transition.

## Resumen

Este artículo pretende desvelar si *Arriba* y *Odiel* mantuvieron su función propagandística durante la transición española, o si asumieron su rol como agente político. Para llevar a cabo esta investigación, hemos aplicado análisis de contenido a los textos de opinión publicados en ellos desde la muerte de Franco (noviembre de 1975) hasta el referéndum por la Constitución (diciembre de 1978). Este trabajo demuestra que *Odiel*, siendo uno de los periódicos más pequeños de la cadena de Prensa del Movimiento, no siguió los dictados que procedían del diario de referencia nacional, *Arriba*, y en consecuencia, la ausencia de un discurso homogéneo.

## Palabras clave

Historia de la Comunicación en España, Política de la Comunicación en España, Comunicación y Franquismo, propaganda y contra-propaganda, Transición española.

## 1. INTRODUCTION AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Spanish Transition is the political process through which Spain evolved from a dictatorial regime to a democratic one. Such a big political change brought along adjustments at legislative, economic, social, political and journalistic levels. Nevertheless, what do authors in this study understand as 'Spanish Transition' in terms of time?

The duration of this political process has never been exempt from a deep controversy. Thus, whereas most of the historians have traditionally agreed that Franco's demise was its start point, they have never reached a consensus about its ending. Hence, among all the theories about this controversial issue, we have opted for what Soto (1994: 110-111) and Guillamet (2002) assert: the Spanish Transition commenced when Franco died (November 1975) and finished with the referendum on the Constitution (December 1978).

In this study, this historical period consisting of 38 months has been studied through the analysis of the newspapers *Arriba*, national reference newspaper of the Movement Press' chain, and one of the chain's smallest

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nº 28

newspapers: *Odiel*.

On the one hand, Jose Antonio Primo de Rivera founded *Arriba* on the 21<sup>st</sup> of March 1935 as a propaganda organ at <<Falange Española>>'s disposal. It ceased in 1936 in compliance with a governmental order, and in April 1939, it came back in Madrid being assimilated as the national reference newspaper for the Movement Press' chain (the Francoist propaganda organ). Henceforth, it broadcasted the regime's ideology to the Spanish population, showing the yoke and the arrows -symbols of <<Falange Española>>- in its head until Suarez's Government disbanded the official press's chain in April 1977. Having lost the support of the National Movement, *Arriba* might as well be added into the State Social Media (MCSE, in Spanish). In 1979, it finally disappeared, thus complying with an order coming from the Spanish Cabinet Council that decreed the closing down of the chain.

On the other hand, in 1935 the PRC (Conservative-Republican Party) and CEDA (Spanish Confederation of Autonomous Rightists) engendered *Odiel* as their propaganda organ in Huelva. Originally, it had a <<Maurist>> ideology (1). In August 1937, having been bought by <<Falange Española>> in public auction, it was integrated into the Movement Press' chain. Henceforth, it showed in its head the yoke and the arrows -symbols of Falange- and the caravel, which commemorated the discovery of America, until 1977. Then, due to the cessation of the Movement Press' chain, *Odiel* joined the MCSE. Finally, this tabloid closed down on the 29<sup>th</sup> April 1984, not having found any purchaser in public auction.

Bearing the former in mind, our aim is, on the one hand, to analyse these newspapers' ideological evolution. On the other hand, demystifying them as propaganda organs of the Executive during the Spanish Transition, thus proving that these newspapers, despite being owned by the official press chain, did not have a homogeneous discourse concerning the governmental management. Therefore, they abandoned the propaganda function they were meant to follow and assumed their role as political agents.

Nevertheless, most of the authors have traditionally defended that the official press carried on being propaganda organ at the Government's disposal during that time. Thus, Montabes Pereira (1989) asseverates that the official press did not evolve during this period. Likewise, Alférez (1986) asserts that its workers' ideologies never reached the official press' opinion pages, which strived on transmitting and defending the Executive's dictations and interests, at least during Arias' turn (Redero and García, 1991). In this regard, they stress that the official press' goal was reinforcing the empowered position of the authoritarian Spanish government; the ideology, in this connection, plays a functional role in the maintenance of a concrete ideological faction in the power (Pineda, 2008). Additionally, broadcasting a political group's ideology is propaganda, according to Pizarroso Quintero (1993) and Thomson (1999).

Contrariwise, counter-propaganda is a critical discourse against the power without any aiming at achieving an empowerment position for who is criticising the power's institutions (Pineda, 2008). Thus, counter-propaganda is the discourse against the power that runs in a state in which media are subject to the power (Jawett and O' Donnell, 1986: 168-169).

Conversely to what Montabes Pereira, Alférez and Redero and García stated, Castro Torres (2010) recognises that different ideologies –concerning deterrent or rhetorical discourses more truthful, less interested in the situation itself than in triggering certain political effects (Eagleton, 1997: 53) – coexisted within the official press during the transition. Meneses (2008) goes even further affirming that, during this historical period, the ideological diversity present in the official press brought discursive plurality to its pages, which was not expected being propaganda media.

Resulting from this intense debate over the behaviour of the official press during the Spanish Transition, this study aims to pose the following research questions:

**RQ1: Did *Arriba* and *Odiel* have an in-chain discourse as expected being official press?**

**RQ2: Did they carry on being propaganda organs at Government's disposal during the Spanish Transition?**

Once our research questions posed, this research aims at achieving the following goals:

- To show that different ideologies coexisting within the selected newspapers were translated into discursive plurality regarding the Government and its management of the Spanish Transition.
- To explore the evolution of these official newspapers' propaganda function during the transition.
- To provide evidence of a lack of an in-chain discourse within the Movement Press during this period.
- To demonstrate that during the analysing period, the studied dailies abandoned their propaganda function, and assumed their role as political agents in the new Spanish political scape.

To achieve this research aims, we start from the following assumptions set up through the hypothetical and deductive method:

**(H1):** The newspapers *Arriba* and *Odiel* greeted different ideologies during the transition, and they were translated into discursive plurality regarding the Government and its management of the transition. This fact was the reflection of the ideological diversity existing in the society and which, at first, underground, and after Franco's death, freely expressed, was transferred to the official press' pages.

**(H2):** As a result of this ideological and discursive variety, these newspapers did not transmit a homogeneous discourse concerning the Executive.

**(H3):** This fact was the result of a lack of an in-chain discourse within the Movement Press.

**(H4):** Consequently, they abandoned their propaganda function during the Spanish Transition, thus assuming their role as active political agents.

Once this research, its hypotheses and goals introduced, we proceed to present the method we have applied to our studying object.

## 2. METHOD

To carry out this research we have applied a technical biography to the selected newspapers, by following Casasús' proposal (1985). This first approach has allowed us to get to know these tabloids and to discern the ideology (2) of the writers who published in them during the transition.

Having analysed them biographically, we proceed to apply content analysis, both quantitative and qualitative. This is a systematic method through which we can make valid and reliable inferences according to the context in which texts were produced (Krippendorff, 1982). Accordingly, we have opted for the explicit content analysis, since according to Landry (1991: 341), "it refers to what is explicitly said or written [...], it leads all the meaning".

Once selected the method, we need to collect the sample, for which we have followed Krippendorff's proposal (1982). But, before that, we must take into account that the collection of both newspapers' editions on a daily basis since Franco's death (November 1975) up to the referendum on the Constitution (December 1978) would add up to a total sample of 1,140 editions. This sample would not be assumable for this sort of study. This is why we have chosen 20 politically outstanding historical dates spread among the three Governments in charge of the political transition: Arias' Government (1975-1976), Suarez's Government (1976-1977), and UCD's Government (1977-1978) (3), as the reader can check in chart 1.

Chart 1: Historical facts selected.

Period	Historical dates selected	
<b>ARIAS' GOVERNMENT</b> (1975-1976)	1. November 1975. Collection: 18-23/11/1975	1. Franco's death (20/11/1975) 2. Juan Carlos I inaugurated as King (22/11/1975)
	2. March 1976 Collection: 01-08/03/1976	3. General Strike (01/03/1976) 4. Deaths in Vitoria (03/03/1976)
	3. July 1976 Collection: 02-08/07/1976	5. Arias Navarro's resignation (02/07/1976) 6. Adolfo Suarez inaugurated as President (05/07/1976)
<b>SUAREZ'S GOVERNMENT</b> (1976-1977)	4. December 1976 Collection: 08-18/12/1976 <sup>1</sup>	7. Referendum on the Political Reform Law (15/12/1976)
	5. January 1977 Collection: 24-31/01/1977	8. Assassinations in Atocha (24/01/1977)
	6. April 1977 Collection: 01-14/04/1977	9. National Movement's liquidation (01/04/1977) 10. Legalisation of the Communist Party (10/04/1977) 11. Pita da Veiga's resignation (11/04/1977) 12. Call for General elections (12/04/1977)
	7. June 1977 Collection: 08-18/06/1977	13. General elections (15/06/1977)
<b>UCD'S GOVERNMENT</b> (1977-1978)	8. October 1977 Collection: 13-28/10/1977	14. General Amnesty (15/10/1977) 15. Pacts in Moncloa (25/10/1977) 16. Tarradellas returns (23/10/1977)
	9. March 1978 Collection: 07-10/03/1978	17. Crisis in the Constitutional Commission (07/03/1978)
	10. November 1978 Collection: 01-02/11/1978	18. The Constitution is passed by the Spanish Parliament (01/11/1978)
	11. November 1978 <sup>2</sup> Collection: 18- 22/11/1978	19. Galaxy Operation (18/11/1978)
	12. December 1978. Collection: 01-08/12/1978	20. Referendum on the Constitution (06/12/1978)

Source: Own elaboration.

Once collected the sample, consisting of 200 editions, it is time to set up the units of analysis to which apply the method, and the categories that will lead us to validate or to refute our hypotheses, with the subsequent achievement of our goals.

According to Berelson (1952), the units of analysis are segments of content characterised for its classification into categories. Considering that our hypotheses aim at proving the existence of ideological plurality within these official newspapers, we have opted for the analysis of editorials, articles and columns ('items': units of total symbolic meaning, according to Berelson, 1952). However, why have we chosen these journalistic genres and no others?

Firstly, we have selected editorials since they are the opinion texts which reflects the media's owner's interests, so they are not free neither in their register nor in their form, as they are "generally uniform and with more or less fixed criteria" (López Hidalgo, 2012: 35). In addition to this, Villalobos (2010) recognises that historians have traditionally studied the editorial line of the newspapers to get to know their behaviour concerning any particular issue, thus ignoring the opinion plurality provided by signed opinion texts. This is why, secondly, we have picked the signed opinion texts (articles and columns), as Gomez Calderon (2004) and Villalobos (2010) proved that they are a very reliable source for the study of historical periods, as they welcome different discourses about the same topic. This is the result of the writers' freedom to expose their own ideas, which, in turn, guarantees opinion diversity within the same newspaper (Borrat, 1989).

Likewise, Martínez Albertos (1992: 382) states that columns and articles are spaces for the debate over different and free selected issues, in which prestigious and famous writers present their own point of view on the issue on condition that they sign their texts. In this connection, López Hidalgo (2012) stresses that, due to this fact, differences between what editorials and articles and columns transmit can be very remarkable. This statement contradicts to Abril Vargas (1999), who affirms that these deviations are mere nuances. Therefore, whether this ideological and opinion diversity existed within the studied newspapers, it will be in signed opinion texts where we will be able to find it.

Taking the aforementioned considerations as a model, if ideological plurality was within these official newspapers, it could have been translated into discursive and opinion diversity regarding the Government and its management of the Spanish Transition in their opinion pages. That would provide evidence of the absence of a homogeneous discourse within the official tabloids, which would rule them out as broadcasters of the Government's interests during this period. This, in turn, would contradict to Alférez's (1986), Montabes Pereira's (1989) and Redero and Garcia's (1991) theories.

Once the units of analysis selected, and after collecting a total sample consisting of 350 opinion texts, we proceed to set up the categories for the validation or refutation of our hypotheses.

According to Berelson (1952), a category is a generic concept that clusters up various register units, and levels through which the units of analysis are classified (Krippendorff, 1982). So, bearing in mind our hypotheses and goals, these are our categories:

- **Supportive position (+):** Explicit support to the Government.
- **Neutral position (0):** Non-judgement on the governmental management.
- **Critical position (-):** Critics against the labour of the Executive.

This classification has allowed us to learn whether different discourses with regard to the Government concurred in the analysed tabloids. Likewise, we have checked whether they carried on being propaganda organs or if, conversely, they assumed their role as political agents, thus abandoning the function for which they had been engendered.

Once our method exposed, we proceed to present the results of this research and to discuss the findings.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1. Ideological and business evolution

Having analysed the selected tabloids, we can assert that different ideologies (mostly, Falangism, Socialism and Ucedism) coexisted within the editorial board of the Movement Press' chain, as shown in chart 2.

Chart 2: Editorial board of the Movement Press' chain (1975-1978)

Name	Position	Relationship with the media	Militancy
Alejo Jesús García Ortega	Deputy director	In staff (1975-1976)	--
José A. Gurriarán López	Deputy director	In staff (1975-1976)	PSOE and UGT <sup>3</sup>
Ángel del Río	Deputy director	In staff (1977-1979)	--
Francisco Muro de Íscar	Deputy director	In staff (1976-1979)	--
Enrique de Aguinaga López	Editor-in-chief	In staff (1962-1979)	--
Pedro Rodríguez	Deputy director	In staff (1976-1979)	Falange Española <sup>4</sup>
Mariano del Mazo Zugazagoitia	Editor-in-chief	In staff (1975-1979)	--
Fernando Lanzaco Bonilla	Deputy director	In staff (1977-1979)	--
José M <sup>a</sup> . Menéndez Ríos	Editor-in-chief	In staff (1974-1977)	--
Fernando Ónega López	Deputy director	In staff (1976-1979)	UCD <sup>5</sup>
Chelo Escobar Castro	Editor-in-chief	In staff (1975-1979)	--
José Cavero Jáñez	Editor-in-chief	In staff (1976-1979)	Pro UCD <sup>6</sup>
Félix Ortega Muñoz	Deputy Director	In staff (1976-1979)	--
César de Navascues	Editor-in-chief	In staff (1975-1977)	--
Jordi Casasampere Gisbert	Editor-in-chief	In staff (1977-1979)	--
Francisco Sáez González	Deputy director	In staff (1975-1979)	--
Manuel Roca Basanta	Editor-in-chief	In staff (1977-1979)	--
Luis Carrillo	Editor-in-chief	In staff (1975-1979)	--
Valentín Martín Martín	Editor-in-chief	In staff (1975-1979)	--
Juan Blanco	Editor-in-chief	In staff (1974-1979)	Falange Española <sup>7</sup>

Source: Data retrieved from MARTÍNEZ FABREGAS, Jezabel and ROMERO DOMÍNGUEZ, Lorena (2014): "Arriba durante la Transición española: el abandono de su función propagandística con respecto al Gobierno", in *Historia y Comunicación Social*, 19, p. 329.

The data given here provide evidence of a renewal within the Movement press' making decision organ occurred between Franco's death (November 1975) and the referendum on the Constitution (December, 1978). This fact constitutes itself the evidence of an ideological and structural evolution experienced by the official press during our analysing period, thus contradicting to Alférez (1986) and Montabes Pereira (1989), and partially validating out first hypothesis.

Nevertheless, was this ideological plurality reflected in the opinion texts published in *Arriba* and *Odiel* during the Spanish Transition?

The submission of the staff and external collaborators to the editorial dictations was highly difficult since there



was not a homogeneous editorial line to follow because of the ideological plurality co-existing within the Movement Press' editorial board. And this is a plausible reason due to which these newspapers could have transmitted different discourses regarding the Government during the Spanish Transition. This fact, if occurred, would provide evidence of the abandonment of their propaganda function.

### 3.2. Opinions about the Government during the Spanish Transition

The content analysis applied to the collected sample has shown that there was opinion and discursive plurality within the analysed newspapers' opinion pages, as shown in chart 3.

Chart 3: Position of editorials and signed opinion texts published in *Arriba* and *Odiel* with regard to the Government between 1975 and 1978

HISTORICAL DATES	ARRIBA						ODIEL					
	Supportive position (+)		Neutral position (0)		Critical position (-)		Supportive position (+)		Neutral position (0)		Critical position (-)	
	EL <sup>8</sup>	SOT <sup>9</sup>	EL	SOT	EL	SOT	EL	SOT	EL	SOT	EL	SOT
Franco's death	0%	0%	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
Juan Carlos I inaugurated as King	0%	0%	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
General Strike	50%	62,5%	50%	12,5%	0%	25%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%
Deaths in Vitoria	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	50%	100%	0%	0%	50%
Arias' resignation	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Suarez is inaugurated as President	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	55%	0%	45%	0%	0%
Referendum on the Political Reform Law	100%	41,7%	0%	33,3%	0%	25%	0%	16,7%	100%	83,3%	0%	0%
Assassinations in Atocha	100%	44,4%	0%	33,3%	0%	22,3%	33,3%	16,7%	33,3%	33,3%	33,3%	50%
National Movement's dissolution	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Legalisation of the Communist Party	100%	75%	0%	12,5%	0%	12,5%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Pita da Veiga's resignation	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Call for general elections	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
General elections	72,7%	60,9%	27,3%	26,2%	0%	12,9%	33,3%	50%	66,7%	50%	0%	0%
General Amnesty	50%	50%	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
Pacts in Moncloa	66,7%	0%	0%	29,1%	33,3%	70,9%	0%	0%	25%	100%	75%	0%
Tarradellas returns	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Crisis in the Constitutional Commission	33,3%	50%	66,7%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
The Constitution is passed by the Spanish Parliament	25%	0%	25%	0%	50%	0%	0%	0%	100%	25%	0%	75%
Galaxy Operation	25%	0%	25%	0%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Referendum on the Constitution	27,3%	38,2%	54,5%	61,8%	18,2%	0%	0%	0%	100%	80%	0%	20%

Source: Own elaboration.

The data given here reveal that, whereas the editorial line in *Arriba* was mostly in favour of the Government during the transition, it opted for a more neutral position in *Odiel*. Nevertheless, there were exceptions to this rule in concrete moments, in which editorial position ranged from supportive to critical discourses. And these deviations were even more remarkable in the case of signed opinion texts, in which the writers constantly contradicted to each other, even refuting what the editorial line had stated. We proceed to present the position of editorials and signed opinion texts regarding the three Executives' management during the political change period, attending to each of the selected historical dates.

#### 3.2.1. Arias' Government (1975-1976)

Both *Arriba* and *Odiel* ignored the Government during the first two selected historical dates (Franco's death and Juan Carlos I inaugurated as King of Spain), opting for focusing on the historical characters that starred these facts.

However, this journalistic scape considerably changed by the beginning of 1976. Thus, the general strike occurred in March 1976 brought about outstanding opinion plurality. Whilst the praising voices, highlighting the Government's management of this situation, starred the editorials published in *Arriba* (4), neutral position outstood in *Odiel*.

Conversely, signed opinion texts were not as benevolent as the editorial line. Thus, Fernando Onega (5) in *Arriba* contradicted to what the editorial had stated, by accusing the Government of lack of authority, making it responsible for the constant demonstrations that were taking place during that time (6). The columnist also criticised Arias' Executive for not legalising the political parties yet in an irregular situation. This, in his view, was an evidence of his political ultra conservatism (7). Likewise, the signed opinion texts published in *Odiel* focused

on making the Executive responsible for the economic problems existing in the country at that time, thus justifying the demonstrations (8).

Concerning the deaths occurred in Vitoria as a result of a political charge for dissolving a demonstration, the editorial line of both of them coincided in defending the role played by the law enforcement agencies in the maintenance of public order (9). This position was refuted by the signed opinion texts. Thus, whereas *Arriba* displayed a column by Onega in which he ignored the Government during the deaths in Vitoria (10), *Odiel* opted for publishing another column by the same writer in which he blamed the Executive for triggering the current instability situation the country was undergoing, highlighting the urgent necessity of holding a referendum on the political reform (11). He also called for Arias' resignation.

A few months later -in July 1976-, the response to Onega's requirement arrived: Arias Navarro resigned, and Adolfo Suarez filled his shoes. During these controversial moments, the signed opinion texts published in the analysed newspapers coincided in thanking Arias for his democratic labour, although they had been criticising his authoritarianism until yet. Thus, the displayed editorial in both daily journals highlighted Arias' <<12<sup>th</sup> February Spirit>> (12), and highlighted that he was a man to whom the country owed and would always do the first steps towards democracy (13).

However, whereas Arias' exit from the Executive run almost unnoticed by these tabloids, Adolfo Suarez was the star of their opinion pages since he was inaugurated as President of the Government. Thus, Blanco Tobio focused on Suarez's humility, and encouraged him for launching a political reformist process that led Spain to democracy (14). Conversely, Ónega in *Odiel* opted for requiring the Government to humbly assume its empowerment position, also criticising the way the Spanish Administration had been compound during the latest 40 years (15). Hence, Arias' Government ended, and a deep controversy landed in the opinion pages of the analysed newspapers, behaviour that was highly inappropriate for propaganda media.

A new political period started then in the frame of the Spanish Transition, and the reformist Suarez's Government was in charge of it.

### 3.2.2. *Suarez's Government (1976-1977)*

Once Suarez had been inaugurated as President of the Government, the first political action he carried out was convoking the Referendum on the Political Reform Law. This reform pursued the total change of the functioning of the political system in Spain, one of the crucial steps in order to make the Spanish state turning into a democracy. This fact was applauded by the editorial line of both tabloids, which focused on highlighting the step forward towards democracy that this fact meant (16), whilst the signed opinion texts ranged from supporting to criticising the governmental management.

Thus, we have checked that columnists and writers fluctuated in *Arriba* between praising the governmental management, considering it as a role model (17), to criticising it for "taking the country to democracy against their citizens' wishes" (18). Nevertheless, they were more neutrals in *Odiel*, where they opted for ignoring the role the Executive had played in the political reform. It also encouraged Spanish population to vote 'Yes' in the referendum (19). Mario Soria, however, turned down this generally neutral position in the local newspaper, defending the Government against the accusations that came from right and left wing opposition political parties (20).

Finally, the 'Yes' won in the referendum, and 1977 started the worst way possible: with the assassinations in Atocha, when the extreme-right terrorist faction murdered five Communist lawyers working in a labour lawyers' bureau site in Madrid. Not only did this fact strengthened the criticism against the Executive, but it also brought about a remarkable discursive plurality. Thus, whereas the editorial line in *Arriba* was in favour of the Government and praised its democratic spirit that had brought democracy to the country (21), its counterpart in *Odiel* coincided with this idea, but also accused the Executive of being authoritarian, requiring it to join forces with the opposition political parties to preserve peace and to guarantee democratic freedoms (22).

Signed opinion texts were also plural regarding this fact. As an illustration, in *Arriba* Cristóbal Páez considered the Executive as antidemocratic, (23) whilst the editorial line had stated that the country owed it the advent of

democracy. On the other hand, in *Odiel*, whereas Onega applauded Suarez's calm during this tragic week (24), Félix Ortega blamed the Government for the instability the country was undergoing (25).

To sum up, the editorial line in *Arriba* was in favour of the Central Administration during this controversial period, whilst the signed opinion texts started to strengthen their criticism against it. In the case of *Odiel*, however, the opinion plurality concerning the Executive's management is a feature that not only concerns to the signed opinion texts, but also to the editorial line, in which we have observed different positions. In addition, this fact proves that the existing ideological plurality within the Movement Press' editorial board was reflected into the opinion pages of the analysed newspapers. Therefore, the analysed tabloids abandoned their in-chain-discourse with respect to the Government.

As the year went ahead, the National Movement (the basis of the dictatorial regime and the owner of the Movement Press) was disbanded in April 1977. This political action was applauded by the editorial line of *Arriba* and ignored in *Odiel*. Likewise, the signed opinion texts opted for ignoring this historical fact and the role that the Executive had played in it.

The controversy within these tabloids went on during the legalisation of the Communist Party, the traditional common enemy for the Francoism regime. Thus, whereas the editorial line of both newspapers were in favour of the Government with regard to the legalisation of this political party, considering it as a realistic decision (26), Mario Soria blamed the Executive for blowing up of the stock market by legalising the Communist Party (27), thus contradicting to the editorial line.

What happened next was a direct consequence of the legalisation of the Communist Party: the resignation of Pita da Veiga, Minister for Marine. However, the Army maintained its calm position, not acting in a violent way. In this connection, this fact and the call for general elections were highly applauded by the editorial line of *Arriba*, but ignored in *Odiel*. Hence, whilst there was no positioning in this regard in the national reference newspaper, in the local tabloid, Fernando Onega supported UCD's candidature, announcing Suarez's victory in the legislative elections before they were held (28).

Two months later, in June the same year, the general elections –the first ones held in the country since 1936– reflected once again opinion plurality in *Odiel*, whilst *Arriba* was completely in favour of the Government. Thus, columnists and writers coincided in betting for Suarez as President of the Spanish Executive (29), praising his democratic spirit (30). Conversely, the editorial line in *Odiel* was plural. Thus, on the one hand, it congratulated Suarez for his victory in the general elections (31), whilst, on the other hand, it accused him of blowing up the country as a result of his wrong political management (32). This fact shows that there was not a homogeneous discourse even within the editorial line.

Signed opinion texts, on their part, opted for supporting the Government, following one of the lines drawn by the editorial line and ignoring the other. Thus, Salcedo highlighted Suarez's mood as candidate and his moderated spirit, considering it as the best way to achieve democracy (33). So, the homogeneous discourse that was expected from these newspapers since being propaganda organs did not exist at that moment.

Once the general elections held and with UCD in charge of the Spanish Government, the first political legislature based on sovereignty since 1936 started.

### 3.2.3. UCD's Government (1977-1978)

In October 1977, the General Amnesty passed by the Spanish Parliament was highly applauded by the editorial line of the analysed newspapers. However, both of them ignored the governmental management.

Conversely, some days later, during the negotiations of the so-called <<Pactos de la Moncloa>> -meetings in which representatives of different political parties with Parliamentary representation proposed strategies for going out of the economic crisis that Spain had been going through since 1975-, there was an explosion of opposite feelings in the studied official newspapers as a result of the proposal of the dissolution of the Movement press' chain that UCD Government made. The reaction to this proposal, which fell like a bucket of cold water over the official press, was immediately reflected into the analysed tabloids' opinion pages. Thus, both of them



accused the Government in their editorial line of taking advantage of them for gaining the elections (34), and once settled in the power, leaving the official press to its fate, considering it as antidemocratic (35).

In this case, signed opinion texts published in both newspapers followed the editorial line, criticising the Executive for taking advantage of the official press, by using it as a tool for winning the elections, and betraying it after that (36). Subsequently, they called for the immediate cease in the use of the official press as a propaganda tool at the Executive's disposal (37). *Odiel*, however, embraced opinion plurality into its opinion pages, opting for a more neutral position, by stressing that official press should be independent from the Government (38). Likewise, Blanco Tobio highlighted that state press and democracy were not mismatched, thus contradicting to the reasons that Suarez had exposed to justify his proposal, but not judging the suggestion itself (39). Nonetheless, once the proposal had been determined, he strengthened his position and accused the Government of using the Movement press' chain for its political interests (40). At this point, it is worthy to highlight that, although the official press' writers were accusing the Government of using the official press to win the general elections, truth is that they had been criticising Suarez's Government from the beginning of its legislature, as can be checked in chart 3.

Henceforth, critical positions against the Government started to increase considerably. In fact, it could be said that during this concrete historical moment, an inflexion point in the evolution of these newspapers' behaviour regarding the central administration took place.

Thus, it is not strange that these newspapers, due to being immersed in such a deep controversy triggered by Suárez's proposal of closing down the Movement Press, mostly overlooked the return of Josep Tarradellas, the Catalanian President in exile, to Spain. The fact was slightly applauded by the editorial line of *Arriba*, and completely ignored by *Odiel*.

Whether 1977 ended full of disputes, 1978 started with a final political sprint to achieve the required consensus for reaching the longed democracy. Thus, in March that year, both newspapers positioned neutrally about the crisis in the Constitutional Commission. This fact was the result of PSOE's exit of the team working on the Carta Magna, due to opinion differences with the political party in the government (UCD) about setting municipal elections for the following year.

Conversely, the approval of the Constitution in October that year was exhaustively covered by these daily journals, which presented this political measure as a step forward towards democracy (41). However, Carlos Rodríguez in *Arriba* discreetly reminded the Executive that PSOE had gone back to the Commission- to carry on working on the Constitutional text- on condition that after the referendum was held, the Government would call for general elections. And, concerning these prospective elections, signed opinion texts in both newspapers coincided in presenting PSOE as the best alternative for UCD, as Socialism would even us to the rest of occidental democratic countries (42).

In addition to this, Carlos Rodríguez in *Odiel* took advantage of the controversial situation and harshly criticised some people from the Government that had not attended to the voting on the Constitution's approval, both to the Parliament (the case of deputy Lasuén) as well as to the Senate (the cases of senators Fernández Miranda and Julián Marías) (43). Alberto A. Torres went even further, by criticising not only the openness of the Government but also the parliamentary and political plurality that the Constitution allowed, whilst E.G.N. applauded this political diversity present in the Parliament (44).

Moreover, in this desperate race towards democracy, the Galaxy Operation –the first attempt of coup d'état occurred in Spain since the Spanish Civil War ended- took place. Nevertheless, it run almost unperceived in both newspapers. This behaviour can be interpreted as an attempt at avoiding social fear that could have triggered the increase of 'No' in the voting set for December 1978, the referendum on the Spanish Constitution.

Thus, in their coverage of the plebiscite, the editorial line in both newspapers focused on asking for the 'Yes', ignoring the Executive (45), and recognising that the Constitution was the result of the effort made by all the political parties (46). Nevertheless, the signed opinion texts were not as neutral as editorials were. They disseminated very harsh opinions against the Executive. Thus, Carlos Rodríguez blamed the Government for the problems existing in the country at the time, calling for the dissolution of the Parliament and the call for general

elections. For those prospective polls, the author re-appointed PSOE as the best alternative for UCD at the Government (47).

This fact proves that a supportive opinion in favour of PSOE had been born within the analysed official newspapers, which having abandoned the in-chain discourse, had also stopped being propaganda, thus assuming their role as political agents. This behaviour on the part of the analysed tabloids contradicts to what Alférez (1986), Montabes Pereira (1989) and Redero and Garcia (1991) had stated, as it provides evidence of an evolution itself.

In this connection, we can assert that the studied newspapers embraced different ideologies both in their editorial boards as well as in their opinion pages, as our first hypothesis assumed. Resulting from this ideological and opinion plurality coexisting within these daily journals, they did not broadcast a homogeneous discourse concerning the Government, as anticipated in our second hypothesis. They did neither have an in-chain position, since, as we have checked, *Odiel* disregarded constantly the dictations coming from *Arriba*, as expected in our third hypothesis. Finally, these tabloids abandoned their propaganda function at Government's disposal during the Spanish Transition, thus taking on their role as political agents.

Once presented the findings and the discussion of this research, we proceed to explain the conclusions we have arrived to in this research.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

This study has shown that, in spite of that the percentage of critical discourses with regard to the Government disseminated by the analysed newspapers is not very high, the variety of positions in this connection reveal that there was a remarkable opinion plurality within each of the analysed newspapers. As a result of that, editorials and signed opinion texts contradicted to each other within the same tabloid, not having, thus, a homogeneous discourse. As a consequence of that, they did not have an in-chain discourse as expected being propaganda media. Accordingly, this discursive variety contributed to the abandonment of the propaganda structure on the part of the analysed tabloids.

On the other hand, and as the findings have shown, the newspaper *Odiel*, even being one of the smallest in-chain newspapers, constantly defied the dictations coming from the national newspaper (*Arriba*). In addition, instead of following them, it intentionally ignored them, opting for displaying other texts whose opinions differed from those stated by the editorial line. In this connection, we have checked that there was not a homogeneous editorial line to follow, resulting from the ideological plurality existing in the chain's making-decision organ. This is, therefore, another evidence of the breaking down of the propaganda structure inside the Movement Press' Chain.

Finally, and considering the prior statements, these newspapers were not propaganda organs at Government's disposal during the Spanish Transition, since each of them transmitted different discourses concerning the Central Administration, thus contradicting to each other and not behaving as a chain. Consequently, they abandoned their propaganda function during the Spanish Transition, withdrawing the support that they had traditionally granted to the Executive and assuming their role as political agents. So much so that, at the end of the studying period, some of the writers who work with the analysed newspapers started to demand the dissolution of the Parliament, and to call for general elections after the referendum on the Constitution was held. They even dared to recommend PSOE as the best successor for UCD at the Government, as they considered that the political party led by Suarez was more concentrated on its own interests than in those of the Spanish population.

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(01) According to Tusell and Aviles (1986), Maurist ideology was a political movement of regeneration that pursued -against the elitist Canovas' conservatism, and in the frame in which the emerging mass society was born into the political life in Europe- the citizenship participation in public life, through a revolution from the top to the bottom of the political system. It defended the Catholicism, the constitutional Monarchy, a liberal and democratic conviction, a real preoccupation about <<social issues>>, and a Spanish nationalism compatible with recognising the autonomies.

(02) We have just specified the data concerning the militancy of the writers who were officially registered in any political party, or according to their self-consideration in the texts they published.

(03) Arias Navarro's Government had started in 1974, and the one ruled by UCD lasted until 1981. However, as the analysing period for this study is 1975-1978, we have just pointed out the dates during which these Governments were in charge of the power during our studying period.

(04) *Arriba*, 05/03/1976, p. 2. \**Una huelga, seis mil pesetas*.

(05) Fernando Ónega was one of the in-chain-journalists that the Movement press counted on in its attempt at maintaining a homogeneous discourse. However, it was the analysed newspapers' director who finally decided what texts were displayed.

(06) *Arriba*, 04/03/1976, pp. 1 y 2. Fernando Ónega: *El Péndulo*.

(07) *Arriba*, 07/03/1976, p. 2. Fernando Ónega: *El Péndulo*.

(08) *Odiel*, 02/03/1976, pp. 1 y 2. \**La huelga*.

(09) *Odiel*, 05/03/1976, p. 2. *Lo de Vitoria*.

(10) *Arriba*, 05/03/1976, p. 3. Fernando Ónega, *El Péndulo*.

- (11) *Odiel*, 06/03/1976, p. 4. Fernando Ónega, *El Péndulo*.
- (12) It is the term with which historians have agreed for referring to a slightly reformist political project motioned by Carlos Arias Navarro that was never put into practice.
- (13) *Arriba*, 02/07/1976, p. 2. *En la hora de un relevo*; y *Odiel*, 02/07/1976, p. 2. *En la hora de un relevo*.
- (14) *Arriba*, 04/07/1976, p. 2. Manuel Blanco Tobío: *Un hombre para este tiempo*. Y *Odiel*, 04/07/1976, pp. 1 y 2. Manuel Blanco Tobío, *Un hombre para este tiempo*.
- (15) *Odiel*, 06/07/1976, p. 4. Fernando Ónega, *El Péndulo*.
- (16) *Arriba*, 14/12/1976, pp. 5 y 7. *Las razones del <>* y *Odiel*, 09/12/1976, p. 1. *Sí queremos*.
- (17) *Arriba*, 16/12/1976, p. 2. Fernando Ónega: *El Péndulo*
- (18) *Arriba*, 14/12/1976, p. 2. P.R.: *Nombres propios: Vino tinto*.
- (19) *Odiel*, 13/12/1976, p. 19. Mario Soria, *Participación*.
- (20) *Odiel*, 09/12/1976, p. Mario Soria, *No a la abstención*.
- (21) *Arriba*, 28/01/1977, p. 7. *\*La situación*.
- (22) *Odiel*, 29/01/1977, p. 2. *Por la unidad de todos*.
- (23) *Arriba*, 27/01/1977, p. 7. Cristóbal Páez: *Observatorio, Los nidos de la violencia*.
- (24) *Odiel*, 26/01/1977, p. 3. Fernando Ónega, *El Péndulo*.
- (25) *Odiel*, 27/01/1977, p. 9. Félix Ortega, *Desestabilización*.
- (26) *Arriba*, 10/04/1977, p. 2. *\*Una decisión realista*. Y *Odiel*, 10/04/1977, p. 3: *Una decisión realista*.
- (27) *Arriba*, 14/04/1977, p. 6. *Marzo, ventoso...*
- (28) *Odiel*, 10/04/1977, p. 6. Fernando Ónega, *El Péndulo*.
- (29) *Arriba*, 07/06/1977, p. 7. Félix Ortega: *El Candidato Suárez*.
- (30) *Arriba*, 08/06/1977, p. 7. José Caveró: *Cambiar será inevitable*.
- (31) *Odiel*, 16/06/1977, p. 11. *Triunfó la moderación*.
- (32) *Odiel*, 12/06/1977, p. 2. *Programas y actitudes electorales*.
- (33) *Odiel*, 12/06/1977, Antonio Salcedo, *La situación, Un talante*.
- (34) *Odiel*, 20/10/1977, pp. 2 y 4. *Prensa del Estado IV. Periódicos institucionales y democracia*.
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- (37) *Arriba*, 26/10/1977, p. 7. Manuel Blanco Tobío: *Un servicio público*.
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- (40) *Odiel*, 27/10/1977, p. 6. Manuel Blanco Tobío, *Prensa del Estado (1)*.



- (41) *Odiel*, 01/11/1978, p. 2. *Una Constitución para todos*.
- (42) *Arriba*, 01/11/1978, p. 10. Carlos Rodríguez: *La política y los días*.
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- (44) *Odiel*, 01/11/1978, p. 24. E.G.N., *Constitución*.
- (45) *Odiel*, 06/12/1978, p. 2. *El deber de votar*; y *Arriba*, 03/12/1978, p. 7: *\*Razones para el <>*.
- (46) *Odiel*, 05/12/1978, p. 2. *Sin miedo al mañana*.
- (47) *Odiel*, 07/12/1978, p. 24. Carlos Rodríguez, *La política y los días*.

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