



**DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM, MEDIA
AND COMMUNICATION (JMG)**

THE RALLY EFFECT AND COVID-19

The case of Spain

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Essay/Thesis:	30 hp
Program and/or course:	Master of Science in Political Communication–MK2502
Level:	Second Cycle
Semester/year:	St/2021
Supervisor:	Mats Ekström
Examiner:	xx
Report no:	xx (not to be filled in by the student/students)

Abstract

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Keyword: Rally effect; COVID-19; Trust; Confidence; Spain; Pedro Sánchez.

The rally effect arises at times of international crisis affecting the confidence of the prime minister. During the pandemic, the planet has faced a health crisis that each country has managed with different measures. This research aims to study the duration of the rally effect in the case of Spain, one of the most affected countries and with the worst management according to some organizations. In addition, the relationship between the measures that the Spanish government has taken to fight the coronavirus with the trust of the public in the president of the government will be studied. The results show the existence of the rally effect after the emergence of the pandemic, and a positive relationship of confidence in two of the three states of alarm announced by the government.

Foreword

It has been an atypical year in the middle of a pandemic, where teaching has been remote and the effort together with sacrifice more present than ever. I never imagined leaving this great study academy with all the knowledge and methodology learned. Always grateful to JMG for his work and dedication.

I would like to dedicate this work to those who have been with me during this hard year, combining other studies, family life and friends. Thanks mom, dad, and Javier. Without your help during the first year of master it would have been impossible. You have always told me to focus on studies and the rest would be seen.

Thanks to my two inseparable friends Óscar and Pablo for being there, sometimes it is not necessary to say anything, just have a good time and disconnect. A great memory for my unforgettable adventure companions Andrea, Andrés, and Kyriakos, I have learned with you for the rest of my life, and I will always take you with me. I will be in doubt with your patience to explain things to me, especially to you Kyriakos.

A special memory for Mats Ekström who has been very patient and has reviewed each of my drafts as if he were the first. Without you, this would not have gone ahead.

Finally, I will miss Gothenburg, the rain, long library afternoons and going for sweets with my life partners for two years. JMG & Gothenburg always in my heart.

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Introduction

"The worse I do, the more popular I get" J.F. Kennedy after the Bay of Pigs incident.

This research aims to study the relationship between trust in the president of the Spanish government and the effects of the pandemic. The rally-around-the-flag effect suggests that a government or president improve or raise their popularity or public-confidence after an international crisis. Thus, the rally effect theory will be used to study how the emergence of the coronavirus pandemic affected citizens' confidence in the president. Therefore, multiple barometers have been studied to examine the evolution of confidence over time and conclude with the durability of the rally effect in the Spanish case during the pandemic.

Examining more deeply, a second analysis will be conducted to study if there is any relationship between the declaration of states of alarm in Spain and the confidence of citizens in the president. Several studies (Sibley et al. 2020; Bol et al. 2020; Baekgaard et al. (2020) have confirmed that lockdown measures influence positively the formation of public trust (both confidence and trust are used synonymously). Nevertheless, a study (Schraff, 2020) suggests that lockdown effects are not related to political trust. Thus, it is intended to find out the levels of confidence in three specific moments that the president of the government reached when he announced the states of alarm to fight COVID-19.

To achieve a correct solution to this aspiration, the three specific dates will be chosen to study the surveys in relation to trust, and in a second phase, a regressive analysis will be developed to check if there is a relationship between variables and strengthen both the results and the hypothesis. Associating the state of alarm as a policy to fight against the coronavirus, the correlative analysis will be carried out with the dependent variable 'degree of trust in the government' and the independent variable 'degree of trust in government policies to fight the coronavirus'.

Therefore, what is intended to be achieved with this work is to observe how the rally effect behaves both in the short term and in the long term at a time of world crisis, and under this scenario, how government policies to fight the virus have influenced the perception of citizen trust. This research contributes to the current investigations in relation to trust and COVID-

19 studying the impact of the rally effect in a coalition government and measuring the relationship between confidence in governments and government policies (lockdown). In addition, it is intended to provide new data on the duration of the rally effect in times of world crisis.

Context

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) recorded "more than 118,000 cases in 114 countries and 4,291 people lost their lives." At that time, the WHO "made the assessment that COVID-19 can be characterized as a pandemic" (WHO, 2020). In Spain, the pandemic began a few days before with the first cases registered in the Canary Islands. On March 13, President Sánchez announced the state of alarm, an exceptional mechanism when it is "impossible to maintain normality through the ordinary powers of the competent authorities" (BOE, 1981). By that time, Spain already registered more than 7,400 cases. The second announcement was made on October 25, 2020, the president decided in the Council of Ministers this decision "to give full constitutional protection to the necessary measures against the pandemic in the Autonomous Communities" (La Moncloa, 2020). The third state of alarm was declared on November 3, 2020, as an extension of the second until May 9, 2021 (La Moncloa, 2020).

The state of alarm is considered a way of doing politics to fight against the COVID-19 pandemic because it allows the reduction of rights and freedoms of citizens to avoid crowds or numerous meetings. This measure ultimately consists of reducing entertainment and leisure activities between people as much as possible so that the virus spreads as little as possible. Some of the measures that have been taken during the state of alarm to combat the virus are the curfew and the reduction of mobility in certain areas and times. Also, this legal tool also allows to practice "temporary requisitions of all kinds of goods and impose mandatory personal benefits; Intervene and temporarily occupy industries, factories, workshops, farms or premises of any nature, with the exception of private homes; or limit or ration the use of services or the consumption of basic necessities" (BOE, 1981). However, none of these last three actions have been carried out during the pandemic.

Therefore, the declaration of the state of alarm is considered as a policy to fight against the coronavirus because it allows reducing the mobility of people through selective or general lockdowns based on epidemiological data, and even establishing curfews both to national level as autonomic.

The reason why Spain is the object of study is directly related to the position of the political opposition regarding the management of the pandemic, and on the other hand, the numbers of infected and deceased. These two features motivate the research to consider it necessary to study trust in Pedro Sánchez from two different perspectives. On the one hand, Spain is considered one of the worst managers of the crisis according to the political opposition, they judge this management as the worst in the world based on the Cambridge University report (Sachs et al. 2020). Precisely because of the management, the conservative political party VOX decided to impeach the coalition government to “kick out the criminal socio-communist government” (La Vanguardia, 2020). However, it was not successful. On the other hand, in terms of numbers, Spain accumulates as of February 18, 2021, more than three million infected and more than 66,000 deaths according to WHO. These numbers point to Spain as the seventh country with the most infections in the world and the tenth with the most deaths (WHO,2021).

Rally Effect Theory

The rally round the flag effect surges for the first time when Mueller (1970) seeks to predict presidential popularity related to the Truman administration in 1945 through the Johnson administration in 1969 which popularity was asked 300 times to the citizenry. The scholar establishes four independent variables to predict the popularity: the coalition of minorities, rally round the flag effect, economic slump, and the war. For Mueller, some international events result in a “‘rally round the flag’ effect which tends to give a boost to the President’s popularity rating” (Mueller, 1970:21). Thus, the author developed three characteristics to identify rallies events: a rally event should be a) international; b) involving the United States of America and the president directly; and it must be c) “specific, dramatic, and sharply focused” (Mueller, 1970:21). The reason why the rally must be international and involves the

USA and the president is that conflicts between third parties may not be relevant for most Americans, and it may divide the population in terms of loyalty. Finally, the rally event must be specific, dramatic, and sharp to achieve total attention and interest by the citizens (Mueller, 1970).

Hence, 34 rallies were identified and classified into six different categories: (1) Four military interventions by American troops, (2) Major military advances in ongoing wars, (3) Major diplomatic developments at that time, (4) Two concrete dramatic technological development, (5) Meetings between head-leader of the US and Soviet Union, (6) The start of the presidential term (as analytic convenience). Finally, Mueller suggests that the rally round the flag effect is measured in terms of length of time, expressed in years since the last event; and two variables were created to generate differences in the coefficient analysis: "good" and "bad". Thus, it would be how the public would react to international events (Mueller, 1970). The results of the Mueller study indicate that the rally-around-the-flag effect "predicts short term boosts in a President's popularity whenever there occurs an international crisis or a similar event. The variable proves to be a sturdy one and suggests a popular decline. of about five or six percentage points for every year since the last "rally point" (Mueller, 1970:34).

Later, Lee's (1977) purpose of his research was to examine the impact of major international events on presidential popularity to identify any pattern of the public's reaction to the President. The way to do it was by selecting classes of important events for the public and examining the impact of these events on presidential popularity. Thus, the scholar selected 53 major international events between the Roosevelt administration through the Ford administration classifying them into six categories such events. (1) The outbreak of wars or military crises involving the real or potential intervention of American troops, (2) End of war conflict or reconciliation or major international conflict involving American resources, (3) Summit conferences between the USA and third powers, (4) New initiatives in foreign policy with wide public attention, (5) International "setbacks" or accomplishments, (6) Events involving the President (such as attempts or real assassination) (Lee, 1977).

The study hypothesis consists of that "presidential popularity tends to go up immediately after a major international event and slips back after a brief period of time" (Lee, 1977:253).

The scholar offers two different explanations for it. First, the public tends to support the presidential action regardless of the content, due to the lack of information there is no chance to evaluate it. When it comes to foreign policy, the administration is the only owner of the information, therefore, the author mentions that the initial reaction from the public is to give the president the benefit of the doubt. "A careful examination of available Gallup polls on major foreign policy issues of the past three decades shows that the majority of the public (with a few exceptions) supported presidential action in foreign policy at its initial stage" (Lee,1977:253). This argument is developed concerning the "opinion leadership" school years later. The second explanation provided for the hypothesis suggests that during international crisis events, the President is the main actor and represents and symbolizes unity and power.

During these events, the presidential performance is judged on average and it is the result of the increase in approval or trust. "The average man's reaction will include a feeling of patriotism in supporting presidential action, a desire not to hurt a President's chance of success" (Lee,1977:253). This feeling of patriotism is suggested as a cause of the rally round the effect by the patriotism school in the 90s. Lee's (1977) findings suggest that "a President can count on increased popularity after a salient international event, but he cannot expect it to last for very long".

Kernell (1978) studied presidential popularity concerning real events and conditions and how popularity responds to environmental change. The author states that Mueller's work relies too much on the time variable as an explanatory variable. Nevertheless, the results of his study showed that the value of time is low as substantially. However, Kernell (1978) uses 'short term surge' as a variable to explain his hypothesis, which is related to the rally round the flag variable presented by Mueller. "Students of public opinion have noticed over the years that during periods of international crisis the public tends to rally behind the president" (Kernell, 1978:512). Kernell's findings suggest that "during the first month of a rally event, each president's popularity sharply improved by about 5 to 7 percentage points on the average". Furthermore, the author points out that Kennedy obtained great support from public opinion during the first two years of his government "product of a series of dramatic international crises" (Kernell, 1978: 518).

Baker and ONeal (2001:661) defined the rally effect as “the propensity for the American public to put aside political differences and support the president during international crises”. The authors' study is based on the relationship between the rally round the flag effect and the use of force by the government. The scholars indicate two possible origins for the rally effect according to Brody (1991) and Zaller (1992). First, the patriotism explanation which is related to the patriotism school. “In times of foreign policy crisis, when important political, economic, or strategic interests of the nation are at stake, the public will focus uncritically on and united behind the commander-in-chief in a show of patriotic support” (Baker and ONeal, 2001:667). Second, the opinion leadership explanation is based on the limitation of information in times of foreign policy crises. When the public has no access to information and the possibility to create an opinion, they must trust the administration as a source of information. Thus, “the public is led to assume that there is a consensus among political leaders on the issue and to support the president, even if they would otherwise be inclined to oppose him” (Baker and ONeal, 2001:668). Finally, the results of the study prove that Mueller (1973), Lee (1977), and Kernell (1978) studies are influenced by their methodology. Besides, the use of force does not indicate a boost in presidential popularity. On the other hand, the results suggest that the patriotism explanation about the rally effect does not appear well-founded. The public will rally behind the president due to the information provided instead of patriotism (Baker and ONeal, 2001).

Hetherington and Nelson (2003:37) studied the rally-round-the-flag effect related to 9/11 and defined similarly to others the rally effect as “the sudden and substantial increase in public approval of the president that occurs in response to certain kinds of dramatic international events involving the United States”. These scholars propose as the cause of the rally effect the patriotism school and the opinion leadership school. The explanatory cause of the rally effect in terms of patriotic feeling “holds that in times of international crisis Americans rally to the president as the anthropomorphic symbol of national unity a kind of living flag” Hetherington and Nelson (2003:37). On the other hand, the opinion leadership school suggests that “leaders' unwillingness to criticize leaves journalists with nothing to report and citizens with nothing to read, see, or hear that is not supportive of the president” Hetherington and Nelson (2003:38).

Because of the rally effect applied to the 9/11 case, the results suggest that the trust in the government suffered a considerable raise. The scholars point out that the percentage of public trust before the attacks was at 30%. “Bush's approval rating soared in the Gallup Poll from 51% on September 10 to 86% on September 15” (Hetherington and Nelson, 2003:37). However, there was a slow decrease after the attacks until it stabilized but “between September and December 2001, the percentage of trusting responses fell to 49%, a drop of 15 points” (Hetherington and Nelson, 2003:40). Their analysis regarding rally's causes proves partial support for the patriotism school concerning the origin of rallies (why) while opposition leadership schools explain the duration of the effect (Hetherington and Nelson, 2003).

Dinesen and Jaeger (2013) observed the terrorist attacks of March 11, 2004, in relation to institutional trust. The authors establish as a variant of the rally effect the increase of confidence in the government in contexts of terror. On the other hand, they establish that the effect rally on the institutions reflects patriotism as well as a collective feeling of identity in relation to the capacity of the institutions to react to a national threat. Scholars use data collected from different waves of the Eurobarometer survey. They measure institutional trust both before the attacks and afterward to observe the impact of the terrorist attack on public confidence. The results show that the government increased its confidence by 15%, taking fourteen months to return to the confidence levels prior to the attack. “There is strong evidence of a rally effect since trust in most institutions increased dramatically in the immediate wake of the 3/11” (Dinesen and Jaeger, 2013:921).

In general, Mueller (1970), Lee (1977) and Kernell (1978) agree that the rally effect is an event that occurs suddenly and for a short period of time, increasing the confidence of the president of the United States as a result of an international event. Baker and Oneal (2001) point to the role of citizens in times of crisis stating that they put aside their differences during times of international crisis to support the president due to the distribution of information from official sources. Hetherington and Nelson (2003); and Dinesen and Jaeger (2013) establish very similar definitions to the previously mentioned authors, but they discern about the duration of the rally effect. Hetherington and Nelson (2003) discovered in the 9/11 attacks that it took 10 months for trust in President Bush to return to pre-attack levels. Dinesen and

Jaeger (2013) observed in their study of the terrorist attacks on Madrid on March 11 that it took 14 months for levels of trust in the government to return to pre-attack levels. Taking all these aspects into account, the rally effect is a phenomenon that arises in moments of both national and international crisis where citizens perceive their nation attacked or at risk and react by supporting their leader by showing confidence, sometimes being more durable than others.

Previous Research: Trust and COVID-19.

Several recent studies have investigated the relationship between the rally effect and COVID-19. Hamanaka (2020) has studied the support of Israeli citizens for Prime Minister Netanyahu during the first wave of the coronavirus. Hamanaka has studied the effect of two actions developed by the government. First, to survey the population during the first wave of infection, and secondly, the application of a special policy to stop the virus. Thus, the results of the study show the possibility of carrying out "discoveries about the conditions under which a society supports its political leaders in the face of a national crisis" (Hamanaka, 2020:1).

Garrido et al. (2020) in their study about COVID19 and the rally-around-the-flag effect in Spain, redefine the concept of the 'rally round the flag' effect in multiparty systems and, on the other hand, analyze the effects of the rally effect, which can be direct, increasing "the popularity, appreciation or confidence of the president who is facing a serious crisis"; and an inverse effect over the confidence in opposition leaders, "defined as a decrease in popularity, appreciation or confidence in their leaders due to their attitude during the crisis" (Garrido et al. 2020:538). Finally, the research offers three political causes for the rally effect in the Spanish context: the weakness of the government; opposition support; and affective polarization.

Parsons and Wiggins (2020) researched during the lockdown in May the levels of trust in the British government of five different age groups in the UK. The results suggest that those over 50 years of age tend to have high levels of trust in the government, while those under 30 tend to have minimum levels of trust. "Members of the three older generations surveyed (ages 74,

62, and 50) reported the highest levels of trust in government in contrast to their younger counterparts (ages 30 and 19)" (Parsons & Wiggins, 2020:10).

Esaiasson et al. (2020) have conducted a study about how Swedish citizens "updated their institutional and interpersonal trust as the corona crisis evolved from an initial phase to an acute phase in the spring of 2020" (Esaiasson et al. 2020:1). They use a large web-survey panel in which the same respondents were interviewed in two different periods of time. Thus, the scholars conclude that the coronavirus crisis increases levels of institutional and interpersonal trust. Regarding the rally effect, they suggest that "the rally effect is clearly stronger for trust in government authorities than for interpersonal trust in unknown others" (Esaiasson et al. 2020:9).

The recent literature has dug into more concrete aspects of the pandemic. A couple of different studies have confirmed a positive relation between lockdown measures and confidence in the government. Bol et al. (2020) have researched the effect of COVID-19 lockdowns on political support studying the political attitudes of citizens from 15 different western European countries. The scholars have used a web-based survey to analyze the samples from before and after the lockdowns. The results suggest that "it shows that lockdowns have increased satisfaction with democracy by 2.8–3.2 percent and trust in government by 2.4–3.2 percent" (Bol et al. 2020:5). The authors raise the credibility of the results changing the treatment variable by other policies such as school closure and workplace closure, however, they confirm a null effect and the lockdown policy as an indicator of political support. The article concludes by considering the lockdowns necessary for the population and therefore showing confidence towards the institutions. "It seems that citizens have understood that strict social containment was necessary, and have rewarded governments that decide to enforce it, at least in the short term. Furthermore, our findings suggest that it has had a positive spillover effect on support for democracy and its institutions" (Bol et al. 2020:6).

Sibley et al. (2020) describe the effects of the coronavirus pandemic and nationwide lockdowns in relation to institutional trust and attitudes toward the government, nation, well-being, and health in New Zealand. The scholars used a national longitudinal panel study of social attitudes, personality, and health outcomes, which sample corresponds to 1003

participants interviewed before the lockdown and during the first 18 days of the confinement. Finally, the results point out an increase in trust in politicians during the lockdown where the levels of trust in politicians prior to lockdown was 3.69, reaching 4.14 for the lockdown-group. They conclude by stating that taking a proper national measure to fight the virus triggers the acceptance of any governmental policy, while the inaction will trigger confrontation and conspiracy. "Our results raise the possibility that a strong national response to COVID-19, bolstering national attachment, may serve to promote adherence to lockdown and health guidelines. The absence of such a response, however, may provide fertile ground for division, lack of adherence to guidelines, and conspiracy theories" (Sibley et al. 2020:628).

Baekgaard et al. (2020) have researched to what extent the rally effect is related to lockdowns. They interviewed 2,125 unemployed citizens from Denmark before and after the announcement of the lockdown on March 11, 2020, collecting such data by an online survey. The results confirm an increase in the Prime Minister's administration trust by 34%. "From before to after the announcement, average trust in the administration increased from 4.16 to 5.57 on a scale from 0 (no trust at all) to 10 (complete trust)" (Baekgaard et al. 2020:14).

Nevertheless, a study conducted in the Netherlands totally suggests the opposite. Schraff (2020) compares the lockdown effect to the dynamic of the pandemic. The main argument establishes the increase of political trust driven by the rise of COVID-19 cases instead of lockdown measures. For the scholar, emotions such as uncertainty trigger a rally around the flag dynamic conducted by the growth of cases. The study is based on a representative Dutch survey of 1600 participants in March 2020, which data was collected within the LISS Panel hosted by CenterData at Tilburg University. According to this data, the results show that the lockdown effect was not directly related to political trust formation. As far as the coronavirus cases increase the political trust does. "Dutch survey data collected during March 2020 suggest that the lockdown was irrelevant for political trust formation. Accounting for nonlinearities and interactions in the statistical model of trust suggests that the accumulation of Covid-19 infections increased political trust" (Sibley, 2020:11).

Discussing the causal model

On the one hand, the following discussion consists of the explanation of factors and events that took place during the period under study. Thus, this thesis shows a possible relationship between trust in the president of the government and the degree of trust in the government's policies, however, this relationship is not aimed to be presented as causality due to the existence of other events that could alter the confidence indicators in President Sánchez. On the other hand, the relationship between trust in the government and trust in the president is clarified.

First, the first events that may affect confidence in President Sánchez began in 2018 when Sánchez impeached Mariano Rajoy. After reaching the presidency of the government, Sánchez decided not to call elections until June 2020. During this first term, the president managed to develop some policies such as increasing the professional minimum wage (El Español, 2018) or strengthening the historical memory law (La Vanguardia, 2018). However, it was not able to reach a consensus to approve the general state budgets, so Spain was called to the polls. After elections, no party reaches the number of votes necessary to form a government, so other elections were held in November 2019. This time, the socialist party managed to reach a government pact with the forces of the Spanish left such as "Podemos", the Catalan and Basque independence left, and the Basque nationalist party, among others (Antena3, 2020).

The factors and events that may have affected confidence in the president of the government have also occurred during the pandemic. The socialist government has been criticized for the lack of medical supplies during the first wave of the pandemic; the collapse of hospital care; scams in the purchase of medical supplies; the problem of the number of deaths due to COVID-19; or the confrontation between the central government and communities since the beginning of the pandemic (Ramos, 2020; Villar, 2021; Borraz, 2020; Pinheiro, 2020; Calvo, 2020; EFE, 2020). All these events taken together, could lead to an alteration in the confidence of the president. Thus, trust in Sánchez is not based on a single event or on the relationship that exists between two variables, since there is both a great context and a series of events that lead citizens to place or not trust Pedro Sánchez.

The general logic that explains the relationship between trust in the president of the government and trust in policies to fight the coronavirus emerge from previous investigations. Bol et al. (2020), Sibley (2020), and Baekgaard et al. (2020) have concluded their studies by establishing relationships between the measures that governments have carried out to fight

the pandemic (lockdowns) and the increase in citizens' trust in political leaders. Thus, what is intended in this study is to choose the case of Spain, where lockdowns can only be done under a legal mechanism called a state of alarm, and study it in relation to the degree of trust that citizens have. Therefore, the degree of confidence in government policies to fight the coronavirus has been chosen as an independent variable, with this measure being the state of alarm. For this, a regressive study has been carried out to statistically ensure that there is a relationship between the variables mentioned above. However, the study can only be carried out for the first state of alarm because there is no data to develop the subsequent two.

To conclude, the variable trust in the prime minister may be affected by multiple factors. This thesis aims to observe the durability of the rally effect in the confidence of the president in the first place, and on the other hand, to observe how confidence in the president of the government could vary depending on the degree of confidence of citizens in the government's policies to fight the virus. Therefore, although the relationship between variables is positive, it does not mean that the relationship is causal because other factors could have directly affected said relationship.

Aim & Research Questions

Multiple authors have investigated the impact of international crises on trust in leaders, confirming that there is an increase in said trust. Also, recent studies have reflected the positive effect that lockdowns have on confidence in the government. However, this study has found a lack of research on the impact of the rally effect in specific areas of the world, such as Spain. In addition, there is a lack of study regarding the scope of measures to combat the pandemic, such as lockdowns, on building trust in governments. For this, this study aims to cover these needs observed based on previous studies.

First, this research will study the impact of the rally effect in the case of Spain for a year, providing added value to science since Garrido et al. (2020) for example, they only study the rally effects until June 2020, while this study extends the data collected until January 2021, providing analysis for the short and long term. Furthermore, due to the birth of the term rally effect was born in a bipartisan American culture, studying the case of Spain is innovative because the coalition government is based on the support of a group of left-wing parties,

unlike the rest of the countries studied where majority governments prevail. Secondly, the absence of an analysis that relates the declaration of the state of alarm with the confidence in the president of the government will suppose a new scenario of knowledge and analysis for the social sciences, since it is something new. And third, the knowledge emanating from this work will contribute to the current investigations in relation to trust and COVID-19 studying the impact of the rally effect in a coalition government and analyzing the relationship between confidence in governments and government policies (lockdown). In addition, the data obtained will provide new knowledge about the duration of the rally effect in different contexts.

It is known that Mueller (1970), Lee (1977), Kernell (1978), Baker and Oneal (2001), Hetherington and Nelson (2003), and Dinesen and Jaeger (2013) have established that during moments of international crisis or moments of national crisis, such as a terrorist attack (Hetherington and Nelson, 2003; Dinesen, 2013), there has been a rally effect causing the confidence of the political leader to increase exponentially, being in some situations more durable than in others. Mueller (1970), Lee (1977), Kernell (1978), Baker and Oneal (2001) state that the durability of the rally effect is very short, even claiming that it lasts only one month. Meanwhile, there are other authors (Hetherington and Nelson, 2003; Dinesen, 2013) who have studied a much longer durability, however, the cases studied have experienced the same peak of confidence growth in the first month. Considering the COVID-19 pandemic as an international event that directly affects the president due to the dramatic and fierceness of the events (Mueller, 1970) this study aims to find out the durability of the rally effect applied to the public's trust in President Pedro Sánchez. Thus, the following question will be answered:

RQ1: To what extent is the rally effect perdurable in confidence towards Pedro Sánchez?

On the other hand, the studies by Bol et al. (2020), Sibley (2020), and Baekgaard et al. (2020) have shown how the effects of taking measures against COVID-19 such as lockdowns have caused the population to trust more both the government and politicians. Because lockdowns are considered as a measure of activity in the fight against the coronavirus, the declaration of the state of alarm is taken as a said measure, since it is a legislative tool to apply policies. In

this way, it is proposed to study the relationship between lockdowns and trust in the president of the government of Spain in three specific moments in which it is decided to establish the state of alarm. Therefore, it is intended to answer the following question:

RQ2: How has Pedro Sánchez's confidence been affected after the declarations of the states of alarm?

Method

The main method used for the two objects of study will be the quantitative method of surveys. The data are obtained from the barometer carried out by the sociological research center (CIS in Spanish). It is an autonomous body that depends on the ministry of the presidency. The CIS monthly barometers consist of a survey, with a standardized questionnaire, carried out with the same methodology. These questionnaires contain a set of fixed questions from which the “barometer indicators” are elaborated. In addition to these, each barometer contains another block of variable questions, which each time is dedicated to a topic of political or social interest. “The barometer is characterized by the following elements: a) Personal survey carried out in households; b) developed at the national level (Spain); c) The universe is the Spanish population over 18 years of age; d) The size of the sample of 2,500 ultimate units or individuals, subject to modifications caused by exceptions depending on the objective; and e) Proportional allocation (If the electoral population in a community is 10% of the electoral population in the whole of Spain, it will correspond to 10% of the sample.)” (CIS). On the other hand, the research center establishes the multi-stage sampling procedure, stratified by conglomerates, with selection of the primary sampling units (municipalities) and of the secondary units (sections) in a proportional random way, and of the last units (individuals) by random routes and sex and age quotas. The strata have been formed by crossing the 17 autonomous communities with the size of the habitat divided into seven categories: less than or equal to 2,000 inhabitants; from 2,001 to 10,000; from 10,001 to 50,000; from 50,001 to 100,000; from 100,001 to 400,000; from 400,001 to 1,000,000; and more than 1,000,000 inhabitants.

The period under study ranges from July 2018, the first barometer since Sánchez impeached Mariano Rajoy, to the last study carried out by the CIS in January 2021. However, for the period prior to the outbreak of the pandemic, the barometer does not include the question under study regarding the degree of trust in Pedro Sánchez in all the questionnaires. The barometers used are study No. 3219 (July 1st-10th, 2018. N= 2,485); study No. 3226 (October 1st-10th, 2018. N= 2,973); study No. 3238 (January 1st-13th, 2019. N= 2,989); study No. 3257 (July 1st-11th, 2019. N= 2,952); study No. 3261 (September 1st-18th, 2019. N= 5,906); study No. 3267 (October 28th to November 3rd, 2019 / November 4th-9th, 2019. N= 4,808); study No. 3271 (January 2nd-13th, 2020. N= 2,909); study No. 3273 (February 1st-11th, 2020. N= 2,957); study No. 3277 (March 1st-13th, 2020. N= 3,912); study No. 3279 (March 30th to April 7th, 2020. N= 3,000); study No. 3281 (May 4th-13th, 2020. N= 3,800); study No. 3283 (June 1st-9th, 2020. N= 4,258); study No. 3288 (July 1st-9th, 2020. N= 3,032); study No. 3292 (September 1st-7th, 2020. N=2,904); study No. 3296 (October 1st-7th, 2020. N=2,924); study No. 3300 (November 3rd-12th, 2020. N= 3,853); study No. 3303 (December 1st-9th, 2020. N= 3,817); study No. 3307 (January 7th-25th, 2021. N= 3,862). The dates indicated in parentheses indicate the days on which the data was collected and the samples, and the presentation of the results are in percentages.

Fieldwork is usually carried out during the first fifteen days of each month, with exceptions. In August no fieldwork is done. Finally, the sampling error, under the assumption of simple random sampling, stands at + 1.9% for the whole sample, for a confidence level of 95.5% (two sigmas), and the most unfavorable situation ($P = Q$) (CIS). “The selection process of the interviewees in the barometer has two parts, a probabilistic one (municipalities and sections, with probabilities proportional to the Spanish population aged 18 years and over) and a non-probabilistic one of random routes (selection of dwellings in the selected sections) and sex and age quotas (selection of individuals in the selected dwelling). This procedure means that the probability of selecting an individual in the sample is unknown and, to establish an error level, the hypothesis is considered that the selection made corresponds to a simple random sampling (where all the individuals in the sample are equally likely to be selected)” (Banco de datos, CIS)

Through this method, it is intended to achieve the goal of answering the first research question related to the impact of the rally effect on the figure of the president of the Spanish government, comparing confidence levels before and after the pandemic outbreak. Confidence in the president will be collected at levels prior to the pandemic since the impeachment in June 2018, corresponding to the months of July 2018, October 2018, January 2019, July 2019, September 2019, November 2019, January 2020, February 2020, and March 2020. Only the questionnaires with the specific question under study are included. Regarding the levels of confidence during the pandemic, the data is used from April 2020 to January 2021 except for the month of August. To measure trust in Pedro Sánchez, a specific question is being taken from the monthly barometer: *Does the President of the Government, Pedro Sánchez, inspire you, personally, a lot of confidence, pretty confidence, low or no confidence?* The answers offered to this question are the same as those in the statement, in addition to the options "don't know" or "don't answer".

When the question under study is translated, it is difficult to differentiate two terms that in Spanish if possible, the answers of those who have pretty confidence, and a lot of confidence will be grouped into a single group that corresponds to those who have 'full confidence'. On the other hand, the answers "don't know" and "don't answer" will be grouped under the category "DK / DA". The other answers will not undergo any modification.

Secondly, the barometer surveys will be used to measure the confidence that citizens have in Pedro Sánchez at the three specific moments of the announcement of the state of alarm. In this way, it is intended to measure the impact of the announcement of the state of alarm on confidence in the president of the government after two months. Two months of study are chosen since Bol et al. (2020), Sibley et al. (2020), and Baekgaard et al. (2020) establish that a month right after the declaration of lockdowns, an increase in confidence appears; in this case there will be two months to have a less limited vision. To do this, the same question will be chosen and the same process corresponding to the first research question will be carried out, but on specific dates. The first alarm status announcement was made in March 2020, so the barometers for April and May will be chosen to check the effect of the measure. The second state of alarm was declared on October 25, 2020, so the study barometers correspond to the month of November and December 2020. Finally, the third state of alarm was declared on

November 3, 2020, as an extension of the second, so the barometers for December 2020 and January 2021 will be analyzed. To show the results collected in the data tables that can be consulted in the appendix, the author himself elaborates some figures based on the data offered by the CIS.

Considering the state of alarm as a policy to fight the coronavirus, a regressive study will be conducted to strengthen the results offered by the surveys, as a complement. Furthermore, the analysis also shows the significance of choosing Pedro Sánchez as the study variable and not others such as the government or politicians. Thus, it is pretended to know both the relationship and the significance between variables. Hence, the dependent variable will be the degree of trust that citizens have in the president, which is measured with the following question: *Does the President of the Government, Pedro Sánchez, inspire you, personally, a lot of confidence, pretty confidence, low or no confidence?* The independent variable expressed as the degree of trust in government policies to stop the virus, it is measured as *The policy that the current government is following to fight COVID-19, does it deserve you pretty confidence, a lot of trust, little or no trust?* For a better understanding of the data and results presented, the same synthesis procedure of the answers previously made will be carried out.

Regressive Model



Relationship between the dependent variable ‘trust in Pedro Sánchez’ and the independent variable ‘degree of trust in governments policies’.

Regression Study 1	Regression Study 2	Regression Study 3
State of Alarm	State of Alarm	State of Alarm
March 2020	October 2020	November 2020

It is recognized as a weakness of the study that the data obtained belong to a single source with a certain relationship with the government, however, this also shows the official quality

of the data. More details on weaknesses and strengths of the study are developed in the conclusions.

Finally, in the analysis section, a test of significance is included to establish the significant relationship between the changes in confidence in specific periods of time with a variation of ten percentage points. For this, the SPSS program has been used, recoding the confidence variable in Pedro Sánchez into two values: confidence and no confidence. Unlike the other values used during the investigation, this has been done for procedural reasons with SPSS. The time periods tested correspond to the months studied in the barometers: July 2018 - January 2019; July 2019 - November 2019; November 2019 - February 2020; March 2020 - April 2020; and July 2020 - January 2021.

Results

Trust and Rally effect.

Levels of Trust in Pedro Sánchez before the outbreak of COVID-19.

Figure 1 shows the evolution of confidence levels in Sánchez before the pandemic based on the total data (see Table 1), since he entered the government after impeaching Rajoy, until March 2020 when COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic. The socialist leader began his path in government with 28.8% of full confidence, however, more than 65% of the participants trusted little or nothing in Pedro Sánchez. During the following year in office, Sánchez increased the levels of trust over those who trusted little, but those citizens who did not trust the president were 2.6% more. Until July 2019, various events may explain the ups and downs in confidence, such as the elections of April 28, 2019; the setting of a minimum wage; or the failed negotiation of the general state budgets. However, since July 2019, the levels of trust in President Sánchez begin to decline until January 2020 (30.7 ↓ 25.9), and those with no confidence increase.

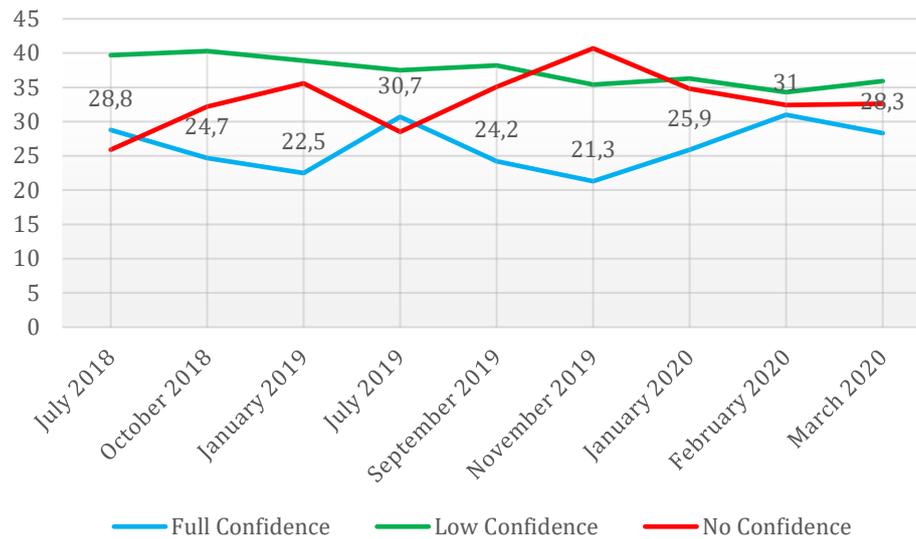


Figure 1. Trust in Pedro Sánchez before the outbreak of COVID-19. Source: CIS. Made by the author.

During the period July 2019 and January 2020, the elections of November 10 are held, which yield new data. These data are made visible by comparing the barometers made in November 2019 with that of January 2020, the period in which the coalition government between the socialist party and Podemos is formed. The level of full confidence increases by more than 4 percentage points, those who trust Pedro Sánchez a little rise 0.9, while the level of non-confidence plummets by 5.9% from November 2019 to January 2020.

The barometers for February and March 2020 measure Sánchez's confidence as president-elect in a coalition government for the first time in Spanish democracy, but two different flows of variation in confidence can be observed. From January 2020 to February 2020, trust indices increase, participants who trust the president little are less, and those who do not directly trust are the same number as those with little confidence. Thereby, an increase in public confidence in the new government can be observed. However, from February to March 2020, Sánchez loses full confidence, gaining points for those who have little confidence in him, while those who do not trust the president remain.

In conclusion, the level of confidence in Sanchez before the pandemic, despite the fluctuations, remains stable at 28 percentage points, varying from July 2018 at 28.8% to March 2020 at 28.3%. The degree of low confidence in the president decreased 3.8% (39.7 ↓

35.9). Finally, it can be seen how the number of people who do not trust Pedro Sánchez in this period increased by 6.7% (25.9 \uparrow 32.6).

Levels of trust in Pedro Sánchez since the outbreak of COVID-19.

The evolution of public trust in Pedro Sánchez since the outbreak of the pandemic can be seen in Figure 2. The barometer for the month of April is the first to be done during the pandemic. Sánchez reaches 39% of full confidence in the first month of the pandemic, while the levels of low confidence and no confidence do not exceed 32%. In May, there is a decrease in confidence in Sánchez. Participants who feel low confidence (+ 1%) or no confidence (+ 1.2%) increase compared to last month. In June, the third month of the pandemic punishes the president by reducing his levels of trust and increasing those who do not trust him, while those who have a little confidence in the president was less so.

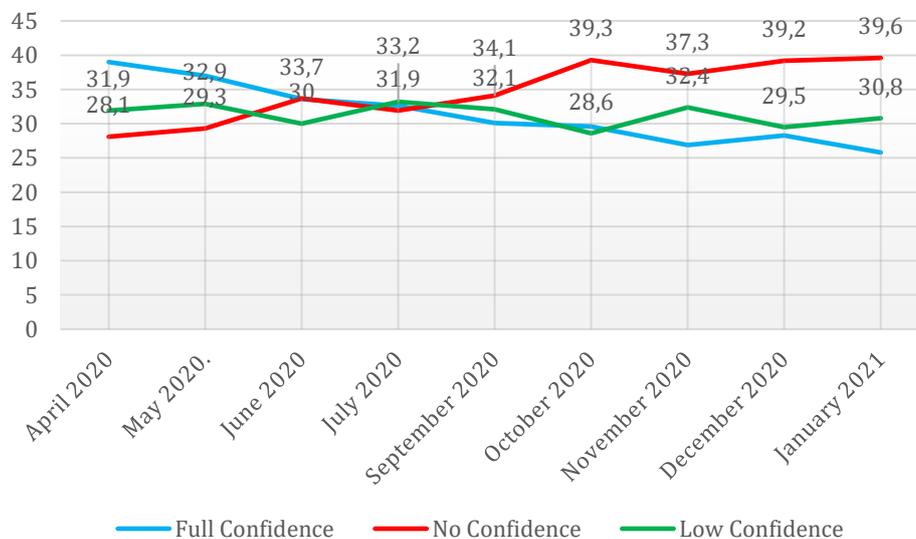


Figure 2. Trust in Pedro Sánchez since the outbreak of COVID-19. Source: CIS. Made by the author.

With the beginning of the summer, the confidence indicator suffered a loss of full confidence (-3.5%). The drop in confidence was noticeable in those people who had little confidence in the president, increasing by two percentage points from June to September 2020. However, the levels of non-confidence increased slightly. At the end of the summer, the month of October showed a slight decrease in both those who fully trust and those who have little confidence, however, a large increase in distrust is observed (\uparrow 5.2 %).

During the month of November 2020, both the levels of full trust and those who do not trust Sánchez suffer a decrease. However, there is a rise of four percentage points for those who have some confidence in the president. The last barometer of 2020 showed good results for Sánchez. Small increase in the indices of full confidence, there are fewer who have little confidence in the president but a few more who do not have any confidence. Finally, in January 2021, the socialist president suffered a drop in the levels of full confidence. On the other hand, the number of people who have little trust in Sánchez increased slightly, while the levels of non-trust remained practically the same with just a 0.4% increase.

To sum up, from the beginning of the pandemic until January 2021, President Sánchez lost 14.8% of full confidence while the indicators of those people who do not have confidence in him increased by 11.5%. Nonetheless, there is a rally effect just after the first month of the pandemic with an increase in confidence of more than 10 points. On the other hand, those with a little confidence increased by just over one percentage point.

Total evolution of trust in Pedro Sánchez.

The general results of trust in Pedro Sánchez (figure 3) from July 2018 to January 2021 show that the president of the government has lost the trust of the citizens since he entered Moncloa. The indices of full confidence in July 2018 were at 28.8%, decreasing slightly to 25.8% in January 2021. The little confidence that citizens have in President Sánchez has also been decreased by 8.9% (39.7 ↓ 30.8). However, the rise is found in the population's non-confidence values, when in July 2018 there were 25.9% of participants who did not trust Sánchez, up to 39.6% in January 2021.

However, regarding the question about *to what extent the rally effect is perdurable in confidence towards Pedro Sánchez*, the values are perfectly observable if we take as a reference the month before, March 2020. Here, Sánchez had the full confidence of 28.3% of the participants of the barometer increasing 10.7% in a matter of one month. Thus, it can be affirmed that the COVID-19 pandemic in its beginnings was positive for the confidence towards the president. Furthermore, this confidence can be observed in the decrease in the

levels of those who had little confidence (-4%) as well as the decrease in those who did not trust anything (-4.5%).

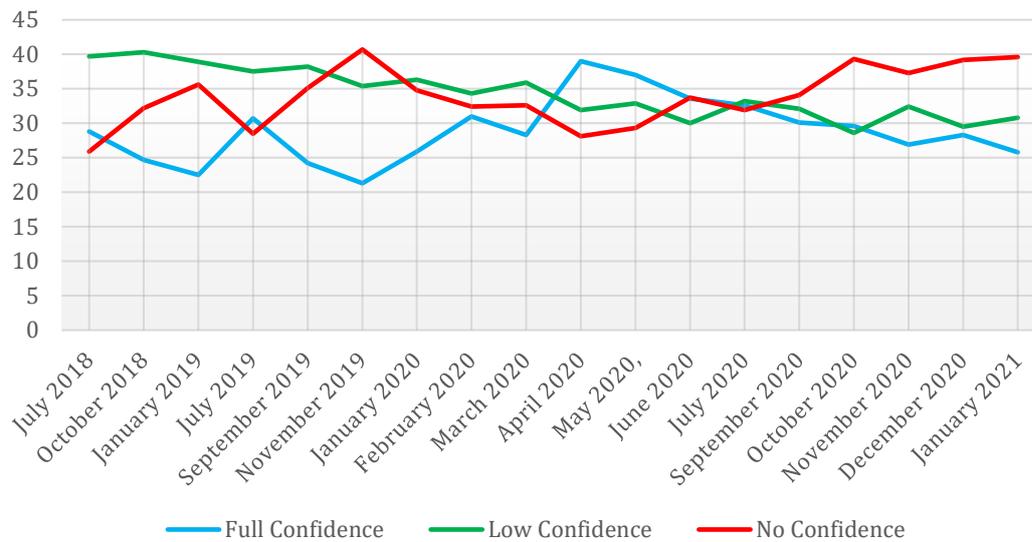


Figure 3. Total trust in Pedro Sánchez. Source: CIS. Made by the author.

As a result, it can be concluded that Pedro Sánchez experiences the rally effect during the first month of the pandemic seeing a considerable increase in confidence, which begins to decrease progressively until October / November when it reaches confidence levels prior to the pandemic.

Trust and State of alarm

This second part of the research analyzes the relationship between the trust in the president and the policies applied by the government (state of alarm). The first state of alarm was declared after the declaration of the COVID-19 as a pandemic by the WHO, concretely March 14th, 2020. Figure 4 (see appendix) shows the evolution of the degree of trust in the president from March to May 2020.

The president of the government announces the state of alarm with a 28.3% of full confidence in the month of March, a 35.9% of low confidence and more than 30% of people who did not trust him. The following month, all the confidence indicators underwent a notable change in favor of the Prime Minister. The degree of full confidence increases; those who trust Pedro Sánchez a little are 4% less, while those who did not trust another 4.5%. Faced with this rise

experienced in April, in the month of May the dynamics of the indicators changed. Participants who have full confidence in the president are 2% less than the previous month; The low trust rate increased by one percentage point and the number of citizens who did not trust Sánchez increased (\uparrow 1.4%).

Figure 5 (see appendix) offers an evolutionary view of confidence after the second state of alarm, varying in three months. The second state of alarm was announced 7 months later, on October 25, 2020. At that time Sánchez had the confidence of 29.6% of the participants, one point less was those who had little confidence in him, but 39.3% of those responding citizens did not trust Sánchez. The following month, in November, there was a drop (\downarrow 2.7%) in the level of full confidence while the degree of low confidence increased by 3.8%. Those who have no confidence at all decrease by two percentage points. However, the evolution of confidence from November to December undergoes a positive change for the president as full confidence rises from 26.9% to 28.3%; citizens who have little confidence are 2.9% less than the previous month, but those who do not have confidence increase slightly ($+$ 1.9%).

Finally, it can be observed how confidence varies in the months after the announcement of the third state of alarm as an extension of the second (figure 6, see appendix). As previously mentioned, the full confidence levels from November to December increase from 26.9% to 28.3%; the indicator of low confidence decreases (-2.9%) and there are more (\uparrow 2.9%) who do not have confidence towards Pedro Sánchez. However, from December 2020 to January 2021 there are changes against confidence in the president since the degree of full confidence decreases more than two points; those who have a little confidence are slightly more than 1% and the population that does not trust anything increases slightly.

Regression Analysis: State of Alarm and Trust.

The relationship between trust in Sánchez and trust in the government's policies is presented in table 4 (see appendix). The relationship between the variables is positive, so for each unit that the dependent variable increases, the independent variable will increase by 0.468. On the other hand, the model shows a significant percentage in explaining the variation of the response variable ($R^2 = 37\%$).

In May 2020, for each unit that the dependent variable increases, the independent variable will increase by 0.436, thus, the relationship between variables decreases from 0.468 to 0.436, but still maintain a positive relation. The variable 'trust in government's policies' can explain the variation of trust in Pedro Sánchez by 39.4%, which means an increase of 2.4% in one month. Therefore, if the population has pretty or a lot of trust in the government's policies, trust in Pedro Sánchez will grow in the same way.

This analysis corresponds to the first state of alarm and it is not possible to develop the same study for the second and third state of alarm because there is no data due to the barometer does not ask for the degree of trust in government's policies regarding said states of alarm. However, these results suggest the existence of a positive relationship between these two variables and therefore the reason why Pedro Sánchez is studied instead of the government or other actors.

Analysis

Trust and the Rally Effect

The levels of confidence that Sánchez had from his beginning as president until March 2020 has been full of peaks. Although it is true that the question of confidence in the barometer was not asked in a regular way, the ups and downs in the degree of confidence are visible in figure 1. The level of full confidence increases exponentially during the first year of mandate, however, it begins to decline until March, despite the confidence peaks reached, they were never like in July 2019 with 30.7%. However, it can be seen in the long term that the degree of full confidence in Sánchez only decreased by 0.5% in more than a year and a half as president.

If the indicator of low confidence is observed, it is striking that the variation suffered throughout the presidency does not consist of large peaks except from September to November 2019 (-2.8%) and from January to February 2020 (-2 %), so a progressive decreasing trend can be observed in those citizens who had a little confidence in Pedro Sánchez.

The level of non-confidence is similar to the first mentioned. The trend during the president's term prior to the pandemic in those who did not have confidence in him consists of a large peak that occurs from July 2019 to November 2019, which produces an increase of 12.2%. This indicator has large increases but also large decreases, however, the trend shows that more people decided not to trust Pedro Sánchez in March 2020 than in July 2018. It should be noted that all the confidence variations during the period prior to the start of the pandemic have a statistical significance as they have a value less than .05 (see appendix, figure 7).

Then came the pandemic and the rally effect. The rally effect occurs during the first month of the pandemic in Spain with a 10.7% rise in confidence in Pedro Sánchez, a peak never experienced before by the president. From a statistical perspective, the confidence peak reached from March to April has statistical significance despite having slightly higher values (.009) than those of previous analyzes, but it is still significant (see appendix, figure 7). Another evidence that argues for the existence of the rally effect is the drop in the levels of low confidence and non-confidence, which automatically decrease with the onset of the pandemic until June / July, when the process is reversed, increasing their percentages again.

Since May, full confidence in President Sánchez begins to decline slightly until November 2020, but manages to increase the following month, reaching 28.3%. At this time, the degree of confidence in Pedro Sánchez reaches the level before the pandemic registered in March 2020 (28.3%), with the rally effect lasting from April to December.

On the other hand, the low confidence indicator shows the same trend as it did before the pandemic. A progress with small ups and downs that ends with fewer people trusting Sánchez a little than when the coronavirus began. The trend during the pandemic of citizens who had a little confidence is stable. However, the degree of non-confidence in the president decreased every month from April 2020 until it slowed down from July to September 2020. Since that moment, an ascent begins including a small dip, reaching almost 40% of the people interviewed who do not trust the president in the month of January 2021. Thus, it can be seen how from April 2020 to January in 2021, the sample that did not trust Sánchez increased by 11.5%. And if the confidence levels are observed from July 2020 to January 2021, these variations in trust and no trust in Pedro Sánchez are statistically significant as they have values below .05 (see appendix, figure 7).

Kernell (1978) pointed out that during the first month there is an increase of between 5% - 7% in confidence, while Sánchez achieved 10.5%. Lee (1977) concluded how the rally effect is fulfilled just after a moment of international crisis, but the president cannot expect it to last long. For the case of Spain, after March 11, it took 14 months to return to levels prior to the attack (Dinesen, 2013). In the case of Pedro Sánchez, it took 9 months to return to levels prior to the pandemic. Therefore, it can be concluded that the rally effect lasts for one month in Spain in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic because the following month the levels of full confidence begin to decrease slightly and progressively. However, the confidence accumulated in just one month takes around nine months to return to pre-pandemic levels, considering this time as the effects that the rally effect takes to disappear.

Trust and State of Alarm

The effects of the first state of alarm are evident in the month of April, increasing full confidence by more than ten points and decreasing the levels of mistrust and low confidence. From April to May, full public confidence fell slightly by two percentage points, while the other two indicators increased very slightly (barely + 1% each). Following this boost in confidence, the trend reversed in May, beginning a decline in full confidence and a slight increase in both the degree of low confidence in the president and no confidence. After the first announcement of the state of alarm, the trend in the levels of full confidence is upward, while for the indicators of low confidence and no confidence it is downward.

In October, the second state of alarm was announced, and the indicators show different changes. The degree of full confidence the month following the announcement is reduced. The effects of the new declaration of the state of alarm suggest that those who have little confidence have increased the percentage in November 2020 by 3.8% compared to the previous month. However, the new state of alarm meant a reduction in the rate of those who do not trust Sánchez. After this reaction, none of the three values is stable. Full confidence levels increase to previous levels; those who have little confidence decrease, and people who have no confidence increase by almost two points. Therefore, the effects of the declaration of the second state of alarm indicates a downward progress in the level of full confidence, a

slight increase in those who have a little confidence while those who do not trust Sánchez are practically the same.

The expansion of the second state of alarm causes the declaration of the third state of alarm in November 2020. The effects of this declaration are positive regarding the level of full confidence, since this indicator is increased by 1.4% per month after being announced, but it has a 2.5% drop in January 2021, so the drop is greater than the rise and in two months it has less confidence than when the state of alarm was announced. The sample of those who have a little confidence in the president decreases by almost three percent in reaction to the announcement, however, it has a small rebound in the month of January 2021, the negative trend being in two months due to the decrease that suffers. Finally, the progress of the non-confidence indicator is upward, which means that the effect of the third state of alarm is negative for the president because it only increases the number of people who do not have confidence in him during the two months studied. (+ 2.3%).

The declaration of the state of alarm has affected confidence in Pedro Sánchez in a different way. Sibley (2020) shows in its results that confidence in politicians increases by 12% after announcing the containment measures. Baekgaard et al. (2020) concludes that the difference between the confidence in the Prime Minister before and after the declaration of the confinements is a growth of 34%. Bol et al (2020) show that lockdowns represent 33% more trust in the government after their implementation. Thus, taking the month following the announcement of each state of alarm as a reference, the declaration of the first state of alarm represents an increase in confidence in Pedro Sánchez (+ 10.7%). The second state of alarm indicates that confidence is increased in global terms, since confidence levels decrease by 2.7% but low confidence levels increase by 3.8%, therefore, being both confidence levels, a general increase of 1.1% could be estimated. Finally, the third state of alarm points out that there is no increase in confidence because the relationship between full confidence (\uparrow 1.4%) and low confidence (\downarrow 2.9%) is negative, in addition, the non-confidence indicator increases by 1.9%, thus, the declaration of the last state of alarm does not imply an increase in confidence.

Conclusion

This research has concluded with results that provide new data to the study of confidence in relation to the coronavirus pandemic and the relation between policies to fight the virus and population trust. The results shown must be analyzed with caution due to the novelty of the matter and that the pandemic has not ended, and consequently the data continues to grow, being interpretable in the long term as well.

The study of trust in President Sánchez from July 2018 to January 2021 is a very long study period that perfectly shows the variation in trust and consequently what the appearance of the rally effect looks like. Therefore, this first part of the research shows that the rally effect arises in a period of international crisis, as the theorists claim, and provides the social sciences with the specific duration of said effect at a specific time in a concrete country. The collection of these data provides a unique value for future confidence studies that need this information due to the specificity and precision of the data over time.

The research indicates that there is a clear rally effect in the Pedro Sánchez government in the month immediately after the declaration of the pandemic, which causes a clear increase of ten points in the confidence of the president of the government. This increase of ten points is higher than that studied by Kernell (1978) who found an increase between 5% and 7% in the confidence of Presidents Truman, Kennedy, and Nixon. However, when the events are related to military or armed acts, the growth of the rally effect is stronger. In war cases, Roosevelt increased his confidence by 12 points after the attack on Pearl Harbor; Kennedy also increased 12 points during the Cuban missile crisis; Ford achieved an increase of 11% after the Mayaguez incidents (Lee, 1977); and George H.W. Bush raised his confidence ratings by around 20% after the Gulf War (Hetherington and Nelson, 2003). In the case of 9/11, George W. Bush experienced a growth of 35% (Baum, 2002); or after the March 11 attacks in Madrid, the growth was 15% (Dinesen, 2013).

The confidence that Sánchez received has risen and fallen since 2018, but with the outbreak of the pandemic, a large increase is visible. From that moment on, the level of full confidence begins to fall, and the other indicators increase as we have seen previously. This rally effect exists if the following month after a crisis is taken as a reference, but if we take the pandemic as a crisis, confidence in Pedro Sánchez is hardly increased. However, the confidence achieved after the peak of the rally effect takes 9 months to reach pre-pandemic levels. Thus, the

durability of the rally effect in the Spanish case can be examined from two perspectives. First, as regards the emergence of the rally effect, it arises immediately the month following the declaration of a pandemic by the World Health Organization. Second, the durability of the rally effect in terms of how long it lasts is nine months, since in December 2020 it reaches full confidence levels like those of March 2020. Thus, the durability of the rally effect in Spain is considerable since in other events such as the Gulf War, the rally effect maintained its effect for 7 months. Kernell (1978) estimated the durability of the effect at 5 months, and Dinesen (2013) studied that the rally effect in the March 11 attacks disappears in 7 months and that it takes 14 months for confidence to reach levels prior to the attack. Lee (1977) calculated the durability of the rally effect in the Pearl Harbor attack, the Cuban missile crisis, and the Mayaguez incident for 8 months.

Johansson et al. (2021) suggest that the moment that support for the government begins to decline is caused by citizen perception of the crisis management by the executive, and this support for the government is explained by ideology. Regarding the reasons that can cause both the growth and the decrease in confidence in the Spanish case, this will be the subject of future studies, but the literature has already made some suggestions regarding other events. Kernell (1978) pointed out that confidence in Kennedy was caused by a series of dramatic international crises. Another perspective to analyze the causes of trust growth can be explained by patriotism school or opinion leadership (Hetherington and Nelson, 2003).

Nonetheless, in the period studied, various events have occurred that may or may not have influenced the confidence indicators. It should be noted that before reaching the presidency, in 2016 Sánchez suffered an internal crisis in the socialist party and was unable to conclude an investiture pact with the political parties 'Ciudadanos' and 'Podemos', which would have resulted in a new government. This did not happen due to the lack of understanding between 'Ciudadanos' and 'Podemos', which is why Mariano Rajoy was president of the government with the abstention of the PSOE, Sánchez leaving his act of deputy minutes before Rajoy's inauguration. Already in 2018, Sánchez reached the presidency because of an impeachment to former President Rajoy and expresses his will not to call elections until June 2020. Thus, this is the scenario in which citizens begin to shape their confidence in the president.

Sánchez's government would not have a long journey since he failed to approve the general government budgets forcing him to call elections again in 2019. However, Sánchez manages to carry out some policies before the elections that may influence the confidence of the citizenship. The government increased the minimum wage (El Español, 2018); changed the tomb of the dictator Franco to strengthen the Historical Memory Law (La Vanguardia, 2018); and Spain became the largest entry point for African immigration in Europe (Caro, 2018).

After the elections, Pedro Sánchez does not achieve an absolute majority and the government pact with 'Podemos' does not reach the majority voted in Parliament, so elections are called in November 2019. He once again obtains a simple majority at the polls and after the November elections, he reached a government agreement with 'Podemos'. However, in September 2019 he made some very popular statements in which he exclaimed that agreeing with 'Podemos' would not allow him to sleep at night. In addition, this was added to the fact that the government pact was consecrated thanks to the votes of the Catalan and Basque independence parties. While for 'Podemos' it was a progressive agreement, for some opposition party it was a pact with terrorists and separatists (Podemos, 2019; Antena 3, 2020). Therefore, it is another scenario to consider for the creation of public trust.

During the pandemic, events have also occurred that can cause both growth and decline in confidence. The government has been harshly criticized for managing the pandemic in terms of the lack of material that Spain suffered during the first wave; the collapse of primary care since the beginning of the pandemic; the scandal of the purchase of medical supplies; the non-concordance of the statistics provided by official bodies and by the government; or the political struggle between the central government and communities (Ramos, 2020; Villar, 2021; Borraz, 2020; Pinheiro, 2020; Calvo, 2020; EFE, 2020). These are just some of the events that have occurred during the study period that could be the cause of both the rise and the decrease in the confidence indicators, thus this study is a mere discoverer of the growth experienced by Sánchez without aspiring to specify the concrete causes. Therefore, there are multiple causes or motives that have been able to influence trust in the president of the government and those exposed in this work are some of them, so that future studies could establish causal relationships between the facts and the levels of trust.

Regarding the relationship between trust in the president of the government and the degree of trust in government policies, it differs over time, but two of the three existing statements represent growth on trust in the leader Sánchez. The declaration of the first state of alarm supposes a growth in the confidence of the citizens in President Sánchez. In the second state of alarm, Sánchez's confidence is slightly increased, and after the declaration of the third state of alarm, confidence is not increased in any way. The present study adds great value to the relationship between trust and the measures taken to fight the coronavirus because in the first announcement of the state of alarm there is an increase of more than 10 points in the indicator of full confidence while in other studies the increased confidence in the government is between 2.4% and 3.2% and the intention to vote for the prime minister is between 4.1% and 4.3% (Bol et al. 2020). Sibley et al (2020) indicate an increase in trust in politicians from 3.69 to 4.14. Baekgaard et al (2020) find an increase from 4.16 to 5.57 in trust in the prime minister. Therefore, all these studies have been carried out in the same period of time, but the Spanish case is the one that shows the greatest increase in confidence in the first state of alarm, since in the second the increase is hardly significant, but no other country has developed similar measures to Spain in that second period.

The relationship of trust between the moments when the state of alarm is announced and the indicators of full confidence might have as an explanation the correct perception of the crisis management that citizens have or simply ideology (Johansson et al. 2021), however, there is no such data and the relevant studies have not been carried out to make this statement in the Spanish case. The results of Bol et al. (2020), Sibley et al. (2020) and Baekgaard et al. (2020) have served to study that after establishing measures to fight the coronavirus, the population has tended to trust politicians, governments, and the prime minister. This research shows a reality like that shown by Baekgaard et al. (2020) since both studies choose the president of the government specifically as a variable. Thus, this research sheds new data on the influence that the measures that governments take in times of crisis have on the degree of trust that citizens have in the president of the Spanish government, a study never done before and that sets a precedent for future research.

The source of the data collected belongs to the same organization, which being official limits the scope by not having a variety of sources. However, it is also considered that the study of these data provided by an official body in relation to the government allows to draw impartial

conclusions because the numbers are what they are, and the confidence fluctuates throughout the period studied. Therefore, the source of the data could be a limitation by using only one but the official and public one has been used, which tests the quality and use of the data. It should be noted that there is no other body that performs alternative barometers in Spain during the period studied without paying for it. Another limitation to consider is that the question on which the data is obtained is not asked during the period from July 2018 to January 2020 with a specific periodicity.

Nevertheless, there are some strengths that on the one hand imply the importance of this research, and on the other hand, it may allow the motivation of future studies. First, the study of the rally effect applied to the coronavirus pandemic in Spain, comprising a long period of time studied, is totally innovative and provides a variety of information and data that can be used for further research. Second, the relationship established between trust in the president of the government and the measures to fight the coronavirus (state of alarm) is the first study commissioned to investigate this relationship and the data obtained provide a new scenario for study and reflection. While other scholars choose to trust the government or politicians in general, this work has personified the figure of the president to obtain direct and first-person data. Thus, future studies may carry out a relationship between trust in Pedro Sánchez and the assessment attributed to Sánchez. Third, the conclusions obtained on the rally effect provide new data and information to the field of rally effect theory in terms of the durability of the effect and how it has behaved at a specific time in a specific country. Fourth, an alternative perspective has been used to analyze the rally effect in terms of the emergence of the confidence peak and, on the other hand, the duration of confidence over time, thus providing double information to the field of confidence in political leaders and the theory of rally effect.

To conclude, the rally effect always appears in times of international crisis but begins to disappear shortly thereafter. The measures taken to curb the virus coincide with a growth in public confidence, but there is no direct causal relationship, so future studies will be able to answer this question.

	July 2018	October 2018	January 2019	July 2019	September 2019	November 2019	January 2020	February 2020	March 2020
Full Confidence	28.8	24.7	22.5	30.7	24.2	21.3	25.9	31	28.3
Low Confidence	39.7	40.3	38.9	37.5	38.2	35.4	36.3	34.3	35.9
No Confidence	25.9	32.2	35.6	28.5	35.1	40.7	34.8	32.4	32.6
D.A/D.K	5.7	2.8	2.9	3.3	2.4	2.6	3.1	2.3	3.1

Appendix

Table 1: Levels of Trust in Pedro Sánchez before the outbreak of COVID-19.

Table 2: Levels of Trust in Pedro Sánchez since the outbreak of COVID-19.

	April 2020	May 2020	June 2020	July 2020	September 2020	October 2020	November 2020	December 2020	January 2021
Full Confidence	39	37	33.6	32.6	30.1	29.6	26.9	28.3	25.8
Low Confidence	31.9	32.9	30	33.2	32.1	28.6	32.4	29.5	30.8
No Confidence	28.1	29.3	33.7	31.9	34.1	39.3	37.3	39.2	39.6
D.A/D.K	1	0.8	2.7	2.3	3.7	2.5	3.4	3	3.9

Table 3: Levels of trust after the first state of alarm.

	March 2020	April 2020	May 2020
Full Confidence	28.3	39	37
Low Confidence	35.9	31.9	32.9
No Confidence	32.6	28.1	29.3
D.A/D.K	3.1	1	0.8

Table 4. Confidence in the government's policies impact on the trust in Pedro Sánchez after the first state of alarm.

	April 2020	May 2020
Confidence in the government's policies	.468***	.436***
R ²	.370	.394

Note: *p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001. Unstandardized coefficients.

Figure I: Evolution of trust in Pedro Sánchez before the outbreak of COVID-19.

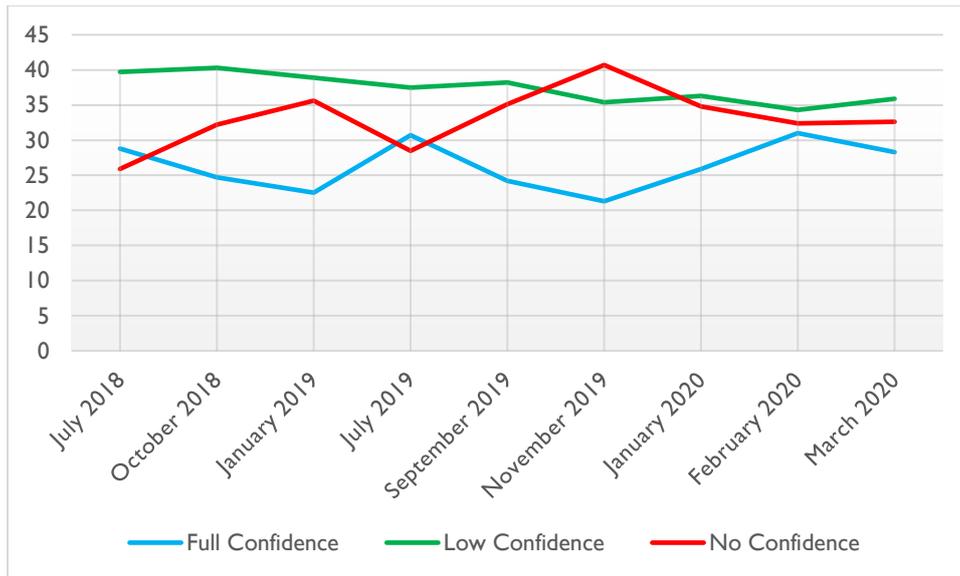


Figure 2: Evolution of trust in Pedro Sánchez since the outbreak of COVID-19.

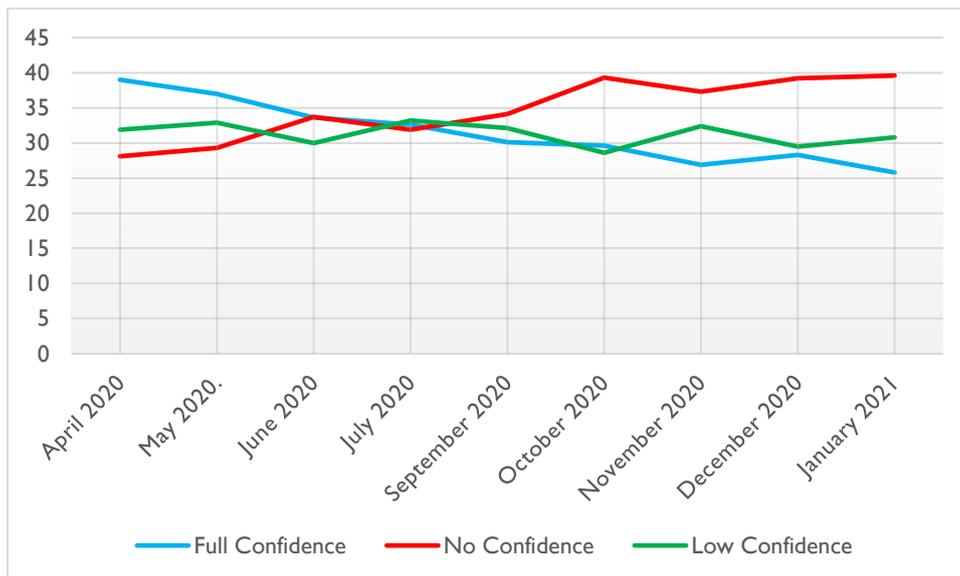


Figure 3: Levels of trust in Pedro Sánchez.

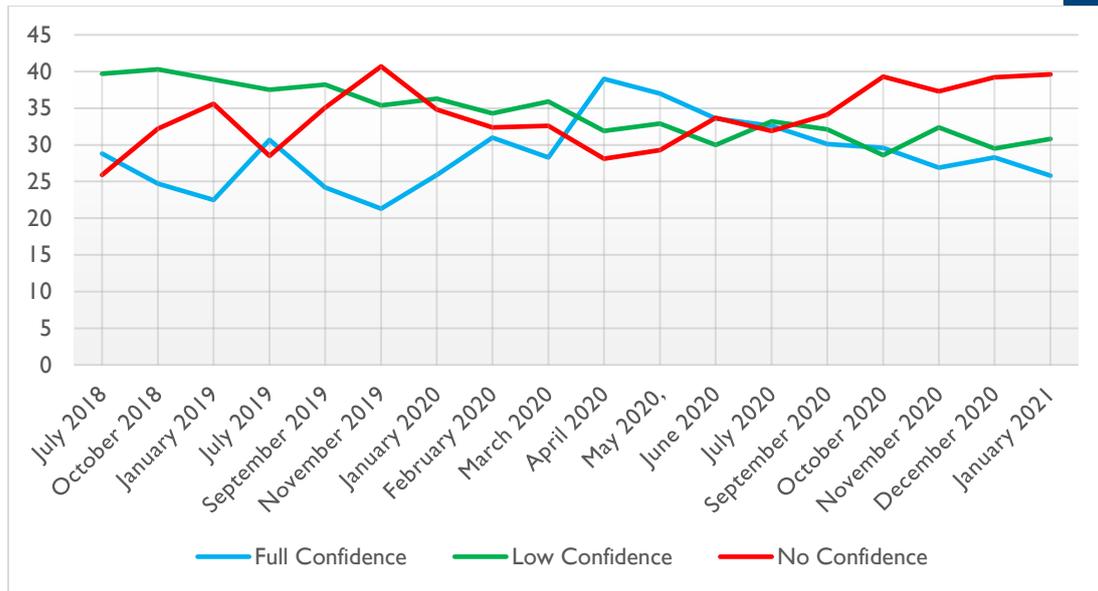


Figure 4: Evolution of trust after the first state of alarm.

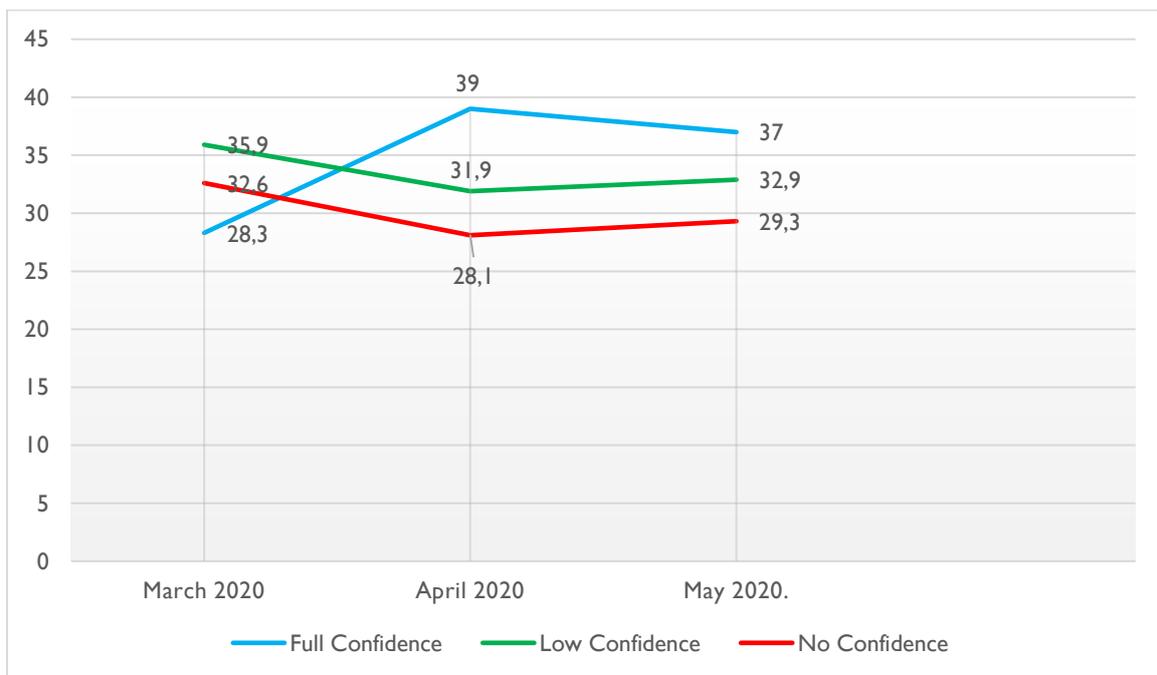


Figure 5: Evolution of trust after de second state of alarm.

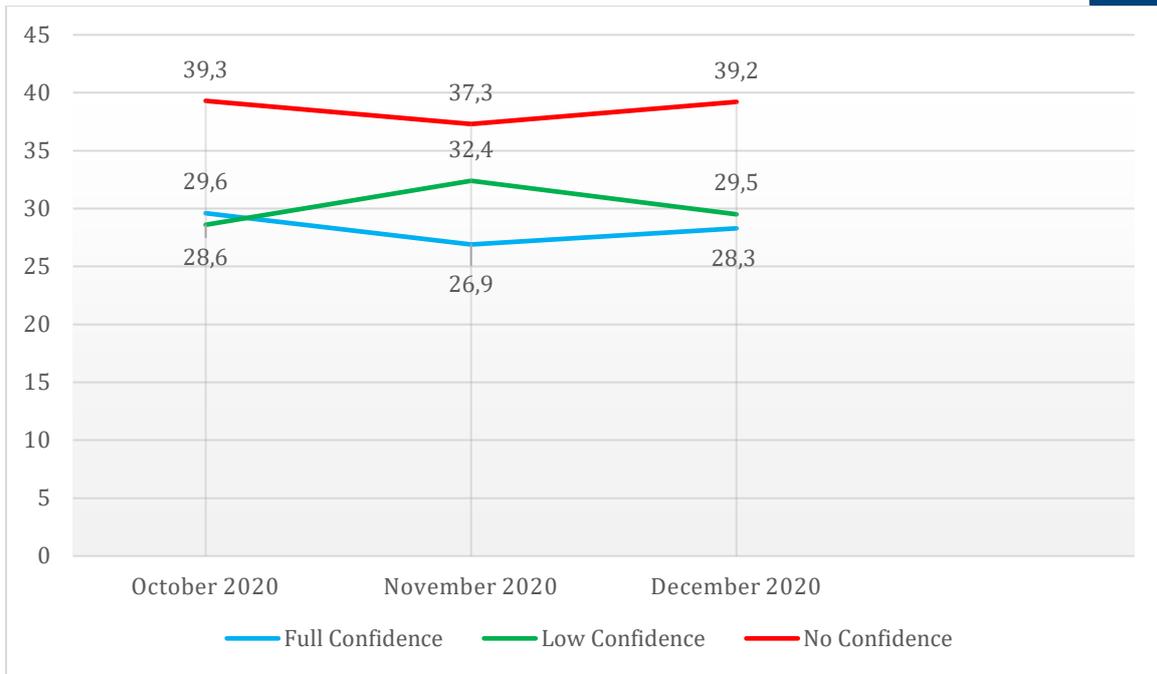


Figure 6: Evolution of trust after the third state of alarm.

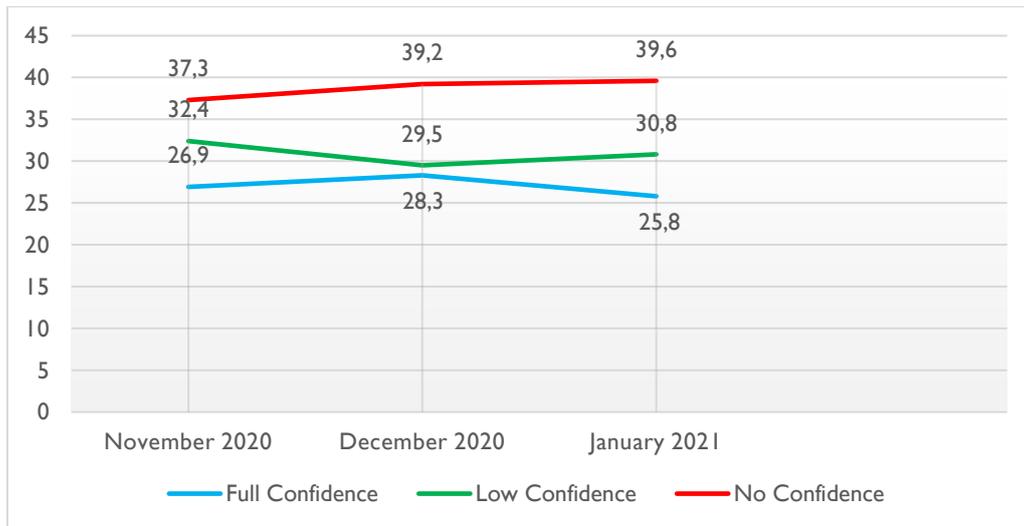


Figure 7. Chi-square Pearson Tests. Degree of Confidence in Pedro Sánchez

	Value	Asym. Sig. (2-sided)
July 2018 – January 2019	50,136	*.000
July 2019 – November 2019	112,731	*.000
November 2019 – February 2020	53,280	*.000
March 2020 – April 2020	6,875	*.009
July 2020 – January 2021	61,173	*.000

Note: *Asym.Sig <.05

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