

# **Creating public trust through citizen engagement in a developing country**

Case study: Costa Rica



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## Abbreviations

AMEP	= Assessment and Management of Environmental Pollution
ASIPROFE	= Association of Productive Feminine Ideas
APA	= American Psychological Association
CARICOM	= Caribbean Community
Cf.	= Compare with
CCCI	= Cantonal Inter-Institutional Coordination Council
CDI	= Centre for Development Impact
CEDRES	= Regional Development Council
CEMPRODECA	= Cooperative Market for Development
COOPECERROZUL R.L.	= Cooperatives of Coffee and Oranges
COOPECUREÑA	= Cooperative of Cureña
COOPEPILANGOSTA R.L.	= Cooperative to generate Socio-Economic Development
COOPROTUS	= Cooperative of Tourism
CNP	= National Council of Production
CTDR	= Territorial Rural Development Council
DESA	= United Nations Department on Economic and Social Affairs
DINADECO	= National Directorate of Community Development
FITTACORI	= Foundation for the Promotion of Research
f.e.	= For example
IFAM	= Institute of Municipal Promotion and Advice
IMAS	= Institute of Social Help
INDER	= Institute of Rural Development
INFOCOOP	= National Institute of Cooperative Development
INA	= National Institute of Learning
INTA	= National Institute of Innovation and Transfer in Agr. Tec.
MAG	= Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock
MIDEPLAN	= Ministry of National Planning and Economic Policy
MINAE	= Ministry of Environment and Energy
NPM	= New Public Management
NPG	= New Public Governance
OECD	= Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development



OPA	= Old Public Administration
PA	= Public Administration
PAC	= Citizen Action's Party
PND	= National Plan of Development
PLN	= National Liberation's Party
SENASA	= National Animal Health Service
SINAC	= National System of Conservation Areas
TD	= <i>Tejiendo Desarrollo</i>
TEC	= Costa Rica Institute of Technology
UN	= United Nations
vs.	= versus

## Abstract

Given the latest developments with the New Public Governance (NPG) and the rise of citizen-centred governance approaches, this study tackles the question of whether citizen engagement can create public trust in a democratic system embedded in a developing country. Given the lack of literature in Latin American countries, Costa Rica has been selected as a case due to its long-standing democracy and efforts in enhancing a transparent and participative government (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2016).

With regard to the citizenry-government relationship, already years ago, scholars like Ostrom have identified that in the long run, trustworthiness can only be achieved through sincere dialog and effective participation (2008). Hence, there has been a literature gap on the detailed mechanisms that lead from citizen engagement to public trust; or in other words, a trustworthy relationship between citizenry and the government. Taking into consideration past research of scholars (e.g. Social Capital Theory; Coleman, 1988) and studies of international organisations (e.g. OECD), a correlation between the elements of citizen engagement, social capital, social trust and public trust has been discovered. Consequently, this study elaborates a new conceptual framework based on the idea that – in the Costa Rican context – citizen engagement leads to the creation of social capital and social capital enhances social trust, ending in public trust. Whereby, this causal chain initiates with X (citizen engagement) creating Y (public trust); the causality in between contains two main entities (social capital and social trust) and is connected through three causal mechanisms ( $n_1$ ,  $n_2$  and  $n_3$ ); which will be tested through process tracing in the present study.

Concluding remarks are positive and approve that in the case of Costa Rica, citizen engagement creates public trust. The theoretical framework is established and the two causal mechanisms have been successfully tested. Nevertheless, the findings have to be interpreted with caution, as limitations may interfere.

### **Key words:**

Citizen engagement, public trust, social trust, social capital, Latin America

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Research question

A government is composed of a set of political institutions, of which its impact on people's lives can be controlled and measured. Thus, a government influences its relationship with citizenry directly by choosing either a citizen-based approach or rather a top-down approach in the pursuance of its activities and policies. These basic decisions include elements, that are able to stimulate a vivid society; awaken a dormant citizenry to aim not only for their individual interest but moreover to think for the whole community (Ostrom, 1996).

In the light of this belief, a government is able to create an invisible social cohesion, also called social capital, through a citizen-centred approach. Previous scholars have established a correlation between social capital and social trust (cf. Coleman, 1988); whereas the former leads to the latter. In line with this, subsequently related, is the concept of social and public trust; where social trust becomes an inherent element of the wider public trust. However, there exist only minuscule information on this combination of concepts (OECD, 2009) and the underneath process. As such, this research's aim is to apply process tracing in order to go beyond merely identifying correlations between two variables (X and Y) and to unpack the causal relationship between citizen engagement and public trust to study the causal mechanism linking the two concepts (Beach & Pederson, 2013). In other words, investigating causal mechanisms enables to go a step further, when studying causal relationships, allowing to somehow unleash the black box of causality and as such, to determine the intermediate factors lying between a hypothesized cause and its desired outcome (Gerring 2007a, p. 45; consulted in Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 1). Thus, by applying process tracing, expectations that might explain the process between citizen engagement and public trust are being tested.

Thus, in this research, it is expected that when citizens are actively involved in community activities and affairs, the social structure is not only denser, but the strength of the ties among citizens, as well as citizens and government seems reinforced (Ostrom, 1996; Pestoff, 2009; Verschuere et al., 2012). As such, the stability and development of a government, the support of the local level (including citizens and local governments, municipality) is indispensable. The invisible bound enabling a government effective action-taking among its population, can

be analysed within the social structure and cohesion, resulting in the level of public trust. In order to create or restore trust of citizens in municipalities and governmental institutions; citizen engagement is assumed to need to be enhanced, empowered and increased.

Besides the general research gap regarding the origin of public trust and the conditions to generate it; there exists a particular need to produce more knowledge for the Latin American area. This context has been neglected in the past; as studies have preferably being conducted in Central European countries or Northern America due to several reasons; among them the available data and resources (APA, 2008). Therefore, this study wishes to unfold this, while aiming to answer the research question: *how citizen engagement creates public trust* in the context of Costa Rica, a developing country in Central America.

## **1.2 Justification**

With the New Public Governance (NPG), the importance of citizen engagement and co-production is undoubted (Meijer, 2016). Many scholars investigate its relevance and the related factors surrounding it (cf. Van Eijk, Van de Bekerom). As such, the idea that citizen engagement reinforces public trust with a government is not unprecedented, it was already thought of in 1984 by Charles Levine. He states that if citizens and professional staff share actions, activities and responsibility, it will lead to more responsiveness towards and more commitment among citizenry (Levine, 1984). Consequently, the public trust of citizenry towards the government is expected to be positively affected. In 1996, Ostrom added to this thinking “the experience of co-producing and engagement further encourages citizenry to establish horizontal relationships and social capital” (p. 1082; consulted in Fledderus, 2015, p. 553). As such, the enhanced cooperation not only among government and citizenry but within citizenry – building social capital – will lead from an inter-personal trust to a more generalized trust among society.

However, the relationship between the concept of citizen engagement and public trust has not been elaborated thoroughly in the past. This might be due to the fact that both concepts (the latter more than the first) are complex and difficult to measure empirically. Attempts have been realized moreover in the Anglo-Saxons and Central European area, such as the Netherlands (Van de Bovenkamp, 2010; Fledderus, 2016), Germany (Amnå, 2010) and Italy

(Bartoletti & Fraccioli, 2016); whose research is not applicable on highly different contextual situations such as developing nations. Thus, it is therefore problematic that developing countries have received minuscule attention in this research area. Yet, this might be due to the fact that conducting research in areas such as Central America or Africa requires an enormous amount of patience, creativity, cultural sensitivity and resourcefulness (APA, 2008); which is often bypassed. Nevertheless, it is crucial to encourage the equal development of literature in order to provide nations with the relevant knowledge to build on.

Altogether, the establishment of the causal chain between citizen engagement and public trust – and thus, inherently exploring the conditions to create public trust – introduces a justified research. The utility of this research, combined with the case selection of a developing country in the Latin American context, namely Costa Rica, is therefore well defended.

### **1.3 Structure of this study**

The study will explore the research question – *how does citizen engagement create public trust?* – in a structured approach. For this, firstly, the theoretical part will be established. This involves a brief context relevant introduction on the NPG, helping the reader to understand the importance of citizen inclusion and engagement in an era of public budget cuts and reduced human resources. In this context of the rise of citizenry involvement and activity in public services, the reader will be smoothly introduced in the theory of trust in public governance. In order to understand how the bonds and ties between actor's function, the relevance of the Social Capital Theory will be explained as well as its suitability as a connector in between citizen engagement and trust will be outlined and explored.

From this, the methodology of the study will be revealed. First of all, the research design will be introduced, consisting of the establishment of the causal chain through process tracing and respectively, the test of the entire causal mechanism. Further, the case relevance of Costa Rica is justified, this as a developing country responding to a significant research gap in the field; followed by the case analysis and the establishment of the causal chain (tracing of the process). Once the causal mechanisms are proved to be sufficient and necessary for the outcome to happen, the results will be presented. In conclusion, recommendations and future research gaps will be highlighted.

## 2. Theoretical part

The theoretical part provides a general introduction about the context, and as such outlines the emerge of the NPG, followed by an overview on citizen engagement and trust. Further, the Social Capital Theory will be applied on the theoretical framework of these two concepts and serve as a causal connector in between.

### 2.1 New Public Governance

In the past years international competition and fiscal pressure have been demanding governments for radical action, introducing a new concept of governance. Increased complexity of social problems, and the *horizontalisation* of society required a new approach of governance. The old paradigm of Public Administration (OPA), where citizen's input was exclusively used for elections and tax resources, seemed overcome (Meijer, 2016). With the emerge of the New Public Management (NPM), the government outgrew its role as protector of citizen rights and transformed towards a provider of services, delivering value for the invested money. However, NPM was much inspired by private sector models, where the market and consumerist perspective is mostly applied. As such, the citizenry was characterized as rational consumers, with the duty of paying for these collective services. Nevertheless, in line with technological changes – which both at the same time challenged governments, but also allowed an unexperienced level of interaction with citizenry – a new paradigm emerged. Many governments transformed their perspective on citizenry and established a rather collaborative engagement, increasingly oriented towards a citizen-centred approach.

This allowed the rise of the NPG, which – in contrast to the previous OPA and NPM – focuses on the inter-organisational processes (instead of the policy system or inter-organisational management); as such, emphasizes partnership and collaboration with citizenry instead of market competition (Osborne, 2010). Thus, NPG highlights not only service processes and outcomes (rather than inputs), but also concentrates its efforts on trust as main governance mechanism – where earlier had been institutional hierarchy. Moreover, with the NPG, the legitimacy itself is based on these processes. In this context, there is more space and attention for the role of citizenry and specifically, the role of service users as

partners (co-production), forming an indispensable part of the whole service process. As a consequence of the implementation of this new approach, citizens are no longer regarded as passive consumers of the system, but rather become active and engaged partners.

## **2.2 Citizen Engagement**

The role of citizens in a society evolves both over time and place (Amnå, 2010), where different forms of citizenship can be identified. For example, in the Netherlands, among layers of economic and cultural citizenship; the one of social citizenship increasingly gained importance over the past years (Van den Brink, 2002). Thus, with social citizenship, the active citizenship emerges not only in the Netherlands, but beyond. Active citizenship becomes an important policy focus for many Western countries, when early 2000, different scholars (cf. Tonkens, 2006; Clarke, Newman, Smith, Vidler and Westmarland, 2007; Van de Bovenkamp, 2010, p. 10) determine that the citizens' role had extended: the duty of citizens were not only to vote and have proper rights, but to actively participate in the public endeavours and take on civic responsibilities. Due to the immense growth of welfare states, citizens may have become passive (Van de Bovenkamp, 2010, p. 10); thus, in order to activate citizenry, the government has to step back and make space for citizenry to develop ideas, engage, co-produce and participate. For this reason, in this part, the concept of citizen engagement is explained, the driving human motivation is outlined and the different forms of citizen motivation are defined.

### **2.2.1 The concept of citizen engagement**

*“Government should be participatory. Public engagement enhances the government’s effectiveness and improves the quality of its decisions.” – Obama (2009)*

In line with the increasing focus on an active citizenry (Van de Bovenkamp, 2010), different actors have dedicated time to define the concept of citizen engagement. Firstly, the World Bank Group states that citizen engagement consists of citizens playing a critical role in advocating and helping to make public institutions more transparent, accountable and effective, and in contributing with innovative solutions to solve complex development challenges (2017, p. 1). From an academic perspective, Van de Bovenkamp states, that in the frame of an active citizenship, citizens become engaged in three ways: “they should take care

of themselves, they should take care of each other and they should be active in the organisation of public policy and services in general” (2010, p. 10). As such, Van de Bovenkamp attributes both individual and common rights as well as responsibilities to the role of citizenry. Firstly, she highlights the importance of self-reliability; citizens should try to solve issues themselves. The same reasoning applies for public services; people are expected to formulate their needs and inform themselves about the quality of services, and choose the provider that suits them best (Hurenkamp and Kremer 2005; Clarke, Newman et al. 2007; Van de Bovenkamp, 2010, p. 11). Secondly, Van de Bovenkamp stresses in her statement the need for citizenry to take care of one another; before calling upon the state, citizens should ask their social network for help and support (Van de Bovenkamp, 2010, p. 11). Thirdly, citizenry should take part in activities in order to improve the public good and services; this can happen on an individual or collective level (idem). Thus, it is this third point – including actions such as taking part in the development of policy agendas, civil society organisations or unions for the well-being of society (idem) – which is particularly important for this study’s research. Accordingly, the present study defines citizen engagement as the actions taken within the public sphere – in other words, applied on a local level; mostly within a community or a municipality (see point 2.2.3 and 2.4).

In this sense, having defined citizen engagement, it is crucial to be aware of its outcome for both citizenry and state. From an academic perspective, studies such as the one of Gaventa and Barrett (2012) have contributed significantly to the literature. The two scholars have selected 100 previously published case studies and extracted from these over 800 examples of citizen engagement outcomes (p. 2399). Following an inductive approach has provided the two scholars with compelling outcomes in four different areas: firstly, the construction of citizenship; secondly, the strengthening of practices of participation, such as increased capacities for collective action, new forms of participation and stronger networks; thirdly, the strengthening of responsive and accountable states, such as greater access to state services and resources and lastly, the development of inclusive and cohesive societies, producing social cohesion across groups (cf. Gaventa and Barrett, 2012, p. 2400). Thus, Gaventa and Barrett’s study has shown that by activating and engaging citizenry, positive effects can not only be observed for the citizenry itself, but also for the state’s relationship (or responsiveness) with citizenry.

Accordingly, this positive impact of citizen engagement has also been proved by several case



studies. For example, ‘The Community Right to Challenge’, a citizen engagement initiative by the UK government, (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012) or the ‘participatiesamenleving’ in the Netherlands (Tweede Kamer, 2014). Nevertheless, there has to be mentioned that citizen engagement is not always successful and sometimes can be accompanied by major challenges (Public Policies EU, 2017). Yet, citizen engagement can be considered as positive, if correctly and cautiously implemented according to its context.

Altogether, the above-mentioned provides reasonable ground for citizen engagement to be a major concept in the era of the NPG. However, before examining a variety of citizen engagement activities (see point 2.2.3 and 2.4), it is important to understand who of the society is willing to engage, and why they do so.

### **2.2.2 Citizen’s motivation to engage**

With the increasing role of citizen engagement, the question about *who engages and what drives citizen’s motivation within a society?* surges. According to many scholars, a common driver for citizen engagement is reflected in human motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Although the motivation may appear in several forms and can have different motifs behind, it remains a driving force for action. More specifically, motivation can be felt either extrinsically or intrinsically. It is an extrinsic motivation, if the motif is based on an expectation of material rewards or punishments from an external party (such as cutting one’s benefit). However, if a person feels a strong desire to participate and engage in activities, or because of strong personal interest and enjoyment; the motivation would be an intrinsic one (Deci, 1972). Besides these two types of motivation, another reason why a person decides to be engaged could be a social factor (an alternative kind of motivation). People may enjoy company, the societal cohesion within a larger group or the connected feeling of a community. Thus, this motif refers to the association with other people (Alford & O’Flynn, 2009) and is reflected through the bonds within a societal structure. Another reason for participation might also be due to norms. Alford provides the example of a rich person supporting progressive taxation because of a common sense of fairness (2009). Also, a similar case would be, when people receive welfare benefits. In this case, it might appear appropriate to a person to return something by taking action on a local level or getting engaged within the community. However, there are surely other motifs – including personal

reasons – for people to think beyond their individual needs and thus, to connect efforts with other citizens in order to collaborate for the good of the larger society.

Thus, this leads us to determine *who* participates within the community and engages itself for the larger society. Based on a traditional approach, scholars believed for many years that mainly elderly people or seniors dedicate their leisure time to be engaged in the community (e.g. Rainer, 2014). This might be due to its time consumption; whereas, professionals and students often lack availability for engagement. However, recent studies – such as the Pew study on civic engagement in the Digital Age (Smith, 2013) – highlight, that young people seem to increase their engagement due to new digital tools and facilities. Given the technological progress, people are able to participate with an increased flexibility and even mobility; which leaves the door open to every person.

### **2.2.3 Forms of citizen engagement**

Knowing *who* engages and *what* drives citizens to be engaged, the different forms of citizen engagement have to be elaborated. Citizen engagement, being a social phenomenon, depends on an undefined number of actors' behaviour, interacting and responding to each other; and thus, it is – unlike physical experiments and calculations – hardly measurable. It can even be stated, that citizen engagement is particularly difficult to measure, due to the unpredictable nature of human being's actions. Nevertheless, scholars have tried in the past and managed to find ways to empirically observe citizen engagement efforts and its outcome (Gaventa & Barrett, 2012). Thus, there are methods in the empirical world in order to measure different forms of active citizenship; and most relevant for this study, establish a measurement for citizen engagement.

According to the context and region, citizen engagement activities have been widely defined in recent years (cf. OECD, 2016; UNDP, 2016); varying mostly from a set of three to ten key activities. For example, the Dutch government associates the following activities with citizen participation: local residents engage in voluntary work or organise litter-clearing campaigns. They may also be involved in the decision-making about the municipal budget (Government of the Netherlands, 2017). Thus, citizen engagement activities can vary from the support of neighbours, the construction of a local road assuring access, the creation of employment for

the community, providing safety for the children, voluntary work in the educational sector and the participation in local and regional politics. Yet, these activities are highly contingent and may change according to environmental, governmental and cultural factors (OECD, 2017). Hence, this present study limits its focus on a set of three citizen engagement activities, aligned with this study's case and sources (cf. PND, 2014; INDER). Accordingly, the following collective actions have been selected:

- (1) Local government activism: the attendance at country government meetings, municipal activities and social engagement to support others in need.*
- (2) Organisational activism: forming part of associations or communities supporting a general purpose.*
- (3) Communal project participation: supporting communal initiatives, such as the construction of a municipal road or a public community space.*

Thus, having defined a set of citizen engagement activities for the present study, the following section will introduce the concept of trust, its dimensions and the relationship with the government. Once both concepts are thoroughly discussed, the final theoretical framework will be presented (see point 2.4).

## **2.3 Trust**

Trust is an omnipresent human phenomenon, although difficult to conceptualize and measure. For the general understanding of trust, in this part, its three bases (namely the calculus-, knowledge- and identification-based trust) are introduced. Further, trust is applied within a democratic setting.

### **2.3.1 Three bases of trust**

Trust is invisible and still a vital social resource emerging from human calculation, identification and knowledge. It can be defined as “the belief that others, through their actions or inaction, will contribute to someone's well-being and refrain from inflicting damage upon this person” (Offe, 1999, p. 47; Fledderus, 2016). According to the literature, there is a general consensus that trust allows actors to overcome collective action problems

(Raymond, 2006) and to reach common goals in a more effective manner (Ostrom, 1990; Putnam, 1993; Tavits, 2006). This finding supports the development of a better understanding of what generates trust. *But where does this sentiment (trust) come from?* Lewicki and Bunker (1996) divided three bases of trust: the calculus-based, the knowledge-based and the identification-based trust. The first one, the calculus-based trust is rooted in a calculation of another's rewards for being trustworthy and costs of not being trustworthy. Knowledge-based trust is based on the amount of information one has to predict future behaviour and intentions; the more one entity informs another, the more likely trust will be developed in between the two. Lastly, identification-based trust is formed when both parties (the person who trusts and the person to be trusted) identify with each other's goals and effectively understand as well as value what the other one is seeking. It is therefore not essentially cognitive, like calculus- and knowledge-based trust, but rather emotional.

This leads us to a more reality-based angle of trust, emphasizing the emotional factor that often influences the relationship between two entities. People have often different reasons to trust or distrust, mostly led by a judgement based on previous experiences. Nevertheless, when citizen engagement is used as a mechanism to foster public trust in government; the collective approach – the connecting within citizenry, the establishment of social relationships and cohesion – is assumed to show effects in their trust attitude with the government (OECD, 2017). In this regard, Van der Walle (2004) highlighted that the focus on individuals and their behaviour (micro-performance hypothesis) should be abandoned, as people might have predispositions that are either positive or negative towards public institutions and government (Kampen, Van de Walle & Bouckaert, 2006). Thus, scholars should always keep in mind, that most human beings are not rational and that individual characteristics as well as emotional predispositions might affect the outcome. As such, their personal environment or socio-historical context might be defining their relationship with public endeavours or institutions. For this, the previously mentioned three bases of trust – calculus-, knowledge- and identification-based trust – seem useful to overcome this obstacle and focus on the present relationship between citizen and government; and, to understand the underlying motivation of humans to interact in the public sphere.

### 2.3.2 Trust and Government

*“Whom society hath set over itself, with this express or tacit trust, that is shall be employed for their good, and that preservation of their property.” – John Locke (1690)*

Modern discussions about trust and government still look back to Locke’s statements, expressing the power of a trustworthy relationship between citizenry and state. In line with Locke’s political philosophy, John Dunn introduced the concept that the relationship between citizenry and government is built of trust (1984; Braithwaite & Levi, 2003). In this sense, the government illustrates the classical entity that organizes a wide community, consisting of a legislative, judiciary and administrative dimension (OECD, 2013). As such, all three dimensions are necessary and crucial for a trustworthy relationship with citizenry. Accordingly, associations in modern discussions state that this correlation of citizenry and government is based on a rational compact, including exchange of information and the public’s evaluation of state effectiveness (OECD, 2009); linking to the three bases of trust (cf. calculus-, knowledge- and identification-based; Lewicki and Bunker, 1996). In line with this, a more recent publication states that “trust in government represents the confidence of citizens and businesses in the actions of governments to do what is right and perceived as fair. (..). Trust in government is essential for social cohesion and well-being as it affects the government’s ability to govern (..)” (OECD, 2013. p. 40). Furthermore, the OECD publication adds that “trust in government and its institutions also depends on the congruence between citizens’ and businesses’ preferences, their interpretation of what is right and fair and what is unfair, and the perceived performance of government. As a result, trust in government is very much culturally defined and context dependant” (idem). Thus, there is evidence that a government can enhance trust through different methods of governance; thus, one of these might be through the stimulation of civic commitment in public endeavours (Braithwaite & Levi, 2003). Accordingly, the statement above – the effect of governance methods – is confirmed by two other scholars, Jennings and Peel, who developed a use case about public trust; their evidence proved that citizen confidence can decrease as a consequence of minimalistic citizen and government interaction (Braithwaite & Levi, 2003).

From the citizen perspective, the citizenry’s emotional investment in government becomes more relevant than their actual ability to evaluate governments’ effectiveness. However, from the perspective of politicians, the aim for being perceived as a trustworthy person by the

voters may itself be a powerful stimulator for government officials to behave accordingly (Blackburn, Brennan and Pettit; consulted in Braithwaite & Levi, 2003). Nevertheless, in regard with governance, it has to be respected that the presence of trust can variate among different levels of governance. As such, the level on which citizens and government interact – be it federal, state, or local – is crucial.

### **2.3.3 Trust and its dimensions**

Given the difference in between civic and public dynamics, two distinct dimensions of trust – a social and a public one – have to be outlined. Social trust emerges on a local level and is reflected in the likelihood of people cooperating with one another within a community or neighbourhood. As such, the resulting associations and cooperatives within a given society serve as indicators for the measurement of social reliance; trust (Moreno, 2011). However, as with many other social phenomenon, the complex, multifactorial and context-specific nature of social interaction has to be taken into consideration (Beach & Pedersen, 2013). As such, the concept of social trust may be influenced by a set of contextual factors; the norms and behaviours naturally applied to a given group and place. However, beyond these, there exist a more general human concept based on people’s connectivity. Its idea builds on the strength of social ties and bonds developed within a community, resulting in a connected society applicable to almost every context (Coleman, 1988). This force emerging of connected dots within a society is called social capital. Its concept introduces the benefits of social networks; the more people interact with each other, the more powerful is their capital as a whole. Thus, social trust seems to be firmly correlated with the social capital available in a given population (Coleman, 1988). On the other hand, public trust – the independent variable (Y) of this study – appears relevant between the larger society and government. As such, public trust reflects the trustworthiness of the relationship between citizenry and the government (Braithwaite & Levi, 2003).

The link between the two dimensions of trust – social and public – has already been established two centuries ago by Alexis de Tocqueville (1831). He mentioned in his publication entitled *Democracy in America* that “a vast number of associations are formed and maintained by the agency of private individuals on the basis of trust and shared interests” (Moreno, 2011, p. 7). From this perspective – and in line with Coleman –, trust is related to

social bonds, which in turn facilitates the pursuit of common – more public – objectives. In the development of this thinking, a five-country study, called *the Civic Culture*, conducted by Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, confirmed the correlation between trust within society (social trust) and confidence in public institutions (public trust). Almond and Verba “surmised that trusting publics were a key facet of a regime of legitimacy” (Ai Camp, 2001, p. 53). Thus, there is a natural connection between the social trust (interaction through associations and cooperatives) and the trust in government (confidence in public institutions).

Stating on these different viewpoints, the present study perceives social trust as an inherent part of public trust and accordingly, develops the following assumption: if social trust is high within a given society, so is public trust. Consequently, both forms of trust shall be a result of an effective citizen-centred governance and therefore, should score high in a participative democracy.

### **2.3.4 Trust and Democracy**

With regard to the relation of trust and democracy, while applying the relevant participative approach according to the governance level, the smooth transition from social to public trust seems given. Respectively, starting with observations in the empirical world, already in the 1980s and 1990s, there has been a debate about the decline of public trust in democracies (Misztal, 1996; Nye et al., 1997). This has been particularly critical in the context of Latin American states, struggling over decades with the reputation of corruption in democratic governments (OECD, 2010). Trust is of significant importance for democratic governments since they cannot rely on coercion in a way other regimes might do. Furthermore, cross-national work has uncovered a strong empirical relationship between interpersonal trust and the number of years of continuous democracy in a given country. In order to find a valid proof, Almond and Verba analysed 43 societies in a World Values Survey (1990-1993), whereas the correlation between the number of consecutive years of democracy and the percentage of citizens saying, “most people can be trusted” was a strong indicator (Ai Camp, 2001, p. 53). Building on the existent research, Catterberg and Moreno established a political trust measurement, confirming the causal relation of trust and the sustainability of democracy (2006). Therefore, trust and a stable democracy seem to go hand in hand (Ai Camp, 2001).

*“The available evidence cannot determine the causal direction, but it does indicate that culture and political institutions have a strong tendency to go together—with trust and stable democracy being closely linked, as the political culture literature has long claimed” – R. Inglehart (in Ai Camp, 2001, p. 62)*

In the following years, scientifically and politically oriented lectures have included the importance on public trust in democracies (OECD, 2015). In this regard, the OECD’s review not only stated critics, but recommended the governments mechanisms allowing to regain trust; mainly through enhancing participation and transparency within their democracy (OECD, 2010). As such, the debate about public trust has been around for many years and accordingly, scholars have been investigating and discussing its role intensively. Within this debate, the question *whether sustained democracy generates societal trust, or whether societal trust produces democratic institutions* emerged. Edward Muller and Mitchell Seligson, in a study of 27 European and Central American societies, claim that democratic experience causes interpersonal trust (Ai Camp, 2001, p. 51). Further, Robert Putnam (1993), in a historical comparison within Italy, suggests that trust enhances democratic institutions. However, Ronald Inglehart (Ai Camp, 2001, p. 14), in contrast, has been very careful not to specify a direction of causation, but rather to emphasize the relationship between trust and democracy. Even if, as Inglehart laments, the available data cannot determine whether trust causes democracy or democracy causes trust, we still need to assess the correlation between the two. In this regard, Van Ryzin discovered that perceived government performance might actually have a miniscule influence on trust (2007). However, what matters more to citizenry and as such, stands in the centre – rather than the actual outcome – is the process. Thus, a fair, participative, equal and respectful process might be more relevant to citizenry in order to develop trust in a democracy, than the actual result of it. This assumption has been supported and confirmed by empirical research (Kumlin & Rothstein, 2005, Van Ryzin, 2011). However, the research on literature about the process itself remains miniscule. Consequently, in order to assess the process related to the creation of trust, it is crucial to focus on the actual engagement with citizenry.



## **2.4 The final theoretical model**

Having introduced and elaborated the concepts of citizen engagement and trust, this section will connect these and establish the final theoretical model. Accordingly, this model will be conceptualized and operationalized in order to apply it to this study's case (see point 5).

### **2.4.1 Trust and Citizen Engagement**

Trust is recognized as one of the key conditions to deliver successful collective actions among governments and society (Yamagishi & Cook, 1993). However, in the literature, there has been an intense debate on the direction of causation between trust and citizen engagement in the past (cf. 2.3.4; Ai Camp, 2001, p. 14 & 51; Putnam, 1993). While the literature shares both sides, this study pursues the viewpoint that citizen engagement impacts the creation of public trust; as first and foremost, before trust can be built, a relationship has to be established. In this sense, the relationship between citizenry and government involves a larger community; therefore, the creation of social cohesion (social capital) and social trust seems necessary in order to produce trust between the two entities (Coleman, 1988); so-called public trust. This introduces the correlation, that the establishment of a social connection – before anything – may therefore be a crucial – if not the most important – cause to generate public trust. However, correlation does not imply causality, therefore it has to be empirically observed and measured (Toshkov, 2016).

A more practical angle has been undertaken by the United Nations Department on Economic and Social Affairs (DESA). While academia still debates on the correlation, the UN's responsible office, the division for Public Administration and Development Management, seems to have established and accepted this connection between civic engagement and the generation of trust. As such, its publications affirm that a citizen-friendly and socially-centred government, responsive to civic participation, builds the nexus between government and citizens, thus creates public trust (DESA, 2007). This correlation is being illustrated and proved on several successful case examples on Austria, Australia, South Africa, India and the United States (*idem*). This relevant topic has also been retaken by other international organisations, such as the OECD. A publication in 2009 recommends that states conducting a transparent and participative governance are more likely to enhance public trust (OECD).

From the pure citizen perspective, the engagement with public institutions and the participation in the public sphere not only provides insights, but also stimulates the mutual understanding for the complex challenges in public administration. Besides this, citizens may naturally step back their individual needs and be willing to engage themselves for the larger society. While interacting with other citizens, public officials, institutions, NGOs; individuals may connect with many like-minded citizens and develop stronger social ties. As mentioned previously, interacting with professionals and committing to a public cause, enhances the social capital within a society (Coleman, 1988). This social capital produces social trust (OECD, 2017), and consequently, can be transmitted to the national level, eventually resulting in public trust. This idea of causality will be thoroughly introduced in the following points.

#### **2.4.2 Social Capital Theory**

A government's effort to enhance citizen engagement is linked to the Social Capital Theory (Coleman, 1988); a theory that elaborates on the inherent potential of the number of social ties a citizen is involved in. The premise behind the notion of social capital is simple; it's about the investment in social relations with expected returns (Lin, 2001). This general definition coincides with various renditions by scholars who have contributed to the discussion (Bourdieu, 1980, 1986; Burt, 1993; Coleman, 1988, Putnam, 1993). In general, individuals interact within networks in order to produce profits. As such, there are some explanations as of why embedded resources in social networks will enhance the outcomes of actions (Lin, 2001). For one, it facilitates the mutual flow of information – on both sides; thus, social ties occur. Some of them, due to their position or location, carry more valued resources than others. Also, social ties, as well as their acknowledged relationships to the individual (or within an individual and an authority), may be conceived by the organisation as certifications of individual trust (social credentials). Supporting the individual by these ties, reassures the organisation that the individual can provide additional resources beyond the personal capital, some of which may be useful for a bigger purpose (governance of a country).

In line with this thought, scholars as Collins, Neal and Neal (2014) developed evidence of the correlation between the level of citizen engagement and the social capital. Their research

outlines that residents who report greater levels of civic engagement also show higher levels of bonding social capital (Collins, Neal and Neal, 2014). Given this correlation, the Social Capital Theory forms a relevant concept in order to answer the research question, namely how citizen engagement creates public trust.

### **2.4.3 Social Capital as causal connector within citizen engagement and trust**

Unlike other forms of capital (like human, natural and financial), the Social Capital Theory inheres in the structure of relations between actors and among actors (Coleman, 1988); stimulating confidence and mutual reliance (trust) in their interaction. It is the social structure and its connectedness of different nodes (entities), which lies at the core of this theory. As such, a citizenry with a strong bond of engagement within the community, collaboration and common action-taking is expected to experience this phenomenon smoothly due to the existing ties and bonds between the entities. In other words, Coleman (1988) explains that the strength of these ties (connections) facilitates transactions, resulting of the mutual confidence and reliance. As such, scholars have not only established a correlation between citizen engagement and social capital, but equally between social capital and trust. Thus, it may be assumed, that a citizen with a high social capital (lots of ties and bonds), perceives a high level of social trust, as this is a necessary condition to collaborate and evolve with many actors. As such, the potential social capital can only be enhanced by citizens trusting in their neighbours, community and in larger society. Having elaborated this, social capital may be defined as one of the mechanism in the creation of public trust.

Further, the Social Capital Theory is built on the argument, that interpersonal trust has a more indirect role. According to Putnam (1993), the social capital argument presumes that, generally speaking, the more human beings connect with others, the more trust will be developed within society. In this belief, interpersonal trust is associated with a tendency toward the proliferation of secondary associations and the resulting empowerment of citizenry. As social theorists (as for example Tocqueville, 1831; consulted in Moreno, 2011; Putnam, 1993) have insisted, a strong and vivid citizenry provides fertile ground for the democratic government. Other literatures suggest that as membership in secondary associations increases within a given society, the public or civic styles of politics are more likely to find ground. Consequently, values of equality and solidarity tend to become more

diffused, the ideal of self-government becomes more highly valued and, perhaps most crucial; citizens are empowered in a way that allows them to hold their leaders more accountable (Ai Camp, 2001).

#### **2.4.4 Causal chain**

Based on the above discussion of the concepts of citizen engagement, social capital and trust; a possible explanation for the research gap regarding the process leading to public trust has been detected. The gap exists not only in regional terms (developing country), but moreover in the actual creation of public trust in the context of the NPG. The shift from an institutional paradigm to a more process-oriented governance has been ongoing for a decade (Meijer, 2016). As nowadays, many scholars agree about the fact, that it is not the institutional model that matters most for people to trust in government, but a fair, equitable and transparent process (cf. OECD, 2016). Given that this process remains still mostly untested, there exists a lack of clarity in terms of how this process towards the creation of public trust – that actually works to win citizenry's trust (social trust) – functions in the empirical world.

In response to this gap, this research establishes a theoretical framework, which serves to discover the uncluttered process between citizen engagement (X) and public trust (Y). Thus, different questions arise, such as the following: *how can this causal theory of X leading to Y be translated into causal mechanisms composed of a set of parts that describe the theorized process?* (Beach & Pederson, 2013, p. 4). Thus, this final theoretical model is built on the previously discussed concepts; accordingly, that it is the actual process of how ties and bonds in communities are established and the process of how social trust is built, that finally leads to the outcome; the creation of public trust. While the theoretical base of this reasoning has been existent for many decades (Coleman, 1988), it is the application in combination that amplifies the literature with a new theoretical model. A theoretical model that consists of two main entities (social capital and social trust) and three sequences, which respectively connects the causal chain from X to Y. Thus, it is this chain that leads from X to Y that allows this research to examine the question of *how citizen engagement creates public trust*, and as such, to explain the underlying process behind the creation of public trust (see figure 1).



**Figure 1:** Theoretical model illustrating the expected relationship between citizen engagement and public trust (created by Hubschmid).

### Conceptualization of causal mechanisms

*“Virtually every commercial transaction has within itself an element of trust, certainly any transaction conducted over a period of time. It can be plausibly argued that much of the economic backwardness in the world can be explained by a lack of mutual confidence.” – Kenneth J. Arrow (1972)*

In line with the theoretical model of this study, the causal mechanism – conceptualized as composed of two entities (see point 2.4.4) – can be established. According to Beach & Pederson (2013), a causal mechanism should be conceptualized, disaggregated into a series of parts composed of its entities engaging in activities (p. 164). As such, conceptualization allows to capture theoretically the actual process, whereas causal forces are transmitted through internally consistent causal mechanisms to produce the desired outcome (idem). Thus, following the mechanistic understanding as described by the scholars Beach & Pedersen (2013), a causal mechanism is defined as a theory of a system of interlocking parts that transmits causal forces from X to Y (Bhaskar, 1979; Bunge 1997, 2004; Glennan 1996, 2002; consulted in Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 29). Hence, each part of the theoretical mechanism can be illustrated as a wheel that transmits the dynamic causal energy of the causal mechanism on to the following wheel; ultimately contributing to the creation of the outcome Y (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 29). In order to illustrate the necessity of each part, an analogy can also be made to a car, where X could be the motor and Y the movement of the car; accordingly, without driveshaft and wheels, the motor itself cannot move forward. Thus, the driveshaft and wheels can be considered as the causal mechanisms that transmits forces from X (motor) to produce Y (movement) (idem). The same logic applies to this research case: while citizen engagement (X) stimulates public trust (Y), each entity and causal mechanism of the causal chain forms a necessary part for the outcome (Y) to happen. For the better understanding of this underlying process, the causal relationships leading from the hypothesized cause of civic engagement (X) to strong social bonds (social capital), and from

social capital to social trust, and accordingly, from social trust to the desired outcome of public trust (Y), has to be uncluttered.

Opening up this black box in between X and Y, each of the parts of the causal mechanisms can be conceptualized as composed of entities that undertake activities (Machamer, 2004; Machamer, Darden and Craver, 2000; consulted in Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 29). In line with the theoretical framework of this study, we identify two main entities connecting the hypothesized cause and the desired outcome (Collier, 2011). The first entity consists of the social capital, reinforcing social ties and bonds in communities, and the second one of the cultivation of social trust. For the better understanding, the causal chain can be illustrated through an equation (Beach & Pedersen, 2013); whereas each part of a mechanism can be illustrated as  $(n_n \rightarrow)$ , where  $n_n$  refers to the entity (n) and the arrow to the activity transmitting causal energy through the mechanism to produce an outcome. \* is connecting the parts, whereas as a whole the causal chain can be portrayed as:

$$X \rightarrow [(n_1 \rightarrow) * (n_2 \rightarrow)] Y$$

Thus, the equation should be read as X transmitting causal forces through the mechanism composed of part 1 (entity 1 and an activity) and part 2 (entity 2 and an activity), which together contribute to the outcome Y. Until this point, the equation is context-free and can be widely applied. Applying the equation to this research's case, a three-part causal mechanism has been conceptualized, which can be illustrated through the following equation:

$$(n_1 \rightarrow) * (n_2 \rightarrow) * (n_3 \rightarrow) = Y$$

; whereas  $n_1$  equals citizen engagement,  $n_2$  social capital,  $n_3$  social trust and Y represents public trust. In this case, all three –  $n_1$ ,  $n_2$  and  $n_3$  – build *systematic mechanisms*, which allows a certain level of generality, transcending a particular spatiotemporal context (Elster, 1998, p. 45; consulted in Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 35) – thereby, these mechanisms can be applied to other cases. Although non-systematic mechanisms are not *per se* problematic (Wight, 2004, p. 290; consulted in Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 35), the confidence in a causal chain established and supported by systematic mechanisms will be reinforced.

Furthermore, this causal chain is built of *structural causal mechanisms*, as they focus on exogenous constraints and opportunities for political action created by surroundings (Parsons, 2007, p. 49–52; consulted in Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 52). However, the choice of level – macro or micro – at which to analyse a causal mechanism depends on at which level the empirical manifestations of a theorized mechanism are best studied (Beach & Pedersen, 2016, p. 54). Besides the spatial dimension, there is also a temporal dimension according to both the time horizon of the causal forces that produce an outcome and the time horizon of the outcome itself (Pierson, 2004; consulted in Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 54). In this case study, the mechanism is expected to function *incrementally*, which is described by scholars as: “an incremental process of small decisions by actors that over time accumulate, resulting in the creation of a structure that forms a pro-integrative context for governmental decisions (Christiansen & Jorgensen, 1999; Christiansen & Reh, 2009; consulted in Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 55). Given this research’s strong dependence on societal actors, the creation of the different elements of the theoretical framework – namely citizen engagement, social capital, social trust and public trust – are expected to occur incrementally through empirical observations that will be visible only over time (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 56).

Hence, it remains crucial that each part of the causal chain is conceptualized as an individually necessary element of a whole (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 31). Thus, while isolated each part is insufficient to produce the outcome, each part is necessary for the overall mechanism to function (cf. car example p. 29). Consequently, the parts of a given causal mechanism are strictly necessary for the mechanism to work: if one part is absent, the mechanism cannot produce the outcome (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 30–31). This observation regarding the necessary and sufficient position within the causal chain will be of mayor importance once the process tracing tests are applied in the analysis section (see point 5). Given the considerable weight of these causal mechanisms (namely that these causal mechanisms themselves are able to affect how causal forces are transmitted between X and Y), this study does not consider the mechanisms as simple intervening variables – opposed to other scholars (Bunge, 1997; Mahoney, 2001; Waldner, 2012; consulted in Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 38) – but moreover, in line with the previously introduced mechanistic understanding (Bennett, 2008a; Bhaskar, 1978; Bunge, 1997; Glennan, 1996; consulted in Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 39): as *invariant entities* with regard to the entire causal chain as

well as individual parts. As such, this study agrees with Glennan (2005): “either all mechanisms are present, or the mechanism itself is not present” (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 39).

As such, inspired by Owen J.’s leading process tracing model (cf. democracy and peace; 1994), for this study’s case, a causal mechanism conceptualized as composed of three parts, each of which can be thought as necessary but nonsufficient for the transmission of the causal forces through the mechanism, is established (see figure 2, p. 32).

Part of the mechanism	Conceptualization of mechanism and its parts (entities and activities)
Context	Citizen-centred democratic government in Costa Rica.
Independent variable; cause (X)	Citizen engagement
Part 1 (n <sub>1</sub> →)	Citizen engagement creates social capital.
Part 2 (n <sub>2</sub> →)	Social capital creates social trust.
Part 3 (n <sub>3</sub> →)	Social trust creates public trust.
Dependant variable; outcome (Y)	Public trust

**Figure 2:** Five parts of Owen J.’s Causal Mechanism applied to this research study (created by Hubschmid; Owen J., 1994; consulted in Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 71).

For now, in pursuance to test their expected causality, the causal mechanisms need to be transformed into empirical observations – in other words, to be operationalized. However, in this case, both entities are product of social interactions and as such, depend strongly on the behaviour of human beings. This makes the empirical measurement difficult or almost impossible. Other scholars have faced similar barriers already in their research (Grootaert, 2002; Robbins, 2016), whereby proxies or indicators have been developed in order to achieve a valuable measurement for the desired social phenomenon to be examined. However, before operationalizing the causal mechanism, the selected research case will be briefly introduced.

### Case selection

For this study, the case of a long-standing Central American democracy, namely Costa Rica, has been selected. Costa Rica presented in the past years significant changes in domestic politics, whereas a shift towards a more citizen-centric government has been observed (Frajman, 2014; Sanchez, 2016). Given the recent implementation of a nation-wide citizen engagement program by the current government (Guillermo Solís Administration), Costa Rica forms a relevant case in order to develop significant research for a geographic area



(Latin America), that has been undernourished in PA literature in the past. Acknowledging this brief understanding of the case, its detailed description, regional relevance and justification are introduced later in this study (see point 3.3).

### Operationalization

After the conceptualization and case selection, empirical tests for the different parts of the causal mechanisms should be operationalized (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 164). Thus, following the logic that if X is expected to cause Y, each part of the causal mechanism between the two should show empirical manifestations – while focusing on activities of entities that transmit causal forces – that can be observed in empirical material (idem). Therefore, for each concept – citizen engagement, social capital, social trust and public trust – have to be formulated empirical predictions of evidence that are expected to be visible if a part of a causal mechanism exists, as follows:

Citizen engagement can be operationalized by looking for evidence demonstrating the active citizenship consisting of the actions taken within the public sphere for the well-being of the larger society. In the empirical world, citizen engagement can be observed through citizenry developing actual ideas, engaging, co-producing and participating on a local level; mostly within a community or a municipality.

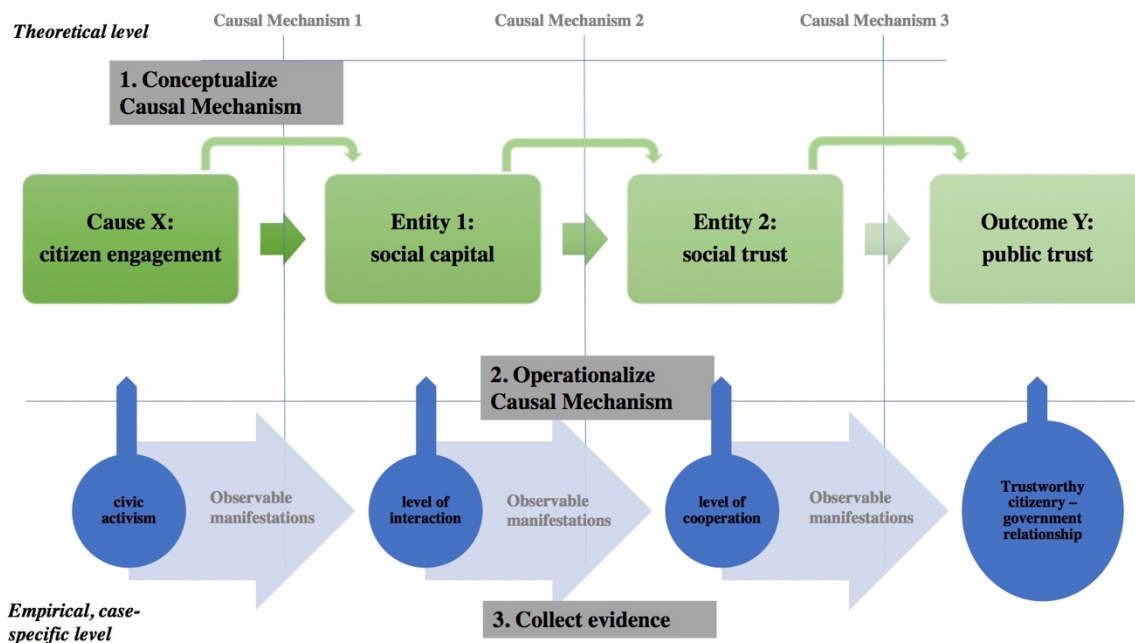
Social capital can be operationalized by looking for evidence demonstrating the reinforcement of social ties and bonds in communities. In the empirical world, social capital can be observed through the level of interaction; the strength of social integration within a community (Grootaert, 2002).

Social trust can be operationalized by looking for the amount of collaboration happening within the ties and bonds in communities. In the empirical world, social trust can be observed by the level of civic exchange; the general cooperativeness of individuals and organisations (Robbins, 2016) that flows within a community.

Public trust can be operationalized by looking at the perceived trustworthiness of citizenry – government relationship; as such, this can be empirically visible and observed

through the level of positive citizenry – government cooperation (the general public-private cooperativeness).

Thus, having established the final theoretical framework, the conceptualization and operationalization of its causal mechanisms, it is crucial to understand how the different steps come together in theory-testing process tracing. With a visual schema, the subsequent steps to follow can be illustrated (see figure 3 below): starting with conceptualizing the causal mechanisms, secondly, operationalizing them and finally, collecting the relevant evidence. Consequently, by following this approach (cf. Gerring’s approach; consulted in Beach & Pedersen, 2013), a subsequent order between the theoretical argument and the empirical testing supports the better understanding of the case-specific process tracing. As highlighted in the schema (see light green arrows), each theoretical concept is expected to have an impact on the following one. Hence, these expectations are the connections between the entities and are finally, what theory-testing process tracing – through observable manifestations – examines in order to establish the causal chain; in other words, to approve or disapprove the entire theoretical framework (see point 2.4.4).



**Figure 3:** Theory testing process tracing schema applied to the research case (created by Hubschmid, Beach & Pedersen, 2016, p. 15).

Therefore, what is actually traced is not a series of empirical events but moreover, the underlying theorized causal mechanism itself, by observing whether the expected case-specific implications of its existence are present in a case or not (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 15). Hence, the next section will thoroughly introduce the three case-specific expectations.

#### 2.4.5 Expectations

Expectations derive of the theoretical argumentation (see point 2.4.4) and are to be proved with observable manifestations of the empirical world (Beach & Pedersen, 2013), which allow to test the causality of the whole (Owen A. et al., 2002). Hence, prior to the testing of the causal chain, the expected correlation of its entities needs to be defined. In other words, statements representing the expected relationship of the underlying process connecting the independent and dependent variable have to be established (Creswell, 1994). Accordingly, applying this approach to the case of Costa Rica, namely the implementation of a nation-wide citizen engagement program named *Tejiendo Desarrollo* (see point 4), the following expectations have been established in order to test the causal chain:

**Hypothesized cause:** An active and engaged citizenry on a local, regional and national level; visible through their commitment in local government activism, organisational activism and communal project participation.

- (1) **Citizen Engagement → Social Capital:** Engaged citizens (local government activism, organisational activism and communal project participation) will *interact*, connect with each other and develop a common purpose within the community; as such create social capital.
- (2) **Social Capital → Social Trust:** Engaged citizens, once highly connected and interacting, will increasingly *exchange* goods and *cooperate* with each other. The higher the interaction between citizenry, the higher the economic exchange and cooperation within the ties in the community network; as such social capital enhances social trust.
- (3) **Social Trust → Public Trust:** Engaged citizens, who *interact* and *cooperate* within the community, also believe in a *trustworthy relationship with the government*; thus, the increased level of cooperativeness stimulates the positive relationship between

citizenry and government – in other words, social trust stimulates public trust.

**Outcome of interest:** An active citizenry interacts within its communities and shows a high level of cooperativeness, which is reflected positively in the relationship between the citizenry and the government of Costa Rica.

The above defined three sequences will be tested through different process tracing tests; where according to the weight of the available evidence, the sequence will either pass or fail the applied test. Assuming that the above expectations will pass the process tracing tests; the combined application of the Social Capital Theory with the concept of trust can be established. Consequently, the final theoretical model will be based on Coleman's Social Capital Theory (1988), aiming to both combine it with the concept of social and public trust, while keeping at its core the relevance of a citizen-centred process – because it is what truly matters to citizenry.

## **3. Methodology**

### **3.1 Research Design**

For the establishment of the causality between citizen engagement and public trust, this study will make use of a qualitative social science method. The strength of qualitative methods is that they are able to explain a social phenomenon; how a given social input leads to an observed effect (Centre for Development Impact [CDI], 2015). For this reason, the main theoretical framework in this small-N within-case study will be tested through process tracing (Coleman, 1988; George & Bennett, 2005). This with the aim to establish a causal mechanism between the engagement of citizens and the creation of public trust.

However, causality is not directly detectible (Toshkov, 2016). As such, the causal mechanism shall be established counterfactually through observable implications (indicators); which then become evidence after being assessed for accuracy and interpreted in the context (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 73). Given the complexity of the social world, it is almost impossible to apply experimental methods. Therefore, the use of process tracing as the qualitative method to establish the causal chain seems suitable in this study. With process tracing, the strength of the evidence *in cause* proving a causal relationship is assessed by four probability tests (CDI, 2015). These tests serve as plausibility tools in order to establish the process from the dependant (X) to the independent variable (Y). Lastly, the traced process will lead to the outcome of this research; the creation of public trust. However, before delving into the detective approach and the process tracing tools, the methodology will be carefully described.

### **3.2 Process tracing**

Process tracing is mostly chosen for the analysis of causal mechanisms using in-depth qualitative case studies in social science (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 7). The selection of this research method is justified in this study, given the interest in developing strong within-case inferences regarding the presence of mechanisms in a particular case (*idem*), namely citizen engagement in Costa Rica and its impact on public trust. Treating process-tracing as a single method has increasingly won legitimacy; as for example Gerring's study of conducting a two-stage deductive research process (2007a), where the analyst first clarifies the theoretical

argument and then empirically verifies each stage of the model, showed (p. 172–185; consulted in Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 10). As such, this study follows Gerring's structure (2006): having outlined the theoretical framework and argument in previous sections (see point 2.4.4), the empirical testing and establishment of the causality will follow in the subsequent ones (see point 4, 5 and 6). For the actual analysis of the traced process, this study will follow Owen J.'s approach to conceptualize the causal mechanism (1994; consulted in Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 71). Owen established with his peace and democracy study a valuable five-part model, which will later during the analysis serve as a suitable guidance for this research (see point 5).

Yet, Owen has not been the only scholar applying this qualitative social science, more generally, process tracing has recently experienced a rise in popularity (Beach & Pedersen, 2013) and accordingly, has been used in many different studies (e.g. Bennett & Elman, 2006a, 2006b; Elman, 2004; Hall 2008; Jacobs ,2004; Khong, 1992; Lehtonen, 2008; Owen J., 1994; consulted in Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 2). In order to detect the causal mechanisms of X causing Y, process tracing involves articulating the steps between a hypothesized cause, *in casu* the citizen engagement program (X), and an outcome, *in casu* the public trust (Y). Thus, in other words, process tracing aims to establish a causal chain between the independent and the dependent variable; the causal and caused variable. For the establishment of this causality, the derived formal statements (expectations in form of sequences) are tested in order to define whether the relevant pieces of evidence provide a necessary and sufficient base for the outcome to happen. The core of the causal chain is that each part of the mechanisms is necessary to give rise to the subsequent part. Yet, there might be alternative events on the way, but they have to be fully caused by the independent variable that precedes it and transmit the causal force without adding or altering substance to the dependent variable (George & Bennett, 2005).

Thus, in line with several other scholar's belief (cf. Bennett, 2005; Collier, Brady and Seawright, 2010b; consulted in Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 83), process tracing is based on the Bayesian logic; a logic formula for estimating the probability that a theory is supported by evidence (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 83). According to Bennett (2005), Bayesian logic should be applied as the inferential underpinning of process tracing methods, enabling to evaluate transparently and systematically the confidence placed in evidence confirming or

disconfirming hypothesized causal mechanisms (idem). The simplest version of Bayesian thinking consists of an assessment of posterior probability based on the likelihood of the outcome to happen and the prior knowledge – compared to alternative hypotheses (idem). Thus, the confidence in the theory will be augmented, when the posterior probability of a theory exceeds the prior probability before collecting the evidence (idem). Applied to this study's case, it is the likelihood of finding evidence supporting the validity of the theory – namely empirical observations confirming the causal mechanisms ( $n_1$ ,  $n_2$  and  $n_3$ ) – that actually counts. Thus, *in casu*, if after the analysis the probability of the theoretical framework – namely citizen engagement creating public trust – exceeds the prior probability, a reinforced confidence in the validity of the theory can be developed.

### 3.2.1 Detective approach

Thus, from the establishment of the main theoretical framework to the approval of the derived expectations, the causal mechanisms require to be tested through empirical observations gathered from a detective approach of the case (see point 4). Generally, causal mechanisms, as defined by George and Bennett, are ontological entities and processes in the world happening on an observable basis (2005, p. 394; Beach & Pedersen, 2013). However, in reality, social theories, as *in casu* the Social Capital Theory and the concept of trust, develop naturally in our head and as such, the mechanisms remain empirically unobservable. For this reason, the causal inference has to be established counterfactually through observable proxies (indicators). Thus, causal mechanisms can be defined as “the ultimately observable physical, social or psychological processes through which agents with causal capacities operate, but only in specific contexts or conditions, to transfer energy, information, or matter to other entities” (George & Bennett, 2005, p. 400). According to Collier, Brady and Seawright, this type of material should be named *causal process observations* (shortly CPO), as they provide information about the mechanism and contribute leverage in causal inference (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 73). In line with this belief, *in casu*, observations are considered so-called *raw material data*, as they only become evidence after being assessed for accuracy and interpreted in the context (idem). With process tracing, this evaluation is undertaken using the case-specific contextual knowledge, as visualizes the following equation:  $[o + k \rightarrow e]$ ; where o stands for observation, k for case-specific knowledge and e for the evidence that results of the assessment (idem). Through the Bayesian logic of probability will be assessed

whether the stated causal mechanism is present or absent; accordingly, the transmission of causal forces occurs or not. Hence, it is only after the careful evaluation of the observation, that a piece of information can be called evidence (*idem*); and consequently, be used to make within-case inferences.

Thus, according to Beach & Pedersen (2013), at the centre of such a mechanistic and deterministic understanding of causality lies the dynamic and interactive influence of causes on outcomes; particularly, how causal forces are transmitted through the series of interlocking parts of a causal mechanism to contribute to an outcome (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 25 and p. 76). As such, given the theory-centric ambition of this study – namely to generalize the theoretical framework of how citizen engagement creates public trust beyond the single case of Costa Rica –, theory-testing process tracing is applied (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 164). This variant differs from the two others (theory-building and explaining-outcome), as it deduces a theoretical framework from the existing literature and consequently, tests whether evidence shows that each part of a hypothesized causal mechanism has been present in a given case, enabling within-case inferences about whether the mechanism functioned as expected (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 3). Thus, theory-testing is applied when there exists a well-established empirical correlation between X and Y, but no further understanding about the potential mechanism in between the two (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 164). As such, this variant of process tracing is usually presented as a stepwise test of each part of a causal mechanism, as Owen J.'s (1994) study of the democratic peace mechanism showed (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 4). Thus, by applying step-by-step empirical tests (based on Bayesian logic of inference), process tracing aims to increase the confidence in the existence of a mechanism (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 7). Yet, only if changes are able to be measured in the entity acted upon after the intervention of the causal mechanisms and in temporal or spatial isolation from other mechanisms, the causal mechanism is regarded to have generated the observed change (George & Bennett, 2005; Beach & Pedersen, 2013). For this evaluation, a set of process tracing instruments can be applied, which will be elaborated in the next section.



### 3.2.2 Four process tracing tests

While conducting process tracing, the probability that the hypothesized causal chain leads to the effect will be assessed by four process tracing tests (Beach & Pederson, 2013; Collier, 2011; consulted in CDI, 2015, p. 3); which are based on the principles of certainty and uniqueness (see figure 4). Thus, the tests define whether the evidence is necessary or sufficient for the correlation between cause and outcome. In other words, the test reviews the evidence under assumption that the hypothesized causal sentence holds (X leads to Y in the theorized way) or by stating, that the hypothesized causal mechanism does not hold (an alternative causal sequence explains the effect). For this, the tested hypothesis is either backed by a clue (evidence supporting the hypothesis) or an inference (incident decreasing confidence in or even rejecting hypothesis); whereas – according to the applied (Straw-in-the-wind, Hoops, Smoking gun or Double decisive) test – the clue or inference will be sufficient or necessary in order to approve or disapprove the hypothesis. For the better understanding, the different tests are explained below:

**Table 1. Process Tracing: Types of Tests<sup>1</sup>**

		Sufficient to Establish Causation <sup>2</sup>	
		No	Yes
Necessary To Establish Causation	No	<b>1. Straw in the Wind Test</b> <i>Passing:</i> Affirms relevance of hypothesis, but does not confirm it <i>Failing:</i> Suggests hypothesis not relevant, but does not eliminate it <i>Implication for rival hypotheses:</i> None	<b>3. Smoking Gun Test</b> <i>Passing:</i> Confirms hypothesis <i>Failing:</i> Does not eliminate it <i>Implication for rival hypotheses:</i> None
		<b>2. Hoop Test</b> <i>Passing:</i> Affirms relevance of hypothesis but does not confirm it <i>Failing:</i> Eliminates it <i>Implication for rival hypotheses:</i> None	<b>4. Doubly Decisive Test</b> <i>Passing:</i> Confirms hypothesis and eliminates others <i>Failing:</i> Falls short in establishing sufficiency and/or necessity <i>Implication for rival hypotheses:</i> passing eliminates them, as noted above
	Yes		

<sup>1</sup> This table is adapted from Bennett (2010: 210). It builds on categories initially formulated by Van Evera (1997: 31–32).

<sup>2</sup> In this table, “establish causation,” as well as “confirming” or “eliminating” a hypothesis, obviously does not involve a definitive test. Rather, as with any causal inference, qualitative or quantitative, it is a *plausible* test in the framework of a particular data set and of this specific method of inference.

**Figure 4:** Matrix for the assessment of certainty and uniqueness of an evidence (Collier, 2011).

The first test is called **Straw-in-the-wind test**. It is the weakest test of the four, because it consists of a neither necessary nor sufficient evidence in order to confirm a hypothesis. Thus, this test represents low uniqueness and low certainty. Accordingly, a Straw-in-the-wind test is not enough to make either an approving or disapproving conclusion on the hypothesis (Collier, 2011). However, if reliable Straw-in-the-wind evidence exists, as for example in this study's case: *a clue that citizen engagement increases due to the program Tejiendo Desarrollo; consequently, the researcher might have a hint for the hypothesis to be approvable. On the other hand, there might also be an inference to this clue, stating that there does not exist any considerable citizen engagement in Costa Rica; thus, the plausibility of the hypothesis would in this case be decreased but not rejected.*

Secondly, the **Hoops test** provides high certainty. As such, passing this test is necessary to confirm a hypothesis and is required in order to declare a theory to be true. Yet, evidence passing the Hoops test is not enough to approve the hypothesis, because it is not sufficient. Nevertheless, weak evidence can be used to somewhat exclude alternative events, as failing the Hoops test can eliminate a rival hypothesis (Collier, 2011). Thus, compared to the Straw-in-the-wind test, passing the hoop test has stronger implications for rival hypotheses: it somewhat weakens their plausibility, without precluding the possibility that alternative hypotheses may be relevant (Collier, 2011, p. 826). As an example, taking the hypothesis that Guillermo Solís, the president of Costa Rica (2014-2018), created public trust: *a potential clue is his personal asset as an influencer. However, even if being an influencer is consistent with the hypothesis, it does not demonstrate itself that it is enough to create public trust (inference). Nevertheless, given Guillermo Solís' ability and strong charisma to gain people's vote, the hypothesis passes the test. As such, passing the test does significantly increase the confidence that the hypothesis is true; however, is not enough to prove the hypothesis. Yet, in case of the opposite, the hypothesis can be disconfirmed.*

Thirdly, the **Smoking gun test** is sufficient to confirm a hypothesis due to its high uniqueness of the event. Evidence in favour of the hypothesis, passing the Smoking gun test are enough to approve the hypothesis. Hence, evidence failing the test substantially weakens the confidence in the hypothesis (Collier, 2011). Again, taking the hypothesis that Guillermo Solís created public trust: *a potential clue is when Guillermo Solís is found with some statistics in his hands proving that he personally created public trust. Thus, the investigator*

*can be confident that the hypothesis is true. Even if an inference interrupts this belief, it does not significantly decrease the confidence in the hypothesis due to the high uniqueness of the evidence in hand.*

Lastly, the **Double decisive test** represents the most demanding one. Passing this test is both necessary and sufficient to confirm a hypothesis, as it provides both a high certainty and uniqueness. As such, evidence passing or failing this test can either approve or disapprove a hypothesis; and thus, this test constitutes at the same time the strongest of all and the hardest to pass (Beach & Pedersen, 2013; consulted in CDI, 2015, p. 3; Collier, 2011). Again, taking the same hypothesis as with the Hoops and the Smoking gun test: *assuming the clue that Guillermo Solís has been the only president in the past 10 years and an official OECD and UN report state, that he had been the reason for the rise in public trust in Costa Rica, then the investigator can be confident, that the hypothesis is true as well as all other alternative hypotheses are false. In the case that the report states of the year of the previous president, this inference would be strong enough to disconfirm the hypothesis.*

Yet, besides the many positive aspects of this qualitative methods (George & Bennett, 2005), such as the ability to assess social phenomena and to test them respectively with a set of instruments; the sources to be analysed form a crucial role for the outcome of the study. Thus, empirical observations need to be evaluated for their collection, content, accuracy and probability before being qualified as evidence (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 7). In line with this, a brief introduction on the selected sources and their evaluation is elaborated in the following section.

### **3.2.3 Turning observations into evidence**

In order to trace the process for this study, empirical material is gathered to see and test whether the predicted expectations are present (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 7). By applying the Bayesian-compatible tool for evaluating empirical material, the quality of the sources is assured (idem). Thus, the collected observations undergo a four-stage evaluation of collection, content evaluation, assessment of accuracy and probability of evidence: firstly, with regard to the collection, it is evaluated whether there is enough observation available and whether there exist any awareness of resource limitation; secondly, the observations'

content is assessed to determine what the observation tells in relation to the predicted to occur; thirdly, it is assessed whether the observation measures the intended, whether there are any sources of errors as well as potential solutions to correct them; and lastly, according to the Bayesian logic, the probability is evaluated (Beach & Pedersen, 2013).

Thus, taking this research case, different sources have been selected – including official governmental documents, reports, statements and publicly available interviews – that help to understand citizenry and its relationship with the government. The main source consists of the publicly available interviews provided by the programme *Tejiendo Desarrollo*, INDER. Although being an originally Spanish source, its translation to English has been provided by a perfectly bilingual (see Annex). Providing the citizens' (participants) personal opinion and statements on their engagement with public entities, the interviews show first-hand insights on the impact of *Tejiendo Desarrollo*. These interviews are considered to be a primary source, as they have been conducted by INDER, a governmental entity, during a time period from 2016 – 2017 (*Tejiendo Desarrollo*, 24 October 2016; 8<sup>th</sup> December 2016; 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2016; 29 March 2017); whereas both participants of the program *Tejiendo Desarrollo* and governmental representatives released their perception and experience about the collaboration within the community and the institutions. Thus, on one side, these interviews are a valuable source, as they provide the opinion of both the citizen and the professionals. However, on the other side, interviews can be biased with regard to whether one has spoken to the 'winner or loser party' (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 134). While – besides the fact of their participation in *Tejiendo Desarrollo* – there does not exist any further information on the selection process of the interviewees, the role of the interviewee has to be assessed accordingly. Thus, there might be a bias regarding the viewpoints of the interviewees, which interferes with the objectivity of the study. As such, in order to increase the reliability and validity of this study, the appropriate step of including another significant source – besides the interviews – is highly recommended for the overall evaluation of the causality. Thus, in this case, additional evidence will be developed through the help of the social media platform Facebook (see point 5.4), as well as an international organisation, namely the OECD. While testing the entire causal chain with these sources, the research outcome may be validated and become more reliable, as potential source limitations and biases might be detected.

Altogether, a variety of sources have been taken into consideration, whereas – as typical for process tracing – mostly qualitative sources have been included. Having discussed the

positive aspects of process tracing and the sources, the proper challenges related to the methodology should also be taken into consideration. A brief overview below will clarify how to control and counter-balance potential issues of non-comparability or limitations.

### **3.2.4 Internal and external validity**

Yet despite the wide-spread use of process tracing in empirical research and the increasing literature (e.g. Bennett and Elman, 2006a, 2006b; Elman, 2004; Hall, 2008; Jacobs, 2004; Khong, 1992; Lehtonen, 2008; Owen J., 1994; consulted in Beach & Pederson, 2013, p. 2), there are still doubts about how and when valid inferences can be made. Given the nature of process tracing, it is important to outline the internal and external validity of a study (George & Bennett, 2005; Gerring, 2006). In this research, particular attention has to be assigned to the issue of non-comparability and generalization. As such, several observations have to be mentioned.

In the habit of this methodology, the internal validity is confronted with non-comparability and other limitations (Gerring, 2006). Regarding the sources, the analysis with process tracing seeks to make sense of different qualitatively relevant pieces of evidence, which each will help to understand a part of the outcome. While not contributing to the observation in a larger sample, the pieces of evidence can be understood each as single relevant observation (Gerring, 2006, in George & Bennett, 2005, p. 2422). As each piece of (mainly qualitative) evidence comes from a different population, the total number of observations is indeterminate (as non-comparable observations are difficult to count). Process tracing observations are not different examples of the same thing; they are different things *like apples and oranges* (George & Bennett, 2005, p. 2235). As such, the observations flow seamlessly together, as it is not clear where one observation ends and another begins. Thus, it is this non-comparability of adjacent observations, not the nature of individual observations, that differentiates the process tracing method from other research designs (George & Bennett, 2005, p. 2596). As such, non-comparability not necessarily means a weakness, but can be perceived as a positive quality of this methodology; especially in this present research. This argument is supported by the fact, that the ambiguity does not cause any trouble; given that the number of observations in citizen engagement does not directly have an influence on the usefulness and

truthfulness of the outcome (public trust). Thus, the number of observations in this within-case study has no obvious relevance on the internal validity; neither of the result of this study.

Furthermore, there has been a debate about process tracing, whether the generation of observable implications – to test causal mechanisms – are sufficient in order to establish a causal chain. As contrary to statistical methods, in process tracing, the quality of evidence is not judged by the number of observations (sample size), but rather by the probability of observing certain pieces of evidence (cf. Bayesian logic; George & Bennett, 2005). Thus, assessments of probability in process tracing might not be quantitative; rather, the evidence consists of empirical observations combined with knowledge of contextual factors (Befani & Mayne, 2014; consulted in CDI, 2015). Hence, scholars take different sides in this debate: on one hand, Mahoney approves (2001); on the other hand, Hedström and Ylikoski believe that mechanisms represent only some aspects of causal explanation, but lack others – as they are randomly determined, in other words, stochastic (2010). With regard of this present study, we agree with Waldner (2012), who states that it is possible to do process tracing on the hypothesized causal mechanisms at the macro-level (cf. George & Bennett, 2005, p. 371). For the selected case of this study (see below 3.3), the strength of process tracing actually becomes useful, as it is able to take into consideration observations and social phenomena, which with other research methods can easily been overseen or lost.

Regarding the external validity, such as the generality of the causal mechanisms (respectively, the generalization of the research outcome), the chosen ‘theory-centric’ approach seems convenient. The theory-centric process tracing variant understands that the social world can be split into manageable parts that can be studied empirically (Jackson, 2011: consulted in Beach & Pedersen, 2016 p. 12). Thus, the methodology aims to build theories that can be generalized. As stated previously (see point 2.4.4), theory-testing process tracing studies are understood to be systematic factors, which allow them to be applied across cases that lie within a context in which they are predicted to operate; in other words, systematic mechanisms are expected to be present in a set of cases (different populations) (Falleti and Lynch, 2009; consulted in Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 12). Altogether, having elaborated potential limitations of internal and external validity, respective measures will be taken in the subsequent analysis (see point 5) in order to maximize the study’s credibility,

reliability and chances for replicability. Prior to that, the selected case for this study will be thoroughly introduced.

### **3.3 Case**

In line with the purpose of theory-testing process tracing, this methodology aims to investigate whether a hypothesized causal mechanism was present in a single case, which then is treated as a selected example of a broader population of the phenomenon (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 70). Thus, it is crucial that both X and Y are detectable in the chosen case in order to be established in the theory (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 164). As such, this study selected the case of Costa Rica, which is due to its long-standing democratic history and recent historical development (see point 4) expected to deliver a most-likely case, if applying the previously introduced theoretical framework (see point 2.4.4) (Beach & Pedersen, 2013).

#### **3.3.1 Regional relevance**

Modern social science research on Latin American political culture has until recently been quite fragmentary and underdeveloped. Public trust research has been conducted mostly in developed regions: Central Europe and the Anglo-Saxons. As so far, Latin America – or more specifically Central America – has not been thoroughly covered with research in this area. Whereby, the scholar Lawrence Harrison has made the controversial argument that “underdevelopment is a state of mind”, reflecting the low levels of interpersonal trust, and the pervasiveness of *uncivic* behaviour, characterizing the region (Ai Camp, 2001, p. 55). Further, the scholar O’Donnell, suggested that the low level of social trust encourages an exaggerated form of individualism that breeds class hostility and disrespect for the rule of law (Ai Camp, 2001, p. 56). More general, Marta Lagos writes that to understand the kind of democracy that is currently evolving in Latin America, “one must consider not only the formal and institutional bases of politics, but also the non-rational or operational cultural traits that form such an important part of the region’s soul” (Ai Camp, 2001, p. 55). Thus, it is the latter that provides the analysis – the chosen case and its regional aspect – of this research with justification.

### 3.3.2 Case selection

There remains a context specific research gap in the region of Latin America. Scholars explain this gap due to high corruption and crime, where research on public trust remains limited. As such, in the past years, scholars have ignored to touch research related to corrupt or criminal governments due to the lack of valid documentation and complex access to primary sources (OECD, 2014). However, over the past years, significant efforts to enhance public trust have been made: especially civic engagement efforts have played a key role in Latin America (OECD, 2009). Particularly Costa Rica – a Central American state – has shown significant progress in the willingness of its Administration to enhance open government (trust, transparency and participation); whereas the OECD praised the nation's lead accordingly (OECD, 2016). Thus, given Costa Rica's relevant development in this area, the Central American state has been selected as the case of this study.

Costa Rica is considered as one of the most consolidated and long-standing democracies in Latin America (OECD, 2014). Yet, over the past years, a shift in the Costa Rican politics has been observed. Citizens increasingly switched from the once leading national political party, the National Liberation Party (PLN), towards a more citizen-oriented government: The Citizen Action Party (PAC). This movement is not surprising, as the OECD remarked for years the low level of citizen participation in Costa Rica (OECD, 2014). In fact, the OECD resumed in a more actual report even that Costa Rica has shown the lowest percentage of citizen participation in civil society organisations in Latin America, with only 41% of the population taking part in organisations such as parents' associations, village committees, professional associations, sports groups and political parties or movements over the past years (OECD, 2016, p. 29). However, this being a result of many governments in a row, might come to an end with the lead of the PAC.

Since 2014, with the election of Guillermo Solís, PAC's candidate, great strides have been taken towards a more citizen-centred government. Besides the establishment of 'open government' policies and laws; joint efforts with the OECD, such as capacity-building seminars for citizen participation, have been taken (OECD, 2015). Thus, the OECD confirmed in 2015 that the Guillermo Solís Administration has made citizen participation a priority and that the nation is establishing a solid base to create a more active citizenry.



Given Costa Rica's latest development, its case provides a significant example in order to analyse, what citizen engagement efforts have been taken by the Guillermo Solís' Administration since 2014 and how the outcome has been displayed within the country.

### 3.3.3 Brief case description

According to the research question of this present study, a case has been required where the impact of citizen engagement can be measured and explained. As citizen engagement is recommended to be analysed on the local level, especially municipalities and communities provide a reliable base for measurement. Costa Rica (see figure 5),



**Figure 5:** Costa Rica is situated between Nicaragua and Panama in Central America.

besides being a democratic country and famous for the abolishment of its army, has a territory of about 51.100 km<sup>2</sup> and a population of almost 5 million people. The country is organized into six main provinces; consisting of 81 cantons and 470 districts (OECD, 2016).

Given the Guillermo Solís Administration's great efforts toward a more citizen-based government, there are many empirically observable results within the country. Particularly, the inclusion of citizen participation in the National Plan of Development (PND, 2014) has been crucial in order to realize nation-wide progress. A considerable result of this citizen favourable policy approach – an inherent part of the PND – has been reflected in the launch of the program *Tejiendo Desarrollo*. The program is a joint effort of several ministries and the central administration itself, aiming to stimulate citizen engagement and participation across Costa Rica's territories. Thus, participating municipalities form a suitable unit of analysis for this research. As described thoroughly in the case description (see point 4), it is this program that allows this study to measure the impact of citizen engagement empirically within the societal context of Costa Rica.

## 4 Case description

A careful description of the relevant series of events and situations over time forms the foundation of process tracing (Collier, 2011, p. 823), as a detailed description of the trajectories of causation is vital for the analysis to succeed. Hence, it is about the description of an event at one point in time; as such, the “good snapshots at a series of specific moments” (Collier, 2011, p. 824). Yet, sometimes there does not exist a clearly established guideline where to start the causal chain. As such, all relevant events as well as alternative observations – so-called ‘rival explanations’ – shall be included in the descriptive inference below (idem).

In the case of this study, it makes sense to start with an outline of the historical context of Costa Rican politics:

In the 1990’s, Costa Rica has suffered accusations of corruption and the lack of transparency (Frajman, 2014). In response to these, citizenry naturally wished the government to be more transparent and citizen-centred (Sánchez, 2016, p. 113); which eventually led to the birth of the political party called Citizen Action Party (PAC). Thus, in the year 2000, the PAC was officially founded after a decade of Costa Rican people not identifying anymore with the leading national political party at this time, the PLN (National Liberation Party). People had enough of corrupt politicians governing separated from the people’s will, needs and desires (Frajman, 2014). The PAC, being the party of the people, responded to this call with the promise for a change (PAC, 2017). Aiming for a country with a political system that enhances the participation of the various sectors that make up the Costa Rican society and guaranteeing the effective division of powers as well as transparency in all processes of democratic participation; the political party seemed to fulfil the needs of many desperate citizens (Frajman, 2014).

In the meantime, a leading intergovernmental economic organisation, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), released a report with a specific focus on citizenry. In the overall, the report analysed different case studies and came to the conclusion, that by including citizenry, activating them to be engaged and committed to an inclusive governance of a country; a government cannot only save costs, perform better, but moreover, generate public trust (OECD, 2009). This conclusion is based on the OECD’s discovery that

citizens judge democratic governments on their policy and democratic performance, whereas the focus of the latter lies on the process – in line with the New Public Governance Theory (Meijer, 2016). The report reinforces its argument by the statement of a famous scholar, stating that “public engagement is not just desirable; it is a condition of effective governance” (Donald G. Lenihan; OECD, 2009, p. 20).

A few years later, in 2014, on the road towards the presidential elections, the Costa Rican politicians could already perceive a shift within the national political dynamics (Sánchez, 2016; Frajman, 2014). One of the leading Costa Rican newspaper stated one day prior to the elections “the signals that the population wishes a change get every day stronger” (Jimena Soto, 6<sup>th</sup> April 2014). Thus, the movement from the once leading national political party, PLN, to the more left-leaning PAC was confirmed (Frajman, 2014). After eight years of the presidential lead of the PLN, the PAC had increasingly gained followers (many former PLN politicians) and seemed determined to handle a takeover of power (PAC, 2017). The PAC, with its presidential campaign promising a more citizen-based governance – where every citizen has a voice, and is invited to participate – met the mayor desires of citizenry and responded to their needs. The PAC even used a metaphoric slogan (in form of a hashtag) saying that ‘#CostaRicaWillChange’ (‘#CostaRicaVaCambiar’; 2014). The message spread quickly on several social media platforms and gained significant popularity (Sánchez, 2016). Guillermo Guillermo Solís, the PAC’s presidential candidate, son of a shoe vendor, and himself teacher at the National University of Costa Rica; appeared publicly as ‘a normal person’, down-earth and very citizen-close (Sánchez, 2016); combined with a great talent to reach out to the people (La nación de Costa Rica, 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2014).

Thus, on 7th April 2014, Guillermo Solís, the official presidential candidate of the PAC, won the citizens’ vote with his presidential campaign entitled ‘Costa Rica Is Changing’ (‘Costa Rica Esta Cambiando’), where Guillermo Solís announced his engagement towards a reinforced and active citizenry (Sánchez, 2016; Frajman 2014). With a presidential campaign that gained remarkable popularity and followers, the election of Guillermo Solís as the President of Costa Rica in the second national convention in 2014 became a historic event (Sánchez, 2016). The number of his received votes has been ‘eye-opening’ for Costa Rica’s politicians; as Guillermo Solís achieved an election outcome with almost 1.300.000 million votes, representing 77% of the total electoral participation (Frajman, 2014; PAC, 2017). This

has been an unprecedented result; for the first time in history a Costa Rican president gained the votes of over 1 million citizens and as such, achieves to unify a large number of the population under one political party (Mercedes Agüero, 7th April 2014; Frajman, 2014; see figure 6).

**Table 2**  
Presidential election – runoff.

Candidate (party)	Number of votes received	% of votes received
Luis Guillermo Solís (PAC)	1,229,420	77.8
Johnny Araya (PLN)	295,615	22.1

Source: La Nación.

**Figure 6:** Costa Rican election results in 2014 (Frajman, 2014).

Given the corrupt reputation of the previous presidency (Frajman, 2014), one of the new president's most important tasks immediately became to "recover people's confidence in the Costa Rican state", stated Luis Mesalles, an analyst, who wrote for the national newspaper *la nación* (Malkin, 2014). As such, in his presidential election speech, President Guillermo Solís reiterated his Administration's commitment towards a citizen-centred governance and more transparent institutions. He addressed himself to his voters with the following words: "welcome to the change. The people of Costa Rica decided to change, now it's the people's voice and the people who will govern. It's time to go back to the country's roots, the citizens themselves. We want a future for our people" (La nación de Costa Rica, 3rd February 2014). Further, he reassured "we are the movement of the people, and we best represent the necessities, values and principles of the nation. We are the movement of the majority of Costa Rica, people willing to engage for the better of this nation" (La nación de Costa Rica, 3rd February 2014). Accordingly, the euphoria and expectations of the Costa Rican people have been high (Frajman, 2014).

Shortly after taking the mandate, the Guillermo Solís Administration released its National Plan for Development for the year 2015 to 2018 (PND, 2015).

*"You and I know: to get the country out we will need a lot of dialogue, a lot of respect for difference and diversity. For that reason, the working groups have already initiated sectoral dialogues on different topics of the national agenda."* – Guillermo Solís Administration (2015)

According to his political party's vision, the PND states that the active participation of the civil society in the communal, local, territorial and regional space are fundamental to reach the national objectives. Further, the plan stresses that it is imperative to re-establish the people's trust in the institutions (PND, 2015, p. 9; Malkin, 2014). In its chapter four, the PND calls for an open government, stating that: "the open government is centric for this Administration. It is postulated as a renewed resource for state reform and modernization of public administration, based on an innovative relationship among the various actors for the co-creation of public value. It is not an end in itself, but a means to promote transparency, collaboration and participation" (PND, 2015, p. 78). Furthermore, the PND affirms that "emphasizing the role of citizens in public affairs and decision-making can enhance the search and implementation of solutions in this scheme of greater shared responsibility, that allows us to take advantage of distributed capacities and collective intelligence of the social actors" (PND, 2015, p. 79). Thus, in other words, the national plan highlights the importance of a citizen-centred approach; highlights the benefits of human capital and collective action. Yet, in chapter four, the PND introduces the nation-wide citizen engagement initiative called *Tejiendo Desarrollo*. "The program *Tejiendo Desarrollo* is promoted by the Presidency of Costa Rica, through the Office of the First Lady, the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Policy (MIDEPLAN), the Institute of Rural Development (INDER), the Institute of Municipal Promotion and Advice (IFAM) and the National Directorate of Community Development (DINADECO) for the purpose of promoting the inter-institutional coordination and citizen participation in regions, territories, municipalities and communities within the network of *Tejiendo Desarrollo*" (PND, 2015, p.82). As such, the Guillermo Solís Administration had launched an inter-institutional framework (*Tejiendo Desarrollo*), introducing a formal base for citizen engagement action and plans taking place on a nation-wide level.

In the following years, Guillermo Solís governed according to the expression of 'Costa Rica Is Changing' ('Costa Rica Esta Cambiando'); showing results through *Tejiendo Desarrollo*. According to an open government, one of these has been the implementation of public participation spaces; whereby the PND states that "citizen participation in a democratic regime consists of more than the representative exercise of suffrage; including levels of direct intervention in the processes of dialogue, public consultation, social deliberation, planning,

management, decision making and social control” (INDER, p. 6). Thus, the document highlights that this “(..) will be carried out through the deepening of representative and participatory democracy, with citizen interest as the primary objective” (idem). In this context, the public institutions form a key role in order to guarantee not only the launch but also the sustainability of these public participation spaces (idem). For the viability of these spaces, “citizens and their organisations are expected to provide information, project proposals, but also to be involved in decision-making and influence priorities, on the actions undertaken by local and central government” (idem).

As a consequence, with the implementation of the program *Tejiendo Desarrollo*, participation spaces have been established on a national base, expected to stimulate the functioning of existing coordination, decision and implementation structures (INDER, 2015). The newly established citizen participation spaces include mainly four different enforcement areas: cantonal council of institutional coordination (CCCI), regional council of development (COREDES), territorial council of rural development (CTDR) and communal dialogues. (1) The CCCI builds an instance of technical, political and inter-institutional coordination, which is established in every canton. The Council aims to coordinate in between the public institutions, the local governments and the actions to be taken, while maximising the use of public resources. This process is facilitated by MIDEPLAN. (2) The COREDES forms the instance, where the necessities and aspirations of a region are identified and the measures to be taken are defined. In these meetings, different actors (civil society) can meet and articulate politics, plans, programs and institutional projects. The COREDES are also facilitated by MIDEPLAN. (3) The CTDR constitute spaces of participation, coordination and articulation for actions between citizenry and public institutions. This instance is facilitated by INDER. (4) The communal dialogues serve as a place where different communal actors can be heard through *Tejiendo Desarrollo*. The function of this dialogue is to generate a way to integrate different citizen efforts, prioritize the projects on a local, regional and national base; with the participation of the communal leaders. This process is facilitated by DINADECO (INDER, 2015).

In the meantime, the OECD reassessed Costa Rica’s position on open governance and produced a review in 2016; where the organisation praised the nation’s progress regarding transparency, accountability and citizen participation. The review presented evaluations that

Costa Rica has been one of the first to involve the executive, legislative and judicial branches of the state, along with subnational governments, independent institutions and civil society organisations, in the design and implementation of its national open government agenda (cf. PND, 2015; OECD, 2016). Thereby, Costa Rica is moving towards what the OECD defines as an ‘open state’: “a government based on principles of transparency, accountability and citizen participation contributing to ensure that the views and needs of all relevant stakeholders are reflected in the policy-making cycle, hence favouring more inclusive socio-economic development” (OECD, 2016, p. 3). The review states positively that “Costa Rican citizens have various possibilities for involvement in public affairs, including both ad hoc and permanent mechanisms through which they can influence the decision-making processes” (idem). Furthermore, the OECD acknowledges Costa Rica’s efforts to include citizen engagement as a priority in its National Strategy (PND, 2015). As such, the review continues: “in addition, fostering citizen engagement features as one of the objectives of Costa Rica’s National Development Plan” (cf. PND, 2015; OECD, 2016, p. 19).

From a domestic politics perspective and in line with the OECD’s observations, Olga Marta Sanchez, the Minister of MIDEPLAN, explained in 2016 how citizen engagement has been integrated in the national development framework. “In this plan, one of the three pillars clearly indicates the need to work increasingly for a more efficient and transparent state; both more in line with the needs and aspirations of people” (*Tejiendo Desarrollo*, 24 October 2016; see Annex 10.4).

Conform with this statement, over time, *Tejiendo Desarrollo* has been confirmed – over time – to open unprecedented opportunities for citizenry to participate in numerous projects; increasing social ties and bonds within the community. As a consequence, citizenry increasingly interacted among each other. This higher level of interaction could be empirically observed through many *Tejiendo Desarrollo* projects; where several interviews with participants of the initiative provide first-hand insights. Taking for example the project of Sarapiquí (*Tejiendo Desarrollo*, 8th December 2016; see Annex 1.1), where agriculture has been enhanced in collaboration with the citizens. Didier Rodriguez, the Secretary of the Territorial Council of Sarapiquí, mentioned that the needs of this region are low employment and access to urban regions (idem). Further, Werner Avila from the Department of Promotion of INFOCOOP stated that this region has been a good example of the interaction among

citizens and public officials on behalf of *Tejiendo Desarrollo*. He mentions that “the newly established COOPECUREÑA has even been receiving education and capacity training through *Tejiendo Desarrollo*” (*Tejiendo Desarrollo*, 8<sup>th</sup> December 2016; see Annex 1.2). This statement has been confirmed by the Professor of the Institute of Technology of Costa Rica, Lady Fernandez, who affirms: “we are working in this community since 2014, when we discovered through the program *Tejiendo Desarrollo*, that this community has a strong interest in collaborating” (*Tejiendo Desarrollo*, 8<sup>th</sup> December 2016; see Annex 1.8). Furthermore, engaged individuals such as the females of ASIPROFE show that citizen engagement is established and strongly visible in Costa Rica’s communities. The interview with the founder and employees of ASIPROFE shows, that their interaction on behalf of ‘Café de la Legua’ has created stronger ties and bonds in their community, resulting in the significant creation of employment (*Tejiendo Desarrollo*, 8<sup>th</sup> December 2016; see Annex 4).

In line with this, the Treasury and Communicator of ASIPROFE, Rita Espinoza, states “this project has been a nice example of what *Tejiendo Desarrollo* does on a nation-wide base. Because in this project, you can observe many governmental institutions collaborating with us for the good” (*Tejiendo Desarrollo*, 8<sup>th</sup> December 2016; see Annex 4.1). The government’s engagement and actions in order to empower citizenry has been welcomed and appreciated. As such, a positive impact on the citizenry-government relation can be empirically visible (*Tejiendo Desarrollo*, 8<sup>th</sup> December 2016 and 29 March 2017; see Annex 2.4 and 8.1). Also, Leticia Castro, the Founding Partner at ASIPROFE shares insights of their team experience and aspirations: “we have a positive response to the coffee quality that we are carrying day by day. We have now the disposition to take it to Guanacaste to tourist projects (..). The great challenge now is to articulate it with rural tourism, which we believe is another great opportunity for the integral development of our people, for the generation of employment, and especially for youth; (..) and it represents what a group of committed women can achieve driven by an integral family vision” (idem). A similar positive experience seems to have gained the women of AMEP, as Maria Elena Garcia states “the project of the Association of Successful Women has been supported by the MAG, INA, INTA, FITTACORI, the Institute of Technology in collaboration with program *Tejiendo Desarrollo*. Given the lack of employment in the village, it benefits 15 women, heads of household. The aim is to incorporate 20 – 30 more women. (..). Including in some future our children, or husband, brothers, the parents of some companions who also need work” (*Tejiendo*



*Desarrollo*, 8<sup>th</sup> December 2016; see Annex 5.1). Thus, an increased level of cooperation is clearly observable.


Further, the increased level of cooperation also tackles communal problematics through the increased societal interaction and willingness to collaborate with each other, as Romelio Arias shares proudly: “sometimes when there is overproduction of mango, it gets all lost. That’s why we created the project of an organisation, the Cantonal Agricultural Centre, that is nowadays responsible in these cases. We received all support from the CCCI, (..), thanks to the program of the First Lady, it became stronger. As such, there is a very important leverage in the INDER and MAG. (..). The project itself comes from the bases, the people.” (*Tejiendo Desarrollo*, 29 March 2017; see Annex 6.1). Furthermore, newly established cooperatives not only tend to make the process more effective for citizenry, but also more sustainable as the First Lady herself states about the COOPECEROAZUL project: “an orange processing plant is an infrastructure that the 137 associates with COOPECEROAZUL need to give an added value to their product. This enables that the fruit no longer has to be sold at a low cost to the proceeding company in the capital, for the sake to return it then again back to the tourist hotels in form of juice. Now they can offer complete service to clients; they will obtain greater profits that will enable them a better life quality” (*Tejiendo Desarrollo*, 8<sup>th</sup> December 2016; see Annex 7.1). A member of the COOPEPILANGOSTA, Jaime’s Salazar formulates a nice closing: “the case of COOPECERAZUL (..) is a very successful case, where with the accompaniment of the state, and specifically with the INDER through the cooperative and with the producers a super interesting work was done – to unite the efforts and potentials of the three parties” (*Tejiendo Desarrollo*, 29 March 2017; see Annex 8.1).

Yet, Werner Avila mentions proudly that “with the COOPECUREÑA, we obtained a credit for 20 million as a work capital in order to be able to buy a track, which we need to transport the milk to the associates” (*Tejiendo Desarrollo*, 8<sup>th</sup> December 2016; see Annex 1.2). Also, Kenya Kirchman, who owns due to *Tejiendo Desarrollo* a mini-business, states that “thanks God, we are here with the help of the INDER and other institutions of the program *Tejiendo Desarrollo*. This program has been like a ‘wake-up-call’ for us; now we know about the existing opportunities. If the INDER can’t help, they tell us that maybe in the MAG or the SENASA they will be able to support us. Thus, a true union has been created; this is something wonderful” (*Tejiendo Desarrollo*, 8<sup>th</sup> December 2016; see Annex 1.5). Also, the

teacher Lady Fernandez highlights that “with the workshops, we are able to identify the necessities of the people. Starting with these necessities, we can align these people in the community and create a greater outcome with the joint efforts” (*Tejiendo Desarrollo*, 8<sup>th</sup> December 2016; see Annex 1.8). Werner Avila adds another example, stating that “with the opening of the National Park Braulio Carillo to visitors, we are working strongly aligned with the SINAC, the municipality, universities, associations and cooperation’s in order to make it possible” (*Tejiendo Desarrollo*, 8<sup>th</sup> December 2016; see Annex 2.1) Furthermore, the Director of the ‘Cordillera Volcanica Central’ shares his experience by telling that “(...) we have decided that the National Park will be a priority in order to thrive tourism. Luckily in coordination with different institutes, the INDER, our people, the community and the municipality, the road has been fixed and tourists can now reach the Park even with a simple car” (*Tejiendo Desarrollo*, 8<sup>th</sup> December 2016; see Annex 2.2). Werner Avila closes with the remark that “all the projects that we have commented on, we worked closely with *Tejiendo Desarrollo*; which allowed us to organize a direct relation with the institutions and the people in order to execute them” (*Tejiendo Desarrollo*, 8<sup>th</sup> December 2016; see Annex 2.4).

### Case description summary

Thus, altogether, without doubts, the program *Tejiendo Desarrollo*, implemented by INDER, Guillermo Solís Administration, motivated people to be engaged and to collaborate with the community and institutions. Having established this complex descriptive inference, the figure 7 below provides a brief overview on the single observations and its chronological order.

Descriptive Inference		
Empirical observation		Source
	Shift in Costa Rican politics	PAC, 2017
	Report: citizen engagement leads to public trust	OECD, 2009
	Society wishes citizen-based governance	Frajman, 2014
	New president elected, Guillermo Solis, personalizes change	Sánchez, 2016
	New president elected promises citizen-centred governance	La nación de Costa Rica, 2014
	Citizen engagement included in National Development Plan	PND, 2015
	Nation-wide citizen-engagement initiative	<i>Tejiendo Desarrollo</i> , 2016 – 2017
	OECD, 2016	OECD, 2016
	Increased level of interaction among society	<i>Tejiendo Desarrollo</i> , 2016 – 2017
	Increased level of cooperation among society	<i>Tejiendo Desarrollo</i> , 2016 – 2017
	Increased trustworthiness in citizenry – government relationship	<i>Tejiendo Desarrollo</i> , 2016 – 2017

**Figure 7:** Table consisting of the chronological events that lead to the outcome of interest (created by Hubschmid).

Having established the description of the case, there exist sufficient observations that provide ground to examine the causal mechanism of this theoretical framework. As such, in the following section of the analysis, firstly, the importance of the causal inference will be highlighted, the hypothesized cause elaborated, the three mechanisms tested and finally, the outcome of interest will be established or not.

## 5. Analysis

This process tracing case study aims to analyse whether a theorized causal mechanism exists in an individual case, namely Costa Rica. Thus, having established the theoretical framework and described the case thoroughly, this section examines whether the theory can empirically be validated and as such, assure that the framework accurately represents reality (Beach & Pedersen, 2013). With the contextual and situational knowledge provided by the case description (see point 4), the three systematic and structural causal mechanisms are being tested by one of the four process-tracing tests (Straw-in-the-wind, Hoops, Smoking gun or Double decisive test).

### 5.1 Causal inference

Given the methodology of process tracing, this section will test whether the available empirical evidence strengthens or weakens our confidence in the theory (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 68); accordingly, whether the established causal chain holds. Yet, given the complex social phenomenon, this study has to infer from a set of empirical observations whether the theory is able to proof to be the explainable cause of the desired outcome. In other words, this section will make within-case inferences by using the collected empirical observations of the Costa Rican case in order to establish evidence, proving that all of the parts of a hypothesized causal mechanism are present in the case (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 68–69); from what should be concluded that an underlying reliable and valid causal explanation exists. Depending on the inferential weight of the evidence supporting the instance, the application of four process tracing tests (Straw-in-the-wind, Hoops, Smoking gun and Double decisive; Beach & Pedersen, 2013; Collier, 2011; consulted in CDI, 2015) on the three causal mechanisms determines whether each part is absolutely necessary for the entire causal chain to function. In other words, the methodology of process tracing will open the black box that the process in between citizen engagement and public trust illustrates (see figure 8 below).



**Figure 8:** With process-tracing, the black box can be analysed (CDI, 2015).

However, insights in this black box can only be granted, if the causal chain is made visible within the real world. For this, the causal mechanism has to be first conceptualized and then operationalized for the causality to be tested (see point 2.4.4). As such, operationalising the mechanisms involves the identification of evidence for the *causality* between one part of the causal chain and another (CDI, 2015). Thus, the question has to be asked *whether there exists significantly strong evidence in order to believe that a part of the mechanism occurred due to its prior cause?* This question can be solved by delivering observable manifestations or in the case of the opposite, through alternative explanations (CDI, 2015, p. 5).

Thus, in this analysis below (see point 5.3), the three mechanisms will be tested, whereby the relevant evidence will be gathered with regard to each mechanism; subsequently, elaborated and tested in order to approve or disapprove the causal mechanism. Yet, before examining the black box, namely what's in between citizen engagement and public trust; preliminarily, the hypothesized cause (citizen engagement in Costa Rica) will be elaborated in the next section.

## **5.2 The hypothesized cause: citizen engagement**

In this section, previously introduced observations from the descriptive part are outlined in order to evaluate its proof that citizen engagement is established in Costa Rica at the time of the study. Citizen engagement – forming a fundamental part of the main theoretical framework of this study – builds the main hypothesized cause, and as, such its existence in the Costa Rican context is crucial for this study's outcome. Thus, having operationalized citizen engagement as a sort of active citizenship consisting of actions taken within the public sphere for the well-being of the society; which can be observed through citizenry developing actual ideas, engaging, co-producing and participating on a local level, mostly within a community or a municipality (see point 2.4.4). As such, significant observations proving the above actions have to be gathered throughout the case description (see point 4). Accordingly, the foundation of the PAC (2017), the reports of Frajman (2014) and Sanchez (2016), the PND (2015) and the OECD report (2016) seem to provide supportive case insights. In order to count as evidence, these observations have to undergo the four-part evaluation (namely collection, content, accuracy and probability; Beach & Pedersen, 2013), as applied below:

With regard to the foundation of the PAC, this event established a political base towards a more citizen-centred governance, which has been crucial for Costa Rica's engaged citizenry. Collected online and publicly available, the official webpage of the PAC states that the political party "stands for a country, where the planning and execution of programs and projects include the participation of regional institutions, their communities and organisations" (PAC, 2017). In this sense, the values of the PAC form a necessary base for the launch of *Tejiendo Desarrollo*. Thus, the content of this observation provides us with information that citizen engagement is at the heart of the leading political party; thus, this evidence measures citizen engagement in Costa Rica. As such, ignoring the alternative that other political parties might have introduced similar citizen engagement programs, which seems unrealistic given the specific political context of Costa Rica (Frajman, 2014); one would expect PAC to enhance citizen engagement in Costa Rica.

Concerning Frajman's report (2014), he stated how Guillermo Solís's personality reflected the change from a corrupt government towards a people's government. Not only Frajman, but also national newspapers stated how Guillermo Solís' profile fitted perfectly with both the campaign and citizenry's demands for a less hierarchical and more transparent government (Jimena Soto,



**Figure 9:** Guillermo Solís presidential campaign, representing a down-earth citizen (PAC, 2017).

6th April 2014). Altogether, it is important to mention him in this context, as he stood at the centre of the shift from the PLN to the PAC and somehow personified the PAC (Frajman, 2014). This has been crucial for Costa Rica in order to move the focus towards a more citizen-centred nation. This change of dynamics in the Costa Rican politics has been relevant for this present study, as the PAC provided the current government with a solid base to govern "with the people and for the people" (PAC, 2017); accordingly, makes it a relevant piece of evidence. As such, having the PAC representing the political majority and promising its followers a change, has been crucial for the stimulation of an active and engaged citizenry.

With the obtained historical results, the election represented a wake-up call for the nation (Frajman, 2014), and confirmed that it is time to listen to its people; they are willing to

participate and speak off. As such, the presidential election of Guillermo Solís, representing the voice of citizenry, has been a memorable event for Costa Rica (Mercedes Agüero, 7th April 2014; La nación de Costa Rica, 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2014). Still, as an alternative, the election of a different president has to be outlined. Even if he personalizes the change, it cannot be guaranteed with certainty that another political leader would not have been able to drive the same path. Therefore, as an inference, it has to be respected that within the PAC, it could have been any person. Nevertheless, there exists evidence that voters effectively voted for Guillermo Solís as a person, and not primarily for the political party; as Sánchez describes in his academic paper: “the voters chose the candidate for reasons such as: they were looking for a political change, they were convinced by the candidate's way of thinking and talking, they were attracted by their position on corruption and their government program” (2016, p. 113) And moreover, he reveals: “it is striking that in a portion of 60.7% of those who declared that they had voted for him, they said they did it for the candidate and not for the party” (idem). Therefore, there exist strong evidence (high certainty) that his personal asset has surely been a valuable contribution to the electoral success in 2014; and subsequently, his personality and governance have contributed significantly to the implementation of nation-wide citizen engagement programs.

Further, the PND – an outcome of the Guillermo Solís Administration, which formally introduces the concept of *Tejiendo Desarrollo* – forms an important clue. Through the launch of *Tejiendo Desarrollo*, nation-wide citizen engagement actions have been implemented; contributing to the local, regional or national community (cf. *Tejiendo Desarrollo*, see Annex). As such, it is particularly convincing that both citizenry and public managers seem to have faith in this initiative. As such, Yanina Soto, the Executive President of the IFAM, affirms that “through *Tejiendo Desarrollo*, we can provide training and achieve the development that we want so much within our communities; which allows us to empower citizens and let them take decision from the base” (*Tejiendo Desarrollo*, 24 October 2016; see Annex 10.1). Alternatively, no other event (inference) could have provided this baseline in order to establish the main theoretical framework. Therefore, there is strong evidence that *Tejiendo Desarrollo* is indispensable in the pursuance to proof this study’s theoretical framework; as the initiative triggers the actual citizen engagement in Costa Rica. One could not imagine a viable alternative (inference), as for example a private foundation or association to create a project in this (nation-wide) dimension. As such, it is the character and

joint-force of *Tejiendo Desarrollo*, who allows citizen engagement to thrive in Costa Rica; subsequently, has been the foundation for a nation-wide citizen engagement as we know it of today (PND, 2015; INDER, 2015). Altogether, the base for this engagement has been provided by the Guillermo Solís Administration, as the report on the program highlights: “the program *Tejiendo Desarrollo* is the fruit of an innovative initiative of the Guillermo Solís Administration (2014-2018)” (INDER, 2015, p. 4). At the core of *Tejiendo Desarrollo*, we find the PAC’s values, such as “citizen participation in the sense, that no action in favour of the inhabitants will be logical without their participation in decision, construction and supervision, as it requires the demands and needs of the citizens themselves” (INDER, p. 4; PAC, 2017).

Thus, having taken into consideration four national sources, it is important to assure the objectivity of this research. As such, an external source of an international organisation, namely the OECD, can either support the above evaluated or not; whereby, potential error biases or subjectivity issues are discovered (Beach & Pedersen, 2013). Thus, the OECD released in 2016 an open government report, whereas Costa Rica is praised for its efforts in developing a transparent and open government (OECD, 2016). The report highlights Costa Rica’s commitment to create citizen participation spaces and to provide citizenry with the necessary tools to become an active role in their community and the wider society. Therefore, it can be concluded that citizen engagement has been established in Costa Rica at the time of the study; as all of the four observations have been positively categorized as relevant evidence for this case. Thus, with a high certainty, Costa Rican’s citizen deliver ideas, participate, co-create and engage within their communities. From here, the actual analysis of the causal mechanisms can occur; testing whether citizen engagement leads to social capital, social capital to social trust and subsequently, social trust to public trust.

### **5.3 Testing the causal mechanisms**

Having established citizen engagement in Costa Rica, the actual mechanism between citizen engagement and public trust will be tested through process tracing; whereby, relevant empirical observations are evaluated in the context (CDI, 2015, p. 6; Beach & Pedersen, 2013). With regard to the actual testing, this means to establish evidence that gives a reasonable degree of confidence in the causality; in other words, that each part of the



mechanisms exists and leads to the following one (idem). Again, observations will only qualify as evidence once they have passed the collection, content, accuracy and probability test (see point 3.2). Starting with mechanism 1, each mechanism and its relevant evidence is evaluated below:

**(1) Mechanism 1: Citizen Engagement → Social Capital**

Engaged citizens (in local government activism, organisational activism and communal project participation) will *interact*, connect with each other and develop a common purpose within the community; as such create social capital.

According to the first mechanism, this section will test whether citizen engagement creates social capital. Having operationalized social capital as the demonstrated reinforcement of social ties and bonds in communities, this can be empirically visible and observed through the level of interaction (strength of social integration within a community) (see point 2.4.4). As such, the relevant proof – that this existing citizen engagement leads to social capital in Costa Rica – has to be detected in the case description and connected with the causal mechanism.

According to the case description (see point 4), the interviews of the program *Tejiendo Desarrollo* and its participants deliver crucial observations. Given the amount of collected interviews, there's no risk of resource limitation (Beach & Pedersen, 2013). The interview's content provides information on the increased interaction between citizenry and their perception of community. For example, the implementation of regional and local citizen participation spaces under *Tejiendo Desarrollo* allowed citizenry to gather, develop ideas, co-create and be engaged within the society. As such, with this nation-wide citizen engagement initiative, the government opened unprecedented opportunities for citizenry to participate in numerous projects. While the level of interaction among citizenry augmented, the creation of social ties and bonds has been observed accordingly (see point 4). In line with this, several participants' statements have confirmed this increased interaction and perception of a group cohesion (cf. *Tejiendo Desarrollo*, 8<sup>th</sup> December 2016; see Annex 1.1, 1.2, 1.8 and 4.). Thus, this evidence is able to establish with a high probability that the interaction and social cohesion is existing in the Costa Rican case.

As such, the empirically observable correlation between citizen engagement and the creation of social capital is with a high certainty present; which is necessary – but not sufficient – for the theory to be true. As such, having established the above stated evidence, mechanism 1 passes the **Hoops test**.

## **(2) Mechanism 2: Social Capital → Social Trust**

Engaged citizens, once highly connected and interacting, will increasingly *exchange* goods and *cooperate* with each other. The higher the interaction between citizenry, the higher the economic exchange and cooperation within the ties in the community network; as such social capital enhances social trust.

According to the second mechanism, this section will test whether social capital creates social trust. Having operationalized social trust as the amount of collaboration happening within the ties and bonds in communities; as such, this can be empirically visible and observed through the level of civic exchange (the general cooperativeness of individuals and organisations; see point 2.4.4). As such, the relevant evidence has to be detected in the case description and connected with the causal mechanism. For this, according to the case description (see point 4), the participants' interviews of *Tejiendo Desarrollo* support this second mechanism; whereby the relevant statements are analysed below:

As a consequence of the increased social interaction and cohesion (social capital), a rise of cooperativeness among citizens is visible; empirically observable in the increased exchange of goods and private engagement. Many active citizens have been involved in collaborations and joint efforts with the aim to enhance local business and the well-being of the community. Indeed, it can be observed that the level of cooperativeness has increased (*Tejiendo Desarrollo*, 8<sup>th</sup> December 2016; see Annex 1.5), when Kenya Kirchman, involved in a mini-business says that “a true union has been created” (*idem*). People increasingly engage and rely on each other even in economic terms. Accordingly, the flow of material goods and exchange is significantly higher among citizenry, than it has been before the implementation of *Tejiendo Desarrollo*. As a result of the initiative, the interviews reaffirm in various instances that a higher level of cooperation among citizenry can be observed (*Tejiendo Desarrollo*, 8<sup>th</sup> December 2016; see Annex 1.5, 2.1, 2.2 and 2.4). Accordingly, it is justified to believe that any alternatives are excluded and the assumption that increased interaction –

resulting of citizen engagement – produces higher communal cooperation, is valid. Altogether, the empirically observed stronger bonds and ties within citizens in communities with *Tejiendo Desarrollo* programs introduce high certainty of cooperation to be present and a uniqueness of the situation. In particular, evidence such as the interview with ASIPROFE illustrates this social bound and cohesion, as these women have been empowered and interact with a much larger group of people, organisations, cooperatives and enterprises than they could have done on an individual basis (*Tejiendo Desarrollo*, 8<sup>th</sup> December 2016; see Annex 4.1).

Thus, the empirically observable increased level of cooperativeness is not only with high certainty existing and necessary for the research outcome to be true; but moreover, also introduces a high uniqueness, whereas the evidence provided appears sufficient to confirm the expectation – namely that social capital leads to social trust. Accordingly, the 2<sup>nd</sup> mechanism passes the **Double decisive** test.

### **(3) Mechanism 3: Social Trust → Public Trust**

Engaged citizens, who *interact* and *cooperate* within the community, also believe in a *trustworthy relationship with the government*; thus, the increased level of cooperativeness stimulates the positive relationship between citizenry and government – in other words, social trust stimulates public trust.

According to the third mechanism, this section will test whether social trust creates public trust. Having operationalized public trust as the perceived trustworthiness of citizenry – government relationship; as such, this can be empirically visible and observed through the level of positive citizenry – government cooperation (the general public-private engagement). Thus, the relevant evidence has to be detected in the case description and connected with the causal mechanism. For this, according to the case description (see point 4), the OECD report 2016 and the Interviews of *Tejiendo Desarrollo* have delivered supportive observations. For the testing of this third causal mechanism, a two-sided analysis – including both a citizenry and a governmental perspective – has been analysed below:

Starting with the citizenry's perception of the government, a mostly positive response has been detected throughout the case description (see point 4); whereas can be derived that the

government's engagement and actions to empower citizenry seemed to have left traces in the people's lives. Statements as for example of Jaime Salazar, member of the COOPEPILANGOSTA, which highlights that *Tejiendo Desarrollo* "(..) is a very successful case, where with the accompaniment of the state, and specifically with the INDER through the cooperative and with the producers a super interesting work was done – to unite the efforts and potentials of the three parties" (*Tejiendo Desarrollo*, 29 March 2017; see Annex 8.1). Furthermore, the women of 'Café de la Legua' reaffirm, that through *Tejiendo Desarrollo* beneficiary public-private cooperatives have been established, which accordingly initiated a foundation of trust for more ambitious projects in the future (cf. *Tejiendo Desarrollo*, see Annex 4). Given these statements, the citizen cooperation with public organisations such as the INDER, IFAM, MIDEPLAN and DINADECO has been mentioned several times and been related to a positive experience; whereby the necessary and sufficient evidence proving a beneficiary impact on the overall citizenry-government relation has been detected.

However, this public-private collaboration only makes sense, if both sides see a purpose and can rely on each other; therefore, it is crucial to also include the government's view. Thus, the statement of the Executive President of the INDER, Ricardo Rodríguez introduces the perspective of a key governmental institution in this framework. "We have articulated with the excellent program of *Tejiendo Desarrollo* in order to collaborate with local governments, civil society, state institutions and private enterprise. Creating these projects leads to better living conditions for our inhabitants in our entire national territory" (*Tejiendo Desarrollo*, 24 October 2016; see Annex 10.3). Furthermore, Harys Regidor, the Executive Director of DINADECO, confirms in an interview not only the importance of the Guillermo Solís Administration in the successful enhancement of national citizen engagement initiatives (through *Tejiendo Desarrollo*); but also reiterates the importance of singular institutions participating in the initiative. As such, Regidor states that "this is how the current Administration has strengthened citizen participation and through DINADECO has found a fundamental pillar, so that many communal leaders throughout the country can generate strategies that improve the quality of life of their inhabitants" (*Tejiendo Desarrollo*, 24 October 2016; see Annex 10.2). As a closing, and final theory assuring statement, the words of Mercedes Domingo, the First Lady of Costa Rica, have been chosen. In one of the interviews, she dedicates her speech to the people of Costa Rica and invites them to

participate in the national initiative. As such, Mercedes Domingo speaks directly to the citizenry with the following words: "the program *Tejiendo Desarrollo* emerges to place the people – you – at the centre of the development vision" (*Tejiendo Desarrollo*, 24 October 2016; see Annex 10.5). Further, the First Lady invites people to generally increase their participation on all levels. She reassures that it is by participating in this new citizen-centred governance form, that the people will gain a say and make their voice heard. "With *Tejiendo Desarrollo* also emerges a change in the way of governance. A governance where all people participate in the decision-making process both at the community level and at the local, territorial and regional level" (idem). Lastly, she reaffirms that the people are the movement, which directly connects to the current Administration's political party (PAC) and with it, its closeness to the people. She finishes with: "we also build this governance among all, and we are supporting the articulation and coordination of public institutions to respond to those needs that are being marked from the territories and the communities themselves" (*Tejiendo Desarrollo*, 24 October 2016; see Annex 10.5). Altogether, it can be summed up that the governmental entities reiterate their willingness to cooperate with citizenry after the launch of *Tejiendo Desarrollo*, as well as plan to do so in the future.

The above evaluated evidence reassures that the third mechanism with a high certainty and uniqueness is present, whereas several statements – both from citizenry and governmental representatives – delivered the necessary and sufficient proof in order to confirm the expectation that social trust leads to public trust in the case of Costa Rica. Therefore, also the third mechanism passes the **Double decisive test**.

#### **5.4 The outcome of interest: public trust**

Having established the final outcome of interest – namely public trust – in the previous analysis, it remains to include an additional objective source in order to detect potential error bias or subjectivity of the above tested rather subjective sources. Given the considerations on the possible limitations of governmentally-led interviews, the national internet delivers a credible alternative proof of citizenry opinion, as citizens are allowed to post their honest opinion, comments and thoughts online – without restriction.

As such, several scholars have already introduced the emerging utility of social media platforms (Stieglitz & Dang-Xuan 2014; Duggan & Smith, 2016), in providing a direct citizen engagement and governmental feedback stream containing unbiased insights. Thus, taking the Costa Rican case, the official Facebook page of *Tejiendo Desarrollo* (domain: @TejiendoDesarrollo) may serve as a rather objective source in comparison to the participants' interviews. Accordingly, analysing the evidence that the Facebook page delivers, namely in content, accuracy and probability (Beach & Pedersen, 2013); it can be stated that the page expresses the likeability of the project among the network (mostly assumed to be citizens), the accuracy in opinion and responsiveness as comments are authentic and unbiased, and finally, the evidence increases the probability for the entire causal chain to be true. Accordingly, *in casu*, the official *Tejiendo Desarrollo* webpage contains a significant number of 'likes', namely 9.069 (@TejiendoDesarrollo, 10<sup>th</sup> January 2018); whereas can be deducted that citizenry clicking on the 'like button' have a positive experience with the program, show interest and are willing to actively follow its activities and projects. Given the amount of citizen commentaries, the interest in the program appears to be vivid and positive; as for example a citizen named Cinthya Mercedes Sandoval Sandoval (see figure 10) commented on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2017: "we hear it and we can see it, this program is not only food packages as in the past, moreover this is real support for those who wish to work. Keep advancing Costa Rica on this path". Thus, in the overall, the social media of *Tejiendo Desarrollo* reflects a healthy interaction and relationship with citizenry.

Again, a two-sided perspective shall be included. As the social media platform does not only provide citizens a voice online, but also allows *Tejiendo Desarrollo* to interact with interested citizens. The figure below shows the example of high governmental responsiveness, that after a citizen named Marco Campos asked for program-related information via Facebook, the person in charge of *Tejiendo Desarrollo*'s social media immediately responded (still the same day) and provided the necessary information. These miniscule clues may not be generalizable, but still provide an additional source of observation, which is highly unlikely to be biased by governmental forces (vs. governmentally-led participants' interviews). Even though the use of social media in a political environment is still highly discussed (Duggan & Smith, 2016), it can be used *in casu* as an additional evidence passing the **Straw-in-the-wind** test – as such, neither necessary or sufficient to confirm the hypothesis – in order to increase the confidence in the expected causality, namely that citizen engagement creates public trust.

Thus, given these observations based on this secondary source, the evidence derived from the interviews can be supported by the additional clue below (see figure 10):



**Figure 10:** Screenshot of the social media portal of *Tejiendo Desarrollo* (Facebook, 14th November 2017).

With the support of this additional source, potential error biases and limitations (such as subjectivity) of the interviews can be outbalanced. Proving this, the entire causality will be assessed in the following section.

## 5.5 Testing the entire causal chain

Having established the main observation based on national sources (cf. *Tejiendo Desarrollo*), for the research's credibility, reliability and validation, the causality has also to be supported by a neutral source; such as reports of international organisations without any specific preference for Costa Rica. As an example, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) released a report in 2009, whereby the organisation published case studies conducted over several populations that highlighted the positive impact of citizen engagement on public trust. In line with this, the UNDP Global Centre for Public Service Excellence shared in 2016 a report, whereas again case studies proof the correlation between

citizen engagement and public trust. Hence, having this objective proof of the correlation between citizen engagement and public trust – thus, of this theoretical framework –, the rather subjective main source (participants' interviews) can be validated.

Thus, taking the previously established equation, whereas  $(n_1 \rightarrow) * (n_2 \rightarrow) * (n_3 \rightarrow) = Y$ , it can be summarized that the first mechanism passed the Hoops test, whereby alternative expectations have been excluded. The combination of various Hoops tests may result in the additive effect that increases the confidence in the validity of the causal mechanism (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p.105). This due to the low probability of a non-valid explanation surviving multiple independent Hoops tests; as the chance for an alternative explanation diminishes after each successive Hoops (idem). Accordingly, mechanism 2 and 3 have been reassured by the first mechanism and managed – supported by the relevant evidence – to pass the Double decisive test. Given that a causal chain is only as strong as the weakest parts of it, the first mechanism cannot be underestimated. However, several scholars, such as Collier, state that the process tracing tests shouldn't be taken to rigorously, as their sore capability is to assess evidence; yet, whether one is more dominant in a contextual situation or not, can be assessed by the researcher. Thus, evaluating the entire causal chain and taking into consideration the approval of the theoretical framework by independent international organisations, the causality is both with a high certainty and uniqueness present in the case of Costa Rica (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 31).

Accordingly, it is the necessity of each part of the causal chain that produces a positive and trustworthy relationship between citizenry and government in response to the program *Tejiendo Desarrollo*, as well as the uniqueness of certain pieces of evidence that led to the confirmation of the theoretical framework, namely that citizen engagement creates social capital, social capital enhances social trust, social trust leads to public trust.



## 6. Conclusion

### 6.1 Answering the research question

*“If you want to walk fast, travel alone: if you want to walk far, travel together.” - Loeffler (2008)*

The analysis of the traced process, and subsequently, its three causal mechanisms, has shown that the expectations derived of the theoretical framework have been approved. Accordingly, each piece of evidence has passed one of the four process tracing tests, whereas not each part needed to be both necessary or sufficient for the theory to be true. Yet, respecting the contextual situation, the final evaluation of the traced process leads to the confirmation of each sequence, namely X, n<sub>1</sub>, n<sub>2</sub>, n<sub>3</sub> and Y. Thus, the theoretical framework that citizen engagement leads to social capital, social capital to social trust and social trust to public trust, is established. For the better understanding of the evaluation of the three causal mechanisms, a table has been created (see figure 11 below).

Observation	Part of causal chain	Evidence	Process tracing test	Final evaluation
<i>Tejiendo Desarrollo</i> , 2016 – 2017	CM n <sub>1</sub> : Citizen engagement leads to social capital	Necessary	Hoops	<b>Confirmed</b>
<i>Tejiendo Desarrollo</i> , 2016 – 2017	CM n <sub>2</sub> : Social capital leads to social trust	Necessary Sufficient	Double decisive	
<i>Tejiendo Desarrollo</i> , 2016 – 2017	CM n <sub>3</sub> : Social trust leads to public trust	Necessary Sufficient	Double decisive	

**Figure 11:** Table providing an overview on the testing of the causal mechanisms (created by Hubschmid).

Explaining the figure above more in detail, it can be concluded that the entire causal chain in its parts has been confirmed, and finally established. The analysis confirmed that all three expectations have been established in the causal chain. Hence, the equation elaborated under 2.4.4 appears to be approved:

$$(n_1 \rightarrow) * (n_2 \rightarrow) * (n_3 \rightarrow) = Y$$

This equation introduces the necessity and sufficiency of the entire chain. By resuming the causality, it can be stated that: firstly (n<sub>1</sub>), engaged citizens will interact, connect with each

other and develop a common purpose within the community; as such create social capital. Thus, the expectation that citizen engagement leads to social capital has been confirmed. Secondly (**n<sub>2</sub>**), engaged and interacting citizens will increasingly exchange goods and cooperate with each other. The higher the interaction between citizenry, the higher the informational and material flow within the ties in the community network. Accordingly, the causal mechanism entailing that social capital leads to social trust has been confirmed. Thirdly (**n<sub>3</sub>**), engaged citizens, who interact and cooperate within the community, also believe in the same form of relationship with the government. Altogether, citizen engagement creates social capital, which stimulates social trust; consequently, leading to public trust; thus, confirming the third mechanism.

Thus, having traced the process from a citizen engagement initiative in Costa Rica to the actual creation of public trust, this has proved the expected causal chain to be applicable *in casu*. Given that after the analysis, the probability of the theoretical framework – namely citizen engagement creating public trust – exceeds the prior probability; a reinforced confidence in the validity of the theory can be developed (see point 2.3.1). Yet, the context in which a mechanism is expected to function is vital, as the same causal mechanism placed in two different contexts can hypothetically contribute to producing two different outcomes (Falleti & Lynch, 2009, p. 1160; consulted in Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 54). However, that the causal chain of this case consists of systematic factors, structural causal mechanism and an incremental progress facilitates its application to other cases (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 55). Thus, providing the research literature with these new insights will not only enrich its current state, but also inspire other scholars to replicate the study in a different environmental situation or build on this established theoretical framework.

Thus, the answer to the research question – does citizen engagement create public trust – can positively be responded; indeed, according to the elaborated theoretical framework, the expectations have shown that the causal chain has been established, and as such the conceptual framework be approved. Altogether, citizen engagement creates public trust, through the mechanisms of social capital and social trust.

## 6.2 Main findings

Knowing that citizen engagement enhances social capital, and social capital stimulates social trust, which finally leads to public trust; not only complements the current literature, but moreover, brings a valuable add to researchers investigating in a similar context or around one of these concepts. The findings fit well with the current literature, as they are useful in many ways.

Firstly, they affirm the importance of citizen engagement in an era of public cut-backs, NPG and increased co-production efforts (Meijer, 2016). Thus, the approved conceptual framework shows that indeed increased citizen engagement efforts – although not always easy to implement and sometimes more time consuming – they pay off for a government in different areas (social cohesion, social trust, public trust) (OECD, 2016). Secondly, many scholars already connected either citizen engagement with social capital (Ostrom, 1996; Fledderus, 2015), or social capital with public trust (Coleman, 1988); however, the connection with both sides brings a new approach closely aligned with Levine's thoughts in 1984. As such, this research aims to inspire scholars to follow the established concept and ideally apply it to a distinct context or region (see point 6.4). Thirdly, this study introduces a clear line between the two dimensions of trust: social and public trust (Robbins, 2016); while highlighting that social trust forms an inherent part of the latter. Thus, this brings a novel approach in the wide debate of social and public trust; with potential to be further developed and tested. Fourth and foremost, having discussed the downside of research in developing country; the findings on public trust in Costa Rica fill a gap in the current literature and as such, bring a valuable add.

Nevertheless, and before summing up, it has to be stressed that conducting a case study is thoroughly adapted to the specific environment of the selected case. Therefore, the next section will briefly conclude on the potential limitations of the present study; respectively, its reliability and validity.

### 6.3 Limitations

With regard to the previous mentioned limitations of this study, it has to be highlighted that process tracing has been successfully applied to the case, and no issues of non-comparability occurred (see point 3.2.5). However, with regard to the internal validity, the study suffers a concern of subjectivity due to a majority of sources released of governmental entities (cf. PAC, PND, Interviews). As previously introduced, also the Bayesian formula is built on a degree of subjective choice by the researcher in terms of expectations of the probability of the likelihood of finding certain evidence and the interpretation of confidence in the theory based on existing theorization (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 85), which earns critics. Yet, in response to this, the scholars, Howson and Urbach (2006) stated that a series of empirical tests can increase the confidence in the validity of the theory, whereas the final posterior probability would converge on the same figure ignoring whether two different values of prior – subjective researcher expectations – were taken initially (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 85). With regard to this study, by introducing additional objective sources, namely the reports of the OECD and UNDP (see point 5.5), subjectivity can be controlled for.

With regard to the external validity, a concern regarding the generality of the study has to be outlined. While certainty and uniqueness of the theoretical framework can be accorded to the specific case of Costa Rica, no inferences regarding the necessity and sufficiency of the mechanism in relation to the population level of the phenomenon can be made (George & Bennett, 2005; Gerring, 2006; Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 88). This, due to the nature of a theory-centric process tracing, which is restricted to whether or not a mechanism appears to be present in a case, *in casu* Costa Rica. While systematic mechanisms alone are not enough to apply the theoretical framework to different populations, it would require a cross-case approach in order to prove more specifically the wide application of the concept; as for example to investigate cases where public trust (Y) is present and accordingly examine whether citizen engagement (X) is equally present (see Braumoeller & Goetz, 2000; Seawright, 2002; consulted in Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 89). Unless in Owen J.'s study (2014), where many large-n cross-case studies have validated that the hypothesized cause (democracy) is a sufficient explanation for the desired outcome (peace between two states) (cf. Russett & Oneal, 2001; consulted in Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 89), the present study has not undergone such a cross-case validation. Accordingly, its findings may only be of

relevance – reliable and valid – for the selected case of Costa Rica, unless the theoretical framework becomes – through cross-case validation – approved for a wider application.

#### **6.4 Remarks and recommendations**

Having concluded the present study, it remains to share some additional remarks and recommendations with regard to the outcome of this research. Based on the learning experience that this present study entailed, three observations will be elaborated below.

Firstly, in this research, the application of process tracing has followed partly Bennett (2005), Beach & Pedersen (2013) and Collier's (2011) approach. However, given its qualitative and stochastic nature, scholars are still very disperse on strict application terms of this methodology. Thus, while the analysis of the present study has followed the approach, that various tests can be combined in order to eliminate alternatives and establish an expected explanation to be true (Collier, 2011); as such, a variety of tests may add up to the confirmation of the entire theoretical framework. Thus, given the stochastic nature of process tracing, one has to be aware that there is never a 100 percent guarantee of certainty and uniqueness; which leaves a certain flexibility to develop well-grounded arguments in different directions.

Secondly, it is understood that scholars hesitate to conduct research in developing nations due to several reasons (cf. APA, 2008). However, this research proves that a developing environment no longer equals immense burden for researchers, as many of them can be overcome due to technical progress. In this case, applying process tracing, several online sources and documents could have been taken into consideration. Furthermore, critics like patience, lack of structure and resources could have been overcome by close collaboration with local peers. Thus, this study invites scholars to overthink their regional research preference as well as to open the perspective for novel approaches (for example Latin America or Africa).

Thirdly, even though in this present study, the conceptual framework has not been approved for the application on the population level, there is tremendous potential to develop the concept towards that direction. Thus, in order to increase and assure this study's external

validity, a cross-case validation is highly recommended (Owen J., 1994; Beach & Pedersen, 2013) and will allow the concept to have a major impact above the national level.

## **6.5 Future research**

Given the ‘within-case’ nature of this present research, its result is strongly valid for the applied case (Costa Rica); however, ought only to be generalized with caution (see point 6.4). As such, in order to build on this present research, it would be interesting to conduct a similar study on a neighbouring country such as Nicaragua, Panama, Honduras, El Salvador or Guatemala – thus, both enlarging the literature and testing the present study on other nations. However, with the application of this concept on different environmental, cultural and political systems, some remarks for future research have to be made:

Firstly, with regard to a wider regional application of the concept, it has to be respected that different regions mean different citizen needs (OECD, 2017); thus, the citizen engagement activities might vary. Accordingly, the needs of the citizens shall be more respected in future research. Thus, future research opens the opportunity to dive deeper into the theoretical framework and make – for example – an emphasis on where citizen engagement shall increase most in order to have the major output in public trust; subsequently, increase the state’s effectiveness (OECD, 2017). Only by working closely with citizens and government – as such, including at least both perspectives and perceptions in the analytical part – it is possible to establish reliable and valid findings.

Secondly, a special focus shall also be allocated to technological tools, which nowadays facilitate citizen engagement and allow increased citizen-government interaction and exchange (f.e. feedback loops; Stieglitz & Dang-Xuan 2014; Duggan & Smith, 2016). As such, future research could include the support of technological findings in the causal mechanism and investigate its effect on each part of the causal chain, namely how citizen engagement creates public trust. For example, it could simply be started with the investigation whether the increased interaction through digital tools positively influences the establishment of public trust; or in other words, becomes a significant factor of the creation of public trust.

Thirdly, in line with the enhancement of the existing literature, it is also recommended to combine the present methodology (process tracing) with others; as such, creating hybrid models (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 93). For example, the use of interviews with data triangulation – using citizen, professional and publicly available data perspective – may be an interesting option in order to explore further the different perspectives of the involved parties and gain valuable insights in the functioning of the causal mechanisms – which had been ignored with the approach of this present study.

Altogether, this study invites future research on this topic to be conducted among different regions (enhancing the least developed ones), while respecting distinct contextual citizen needs. Furthermore, the established theoretical framework may be amplified and improved with the inclusion of contemporary available digital tools to increasingly engage, respond and coordinate between citizenry and the government.

Lastly, this study welcomes future research conducted on the established causal framework; therefore, any questions or request concerning the theoretical model, case, applied methodology, sources and analysis will be gently answered.

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## Annex I

### Youtube Channel: Tejiendo Desarrollo

The official Youtube Channel of the program *Tejiendo Desarrollo* offers insights to a selection of the many citizen engagement projects. Different interviews with the participants provide valuable information about their experience with the citizen engagement initiative. A selection of these has been transcribed from Spanish into English:

#### 1. Agriproductive and infrastructure projects in Sarapiquí (Tejiendo Desarrollo, 8th December 2016)

*This project aims to enhance the socio-productive development of Cureña, the second poorest district in Costa Rica. The project strengthens the commercialization of milk, cheese and custard, through COOPECUREÑA and improves the process, the infrastructure and the equipment of the artisanal cheese makers in the area.*

*In La Virgen, a product of the participation and articulated work of the Territorial Council for Rural Development (CETDR), INDER, MINAE, MEP, SINAC, INFOCOOP, TEC, UNA, the Municipality of Sarapiquí and the Southern Organisations Committee of the district La Virgen as well as private company (VISUR) and the citizens have managed to manage a series of development projects for the improvement of the road infrastructure, which facilitates access to the Braulio Carrillo National Park with the aim to boost tourism through COOPROTURS; taking advantage of existing resources. Since the reconstruction of the road, 400 tourists have entered the Braulio Carrillo National Park. The INDER led the project together with the community, the National University, the Institute of Technology, INFOCOOP and COOPROTURS R.L.*

##### 1.1 Didier Rodríguez (Secretary of the Territorial Council, Sarapiquí):

"There is an urgent need for intervention on this territory. Cureña for example is the second district of the country with the lowest development indicators, and we are working on this. Equally the Virgin has similar conditions as a territory in Sarapiquí; which needs a lot of improvement in terms of infrastructure, employment opportunities and quality employment."

1.2 Werner Ávila (Promotion Department INFOCOOP):

“Cureña is a good example of what has been achieved since the constitution of the cooperative, (..). COOPECUREÑA has also received capacity training and education, (..). For example, a loan of 20 million Costa Rican Colons has been allocated as a working capital in order to purchase a truck, which is needed for the transportation of the milk to the associates.”

1.3 Olga Villalobos (President of COOPECUREÑA):

"A dream has come true for which we've been fighting for almost five years now. There are 56 members, with their respective families and the entire district of Cureña, involved. The benefit has been in the fields, it has been greatly improved in pastures. The Institute of Technology has given us help with courses. (..)."

1.4 Roberto Ulate (Engineer of the MAG):

"We have cooperated with the INDER, the National University, the Institute of Technology and some institutions that are important like the INA in order to provide training in certain areas in the areas of food handling and cheese making. The collaboration with the Ministry and the INDER is very important, because they generate resources for the development of the cooperative (..)."

1.5 Kenya Kirchman (Micro-enterprise):

"Thank God, with the help of the INDER and many institutions through the program *Tejiendo Desarrollo* program, we are almost ready to start. By means of the program *Tejiendo Desarrollo*, it has been like an awakening. Now we know that if the employees of the INDER say they cannot help, the same person in the INDER tells you 'no but in the MAG they can surely help.' So, from there, they directly call the MAG and even if the MAG says, 'but no, it's SENASA, let's call.' There is a true union. This is something wonderful!"

1.6 Jeannette Fonseca (Cheese producer):

"Even to me they have already donated three cows, which have produced a very productive profit, (..)."

1.7 Didier Rodríguez (Secretary of the Territorial Council, Sarapiquí):

"The INFOCOOP has also supported the COOPROTOUR, a cooperative of different ventures. The idea of the cooperative is to attract customers to make a visit to the different ventures of these associates, it is a cooperative that has demonstrated a great entrepreneurship, (..)."

1.8 Lady Fernandez (Professor of the Institute of Technology, Costa Rica):

"In this case, we have been working in this community since 2014, when by articulation with the National University they detected that the community has a strong interest in being able to know a little more about what is tourism and to receive training on it. The first thing we did, were workshops. These would allow us, through a methodology, to identify the underlying needs of the people. Starting with these needs, we strive to shape the reality in collaboration with the people of the community. (..), we are already in the community making field diagnosis and we value all the existing activities and the human capital that we meet in the community. There are some who already have an educational base; there are people who have a level of primary, secondary, complete or incomplete school degree. From there, we do as a baseline in order to really and to show people what is the most important in rural tourism, (..), many have dairy farms, which allow them to also take advantage of the landscape they have, which is wonderful; they have an amazing scenic beauty."

## **2. Braulio Carillo National Park (Tejiendo Desarrollo, 8th December 2016)**

2.1 Werner Ávila (Promotion Department INFOCOOP):

"In La Virgina, the opening of the Braulio Carillo National Park to visitors is a very ambitious new program. For this, we are working very closely with the SINAC, the Municipality, universities, associations and cooperatives of the region in order to generate all that."

2.2 Rafael Gutiérrez (Director of the Central Volcanic Range):

"This park is a very interesting park, it was established in 1978 as a way to protect all water sources in the highlands of the Central Valley (..). However, the region of Sarapiquí does not have access to tourism at the moment. While monitoring the management plan, screening the

new trends and the needs of the community (..), we have established the emerge of tourism as a priority for the National Park. Until now, its income has been very little; less than 5 thousand people per year due to the bad road conditions. Thanks to the collaboration of different institutions – INDER, us, the same community and the Municipality –, the road has been fixed and allows now access the Park with a simple vehicle."

### 2.3 Melis Ferreto (Roads committee):

"I am proud that we are able to bring people, both tourists and foreigners, who can come to see this wonder (Park) we have here in Sarapiquí."

### 2.4 Werner Ávila (Promotion Department INFOCOOP):

"All these programs we have discussed, are in collaboration with the program *Tejiendo Desarrollo* and through them, we have been managing a direct relationship with others to be able to execute them. (..). There are enough initiatives and projects; what remains is the capacity and the work, supporting them so that they can develop. Now, we are able to visualize the territory with real options of production and work for its inhabitants (opportunities)."

## **3. CEMPROECA Market, Gira Guanacaste (Tejiendo Desarrollo, 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2016)**

*In Hojancha, Guanacaste, the CEMPRODECA Handicraft Market is a project led by the IMAS in the framework of Tejiendo Desarrollo. With an investment of more than ¢ 300 million the market has 14 locations and a plant for farmer fairs. In total, more than 100 families benefit.*

### 3.1 Mercedes Domingo (First Lady of Costa Rica):

"Two years ago Mayor Eduardo Pineda invited me to participate in the municipal council and a space in the CCCI, and we came here to CEMPRODEC. I got to know this initiative, where later we created a market and a few places that promoted small and medium enterprises and the crafts here in Hojancha. In addition, there are spaces of encounter and of economic activation. With *Tejiendo Desarrollo*, we identified the bottlenecks and promoted the project that accompanied one hundred families in the 14 premises, but also 75 families in the space used as a fair for agriculture and handicrafts."

### 3.2 Member of the association of handicrafts in Hojancha:

"In our association, we are eight women. It is called an association of 'folk' handicrafts. (..). We come here one day a month with our products, and maybe we are going to benefit a lot of families. "

### 3.2 Seller in the market:

"I am happy for me as a producer, this is a great opportunity. The market enables us to sell what we saw directly to the consumer; what a nice experience is it to sell to the actual consumer and not to the middleman."

### 3.3 Mercedes Domingo (First Lady of Costa Rica):

"This type of space that reactivates the local economy where small and medium producers, craftsmen and artisans are accompanied, are fundamental in the framework of *Tejiendo Desarrollo*. The program accompanies the coordination, but also the generation of employment and production with identity and recovery of the cultural processes of each of the localities. And this is what generates this participation space; it has given employment to 100 families that activates the economy and 75 more are going to be added. It is a space full of participation, which allows us to live and meet in the canton of Hojancha."

## **4. Project 'Café de la Legua' (Tejiendo Desarrollo, 8<sup>th</sup> December 2016)**

*The micro-beneficiation of ASIPROFE (Café de la Legua) aims to give producers, rural women, the added value of their coffee production.*

*Tejiendo Desarrollo supports the association with the necessary infrastructure for the proper operation of the micro-benefit. This project benefits 300 rural families.*

### 4.1 Rita Espinoza (Treasurer and Communicator of ASIPROFE):

"This project has been a good example of what *Tejiendo Desarrollo* intends to do in all parts of the country. The program aligns many governmental institutions for the better."

### 4.2 Margot Rivera (President of ASIPROFE):



"We as coffee farmer families in this area depend a lot on this plantation, which is coffee. The coffee production supports us during the year to be able to supply our families with food and everything necessary for us."

4.3 Damaris Bonilla (Partner ASIPROFE):

"Our coffee is organic, without any agrochemicals. The harvesting is done in a good maturation. The land we use for a double cultivation; because we sow also fruits and beans."

4.4 Margot Rivera (President of ASIPROFE):

"(..) in a few months, when it begins to mature, families will do everything possible to go and collect coffee in a very natural way."

4.5 Rita Espinoza (Treasurer and Communicator of ASIPROFE):

"(..) and final packaging. This stage we do not do in the community, since we do not have all the requirements to do it because we do not have the necessary infrastructure for the coffee package process. This is what the program of *Tejiendo Desarrollo* intends, to link citizens and associations with different institutions in order to make the process faster. The INDER welcomes this collaboration and is going to take charge of providing the money for the infrastructure of the micro benefit (..). The association lays the ground, the MAG gives machinery and the BEBs gives a little money to pay for the teams that are still needed and the capital to buy coffee."

4.6 Leticia Castro (Founding Partner ASIPROFE):

"We have a positive response to the coffee quality that we are carrying day by day. We have now the disposition to take it to Guanacaste to tourist projects (..). The great challenge now is to articulate it with rural tourism, which we believe is another great opportunity for the integral development of our people, for the generation of employment, especially for the youth; for the younger populations articulated at the level of the organisations of women (..) and it represents what a group of committed women can achieve driven by an integral family vision."

**5. Socio-productive Project of the Successful Women of Puriscal (Tejiendo Desarrollo, 8<sup>th</sup> Decemer 2016)**

*The Association of Successful Women of Puriscal have a fruit processing plant, that generates acerola juice thanks to the contribution of public institutions, private companies and academia.*

*The Centre employs 15 female heads of households and older women who support their families. The main objective is to generate even more employment.*

5.1 María Elena Garcia (President of AMEP):

“The project consists of harvesting and processing the pulp of the acerola, (..).”

5.2 Kattia Aguilar (Partner of AMEP):

"We have several parcels of seed; the process begins by going to the plot, where the fruit is collected – everybody is responsible for collecting it. Then it is carried to the machinery, where it is received, weighed and washed. (..)."

5.3 María Elena García (President of AMEP):

"The project of the Association of Successful Women has been supported by the MAG, INA, INTA, FITTACORI, the Institute of Technology in collaboration with program *Tejiendo Desarrollo*. Given the lack of employment in the village, it benefits 15 women, heads of household. The aim is to incorporate 20 – 30 more women. (..). Including in some future our children, or husband, brothers, the parents of some companions who also need work."

## **6. Agroindustrial Plant of Mango and other fruits (Tejiendo Desarrollo, 29 March 2017)**

*The construction of the Agroindustrial Plant for the cultivation of Mango and other fruits in Turrubares became a reality thanks to the articulated work of the MAG, INDER and Cantonal Agricultural Centre.*

*This agroproduction project benefits 250 families and got an investment of more than ¢ 266 million.*

#### 6.1 Romelio Arias (Member of the MAG Turrubares):

"Turrubares (..) is a canton merely agricultural. With the project of mango agroindustry, we will try to mitigate employment. It will generate about 10 jobs here in the plant, apart from the amount of employment that will be generated in the plantations."

#### 6.2 Mariano Carvajal (Producer Mango):

"See, here in Turrubares it is very hard to live. There are very few employment opportunities. At least, thank God, I learned how to prepare the mango. It is not only me who is benefitting, there are many others involved; the guard, those who help me to fumigate, the ones who help me to take the mango gain and the man who wins the mango wins me. At the core of this project is the involvement of many people; many families have to eat. We fumigate twice a week, when it comes the cut, it's the whole week coming down here."

#### 6.3 Gerardo Agüero (Producer Mango):

"The program is very important for us (..). It is an alternative that we have to sell the fruit, because generally many producers what they do is that they are sold to people, and maybe they receive very little money. Working the handle is not easy, (..)."

#### 6.4 Romelio Arias (MAG Turrubares):

"There is a lot of mango here, and when there is overproduction it is all lost. That's why we created the project of an organisation, the Cantonal Agricultural Centre, that was responsible in these cases. We received all support from the CCCI, (..), thanks to the program of the First Lady, it became stronger. As such, there is a very important leverage in the INDER and MAG. The INDER is committed to develop the infrastructure, and at this moment it is already finished with a cost of 145 million Costa Rican colons; leaving a second stage to buy machinery and if possible this year around February or March, we will already be processing fruits here. (..). Institutions such as the municipality have also participated, which has helped us with permits and everything. The CNP, has helped us a lot with the marketing side. The INA, with the training part. Thanks to the program *Tejiendo Desarrollo*, we are even stronger, because we already have leverage more than other institutions that are working for the same benefit. The project itself really comes from the bases, the people. They go to the CCCI, and from there they get to know about the different institutions."

## **7. COOPECERROAZUL (Tejiendo Desarrollo, 8<sup>th</sup> December 2016)**

*The 'Small Producers Consolidation Project' in Nicoya, implemented by COOPECERROAZUL R.L., is being developed in several stages. In the first instance, a safe space for the commercialization of orange in fresh fruit is generated through the future Regional Market Chorotega, which opens its doors in 2018, this together with the planting of new citrus fruits that increase the volume of business and reduce dependence of a single fruit.*

*In a second stage, with a company an orange juice processing plant will be implemented. This project benefits 315 families.*

### **7.1 Mercedes Domingo (First Lady of Costa Rica):**

"An orange processing plant is an infrastructure that the 137 associates with COOPECERROAZUL need to give an added value to their product. This enables that the fruit no longer has to be sold at a low cost to the proceeding company in the capital, for the sake to return it then again back to the tourist hotels in form of juice. Now they can offer complete service to clients; they will obtain greater profits that will enable them a better life quality."

## **8. COOPEPILANGOSTA (Tejiendo Desarrollo, 29 March 2017)**

*With the fall in international prices and climate change, the conditions of producers became difficult. Through a cooperative, the COOPEPILANGOSTA, the people managed to recover coffee plantations and diversify production with orange plantations. With the support of Tejiendo Desarrollo, a coffee roaster can be acquired to add value to the product, as well as a technical package that incorporates fertilizers and inputs to control diseases in crops. The total investment is estimated at ¢ 140 million that will benefit approximately 120 families.*

### **8.1 Jaime Salazar (COOPEPILANGOSTA):**

"The case of COOPECERROAZUL (..) is a very successful case, where with the accompaniment of the state, and specifically with the INDER through the cooperative and with the producers a super interesting work was done - to unite the efforts and potentials of the three parties!"

## **9. Project Mercado CEMPRODECA, Hojancha (Tejiendo Desarrollo, 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2016)**

### 9.1 Mercedes Domingo (First Lady of Costa Rica):

"In Hojancha, under the framework of *Tejiendo Desarrollo*, with the contribution of the IMAS and an association, a craft centre was built with 14 premises that benefits 100 families (...). Once the construction is completed, *Tejiendo Desarrollo* facilitates the marketing process their artisanal products."

### 9.2 Luis Vara (Presibtero):

"A mall, where the poor who produces it, can sell it directly to the consumer."

### 9.3 Sonia Herrera (Beneficiary):

"Good to see that there is 'to give' to my children. I am a female head of household, same as my sister and my mother. It is a struggle and this is a blessing - and the empowerment of seeing that I can!"

## **10. Interviews with institutions (Tejiendo Desarrollo, 24 October 2016)**

### 10.1 Yanina Soto (Executive President of the IFAM):

"Through *Tejiendo Desarrollo*, we can provide training and achieve the development that we want so much within our communities; which allows us to empower citizens and let them take decision from the base."

### 10.2 Harys Regidor (Executive Director of DINADECO):

"The program *Tejiendo Desarrollo* of the current Administration is one of the main strategies for strengthening governance at the national level. DINADECO, as part of this institutional effort, has carried out communal dialogues throughout the country to precisely strengthen the decision-making processes and the generation of alternatives that allow communities, by their own conditions and capacities, to define which are the development projects that seek to improve the condition of its inhabitants. This is how the current Administration has strengthened citizen participation and through DINADECO has found a fundamental pillar so

that many leaders and communal leaders, throughout the country, can generate strategies that improve the quality of life of their inhabitants.”

10.3 Ricardo Rodríguez (Executive President of INDER):

"The Institute of Rural Development, with the aim of generating territorial development in each of the territories of the country, has started working with projects (..). And we have articulated with the excellent program of *Tejiendo Desarrollo* in order to collaborate with local governments, civil society, state institutions and private enterprise. Creating these projects leads to better living conditions for our inhabitants in our entire national territory.”

10.4 Olga Marta Sánchez (Minister of MIDEPLAN):

"*Tejiendo Desarrollo* is a new form of work, where we try to ensure that all Public Institutions converge by giving their specific contributions to development based on the needs and strategies that each locality, territory or region has for its own development. *And why is MIDEPLAN part of this?* It was fundamentally up to us to coordinate the National Development Plan (PND) and in this plan, one of the three pillars clearly indicate the need to work increasingly for a more efficient, more transparent State, more in line with the needs and aspirations of people. This leads us to think about development taking place directly where people live, coexist and develop their daily activity.”

10.5 Mercedes Domingo (First Lady of Costa Rica):

"The program *Tejiendo Desarrollo* emerges to place the people - you - at the centre of the development vision. You are fundamental to define the needs and development that you want from the territory in which you live, knowing its limitations and potentialities, that is important because building development is a responsibility of everyone. *Tejiendo Desarrollo* also emerges to change the way of governance. A governance where all people participate in the decision-making process both at the community level and at the local, territorial and regional level. We also build this governance among all, and we are supporting the articulation and coordination of public institutions to respond to those needs that are being marked from the territories and the communities themselves.”