

How social movements engage with public deliberation: A multifaceted approach

Sergio Guillén Grillo

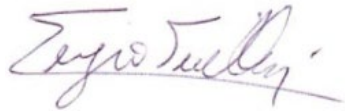
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Declaration

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A handwritten signature in purple ink, reading 'Sergio Guillén Grillo'.

Sergio Guillén Grillo

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Abstract

This thesis empirically examines how a social movement as a plural, multifaceted body, engages with an ample range of spaces for deliberation. The study focuses on the social movement's practices and aspirations when engaging with a variety of spaces for public expression and involvement in decision-making, ranging from Municipal Councils, to Technical Advisory Commissions, to Community Agricultural Festivals. It examines the questions *“how do social movements engage with public deliberation?”*, and *“what are the implications of this engagement for the theory and practice of deliberative democracy?”*.

The empirical research in this thesis is based on an interpretive study of the Costa Rican Movement Against Genetically Modified Organisms (Movimiento Anti-Transgénicos or **MaT**) and its practices of engagement with deliberative spaces at the national and local levels between 1999 and 2015. The research project examines this case as an information-rich, revelatory and extreme case of social movement engagement with formal local government decision-making on complex and divisive issues. My inquiry about MaT's understanding of its engagement with local deliberative sites led to a puzzling finding: despite the movement's perceived high success in repeatedly lobbying local governments, there was a broad diversity of notions and ideals within the movement about engagement with institutionalized spaces. Therefore, my analysis expressly recognizes that activists within the movement do not have a unified perspective about the movement's engagement with public deliberation, or a singular approach for how to relate to outsiders and antagonists

This thesis proposes three original contributions to knowledge as a way to bridge the study of social movements and public deliberation. First, it adopts a novel interpretive research approach that is sensitive to the differentiated attitudes and practices of social movements for engagement with public deliberation, broadly understood. As my second contribution, I have introduced an analytical framework that supports the classification of the specific orientations for this movement according to their features (elements that weaver together the distinctive aspirations and perspectives of activists) and practices (specific forms of collective action primarily enacted by activists). The third contribution provides an enhanced understanding of the diverse ways that social movements engage with public deliberation, in light of evolving scholarship about deliberative systems. This thesis broadens the evolving understanding of social movements in deliberative systems by examining movements as multi-faceted actors that perform and leverage multiple roles in their engagement with public deliberation.

The movement's diversity manifests in a set of loosely converging "orientations", each of which assembles a set of compatible aspirations and practices in pursuit of the broader movement's goals, namely: (i) partisan resistance (PRO), (ii) transpartisan inquiry (TIO), and (iii) generative empowerment (GEO). PRO activists, the dominant orientation, redefine excluded communal actors as relevant to the biosafety debate and enact and leverage contentious practices to ban GMOs and promote agroecological alternatives. TIO activists focus on strengthening public reasoning on complex issues, and engage dissenters through respectful dialogue. GEO activists strengthen the capacity of grassroots actors to participate in public decision to safeguard their livelihoods and cultural and natural resources.

Grounded on these findings, this work provides concrete insights about how the plurality of orientations can be deployed by deliberative democracy scholars to examine the questions of recognition and inclusion of marginalized perspectives, and the diverse modes of protest and expression. The findings are relevant for social movements in the advancement and understanding of their own mobilization efforts. They are also relevant to public managers, experts and democracy scholars, because they offer insights on the plurality of concerns and preferences that a social movement can encompass, and can guide efforts to design and implement future deliberation processes. I conclude by recommending possible policy measures that could draw on these findings to enrich the assessment of the country's democratic landscape, gain further insights from activist research, and foster greater leadership in deliberative engagement by key actors in biotechnology and biosafety governance

List of Abbreviations

AESO	Social Ecology Association
CaC	Campesino-a-Campesino
CCC	Cañas Civic Committee
CIACR	Costa Rican Professional Guild for Agricultural Engineers
COECO-Ceiba/AT	La Ceiba Ecological Communities / Friends of the Earth-Costa Rica
COPROALDE	Coordination Network for Alternative Development Projects
CTNBio	National Technical Biosafety Commission
DHR	National Ombudsman (Defensoría de Habitantes de la República)
DR-CAFTA	Free Trade Agreement between the United States, the Dominican Republic and Central America
FA	Partido Frente Amplio (Broad Front Party)
FECON	Costa Rica Federation for Environmental Conservation
FEDEAGUA	Ecumenical Forum for the Alternative Development of Guanacaste
GM	Genetically Modified
GMO	Genetically Modified Organism
INA	Instituto Nacional de Aprendizaje (National Vocational Education Institute)
INTA	Nation Technology Transfer Institute of the University of Costa Rica
LAC Biosafety	Latin America and Caribbean Multi-country Biosafety Project
MAOCO	Costa Rican Organic Agriculture Movement
MaT	Costa Rican Movement Against Transgenics
OGP	Open Government Partnership
PAC	Partido Acción Ciudadana (Citizen's Action Party)
PLN	Partido Liberación Nacional (National Liberation Party)
PUSC	Partido Unidad Social Cristiana (Social Christian Unity Party)
RALLT	Network for a Transgenic-Free Latin America
RCB	Biodiversity Coordination Network

SFE	State Plant Health Service
SMS	Social movement studies
TECOCOS	Community Coastal Territories
UCR	University of Costa Rica
UNA	National University of Costa Rica

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Setting the Scene: Growing a movement's practices

In 2003, approximately 30 activists gathered on the outskirts of the capital of Costa Rica, San Jose, to participate in two workshops on transgenics, or Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs). At both workshops, the activists shared information and reflected on the use of GMOs in Costa Rica, and agreed on collective strategies in response (Quesada, 2003). The activists were members of organizations representing environmentalists, peasant farmers, indigenous peoples, progressive religious groups, and public universities, and many of them had participated in activities opposing GMOs before. The 2003 workshops signalled an effort to coordinate a national “movement against transgenics” (MaT) and agree to broad lines of action to contest elite control on GMO information and decision-making. In the following months, MaT achieved several political gains by lobbying the president and minister of environment, and by exposing biosafety regulatory weaknesses through citizen monitoring of areas surrounding GMO seed nurseries. Although its demands for a GMO moratorium were not successful, in July of 2004 Monsanto withdrew its GM corn license application and temporarily closed its operations in Costa Rica. This initial wave of mobilization brought the GMO issue to the national spotlight and gained MaT minority representation on the national biosafety commission that regulates GMO permits in Costa Rica (CTNBio). The movement also started lobbying local government councils, and between 2005 and 2011, eight municipalities declared themselves GMO-free territories. However, none of these efforts were successful in improving community access to substantive decision-making nor restricting the importation or production of GMOs.

MaT faced successive setbacks until a new event sparked mass public outcry. A 2009 legal opinion by the Ministry of Agriculture labelled municipal declarations as non-binding on its licensing authority. Moreover, in 2011 MaT was unable to block the license for the local production of what would become the country's first GM export crop, the “pinkglow” pineapple. However, when MaT denounced in November of 2012 two new license requests for GM corn seed nurseries, large-scale citizen concern bolstered its capacity to mobilize the public. Although MaT had scant resources, it utilised its extensive country-wide networks in order to organise a host of decentralized activities all over the country such as protests, cultural events, agroecological fairs, and improvised public lectures. In December of 2012, many of these local activities were strung together by a nine-day, 250 km cross-country march in which members of two dozen organizations participated. MaT also received supporting letters from third-party academic, professional and civil-society organizations, and over 7,000 petition signatures

asking to halt permits for GM corn. The Ministry of Culture issued a decree declaring native corn a national cultural heritage. MaT used these expressions of support to back its Constitutional Court appeal against the regulation for granting GMO licenses. However, its main claim of mass representation came from its successful outreach to Municipal Councils. Three months after this new round of collective actions, the number of GMO-free municipalities increased threefold and reached 60% of the country's total municipalities. A year later, on April of 2014 it reached 92%.

In this thesis I examine the diverse activist practices of MaT outlined above to better understand how social movements contribute to public deliberation. In doing so this research speaks to two bodies of scholarship that have considered the role(s) of social movements in contemporary democracy, namely social movement studies (SMS) and deliberative democracy. On the one hand, the field of SMS examines the contextual factors that facilitate or constrain the emergence of social mobilizations, the characteristic aspects of social movements and the processes through which these characteristics evolve over time, and the consequences of social mobilization (Snow et al., 2004). Social movement scholarship also pays close attention to what movements seek to communicate through their collective action, or as proposed by Tilly, their displays of “WUNC”: worthiness, unity, numbers and commitment (Tilly, 1999, p. 260). On the other hand, the “deliberative turn” (Dryzek, 2000, p. 1) in democratic theory has placed at the heart of its understanding of democracy the process of mutual communication between diverse actors through which they can weigh and reflect on each other's perspectives and interests regarding matters of common concern (Bächtiger et al., 2018a). For deliberative democratic theory, some social movement actions, like working to collectively understand problems or making side-lined perspectives more salient, align closely with the deliberative democratic ideals, while others diverge sharply from it, like the use of us-versus-them rhetoric and coercive protest (Fung, 2005; Hendriks, 2006; Talisse, 2005; Young, 2001). More recent contributions on the deliberative system have sought to resolve the tension that result from this dual perspective by formulating how non-deliberative social movement practices may enhance the possibilities for, and the quality of, public deliberation at the system level (Curato, 2020; Dryzek, 2009; Mansbridge et al., 2012).

This empirical study extends the reach of SMS and deliberative democracy by exploring the relationship between the plurality of social movements and their engagement with public deliberation. Scholarship in social movements, over the last two decades, has begun to look at the different roles that social movements can play at different stages of the democratization process (Rossi & Della Porta, 2015, 2019). However, the relationship between movements

and sites of public deliberation remains a nascent topic in the scholarship on social movements (Della Porta & Felicetti, 2019). While some SMS scholars acknowledge the diversity of social movements, the focus of their analytic attention tends to be on the tensions between factions within the movement, and the danger of organizational breakdowns (Polletta & Kretschmer, 2015). On the other hand, deliberative democrats have been plagued by questions on the role of social movements in deliberative democracy, which the deliberative systems approach has sought to resolve (Cross, 2021; Curato, 2020; Dryzek, 2009; Hendriks, 2006; Mansbridge et al., 2012; Mendonça & Ercan, 2015). However, even from a deliberative systems perspective, the plurality of social movements is obscured by analytical choices that impart a one-dimensional view of social movements in public deliberation. The one-dimensional view manifests in different ways, for example, by emphasizing a particular role for social movements in deliberative systems (Curato, 2020; Hendriks, 2012; Mendonça, 2016; Niemeyer, 2011; Smith, 2020), or by assuming movements make decisions on several roles based of unified goals (Dodge, 2010; Fung, 2005). Yet as the discussion on MaT above revealed, contemporary social movements engage in a range of practices that shape public deliberation in diverse ways. This research sets out to develop a more plural appreciation of social movements and their engagement in public deliberation.

As diverse bodies, social movements bring together a range of concerns and aspirations from their social base and undertake multiple tactics of contentious action to advance their claims. The complex effects of this plurality are illustrated in MaT's dilemma in engaging with local communities and local governments when opportunities for mass resonance strained its limited resources. Several early successful cases of local government outreach followed a gradual bottom-up approach, where local groups were first supported in developing a situated understanding of GMO, and subsequently this led to bottom-up demand on municipal councils. However, in the climate generated by mass public concern about GMO corn in 2012, MaT had to navigate trade-offs to scale-up its impact. Its approach shifted from gradual, grassroots, context-sensitive mobilisation, to mass lobbying and social media campaigning based on boilerplate resolutions. Contrasting approaches to local outreach sparked disagreements within the movement, that at times were voiced overtly¹.

At this point it is important to acknowledge that actors within any social movement may have different notions about how to communicate, discern, and pursue the collective wellbeing that

¹ For example, in a public forum in the Municipality of Nicoya, a grassroots leader contrasted their own grassroots-constructed resolution to others that lacked a local build-up of grassroots support, and therefore were "an empty brand" and had little local accountability to protect them if a future municipal council wanted to retract them (Pearson, 2012).

differ from those of democratic theorists. Movement actors may have had negative past experiences that have eroded their trust in state-promoted consultations or “dialogue tables” (the version of forum most commonly used locally) that were used to legitimize preestablished government policy. Or they may have a vision of a “public forum” more akin to grassroots accountability initiatives like the Permanent People’s Tribunal (TPP) (Feierstein, 2019), that give communities a voice to denounce failed state mechanisms. Given these diverse views on public deliberation, this thesis takes an interpretive approach to understanding how social movements engage with public deliberation.

1.2 Research focus

The central questions driving this research are “**how do social movements engage with public deliberation?**”, and “**what are the implications of this engagement for the theory and practice of deliberative democracy?**”. The research offers a novel examination of a social movement as a plural, multifaceted body in its engagement with diverse spaces of public deliberation, from institutional sites of decision-making (such as courts, legislatures, municipal councils), to technical commissions, designed public consultations, through to more informal sites of public discourse. The research is informed by an in-depth examination of MaT in Costa Rica between 1999 and 2015. MaT represents an information-rich, extreme and revelatory case. It is information-rich due to the substantial range of documentation that had been generated by the movement itself, and by other organizations in local and international social movements and academia. MaT can be considered an extreme case because it highlights successful mass-scale social movement engagement with local territorial deliberation in a political context where deliberative innovations have been scarce. MaT is also revelatory case because it sheds light on the diversity of perspectives within a social movement on how to engage with local government decision-making, and public deliberation more broadly.

My in-depth empirical research and analysis of MaT finds that within the social movement, the diversity of its activist membership takes the form of loosely converging “orientations”, each of which assembles a set of compatible aspirations and practices in pursuit of the broader movement goals. I have classified these orientations based on their preferences towards movement action and towards the dynamics of relating internally and with others. I have identified three discernible orientations, with substantial overlaps between them. One of them, which I have called the **partisan resistance orientation (PRO)**, is dominant in the definition of the movement’s collective identity and its strategic goals; for PRO activists, MaT’s core task is to block the threats to environmental health, community livelihoods, local culture, and economic justice that the movement associates with GMOs. The other two orientations, which

I have called the **transpartisan inquiry orientation (TIO)** and the **generative empowerment orientation (GEO)** complement the resistance orientation in pursuing these core goals, but also invigorate the movement by expressing additional facets of its members' aspirations. TIO activists are primarily concerned with expressing and learning in the face of the complexity of the challenges confronted by the movement. GEO activists are focused on building enduring grassroots capabilities in the movement's field of action.

1.3 Current perspectives

The research in this thesis engages with two fields of academic scholarship: social movement studies (SMS) and deliberative democracy. In this section I will first look at the conceptualization of social movements in the contemporary SMS including efforts to classify and understand their roles and relationship to democracy. Next, I examine different approaches to understanding the role of social movements in the field of deliberative democracy which emphasizes public deliberation as a central norm for democracy. I conclude this section by highlighting how the work of this thesis connects these two fields.

1.3.1 Social movement studies (SMS)

SMS constitutes a broad multidisciplinary field that emerged in the 1960's as a complex critique to the mainstream dismissal of the emergent popular politics of that time, like civil rights and students' movements, as merely impulsive and self-indulgent reactions to temporary hardships (McAdam et al., 2004). The concept of a social movement has historically been, and continues to be, contested (Chesters & Welsh, 2010; Flesher Fominaya, 2020; Rohlinger & Gentile, 2017). While a diverse range of definitions has been advanced (Della Porta & Diani, 2006; Melucci, 1996; Tilly & Tarrow, 2015) they generally incorporate the following characteristics: collective action enacted, at least in part, outside the scope of mainstream institutions; claims that pursue social change directed at a specific target (for example, the state, private actors, or cultural practices); and some degree of organization, temporal continuity, and shared solidarity or identity (Flesher Fominaya, 2020, p. 8). To guide the analysis of this thesis, I have adopted the definition of social movement proposed by Gillan (2020): "a collective actor – comprising individuals, informal groups, and (often) formal organizations – coordinating voluntarily to pursue a range of values or interests that bring it into conflict with perceived systems of power" (p. 408).

In its initial decades SMS focused heavily on the task of classifying social movements. These efforts sought to characterize variations in the logics (or orientations²) of social movements as well as in their strategic repertoires of action. Initial efforts to classify the orientations of movements explored multiple characteristics, but gradually converged on the distinction between expressive (or identity-oriented) movements and instrumental (or strategy-oriented) movements. Although the originators of these classifications warned against their adoption as a way of essentializing different movements, their use progressively lost currency as it met with criticism for being unduly essentialist, understating the plurality of social movements and the strategic value of expressive action (Bernstein, 1997; Taylor & Van Dyke, 2004). As I have briefly outlined, and will elaborate on further ahead in this chapter, a key contribution of this thesis is revealing how classification efforts, when incorporated with an appreciation of plurality within movements, can help to illuminate, rather than obscure, a movement's diversity. Hence, this study can help illuminate whether factors specific to a movement that highlights its diversity in of mobilization attitudes and practices.

Another prominent theme in SMS focuses on the interconnection between social movements and democracy. From a historical perspective, the emergence of social movements brought about a shift in the ability of ordinary people to contest existing power structures (Markoff, 2015). In addition, movements were sometimes successful in gaining a share of state power, meaning a more inclusive and democratic state (Rossi & Della Porta, 2015). Entry into the state can be advantageous when the defining interest of the movement can be linked to a state imperative, and the vitality of is not unduly diminished (Dryzek et al., 2004), however when these conditions are not met, it can result in co-optation and demobilization of collective challenges (Markoff, 2015). Social movements have been assigned a limited role in political research on democratization, and conversely, social movement studies have paid little attention to democratization (Rossi & Della Porta, 2015), with some exceptions, predominantly from scholars who examined the transition in authoritarian regimes in Latin America, Eastern Europe, and most recently, globally networked environmental and social justice movements (Corry & Reiner, 2021; Della Porta, 2014; Escobar & Alvarez, 1992; Karampampas, 2020). Movements are best able to flourish in democratic regimes, due to the greater safety afforded to collective assembly and claim-making, and the regime's increased responsiveness to

² My use of the term orientations in this thesis differs from that of 1990s SMS scholars in two main ways. First, I am using orientations as a classification within movements not between movements, to differentiate between clusters of activists (or sometimes whole groups) within the movement that have common aspects. Therefore, as will be discussed in Chapter 3, the orientation is an "embedded unit of analysis" within a movement. Second, those aspects along which I am identifying commonality in an orientation comprise both the views and aspirations of the orientations (which I refer to as the features), as well as their actual mobilization practices, whereas the classical SMS notion of orientation is generally used to refer to the views and aspirations, but not necessarily to the practices, or "tactical repertoire". (Taylor & Van Dyke, 2004).

“coordinated public displays of worthiness, unity, numbers and commitment” (Tilly, 2003, p. 31). Rossi and Della Porta (2019) have argued that movements foster democratization via a diverse range of effects, depending on the current stage of democratic development of a regime

As this overview highlights, SMS scholarship has recognized in broad terms the complexity of the relationship between social movements and democracy. However, in this field, the predominant focus has been the democratic conditions that enable social movements to emerge and function, rather than the multiplicity of aspirations and practices that characterize different forms of social movement engagement with sites of public deliberation. Moreover, there is a need for greater understanding about the outcomes of activists’ engagement with democratic innovations (Della Porta & Felicetti, 2019). The democratic functions and possibilities of social movements has also been the subject of considerable discussion in the growing scholarship on deliberative democracy, to which I now turn.

1.3.2 Deliberative democracy scholarship

In minimal terms, deliberative democracy scholars define deliberation as “mutual communication that involves weighing and reflecting on preferences, values and interests regarding matters of common concern” (Bächtiger et al., 2018a, p. 2). However, since this thesis is concerned with *public* deliberation, I will reframe this definition to involve ***mutual communication that involves weighing and reflecting on preferences, values and interests regarding public interest issues***. Following Burkhalter et al. (2002) public interest issues can be generally understood to fall into three overlapping categories: public policy matters (matters involving government action), collective action problems (matters requiring coordinated action by many social actors), or complex moral and cultural conflicts. (p. 401). The term deliberative democracy is used to refer to “any practice of democracy that gives deliberation a central place” (Bächtiger et al., 2018a, p. 2), as well as a specific theory of democracy that proposes a normative project for democratic revitalization (Dryzek, 2010). The normative standards for good deliberation are aspirational, can be in conflict with one another, and have in many cases been reformulated as a result of debate within the field and with its external critics. Two normative ideals of deliberative democracy that have not been revised or challenged are **mutual respect** and the **absence of coercive power** (Mansbridge, 2015). Other normative deliberative democracy ideals, which have evolved due to critical contestation, include: **equality, reason giving, aim at consensus, orientation towards the common good, sincerity, publicity, and accountability** (Bächtiger et al., 2018a).

Over three decades, understandings of social movements within the field of deliberative democracy have diverged and evolved. Early formulations framed social movements as exemplary of fundamental deliberative ideals through the expression of excluded perspectives (Bohman, 1996; Dryzek, 2000). As the focus shifted towards small scale deliberation in designed forums, more emphasis was placed on the problematic nature of interest advocates, including social movements, due to their contentious attitudes and their resistance to consider the merits of arguments presented by those they oppose (Calvert & Warren, 2014; Hendriks et al., 2007; Niemeyer, 2011). This prompted scholarly and practical discussions about the desirable characteristics of participants in deliberative forums, and the possible roles of partisan actors (Fishkin et al., 2021; Hendriks, 2012)

With the ‘systemic turn’ in deliberative democracy in the 2000s (Dryzek, 2016), more scholars acknowledged the broader role of social movements in public deliberation. This broader range of practices included some that were unquestionably deliberative, others that were “arguably” deliberative, and others that would be regarded by the vast majority of scholars as non-deliberative. From a systemic perspective, non-deliberative practices can conceivably have deliberative consequences, and conversely, deliberative practices can have non-deliberative consequences.

Even within this broader systemic outlook, when examining social movements, scholars have tended to focus on just one particular role that they perform in the overall deliberative system: whether opposing hegemony through disruptive protest, giving salience to excluded views, generating connectivity between different deliberative settings, or “prefiguring” new forms of democratic interaction (Curato, 2020; Giugni & Nai, 2009; Mendonça, 2016; Smith, 2020; Stears & Humphrey, 2012). I argue in this thesis that this singular focus has restricted the development of a fuller understanding of the complex roles that social movements can and do play in public deliberation. Moreover, it has neglected the opportunities for enhancing systemic deliberation through the interplay between the diversity of deliberative aspirations and practices within social movements.

Although the deliberative systems approach has introduced greater openness to consider the role of social movement practices (especially more antagonistic activities) as part of overall deliberative quality, there is greater need for further conceptual elaboration and empirical study on the deliberative consequences of social movement practices (Barvosa, 2018; Curato, 2020; Drake, 2021; Smith, 2020). Drawing on in-depth empirical study of the LGBTI+ movement in the United States, Barvosa (2018) concluded that social movements both contribute to the

emergence of systemic deliberation, by empowering marginalized groups, and they also intensify its cognitive obstacles, through divisive framing. Hence, Barvosa believes the emergence of large-scale deliberation requires additional catalysts that can stimulate public reflection and help citizens overcome their cognitive barriers. Other scholars of deliberative systems have stressed the difference between confrontational action by social movements that is predominantly communicative, and action that is coercive through symbolic acts or physical violence (Aitchison, 2018; Beauvais, 2020; Drake, 2021; Smith, 2020; Stears & Humphrey, 2012). Other deliberative systems scholars have argued that different social movement tactics, even if they diverge from the principles of deliberative conduct, can generate outcomes that enhance deliberative capacity at the systemic level (Curato, 2020; Dryzek, 2009; Mansbridge et al., 2012; Mendonça & Ercan, 2015).

Drawing on these diverse formulations, I am proposing five analytical categories for classifying the main roles that deliberative systems scholars attribute to social movements in the deliberative system: (a) **collaborative engagement**, (b) **cautious scrutiny**, (c) **democratic expression**, (d) **democratic correction**, and (e) **instrumental contestation**. (I describe these in detail in section 2.3. of Chapter 2, Literature Review). I am not implying that deliberative systems scholars explicitly intend to be reductive about the character of social movements, however, in situating them as actors within a broader political environment, their characterization tends to capture only certain elements of their action. However, these characterizations leave out important aspects of the complex, plural character of social movements that influence how approach public deliberation. Having situated this research in the broader literature of social movement studies and deliberative democracy, I turn now to discuss the core contributions of this thesis.

1.3.3 Contributions to bridge the study of Social Movements and Public Deliberation

This thesis makes three important contributions to the study of social movements and public deliberation. Firstly, it takes a broad situated approach to studying how social movements make sense of their practices of engagement with public deliberation, without a restricting it to a pre-conceived role. As will be explained in the next section, this research has been informed by the interpretive tradition which seeks to make sense of a particular phenomenon (here, public deliberation) through the interpretation of those with lived experiences (Hendriks et al., 2013; Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, 2015). This inquiry views engagement with public deliberation broadly, extending the meaning of engagement with deliberation to a diversity of other activities and settings. At the same time, the analysis is enriched by a focused study on how diverse

groups of activists within the movement view a specific type of deliberative interaction: the engagement with Municipal Councils to promote declarations as GMO-free territories. Secondly, I have developed a classification of specific orientations within a social movement according to their features and practices. In doing so my analysis expressly recognizes that the activists within the movement do not have a unified perspective about the movement's engagement with public deliberation, or a singular approach for how to relate to outsiders and antagonists. While the specific findings of this study are not necessarily generalizable to all movements, the analytic resources I have developed can be applied to other in-depth studies of diversity in social movements. The third contribution of this research is that it showcases the diverse ways through which social movements engage with public deliberation. It provides concrete insights into how different orientations within a social movement can be deployed by deliberative democracy scholars to examine the questions of recognition and inclusion of marginalized perspectives, and the diverse modes of protest and expression.

1.4 Research methodology

This study sought to understand how activists participating in social movements assign meaning to their own practices of engagement with platforms of public participation and decision-making in the context of their day-to-day reality. An interpretive frame of inquiry was used, which enables the researcher to be receptive to the wide range of activists' outlooks and practices for engaging with public deliberation, while remaining connected to the theoretical and normative questions that drive the research project (Boswell et al., 2019; Hendriks et al., 2013; Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, 2015).

The research process followed an interpretive case study approach (Boswell et al., 2019; Patton, 2015). It used a single, revelatory case of the practices and operations of the Costa Rican Movement Against Transgenics (MaT) between 1999 and 2015. The research data was gathered through fieldwork in several sites in Costa Rica between April and September of 2015. The sources of data included semi-structured interviews, observation of movement organization and mobilization practices, and the analysis of field documents generated by the movement and by other stakeholders involved in the GMO and biosafety issue. The interviews were carried out with 34 local actors, including movement activists, government officials, biotechnology industry representatives, and academic researchers. All participants interviewed signed prior informed consent forms.

While the research centres on a single case, the diversity of the elements within this case allowed for the exploration of diverse embedded elements within the case (Yin, 2018). These

diverse elements in turn served as a basis for the comparison of the plurality of attitudes and practices for engagement with public deliberation. Following the interpretive case study tradition, the analysis involved ongoing adaptation and reflection in order to determine the specific axes of analysis (Boswell et al., 2019; Yanow, 2014). The first analytic axis explored differences across different geographic settings. The second analytic axis involved contrasting practices in different types of deliberative system settings. The third analytic axis involved a comparison of different modes of reflection within the movement. And the final analytic axis examined the plurality of the movement's action and relational orientations.

These four axes of analysis were used to develop the analytical framework for the thesis. The framework provided four types of features for classifying the action and relational orientations within the movement: (i) **the notions about credible knowledge**, (ii) **the conception of insiders**, (iii) **the conception of outsiders**, and (iv) **the vision of change sought**. The framework also provided three criteria for analysing the practices of each orientation: (a) **the degree of political norm conformity**, (b) **the primary intent of mobilization**, and (c) **the type of deliberative sites (public space or empowered space) where the engagement takes place**.

1.5 Main findings

The research presented in this thesis investigates how movement activists and other stakeholders perceived previously existing opportunities for the public to participate in decision-making on agricultural and biosafety policy, whether they felt that the country-wide GMO-free territories campaign had generated changes in these opportunities, and how those changes measured up to their own ideals and expectations. This dialogue with MaT activists and other stakeholders allowed me to uncover three distinct orientations that MaT movement activists adopt towards public deliberation, namely: 1) partisan resistance (PRO); 2) trans-partisan inquiry (TIO); and 3) generative empowerment (GEO).

Partisan resistance, the dominant orientation of MaT, successfully redefines excluded actors as relevant to the biosafety and agricultural biotechnology debate, and integrates insights from the global and national radical green politics and challenged the standing of entrenched powerholders. PRO activists have enacted and skilfully leveraged a range of contentious practices from lobbying to litigation to contentious representation in decision-making bodies in seeking to ban GMOs and promote agroecological alternatives. However, their discursive and relational approach can heighten divisiveness by stereotyping and dismissing those holding dissenting views. The **transpartisan inquiry** orientation is primarily concerned with how public

judgement on complex issues is shaped, and therefore seeks to promote greater integration of diverse perspectives, engage the general public and those who disagree with the movement through respectful dialogue, and advocate accountability and social sensibility by scientific experts. The **generative empowerment** orientation seeks to strengthen the long-term capacity of grassroots actors and local communities to participate in the safeguarding of their livelihoods and cultural and natural resources.

Through the work of its multiple orientations, MaT has been able to challenge the dominance of state and industry elites in setting the agenda about GMOs and biosafety across multiple political arenas. It has also been able to gain the recognition of excluded actors, such as rural smallholders (*campesinos*), indigenous farmers, and ordinary citizens, by elevating their standing as legitimate and necessary participants in decision-making about agricultural and biosafety policy. The approach taken in this thesis explores comparisons within the case of MaT in order to identify the diversity of aspirations and practices for engagement with public deliberation.

My analysis reveals how the features MaT's three orientations can work together to promote cohesion, advance the democratization of knowledge, induce respect for rural communities and their livelihoods, and transmit demands for the accountability of industry and government authorities. However, these features can also at times come into tension on matters related to expert engagement, stimulating lay citizen reflection, promoting the perception of mass support and supporting grassroots capacity building. With respect to the practices of the diverse orientations, the findings point to specific areas of convergence, related to stimulating social learning, challenging entrenched power, and highlighting agroecological knowledge. Finally, in terms of the contribution to public deliberation scholarship and practice, the orientations approach highlights how diversity within a social movement can help to address the inclusion of marginalized actors and shape the enactment of protest, expression and the correction of systemic obstacles to deliberation.

1.6 Structure of the thesis

In this chapter I, have outlined the key questions and scope of the research. In Chapter 2, I elaborate further on how the existing literature in SMS and Deliberative Democracy have conceptualised social movements and their place in public deliberation. In Chapter 3, I discuss my research approach and methodology. I explain the epistemological foundations of the research and the criteria and personal positionality that informed the selection of the case, as

well as the abductive process through which the significance and focus of the analysis evolved. Chapter 3 also provides a general overview of the setting for the case.

In Chapters 4, 5, and 6, I analyse the features and practices of the three orientations that were identified in the Costa Rican Movement Against Transgenics (MaT). In Chapter 4, I examine the partisan resistance orientation, that is the dominant orientation of the movement and leads the movement's networked use of multiple contentious strategies. In Chapter 5, I examine the transpartisan inquiry orientation, that is characteristic of certain activists within the movement; this orientation strengthens the movement's ability to engage reasonably with dissenting or undecided others, motivates informed leadership, and can encourage strategic self-critique. In Chapter 6, I examine the generative empowerment orientation, that is common in some community development organizers within the movement; this orientation prioritizes the empowerment of campesino and impoverished communities through the lasting transformation of local power relations.

In Chapter 7, I analyse the interactions between the three orientations, in the context of the movement's engagement with public deliberation. As explained in section 1.5, MaT has been able to complement the diverse features of its three orientations to promote cohesion, democratize knowledge, support the standing of marginalized actors, and expand the means for holding powerholders accountable. The practices of the movement have also converged in ways that enhance learning, reinforce challenges to powerholders, and promote agroecological alternatives. While the specific characteristics of these three orientations may be specific for this particular movement, the use of the orientations framework developed in this thesis can be shed light on the plurality of other movements, and illuminate diverse orientations within them.

In Chapter 8, I draw out the key contributions of this thesis to contemporary understandings of how social movements engage with public deliberation. I discuss the potential contributions that examining social movement plurality through an orientations approach can offer to the practice and theory of deliberative democracy. I also consider some relevant limitations of the study. Furthermore, I point to directions for future work by scholars, including applying the orientations approach to examine other social movements, focusing more precisely on the internal communication dynamics of a movement, and using the orientations approach to inform the design and implementation of new deliberative innovations. I conclude by recommending possible policy measures that could draw on these findings to enrich the assessment of the country's democratic landscape, gain further insights from activist research,

and foster greater leadership in deliberative engagement by key actors in biotechnology and biosafety governance.

Chapter 2 Social Movements and Public Deliberation: A Literature Review

Social movements are an important aspect of the diverse landscape of public deliberation. While there are many varied definitions of social movements (e.g. Della Porta & Diani, 2006; Melucci, 1996; Tilly & Tarrow, 2015) most typically incorporate the following characteristics: collective action enacted, at least in part, outside formal institutions; claims that pursue social change directed at a specific target (for example, the state, private actors, or cultural practices); and some degree of organization, temporal continuity, and shared solidarity or identity (Flesher Fominaya, 2020, p. 8). Scholars of social movement studies have long recognized the strong relationship between social movements and democracy, as Tilly and Wood (2020) have pointed out “a number of the same processes that promote democratization (...) also foster social movements, and vice-versa” (p. 145). However, in social movement studies, the predominant focus has been on the democratic conditions that enable social movements to emerge and function. Research on the democratic implications of social movements is still regarded as a more budding area of inquiry.

Within the field of deliberative democracy, social movements have been recognised for their role in advocating for more inclusive and accountable political systems. However, some of the normative ideals of deliberative democracy, such as mutual respect, non-coercion, and weighing of the common good, could be seen as being in conflict with some of the practices of social movements, particularly when thinking of deliberative dispositions in small-scale democratic forums. The turn towards a systemic view of public deliberation (Bächtiger et al., 2018a; Dryzek, 2009; Mansbridge et al., 2012; Owen & Smith, 2015), over the past fifteen years, has recast certain notions about the range of practices that contribute to democratic deliberation, and revitalized the exploration of the role of social movements in deliberative democracy. The field of deliberative democracy now includes several frameworks for conceptualizing deliberation across a system (Bächtiger & Parkinson, 2019; Bevir & Chan, 2021; Hendriks et al., 2020; Stevenson & Dryzek, 2014; Zgiep, 2019), and these frameworks provide useful vantage points for examining the deliberative implications of social movement features and practices.

In this thesis I view social movements through a heterogeneous lens, regarding them as polychrome agents with multiple perspectives and diverse practices. In doing so, I offer a more nuanced understanding of the diverse roles of social movements in public deliberation, broadly understood. My research explores this polychrome expression of social movements through an interpretive in-depth case study of the “Movement against Transgenics” (Movimiento anti-

Transgénicos, or MaT) in Costa Rica. In this chapter, I will examine the main foundational concepts for understanding the role of social movements in contemporary democracy. First, I will outline the key concepts from social movement studies, regarding the classification of social movements and their democratic implications. I will then review the main concepts of deliberative democracy theory and its evolving formulation of normative ideals. Subsequently, I will examine how social movements have been understood in deliberative democracy scholarship, including through diverse frameworks for deliberative systems. Finally, I will discuss the value of a more pluralist interpretation of the roles of social movements in public deliberation, which I will develop throughout this thesis.

2.1 Social Movements and Democracy in Social Movement Studies

Social movement studies (SMS) is an area of scholarship that has integrated theoretical and methodological contributions from a wide range of fields, including sociology, political science, geography, history, social psychology, organizational studies and communication. Early “new social movements” scholarship evolved through a sequence of competing theories, that differed in their emphases on the particular elements driving contention: breakdowns in social order, resource mobilization, political process and political opportunity structure, repertoires of contention or aspects of framing and identity (Rohlinger & Gentile, 2017). Classic sociological theories of collective behaviour see strain or breakdowns in social control as the driver of social unrest that leads to collective action (Buechler, 2004). Resource mobilization theories see movements as strategic collective actors that, through the aggregation of diverse types of resources (moral, cultural, social-organizational, human, and material) and the creation of organizational structures, seek to achieve their goals by unconventional means (Edwards & McCarthy, 2004; Opp, 2009). Political process theories conceptualize the conditions external to the movement as the political opportunity structure and argue that its susceptibility to change, alongside the movement’s organizational strength and sense of grievance, affect the likelihood of the emergence of contentious action (Kriesi, 2004; Meyer & Minkoff, 2004). Repertoires of contention theories focus on the ways social movements act collectively in pursuit of their interests, “not only what people do when they are engaged in conflict with others but what they know how to do and what others expect them to do” (Tarrow, 2011, p. 39). Collective identity theories focus on the way that collective action is socially constructed through an “interactive and shared process” of defining the axes of collective action and weaving together active relationships and commitment (Melucci, 1995, p. 44). Finally, framing theories examine the way social movement adherents build conceptual structures to “negotiate a shared understanding of some problematic condition or situation they define as in need of

change” and then determine who to assign responsibility for the situation, what course of action is to be pursued, and what arguments to use to persuade others to become involved in taking this action (Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 615)

2.1.1 Approaches to classification in social movement studies

This thesis aims to better understand how social movements manage their plurality in the process of engaging with public deliberation. In order to explore the diversity that exists within a movement, it is important to discover categories that can help to differentiate between the distinct features and practices embodied within a movement. A useful foundation for this exploration is to draw on the past approaches that SMS scholars have used to identify the characteristics of social movements. The main aspects that have been used to categorize social movements revolve around their social change outlook or aims, as well as their repertoire of organized activity. In the first instance, several classification systems emerged between the late 1960s and the 1990s, however, the most influential approaches converged towards a differentiation between an instrumental- or strategy-orientation, and an expressive- or identity-orientation (Rucht, 1988; Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2017). None of the proponents suggested that movements would align wholly within a single orientation, but they argued that in particular historical and geographic contexts, certain movements may display a dominant type of orientation or “logic”³. To illustrate this, the contemporary women’s movement has been proposed as an example of a predominantly identity-oriented movement due to its emphasis on cultural transformation, while the labour or environmental movements have been identified as predominantly strategy-oriented movements, due to its emphasis on impacting concrete policies (Klandermans, 1993; Rucht, 1988). However, this dichotomy increasingly met with criticism by scholars who argued that social movements combine both instrumental and expressive approaches (Taylor & Van Dyke, 2004). In consequence, this classification approach gradually came into disuse (Klandermans, 2015).

The second approach to categorization focuses specifically on the strategic “forms of action” (Rucht, 1988, p. 311) or “tactical repertoires” (Taylor & Van Dyke, 2004, p. 264) adopted by movements. In this sense, movements can be examined according to the types of organized activity that they pursue in order to achieve their objectives. As Taylor and Van Dyke have argued, the tactical repertoire of movements has been a central element in their study by the resource mobilization and political process scholarly traditions, and popular views have also

³ Rucht (1998) uses the terms ‘logic’ and ‘orientation’ interchangeably, and defines it as “a guiding principle whose recognition (or empirical validity) will elicit certain structural and behavioral consequences. Thus a ‘logic’ signifies not a causal determination but probable results.” (1988, p. 319).

at times tended to identify movements more readily with their tactics than with their goals (2004, p. 263). While the range of possible strategic actions that movements can enact is extremely broad, ranging from activities as diverse as petitioning, marches, sit-ins, confrontations, media campaigning and litigation, scholars have found that the repertoire enacted by a specific movement is limited and predictable; thus the notion of “repertoires of contention” has been used to describe “distinctive constellations of tactics and strategies developed over time and used by protest groups to act collectively” (Taylor & Van Dyke, 2004, p. 265).

There have been several efforts in SMS to classify the types of action repertoires employed by different movements. Turner and Killian (1987, cited in Taylor & Van Dyke, 2004) classified tactics into four categories: (a) persuasive appeals, (b) facilitation of the movement’s own capacities for action, (c) bargaining by offering public or electoral support, and (d) coercion by offering to generate some form of material cost or withhold support from another player. The model developed by Kitschelt (1986, cited in Rucht, 1990), in an analysis of the German anti-nuclear movement, distinguished between (a) assimilative and (b) confrontational strategies; the former involved gaining the support of established power-holding institutions, such as lobbying, or referendums, or litigation, while the latter involved exerting pressure through protests, civil disobedience or occupations. Della Porta and Diani (2006) looked specifically at forms of protest and classified them using three particular logics: (a) the logic of numbers, where movements seek to demonstrate massive public support, especially to signal the ability to mobilize electoral capital; (b) the logic of damage, which attracts media attention and a capacity to confront and block the opposed project or activity; and (c) the logic of bearing witness, which aims to claim the moral high ground by spotlighting the movement’s unwavering commitment to its values, even when taking action may entail a personal cost, such as being arrested. Devlin (2019) distinguishes between (a) actions consistent with “normal politics” such as lobbying, organizing public meetings, collecting signatures, litigation, and advertising campaigns, on the one hand; (b) actions that generated “public spectacles” meant to draw public attention more forcefully, such as rallies, vigils, hunger strikes, demonstrations, and boycotts; and (c) transgressive actions, such as large-scale disruptions, political violence, and military action (p. 8). In summary, these models of classification involve two dimensions, the first addresses whether the movement acts through arenas that are considered “conventional” for political action, or if it spills out into the context of everyday life, either for expressive or disruptive action. The second dimension looks at the mode of power sought by the movement, whether strengthening its own knowledge and organizational capacity, displaying an

electorally significant volume of public support, generating disruption through outright confrontation, or spotlighting its morally ascendant commitment.

2.1.2 Democratic role of movements in social movement studies

Another prominent area of SMS involves the democratic implications of social movements. Historically the emergence of social movements brought about a shift in the ability of ordinary people to contest existing power structures in ways that were “open, collective, [and] sustained” (Markoff, 2015, p. 26). However, the initial emergence of social movements can also be linked to the new opportunities for raising challenges to powerholders that arose in democratizing regimes in Western Europe and North America around the XIX Century, and spread from there to other democratizing and non-democratic settings (Tilly, 2003). Hence, SMS scholars have understood social movements and democracy as interconnected phenomena. The predominant focus of SMS research on the relationship between social movements and democracy has been on how the level of democratization affects the conditions for social movement emergence and expression, and often points more strongly at the role of elite strategizing, rather than on the role of social movements themselves, in fostering the conditions for democratization. Movements are best able to flourish in democratic regimes, due to the greater safety afforded to collective assembly and claim-making, and the regime’s espoused commitment to being responsive to the public will. However, elites in democratic regimes are also able to co-opt the actors and claims of social movements into the formal power structures of the state, and in this way demobilize collective challenges (Markoff, 2015).

On the other hand, a smaller group of SMS research has attempted to examine more directly the effects of social movements on democracy and democratization. One seminal stream of this research derived from the study of popular movements opposing the Latin American dictatorships in the second half of the XX Century (Baiocchi et al., 2011; Escobar & Alvarez, 1992; O’Donnell et al., 1986) . Subsequently, other researchers have examined the pro-democracy movements in Eastern Europe and the Arab Spring movements (Jacobson & Saxonberg, 2013; Lafi, 2017) More recently, SMS scholars have focused on the globally networked movements for economic justice, environmental justice, and diversity and inclusion (Bennet & Segerberg, 2012; Castells, 2015). Rossi and Della Porta (2019) have argued that movements foster democratization via a diverse range of effects, depending on the current stage of democratic development of a regime. Additionally, social movements can also prompt repressive responses that may lead to de-democratization (Tilly, 2003). Social movements can also advance anti-democratic claims, such as the marginalization of minorities or the restriction

of civil liberties, and these may at times lead to de-democratizing outcomes, or may instead prompt public reactions and counter-mobilizations that advance further democratization (Coley et al., 2020; Tilly, 2003).

SMS scholars have studied the form and function of social movements in different kinds of states, from fully authoritarian, to transitioning to democratic consolidation, to substantive democracies. Research by these scholars has found that the role of social movements progresses through different stages. The initial stages involve establishing underground networks that address communal needs and pressure for democratization. At subsequent stages, movements seek, to strengthen the accountability of transitioning institutions. At more advanced stages, movements push to deepen the inclusion and belonging of marginalized identities and to promote global justice, as the state advances towards democratization. (Melucci & Avritzer, 2000; Rossi & Della Porta, 2019; Scholl, 2015; Shock, 2005).

As this overview highlights, the field of social movement studies has recognized in broad terms the complexity of the relationship between social movements and democracy. However, in this field, the predominant focus has been on how democratic conditions enable or constrain the emergence and activities of social movements. In contrast, the degree of attention by SMS scholars to the democratic implications of social movements has been much lesser, and this subject is still considered an emergent area of inquiry. However, the examination of the democratic effects of social movements has been a growing matter of interest in the scholarly field of deliberative democracy, which I will discuss next.

2.2 Deliberative democracy and social movements

Deliberative democracy is a normative project that seeks to enhance democracy by promoting the central role of inclusive, uncoerced and respectful mutual communication (Mansbridge, 2015). It is also a constantly evolving field of inquiry with a rich process of contestation, reflection and revision of its core concepts and principles (Bächtiger et al., 2018a). Social movements are a key element in this project of democratic enhancement. However, the field of deliberative democracy has had a contested, at times ambivalent, and evolving understanding of the relationship between social movements and public deliberation (Della Porta & Felicetti, 2019; Drake, 2021; Hendriks, 2006). In this section, I will first present an overview of the core evolving concepts and principles of deliberative democracy, and how they have been progressively contested and reformulated. I will then discuss its diverse and at times

contradictory understanding of social movements, and its evolution in tackling important nuances of social movements. I will then propose how this understanding can be further enriched by engaging with the varied features and practices of social movements, and their deliberative implications.

2.2.1 Overview of deliberative democracy concepts and principles

Deliberative democracy emerged in the late 1980s as a turn by political theorists towards the revitalization of democracy through central role of public deliberation (Bächtiger et al., 2018a; Chambers, 2003; Dryzek, 2010; Floridia, 2018). Scholars of deliberative democracy situate it in contrast to notions of aggregative democracy that centre democratic legitimacy in “the proper aggregation of votes in free and fair elections pitting various elites against one another” (Landemore, 2017, p. 52). This does not mean that deliberative democrats seek to displace the practice of voting in democracy, since they believe voting and deliberation can serve complementary roles in contemporary democracies (Bächtiger et al., 2018a; Warren, 2017). More precisely, deliberative democracy challenges certain views underlying “voting-centric democracy” (Chambers, 2003, p. 308) that had become highly influential in mid-XX Century political theory: an elitist conception of ordinary citizens as too uninformed, immature and apathetic to form sound conceptions about the common good (Schumpeter, 1942/1994), and an economically reductionist conception of citizens’ political choices as the result of efforts to maximize the achievement of pre-existing self-interests (Riker, 1995).

The field of deliberative democracy has experienced high levels of growth, diffusion, controversy and evolution since its emergence. Over the past decades, it has become a prominent and thriving area of contemporary political theory and empirical research (Bächtiger et al., 2018b; Della Porta, 2013; Dryzek, 2010; Dryzek et al., 2019; Elster, 1998; Fung & Wright, 2003; He et al., 2021; Hendriks et al., 2020; Parkinson & Mansbridge, 2012; Steiner, 2012), and has extended into a wide range of other disciplines, including communications (Gastil, 2008), planning (Forester, 2013), environmental governance (Baber & Bartlett, 2005; Bäckstrand et al., 2010), policy analysis (Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003), development studies (Gaventa, 2006; Heller & Rao, 2015), political psychology (Mendelberg, 2002; Rosenberg, 2014), and cognitive psychology (Moshman, 2020; Ueshima et al., 2021). Scholars within the field have proposed numerous definitions of the process of deliberation and diverse formulations of the principles and ideals that constitute good deliberation (Bächtiger et al., 2018a; Mansbridge, 2015; Mansbridge et al., 2012). Internal and external criticisms have questioned various concepts and principles in deliberative democracy, from the early emphasis on rational argumentation and consensus (Gaus, 1997; Young, 1997), to the

conceptions of power and collective versus individual interests (Hendriks, 2009; Mansbridge, 2006). In many instances, the proponents of deliberative democracy have re-examined and updated key concepts in response to this internal and external critique (Bächtiger et al., 2018a; Bächtiger & Parkinson, 2019; Dryzek, 2010; Mansbridge et al., 2012; Owen & Smith, 2015). This dynamic of ongoing contestation, reflection and evolution is highly valued within the field and consistent with its normative project which recognizes that “the ideals of which good deliberation is composed are rightly constantly subjected to critical scrutiny, examined for unintended implications, opened to revision, revised, and subjected again to contest and further scrutiny” (Bächtiger et al., 2018a, p. 9).

Moreover, the normative standards for good deliberation are aspirational and can be in conflict with one another. As aspirational, or “regulative ideals”, they are not fully achievable in practice, yet they provide the goals that one can aim to achieve and adopt as a parameter for comparative assessment (Mansbridge, 2015). Clear examples of regulative deliberative ideals are **the absence of coercive forms of power** (Mansbridge, 2015), and “**equality**”, or “**equal opportunity of political influence**” (Bächtiger et al., 2018a, p. 6), since both these aspects are influenced by structural power dynamics and inequalities in education and material wealth. An example of deliberative ideals that can be in conflict with one another is the trade-off between publicity and privacy in some instances of deliberation where representatives are called to balance between particular interests and the common good (Chambers, 2004).

Debates within and outside the field of deliberative democracy have led to an evolution of some of its normative ideals. According to Bächtiger et al. (2018a), some core standards in the original (or classic) formulation of deliberative democracy have evolved including ideas on **equality**, **reason giving**, **aim at consensus**, **orientation towards the common good** (rather than particular interests), **sincerity**, **publicity**, and **accountability**. In contrast, the classic standards of **mutual respect** and **absence of coercive power** have not been significantly contested nor revised. The classic standard of **equality** has been reformulated to “**equal opportunity for influence**”, in recognition not all participants’ views may influence the outcome equally, since there may be a difference in the soundness of their considerations. The classic standard of **reason-giving** has been reformulated to **exchanging relevant considerations**, providing greater allowance for the exchange of emotions and other forms of expression, such as testimony and humour, that persons may use to communicate their concerns (Dryzek, 2000). The classic standard of **aim at consensus** has been reformulated to allow also for the **attainment of meta-consensus** (higher level consensus over the issues at stake or the procedure for resolving it, rather than consensus about a substantive solution)

or clarification of the conflict (Niemeyer & Dryzek, 2007). The classic standard of **orientation toward the common good** has been reformulated to include the **weighing of the common good and self-interests, constrained by criteria of fairness**. The classic standard of **publicity** has been reformulated to **an allowance for privacy in certain interactions** (particularly, when representatives can be trusted, or when constituents previously agree of the value of privacy). The classic standard of **accountability** has been further delineated to clarify that, as originally proposed, it should apply to elected representatives, whereby in other contexts, further conceptualization is required. And finally, the standard of **sincerity** has been reformulated to **reserve it for substantive matters**, while recognizing that for general greetings or when addressing sensitive issues, **some diplomatic restraint**, and even the “civilizing hypocrisy of good manners” may be necessary in order to maintain the atmosphere of mutual respect (Warren, 2006, p. 179).

2.2.2 Deliberative Democracy’s Understanding of Social Movements

The role of social movements in deliberative democracy has also been the subject of ample contestation, conceptual evolution, and empirical inquiry. Some of these questions are closely connected to the previously outlined discussions and revision of core concepts and principles of deliberation. In what follows, I discuss the conceptual contestation and evolution of the field’s understanding of social movements in light of its evolution around the following five debates:

- **liberal** versus **public sphere democracy**
- **adversarial** versus **mutually-regarding interaction**
- **prefigurative** versus **hierarchical self-organization**
- **communicative** versus **disruptive protest**
- **micro-scale** versus **macro-scale deliberation**.

I will then explore the different frameworks for conceptualizing deliberative systems and their prevailing understandings of the role of social movements. Deliberative democrats recognize the value of contestation and the existence of competing formulations, so the contrasts discussed here are generally not regarded as “either/or” propositions. However, they represent areas of tension that stimulated important conceptual reflection and empirical examination. The order that I follow in presenting these tensions serves to progressively highlight certain discussions, both internal to the field and with its critics, that have impacted on ideas on the role of social movements in deliberative democracy.

This is not meant to be a strictly chronological sequencing of debates in deliberative democracy. Such an approach has been taken by some scholars to offer a model based on “waves” or “generations” to describe the evolution of the field (Elstub et al., 2016). However, I find that such an approach would not be the most helpful for examining the main developments and challenges in understanding social movements from a deliberative democracy perspective. Some of these debates have been particularly salient at different moments of the field’s evolution. For example, in the early years, the field debated liberal and public sphere notions of deliberative democracy. Next, the debate about the primacy of the micro-scale versus macro-scale jumped to the foreground during the field’s second decade, in response to the field’s growing interest in designed deliberative forums. While the terms of some of these debates have shifted, for example with the emergence of the deliberative systems lens, all of these continue to nurture ongoing discussions in the field.

Before discussing each of these debates, a final clarification is warranted concerning the diversity of terms used within deliberative democracy to address social movements. While some deliberative democrats do use the term social movements (Della Porta, 2013; Della Porta & Doerr, 2018; Della Porta & Felicetti, 2019; Dryzek, 1990; Polletta, 2016), debates in deliberative democracy scholarship have not always adopted consistent terminology when discussing social movements (neither internally consistent, nor consistent with the terminology used in the field of social movement studies). For example, deliberative democrats have used many terms that make reference to organized collective action by citizens, including interest advocates (Hendriks, 2012), civil society organizations (Dodge, 2014), secondary associations (Cohen & Rogers, 1992) (Cohen & Rogers, 1992), protest (Mendonça & Ercan, 2015), activists (Talisso, 2005; Young, 2001), networks (Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003), and voluntary associations (Elstub, 2008). As the field’s influence continues to expand rapidly to other disciplines, it is likely that more terms will be added to this list. However, with regard to the contrasting notions I discuss here, deliberative democrats have maintained considerable clarity in situating collective action relative to the concepts and principles of deliberative democracy, even if the terminology used to refer to social movements has varied.

2.2.2.1 Liberal versus Public Sphere Deliberation

The first debate that has influenced deliberative democracy’s understanding of social movements is that of liberal versus public sphere deliberation, which addresses the overall vision of the deliberative relationship between social movements and the state. The affinity to liberal constitutionalist ideas in deliberative democracy has multiple roots, including interpretations of the provisions for discussion and reflection on the public good in the United

States Constitution and the writings of John Rawls about the pre-eminence of public reason for political legitimacy (Florida, 2018). Under the liberal stream of deliberative democracy, the central concern is democratic legitimacy, which is rooted in the application of procedural ideals of justification by public argument and reasoning in democratic institutions (Cohen, 1989). In contrast, the critical stream of deliberative democracy, for which Dryzek (1990) uses the term “discursive democracy”, has its philosophical roots in the critical theory of Jurgen Habermas (1962/2015, 1984, 1985) and elements of participatory democracy, especially from the work of Benjamin Barber (1984). Therefore, it combines the concern about the dynamics of political communication needed to determine the public good (free, open, mutually regarding, and uncoerced, according to the Habermasian “ideal speech situation”) with the concern about the nature of unstructured political space where ordinary citizens could gather to discuss political matters, form considered opinions, and critically hold politicians accountable (the Habermasian “public sphere”) (Chambers, 2018, p. 65)

According to Dryzek (2000) the critical stream of deliberative democracy has as its central concern enhancing democratization, which rests in progressively deepening three dimensions: the franchise, the scope, and authenticity. The franchise entails the number of people participating effectively in collective decisions. The scope involves the range of issues under democratic control. Authenticity refers to: “the degree to which democratic control is engaged through communication that encourages reflection upon preferences without coercion” (Dryzek, p. 8). Furthermore, Dryzek argues that “demands for greater democracy almost always emanate from insurgency in oppositional civil society” (p. 87) and while in some cases oppositional groups may subsequently gain inclusion into the state’s formal mechanisms for decision-making, this entry may deplete the overall oppositional strength of civil society. Furthermore, the inclusion may lead to a merely symbolic gain by the newly included group, or to its co-optation by the state, unless its interests coincide strongly with a policy function that the state must already fulfil to ensure its permanence and stability (a state imperative).

Both these streams of deliberative democratic thought envision different ways in which social movements can enhance or erode deliberative democracy. For liberal-deliberative democracy, social movements contribute to deliberative democracy when they support the formulation of legitimate collective decisions through public deliberation in institutions. This support can manifest in diverse ways: such as helping excluded groups overcome inequalities in deliberative representation, providing information to policymakers about the impacts on, and preferences of citizens regarding policies, strengthening the democratic competencies of citizens through practical civic education, and promoting the resolution of public problems

through alternative civil society platforms parallel to the state (Cohen & Rogers, 1992) In contrast, they are regarded as hindering deliberative democracy when they obstruct or distort public deliberation through various actions: by withholding support, discrediting or boycotting deliberative settings; by misrepresenting the issues or overrepresenting their interests to manipulate public opinion; or by capturing administrative processes in service of their particular interests (Cohen & Rogers, 1992). For discursive (or public sphere) democracy, social movements enhance democratization through the lively contestation of discourses in the public sphere and by making public decisions accountable to an expanding share of citizens on a growing range of issues. They can also contribute to democracy by engaging with the state, as long as their interests align with a state imperative, and their engagement does not deplete the oppositional public sphere (Dryzek, 2000). However, even from a discursive democracy perspective, it is possible for social movements to be anti-democratic, either through the authoritarian character of their internal dealings, or through their advancement of exclusionary and antidemocratic goals..

2.2.2.2 Adversarial versus mutually-regarding interaction

Another core debate that has shaped ideas about social movements in deliberative democracy pivots around partisanship, whether there is scope in the deliberation for adversarial versus mutually-regarding interactions related to the complex challenges of addressing plural interests. This concerns also the potential shortfalls in meeting the normative deliberative ideal of inclusive, uncoerced, and respectful mutual communication and reflection oriented towards the common good. As previously discussed, the original versions of many of deliberative democracy's classic principles have already been the subject of reformulation. Nonetheless, the debate about adversarial versus mutually-regarding interaction continues to be an important element of contention. In Mansbridge's (1983) seminal book *Beyond Adversary Democracy* she contrasts the concept of the "adversary" pluralist and aggregative dominant democratic system with the small-scale "unitary" participatory democratic experiments of the 1960's and 1970's. Her work highlighted the need to understand the complementarity of different democratic approaches according to the conflict or complementarity of interests and the immediacy of social relationships. Her views have continued to be highly influential in the evolution deliberative democracy's treatment of "self-interest", and the reformulation of the original regulatory ideal of the prevalence of the collective good over self-interest (Mansbridge et al., 2010; Warren & Mansbridge, 2013).

Social movements are generally regarded as partisan by deliberative democracy scholars, and therefore as not suitable to meet the suitable norms of conduct of deliberators. Partisanship is

taken to imply certain pre-existing interests and dispositions in relation to the matters being deliberated or the relevant actors involved. These partisan commitments decrease the partisans' willingness (compared to ordinary, non-partisan citizens) to listen, weigh and reflect on the considerations shared by others (especially those who are regarded as antagonists on the issue), critically assess their own perspective in light of the new information, and be open to transform their own opinions if the information warrants it. (Hendriks et al., 2007). Partisanship is most significantly regarded as problematic in the context of designed deliberative forums, rather than at the broader scale of the public sphere (Hendriks, 2006). The broad debate about the role of partisanship in deliberative forums has produced a variety of proposals regarding their design and the modalities for the engagement and role assignment for interest advocates, including social movements. The alternatives include: designation of differentiated roles for partisans (as information providers in a preliminary phase to the lay citizen deliberation) (Hendriks, 2012), involvement of social movements as monitors of the policy uptake of the resulting agreements (Parkinson, 2006), division of the deliberation process into a binary process of initial trust-building followed by decision-making (Kanra, 2012), and provision of deliberative enclaves where activists can clarify their interests in a safe like-minded setting (Abdullah et al., 2016; Mansbridge, 1994).

2.2.2.3 Prefigurative versus hierarchical self-organization

The third debate relates to the kind of internal communication and governance inside social movements. Some deliberative democrats have underscored the relevance of the prefigurative politics of certain social movements as sites of deliberative democracy. Della Porta (2013) highlights the cases of networks of social justice movements, global and national in scope, such as the Occupy Movement in the United States, the Indignados Movement in Spain and the Global Justice Movement (GJM) against neoliberal globalization. These networks have not only mobilized to express dissatisfaction with the erosion of representative democracies as a result of neoliberal policies, but have also transformed their own organizing spaces into new open and public discursive arenas, often aimed towards consensus decision-making. Prefiguration, or prefigurative politics, refers to "the future oriented construction of political alternatives, or of attempts to reflect political goals and values in social movement processes" (Yates, 2021, p. 1). Not all social movements enact prefigurative politics, many social movements adopt hierarchical structures and formal procedures that approach a type of bureaucracy, either within their formally established organizations, or in the network relationships between their groups (Willems & Jegers, 2012). Both prefigurative and hierarchical social movements can adopt a discourse that is critical of the prevailing conditions

of representative democracy, and both can undertake strategic actions that seek to transform real world democratic conditions. The main distinction is that prefigurative organizations expressly establish constraints on organizational practices in alignment with the democratic goals that the movement is seeking to promote.

Furthermore, there are significant differences between social movements as to how they implement diverse aspects of prefiguration, such as: experimenting with organization styles, critiquing political perspectives, establishing new collective norms, enacting and inscribing these practices in specific public spaces or material environments, and demonstrating and promoting the replication of these practices in other contexts (Yates, 2015). Innovations in democratic practices developed by social movements, such as consensus decision-making procedures and occupation of public spaces through “acampadas” (public camps) have increasingly become repertoires transmitted globally across movements (Della Porta & Doerr, 2018, p. 9). Moreover, Polletta (2005, 2012) outlines how a movement’s distinct approach to prefiguration can respond both to specific strategic necessities, and to the relationship style that is familiar to the movement’s broader cultural context. Furthermore, she highlights how social movements often evaluate their prefigurative ethos over time, both in relation to their growth and shifting strategic necessities. For some movements it can become a heavily contested matter, that can even lead to its splintering and dissolution.

2.2.2.4 Macro-scale versus micro-scale effects, and the systemic turn

As a complement to the three debates already discussed, deliberative democracy’s approach to social movements has also been influenced by debates on the scale of deliberation. As was observed by Hendriks (2006), during its first two decades deliberative democracy scholarship mainly adopted two levels of analysis, one concentrated in the micro-scale dynamics of deliberation in bounded contexts (primarily institutions and deliberative forums), while the other concentrated in unstructured and open political communication in the broad public sphere. From the vantage point of micro-deliberation, a core concern was examining the degree to which the ideal procedural conditions of deliberation were fulfilled at each bounded site of deliberation, and the factors that influenced the process and its political effects. The role which micro-scale deliberative scholarship envisioned for social movements was determined by the assessment of their capacity (both as a collective and of their individual members) to behave in ways that were compatible with the dispositional and procedural conditions of deliberation. As mentioned above when discussing partisanship, several deliberative scholars have regarded this requirement as challenging, given the adversarial frames, diminished trust, and patterns of motivated reasoning that have been found to characterize activists and movements

(as well as other partisan actors) in some deliberative settings (Calvert & Warren, 2014; Hendriks et al., 2007). However, other studies have produced results that suggest that the design and facilitation of deliberative forums can have a rehabilitative effect over these limitations (Grönlund, 2020).

In contrast, the macro-scale conception of deliberative democracy envisions as the vital role of social movements discursive contestation in the public sphere (Dryzek, 2000, 2010; Mansbridge et al., 2010), which can also include strategic forms of action “such as protest, boycott, and radical activism” (Hendriks, 2006, p. 494). The democratic contribution of deliberation at the macro-scale is linked more to the process of public opinion formation through open and unstructured communication and the enhancement of democratization through the inclusion of marginalized discourses. However, unrestricted communication in the public sphere can be susceptible to the potential dangers of adversarial interest-group dynamics (Hendriks, 2012) and of misleading and manipulative forms of rhetoric (Chambers, 2009) that diminish the quality of democracy.

Addressing deliberative democracy solely from either a micro-scale or a macro-scale perspective is problematic for several reasons. Neither lens is sufficient for understanding the dynamics of democratic legitimacy and democratization. Moreover, the barriers for open and free, and fruitful deliberation that arise at one level cannot be entirely resolved through actions at that same level. Additionally, the role of key elements such as institutions, the media and social movements needs to be contemplated at both levels of analysis. Over the course of the past decade, the turn towards the “deliberative systems” approach has gained currency as a response to some of these tensions. I discuss the contribution of deliberative systems to understanding the relationship between social movements and deliberation later in this chapter (in section 2.2.3).

2.2.2.5 Communicative versus disruptive protest

Discussions about the implications of social movement disruptive practices for the normative ideals of democratic deliberation precede the systemic turn. Iris Marion Young (2001) argues that the emphasis placed by deliberative democrats on reason-giving, consensus solutions and orientation towards collective interests failed to address the distortive impact of structural inequalities and hegemonic discourses on the preconditions for authentic deliberation. Young argues that the promotion of democracy requires exposing the exclusions and constraints on the decision-making processes that were distorted by such structural inequalities through “far more rowdy, disorderly and decentred” forms of expression (2001, p. 688). Young’s work

sparked important areas of theoretical and empirical inquiry in deliberative democracy. However, democratic scholars have also argued that her critique neglects deliberate democrats' promotion of multiple sites of deliberation and dismisses the self-rehabilitating potential of communication (Talisie, 2005). Fung (2005) also addresses the role of protest in scenarios where the pre-conditions for deliberation are absent. He proposes a framework of core ethical principles to be applied progressively as increasingly adverse circumstance for deliberation demand greater levels of coercion. At the time when these scholars wrote, the prevalent loci for seeking the real-world expression of the normative principles of deliberative democracy were still institutions or forums. With the systemic turn and its consequentialist view, questions about the influence of coercive and disruptive actions in systemic deliberative quality gained new relevance.

2.2.3 Envisioning social movement roles through a deliberative systems lens

As mentioned above, the deliberative systems approach overcomes the apparent contradiction pointed out by Hendriks (2006) between the micro-deliberative appeal for a conciliatory exchange of reasons seeking the common good and the macro-scale urging for a vibrant, oppositional and unstructured public sphere. A deliberative systems approach conceives public deliberation as occurring across a multiplicity of distinct and interdependent sites, each of them exhibiting different types of political communication and interaction, which can range from formal political decision-making to unstructured public talk and opinion formation (Curato et al., 2017; Dryzek, 2009; Hendriks & Boswell, 2018; Mansbridge et al., 2012). It also offers a foundation for, and a more integrated understanding of, social movements in deliberative democracy.

Mansbridge et al. (2012) argue that some adversarial and disruptive activities – which social movements often undertake – can contribute to the overall quality of the deliberative system. Expertise deployed by partisan advocates can contest the claims of other entrenched experts, and foster enhanced communication between lay citizens and experts. Moreover, mobilized protest can contest structural power imbalances that diminish the opportunities for inclusive and equal deliberation and enhance the visibility of excluded perspectives. Curato (2020) further states that modes of protest that disrupt deliberative processes can correct democratic deficiencies by exposing taken-for-granted structural conditions that perpetuate discursive and social inequalities; they can also oppose emergent consensus that rest on the exclusion of marginalized perspectives. However, not all social movements have goals that promote democracy, and social movement action can also have both aims and effects that diminish democratic quality (Dryzek, 2016). Moreover, a corollary of the consequential view of the

deliberative systems approach is that, just as non-deliberative actions can have effects that enhance overall deliberative quality, actions that are consistent with deliberative principles can also have effects that decrease overall deliberative quality (Dryzek, 2009, 2016; Mansbridge et al., 2012).

Conceptualizing social movement protest from a deliberative systems perspective raises a crucial issue: **where should the line be drawn between deliberative and non-deliberative protest and should certain forms of non-deliberative contestation be excluded from deliberative analysis and the tracing of systemic deliberative effects?** This recognizes a progressive broadening in the field's acceptance of certain forms of collective action, like sit-ins, marches, public satire, or blogging, as deliberative. There is also a general sense that forms of collective action that entail violence, like sabotage, arson, or physical aggression, are decidedly non-deliberative. However, between those two uncontroversial extremes lies a substantial swath of middle-ground where the dividing line remains highly contested. Smith (2016) outlines one potential division between civil disobedience, as a form of peaceful protest that is anchored in clear moral framework in order to respectfully induce reflection by the public about an unjust law or policy, and practices of direct action that primarily seek to disrupt or block an activity that the activists or movement deems unwanted. The differentiating criterion, for Smith, is whether protest is enacted primarily to induce public reflection through respectful and dialogic means, or is aimed chiefly at blocking an opposed activity, even though through its enactment, direct action may also communicate disagreement and generate awareness about injustice.

A contrasting position is voiced by Humphrey and Stears (2006) who argue that certain forms of direct action warrant communicative democratic recognition by deliberative democrats, even if they use coercive power by imposing material costs or using polarizing rhetoric. Their argument is that entrenched inequalities in communicative power, and the prevalence of certain taken-for-granted perspectives, make it impossible for some marginalized perspectives, like animal rights activism, to receive open consideration by the majority of the public. Therefore, only a highly disruptive action that unsettles the intended audience's normal patterns of activity can break dominant discursive patterns and prompt sufficient openness to consider the previously unseen concerns. D'Arcy (2007) additionally advocates such direct actions on the grounds that they embody deliberative democratic norms by contesting the democratic illegitimacy of highly exclusionary discourses. Moreover, Felicetti (2018) proposes additional conditional constraints of what should be the systemic acceptability of non-deliberative politics, according to the type of agents and sites where their actions take place.

He argues that the approach should be more highly restrictive for political institutions in empowered space, moderately constrained for other agents who have substantial influence in empowered space, and much less restrictive in the public sphere, in the sense that political institutions “should not restrict the freedoms of citizens to engage in alternate democratic forms”, and that such alternative forms need to be dynamic and free and are not amenable to “deliberative engineering” (pp. 15-17).

With regards to the understanding of system level properties, much of the current literature adopts the conceptual elements proposed by Dryzek (2009) and expanded by Stevenson and Dryzek (2014). This model defines seven elements, three of which are categories of sites, and the remaining four involve the character of processes or mechanisms that connect sites. The three site categories are: **private space**, **public space** and **empowered space**. Private space involves the private or intimate sites of everyday talk, such as the household or family. Public space involves the public sphere where the diverse range of free and informal communication about matters of collective interest occurs, both face to face and virtually, including casual talk, informal community gatherings, blogging, mass media coverage, and electoral debates. Empowered space is comprised of the locations where institutional collective decisions are made. In contrast, the four processes or mechanisms that relate sites are: **transmission**, **accountability**, **meta-deliberation** and **decisiveness**. Transmission involves the propagation of the claims and ideas from public space in a way that acquires an influence in empowered space. Accountability involves the flow of responsibility from empowered space back to public space, over the public decisions that are made. Meta-deliberation involves the process, across the system, of examining and reflecting on its deliberative character and quality and making changes to the system’s elements accordingly. And decisiveness involves the degree to which the integration of the other six elements (although private space is rarely mapped) determines collective outcomes.

Furthermore, the overall systemic evaluation proposed by Dryzek (2009) is focused on the combination of three properties which together characterize the **deliberative capacity** of the system: its **inclusiveness**, its **authenticity** and its **consequentiality**. Inclusiveness can be assessed in terms of the access to the process of deliberation of all relevant interests. Authenticity is reflected in the degree to which communication induces reflection without coercion, prioritized collective over self-interest, and is built on mutually respectful exchanges. And consequentiality refers to the real impact that deliberation has on collective decisions or social outcomes.

In light of the systemic turn, many of the nuanced issues that shape the understanding of social movements in deliberative democracy can be revisited, partly resolving some of the tensions examined, but also eliciting some new ones. First, social movements have now broadly transcended the liberal-deliberative view that reduced them to ill-equipped partisan actors in ideal deliberative procedures; movements and activists may not be collectively suitable for the types of lay-participant roles envisioned in some mini-public designs, but have a diverse range of other roles to play across a deliberative system. Second, social movements' practices of communicative protest can broaden public understanding of issues and make more visible marginalized perspectives in ways that enhance the democratic, ethical and epistemic functions of deliberation (Parkinson & Mansbridge, 2012) in other forums of opinion formation. This effect can result both from forms of communication that are other-regarding and anchored in collective interests, but also from forms of communication that are adversarial and that refer to self-interest (especially when this concerns the self-interest of disadvantaged and excluded groups). This means that assessing the systemic deliberative impact of communicative protest can be a very complex matter, since it does not directly follow from the deliberative intent or quality of the social movement communicative practice. Third, under the consequential understanding of deliberative capacity, non-deliberative actions by social movements (or any other actor) can potentially generate system-level consequences that enhance overall deliberative quality. However, this notion has generated controversy, both for its more extreme implications (Owen & Smith, 2015) as well as in the ensuing difficulty establishing guideposts (which actions ought to be labelled as non-deliberative? and which actions ought to be excluded completely from consideration in the dynamics of the deliberative system?). Finally, social movements, like other important elements of deliberative systems (for example, experts or the media) need to be studied in terms of their dynamic role in the system. This not only involves how social movements function as sites of deliberation, or how they engage as actors in processes of collective reason-giving and decision-making, but also how they participate in transforming the deliberative capacity of the system over time. This constitutes an emerging discussion that has prompted some partial responses, which have looked at social movements as connectors between sites (Mendonça, 2016), or as agents that script and perform memes that challenge power structures and propagate claims through the different sites of the system (Bächtiger & Parkinson, 2019; Curato, 2020).

Scholars of deliberative democracy have followed four alternate approaches for theorizing the structure of deliberative systems, I have called these approaches: **the sequenced-sites approach, the deliberative capacity approach, the deliberative networks approach, and the interpretive approach**. The sequenced-sites procedural approach gives precedence to

the decentred but stepwise flow of elements of an idealized deliberative procedure (Goodin, 2005; Parkinson, 2006, 2018). The deliberative capacity approach focuses on the flow of discourses, and other forms of communicative power, across three macro-categories of deliberative space (Dryzek, 2009; Stevenson & Dryzek, 2014). The deliberative networks approach looks at the structure and properties of the sites in the deliberative system, and the connections between them (Knops, 2016; Zgiep, 2019). Finally, the interpretive approach brings attention to the lived experiences of actors interacting in particular deliberative and cultural contexts, and the ways in which these actors make sense of those experiences (Barvosa, 2018; Dodge, 2009, 2010; Hendriks et al., 2020; Mendonça & Ercan, 2015). The analytical framework used to conceptualize systems influences how the role of social movements in deliberative systems is understood.

In the sequenced sites framework, the role of a social movement directly relates to the movement's enhancement of or detracting from the deliberative quality of the corresponding step in the sequence; for example, Parkinson (2006) outlines a particular sequence for arriving at a democratic decision, and specific roles of activist networks for each phase of the deliberative sequence. These involve: raising issues and making them salient at the opinion formation and agenda setting phase; offering information about impacts and solutions for the discussion phase; monitoring the fairness of the process (and potentially, mobilizing to block it if doesn't garner their trust) at the decision-making phase; and scrutinizing the application and making the outcome accountable to those affected at the implementation phase (p. 169). Applications of the sequencing framework to analyse actual instances of systemic deliberation vary in how they envisage the sequencing process. Some studies delineate the sequence around a particular policy decision, for example concerning the adoption of an educational reform policy in Belgium (Vrydagh et al., 2020) or carrying out a series of democratic innovations to inform local council decision-making on zoning policies in Pennsylvania (Cai et al., 2017). Other studies delineate the system as a cascade of existing deliberative forums, such as nested Public Policy Conferences in Brazil (Pogrebinschi, 2013) or modelling deliberative institutions to build cross-community trust in Northern Ireland (Suiter, 2021). Finally, some propose sequencing of deliberation as a means for ensuring that a plurality of actors can exercise agency as in a study of street art in Latin America (Dabene, 2020). However, all of these diverse approaches emphasize the role of social movements in relation to specific sites in the sequence. Their envisioned roles can be as discursive supporters or detractors of forums, inducers of an expanded range of voices and perspectives (even including at times divisive rhetoric that can increase polarization), and watchdogs that can either legitimize or discredit the resulting decisions and their implementation.

In the deliberative capacity approach, the role of social movements is assessed in terms of their contribution to consequential, inclusive and authentic deliberative interaction across the system (Dryzek, 2009). This could be primarily reflected in their promotion of deliberation in public space, in the transmission of claims from public space to empowered space, and in their demands for consequential influence of these claims, and for the public accountability of decisions made in empowered space. Stevenson and Dryzek (2014) have made one of the most influential applications of this framework in their analysis of the global system of climate governance, using the seven elements of Dryzek's model. Scholars have also applied the deliberative capacity framework to examine democratization transitions in Venezuela and Poland (O'Flynn & Curato, 2015), and Pakistan (Muhammad, 2019), climate action movements in Australia (Riedy & Kent, 2015), and state responsiveness to claims for indigenous political authority in Australia (Davis, 2021).

The deliberative networks approach is constrained in its reflection of social movements because it can only look at social actors in terms of their relationship to an institutional architecture, so they would either need to be mapped as an institution within the architecture, or would be reflected only indirectly in relation to properties of institutions and their linkages (for example, in the assessment of the degree of inclusiveness, representativeness of institutions) (Doberstein, 2020; Hendriks & Boswell, 2018; Zgiep, 2019). In her analysis of a regional governance system, the Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) of Ontario, Canada, Doberstein (2020) focuses primarily on the design and supervision of the governance system, especially of the linkages between sites and the flow of actors through multiple sites. This analysis of the system's deliberative failures omits any mention of the role of agency through the system, whether through communicative practices or as other more disruptive forms of action. Citizens and other actors are expected to be bound, almost deterministically, to the characteristics resulting from the networks design.

Finally, the grounded (or inductive) approach uses the concept of the deliberative system as a heuristic to examine how claims and understandings about certain issues of common interest propagate through a complex cultural and institutional environment (Barvosa, 2018; Bevir & Chan, 2021; Dodge, 2009, 2010; Hendriks et al., 2020). From this approach, the deliberative system is revealed in the situated understandings of local actors about deliberation, its significance in the broader democratic context and the roles of diverse actors. However, the grounded analysis can also reflect on and integrate other conceptual and normative elements drawing on the analyst's own understanding of these issues, such as those derived from the previous three analytical frameworks.

(Dodge, 2009, 2010, 2013, 2014) undertakes a rich analysis of the tensions faced by environmental justice movements in the Southwestern United States, in the process of developing and transmitting ideas through diverse deliberative sites. In addition to choosing to collaboratively engage (or not) with deliberative forums, social movements can also “autonomously generate critical discourses that challenge the way policy is framed and practiced” (2010, p. 388). Barvosa (2018) has argued that social movements both contribute to the emergence of systemic deliberation, by empowering marginalized groups, and intensify its cognitive obstacles, through divisive framing. She regards forms of activism that have conscious deliberative aims and strategies as catalytic for deliberative systems, and excludes those that promote divisive rhetoric. Mendonça and Ercan (2015) examine the deliberative implications of two instances of country-wide mass public protests in 2013, the protests against government authoritarianism in Turkey and the social justice protests in Brazil. The authors found that the protest movements mobilized heterogeneous groups with at times conflicting views and interests to contest dominant discourses and politics as usual and to promote mutual respect, understanding, trust and reflection. Hendriks et al. (2020) examine how multiple actors in deliberative systems, including citizen groups, administrators and politicians, are working to mend the growing disconnection at multiple levels in the deliberative system, between citizens in the public sphere and between citizens and their elected representatives and elite-dominated policy-making structures.

2.3 Bridging the Plurality and Deliberative Roles of Social Movements

In light of the efforts described to examine the plural characteristics and deliberative roles of social movements, I will propose a path for bridging these through a line of inquiry that examines the plurality in social movement engagement with public deliberation. First, I will condense the range of deliberative roles of social movements contemplated in deliberative systems theory. I will then highlight how this conceptualization has overlooked the complexity of social movement plurality, and will argue for a more plural approach.

2.3.1 Summary of deliberative systemic roles of social movements

Deliberative systems approaches attempt to integrate the micro and macro conceptions of social movements' deliberative roles. However, these roles continue to be highly restricted by the specific conception of the deliberative system. In general, deliberative systems approaches conceive the following deliberative functions of social movements:

2.3.1.1 Collaborative engagement

This role involves actively participating in certain deliberative sites, and possibly even in their co-design, participation in defining the agenda, and promoting the participation of citizens. It is a role often envisioned for civil society in many sequenced frameworks of deliberation, and the role envisioned by Barvosa (2018) for her conception of deliberative entrepreneurs, as well as what Mendonça (2016) refers to as connectivity inducers. It can contrast with the definition of a social movement as a contentious actor. However, as outlined by Hendriks (2012) a partisan actor may choose to participate in a deliberative forum for strategic reasons, if it regards it as more advantageous than being excluded from the process. It may also participate as an expert or witness giving testimony during the information sessions of a forum. In cases of empowered deliberative governance (Fung & Wright, 2003) civil society actors are strongly involved in designing and sustaining the collaborative sites of empowered deliberation. Dodge (2009) also outlined that environmental justice movements sometimes elect to take a collaborative engagement role in some deliberative settings, and to also maintain a more critical role in the public sphere. Hence, in their participation within these settings, movements sometimes elect to moderate certain elements of their discourse. Movement may also defect from this role if disillusioned with the process, and switch to an instrumental contestation or democratic correction role in relation to this specific process (Drake, 2021).

2.3.1.2 Cautious scrutiny

This role is also conceived in both deliberative capacity and sequential frameworks. Social movements may not endorse a deliberative site sufficiently to choose to legitimize it with their participation (or may not be invited to participate) however, they may elect to wait and see the outcome and remain outside it without blocking it, monitoring the process and the implementation of the resulting decisions (Dodge, 2013; Parkinson, 2006).

2.3.1.3 Democratic Expression

Social movements can also be understood as embodying certain democratic ideals in their own practices, while not necessarily engaging, at least for the present time, with the broader political environment in order to change the way in which democracy is instantiated. Expressions of these types of roles include collective actors as emerging sub-publics (Bohman, 1996) and Justice Movements as prefigurative sites (Della Porta, 2005). This may also involve the open and unstructured exchange of views in the public sphere during the early phase of opinion formation around public interest issue.

2.3.1.4 Democratic Correction

Involvement in “democratic correction” would entail transforming the nature of democratic processes and values in the broader political context. This would entail the movement taking inward and outward political actions, while being constrained by a strong democratic ethos compatible with the principles of deliberative democracy. This type of action is most closely displayed in scholarship on movements enacting civil disobedience (Smith, 2019, 2020) or outward-focused activism (Stevenson & Dryzek, 2014) directed at demanding change from state policy actions, or forms of communicative protest specifically driven by a deliberative ethos (Fung, 2005). It may involve subtle forms of coercive power, like influencing agenda setting to the movement’s own advantage, but not disruptive or openly coercive direct-action practices.

2.3.1.5 Instrumental Contestation

If a movement is conceived as predominantly engaged in “instrumental contestation”, its actions are regarded as primarily opposing or influencing other actors in pursuit of a substantive outcome that will align with its particular interests or embraced values. Corresponding roles conceived for social movements in deliberative scholarship include interest advocacy (Elstub et al., 2016; Hendriks, 2006, 2012) and disruptive protest (Parkinson & Mansbridge, 2012), including cost-levying (Humphrey & Stears, 2006) to contest structural asymmetries and disrupt taken-for-granted exclusionary consensus (Curato, 2020) .

2.3.2 Illuminating multiple movement facets, the missing factor of plurality

Much conceptual and empirical work is still needed to clarify the effect of social movements in system-wide deliberative quality. This is reflected, for example, in the inconsistent range of terms used by deliberative democrats when examining them, and in the enduring debates about the place of established social movement tactics, such as disruptive protest, in deliberative democracy. The preceding discussion evidences that social movements are recognized as complex actors by deliberative democrats, particularly with the progression of the systemic turn. However, despite the broad range of functions that are discussed, the gaze of deliberative democrats on social movements continues to be predominantly one-dimensional.

The problem of a one-dimensional understanding of social movements by deliberative democrats manifests in two ways. First, despite the multiplicity of potential roles of social movements in democratic deliberation, many studies and theoretical debates are often

focused on one aspect of their engagement with deliberation. This includes the questions about whether disruptive protest has a place in deliberation (Humphrey & Stears, 2006; Mendonça & Ercan, 2015; Smith, 2016), about the role of activists in promoting connectivity and reconnection (Hendriks et al., 2020; Mendonça, 2016), or what the perception of civil society is about the legitimacy of a particular arrangement of a deliberative system (Vrydagh et al., 2020). Contrastingly, there are many other studies that examine multiple roles of social movements in deliberative systems (Barvosa, 2018; Dodge, 2009, 2010; Hendriks, 2006; Stevenson & Dryzek, 2014). However, while these studies examine the multiplicity of roles of social movements in deliberative democracy, they do not delve very deeply in the plurality of aspirations and perspectives within social movements. One example is the study undertaken by Dodge (2009; 2010; 2013; 2014), while she examined in great depth the dual strategy of environmental justice movements, and the tensions generated by this dual strategy, she did not examine the plurality of perspectives, aspirations and affinity for practices underlying those tensions. This thesis aims to make a novel contribution to the understanding of social movement engagement with deliberation, by bridging past approaches for understanding the diversity of social movements with the growing efforts to understand their role in deliberative democracy. In the next chapter, I discuss the context of the research case and the interpretive methodology used to examine it.

Chapter 3 Research Methodology and Setting

3.1 Research overview

This empirical research project examines the practices enacted by the Costa Rican Movement Against Transgenics (MaT), to oppose the local production of genetically modified (GMO) crops. These practices have enabled MaT to claim a role in GMO and biosafety governance, and to shed light on the perspectives of affected groups that had been excluded from the public debate. By engaging with a variety of sites of public deliberation over more than 15 years, MaT has overcome some of the existing barriers to citizen access to information and decision-making about GMOs and biosafety. Despite not succeeding in blocking the production of GM crops in the country, the MaT has attained a wide range of accomplishments: media visibility of objections to GMOs, minority representation in the national biosafety commission, expressions of support by independent technical bodies, and most saliently, GMO-free territory declarations by the vast majority (92%) of municipalities in the country. MaT has effectively leveraged its accomplishments across multiple sites to attribute wide public support to its claims. It is striking that MaT has been able to achieve this high synergy, despite its diversity of aspirations and perspectives with regard to public deliberation. This thesis examines the remarkable way in which the MaT has navigated and made sense of this plurality, to shed light on the following research questions: **“how do social movements engage with public deliberation?”**, and **“what are the implications of this engagement for the theory and practice of deliberative democracy?”**.

3.2 Research paradigm

3.2.1 Social constructionist ontology and interpretivist epistemology

My research follows an interpretive approach and therefore endeavours to understand how activists participating in social movements assign meaning to their own practices of engagement with sites for public participation and decision-making in the context of their day-to-day reality. Interpretive research is grounded on a social constructionist⁴ ontology, it therefore rejects the notion of an external reality that can be observed and understood independently of the researcher (Bryant & Charmaz, 2019; Ercan et al., 2017; Harris, 2008; Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, 2015). At the core of the interpretivist research approach is the

⁴ In a broad sense, the terms constructivism and constructionism have been used in the social sciences and humanities to refer to a variety of philosophical and research traditions that emphasize the socially constructed nature of a wide range of phenomena, this can include identities, norms, practices and institutions among other ‘social facts’ (Davis, 2005, p. 63; see also Hacking, 1999). The use in this research corresponds to the tradition that Harris identifies as “interpretive social constructionism” (2008, p. 232) and Yanow and Schwartz-Shea refer to as “phenomenologically-informed (‘thick’) constructivism” (2015, p. xxix n. 13).

desire to understand how social actors make meanings out of the elements of their everyday life. As argued by Wagenaar (2015) “social constructionism inquires into the way that a complex social setting of ideas, practices, institutions, people, and so forth gradually changes in its entirety” (p. 184).

In interpretive research, meanings are viewed not as mere representations of people’s beliefs about political phenomena, but they shape these diverse phenomena, including political actions, institutions and public policies (Wagenaar, 2015). Interpretive researchers in political science study existing and emerging policy arrangements, as well as the processes of collective action, as “artifacts of human creation” (Yanow, 2000, p. 74). Interpretive researchers analyse these artifacts by seeking to understand the everyday experience and sense-making of the people who interact with and are affected by them, while also drawing on prior knowledge of terms and concepts and theories that may inform this analysis (Yanow, 2015a).

Interpretive research is strongly linked with the epistemological views of two philosophical traditions: phenomenology and hermeneutics (Wagenaar, 2015; Yanow, 2015b). Phenomenology demarcates as the site of meaning-making the individual’s lifeworld, “the bedrock of beliefs against which the very ordinary, mundane moving through one’s everyday world, interacting with others, takes place and through which one shapes and reaffirms one’s sense of oneself and the elements of one’s social world” (Yanow, 2015b, p. 12). Hermeneutics, on the other hand, examines the multiplicity of artefacts through which humans express meaning; beyond its original focus on language and texts, interpretive researchers have expanded their analysis to other types of artefacts such as those involving acts, interactions, and physical objects (Wagenaar, 2015; Yanow, 2003). Furthermore, hermeneutics contributes yet another important element to interpretive research, the recognition that texts and other artefacts are embedded with multiple, at times even conflicting, meanings (Wagenaar, 2015). In this sense, interpretive researchers in the field of public policy can enhance policy practice by generating greater understanding about the contested meanings surrounding public interest issues and practices, including public deliberation (Ercan et al., 2017).

3.3 Rationale for research design

3.3.1 The role of interpretive research in deliberative democracy

This research uses the concept of deliberative systems as a useful heuristic for making sense of public deliberation as it occurs in a broad sense, across a diversity of sites. In chapter 2, I

outlined the emergent approaches to conceptualize deliberative systems. Among these, the interpretive approach is primarily attentive to the situated understandings and practices of deliberation by local actors (Bevir & Chan, 2021). Wagenaar (2015) highlights the shifting understanding of democracy as consisting of “highly pluralistic and fluid ensembles of actors organized around concrete societal problems”, rather than as institutional background “against which the business of governing takes place” and argues that an interpretive analytical focus has become “no longer an ideal, but a dire necessity” (pp. 305-306). A key focus of deliberative systems are the diverse sites where actors come together to respond to complex social problems through a broad range of communicative activity and the dynamics through which the discourse within those sites is connected (Dryzek, 2009, 2016). In exploring the current body of scholarship that examines the characteristics and functioning of deliberative systems in real world settings, I concur with Ercan et al. (2017) that “an interpretive orientation provides the methodological tools to capture the ‘fuzzy’ concepts of the deliberative system and its various components and linkages, rendering amenable both to empirical analysis and normative assessment” (p. 197). Furthermore, I believe that examining the plurality of outlooks within a social movement, as its activists engage with other political actors across the different sites of the deliberative system, can offer a novel contribution to understanding the role and character of social movements within the deliberative system.

3.3.2 Abductive logic of inquiry

My interpretive research follows an abductive logic of inquiry, a distinct form of reasoning from deduction or induction. Reichertz (2010) proposes that abductive inferencing is not so much a mode of reasoning nor an exact method of generating hypotheses, as it is “an attitude of preparedness to abandon old convictions and seek new ones (...) a state of preparedness for being taken unprepared” (section 3. “Two Strategies for Producing Abductions”). An abductive frame of inquiry enables this study to remain receptive to the wide range of activists’ outlooks and practices for engaging with public deliberation, while remaining connected to the theoretical and normative questions that drive the research project. It allows the researcher to identify broad patterns where the sense-making and practices of the social actors, engaged through the study seem to agree with or deviate from the expectations set out by the theory (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012). It then guides the researcher to move iteratively, as through an “interpretive dance”, between the literature and emergent findings, to discern patterns of broader analytical interest and develop “plausible conjectures”, that rest on inferences supported by relevant information (Boswell et al., 2019, p. 29). For this specific research project, abductive reasoning fostered an open, non-doctrinaire inquiry about the views and

actions of activists towards public deliberation. At the same time, it supported and adaptive response of the research process to the emergence of puzzling elements that deviate from the configurations that previous theoretical and practical debates have anticipated. This greater iterative, and tentative mode of reasoning allowed the study to remain engaged with the normative roots of deliberative democracy while carefully acknowledging and seeking to better understand the diversity in action, relational, and aspirational orientations of the activists that make up these movements.

3.3.3 Case selection and delimitation

The thesis examines one purposefully selected case study, that of the Costa Rican movement opposing Genetically Modified Organisms (**MaT**) and its practices of engagement with deliberative spaces at the national and local geographic levels between the late 1990s and 2015. My research project examines this case as an **information-rich, revelatory and extreme** case of social movement engagement with formal local government decision-making on complex and divisive issues. According to Patton (2015) “information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research” (p. 105). A substantial amount of information about MaT’s engagement with public deliberation is available as a result of several factors, most significant among them: the occasional salience of MaT’s direct actions and claims in the print media, MaT’s own efforts to widely assemble and distribute information to back its claims (both produced by themselves and by international groups), the range of institutional documents that MaT’s actions elicited (including municipal council minutes and declarations, organizational support letters, and court rulings), and the existence of other research documents about MaT, some of them generated by activists from MaT. A revelatory case provides access to a phenomenon in a way that is novel, or not previously accessible, to social science inquiry (Yin, 2018). The revelatory aspects of this case relate to the way it exposes the diversity of social movement aspirations and practices for engagement with public deliberation. Finally, an extreme case has atypical properties, that can render it more problematic or a more favourable instance of a phenomenon being studied (Flyvbjerg, 2006); MaT constitutes an extreme case for study because it highlights successful mass-scale social movement engagement with local territorial deliberation in a political context where government-led deliberative innovations have been scarce.

While the study is demarcated by MaT as a single case of a social movement, the research design contemplates additional units of analysis embedded within the single case (Yin, 2018).

Scholz and Tietje (2002) have explained the relationship between the whole and subunits in an embedded case, as follows:

In an embedded case study, the starting and ending points are the comprehension of the case as a whole in its real-world context. However, in the course of analysis, the case will be faceted either by different perspectives of inquiry or by several subunits (p. 2).

Even at an initial glance, the MaT encompasses multiple facets of diversity in its range of activists, organizational structures, localities, interests, tactics, dilemmas and situated outcomes. These diverse facets offer potential insights about how the movement engages with public deliberation. Adopting the heuristic proposed by Boswell et al. (2019), at the initial stage of an interpretive research project, the characterization of a case is necessarily provisional. My choice of this case reflects my own normative interests and theoretically informed expectations concerning the variety of roles that social movements can play in shaping deliberation at the local scale. However, this provisional design needs to remain flexible and open to adaptation in order to support the process of “creative, discovery-oriented intuition” (Boswell et al., 2019, p. 61). Hence, the single case provides a “semi-bounded” setting that has potential for illustrating the elements that are of interest to the researcher, and the design remains flexible to potential shifts in the precise subunits, or embedded units, that will provide the basis for analysis, generating in this way an evolving clarity about “what the entity studied is a case of” (Haverland & Yanow, 2012, p. 406). While Yanow (2000) does not refer to the concept of embedded units within a case, she uses the somewhat related notion of “interpretive communities”. (p. 20).

In this study, I examine the relevant differences between particular interpretive communities within the MaT, concerning their sense-making about the MaT’s engagement with public deliberation. The delineation of these interpretive communities follows a gradual shift along four axes of analysis. The first axis compared the practices and consequences of activists and groups within the MaT working in different geographic regions. The second axis compared the practices of engagement with sites of public deliberation according to the sites’ ability to generate binding decisions. The third axis contrasted interpretive communities within the MaT based on the modalities of reflection embodied in their practices (other-regarding versus emancipatory). The fourth and final axis inductively formulated the “plausible conjecture” of three distinct action and relational orientations within the MaT, according to certain emergent features and practices. I discuss this process more fully in the sections of this chapter about data gathering and analysis.

3.3.4 Researcher positionality

As a researcher, my own personal history, cultural background, social standing, and prior study and experience about the subject matter of this thesis has inevitably influenced my point of departure initiating this research, my interactions throughout this study with social movement activists and other relevant actors in the research setting, and the interpretations and analytical insights that I am able to make from the information gathered through this research. The term “positionality” is generally used in the interpretative research scholarship to this complex cluster of influences that my conditions and perspectives inevitably hold both on myself and on those with whom I interact throughout this research (Boswell & Corbett, 2017; Charmaz et al., 2018; Timmermans & Tavory, 2012).

My personal and professional experience has involved traversing the boundaries across multiple environmental discourses⁵. In the early 1990s, I volunteered as an activist in radical political ecology and environmental justice organizations, that embodied green radical discourses. Concurrently, I worked as a sustainable finance officer in two organizations that promoted renewable energy policies and provided business development and financial support to small-scale renewable energy enterprises in Latin America (aligned with the discourse of sustainable development and a nascent ecological modernization). In addition to serving professionally in organizations that embraced the contrasting discourses of radical green politics and green growth, I was also active in groups that promoted lifestyle transformations grounded in ecological spirituality. Thus, my career has evolved immersed in contrasting environmental discourses, generally being aware of and reflecting on these tensions, and having personal links with people who embody these diverse discourses.

In the mid-1990s, I experienced two tragic events that prompted me to take step back from my radical ecology activism and develop an active interest in environmental peacebuilding and collaborative governance. Between November 1994 and July 1995, four friends, fellow Costa Rican environmental activist, died under dubious circumstances. My closeness with these episodes, that many in the environmental movement regard as instances of illicit violence against social activists (Alvarez et al., 2020), prompted me to seek alternative avenues for advocating social change that focused on promoting shared understanding across diverse interests and discourses. I shifted my career focus towards facilitating conflict resolution and promoting the conditions for collaboration in public interest issues. I became certified as a

⁵ The concept of “environmental discourses” was coined by Dryzek (2013) to classify the different shared ways used by social actors to make sense of environmental issues and developing coherent narratives concerning them.

conflict mediator and reflective dialogue facilitator, and earned a Master's Degree in Environmental Security and Peace. For my Masters' thesis, I researched the political context and stakeholder attitudes that influenced the possibilities for deliberative governance of Costa Rica's electricity sector (Guillen Grillo, 2009).

The personal interests I have outlined, align strongly with the normative principles of deliberative democracy. Over the past two decades, I have developed a growing interest in exploring forms of activism that promote social justice and refrain from dehumanizing those who espouse opposing views. This has been accompanied by a growing intellectual curiosity about how the principles of deliberative democracy can relate to the dynamics of social justice activism: how do social movements perceive and engage with whatever opportunities for deliberation are provided by powerholders on sensitive public issues? in what ways are social movements seeking to transform these opportunities and the surrounding political dynamics? are social movements attempting to deepen the democratic character of public debate through their political practices? Hence, a strong focus of inquiry for me has been to identify and explore the aspects of social movements that strengthen critical self-reflection, deter the dehumanization of opponents, and thus stimulate the adoption of the "deliberative stance", an outlook that fosters: "a relation to others as equals engaged in the mutual exchange of reasons oriented *as if* to reaching a shared practical judgment" (Owen & Smith, 2015, p. 16, emphasis in the original).

Since I had not been involved with the issue of GMOs and biosafety prior to this research project, my approach towards the different stakeholders engaged in the issue is primarily that of an outsider to the issue, an insider to the country and its general culture, and someone with tenuous connections to the actors involved. As an outsider to the technical GMO issue, I have refrained from expressing a personal assessment about the key contested technical biosafety issues, such as the technology's risk/benefit balance and whether scientists, regulators and policy-makers were discharging their technical duties correctly. However, since my research is approached through a deliberative democracy framework, I have expressed to research participants my interest in understanding the existing scope and practices of public deliberation on these issues. Sometimes this has meant clarifying the interview questions or when the interviewees were not well acquainted with the concepts to which questions made reference. In such cases, I have offered general examples of methods and procedures for deliberation that have been employed in other countries on biosafety or other related issues. While I have a strong personal interest in the aspects of social movement activism that relate more closely with the deliberative stance, I acknowledge and value the plurality of goals and outlooks that

are present in social movements, and consider the broad range of practices of social movements to be relevant to the configuration and understanding of the deliberative system. In my interactions with diverse social actors, I have shown respect to their perspectives, and have sought to integrate their richness through my interpretive analysis, while also paying attention to and reflecting on my own existing biases.

3.3.5 Research setting and overview

3.3.5.1 Country background

The social movement at the centre of this research is situated in the Republic of Costa Rica, located in the Central American subcontinent. Costa Rica is a valuable setting for investigating social movement engagement with public deliberation, given its specific political and institutional characteristics regarding the governance of contentious public interest issues. The country is generally regarded as having the longest-standing democratic tradition in Latin America, and one of the strongest environmental mandates among developing countries (Booth & Seligson, 2009; Evans, 1999). However, current research has shed light on the limited effectiveness of institutional efforts to foster citizen engagement on complex public interest issues (Jiron, 2021; Sol, 2008, 2012). Activist organizations have responded to this deficit in the success and novelty of top-down democratic innovations, by implementing their own adaptations of participatory spaces (Pogrebinski, 2017; Zuñiga, 2019). However, the Costa Rican state has shown little capacity to integrate those civil society-led initiatives with formal decision-making processes, to generate more inclusive and accountable public policies (OECD, 2016, 2021; Sol, 2012). This research project aims to bring the perspectives of social movement activists into debates on deliberative innovations around divisive public interest issues. Furthermore, it intends to extract home-grown lessons that can be incorporated into the design of deliberative innovations.

3.3.6 The Anti-GMO Movement in Costa Rica

The thesis looks at MaT⁶, the movement working since the late 1990s to oppose commercial agricultural activities that use Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO) in Costa Rica. MaT is highly non-hierarchical, pluralistic and strongly meshed with other networks of organizations working locally, nationally and supra-nationally on contentious environmental and anti-

⁶ Members and observers of the movement have used expressions such as *Movimiento Anti-Transgénico* (Anti-Transgenic Movement), *Movimiento contra los Transgénicos* (Movement Against Transgenics) and even “*los anti-transgénicos*” (the anti-transgenics) to refer to the movement (Monge, 2016; Montero, 2013; Mora, 2014). However, they have not used an acronym or abbreviated form. For ease in the discussion of this thesis, I have introduced the abbreviation **MaT** to refer to the movement.

globalization issues. It is primarily made up of environmental, peasant farmer and community organizations, the majority of which are volunteer-based and informal. The movement is publicly regarded, both nationally and abroad, as highly successful (Bravo et al., 2017; Cárdenas, 2015; Monge & Moreno, 2014) for achieving three major accomplishments: (a) It gained formal representation in the official national biosafety advisory body (CTNBio), although it is permanently in the minority and has no defining influence on its decisions (Pacheco & Garcia, 2014), (b) It achieved a partial injunction via constitutional appeal against certain restrictions to public access to information, which temporarily stopped the issuing of new GM seed production licenses ("Resolution nº 04117," 2018; "Resolution nº 15017," 2014) (c) and, most notably, it successfully persuaded 75 out of the total of 81 municipalities in the country to declare themselves GMO-free territories (Barquero, 2015). Although these declarations are officially regarded to be non-enforceable by the central government, the movement has leveraged them into a strong public perception of massive popular rejection of GMOs.

The above accomplishments attest to a high resourcefulness, creativity, and effectiveness by the MaT (Pearson, 2009b). It also has many of the more meaningful characteristics of contemporary emerging social movements such as: highly networked at multiple levels, flat hierarchical structure, strong reliance on online social media, and permeable and informal leadership dynamics (Montero, 2013). However, some of its features are highly unique, at least for the country, such as: the combined breadth of national reach and depth of identification at the level of local identity (Monge & Moreno, 2014; Rosensteele, 2013); and the sharp hybridization of cosmopolitan environmentalism and radical peasant farmer localism which gives way to important cleavages within the movement (Arguedas, 2006; Pearson, 2011, 2012).

As MaT began to form between 1999 and 2003, its leaders had to contend with an issue that was not only technically complex, but that had been institutionally withheld from public scrutiny for nearly a decade (Rojas, 2003). GMOs had been grown in-country since 1991, mostly for export of seeds to the U.S. and Europe (Pacheco & Garcia, 2014). National regulations contemplated no requirements for consulting or informing the public (García et al., 1998). For the community of geneticists and biotechnologists involved in GMO applications, the country's existing biosafety regulations were comparatively advanced for the region, and supported the country's goal of becoming a pioneer in managing its biodiversity and applying leading edge technology (Espinoza et al., 2004). Beyond the existing expert-centred National Technical Biosafety Commission (CTNBio), the government authorities saw no further need for divulging information or engaging the public. In an early position paper, MaT activists deplored the

state's handling of any information related to GMOs as "almost a state secret" (Rojas, 2003, p. 36).

From its beginnings, MaT regarded the governance of GMOs and biosafety as an issue with broad political, socioeconomic, environmental and cultural implications, and not merely an issue of management and oversight of a specific technology and its associated risks (Rojas, 2003). The MaT recognized the linkages between this issue and others related to human rights, trade, and economic and environmental justice that were being opposed through a broader network of social movements at the national and international scale (Pearson, 2011). The climate of activism at the time, especially the national mobilizations to oppose the ratification of the Free Trade Agreement between the United States, the Dominican Republic and Central America (DR-CAFTA), also pointed at how solid mobilizing themes could be woven in ways that connected neoliberal globalization policies with local impacts on ecosystems, health, and community rights (Montero, 2013). The anti-GMO movement in Costa Rica took shape through the linkage of several existing networks, all of which had their own legacies and traditions of collective organizing and political action (Arguedas, 2006; Arriaga, 2006; Barraza et al., 2013; Cartagena, 2010).

Despite its plurality, the movement coalesced strongly around certain overarching themes that were part of the global critique raised by social movements against GMOs. These themes included: the influence of transnational corporate interests over national agricultural policy and its regulatory framework; the erosion of biodiversity and the cultural heritage of indigenous and peasant farmers; the lack of adequate control over health and environmental risks; and the undermining of national food security and food sovereignty (Carazo, 2006; Garcia, 2008b; Rojas, 2003). Understanding the broader context also involved relying on links with international networks opposing GMOs in order to gather information and compose future scenarios for mobilization and expand its action repertoire (Rodríguez, 2008; Sprenger, 2009).

In the final section of this chapter, I will describe the process of approaching members of the MaT and other actors involved in the governance of GMOs and biosafety to gather information about the movement's practices for engagement with public deliberation. I will also explain the progressive and layered process of extracting the locally generated meanings from the data in order to contribute to the understanding of social movement practices and perspectives within a deliberative systems framework.

3.3.7 Data gathering

The research data was gathered through field work in several locations in Costa Rica between April and September of 2015. The sources of data included semi-structured interviews, observation of movement organization and mobilization practices, and the analysis of field documents generated by the movement and by other stakeholders involved in the GMO and biosafety issue. The research methods were approved on March 16, 2015 by the Australian National University's Human Research Ethics Committee. The interviews were carried out with 34 local actors, including movement activists, government officials, biotechnology industry representatives, and academics. All participants interviewed signed prior informed ANU ethics consent forms, which included contact information both locally and in Australia, so that participants could direct inquiries to the researcher at any time after the research. In the following sections I provide additional information on my data collection.

3.3.7.1 Interviews

Interviews were in-depth and semi-structured. The interview duration ranged from twenty minutes to two hours and twenty-three minutes, with an average duration of one hour and fifteen minutes. Although the interviews were carried out in a conversational and flexible way, they followed the protocol provided in Appendix II. Under the initial research design, the local efforts to promote GMO-free territory declarations were named as a key example of local-scale public deliberation processes that was familiar to activists across multiple regions in the country. Therefore, the general structure of the interview sought to explore four aspects of each interviewee's experience with public deliberation including:

- a. an overview of the interviewee's organization and its engagement with public deliberation in general, and specifically with the Municipal GMO-free territory declarations as a key example,
- b. the interviewee's views on how public contestation on the declaration of GMO-free territories affected the willingness and capacity of the public to engage on the complex policy issues, such as GMOs and biosafety,
- c. the interviewee's personal experience and understanding of processes of citizen engagement and deliberation related to the municipal declarations, and how they compared to other processes with which the interviewee may have been familiar,.

- d. The interviewee's views on the outcomes and limitations of citizen engagement and deliberative processes related to the municipal declarations, as well as the actions required to give them continuity.

The interviewees were selected to cover multiple perspectives, including those of participants supportive of MaT, oppositional to MaT, or others who may be neutral or ambivalent but have relevant local or national government institutional roles involving GMO and biosafety regulation or decision-making. Initially, three MaT activists were selected as key informants from the review of literature about the movement. Subsequent participants were then selected due to their having particularly significant perspectives, either favourable or oppositional towards the movement. This selection was done either through the recommendation of interviewees, or by consulting other sources, including the additional documents about the movement and the GMO debate in the country. The summary of interviewee profiles is provided in Table 3-1, and the full list of interview participants is provided in Appendix I. Profiles are provided based on the characteristics of 33 interviewees, since one interviewee requested full confidentiality, therefore all identifying information is kept undisclosed.

A key goal in selecting interviewees was to gather rich information on MaT's engagement with different municipalities across the country. I sought to collect information about the MaT's activities in sites where the outcomes of the movement's efforts differed. Therefore, I interviewed sources from municipalities where the MaT's efforts were readily successful (Montes de Oca, Nicoya or Santa Cruz), others where they met with light opposition, or the flow of the decision was unexpected (San Rafael de Heredia and Naranjo), others where the decision was stalled (Cartago), and others where the outcome was contradictory to MaT's intent (Cañas). This allowed for the inclusion of counties that had significantly urban (Montes de Oca and Cartago), peri-urban (Naranjo and San Rafael de Heredia), and rural (Nicoya, Santa Cruz, and Cañas) economic and development conditions

As outlined in the interview protocol and informed consent sheet, participants were able to choose whether to be audio recorded or not, and they could decide whether to be identified through their name, to be identified through a synonym, or to be kept confidential. One participant chose full confidentiality, one chose to be identified through a pseudonym, and one chose to be identified by first name only. Three participants chose not to be recorded

Table 3-1 Summary of interview participant profiles

Interviewee Profile	Attitude towards MaT declared during interview		
	Supportive of MaT	Oppositional to MaT	Neutral, Ambivalent or Undeclared
Gender			
Male	20	4	2
Female	6	1	0
Role in GMO and biosafety public deliberation (some participants have more than one of these roles)			
MaT Activist	24		
Civil Servant		1	
Municipal Mayor or Administrator	2	1	1
Municipal Council Member	3		
Academic at University or INA (vocational/technical)	3	1	1
Biotechnology Industry Member/Representative		2	
Journalist	1		
Geographic Focus (some participants had more than one focus)			
National and Greater Metropolitan Area (including Montes de Oca)	11	2	1
Guanacaste (North Pacific)	13	2	1
Cartago	2	1	
Naranjo (Western Central Valley)	3		
San Rafael de Heredia	2		

With permission, the interviews were recorded using a *Livescribe* brand recorder pen and compatible field notebooks, which allowed for the recording of field notes that were synchronised with the audio files. Upon return from the field, the interviews were transcribed with timestamps approximately every 5 minutes and both the audio file and the transcript file were uploaded to the software used for analysis (as described in the data analysis section). Consent forms and other identifying materials related to requests for confidentiality were stored separately and securely in the researcher's locked office or residence, and digital files containing any such identifying information were password protected.

3.3.7.2 Document Analysis

With regard to the documentation related to the movement's efforts, I reviewed several types of documents, including some that focused on the timeframe for my study of the movement (1999 to 2015), and others that examined the country's prior history of government and social movement relations on biotechnology, environmental, and public engagement issues. A large number of the documents reviewed helped me to establish a clear background of the

movement's history and its broader relationship to other local and global social movement campaigns. Thirty-four of these documents are cited as sources in sections 3.3.5 and 3.3.6. of this chapter that present the general overview of the MaT and the country setting. Additionally, I reviewed the minutes of the Municipal Council sessions for 77 Municipalities where the proposals to declare a GMO-free territory were discussed (75 that were successful, and two that were unsuccessful). Reading the minutes of these sessions helped me first of all, verify the timeline for the Municipal approval of the proposals, as well as the correlation that MaT activists often reported between the lobbying efforts at several municipalities. I also reviewed the press releases, petitions, letters and lawsuits that the movement filed against government actions, and the court and administrative responses, to better understand how the movement formulated its public claims. Additionally, I reviewed the digital database of technical reports, multimedia resources, and information handouts that MaT activists distributed via a flash drive or Google Drive hyperlink as supporting evidence to its claims (Garcia, 2015). Finally, I reviewed the publications derived from activist research projects that were undertaken by members of the movement, which I discuss in greater detail in section 5.3.4. of Chapter 5 of this thesis. As outlined in section 3.3.8 on the data analysis of this research, a small number of these documents were also coded to extract inductive themes and concepts using the qualitative analysis software.

3.3.7.3 Unstructured Observation

Seven events were observed between April and July of 2015, with the authorization of the organizers. Four of them were public lectures or conferences, and the other three were public organic agriculture or native seed festivals. The dates, locations, and other specific details of each activity are provided in Appendix III. The mode of observation was unstructured, and only brief notes were taken when new information came to light about movement planned activities, groups internal or external to the movement, or persons who could be relevant sources of information.

3.3.8 Data analysis

The data analysis occurred in several steps. First, during the fieldwork stage I wrote reflective memos about my initial impressions from interviews with five MaT activists selected for their diverse outlooks and perspectives. I also prepared analytical memos exploring the salient characteristics of the role of each of these activists in the MaT, and the GMO-free municipality processes they had each been involved in. My second step involved sorting the information about the GMO-free municipality declarations in terms of their chronological sequence,

geographic location, and other significant characteristics. These two initial steps provided the patterns for organizing the focus of the remainder of my fieldwork.

Next, I transcribed my interviews, and analysed the transcribed texts, along with the time-stamped audio files, using the Qualitative Data Analysis software MaxQDA⁷. My approach to coding was thematic and it used a hybrid mode of deductive and inductive coding (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). I also used the MaxQDA software to analyse and draw themes from 28 additional documents that provided either useful theoretical concepts or descriptions of the MaT's context and practices from the perspective of actors internal or external to the movement. The process of analysis was iterative and involved reflection, intuition and moving back and forth between the data and the literature to examine the correspondence with themes underlying the main research questions.

My initial codes were theory-based and they served first to align the information derived from the semi-structured interviews for initial exploration of the broad themes that had been incorporated into the interview protocol:

- a. the diverse characteristics of the organizations that make up the MaT, and other key organizations (allies and antagonists) and their engagement modes with public deliberation
- b. the interviewees' views about the efforts to declare GMO-free territories
- c. the interviewee's personal experience participating in public deliberations about GMOs and biosafety, both in the context of the GMO-free declarations and beyond them,
- d. the interviewee's opinion about the outcomes and limitations of the public deliberation processes discussed

From this initial phase of coding, I drew a second layer of theoretical codes that examined the diversity of the movement's claims, their ways of engaging with sites of deliberation (or democratic innovations) that were more or less decisive. These two stages of theoretical coding were subsequently complemented by inductive coding of a large range of data-driven

⁷ MaxQDA is a qualitative and mixed methods data analysis software developed by the German company VERBI Software. It allows the import of text documents, images, and interview transcripts linked to audio files. The software has diverse searching capabilities to check for patterns in the data. Segments of the data can be assigned codes that reflect the emerging meanings and concepts revealed by the study. The codes can be sorted, organized and compared with different visual tools. The software also has capabilities for integrating quantitative analysis. The link to the developer's website is: <https://www.maxqda.com/>

themes that emerged from the interviews, such as: social fabric, biocolonization, de facto moratorium, seed or eco-festivals, citizen science, social media, and each activist's origin story.

This process led to progressively illuminating the meaning of the social movement practices being studied, and the contribution of this case to understanding the theory and practice of public deliberation. The analysis unfolded through four progressively deeper axes of analytical exploration about the movement.

1. The first axis examined the varying manifestations of the movement in different geographic settings, and emerged as an analytical starting point from my initial observations during fieldwork concerning the diverse dynamics and contexts of interaction with municipal authorities. As the analysis progressed, the variations in MaT engagement appeared to associate more with different choices about how to approach specific deliberative sites, than with geographic context.

2. The second analytical axis therefore examined MaT practices in relation to the types of deliberative system sites, using the classification of "public and empowered space" developed by Dryzek (2009).

3. The third axis refocused the analysis on the sense-making and reflection of MaT activists about their diverse practices. It sought to make sense of a divergence that emerged in the data about MaT activists' attitudes and recognition of others opposed the movement's claims. This third axis centred on the modes of activist reflection (Goodin, 2003; Habermas, 1984), and revisited past scholarly debates about "intersubjective" versus "anti-hegemonic" ethos of deliberative democracy versus activism (Talisso, 2005; Young, 2001). While some activists showed interest and curiosity regarding the complex reasons that motivated some of the movement's dissenters, others tended to indistinctly dismiss and demonize all dissenters as subservient to economic interests.

4. The progression through these initial three axes of analysis led me to the fourth and final axis, which concerned the plurality of movement's outlooks and aspirations, and how these came to interact in ways that both support and strain one another in the movement's engagement with public deliberation. This final axis built on the effort undertaken through the previous three axes, to examine of the different contexts, engagement practices, and reflective sense-making of the actors of the MaT.

The core analytical work of this thesis focuses on the specific aspirations and practices that shape the “situated agency” (Boswell et al., 2019, p. 25) of the activists who embody each of the orientations that I identify. In using the concept of orientations, I draw on past scholarship in social movement studies that characterizes the different “logics” and “tactics” of social movements, especially the work of Rucht (1988). However, the notion of orientations that I use in this thesis is novel, since it is used as a way to illuminate the plurality within movements, rather than as a shorthand to differentiate between movements⁸.

The findings derived through this fourth analytical axis suggest that the diversity of the movement is oriented according to certain outlooks for action and for relation to others, around which the perspectives of the activists interviewed could be clustered. I do not claim that these are definitive or exclusive orientations, but they do appear to provide a suitable medium for organizing the plurality of perspectives and aspirations within this movement. Conceptualizing the plural orientations within a social movement aligns with the notion of the “situated agency” of social actors, that “individuals are situated in wider webs of beliefs (traditions), which largely shape their beliefs. Yet they keep a capacity for agency in that they respond to traditions, beliefs and dilemmas in novel ways” (Boswell et al., 2019, p. 144).

Furthermore, the proposed idea of orientations speaks to long-standing debates about the democratic impact of social movements (Della Porta & Felicetti, 2019; Fung & Wright, 2003; Talisse, 2005; Young, 2001), such as their dispositional outlook in relation to the “deliberative stance” (Owen & Smith, 2015), and their engagement with long-term capacity-building at the grassroots level (Gaventa, 1995). Each orientation that emerged from the analysis has a double focus: an orientation towards action and an orientation towards relations within and beyond the social movement. The first orientation to emerge, and the dominant one within the MaT, has an action component of **resistance**, and a relational component of **partisanship**. The features and practices of this orientation are examined in detail in Chapter 4. The second orientation has an action component of **inquiry**, and a relational component of **transpartisanship**; its features and practices are examined in Chapter 5. The third orientation has an action orientation of **empowerment**, and a relational component of **generativity**; its features and practices are examined in Chapter 6. In the final section of this chapter, I will discuss the emergent criteria that were used to define the discern the features and practices of the three orientations.

⁸ Such differentiation, as discussed in chapter 2, has been regarded as problematic for obscuring movement diversity (Taylor & Van Dyke, 2005; Klandermans, 2015).

In the following subsections, I explain the two analytical elements that have been used to characterize the orientations: their features and their practices. Under subsection 3.3.8.1. I explain the criteria that were developed inductively as a means to classify the distinguishing features of each orientation. Under subsection 3.3.8.2. I outline the framework used to classify the prevailing practices of each orientation.

3.3.8.1 Plural orientations and their features

The determination of the features of each orientation was based on following four criteria that emerged inductively through the analysis of the data collected in the form of interviews, documents, and observed events and practices. These four criteria constitute the most significant features of the “situated agency” that emerged from my research. The first criterion are the **notions about credible knowledge**, this reflects the fact that across all three orientations, the movement has strived to contest the dominant mode of technocratic knowledge, however, between each orientation there are contrasts in the primacy given to specific sources and holders of knowledge. The second criterion is the way each orientation defines its **conception of insiders** participating in the MaT. The third criterion is the **conception of outsiders**, which is an aspect that diverges significantly between the three orientations. Finally, the fourth criterion is the **vision of change** sought. While all three orientations are generally aligned in their opposition to GMOs and their promotion of alternatives, there are important distinctions in the transformative vision that is desired, with the inquiry orientation placing additional emphasis on enhancing the quality of public reasoning, and the empowerment orientation focusing on the construction of long-lasting self-reliance and capacities at the grassroots level.

3.3.8.2 Plural orientations and their practices

As outlined in this section, both social movement and deliberative democracy scholars have paid close attention to both the types of actions enacted in social movement practices, and the arenas or settings where such practices are enacted. By integrating these diverse classification efforts, it is possible to identify three primary elements of comparison: **norm conformity, intent, and space**. With regards to the degree of political norm conformity, the social movements and deliberation literature has generally examined whether movement practices are aligned (or conforming) with ordinary political processes, or if they are disruptive of these political norms, either through symbolic or physically modes of confrontation. With regards to the predominant intent of movement practices, they have examined whether they are directed primarily at stimulating movement consolidation (self-organization and identity-formation), at

persuasion, or at coercion. Finally, they have examined the types of space, in this case, the potential settings will be divided according to the deliberative systems classification of public space, and empowered space, but with the introduction of an additional category of space that is internal to the movement, which can be either public or empowered, but only in relation to the internal governance and decision-making of the movement.

Table 3-2 Proposed classification of orientation practices

Analytical Criteria of Each Orientation	Types of practices enacted by the movement's orientations
Norm conformity with conventional politics	Aligned with conventional politics
	Symbolically disruptive
	Physically disruptive
Primary Mobilization Intent	Intended to consolidate of the movement (identity and self-organization)
	Intended to persuade
	Intended to coerce
Deliberative Systems Space	Internal space
	Public space
	Empowered space

These analytical categories used to characterize the MAT orientations are summarized in Table 3-2. These categories will be used to discuss and compare the diverse practices of the three orientations in the following chapters.

3.4 Chapter conclusion

The MaT has worked over 15 years to oppose GMO production in Costa Rica, and has been effective in generating a decentred impact throughout the country, and substantially shifting the public agenda on this issue, despite being a highly diverse movement in a setting where the state has very limited provisions to support public engagement. In this thesis, I examine the questions: “how do social movements engage with public deliberation?”, and “what are the implications of this engagement for the theory and practice of deliberative democracy?”. I follow an interpretive approach, that is rooted in a social constructionist ontology and an interpretivist epistemology. The logic of inquiry follows an iterative (abductive) mode of inferencing that remains receptive to the meaning-making of situated actors, while staying connected with the key theoretical and normative questions that drive the research. My own

personal background as a former environmental activist, but also as a professional who has engaged with other environmental discourses, provided familiarity with the setting and actors, but not with the issue of GMOs and biosafety. My normative interests align with the values of deliberative democracy, but I strive to be respectful of different sensibilities of activists and other stakeholders concerning the value and legitimacy of existing spaces for deliberation.

Costa Rica is a valuable setting for examining social movement engagement with public deliberation, given the scarcity of state-initiated sites for citizen engagement and deliberation. I selected the case of the MaT for its apparent information-rich, revelatory, and extreme characteristics. The research fieldwork was carried out between April and September of 2015. I interviewed 34 activists, decision-makers, scientists and biotechnology industry representatives. I also observed MaT protests and events, and reviewed key documents relevant to the case. The analysis of the field data was undertaken using the MaxQDA software.

The progress of the data analysis proceeded along four axes: that successively explored the geographic context, the strategic engagement with types of deliberative sites, the modalities of reflection, and finally, the diverse orientations that reflected the situated agency of the members of the MaT. The findings revealed the existence of three orientations: partisan resistance (PRO), transpartisan inquiry (TIO), and generative empowerment (GEO). In the next section of the thesis, Chapters 4 to 6 examine in turn the detailed features and practices of each of these three orientations.

Chapter 4 The Partisan Resistance Orientation (PRO)

4.1 Setting the Scene

On June 12, 2015, I travelled to Oreamuno de Cartago (east of San José) to interview Mr. Fabián Pacheco, Director of the Specialized Organic Agriculture Centre of the country's National Vocation and Technical Training Institute (INA). My interview with Mr. Pacheco was aimed at better understanding how MaT activists make sense of the movement's efforts, achievements and limitations in engaging with local and national spaces of public deliberation. Mr. Pacheco has been a leading activist since the late 1990s in MaT, the nation's large social movement against genetically modified organisms. He has represented FECON (the Federation of Conservation Organizations) in the past, as a member of the National Technical Biosafety Commission (CTNBio), the technical body that regulates and licenses GMOs. In the interview, Mr. Pacheco indicated that in 2004, as a young activist, he led the effort to pressure the government to declare a national moratorium on commercial production of GMOs. An agronomist and agrobiologist by training, he is also the son of Dr. Abel Pacheco, who was Costa Rica's president between 2002 and 2006. Although the president declined the MaT's demand for a moratorium, Mr. Pacheco believes that a major achievement for the movement was the President's compromise measure of granting environmental organizations two seats in the CTNBio. As mentioned above, Pacheco held one of those seats at the time of the interview. During the interview, Pacheco passionately recounted the history of the MaT and the wide variety of practices it has enacted, while offering insights on its achievements, challenges and detractors.

My interview with Mr. Pacheco was particularly illuminating because it revealed that within the movement 'resistance' is practiced in multiple ways, that I will describe in greater detail in this chapter. Resistance is not only enacted through a wide range of contentious actions, such as protest, lobbying and litigation, but also by embodying and affirming alternative agroecological and cultural practices, and by refuting opponents' aspersions. The interview also highlighted that a single orientation relies on a diversity of practices to strengthen the effectiveness and legitimacy of the movement. While much of the activity described by Mr. Pacheco accords with the resistive functions that deliberative democrats commonly associate with social movements, there are some important nuances in his elaboration of MaT's resistance practices.

This chapter introduces MaT's partisan resistance orientation (PRO), which can be considered the dominant orientation of the movement, and its most visible. Such dominance entails that those activists whose attitudes and practices match strongly with the construct of the PRO,

view them as the core business of the movement. They recognize that there are multiple ways of “doing resistance”, but do not acknowledge the existence of other orientations, like inquiry or empowerment, nor the relevance of their contributions to the movement. The MaT enacts resistance strategies across multiple settings, including settings with formal decision power, such as legislatures, presidential cabinets, courts, and municipal councils, and more open and informal settings such as mass media, community organizations, and agrological fairs. Furthermore, the MaT recognizes a synergistic value of enacting resistance across multiple settings. Thus, a resistive action may be desirable for more than its anticipated direct effect. An action may have value even if its direct goal is only partly accomplished, for example by leveraging support for contentious action in other settings.

The quote below, from Mr. Pacheco, illuminates the combination of political challenges, convictions and concerns facing MaT at the time of the interview. It also helps illustrate the main features of the partisan resistance orientation.

We are not discussing merely just another technology for little seeds; we are seeing a system of imperial ‘biocolonization’ that is woven with technology and legal issues to make our resources flow faster towards the North. (...) Therefore, we are resisting this, right? And when I say resisting, I mean from the way we eat, right? meaning that I am consistent, I live in an ecological farm, and I produce a good deal of what I eat in my diet in an ecological, organic way. I look for my grains to come from economies that are alternative, peasant, indigenist [pro-indigenous rights]. But also, when I say resisting, I mean that we have been pressured, we have been threatened, because it cannot be left out that I have been featured in Wikileaks cables sent to the United States.

As the above excerpt shows, the nature of resistance is understood by the movement in complex ways, it is framed within a broader political context, bound to an integrated vision of political efficacy, interlaced to the response by antagonists, and in strong relation to how the movement’s actions and their outcomes affect the wellbeing of marginalized actors. As I discussed in Chapter 2, the efforts to categorize social movements within the field of social movement studies (SMS) have followed two predominant approaches: on the one hand they have sought to categorize movements according to their logics and social change aspirations, and on the other hand, they have sought to categorize social movements in terms tactical repertoires (Rucht, 1988; Taylor & Van Dyke, 2004). Moreover, those approaches to classification have sought to study social movements and differentiate amongst them. As I explained in Chapter 3, in this thesis I partly borrow from the classification approach of early SMS scholars, but adapt it, in order to illuminate the plurality within social movements. In analysing an orientation, I discuss two broad aspects, its features, which corresponds with the

tradition of examining a movement's views and aspirations, and its practices, which corresponds with the tradition of examining their repertoire of mobilization tactics. However, I introduce the construct of orientations as an analytical category discovered through this research, and embedded within the movement. It is not a label that MaT activists had assigned or described themselves, however it brings together analytically certain features and practices that are generally common to certain subsets of MaT activists, regarding their outlook on the movement, its relationship to the outside world, and its engagement with sites of public deliberation. From here I used the term PRO activists to describe actors who approach the MaT through this particular orientation. As I have already mentioned, in the case of PRO activists, they often express themselves as presenting the generalized view of the MaT, usually without recognizing any substantial footprint of other attitudes within MaT that are significantly different from their own.

4.2 Features of the partisan resistance orientation

Since the PRO is the movement's dominant orientation, its features also define to a great extent the way the movement sees itself, the way it regards others, and the way it is regarded by others, such as the media, the general public, policy-makers and GMO proponents. To facilitate comparative analysis across each orientation, I structure the discussion around the following four analytic features: (a) the notions about credible knowledge, (b) the conception of insiders, (c) the conception of outsiders, and (d) the vision of change sought. These features were outlined in Section 3.3.9.1. of chapter 3, and are summarized at the end of this chapter in table 4.1.

These features are used here to analytically distinguish this dominant orientation from those discussed in Chapters 4 and 5. Most significantly, the combination of these features reveals how a diversity in contentious approaches is valued in ways that have remained largely unexplored under a role-oriented focus that is prevalent in much of deliberative democracy scholarship.

4.2.1 Notions about credible knowledge

PRO activists challenge the entrenched power of technocratic views in public decision-making about agricultural production and biosafety. They build countervailing arguments that underscore the undervaluation of alternative campesino agricultural knowledge and their economic, cultural and environmental oppression under neoliberal policies. This critique draws inspiration from multiple sources, and most significantly, it merges ideas about ecological

stewardship embedded in campesino traditions and concepts from radical political ecology that derive from the ongoing dialogue with the national and international anti-globalization movement. The challenges that PRO activists raise against technocratic decision-makers denounce the exclusion of campesino perspectives, particularly those of indigenous and smallholder farmers whose livelihoods could be affected by the global economic model associated with GM crops, and by the conceivable threat from biocontamination to their cultural heritage and biodiversity. Moreover, they relate those situated dilemmas from everyday campesino lived experiences with concepts from radical political ecology that derive from ongoing dialogue between MaT and global justice and political ecology networks across Central America, Latin America, and the world. The foundation of credible knowledge, for PRO activists, lies in entwining these two ways of knowing: the agroecological wisdom from campesino traditions and the critique of neoliberal transformations. This can be illustrated through three excerpts from Fabian Pacheco's interview. These fragments present the tension between the hegemonic use of scientific status to exclude communal actors and MaT's vindication of traditional knowledge:

This is what academics have not understood. Academics believe that we have to argue with papers, if they have thirty articles in scientific journals and I have two, they have won and I have to go home all downtrodden. No! Even if I do not have a single journal article. This is not a scientific matter. It is a matter that is being discussed in other stages. Popular and political stages (...) we are not talking about a technology here; we are talking about biocolonization!

For me, these are technocrats who do not know where their lab ends and where their ignorance about the real world begins, who think that humanity's food problems are technical problems when they really are political problems, and transgenics make them worse.

For us, the defence of seeds has not only a political and ideological component, it also has a spiritual component, and this is where scientists don't understand. When we speak about seeds being a sacred heritage, a millenary legacy of nine thousand years of domestication, that was not only shaped by bringing together earth and seeds, there is also trade, there are cultural elements, there are spiritual elements around all this agricultural worldview that cannot be displaced, because in them we find the most valuable roots of our culture

PRO activists incorporate communal knowledge in ways that help to consolidate the movement's identity, and also in ways that challenge the existing GMO regulatory framework and question the credibility of its institutions. The work of identity consolidation is illustrated by the use of the slogan "seeds, knowledges and flavours" (*semillas, sabores y saberes*) in the

movement's public communications. The slogan, which has international roots⁹, reflects an approach to performing resistance by highlighting livelihoods and traditions that are local but that are also common to campesinos across the world. It merges the stewardship of seeds with the concept of knowledges (*saberes*) and flavours (*sabores*) (very similar sounding words in Spanish) to evoke an integrated view of agroecological practices and the safeguarding of campesino dignity, autonomy and the ancestral culture underlying their everyday lives. The instrumental work of pressuring and discrediting institutions is reflected in the efforts of community actors engaged in anti-GMO resistance through onsite citizen monitoring of the public lands surrounding GMO cultivation areas.

The slogan “seeds, knowledges and flavours” emphasizes the connection between the MaT's resistance and the protection of agroecological and cultural communal assets (including recipes, crafts, and folk performances). The knowledges (in plural) alluded to here are embodied in the life worlds of communities who have been marginalized from the dominant discourse of agricultural and biosafety policy. The PRO's arguments warn that these forms of knowledge are at risk from the economic and agricultural transformations associated with GMOs. The significance of this slogan in the shaping of movement activities is exemplified by an impassioned statement by Mr. Pacheco during our interview.

An aspect that ideally should always be present in the construction of these process is the matter of festivities around food, of seeds, of sharing seeds, knowledge and flavours (...) To me, these are the ideal processes. This is not a boring subject, it is a subject of dances, of colours, of seeds, of everything we are defending. And, of course, in this, the “eaters of transgenics” fell super short. They think that bringing an expert scientist to explain to people about DNA, right? (...) and if there are I don't know how many scientists who say that eating transgenics is good, and nothing is going to happen to us and all that.

But when we put the seeds in the parks, when we put the colours, the music and speak, right? of which is the agriculture that we want, that you must not patent seeds, that you must not have intellectual property over life, that instead we are here to share seeds. When we talk about how transgenics are questioned by other scientists, and that agrotoxics are also questioned, and of what are the harms to our health, and all that. I mean, people understand! people understand super well! people are not fools!

⁹ The slogan was adopted in Costa Rica by the MaT in 2012 as part of an international campaign coordinated by the Network for a Transgenic-Free Latin America – RALLT (2011). The slogan has been in use to spotlight the inclusive and culture-based nature of anti-GMO festivals and fairs since at least 2010 by the Latin American coordination network (CLOC) of the Via Campesina (CLOC, 2010). The origins of its adoption by the MaT were shared by Mr. Ivan Mora, a MaT activist whom I have categorized as an inquiry activist (and I discuss him further in Chapter 5). Mr. Mora provided helpful background information about different elements and orientations of the movement.

The construction of communal knowledge was also used to contest technocratic authority through community-based monitoring of GMO cultivation regions. This work was undertaken by the small communal group *Comité Cívico de Cañas (CCC)*¹⁰ in several Northern towns of Costa Rica, after Ute Sprenger, an activist-journalist working for the German Church Development Service, met them through a regional network and encouraged them to carry out citizen inspections around GMO cultivation areas. The CCC's onsite investigations found regrowth of herbicide resistant GMO cotton plants in "fields lying fallow, in between subsequent crops, on roadsides and riverbanks as well as in home gardens in the region" (Sprenger, 2009, p. 15). Moreover, the CCC compiled accounts of workers and neighbouring residents of GMO soy seed nurseries near the town of Upala collecting scrap soybeans (not licensed for human consumption) to bring home as food (Sprenger, 2008, p. 28). These instances of failed containment, along with other cases involving pesticide intoxication of seed nursery workers, were documented by the CCC and denounced before the National Plant Health Service (SFE) as evidence of the lack of effective biosafety management and containment by the GMO seed nurseries. For Sprenger, the CCC, and many MaT activists, including Fernando Ramírez, a researcher in the National University's Regional Toxic Substances Institute (IRET), these onsite findings and subsequent ineffectiveness in the regulatory response, were construed as compelling evidence of the questionable capacity and quality of biosafety oversight and control in licensed GMO seed nurseries. In MaT's subsequent lobbying and public messaging, these findings were treated as important locally collected evidence of the failures of the GMO regulatory system. They often used as top technical arguments in MaT's public documents pushing for a national moratorium on GMOs (*Alianza Centroamericana de Protección a la Biodiversidad*, 2004, 2005; *Comité Cívico de Cañas*, 2005).

Paradoxically, while this case evidences that communal knowledge was valued by PRO activists, the efforts in Cañas were not tied to a systematic effort to generate broad communal opposition to GMOs nor to involve the municipal government in addressing the contamination that resulted from containment failures. Nearly ten years after the CCC produced the local evidence that buttressed a national call for a GMO moratorium, Cañas became the only Municipality in the country to declare itself a GMO-friendly territory ("*Concejo Municipal - Municipalidad de Cañas*," 2014). While there are likely multiple factors¹¹ that led the grassroots

¹⁰ The CCC is a local grassroots organization established in the late 1990s through the work of the National Ombudsman to promote the establishment of local Defense Committees to uphold citizen's rights. Since 1997, it has participated in several community-based environmental protests and it co-founded a provincial organization of local committees, the *Asociación Confraternidad Guanacasteca (ACG)*, and is a member of one of the key organizations coordinating the MaT at the national scale, the *Federation of Conservation Organizations (FECON)* (González & Vilaboa, 2010; Ramírez, 2008; Tuinstra Gomez, 2005).

¹¹ I asked this question in multiple interviews, and obtained diverse responses. Fernando Ramirez believed the lack of replication was partly because the level of sustained commitment to unpaid onsite monitoring by Ana Julia

monitoring initiative of the CCC to be an isolated experience with an unexpected local policy outcome, one specific factor warrants highlighting, as it relates to the PRO activists' approach to knowledge. The handling of the CCC monitoring efforts suggest that knowledge, to the PRO, is predominantly useful to produce claims that represent campesino concerns in ways that align with radical political ecology grievances. Producing new evidence that supported those claims and could be disseminated through MaT's national and international networks became the focal concern. Other considerations, such as building a broad base of situated understanding in the community about GMO threats, or establishing effective alliances with other local actors, had a secondary significance. This is an important differentiating feature between the resistance orientation and the empowerment orientation, as I will discuss in Chapter 7.

The above quotes also illustrate how the PRO activists' adoption of a theoretical concept, like "biocolonization" from international political ecology, vindicates campesino and indigenous situated knowledge and rejects the corporate appropriation and commodification of this knowledge. The notion of "biocolonization" is used by PRO activists to denounce the intensification of power imbalances between the knowledge and legal systems of neoliberal and campesino societies (FECON, 2015). Hence, biocolonization uses neoliberal technoscience and intellectual property and trade law to commodify plant genetic resources and traditional knowledge and to disempower the historic developers of agricultural knowledge by turning them into captive consumers (Whitt, 1998). The weaving of local knowledge, as in the "semillas, sabores y saberes" motto, and the failures of containment discovered through community onsite monitoring, with theoretical concepts from political ecology such as biocolonization, enables PRO activists to confront the dominant forms of biotechnological knowledge that neglect perceptions of risk rooted in campesino livelihoods and cultural and spiritual values. This can also be seen to nurture a process of theoretical co-construction in political ecology that draws on the situated activist experience, as pointed out by Martinez-Alier et al. (2014) many concepts and proposals that have emerged from practical struggles as "political ecology from the bottom-up" have subsequently sparked research programs in environmental and social science academia.

Arana and her colleagues of the CCC was exceptional and not commonly found in communities, and partly because expert research centers rarely devote resources and effort to training and assisting civic research efforts. However, Ana Julia Arana stated that the monitoring effort lost momentum when Sprenger concluded her work and left Costa Rica, and that this decision was influenced by political disagreements between MaT leaders at the national scale, which led to reduced support for Sprenger's work. I inquired further about these disagreements in other interviews with MaT leaders, and while some of them acknowledged that such disagreements existed, they declined to discuss them further.

4.2.2 Conception of MaT insiders

As highlighted in the quote at the start of this chapter, PRO activists see themselves as confronting the threat of GMOs heroically and with scarce resources, and activating the social fabric that had been generated in previous anti-neoliberal campaigns. In order to study how PRO activists understand the membership and identity of MaT, I draw on two documents written by two key activists at two different times of the movement's evolution. The first is a position document, early in the movement's formation, written by Isaac Rojas, an activist and lawyer participating in several MaT organizations. The second is a Master's thesis written by activist and journalist Grettel Montero about the MaT's bolstered resistance efforts against GMO corn in 2012. The overlay of these two characterisations, a decade apart, offers a window into the evolving self-assessment of the MaT's resistance efforts. The early document by Rojas (2003) presents the movement as emergent, drawing on the contributions of a group of core organizations and networks, who at the time constitute the insiders of the movement. The latter analysis by Montero (2013) regards the movement as widely spread and decentred, greatly expanding what can be considered as "insiders" as the movement became more diffused.

The position document by Rojas (2003) identified a core group of organizations were seen as the committed insiders who fostered coordination and engagement with the issue. This insider group was comprised of radical environmental, social justice and religious organizations or networks, including: the Biodiversity Coordination Network (RCB), the Organic Agriculture Movement (MAOCO), FECON, COECO-Ceiba/Friends of the Earth (COECOceiba-AT), the Social Ecology Association (AESO), and COPROALDE, as well as several organizations of the Catholic Pastoral Care Movement. These insiders are characterised as being at the root of the construction of sustainable societies, "slowly but steadfastly [contributing] to this process" (Rojas, 2003, p. 5) The organizations are seen to make diverse contributions according to their characteristics, some contributing their accrued knowledge, others their capacity for management and organization, while others promote alternatives for community-based resource management.

In the analysis made by Montero (2013), she emphasizes three characteristics of the movement's self-configuration during the 2012-2013 campaign against GMO corn: (i) diversity, (ii) creativity, and (iii) horizontality and decentralization. Montero argues that these characteristics echo those of the national mobilization campaign against the ratification of the Free Trade Agreement with the United States (DR-CAFTA)¹². Montero's assessment provides

¹² The campaign opposing DR-CAFTA in the October 7, 2007 referendum is regarded as the greatest social mobilization in the country since the 1948 civil war (Amador Guzman, 2018). With just over three months to carry

a good window into the self-perception of movement insiders through the eyes of PRO activists. After more than a decade of activity, the diversity of the MaT's membership has remained high, with involvement from radical environmentalists, academics, students, campesino and indigenous groups, social justice organizations, progressive religious organizations, alternative media, artist and cultural collectives, and minority political parties. The use of creative self-expression, joviality and parody are important points of pride for the PRO, and the MaT overall. Protests have often featured blends of folk and satirical expressions, as in the lines in a campaign song "elote con zopilote / maíz con alacrán / no, no es natural" (corncob with vulture / corn with scorpion / no, it's not natural) (Asociación de Ecología Social, 2004).

Finally, the movement's insiders are operationally linked in a very non-hierarchical and decentralized manner, often leveraging the latent networks of the anti-DR-CAFTA "patriotic committees" and the dissemination power of online media. Online media are used in multiple ways. For example, Facebook and organizational websites are used to publicize activities. WhatsApp is used to plan and coordinate activities across networks. Cloud services, like google drive, are used to store clearing compendiums of articles, videos and reports and make them available. Some organizations and networks within the movement, like the CCC and FECON, took on a formal structure, to meet institutional or financial requirements. However, many coordination networks remain informal, like Bloque Verde. As several MaT activists stated in their interviews, often organizational hierarchical elements are mostly a formality, and can seem stifling at times. For example, it is not uncommon for activists to have multiple hats representing several organizations. Moreover, a person's standing in the MaT is primarily linked to their proven commitment and willingness to contribute to the cause, rather their formal role in an organization, or the relative size or stature of the organization that they represent.

4.2.3 Conception of outsiders to the movement

The category of outsiders to MaT spans a diverse range of actors, some that are likely to agree with the movement's claims, others that are potentially antagonistic, and others that likely to be ambivalent. In the position paper prepared by Rojas (2003) some categories of actors are labelled as "**popular actors**", or working class everyday communal actors, including campesino, indigenous, fishing and afro-descendent communities, who have interdependent

out a national campaign, and a colossal disparity in resources compared to the opposing side, comprised of the government in office, the other main political party, the business sector chambers, and most of the mainstream media, the anti-neoliberal coalition opposing the ratification was defeated by a surprisingly narrow margin of 48.3% versus 51.7% of the votes cast (Raventós, 2008).

relations and a sense of shared identity within a given territory or local natural resource base (pp. 40-42). In the initial formulation by PRO activists, these actors are seen as outsiders, but potential allies. However, as the MaT evolves and becomes more decentralized, local organized groups formed by these actors are incorporated into the MaT's diffused structure (as outlined in Montero's analysis above). A second category of potential allies are identified as **"other civil society sectors"** such as trade unions, and other NGOs, that are not very familiarized with this issue, but could become involved in the future. This second category of actors will remain as "outsiders", but in the future many will play a meaningful role by providing external letters of support the movement's campaigning efforts (see section 4.3.8. in this chapter). Two other categories are identified by Rojas (2003) as either neutral or antagonists from the perspective of the PRO. As potentially neutral, PRO activists consider **"the media"** as a sector that has published very scarcely on the issue of GMOs, and that has neither addressed this issue critically, nor deeply enough to generate public opinion. Finally, as **"oppositional actors"** to PRO activists, the position paper identifies the biotechnology companies, the public academic research centres, and development funders linked to the United States government.

By 2015, when I carried out my field research, I recognized many aspects of this general view of stakeholders, however, some additional aspects were apparent. For one thing, after the DR-CAFTA referendum, the country had become more polarized around the issue of neoliberal political and economic reforms. Consequently, several sectors are regarded more readily as outsider allies of the movement. Some newly identified outsiders who are viewed as allies are the National Ombudsman Body (DHR), and certain academic units within public universities, like the Schools of Biology at the University of Costa Rica (UCR) and the Universidad Nacional (UNA). Moreover, the budding progressive centre-left parties Acción Ciudadana (PAC) and Frente Amplio (FA) are also seen as significant allies. Moreover, there are a number of institutional or expert organizations that are considered as actual or potential outsider allies: the majority of municipal governments that have passed GMO-free territory resolutions, the Ministry of the Environment that supported the 2004-2006 GMO moratorium request, the Minister of Agriculture, who had been an ally when he previously was an academic, and even the recently elected President, from the PAC emergent party, who had signed several campaign promises that aligned with the MaT's agenda.

The climate of heightened polarization has also fostered a logic of "binary thinking" in the PRO (Gallo-Cruz, 2017; McIntyre, 2000). This is the main reason why I have defined "partisanship" as the relational quality of the PRO. Binary thinking can obscure the complexity of the gamut

of actor's values and understandings and reduce them to a simplistic us-versus-them framing. This manifests in an inclination to equate disagreement or scepticism about the movement's claims with subservience to the interests of biotechnology companies and political elites. For example, in his interview, Fabián Pacheco uses derogatory terms like "transgenic-eaters" and "butlers of Monsanto", and blanket generalizations like "Liberación Nacional [the previously governing party] is Monsanto". In this way, he equates the technical and political authorities, including the two dominant political parties of the past seven decades, with the leading GMO corporation, Monsanto. A similar impression was conveyed by anti-GMO activist and Cartago Municipal Council woman, Carmen Vargas (from the PAC party), who points to both former President Laura Chinchilla, and her former staffer who subsequently held the position of Municipal Council President, as having "very big collusion with the Monsanto people". Binary thinking hinders the PRO's ability to self-critically assess the impact of its communicative practices, and "align" its framing (Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 624) to make it compelling to stakeholders with nuanced views about GMOs.

In the words of UCR molecular genetics researcher Federico Albertazzi, who has previously managed a project called LAC-Biosafety that assessed positive and negative impacts of GMO crops on native plants.

I was invited to several forums, and I was labelled (...) as a defender of the transgenics of Monsanto, which does not so much bother me, but it intrigues me. Why? Ultimately, I wanted to do a scientific job of providing evidence for and against, but regardless, the non-governmental organizations labelled me, so I opted to remain silent (...). [The impact of the Municipal Declarations] has been negative, because they have generalized the phenomenon of transgenics from [pure] research to a company that manipulates most of the seeds. Thus, they have not adequately evaluated these two aspects [pure genetic research versus genetic research applied to transforms crops] that in my view are independent of one another. So, everything is 'put in the same basket', so people have said to me that my research has been financed by Monsanto. To which I am transparent. Absolutely not! I have not even done research in the area of [crop] transformation. So, people make unfounded statements. If this is said about me, unsubstantiated, it is very, very likely that this is so about other issues.

Moreover, binary thinking can also affect the PRO's relational dynamics with those who have some degree of common interests with MaT, but whose views may be more nuanced and not necessarily aligned with **all** of the movement's claims. This can even extend to the interaction with certain popular actors whose knowledge the MaT seeks to vindicate and make salient. Thus, the term "alfabetización" (promoting issue literacy), used by Fabián Pacheco in his interview, to refer to the interaction and information sharing with communities, implies that the

MaT's bearer of the sole correct narrative, and that everyday citizens and campesinos are expected to generally accept this narrative as fully representative of their experiences and concerns.

4.2.4 Vision of change sought

There are two primary aspects to the vision of change sought by PRO activists; these are the formal and permanent eradication of GMO production and the use and the promotion of agroecological alternatives. According to Fabián Pacheco, a key activist in the resistance orientation, eradication is important for several reasons. When I asked him what the MaT's consequent strategy would be if it was successful in obtaining a four-year moratorium (as the billed then in Congress sought) he replied:

Then we would continue to open new battlefronts. I feel the moratorium would not only allow us to keep building over those four years when there would be no transgenics planted, four years to promote issue literacy ('alfabetizar'), these are also four years, as I was saying, for generating this climate for the corporations that produce transgenics to [decide] 'let's go somewhere else, in Costa Rica they don't let us be', and this is what we want too, for them to feel that this country is not a good place for transgenic investment.

In this sense of creating an inhospitable climate for GMO companies, there is one recorded instance of Pacheco publicly linking the resistance efforts to the possibility of the destruction of GMO crops, if institutional means were not successful. For example, in a newspaper article, he is quoted as stating: "We are basing the moratorium in a process of resistance. We are willing to destroy crops if necessary (...) I personally will not be opposed to the communities exercising their right to defend their biosafety" by a journalist from the daily newspaper *La Nación* (Ponchner, 2004).

The relevance of agroecological alternatives is also fundamental to PRO activists. Pablo Ramírez, who advocated the GMO-free territory declaration in his home municipality of Naranjo, and was then active promoting it in other municipalities and helping to draft one of the bills for a national moratorium, emphasizes the importance of protecting agroecological practices from genetic contamination. During our interview, he explained how his community group understood GMOs through the lens of their local development efforts: "Our agroecological approach is opposed to that of transgenics (...) the local groups are interested in agroecology, and how it is opposed to productivist agriculture."

In addition, as complementary goals to interrupting transgenic production and promoting agroecological alternatives, PRO activists seek the recognition of marginalized perspectives in the governance of agriculture, rural development and the safeguarding of natural resources and biosafety. Their envisioned pathway for achieving this involves overcoming the dominant power of entrenched elites over the public management of agricultural production or biosafety. This is seen as achievable by turning public opinion overwhelmingly in favour of MaT's claims, or by a legal or political victory through litigation or lobbying of local and national authorities. In the next section, I discuss the prevailing practices enacted by activists within the resistance orientation to advance their vision of change.

4.3 Practices of the partisan resistance orientation

A central aim of this research is to examine the repertoire of practices that are enacted by the movement, and its different orientations, to engage with sites for public deliberation. In Chapter 3 (Research Methodology), I introduced the analytical framework developed in this thesis to categorize the prevailing practices of each orientation (see Table 3-2). This framework uses three criteria to classify the different practices: (i) the practice's norm conformity with conventional politics, (ii) the MaT's intent in enacting the practice, and (iii) the type of communicative spaces (in deliberative systems terms) where the practice is enacted. As outlined in Section 3.3.9.2., for the first criterion, three degrees of norm conformity were identified: **aligned with conventional politics**, **symbolically disruptive** and **physically disruptive**. For the second criterion, three types of intent were identified: **consolidation of the movement**, **persuasion** and **coercion**. Finally, for the kind of site that is being engaged by the practice, I adapt the broad categories of types of deliberative spaces that were originally introduced by (Dryzek, 2009): **empowered space**, to refer to the type of sites where collective decisions are made, and **public space** to refer to the type of sites of free and open communication in the public sphere. I have added **internal** as a third type of site, to refer to those sites that are bounded within the internal dealings of the movement, whether they involve collective decisions or free and open communication.

4.3.1 Self-education

An important practice of PRO activists is to self-educate in order to grow the movement's ability to challenge to the dominant technocratic portrayal of GMOs as socially and environmentally beneficial. PRO activists prepare to engage critically with the hegemonic portrayal of GMOs in the decision-making processes of institutions and in the mass media. The practice of self-education relies on an ongoing commitment by MaT members, both established ones and

newcomers, to consult the different sources of alternative information and to be willing to take a leading role and present it in other public fora. Those sources include written documents and multi-media files, sometimes produced by the movement itself, as in the case of a guide to considerations for GMO-free municipality declarations (Garcia, 2008a), other times produced by international anti-GMO organizations, dissident scientists, or special commissions from other countries or institutions. In terms of the criteria used to categorize practices, self-education occurs predominantly within the **internal** space of the movement, and is therefore not disruptive. In other words, it is **aligned** with conventional political and social dynamics outside the movement, although it may challenge dominant discourses. Self-education is aimed at **consolidating** the movement's sense of purpose and approach towards the contested issue of GMOs and biosafety.

4.3.2 Contextualization

Another practice of PRO activist is to connect the movement's concerns and claims with the dual dimensions of past community-scale struggles for empowerment and recognition, and global radical political ecology. PRO activists encourage members to move away from abstract discussions and relate more directly to the circumstances and potential impacts of vulnerable groups that have been excluded from the decision-making process, such as peasant farmers, indigenous communities, and the general public. I refer to this as the practice of contextualization. To contextualize the struggle, PRO activists seek to underscore the relationship of GMOs with a broader effort to dominate the economies and natural resources of the developing world. They also seek to associate this phenomenon with the disruption of livelihoods, cultures and landscapes of marginalized rural communities. In keeping with these linkages to other meaningful macro- and micro-level issues, the MaT has actively built alliances with other contentious movements addressing social justice and environmental issues at the local, national and supra-national levels. Therefore, this practice has an impact in the generation of identities both in the **internal** space of the movement, and in **public space**. Since it vocally contests hegemonic discourses, it is expressed in ways that **are symbolically disruptive**. Its primary intent is **persuasion** in support of the movement's claims.

4.3.3 “Alfabetización” (promoting issue literacy)

Another important practice revolves around the promotion of GMO literacy. The term used by resistance activist Fabian Pacheco to refer to the process of canvassing communities and explaining the context and threat posed by GMOs, was **alfabetizar**, the Spanish word for literacy training. The use of the term provides evidence of an expectation by PRO activists that

MaT's claims should strongly resonate with the lived reality of ordinary citizens. This practice occurs in **public space**, because it implies an outreach to someone who is not already knowledgeable or "literate" about the concerns regarding GMOs. It involves a **symbolic disruption** of the dominant discourse according to the movement's reformulated narrative. Its intent is **dual**: **persuasion** directed towards the general public and **consolidation** through the generation of a stronger movement support base.

4.3.4 Media/public opinion outreach

PRO activists practice resistance by trying to shape public opinion and undertaking media outreach. They do this by writing press releases and newspaper opinion pieces, responding to editorials or pieces by GMO proponents and engaging through online media. The practice of media and public opinion outreach takes place in the **public space**. This practice is often **aligned** with conventional politics and the established channels of political participation by civil society organizations, but it can also be **symbolically disruptive**, as when it uses controversial symbols (such as "mutant" or "Frankenstein" crops). Its main objective is to **persuade** everyday citizens to take an interest in the issue of GMOs and their potential impact on their immediate lives and wellbeing. It also seeks to stir misgivings about the lack of information sharing by authorities on the issue, and challenge official claims about the safety of GMOs.

4.3.5 Public demonstrations, marches and events

The practice of public demonstrations, marches and events integrates a wide diversity of modalities of lively public gatherings, from multi-day marches to vigils to seed-exchange fairs. I have already described one type of these events earlier in this chapter, the seed-exchange fairs that were organized, often with the theme of "seeds, knowledges and flavours". In the introduction, I mentioned another that was very relevant in MaT's history, the nine-day, 250 km. cross-country march to oppose new permits for GMO corn seed nurseries in December 2012. Multiple visual displays are used in these protests, including banners, signs, and "mutant costumes" like the "tomato-chicken" that symbolically represent the genetic alteration of GMO crops. These events were often complemented with informal lectures about GMO issues, the effects of pesticides associated with large-scale GMO production, and the economic model underlying GMO agriculture. Signatures were often collected for MaT petitions for the GMO moratorium and labelling bills. Several forms of these public events can be considered **aligned** to ordinary political processes, such as cultural fairs or recitals coordinated with public institutions. Others have been **symbolically disruptive**, including flashy protests along public

roads, outside government agencies or within Municipal Council meetings. I found no indication that any of these events were physically disruptive, despite the claims already mentioned, above about the possibility of crop destruction. Hence, these gatherings have generally had the intent of movement **consolidation and persuasion**, but not of coercion. Finally, these events generally take place in **public space**, however in some cases they are connected to empowered space, for example, when they are used to officially announce or commemorate a Municipal declaration of a territory as “GMO-free”.

4.3.6 Civil society onsite monitoring

A practice that involves the construction of local knowledge about biosafety is that of civil society onsite monitoring. I have already briefly referenced this practice when I discussed the notions about credible knowledge related to this orientation. This practice involves the inspection by lay citizen activists of the areas surrounding the location of GMO seed nurseries in order to detect and report any abnormal or concerning signs. Community activists from the Comité Cívico de Cañas (CCC) carried out the monitoring with advice from a German journalist and several scientists who were MaT members. They detected instances of GMO cotton plant regrowth outside of containment, which was reported to the regulatory authorities as failure of regulatory control. They also tracked the instances of intoxication with toxic substances by GMO seed nursery workers. This was a situated PRO activist practice that produced information used by the movement as local evidence to support its claims. Oddly, as I have also mentioned, this experience from the 2004-2006 period, was never replicated in other locations. The practice of onsite civil society monitoring takes place in **public space**. It is carried out by organized citizen activists without any specialized knowledge, and it showcases the reach of GMO impacts into the intimate spaces of everyday citizens: vacant lots in their neighbourhoods, their front yards, and even their bodies¹³. It is therefore **symbolically disruptive** at multiple levels, by questioning the dominant discourse about who can offer relevant information about GMO risks, and contradicting the technocratic assertion that the regulatory procedures in place assured the containment of any impacts from licensed GMOs. It is aimed at both **consolidating** the movement’s perceived self-efficacy, and **persuading** government authorities and the general public that the government regulation is ineffective.

¹³ In case of those who harvested soybeans and cotton from seed nurseries and public regrowth for their own use, as claimed by Sprenger (2008, 2009).

4.3.7 Showcasing agroecology alternatives

The practice of promoting agroecology alternatives is often integrated with the enactment of other public outreach demonstrations and events. This includes organizing spaces, concurrently with demonstrations and protests, where organic seed can be exchanged, or traditional food or handicrafts produced from heirloom crops can be sold, thus supporting the household economy of agroecological campesino producers. PRO activists generally enact this practice in **public space**. Their enactment of this practice sometimes **aligns** with the conventional elements of politics, for example, by being linked to the organic agriculture promotion policies and programs of public educational institutions and agricultural extension agencies. However, it can also be **symbolically disruptive** by transgressing the existing power structures that exclude campesino and indigenous farmers from participating in rural economic and biosafety policy. PRO activists showcase agroecological alternatives with the aim of **consolidating** the movement's engagement in local development and also of **persuading** both decision-makers and the public to support alternative agroecological practices.

4.3.8 Advocacy with third-party sources of legitimacy

PRO activists' persistent efforts to widely disseminate critical information about GMOs have not only been directed at forming the opinion of the general public, they have also sought to engage other organizations with a publicly recognized reputation, either on technical issues (biology, agriculture, law or environment) or on human rights and social justice issues. In this way, they have sought to participate in setting the agenda for public debate on GMOs and biosafety. One relevant actor that the PRO activists have engaged on these terms is the national Ombudsman, (the Defensoría de los Habitantes de la República - DHR). Engaging with the DHR does not directly constitute lobbying, since the DHR has no specific policy-making authority; but as an autonomous body of the legislature, the DHR can call on other government agencies to correct situations that infringe on citizen's rights (Defensoría de los Habitantes de la República, 2022). The DHR can also initiate, or join in ongoing, judicial processes. Another key third-party stakeholder whose engagement was highly valuable for PRO activists is the Professional Agronomist's Association (Colegio de Ingenieros Agrónomos de Costa Rica – CIACR). The CIACR is the autonomous organization with the legal mandate to regulate the profession of agricultural engineering. On November 28, 2012, the Board of the CIACR issued a resolution supporting the existing objections that had been raised against the licensing of Monsanto GMO corn by the CTNBio. In the case of the request to license Monsanto GMO corn, several other organizations external to the movement and not previously

engaged in the opposition to GMOs issued similar letters supporting the objections before the CTNBio. Encouraging organizations to issue such letters, through the diverse networks of the movement, was an important focus of PRO activists. Once obtained, these letters could be used by PRO activists to bolster MaT's legitimacy, by claiming to have mass support from credible actors. Since this practice attracts support from actors that already have high public legitimacy or recognized expertise, it aligns with **conventional** politics. Moreover, it entails **persuasion** of both representative of organizations with recognized authority, and the general public. It is enacted predominantly in **public space**, although in some cases, as in the case of the DHR, it is also enacted in **empowered space**.

4.3.9 Lobbying

The practice of lobbying is generally directed at high-level agency authorities or at elected officials such as legislators and Municipal councilmembers. The main intent of lobbying by PRO activists is **persuasion**. Lobbying usually engages with **empowered space**. Depending on the circumstance, the engagement can be maintained mostly at this level, or it can involve simultaneous diffusion of the process in public space. The movement may hold discussions exclusively in private when it feels that its arguments are convincing to the decision-maker and interference from GMO proponents is not anticipated. The passing of the Organic Agriculture Law is an example of this dynamic. On the other hand, when strong opposition from specific interests is anticipated, the PRO activists' leverage derives precisely from making their lobbying efforts known in **public space**. In these cases, amplified pressure from the public is an important source of power for the PRO. Lobbying is generally **aligned** with conventional politics. In some cases, however, the lobbying efforts seek to implement a novel solution that disrupts politics-as-usual. For example, the campaign to declare native corn as cultural heritage is **symbolically disruptive** to the dominant narrative promoted by the biotech-industry and many agricultural officials. The disruption derives from an attempt to make cultural rights a salient issue in a process of technology governance. Its primary intent is to **persuade** the decision-makers being lobbied. However, there may also be an element of **coercion** at times when direct action is threatened. The most salient instance of this is the claim that communities, in association with the movement, might destroy GMO crops if the moratorium was not approved.

4.3.10 Litigation

Given the robustness of environmental legislation in Costa Rica¹⁴, the practice of **litigation** has often been an important resource for social movements opposing projects that involve complex environmental effects, especially if indigenous populations are affected. The PRO activists of the MaT have access to legal expertise on environmental matters, and it can shape its strategy according to its knowledge of past legal precedent. The dynamic of judicial procedures also makes litigation attractive as a focal point that can serve to rally support from other organizations, for example by other political actors, such as minority party legislators and the DHR, to get involved as an amicus in the judicial proceedings. Moreover, pursuing legal proceedings can have the added strategic advantage of requesting an injunction that can help stop a project, in this case, new GMO licenses, until the matter is resolved in the court. Litigation is a practice **aligned** with conventional politics. Its intent is both to **persuade** and to **coerce** through the temporary power of injunctions and the definitive power of court rulings. Litigation takes place in **empowered space** (although its repercussions can be extended to public space).

4.4 The significance of partisan resistance as the dominant orientation

In the previous two sections I have described the features and practices of the PRO as MaT's dominant orientation. It is through the qualities of this orientation: resistance and partisanship that the movement assembles its most salient claims concerning the perceived threat presented by GMOs, the actors that constitute its main adversaries, and the social actors and circumstances it is fighting to defend. PRO activists view themselves as holding the core of the MaT's values and shaping the tactics that are prevalent for the MaT's success and legitimacy. PRO activists' practices have had the greatest consequential effect in blocking new GMO activity. They also signal a collective commitment to challenge dominant technocratic views, and to promote the rights of marginalized campesino groups. On the other hand, partisanship, in the broad sense, means that the movement is strongly committed to a specific set of interests, or to a particular vision of the collective good. Partisanship undergirds the MaT's sense of strength in unity, and drives its determination to challenge the entrenched structures that dominate agricultural and biosafety policies. Resistance reflects the

¹⁴ Due to the constitutional standing of the right to a healthy and ecologically balanced environment in the Costa Rican constitution, environmental issues are generally regarded by the courts as a "diffuse matter", meaning that they are a matter that broadly affects the social collective. For this reason, activists can generally gain the necessary standing to initiate a legal proceeding, without facing the hurdles of proving that they are a directly affected party.

movement's resourcefulness, the wide repertoire of practices adopted through experience, creativity and exchange with allies. PRO activists also provide the most visible image of the movement, primarily known to outsiders and antagonists who rarely discern the other orientations that comprise the movement. Those other orientations, which I discuss in the following chapters, contribute other features and practices that are often a powerful complement, and sometimes a source of tension for the movement.

4.5 Implications for public deliberation scholarship

In this section, I will examine the contribution of the understanding gained through the analysis of the PRO to the theoretical and practical scholarship of deliberative democracy. As outlined in chapter 2, deliberative democracy scholarship has examined social movements in ways that have been very connected to specific roles. For critical deliberative democracy scholars (Bohman, 1996; Dryzek, 1990) the role of social movements in a free and open public sphere was essential in bringing marginalized perspectives and concerns to the attention of the public and mainstream political actors. However, under the institutional turn of deliberative democracy, social movements came to be regarded, along with other interest advocates, as problematic for the processes of deliberation (Hendriks, 2006; Niemeyer, 2011). With the emergence of the systemic turn in deliberative democracy, however, it was increasingly recognized that social movement actors could have important strengthening effects to the deliberative capacity of a political system, even when the intent of the social movement actors was not, in itself, to promote deliberation (Dryzek, 2009; Parkinson & Mansbridge, 2012).

In Chapter 2, I provided a categorization of the deliberative roles that are generally conceived for social movements under deliberative systems scholarship. Those five deliberative roles are: (i) collaborative engagement, (ii) cautious scrutiny, (iii) democratic expression, (iv) democratic correction, and (v) instrumental contestation. In this section, I examine how these theoretical roles relate to my empirical observations of the resistance orientation, as an embedded subunit of a movement. The findings in this chapter reveal that this orientation performs most of the general roles envisioned in deliberative systems scholarship. In other words, PRO activists perform, in their engagement with public deliberation, as deliberative democrats have generally envisioned social movements to act. However, this study reveals that a single orientation within a movement is capable of fulfilling the wide range of potential roles in a flexible, yet well-coordinated manner. This suggests that deliberative democracy research on social movements could gain greatly from incorporating approaches that can hold a panoramic view of all of these roles.

PRO activists have convened collaborative engagements at the local scale to discuss the impacts of GMOs and the suitability of declaring Municipalities as GMO-free territories. In many cases PRO activists have initiated and promoted the discussion of the issue in the Municipal Council, provided councilmembers with supporting information, announced the discussion to the public at the local and national scale, and subsequently communicated the outcome through the media. The supporting information packages that MaT distributes to Municipal Councilmembers and the public, are akin to what Barvosa (2018) has called “deliberative packages” (p 44). They present the movement’s claims in a way that juxtaposes them with the arguments of the dominant pro-GMO discourse; while not fully unbiased, they illuminate the contrast between the arguments from both sides. PRO activists have generally left it to discretion of each Municipal Council whether or not to convene and hear the arguments of the opposing side. Thus, the MaT is a great deal more active than its opponents in stimulating reasoned discussions at the level of communities, local governments and mass media. While it has not prevented others from presenting the opposing side, it has also not facilitated that the contrasting versions be presented in equal terms.

PRO activists have also been active in the careful scrutiny of some deliberative settings. The clearest instance has been its participation since 2006 holding two seats out of a total of nine in the CTNBio. Since this participation entails a permanent minority, and the remaining members are generally amenable to approving new GMO licenses, MaT has adopted a dissident role within the CTNBio, using the access to information about new GMO license request as a source of early warning about new cases to oppose, and mobilizing through other sites to appeal, block and denounce the decisions of the CTNBio.

With regard to democratic expression, although the fieldwork did not generate sufficient data to analyse in much detail the direct decision-making and internal organization and communication processes in MaT, there were indications during the interview that MaT (this is applicable to all of its orientations) has a predominantly horizontal non-hierarchical structure. The record of the initial workshops held in 2003 (described in the vignette at the beginning of Chapter 1) shows that the movement is invested in collective decision-making. As mentioned, members are urged to self-educate through a broad range of information resources. There is great openness towards new groups sprouting in a decentred way, and enacting practices in new localities, to broaden the reach of the movement. All of this confirms that the MaT is both a site and an agent of deliberation. On the other hand, PRO activists have increasingly shown binary thinking, and their information sharing with grassroots stakeholders is often

unidirectional, with the PRO “imparting literacy” on the issues to lay citizens and communal actors.

As for democratic correction, PRO activists are highly concerned about the marginalization of campesino and indigenous discourses, through a lens that is heavily meshed within the global anti-neoliberal political ecology discourse. They therefore seek to challenge this exclusion by making excluded perspectives more salient, promoting alternatives that support affected cultures and livelihoods, and most importantly, by blocking the GMO production activities that it regards as ecologically, culturally, socially and politically harmful. It acts through diverse practices that range from civil onsite monitoring to protests to lobbying.

Finally, in terms of instrumental contestation, PRO’s main strategic actions to gain coercive power involve litigation and, to a lesser extent, advocacy with authoritative third parties. Particularly, leveraging the successful outcomes in specific sites is a primary means of boosting the legitimacy and persuasiveness of its claims in other sites. Although there has been at least one instance of a public statement by a PRO leader threatening physical disruption, in the form of the destruction of crops, there is no indication that PRO activists have ever seriously considered following through on this.

Moreover, the findings of this chapter illuminate two additional facets of the PRO’s mobilization beyond these five prominent roles. First, the practice of self-education involves a dimension of action not explicitly contemplated in the deliberative systems literature about social movements, although it is fundamental to the process of deliberation. This pertains to the idea of self-reflection and the individual efforts to achieved an informed perspective. However, while this is a precondition for any form of deliberation, it is often omitted when discussing the democratic dimensions of collective action, precisely this process does not primarily unfold in the stage of collective action, but rather in moments of individual study and sense-making. Second, the promotion of agroecological alternatives entails many actions that fall beyond the processes of prefiguration, contention or disruption. These are actions that primarily involve the improvement of the livelihoods and safeguarding of the traditions and values of affected actors.

4.6 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter introduced the partisan resistance orientation (PRO), which is the dominant orientation of the Costa Rican Movement Against Transgenics. This orientation represents a facet of a social movement that is highly recognized in democratic and social movement

theory. The complexity of discussing the PRO is that this entails a heuristic and ideational characterization of the dominant facet of the movement. It interprets the prevailing aspirations, relational modes, and mobilization practices within the movement. However, it does not correspond to a self-identified faction that can be clearly demarcated within the movement.

I have described the key features of PRO, based on the four categories that have emerged through my research for delineating elements of the plurality within social movements. Regarding the form of knowledge recognized, the PRO fosters a countervailing discourse that entwines the embattled ecological and cultural heritage of campesino and indigenous communities with the radical discourse of global political ecology. This is raised as a challenge against the entrenched discursive power of global industrial elites and the technocratic state. However, the deployment of this knowledge suggests that the PRO's intent of bolstering the contestation of dominant discourses supersedes an interest in its use as a catalyst for enhancing the capabilities and wellbeing of grassroots actors. There is also an increasingly one-sided "issue literacy" approach to knowledge exchange with lay citizens, where the PRO regards itself as the bearer of the correct narrative. The PRO sees the movement as diverse, creative and non-hierarchical. It increasingly regards outsiders with a binary thinking lens, expanding the range of potential allies through a sense of anti-neoliberal solidarity, but conflating disbelievers and antagonists as subservient to the economic and political interests of the biotechnology industry. Its two-pronged vision of change entails the eradication of GMO production and the promotion of agroecological alternatives.

As the dominant orientation, the PRO is connected to the majority of the movement's practices. The number of practices associated with this orientation doubles those associated with either of the other two orientations. However, this is understandable, given that as the dominant orientation, PRO activism involves what have come to be regarded as the "core tasks" of MaT. In contrast, the other two orientations involve activities and perspectives that diverge, or have become decentred, from those core tasks. In section 4.3. above, I have analysed these practices according to three criteria: norm conformity with conventional politics, mobilization intent, and deliberative system space. The analysis shows that most PRO activist practices are symbolically disruptive, and half of them also conform with the norms of conventional politics. Their mobilization intent is in the majority of cases persuasive, and in half of the practices, it is also directed at consolidating the movement. Only in the case of litigation, and to a lesser degree in the case of policy lobbying, is the intent to coerce the state, and this coercion is predominantly sought through institutional mechanisms rather than via direct

action. The majority of the practices occur in public space, with a few taking place in the internal space and in empowered space.

The work of PRO activists generates many of the key outcomes that undergird the movement's perceived success and legitimacy. However, while the effect of strong partisanship bolsters the movement's determination, it heightens polarization. The main contributions of these findings to deliberative democracy scholarship are to illustrate how a single orientation within a movement can fulfill most of the roles of social movements outlined in the deliberative democracy literature. Moreover, the findings reveal two other important aspects that are not generally addressed in the field's scholarship. The first aspect is the importance of stimulating self-education within movements to nurture diffuse leadership and the capacity for decentred action. The second aspect is the close interweaving of contentious action with the safeguarding of communal livelihoods and cultural values.

The following chapters, Chapter 5 and Chapter 6, will present the additional two orientation uncovered in my study of the MaT: transpartisan inquiry (TIO) and generative empowerment (GEO). These other two orientations are generally supportive of the dominant PRO, and they enhance the overall resilience of the MaT. However, tensions related to the plurality of the movement can also be discerned, and Chapter 7 offers an analysis of the integration of these plural orientations in the movement's engagement with public deliberation.

Chapter 5 The Transpartisan Inquiry Orientation (TIO)

5.1 Setting the scene

On a rainy morning in May of 2015, I visited Ivan Mora in the small residential garden he was tending in the outskirts of the city of Heredia. Mr. Mora is connected to MaT in multiple ways. He is the treasurer of the Biodiversity Coordination Network (RCB), one of the founding organizations of the MaT. Moreover, he was a youth environmental activist growing up in Paraiso, the first municipality to declare itself a GMO-free territory. While he was too young to be involved when that pioneering local declaration against GMOs was originally passed, he has been involved in subsequent events commemorating the decision. He also completed an agroecology technical certificate in the INA Vocational Campus -- an important hub of MaT leadership. Mr. Mora was completing a Sociology Honours Degree (Licenciatura), and his own thesis focused on the movement. During the interview, he shared that he has regarded himself as somewhat of “an outlier” in MaT. Some of his perspectives are critical of the movement, and he finds that other MaT members are sometimes “offended” when he voices them. As an example, he is critical of MaT’s chosen use of symbols, or what he calls “fables”, such as icons and costumed characters, and even images used in songs of protest by the movement¹⁵. He believes those symbolic ways of representing the risks associated with GMOs could easily be portrayed as inaccurate and “laughable” by the movement’s antagonists and hurt the movement’s credibility. He also criticises the 2012 surge in movement’s action at the municipal level for lacking an overarching process for defining and reviewing strategic goals. He argues that, as the movement expands its influence with overly simplified messages, it becomes less capable of supporting a nuanced understanding by local citizens of the issue of GMOs and its impact on rural communities. Mr. Mora is one of a handful of MaT activists that I interviewed that share specific orientation in the movement which I label as the Transpartisan Inquiry Orientation (TIO).

TIO activists strive to give fair consideration to the concerns of others, and want to ensure that public decisions are substantiated by sound judgments. Like other TIO activists, Mr. Mora is very mindful of how the movement’s actions and the messages it communicates influence the way other’s receive complex information, and are able to form their own opinions about it. As illustrated by the following statement from his interview, Mr. Mora believes that the movement

¹⁵ Icons and mascots used recurrently by the movement portrayed a mutated tomato with the wings, legs and beak of a chicken, and a “Frankenstein” ear of corn. A line in a popular protest song that emerged from the movement, and was used in radio spots, was “I don’t want corn with scorpion”.

needs to undertake a stronger social analysis of how it communicates its message and reflects on its own actions:

How do we produce a campaign? We are not producing a campaign, we are throwing a stone to see what the resonance is, to see if it bounces, and how it bounces. We are not sitting down to think how we are going to do it.

In this chapter, I will present the MaT's transpartisan inquiry orientation. Unlike the dominant partisan resistance orientation (PRO) presented in the previous chapter, TIO is a secondary orientation of the movement. As such, it does not primarily define the movement's identity to its members or outsiders. However, it complements the work of the movement in the pursuit of its goals. In other words, TIO is not prominent in the public image of the movement, but it contributes substantially to its internal dynamics and effectiveness. While TIO appears to be a prevailing orientation within certain MaT organizations (a specific case is the Biodiversity Coordination Network), it is also a core outlook for certain activists who participate in the movement primarily as individuals (without a key affiliation to any specific organization) and for others who are affiliated with multiple organizations (some more resistance-oriented and others more inquiry-oriented). For this reason, I refer to those activists who subscribe to the transpartisan inquiry orientation as TIO activists.

5.2 Features of the transpartisan inquiry orientation

The above recounting and excerpt of my interview with Mr. Mora highlights the most significant features of TIO. In general terms, the transpartisan inquiry orientation has a strong concern about, and influence over how the movement accesses and processes countervailing knowledge. TIO activists also reflect on MaT's strategic action and considers the impacts of its public messaging, its approach towards dissonant perspectives, and the demand for accountability and reasonableness in public decision-making. To facilitate comparative analysis across the three orientations, I organize the discussion according to the following four analytic features: (i) the types of recognized knowledge, (ii) the conception of insiders, (iii) the conception of outsiders, and (iv) the vision of change sought. These features were outlined in Section 3.3.9.1. of chapter 3 (Research Methodology). Several of these features are exemplified in Mr. Mora's interview at the beginning of this chapter. While TIO is not a dominant orientation, it bolsters the ability within MaT to engage reasonably with dissenting or undecided others, and it supports strategic self-critique. I will describe each of the four features in turn.

5.2.1 Notions about credible knowledge

TIO activists are generally engaged in compiling, curating and distributing counter-hegemonic information from multiple sources, particularly from regional and global networks opposed to GMOs. Moreover, TIO activists assign great importance to how those who receive the information will reflect on it and arrive at their own conclusions. This contrasts with the PRO activists' assumption that the dissemination of information is a form of literacy promotion, and that everyday people will naturally resonate with MaT's claims. For TIO activists, what is essential is that people seek out and consider the available information, ask questions, and reason, not whether they ultimately agree with the movement's claims. At the same time, TIO activists believe that the weight of information supports the movement's general claims. Therefore, they anticipate that people who weigh countervailing information offered by the movement against the hegemonic information promoted by the biotechnology industry, will become more sceptical about the industry's arguments (they use the term "siren's songs") and more supportive of MaT's critique. Consider, for example, Jaime García, who is a well-respected TIO activist and a professor of biology at the University of Costa Rica. In our interview, he expressed the following about sharing information on GMOs.

I never speak on these matters trying to convince anyone, but rather to interest them. For people to see that this is an important topic and that they need to form an opinion. And in order to form an opinion you have to read, ask, inform yourself and formulate arguments. Not in an emotional way, but let's say, with good arguments

Furthermore, TIO activists recognize that the issue of GMOs is complicated and has multiple social implications. Therefore, when approaching the public to share information, TIO activists prioritize mutual listening. They regard this two-way dialogue as necessary for understanding which implications of GMOs are most meaningful and comprehensible for everyday citizens. By paying attention to what is most relevant to any given person, TIO activists are able to communicate the information that resonates most strongly with that person's concerns. TIO activist Ana Beatriz Hernandez stressed that activists must listen to lay citizens in order to identify which of these implications are most meaningful and comprehensible to them. In her comments, she mentions the need to revive the practice of "tertulia", a Spanish term for informal gatherings to engage in dialogue and discuss matters of common interest.

It is not just about my worldview and what I would like, but also the views of other people (...) to try to understand the perspectives of other people. To try to see how a topic can be relevant to them, how it can raise questions for them. (...) Something we as activists must do is speak to people directly, revive the practice of 'tertulia', of exchanging opinions. Not from an overly

technical or academic view, this is important too, but when speaking to people it needs to be more familiar. (...) An exchange of opinions without feeling that one has the absolute truth, but rather feeling that one can get feedback from the other person.

5.2.2 Conception of MaT insiders

TIO activists tend to be supportive of the overall work of MaT and proud of its accomplishments. They are also enthusiastic about their own role in the movement. On the other hand, they are also reflective in a critical way about some of the MaT's approaches to communication and mobilization. However, any critiques are generally expressed cautiously and discretely, as personal reflections, taking care to explain that they are not meant to deride the movement's accomplishments.

For TIO activists, the encouragement and opportunities for rich reflection, learning and exchange of knowledge are important elements of their experience of participating in the movement. TIO activist Ivan Mora, emphasized this when he referred to his experience of participating in the RCB, although this also entails having little time to devote to social interactions outside the movement:

The experience of participating in an organization like the [Biodiversity Coordination] Network is of growth. Although a disadvantage is that I do not have time for a social life beyond the other people who are also in the movement. (...) However when I speak with other people [outside the movement] who may have a question, they realize, and I myself realize, that [I have] grown in this rich, valuable way. Because what is interesting is that the [RCB] has people who have been Professors, like Jaime [Garcia] and Silvia [Rivera] and who teach, who are always willing to teach, but there are also younger people, whom you also learn a lot from, and there are people who may be campesinos [from whom] you also learn, because there [is contact with] other worldviews.

TIO activists acknowledge that, in the process of publicly campaigning for its strategic objectives, the movement must choose how it will communicate its claims on complex issues to the general public. Some TIO activists believe that these communicative choices warrant ongoing discussion and analysis. Ivan Mora expresses his concerns about the need for more internal analysis about the choices of symbols used to communicate complex issues.

An interesting topic is the use [by the MaT] of logos or fables about transgenics. (...) Since it is so difficult to explain what a transgenic is, what we generally do is show a smiling ear of corn as good corn, and an ear of corn with horns as bad corn (...) or the "chicken-tomato" a transgenic chicken with the body of a tomato. In my view, a campaign, not only about corn but about transgenics, should have objectives, but what this does is subject the

movement to ridicule! Writers [in mass media], like columnist Juan Carlos Hidalgo have mocked the movement more than three times for the things the movement says (...) This devalues the movement in the eyes of civil society, where we are trying to legitimize the movement and communicate that transgenics are bad. So, how can we explain this to civil society? We need to discuss this further, but the problem is that we do not [discuss it] but instead use fables that become laughable actions.

However, this is not a unanimous concern, even among TIO activists. TIO activist Jaime García believes that the use by MaT of these symbolic elements is a legitimate way to spark ordinary people's curiosity and to prompt them to wonder about transgenics, and to start asking questions and looking for more information. His reflections suggest that this is something that has been discussed at least by some of the activists within the MaT. Mr. García's own opinion on this matter is that GMO proponents repeatedly critique this use of symbols as a tactic to discredit MaT. However, he counters that these same antagonists are much less vocal when it comes to accepting the urgings by MaT to engage on a face-to-face debate about these issues in a public forum. He stressed this during his interview saying the following:

A caricature has a purpose, we are not saying that this is the reality. It simply means for whoever sees such images to start asking questions, that's all. This is the objective. But [GMO proponents] take it to heart! You should see how they act offended by this! (...) And of course, they make people smirk. But this is not something I would expect from educated people. How is it that [GMO proponents] cannot understand this, and then simply discuss the substance [of our claims], not these superficial things!

TIO activists also emphasized the loose and informal character of many networks within the movement. During our interview, Jaime García paused briefly to answer a call from another MaT leader about an upcoming event. He explained that the brief conversation was typical of the types of informal coordination that occurs within the MaT. "This is how it works, (...) very informally. We do not arrange to meet for that. (...) If something comes up, we give each other advice over email or WhatsApp". Furthermore, Ivan Mora outlined how there are significant elements of a division of tasks within the MaT. He illustrated how the RCB is predominantly focused on research, not just on GMO and biosafety issues, but "constantly studying issues (...) some that are not even being discussed currently in the country, like synthetic biology, or geoengineering or nanotechnology (...) always a step ahead." And other groups, like FECON, which is a federation of organizations, are engaged in representing the different organizations of the movement and facilitating communication. Certain platforms, like Bloque Verde, primarily have the role of convening for direct action. In these different organizations there are generally core groups that remain engaged, mostly on a voluntary basis, within these

organizations like FECON and RCB. However, when an issue becomes salient, other people join for a time when there is a call to mobilize.

5.2.3 Conception of outsiders to the MaT

TIO activists have a nuanced view about the factors that influence the reasoning of others who are considering the movement's perspective. TIO activist Ana Beatriz Hernández was especially mindful of the difficulties that everyday citizens might face in sympathizing with the movement's concern. She believes it is essential for activists, when engaging with everyday citizens, to converse on equal ground with them in order to learn what is relevant to their specific reality. This attitude best enables the movement to present its claims and aspirations in terms that are relatable to everyday citizens. She recognizes that this is not always the case. On the other hand, Jaime Garcia recognizes that scientists and decision-makers often face complex institutional and social pressures, such as the threat of being labelled as "anti-science", that impact their willingness to publicly take a stance on counter-hegemonic claims, such as those made by the MaT.

The Inquiry orientation also promotes open engagement with a diverse range of views. It advocates engaging with dissonant views by the general public in ways that are non-judgmental and non-dismissive, but instead are mutually instructive about the limitations and potentialities of different vantage points on a complex issue. This is sharply reflected in the outlook of interviewee Ana Beatriz Hernández, who is concerned about how to engage others with different worldviews who may not find it easy to relate to the way the movement has framed its concerns. As she stated in her interview: "It is not just my worldview and what I would like, but the visions of other people (...) to try to understand the perspective of other people in order to see how the topic can be relevant to them."

Therefore, engaging with others who are sceptical or unsympathetic to the movement's claims, requires a substantial effort to understand the concerns and perspectives of those others. As TIO activist and ecotoxicologist Fernando Ramírez stated during our interview, MaT has an important duty of "social education, so that people have a better chance to make decisions based on their own thoughts, without any impositions." To TIO activists, people who may be unsympathetic to a specific framing of the negative impacts of GMOs may be more receptive to other dimensions of the problem. The challenge of outreach is therefore more directly related to the difficulties in communicating the complexity of the issue, and therefore, to the need to make the movement's concerns relatable to the public's own perspective.

5.2.4 Vision of change sought

TIO activists, while supporting the goal of blocking GMO production and promoting more ecological and just alternatives, seek to achieve this change through a fundamentally transformed public understanding of the social and environmental implications of GMOs. They do not believe it is ultimately effective to achieve a policy outcome, even one matching the movement's demands, if it results from coercing decision makers or from swaying citizens and elected officials by arguments that they have not fully understood or reflected on. They believe that citizens and decision-makers need to have greater access to information, and a greater confidence in their own competence to analyse this information and form their own opinions about complex public issues.

TIO activists show explicit concern for understanding and influencing the reasoning process of those who hold decision-making power over matters that affect the collective good. The concerns expressed by TIO activists relate predominantly to two types of powerholders: technical experts and political decision-makers. TIO activists aim to promote a deeper awareness and accountability by technical experts about the social implications of technology. They believe that experts overly rely on experimental studies that are (i) highly susceptible to industry interference, (ii) insufficiently robust to anticipate long-term environmental and health consequences, and (iii) heedless of the economic, social and cultural consequences. They believe that these experts need to show greater willingness to engage with the public, and to listen to their concerns about the social, cultural and economic impacts. TIO activist Eduardo López, during our interview, expressed his concern about the risk assessment process: “my critique has been to call for a more holistic risk analysis, that takes into account broader issues for the regulation of GMOs, like social consent and the inclusion of the cultural aspects of seeds.” Jaime García recalled, during our interview, the exchange with another scientist after a lecture, that prompted him to become involved in the issue of transgenics:

Ten or fifteen years ago, there was a forum at the School of Microbiology, and towards the end I thought to ask one of the experts who was leading the forum “Look, what happens if once you release a GMO to the environment something that is not desirable turns up, and we need to try to remove it again?” (...) and she did not want to respond, she would evade the question, and I kept asking, so she said “the event is over”. So, I got up and went and cornered her and asked (...) and when she saw that there was no way out of it, and that she was no longer talking to the public, but only to me, she just said “Look, García, my thing is what I do in the lab, what happens outside is not my problem”. That was her answer, which left me very much in shock, so I said to myself “Is that how it is! Well, then I will need to start to get involved with this issue on my own.” And since then, I got involved, began to read, to become informed.

In the case of decision makers, TIO activists believe that they should develop greater competency and sense of duty in order to form considered judgements on complex public issues. Jaime García regards this neglect of considered judgment by decision-makers as a key constraint in those Municipalities that have not adopted a GMO-free territory resolution.

There are cases of Municipalities that have not made the decision [about the GMO-free territory resolution], because they have heard both sides, and as they openly have told us in the hearings 'The problem is that I hear one side, and it seems to me that they are right, and then I hear the other side, and it seems to me that that side is also right' So, there is indecision. They do not dare to [make a decision] but instead they believe both sides. There lies the problem. They want to make a decision based on one side, not based on their own judgment, not on the basis of the documented evidence and the arguments that each of the parties presents. They do not dare to take this step.

TIO activists also believe that the movement itself has to constantly plan and assess its own strategy in order to remain effective in advancing this transformation. They explicitly seek to enhance the movement's legitimacy and to establish the social and institutional preconditions for the movement's concerns to receive reasonable consideration by the public and decision-makers. They consider the collective wellbeing to be best served by powerholders' exercise of considered judgement regarding complex and divisive issues, rather than by their unreflective alignment with a particular side, even when this may be the side that the movement itself is advocating. They therefore work to make other activists and the public more aware of these decision-making processes, in order to render such public interest decisions more accountable to the citizenry. In order to achieve these changes, they enact the practices that will be discussed in the following section.

5.3 Practices of the transpartisan inquiry orientation

The MaT's repertoire of practices constitutes the key means for action through which the movement engages in sites of public deliberation to achieve its diverse goals. TIO activists are predominantly involved in the enactment of five of the MaT's practices: personal reflection, disseminating complex countervailing information, holding lectures and seminars, promoting activist research, and insistence on elite justification and critique.

In Chapter 3 (Research Methodology), I introduced the analytical framework developed in this thesis to categorize the prevailing practices of each orientation (see Table 3-2). This framework uses three criteria to classify the different practices: (i) the practice's norm conformity with conventional politics, (ii) the MaT's intent in enacting the practice, and (iii) the type of

communicative sites (in deliberative systems terms) where the practice is enacted. For the first criterion, I outlined three degrees of norm conformity were identified: **aligned with conventional politics, symbolically disruptive, and physically disruptive**. For the second criterion, I identified three types of intent: **consolidation of the movement, persuasion, and coercion**. Finally, for the kind of site that is being engaged by the practice, I have identified three types of sites: **empowered space** (where consequential collective decisions are made), **public space** (the public sphere, where informal public communication occurs), and **internal space** (where the internal dealings of the movement occur).

5.3.1 Personal Reflection

An inconspicuous habit of critical reflection is a prevailing practice of TIO activists. By inconspicuous, I mean that this is generally exercised in a restrained way, either as a personal action or through toned down interactions with a small number of colleagues within the movement. TIO activists do not want to be perceived as undermining the movement, and therefore are generally reserved about their critical assessments. These critical reflections are therefore not a salient collective activity within the movement. However, personal reflection supports the individual capacity of TIO activists to critically examine the movement's plans and strategies and to empathize with others within and outside the movement. These reflections often have specific aspects of the MaT's practices as their focus. Through my interviews, I identified two salient areas of focus for this reflection: (i) the degree of complexity associated with the use of GMOs and the tensions in building public messages about it, and (ii) the difficulties of engaging a diverse public with a range of different outlooks and sensibilities.

Citizen reflection in civic organizations is an activity **aligned with conventional politics**, however, it is also **symbolically disruptive** since it promotes questioning not only the hegemonic arguments, but also of the movement's own strategies and attitudes, even if this internal questioning of the movement is done in a very restrained and non-confrontational manner. Its main intent is **consolidation** of a critical analytical competency within the movement. It happens primarily in the **internal** space.

5.3.2 Disseminating complex countervailing information

A fundamental practice of TIO activists that links reflection and research to public engagement is the dissemination of complex information. As I have mentioned above, this knowledge is compiled from sources that are considered either neutral or dissident to the biotechnology industry. The information to be disseminated is structured in different ways. In some cases, it

takes the form of “myth debunking” documents, to be distributed as handouts or published as magazine, journal, newsletter, or blog articles (Garcia, 2004, 2016; Lopez, 2014). These documents usually provide a brief introduction in plain language about GMOs, and then present claims that the biotechnology industry uses to promote GMOs, followed by contradicting information that is used to dispute these claims, derived from studies, reports or publications from the international anti-GMO movement (such as: Fagan et al., 2014; Jacobsen et al., 2013; Moseley, 2017). Other commonly distributed documents are lists of considerations that can be used to prepare petitions or local government resolutions against the use of GMOs, like the Municipal GMO-free territory declarations (Calderón, 2008; Garcia, 2008a). A third type of distribution format involves a digital directory containing multiple documents arranged in multiple folders that cover a wide range of topics. TIO activists have compiled an extensive collection of over a thousand digital documents and video documentaries, categorized according to more than 20 themes, including “health”, “ethics”, “GMO-corporate science links”, “ecological impacts”, “socio-economic impacts”, “lawsuits against farmers”, and “unintended effects”. The full collection is often distributed using compact disks or through links to a cloud directory, generally a google drive folder curated and updated by Jaime García (2015). A link to materials in this folder is commonly attached in op ed articles and in the posters for MaT events. Some of the industry claims that the movement most commonly disputes are: (i) that GMOs have been thoroughly proven to be completely innocuous and substantively equivalent to non-GMO crops, and therefore entail no additional risks, and (ii) that GMOs are indispensable in global agriculture in order to meet the dietary needs of the human population.

This practice reflects a fundamental commitment to countering the dominance of information disseminated by the biotechnology industry and the mainstream research community that the MaT believes to be aligned with that industry’s interests. This dissemination takes place predominantly in the **internal** and **public** spaces. It supports a dual function of **consolidating the movement’s capacity to challenge dominant discourses**, and **persuading others** about the merit of the movement’s claims. It is primarily a **symbolically disruptive** action, since it seeks to expand the range of information available to non-experts and facilitate their access to countervailing arguments.

5.3.3 Holding lectures and seminars

TIO activists also regularly reach out to the public through lectures or seminars that allow a public dialogue, debate or exposition of the movement’s claims about the risks and harms of GMOs. These event, especially early on in the movement’s activism, were set up as forums or roundtables with participation by both opponents and proponents of GMOs. Subsequently

there has been a greater prevalence of lectures or seminars where the exposition is framed as “Myths and Realities regarding Transgenics.” There have been different formats of these lectures or seminars. The mode that I personally observed was a semester-long seminar series coordinated by Dr. Jaime García at the University of Costa Rica School of Biology, which was offered both under an open course modality for the public, and as a for-credit elective course for biology students. The structure of the seminar sessions was flexible and the topics, which varied slightly each time the seminar was offered, included: the experience or resistance actions in different local and international territories; analyses of peer reviewed studies on GMO safety; ethical and critical theory analyses of biotechnology applications; analyses of the GMO regulatory framework; and analysis of the legal grounds for GMO-free territory declarations. While this list of topics tends to emphasize an oppositional view to GMOs, Jaime García told me that he often encouraged a broad range of experts, both academics and decision-makers, whether opponents, proponents, or neutral on the issue of GMOs and biosafety to present. However, those who were not GMO opponents tended to decline or ignore the invitation.

These lectures and seminars, for the most part, take place in the **public space**, whether university lecture halls, community centres or organization meeting rooms, but can also occur in **empowered space**, as when the lectures are given as part of testimony in legislative or municipal hearings. It is aimed both at **persuasion** (towards outsiders and potential new members) and **consolidation** (to promote and model for movement members reasoning about contrasting claims regarding GMOs). While it often aligns with **conventional** settings for public debate, it can also be **symbolically disruptive**, particularly in disputing the credibility of the biotechnology industry’s claims about the harmlessness of GMOs.

5.3.4 Promoting activist research

The practice of original research generation by activists has great significance for TIO activists. This is consistent with the importance that TIO activists place on enhancing the process of public reasoning and reflection about complex issues, for the purposes of countering technocratic hegemony. This research generally focuses on the actions and understandings of the MaT and its key interlocutors, and is developed and published as part of theses or academic research projects by activists who are part of the movement. It is well worth mentioning some of these research efforts, to illustrate their variety and level of intricacy:

- MaT activist Eva Carazo, together with Erika Valverde (2009), wrote their Psychology Honours thesis on the psychosocial meaning of seeds for campesinos who rely on agroecological practices.
- MaT activist Grettel Montero (2013) wrote her Master's Thesis in Applied Environmental Social Research on the use of language to vindicate ecological values in the MaT's resistance campaign against GMO corn. It also explores the linkages and similarities of the MaT with the movement against the ratification of the Free Trade Agreement between Central America, the Dominican Republic, and the United States.
- MaT activist Sofía Barquero (2016) wrote her Honours Thesis in Law on the constitutional and legal grounds for the municipal moratoriums on GMOs and the declarations of GMO-free territories.
- MaT activist Ivan Mora (2016) published a study in an academic journal on the framing practices in mass media of opponents and proponents of GMOs at the time of the MaT's mobilization efforts.

This development of activist-driven scholarship has generated three important effects for the movement. First, it has brought in new conceptual tools for the movement to understand its own practices: whether it be the Liberation Psychology of martyred Central American scholar Ignacio Martín-Baró (1996), the insights of Catalan ecological economist Joan Martínez-Alier (2002) on the use of languages by activists to contest the dominant logic of ecological valuation, the analytical approach to activist framing and performativity of Mexican political scientist Aquiles Chihu (2012), or the precedents of the Costa Rican Supreme Court on the competence of Municipalities to regulate environmental impact. Secondly, it introduces new arguments into the public debate that broaden the scope of criteria that warrant analysis and evaluation in order to determine the public suitability of GMO production. And finally, it expands the international visibility of the MaT allowing it to introduce novel conceptual interpretations of contested issues that are rooted in existing practices into the agenda of the global environmental and social justice network of movements.

The promotion of activist research takes place in **public space**, has the aim of **consolidating** the movement's ability to understand the complex context of GMO production and commercialization, and the behaviour of social actors, including itself. It further has the aim of **persuading** external stakeholders through the formulation of more compelling arguments that reflect the complexity of the GMO and biosafety issues. Its character is **symbolically**

disruptive, because it seeks to counteract the influence of the biotech industry as the referee of legitimate knowledge about GMOs

5.3.5 Insistence on elite justification and critique

The last noteworthy practice by TIO activists is the insistence on exchanges where experts and decision-makers justify their reasoning in the face of critical probing and debate. In some cases, this insistence is enacted by TIO activists as insiders, in settings where they have a voice. This includes the insistence to hold discussions in the governing councils and departmental committees of higher education institutions about the social and environmental impacts of GMOs. Jaime García and Ana Beatriz Hernandez described in their interviews their own efforts, as a faculty member and a student leader, to encourage discussions within the University of Costa Rica's Governing Council and its School of Biology Faculty Committee. Speaking about this lack of debate within the University of Costa Rica, Jaime Garcia said in during our interview:

Since 1993, when [the University Council of the University of Costa Rica] gave its opinion about the Cartagena Protocol, in its final remarks it invited to have a discussion, and so forth. This has not been done here at the level of the University, unfortunately. And in two subsequent statements it has maintained that position, while the Faculty of Agronomy, the Centre for Molecular Biology, those who have vested interests always have not agreed with this. They have not confronted it, but they make their own statements at the level of their units, so it is a debate under the carpet, so to speak

In other cases, it involves demands that are made by the movement as an outsider for technical experts and decision-makers from academia, industry, local governments, state agencies or legislatures to show greater openness to examine and contrast arguments on the broader grounds of the socioeconomic, cultural and democratic impacts, and not solely on the basis of published biotechnology research. TIO activist Eduardo López complained in our interview about unequal representation of civil society concerns in the CTNBio: “there is a profound weakness of the Biosafety Commission (...) because there is not an equitable distribution of participation (...) the government should establish consultation methods, spaces for consultation where civil society can weigh on the introduction of transgenics.”

Furthermore, Jaime García in our interview expressed his disappointment that many of the highly educated experts in academic and research centres are reluctant to analyse the multiple social and ecological dimensions of GMO impacts on local communities, and believes that there are great reputational pressures in the scientific community to agree with the dominant arguments about the benefits and harmlessness of GMOs.

There is this fear to be labelled as ‘anti-science’ (...) and to me this is a great paradox, they do not want to know about other aspects, just fall in with the majority or with what is supposed to be [accepted] and they use [well-known] figures like Gabriel Macaya of the Centre for Molecular Biology, since what is leading edge technology has to be good, and no questions are raised about it. This is a paradox, since if anyone should have the capacity to think critically, it is those people who have had the option to earn academic degrees.

The insistence on these exchanges for elite justification and critique is enacted in both **public** and **empowered** space. This practice is **symbolically disruptive**, enacted with the objective of inducing reflection by decision-makers and the public, and leading them to reach their own considered judgment. The function of this practice is therefore not persuasion, but a mode of **consolidation** whose scope transcends the movement itself, and seeks a greater capacity and accountability across society for public reasoning in service of the common good.

5.4 The significance of transpartisan inquiry as a secondary, supporting orientation

As the above analysis demonstrates, the TIO is a secondary orientation that is enacted discreetly, in ways that are supportive to the dominant partisan resistance orientation. Although it is secondary in prominence, it is highly relevant to understanding the MaT’s engagement with public deliberation, particularly at a systemic level. Inquiry involves an interest in, and curiosity about, the experiences and perspectives of others, even others who hold dissenting views. It also entails the willingness to critically examine personal and collective attitudes, assumptions, and actions, particularly when encountering information that challenges previously held beliefs. Relationally, inquiry is coupled with a transpartisanship, a willingness by activists to acknowledge their baseline partisan commitments, and to build shared understanding and pursue the common good through exploring the value of other perspectives and experiences.

Inquiry is often enacted through informal everyday interactions or in relaxed “seminar”-like settings where broader discussions about ethical issues of GMOs are stimulated. While remaining critical of the GMO industry, and its political and economic arrangements, TIO activists take a more nuanced view of agricultural biotechnology and its actors. This enables them to realize the circumstances when the movement’s oppositional logic may be limiting its perspective, and counterbalance some of those negative impacts. One such area involves examining the challenges and predicaments of decision-making in science and public administration, and exploring effective ways to advocate for experts in those areas act with greater accountability.

In contrast with the dominance of the PRO in the collective identity and outlook of the MaT, the affinity of activists with the TIO involves a more individual leaning towards certain introspective and empathetic attitudes. It is therefore less discernible as a general characteristic of the movement, and can be understood more as a potentiality reflected in the actions of certain actors within the movement. Nevertheless, it is expressed through some of the practices, aspirations and understandings of the movement, and it has implications both for the movement's effectiveness and resilience, and for the effects that the movement has on the deliberative system, as I will discuss in the next section.

5.5 Implications for public deliberation scholarship and practice

In this section, I will examine the relevance of this chapter's findings to the theoretical and practical scholarship of deliberative democracy. In Chapter 2, I outlined a characterization in deliberative democracy theory of five possible deliberative roles: (i) collaborative engagement, (ii) cautious scrutiny, (iii) democratic expression, (iv) democratic correction, and (v) instrumental contestation. As in the previous chapter, in this chapter I examine how these theoretical roles relate to my empirical observations of TIO. The findings in this chapter reveal that the MaT's roles of democratic expression and democratic correction are significantly influenced by the practices of TIO activists. The potential for collaborative engagement is also enhanced by the practices aligned with this orientation, however, there have been few institutional opportunities for equal and open deliberation between GMO opponents and proponents.

Many of the TIO activists are deeply committed to enhancing the quality of reasoning by activists, decision-makers, experts, and everyday citizens about public interest issues (in particular, those issues concerning GMOs and biosafety). This commitment is reflected in TIO features and practices. The full range of practices associated with TIO serve the movement in strengthening both democratic expression and democratic correction. In terms of democratic expression, TIO activists share insights that reflect self-contemplation about the movement's internal practices in relation to normative deliberative ideals, such as inclusion of divergent perspectives, and mutually regarding interaction. With regards to democratic correction, TIO activists disseminate information that highlights the underlying power dynamics and social and cultural impacts of GMOs and push for increased opportunities to critically probe the dominant technocratic arguments about GMOs and biosafety.

TIO activists, through their practices of promoting reflection and research, disseminating information that broadens the argument pool, and insisting on expert justification, also

contribute to offset the power differential between experts and civil society, and therefore allow for more equitable participation in public deliberation. However, this potential is rarely manifested in practice, since the occurrence of equitable deliberation opportunities has been rare. The most visible setting for structured multi-party deliberation, the multisectoral National Technical Biosafety Commission (CTNBio), is criticized by both GMO opponents and proponents as “predominantly political, rather than technical.” The environmental organization representatives, and the government and National Academy of Sciences representatives, each accuse the opposing side of voting according to their pre-existing views and not considering the merits of the arguments and supporting evidence presented by the other side. Moreover, the biotechnology companies have made several motions to restrict the information accessible to the environmental organization representatives, or to have them recuse themselves from the voting. Furthermore, MaT activists have also complained about unequal access to publication in the mass media, since some major newspapers refuse to publish responses by MaT activists to opinion pieces and editorials published by GMO proponents. As a result, the instances of collaborative engagement by pro- and anti-GMO groups to discuss their concerns in equitable terms have been limited to a few discussion panels organized by academic institutions.

Furthermore, since the impact of partisanship from social movements and other interest advocates has been an ongoing question in deliberative democratic scholarship, it is relevant to examine the significance of transpartisanship as an aspect of a specific orientation within a social movement. The form of transpartisanship that manifests in this orientation, in the context of a movement that is dominantly partisan, is significant both in the internal and external contexts of the movement. Internally to the movement, TIO activists are critically self-reflective but also cautious about how to express this reflection, so as to not be perceived as undercutting the movement’s credibility by “tone policing” its mobilization efforts (Applebaum, 2020). However, this cautious attitude limits the internal impact that TIO activists can have on the MaT’s outlook towards dissenting others. With regards to the external context, TIO activists can play the role of “boundary spanners” (Garard et al., 2018) by interacting with external sceptics or dissenters in an other-regarding way, and thus help generate the preconditions for collaborative engagement. Barvosa (2018) expands on this notion by advancing the concept of “deliberative entrepreneurs”, which she characterizes as individuals from civil society who issue “open invitations to people from all walks of life and perspectives to reconsider their views regarding a key matter at hand.” (p. 81). In this sense, they can be seen as agents that contribute to transmission of specific concerns from public space to empowered space (Dryzek, 2009). The possibility of a TIO activist taking this role is often highly contingent on the

opportunity arising for that person to engage with outsiders on behalf of the movement within a certain context. At present, the delegation of representation roles occurs due to a diverse range of circumstances. Sometimes an organization within the MaT is formally assigned a representation role (as in the CTNBio), and that organization then delegates a particular person or persons. Other times, the role is more ad hoc and results from the individual's initiative, as in the case of many outreach efforts to municipalities. In the future, if the awareness about the complementary advantages and limitations of different orientations becomes more explicit in the movement, it is possible that MaT may assign different representation functions to activists, according to their orientations. If this were to occur, TIO activists could play valuable catalytic roles in the strengthening of collaborative engagement.

5.6 Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter I have presented the transpartisan inquiry orientation (TIO) as a secondary social movement orientation identified through this in-depth interpretive study of the Costa Rican Movement Against Transgenics. TIO activists place a high value on the process of considered reasoning, and endeavour to understand the complex factors that affect the consideration of others. Some TIO activists are discreetly critical about certain of the movement's resistance actions, particularly regarding its use of certain symbolic imagery to communicate complex technical issues to the general public. Beyond pursuing a particular political outcome, the work of TIO activists strives to increase the quality and accountability of public reasoning by experts and decision makers.

I have outlined the four main features of TIO based on the four categories that have emerged through my research for delineating elements of the plurality within social movements. Regarding notions about credible knowledge, TIO activists compile and distribute counter-hegemonic information, and they strive to induce rich reflection and evidence-based reasoning that is sensitive to broad social, technical, environmental and cultural considerations, even if the resulting opinion disagrees with MaT's claims. Regarding the view of the movement itself, TIO activists are generally supportive towards the movement and proud of its accomplishments, however, they are also critical, in discrete ways, about some of its approaches towards action and communication. Concerning outsiders to the movement, TIO activists have a nuanced view about the factors that affect the reasoning of others, and promote a respectful engagement with dissonant views. Finally, in terms of the vision of change sought, TIO activists seek to safeguard environmental, livelihood and cultural assets through a transformed public understanding of the social and environmental implications of GMOs. They believe that effective policy outcomes need to derive from transparent public

reflection about the collective good, and they intend for the movement's work to induce such reflection.

I have also presented the most prominent practices enacted by TIO activists: personal reflection, disseminating complex countervailing information, holding lectures and seminars, promoting activist research, and insistence on elite justification. I have analysed these practices according to three criteria: norm conformity with conventional politics, mobilization intent, and deliberative system space. The majority of TIO activist's practices take place in public space, are directed towards symbolic disruption of entrenched technocratic attitudes, but in most cases are also aligned with conventional political processes. Moreover, all of these practices promote the consolidation of the MaT's capacities, and many of them seek to persuade actors external to the movement while recognizing the complex factors that motivate their considerations. I have also outlined how inquiry and transpartisanship strengthen the movement's capacity to reflect on its own strategy, to build a homegrown trove of countervailing knowledge, and to develop the reasoning and argumentation capabilities of its own activists.

In relation to the current scholarship on deliberative democracy, I have shown how the TIO activists contribute to offset the power differential between experts and civil society, and therefore allow for more equitable participation in public deliberation. Moreover, I have highlighted how the transpartisan aspects of this orientation can help TIO activists to play a role as boundary spanners, and in a respectful way, encourage sceptics or dissenters to engage more broadly with the movement's perspectives.

The next chapter will present the last of the three orientations found in my study of the MaT, the generative empowerment orientation. This next orientation reflects the concern of movements with strengthening the capacities of marginalized actors to envision a better world and to develop the capabilities for action in bringing to reality this vision.

Chapter 6 The Generative Empowerment Orientation (GEO)

6.1 Setting the Scene

During my travel to the rural North Pacific Province of Guanacaste, I interacted with three community-based organizations that have played leading roles in the local opposition to GMO agriculture in their Municipalities and surrounding territories, namely FEDEAGUA, COPROALDE, and Sol de Vida. FEDEAGUA, which stands for the Ecumenical Forum for the Alternative Development of Guanacaste, is an association established in 1992 to promote “alternative and equitable development for marginalized families, groups and communities in Guanacaste” (FEDEAGUA, n.d.-a, n.d.-b). COPROALDE is an NGO network for the coordination of alternative development projects, has worked since 1988 to promote agroecological initiatives among a diverse network of NGOs and grassroots organizations (Arguedas, 2006; Mora, 1994). Sol de Vida is a grassroots organization that emerged in 1989 in the province of Guanacaste with the objective of promoting the peer-to-peer dissemination of solar home cookers among campesino women (Mendez Vega, 2001). FEDEAGUA is a member organization of the COPROALDE network. Both organizations have collaborated to promote rural self-sufficiency through agroecological practices.

The commonalities between these three organizations can help illustrate an organized commitment within the MaT for the empowerment of marginalized communities. In broad terms, empowerment can be understood as working with vulnerable peoples to assist them to “imagine their world differently and to realise that vision by changing the relations of power” that have disadvantaged them (Eyben et al., 2008, p. 6) Within MaT, these three organisations are example of activism that concentrates its efforts on building meshed social relations and commitments to support the culture and livelihoods of the campesino way of life. In the words of COPROALDE leader Juan Arguedas, their early involvement in the anti-GMO campaign “was a course of action precisely for protection, to prevent the genetic contamination of campesino and indigenous production, but it was also, logically, a political idea, of alternative development”. Similarly, Sol de Vida’s president, Fatima Montealegre, recounts that as the organization’s work promoting solar cookers advanced in the mid-2000s, “someone asked the question, ‘But what are we putting in these ovens?’” (Rosensteele, 2013, p. 3), which prompted the organization to begin researching GMOs and the impact of their production model on the campesino economy. This led Sol de Vida to ally with other environmental organizations and promote the grassroots analysis process that led the county of Santa Cruz to declare itself the country’s second GMO-free territory. Common to all three organizations is the view that local

political action as something that must be built progressively from the grassroots, in order for local community groups to develop a situated understanding of the issue in the light of their everyday concerns, and to become organized to formulate and demand local alternatives.

The three organizations exemplify the distinguishing features and practices of the third and final orientation of MaT – the Generative Empowerment Orientation (GEO) – is the central focus of this Chapter. The GEO entails a steadfast commitment to the construction of situated understanding as the root of political action. The main element setting apart the GEO from the Partisan Resistance Orientation (PRO) discussed in Chapter 4, is that GEO activists emphasize the long-term transformation of community understandings and capacities about GMOs, while PRO activists, when organizing their action under scarce resources, prioritize strategic actions that can block GMO production, even if they do not involve sustained community capacity building.¹⁶

For some GEO activists, this divergence in approaches is substantial enough to induce them to speak critically of the mass Municipal adoption of GMO-free territory declarations achieved after 2012. GEO activist William Allen, from FEDEAGUA, during our interview, expresses deep scepticism about the political and social significance of those widespread declarations,

This was a rather technical discussion, one group of society striving in a public debate, with decision makers from the local government making a declaration on behalf of the Municipality. Sometimes the people themselves do not participate in this. So, it is not an action backed by the people, but only for certain social sectors, campesinos, environmentalists, but not responding to a global need in the country. This makes it seem like a big thing, but when you begin to examine it, there is nothing there. It sounds like a big deal, but this was a mistake by all of us, because especially we carried the flag and set it down, and others picked it up, and they did their work technically, but politically and socially it had a very squalid outcome(...) in some sectors of the country there was citizen participation, but in a great part of it there was not.

In the following two sections, I discuss the distinguishing features and practices of the GEO, and consider how the GEO contrasts with the two other MaT orientations discussed in Chaps

¹⁶ In general, PRO and GEO activists both recognize the importance of giving voice and strengthening the capacity of marginalized campesino communities. However, in those cases when opportunities for wide ranging protest against GMO corn arose in late 2012 and early 2013 under heavy resource limitations, the contrast in the orientations' approaches became more salient. As described in Chapters 1 and 4, during this time, MaT undertook massive advocacy efforts to persuade municipal authorities to issue GMO-free territory declarations, achieving a high degree of success. These efforts included multiple practices, including: demonstrations, a country-wide march, petitions, mass and social media campaigning, and direct lobbying. However, as I discuss at length in this chapter, many GEO activists have been cynical about the majority of these latter declarations, arguing that they lack the lasting and generalized community support that was achieved through the gradual, situated, and bottom-up approach taken by GEO activists to promote the earlier GMO-free territory declarations.

4 and 5. GEO activists emphasize strengthening the situated awareness, organizing capabilities and sense of self-efficacy of communal actors that have often been neglected by the urban centres of power. This can illuminate new facets of the democratic engagement of social movements that have not been commonly examined in deliberative democracy scholarship about the democratic engagement of social movements.

Deliberative democracy scholarship has paid limited attention to the efforts of social movements to construct lasting institutional transformations in local multistakeholder governance after the peak intensity of a wave of contention has declined (Gillan, 2020; Whittier, 2004). It has studied the use of deliberative norms within the organizing practices of social movements (Della Porta & Doerr, 2018). It has examined the enactment of disruptive protests to correct disfunctions of the deliberative system (Curato, 2020). It has also looked at social movements' participation within redesigned multi-stakeholder governance institutions (Fung & Wright, 2001). However, it has not looked at the roles that social movements play in the early construction of those novel institutional arrangements. GEO activists are dedicated to building grassroots foundations for the type of “empowered deliberative democracy” experiments in institutional renewal highlighted by Fung and Wright (2001, p. 7). Even if the institutional construction efforts of MaT's GEO activists have struggled to gain political traction (key limitations on this regard are discussed later in this chapter), they offer valuable insights about how social movements engage in this process of construction.

6.2 Features of the generative empowerment orientation

The quote from Mr. Allen in the previous section illustrates how GEO activists focus on engaging marginalized communities to consider the impacts of GMOs on their own livelihoods and cultural traditions. The broader goal here is to strengthen the community's agency to improve their own social and environmental wellbeing. As in the preceding two chapters, I organize the discussion according to the following four analytic features: (i) the norms about credible knowledge, (ii) the conception of insiders, (iii) the conception of outsiders, and (iv) the vision of change sought. This organizing framework, outlined in Section 3.3.9.2. of Chapter 3 (Research Methodology), facilitates comparative analysis across the three orientations.

6.2.1 Notions about credible knowledge

GEO activists seek to strengthen community-based understanding and commitment to grassroots political action rooted in the situated needs of marginalized campesino and indigenous communities and in the existing power imbalances. They regard the emergence of

this understanding and commitment as necessarily resulting from a gradual bottom-up process of raising awareness and enabling local communities to relate the issue to their own environment, livelihoods and culture. For GEO activists, any local policy gain that is achieved without devoting the time and effort to building this foundation of community-based understanding is likely to be symbolic and transient. In his interview, GEO activist William Allen used the dismissive Costa Rican expression “a salute to the flag” to refer to such a symbolic, but ultimately inconsequential measure. This encapsulates a key concern of GEO activists that policy victories reached without developing situated understanding through grassroots engagement might support the movement’s policy agenda, but are not likely to contribute to build community organizational and strategic capabilities, nor to push for credible and lasting political action that improves the lived experiences of local people.

The necessity to build grassroots awareness and understanding about the contentious issues undergirds the strategic outlook of GEO activists. Sustained demand for change to the living conditions of marginalized communities can only emerge once local actors have internalized a situated understanding about how GMO and biosafety considerations can affect local security, wellbeing and culture. This situated understanding can then catalyse a local demand by organized grassroots actors for particular policy outcomes from local and national authorities, such as the issuing of Municipal GMO-free territory declarations, the strengthening of regulatory supervision on GMO seed nurseries, or the promotion of alternative agroecological projects. Sustained grassroots demand rooted local needs can support the achievement of lasting impacts on the capabilities and lived experiences of local people impacts as a result of the MaT’s mobilization.

This perspective on situated knowledge entails a vision of grassroots political outreach that progresses in several stages. The outreach process starts with preparatory work for engaging grassroots actors, followed by community dialogue and reflection that contextualize technical information with local needs and impacts. These dialogues are conducive to locally-grounded political advocacy that pursues sustained changes in local public decisions and institutional power arrangements. The resulting changes are intended to persist even after the wave of contentious action has dwindled. These commitments by GEO activists seem to be grounded strongly in organizational norms for pursuing community development. (I will elaborate on later in this chapter, when I discuss the vision of change sought).

6.2.2 Conception of MaT insiders

In the case of GEO activists, the issue of insider versus outsider identity is particularly complex. GEO activists focus their work on promoting alternative development models and transforming local power relations in order to enhance the quality of life of marginalized campesino and indigenous communities. Therefore, they strongly identify with their local constituency of campesino and indigenous peoples. On the other hand, their sense of identity within the MaT is less consolidated. As least in the case of the GEO activists that I interviewed, from FEDEAGUA and COPROALDE, they see themselves as contributors to the MaT for the purpose of safeguarding certain communal cultural and livelihood interests, but not entirely aligned with the evolution of the movement. Therefore, my discussion here about the inwards conception of GEO activists touches on two aspects: their outlook towards campesino organizations that are seen as their constituency, and their outlook towards the broader anti-GMO movement.

GEO activist organizations and networks keep themselves open to participation by grassroots actors. Their models of community engagement are therefore highly participatory and based on peer-to-peer interaction between local community leaders. For this reason, the boundary between the specific local organizations where GEO activists participate, such as FEDEAGUA and Sol de Vida, and everyday activists in the communities where these organizations work, is quite permeable. The way identity is conceptualized in GEO activist organizations, revolves around a constituency of grassroots activists who fit the broad definition of campesino (that was introduced in Chapter 4). Therefore, GEO activists have a stronger identity as part of a localist campesino movement than as part of an issue-based anti-GMO movement. In the case of COPROALDE, which is a second-tier coordination network whose membership is comprised of specific organizations, it still consistently strives to include n3w grassroots organizations within its fold.

This localist outlook remains quite receptive to other grassroots activists, even if they come from a different region. As GEO activists William Allen and Wilmar Matarrita, both from FEDEAGUA, explained in their interviews, their organization is focused on a strategy of “sovereign territories” and wants to devolve greater control over strategic local resources, like water, land, and coastal resources, to local communities. For this purpose, they work to build common ground across these multiple issues with different campesino constituencies, including campesinos, fishing communities and indigenous peoples. One statement of Mr. Matarrita’s during his interview summarizes this localist view:

The most important principle is how can we advance an empowerment process from the local space that privileges people's control over their strategic resources. What we mean is, for people first to be clear that they live in a territory, and that this territory, because we live here, is ours, and that we must have a protagonist role in the care of these resources for the benefit of current and future generations

Although it has a technical focus that deviates from predominantly agricultural applications, Sol de Vida has similarly worked for decades in community organizing of campesino women throughout Guanacaste. It has developed a Solar Network of local campesino women organizations that use the construction of solar cookers as the core activity to promote campesino women's empowerment, entrepreneurship, and a recovery of cultural traditions.

In relation to the more urban or national-scale organizations within the broader anti-GMO movement, GEO activist groups like FEDEAGUA and COPROALDE recognize them as ally organizations in a common cause that protects campesino rights and wellbeing. However, they are also wary of some of the organizations that work from an urban-centric mindset, for example, public university academics from the capital, even when they are allies or participants in the broader movement. Grassroots actors are often distrustful about collaborating with such organizations, as Wilmar Matarrita illustrated, using the example of past academic seed data collection efforts:

About four years ago, the people from INTA [the University of Costa Rica Technology Transfer Institute] tried to do a seed inventory. People's reaction in the communities was aggressive, by that I mean that they would not provide the information, all of the information, they gave the information in a piecemeal way (...) institutions or actions coming from outsiders cannot generate legitimacy, they have no possibility of generating legitimacy

Moreover, GMO activists have at times been critically outspoken about other MaT efforts to influence local government on GMOs without first building a strong situated understanding and commitment by local grassroots organizations. GEO activist Juan Arguedas, of COPROALDE feels that in many cases, municipalities were lobbied without building a strong grassroots foundation. Mr. Arguedas describes this as "a modality of writing letters, and going to the Municipal Councils, nearly alone." He argues that this can ultimately fail to have a lasting impact "without social pressure or mobilization, without a social base, those things can just stay on paper."

6.2.3 Conception of outsiders to the MaT

The outlook of GEO activists towards outsiders is also differentiated according to whether those outsiders are seen or not as significant actors for local development. This differentiation derives from GEO activists' commitment to fostering access by marginalized campesino communities to decision-making about their wellbeing and local resources. Therefore, they regard certain local actors, even some government institutions or business representatives, as potential allies in the promotion of alternative opportunities for economic development and access to social services for marginalized rural communities. In contrast, they tend to have reservations about engaging with external stakeholders from more privileged urban centres.

Out of the three MaT orientations, GEO activists have shown the greatest interest in building alliances among organizations working with an overlapping local or regional focus across different advocacy issues. They have also been more open to work with other actors working locally outside of MaT, such as municipal officials, government agencies or even private businesses. GEO activists focus on the lasting local changes in the access to decision-making and the livelihood and cultural wellbeing of marginalized communities. Out of all the interviews that I carried out, it was the GEO activists from COPROALDE and FEDEAGUA, who offered the widest list of ideas about possible new platforms for interaction between organised local civil society and formal institutions. These included participatory forms of public budgeting, provisioning, and accountability. (I discuss these more fully in the practices section further below).

6.2.4 Vision of change sought

The work of GEO activists is directed beyond specific policy issues, such as GMOs and biosafety. It is predominantly focused on giving marginalized citizens the capabilities and opportunities to understand economic, social and environmental challenges. GEO activists seek to generate enduring improvements in the quality of life and access to decision-making of marginalized communities and support their capacity to protect their local livelihoods and their natural and cultural assets. For this purpose, they promote the generation of a situated understanding of the threat to their environment and economic and cultural wellbeing represented by GMOs, and the commitment and organized capabilities to respond to it.

GEO activists also promote local engagement with alternative agroecological techniques that prevent environmental degradation and support local food security, smallholder productivity, and cultural identity. While agroecological alternatives are supported by all MaT orientations

(and PRO and TIO activists both have an important role to play in them), their enactment at the community level is most closely aligned with GEO activists and organizations. This strong alignment derives from the fact that agroecological alternatives constitute a vital support to the core aims of the generative empowerment orientation: aligning the movement's objectives with local livelihood concerns, and generating a lasting impact on local living conditions. Furthermore, empowerment activists emphasize horizontal grassroots approaches to skills development and training.

For GEO activists, the work of agroecological promotion is not merely technical but fundamentally political. It is seen as a means to problematize the dominant model of capitalist globalisation and to induce a critical understanding and response to its marginalising impacts on rural populations. The specific vision of agroecology promoted is tied to a view of constructing community through solidarity networks at multiple spatial scales: local, subnational, national, supranational. It involves multiple actors, farmers as well as non-farmers, rural and urban dwellers, taking on commitments that support the livelihoods of peasant producers and the possibilities for peasants to remain in their plots. In this sense, FEDEAGUA has implemented a solidarity-based cooperative agricultural market scheme in Nicoya called ECOVIDA. This effort links agroecological producers with local consumers in order to support local livelihoods and promote access to wholesome food (Hernandez & Gatica, 2013). The work also supports civic and political skills development and stimulates the emergence of new political leaders among campesino and indigenous communities. This is exemplified in the words of COPROALDE activist, Juan Arguedas

We are thinking up new forms of organization, not so much about structures. Rather, these are forms of constructing the social movement. More respect for the culturally-appropriate pace, more about volunteer input. About ideas, about debate. Where an organization can debate even with a single person in conditions of equal rights and duties. So that if you are a technical person, you can be allowed to participate in the debate in equal terms, without fear, where you will not be disqualified for being a technical person, or you will not disqualify another person for being a campesino, or black, or indigenous person. So, it is a reformulation of how to break the structures of power.

6.3 Practices of the generative empowerment orientation

The MaT's repertoire of practices constitutes the key means for action by the movement to engage with sites of public deliberation in order to achieve its diverse goals. GEO activists are predominantly involved in the enactment of four of the MaT's practices: community dialogue forums, agroecological knowledge networks, localist solidarity coalitions, and collaborative public development ventures.

In Chapter 3 (Research Methodology), I introduced the analytical framework developed in this thesis to categorize the prevailing practices of each orientation (see Table 3-2). This framework uses three criteria to classify the different practices: (i) the practice's norm conformity with conventional politics, (ii) the MaT's intent in enacting the practice, and (iii) the type of communicative sites (in deliberative systems terms) where the practice is enacted. For the first criterion, I outlined three degrees of norm conformity were identified: **aligned with conventional politics, symbolically disruptive and physically disruptive**. For the second criterion, I identified three types of intent: **consolidation of the movement, persuasion and coercion**. Finally, for the kind of site that is being engaged by the practice, I have identified three types of sites: **empowered space** (where consequential collective decisions are made), **public space** (the public sphere, where informal public communication occurs), and **internal space** (where the internal dealings of the movement occur).

6.3.1 Foundational community workshops

The core commitment of the generative empowerment orientation is to build the activism process from the bottom-up, by stimulating a basic understanding by lay communities of the implications of the GMO and biosafety issues for their everyday lives. This is seen as indispensable for meaningful social change, and also for an effective social movement opposition that can have lasting outcomes. In the cases of community outreach that were led by GEO activists, the process of community dialogue was seen as a foundational necessity in order to build a situated understanding of the issue and a grassroots support for the proposals that would be presented to the Municipal Council¹⁷. In the words of one female FEDEAGUA activist, the declaration "is a process that has to have popular support and has to generate participation and social mobilization (...) We would prefer not to have a declaration if it is just some empty brand, because to do so is misleading." (cited in Pearson, 2012, p. 100).

The distinctive element of the generative empowerment orientation is its uncompromising insistence on this level of grassroots engagement for the process of mass mobilization to be

¹⁷ I carried out fieldwork in 2015, seven years after the last of these initial GEO activist-promoted GMO-free territories had been declared. I was therefore unable to observe this process, and was not able to compile documentation about these workshops from the organizers. However, I did interview the FEDEAGUA organizers of the process in Nicoya, Abangares, and Talamanca and attended a lecture by the organizers of the process in Santa Cruz. I also reviewed the account by Thomas Pearson, an anthropology doctoral student who did onsite ethnographic work at the time of the declarations in Santa Cruz and Abangares.

considered truly meaningful. This contrasts starkly with PRO activists, who find an acceptable trade-off in scaling up the impact and visibility of the movement across all the country's municipalities even when it is inviable to do a matching effort of in-depth dialogue and reflection in each of those localities. In the public event announcing the Santa Cruz Municipality's declaration as GMO-free territory, Municipal Council member Roger Matarrita stressed this nested dialogue process: "It has been a long process, involving discussions, workshops, and exchange of information. After much consultation and discussion, the declaration was considered as part of the broader cultural revitalization of the region." (cited in Pearson, 2009a, p. 189; see also Pearson, 2012).

These community workshops were often arranged collaboratively between local organizers, who had credibility promoting grassroots development initiatives and thematic experts who were able to present the complex GMO and biosafety issues in a way that was accessible to local people. In the case of Santa Cruz, the collaboration was between Sol de Vida as the local organizer, and experts from the Biodiversity Coordination Network (RCB) and FECON, including Fabián Pacheco. Both Pacheco, in our interview, and Pearson (2009a) recount that multiple education workshops were co-organized by Sol de Vida and visiting San José experts between 2004 and 2005, with participation by communal actors. Initially the workshops were held only as a way for local leaders to learn about the issue and decide on actions to safeguard the local culture, livelihoods and biodiversity from the potential risks. In his interview, Fabián Pacheco describes the gradual unfolding of the process as leading to a maturing of the local understanding about the issues.

Santa Cruz is a place where the process was slow, but solid. And that is good, because there were a lot of forums with all of the state institutions and associations and all that, involved in making the decision, and it was not rushed, it was matured.

As reported by Pearson (2009a), after numerous workshops with community actors in Santa Cruz, the idea ripened that this location could be suitable for pursuing the first GMO-free territory in the Guanacaste Province. Later, a few municipal officials were invited to a solar cooking festival organized by Sol de Vida, and over 25 people from the Municipality, including the full Municipal Council, attended. Given the positive response, a special session of the Municipal Council was held at Sol de Vida's headquarters, "La Casa del Sol", shortly after. In that session, a motion was raised to declare the Municipality of Santa Cruz as an "Ecological and Transgenic-free Territory". The motion was studied for several months by the Environmental Commission of the Municipal Council, and the resolution was approved in a celebratory public event on December of 2005.

From his observations from a similar workshop organized by Sol de Vida on the day of action against Monsanto in 2006, Pearson (2009a) describes how the depiction of complex issues in these workshops could at times be quite participatory and theatrical. On that event, as the only North American in attendance, Pearson was asked to stand during an impassioned talk by Sol de Vida's director, Juan Arriaga, which included an allegory of the 1856 battle between Central American armies, led by Costa Rican President Juanito Mora and invading United States mercenaries led by William Walker, and relates them to the imperial threats of the Free Trade Agreement with the United States and transgenics. Pearson describes the scene that followed:

Juan asked me to stand next to him, and people laughed when he joked about Walker's imposing physical presence, a reference to my 6 foot 6 inch height. 'Look,' said Juan, 'this is how the peasants in Costa Rica felt 150 years ago'. (...) 'There were some people in Costa Rica, who, since he had already taken over all of Central America, said that we couldn't do anything, and that our country must be handed over to don William Walker.' (...) Several people in the crowd yelled 'No!' and I stood staring out at them, a tall but self-conscious William Walker. Juan then invited several women to come stand with us. (...) The women, representing the other countries of Central America and united opposition to US imperialism, gently pulled me to the ground in a symbolical battle against William Walker. I slowly and carefully lowered myself until I was kneeling in submission, with my head towards the floor. The group of women stood over me triumphantly. William Walker was dead. 'And now we enjoy the Costa Rica that we have today. But today, where is the spirit of don Juanito Mora?' asked Juan. 'Although this free trade agreement has been signed in all of Central America, we can resist it, we can resist from each house, from each school, from each community, from that which we eat and that which we plant.' (Pearson, 2009a, p. 133)

In terms of the analytical framework, these foundational workshops are enacted initially in **public space** and may then be extended to **empowered space** through gradual engagement of local government officials. It has the functions of **group consolidation**, **persuasion** and as well as a commitment by the community **to threaten coercive protest** if the local authorities ignore the gradually consolidated community demands. It is **symbolically disruptive** of the habitual exclusion of communal actors from decision-making on matters that can affect the local ecology and livelihoods.

6.3.2 Agroecological emancipatory networks

GEO activists within the MaT have adopted approaches that involve peer-to-peer knowledge exchanges that promote alternative production systems based on local resources, and strengthen the campesino economy and cultural identity. Knowledge is exchanged through peer-to-peer networks at the local, regional and international scales. GEO activists promote

emancipatory networks with a diversity of areas of focus. Some of these networks are predominantly focused on self-sufficient agroecological farming practices. Other networks contemplate a wider range of productive activities, including household solar energy applications and community-based tourism. An example of the former is case of the “Campesino-a-Campesino” (CaC) model that is used as a framework by FEDEAGUA and COPROALDE. The CaC model emerged in Mayan Guatemalan communities in the 1970s and subsequently evolved into a broad Latin American network that assists peer-based learning, experimentation and adaptation of agroecological practices. Participants in the CaC model are self-sufficient campesino farmers, who spend time learning the model in the plot of a more established practitioner, and then experiment with the practices they have learned in order to adapt them to their own ecological cultural and social context (Holt, 2008). FEDEAGUA member Roger Alvarez, recounted his experience during our interview of participating in a CaC exchange in Bolivia and returning to adapt an agroforestry system to his own land.

FEDEAGUA and COPROALDE sent me to receive a training in Bolivia for fifteen or fourteen days, and there they explained to us all this system and then I brought that on my mind, that what I would do here would maybe not be equal to there, because they had big trees there, and here we started with small trees and seeds and they require another process, that takes a bit longer (...) I would do it with seeds that I have around here, I was not going to go looking for seeds far away. And then I got to broaden it, because in the exchanges I bring seeds and others take them. And the seeds that I do not have I ‘rescue’ and bring them back. And I plant them, but not all climates are the same. But if you go on adapting them, there comes the time when you have it and the rhythm changes and that’s it!

The broader type of activities is exemplified by the work of Sol de Vida. Sol de Vida was started in 1989 by William Lankford, a physics professor from the United States. Initially, it focused on using training rural women to build and use solar home cookers as a keystone for developing community organizing capacities and to promote new community income generation opportunities and “a new way of life” (Juan Arriaga, cited by Mendez Vega, 2001). Every year, Sol de Vida holds community festivities, like the Feast of the Sun, and the celebration of the Mayan New Year, which give the project greater visibility and attract new communities to participate in the model. The headquarters of Sol de Vida, La Casa del Sol, also serves as a showcase of sustainable technology applications at the communal scale, and receives visits from school, universities, private companies, and tourists. The different small grassroots women-led campesino organizations that have been trained and supported by Sol de Vida constitute the Solar Network (Red Solar). The network promotes the emancipation and creation of support bonds among campesino women and the development of alternative income generation projects, often based on environmentally friendly technologies and

sustainable tourism. A third GEO activist organization, Finca Loroco, is an indigenous sustainable family farm in the predominantly indigenous municipality of Talamanca, in the Caribbean region. Finca Loroco has established a seed sanctuary and training centre, that is used to promote community-based agroecological knowledge, and its preservation through seed preservation (Madrigal, 2016).

While this practice has affinities with the PRO activists' practice it differs from it by stressing the direct peer-sharing of applied practices between small farmers, and the subsequent experimentation to adapt knowledge to each site and plot. It takes place in the **public space** of farming and communal farming plots. It is **symbolically disruptive** because it challenges the exclusion of small farmers from decision-making about local development and resource management. It aims to **consolidate capabilities** at the community scale and to **persuade** grassroots actors to become informed and self-organize against GMOs.

6.3.3 Localist solidarity networks

The generative aspect of GEO activism emphasizes the importance of place-based commitments to mutual understanding and support as the foundation for lasting social change. While the general strategy of building alliances is a common throughout all orientations of the MaT, the generative form of coalition building enacted by GEO activists is distinctive, because it is aimed at transforming the structural conditions that constrain the access of marginalized populations to decision-making power. In contrast, common alliance building efforts by the MaT and other radical environmental movements have generally focused on leveraging short-term alliances to push for a discrete campaign outcome (passing or blocking a specific law or project). As I have already mentioned, GEO activist Wilmar Matarrita, described the aim of these efforts as building "sovereign territories".

The work bridging across sectors is evidenced by FEDEAGUA's efforts to link together with other place-based movements, such as the TECOCOS movement (Territorios Costeros Comunitarios – Community Coastal Territories) that is advocating for land-tenure security of fishing communities in publicly-regulated coastal regions, and the movement to recover the ownership of indigenous land in indigenous territories like that of Salitre in the Northern Caribbean. William Allen, in our interview, highlighted the efforts to unite these different movements, some which overlap in territory and others which are from different regions, but all of which advocate for community-based control of these "strategic territorial resources".

We have been building [alliances]. First it is most important to recognize the injustices that exist and create what we have created, and that is a space for convergence. When the people of TECOCOS are defending their territory, when the people of Salitre are defending their territory, when Roger is planting, he is defending his territory, when people are defending the water, they are defending their territory, unfortunately people for the most part do not see how this is a defence (...) but it requires other things: you create a common ground (...) with the coordination of Frente Amplio, with a group of associations and social organizations we have begun to call all of these social movements to talk, to recognize one another, to analyse our junctures, our individual and national contexts and to try to approach the issue from the defence of the territory.

This practice occurs in **public space** but may reach into **empowered space**, particularly by building common ground with local government actors. It can **align with conventional** political channels, and can also be **symbolically disruptive** against them. It seeks to **consolidate** a critical movement that is well-grounded locally, to **be persuasive** about its concerns, and potentially to instil a **commitment to coercive protest**.

6.3.4 Collaborative ventures with local public institutions

Engaging local governments, and other public local institutions, as collaborators in ongoing ventures that generate a lasting improvement in the livelihood, cultural and environmental conditions of marginalized communities is an important focus of empowerment-oriented MaT activists. This highlights a significant contrast between GEO and PRO's relational approach to external actors. While the partisan approach of PRO seeks to make sharp distinctions between allies and foes, and allows little space for nuances on this regard, the generative approach of GEO views local institutions as a key resource that should be engaged for collaboration in local development projects, even if in some cases it is also being pressured or opposed on specific policy issues. As I have mentioned above, when discussing the conception of outsiders, GEO activists are more open to collaborate with institutions that have a common regional or localist focus. Mr. William Allen in his interview mentioned three possible institutional innovations that FEDEAGUA had been exploring to develop with the local governments in their territories. First, he referred to mechanisms based on experiences in Bolivia, where "the people themselves" could bid to execute projects that were defined and funded by municipalities. Second, he also suggested public hearings at the sub-municipal level of districts where local elected representatives would consult with residents about their priorities and preferences for public works in the district. And thirdly, he envisioned public accountability forums in the city's Central Park, where Municipal staff would answer to the community.

Mr. Allen also offered specific examples of past efforts at collaboration with Municipalities on the development of a sustainable household “food forests” (successional agroforestry systems) as a tool for both food security and social and political engagement. He explained during out interview: “agroforestry systems are a technology that is useful as a political tool to formulate a different logic in a territory that is very productive in social, economic and cultural terms, and to mitigate climate change” They have established alliances with three Municipalities in Nicoya, Abangares and San Carlos to introduce the new agroecological models. However, in all three cases the collaboration with Municipalities was short-lived due to barriers encountered in the Municipalities’ financial allocation procedures¹⁸. Nevertheless, FEDEAGUA continues to work to establish alliances with Municipalities, while at the same time pressuring for political change through activism. This practice generally bridges the **public and empowered space**. Its intent is mostly **persuasive**, since it depends on the willingness of actors who have a common localist interest but are external to the movement. It is normally **aligned with conventional channels**, since institutional innovations still need to function well within established government procedures and the dynamics of the local economy.

6.4 The significance of generative empowerment within the movement

During the MaT’s initial years, this gradual grassroots awareness-raising, that lies at the core of GEO activists’ approach, played a substantial role in the movement’s growth. This approach, adopted initially by the movement when reaching out to local communities, enabled MaT to establish a lasting presence in several rural communities and to gain public visibility. The focus on situated understanding and commitment gave MaT strong community-level visibility through the establishment of annual local events, such as seed exchange fairs. However, as the MaT’s campaign for Municipal GMO-free Territories achieved substantial momentum in 2012, it faced a resource allocation dilemma between quickly amplifying its reach to a large number of Municipalities, or continuing building strong grassroots foundations through gradual awareness-raising work. The prevailing course of action was defined by PRO activists, who as the dominant orientation viewed the possibility of rapidly expanding its leverage to pressure the government as too valuable to pass up, given the perceived threat of new GMO corn permits to the country’s biological and cultural heritage. Hence, the local outreach approach of

¹⁸ Mr. Allen mentioned that, in some cases, the Municipality had repurposed the funds originally meant for the joint initiative to other uses, and at other times, a competing organization had been awarded the project by bidding at a lower cost, when the contracting to implement the project was opened for competitive bidding.

the campaign for Municipal GMO-free territories shifted away from gradual awareness-raising and towards more expedient forms of motivating, and when necessary, pressuring, local governments to pass these resolutions. This shift was not without internal tensions and disagreements, and it eventually contributed to the gradual distancing of some GEO activist organizations from an active role in anti-GMO efforts. This cyclical trajectory underscores the relevance of a strong commitment to deep community-based engagement for the inclusivity, legitimacy and ultimate success of a social movement. It also evidences how demanding it can be for a social movement to sustain balance its strategic effectiveness and its commitment to lasting emancipatory impacts.

The generative empowerment orientation was instrumental in the initial consolidation of the movement, and over time, its views came to be deemphasized as a result of strategic considerations. Moreover, GEO manifests as the main outlook and tactical approach of several organizations that are part of MaT. This contrasts sharply with TIO, which manifests more subtly as an individual attitude of certain activists. Moreover, the relationship between the GEO and PRO activists is riddled with much higher levels of tension than the relationship between the TIO and PRO activists. While the TIO activists were highly cautious and tactful about expressing any critique of the dominant resistance work of PRO activists, the GEO activists were much more readily outspoken in their critiques.

6.5 Implications for public deliberation scholarship and practice

In this section, I discuss the implications of the findings outlined in this chapter for public deliberation and social movement scholarship. In Chapter 2, I outlined a characterization in deliberative democracy theory of five possible deliberative roles: (i) collaborative engagement, (ii) cautious scrutiny, (iii) democratic expression, (iv) democratic correction, and (v) instrumental contestation. As in the previous two chapters, in this chapter I examine how these theoretical roles relate to my empirical observations of GEO. After relating the deliberative roles to the features and practices in a general sense, I will point to a theme in deliberative democracy that warrants greater study: the role and perspective of activists in promoting and shaping new local institutions for empowered deliberation. Finally, I relate the empowerment orientation to scholars and activists' questions about the lasting impact of social movements on local wellbeing, beyond the life cycle of a specific campaign.

GEO activists, with their practices of foundational community workshops and collaborative ventures with local institutions can contribute to strengthening the potential of collaborative engagement. The focus of GEO activists on improving the living conditions and inclusion in

decisions over communal resources of marginalized actors connects the investigation of local democracy with the grounded experiences and practices of community development and the promotion of long-term livelihood security (Eyben et al., 2008). The linkages between the opportunities and barriers for the introduction of local deliberative innovations, and grassroots-based approaches for sustained improvement of the lives of marginalized communities, are still budding area of focus for deliberative democracy scholarship (Appadurai, 2015; Mackie, 2015). Therefore, studying the generative empowerment orientation can contribute important insights and novel avenues for investigation for deliberative democracy scholars and practitioners.

The practices of GEO activists of emphasizing foundational workshops as well as agroecological emancipatory and localist solidarity networks contribute to both democratic expression and democratic correction. With regards to democratic expression, the enactment of these workshops and networks gives rise to new spaces for free and open communication among communal actors that have been excluded from participation in decisions about the collective good. These practices also support the emergence a shared understanding about the barriers and potential actions to ensure the collective wellbeing and protect local resources, livelihoods, cultural traditions. In relation to democratic correction, these practices help to organize collective action in the context of situated needs and pathways for desired change. The practices of GEO activists are aimed at strengthen local livelihoods and promote agroecological markets rooted in local solidarity. Moreover, GEO activists place a high currency on the generation of strong grassroots commitments to demand from local powerholders the policy changes that have been collectively identified as necessary and, if required, to mobilize to protect those changes over time.

Furthermore, investigating the generative empowerment orientation from a deliberative democracy perspective can help shed additional knowledge about the process of development of local institutional reforms, “empowered participatory governance” innovations that “aspire to deepen the ways in which ordinary people can effectively participate in and influence policies that directly affect their lives” (Fung & Wright, 2001, p. 7). The findings of this chapter highlight how the empowerment orientation has maintained a strong emphasis in generating local alliances and pursuing new lasting institutional arrangements that address communal social, economic, cultural and ecological needs beyond the GMO issue. It shows how this emphasis has generated tensions within the broader movement, and led some of the empowerment-oriented organizations to step back from the GMO issue, as a critical response to the mass-campaign outreach that omitted a bottom-up community-based consolidation.

Fung and Wright (2001) identify three principles and three design properties of empowered participatory governance designs. The principles are (i) practical orientation, (ii) bottom-up participation and, (iii) deliberative solution generation. The design properties are (i) devolution of decision-making, (ii) centralized supervision and coordination, and (iii) centrality of the state's role (as opposed to voluntarism). All of these principles and design properties are reflected to some degree in the features and practices of the empowerment orientation that have been presented in this chapter. Certainly, the practical orientation and bottom-up participation, as well as the devolution of decision-making are at the core of the practices of foundational community workshops and agroecological emancipatory networks. The aspects that seek to build a novel institutionalization with centralized supervision and state centrality are present in the practices of collaborative ventures with local public institutions. The focus on deliberative problem-solving is also present in all of these practices.

Although GEO activist organizations have not yet achieved the establishment of any empowered participatory governance-styled institutional innovations, the features and practices that have been outlined show that this is a core element of their aspirations. Moreover, as Appadurai (2015) has pointed out, even “(apparently) failed” efforts to promote deliberative decision-making at the grassroots level can help build “deliberative chains”, made up of successive efforts “any one of which has the potential to have frame-changing (or context-changing) effect, because of the mobilized history of prior (apparent) failures”. Similar to Appadurai's notion of deliberative chains, efforts to form collaborative ventures seek to recast the possibilities for collaboration and transcend the limitations of the existing power dynamics. Even when unsuccessful, they can introduce new relational opportunities into the social context. The interpretive research presented in this chapter points to the GEO as a specific orientation within a social movement that may be vital for the emergence of participatory governance innovations aimed at empowerment. It also touches on a vital but often overlooked issue of social movement studies: how movements address the challenge of “continuing the struggle” (Moyer, 2001, p. 80) once it has achieved success in the enactment of its key demands. The empowerment orientation reflects the elements within a movement that sustain a push for lasting improvement in citizens' wellbeing, through the building of enduring grassroots commitments and the implementation of more inclusive institutional reforms.

6.6 Chapter Conclusion

In this third empirical findings chapter, I have presented GEO, the third social movement orientation identified through this in-depth interpretive study of MaT. With its focus on achieving

situated understanding and demand for policies that safeguard local livelihoods and cultural practices, GEO has underpinned MaT's success, particularly at the earliest stages of the movement. However, it has also taken a divergent stance to that of the dominant partisan resistance orientation in instances when PRO activism, propelled by its own momentum, modified its approach from bottom-up community-based consolidation to more direct institutional engagement of the Municipal Government.

I have described the features of GEO, according to the four categories that have emerged through my research for delineating elements of the plurality within social movements. In terms of the notions about credible knowledge, GEO activists view the contextualized community-based understanding of complex issues, such as GMOs and biosafety, as the necessary foundation of any collective action. GEO activists regard affinity to others within the movement according to two different thresholds. Those fitting the category of campesinos are seen as their core constituency. The other threshold applies to those who are allies within the movement, but do not give pre-eminence to grassroots empowerment over strategic leverage considerations. GEO activists at times air discrepancies with this second category, and set themselves apart from them. With regards to the conception of outsiders, GEO activists are wary of those who come from urban areas, and are willing to build common ground for the promotion of development opportunities with those who have an overlapping regional or local focus. Finally, the vision of change centres on enhancing the capabilities of marginalized actors to understand and participate in the governance process over local resources.

I have described the most prominent practices of GEO activists: foundational community workshops, agroecological emancipatory networks, localist solidarity networks and collaborative ventures with local public institutions. I have analysed these practices using three criteria: norm conformity with conventional politics, mobilization intent, and deliberative system space. Most of the practices of this orientation are symbolically disruptive, by working to challenge the entrenched power structures that control territorial resources. However, the practices of localist networks and collaborative ventures also work with conventional pathways of institutional coordination. The practices are enacted both in public and empowered space. And they aim for both persuasion of local allies and consolidation of grassroots capabilities.

The study of GEO is relevant to the current questions of deliberative democracy and social movement scholarship, because it highlights a perspective within social movements about how to cascade different moments of reflection, argumentation and self-expression across diverse sites in the deliberative system, in order to achieve a strongly supported consequential change

in local policies. It is also valuable in the process of understanding how certain outlooks within social movements can stimulate the emergence of the institutional innovations of empowered participatory governance (Fung & Wright, 2001), and to recognize that this process may not be absent of tensions within movements. Finally, it also contributes to examine the facets within the plurality of movement outlooks that are most engaged in pursuing lasting change in the wellbeing of communities as a result of the movement's efforts. The next chapter will examine the interaction between the three orientations that have been presented: PRO, TIO and GEO, and what the implications of this diversity are for the movement's overall engagement with public deliberation.

Chapter 7 Discussion

7.1 Setting the Scene: Multiple Perspectives on Municipal Engagement

In this chapter I draw comparative insights from the three previous chapters and consider how they speak to the central research questions of this thesis: **“how do social movements engage with public deliberation?”**, and **“what are the implications of this engagement for the theory and practice of deliberative democracy?”** In chapter 2, I argued that, while the deliberative democracy scholarship has deepened the understanding of social movements as vital democratic agents, these scholars have generally approached them as a one-dimensional element within the deliberative landscape. In contrast, this study uses an interpretive lens to explore how social movement activists generate meaning about their own diverse practices of engagement with public deliberation. When I originally approached the Costa Rican Movement Against Transgenics (MaT) in my field research, given their unique success in establishing GMO-free territory resolutions at the municipal scale, I had anticipated that on this specific topic of engaging with deliberative local spaces, I would find some level of shared intent to transform how local governments related to citizens and made decisions about public resources. However, as I conducted my interviews and observed movement practices, it became increasingly clear that while the movement had both a strong capacity for concerted action across multiple locations, it also combined widely diverse notions and ideals about the movement’s engagement with institutionalized spaces of public deliberation.

In the preceding three chapters I have presented these varying perspectives as three specific orientations, each of which combines a certain set of features and practices that shape the movement’s political actions and its approach to relating to outsiders. Through my interviews, I investigated how movement activists and other stakeholders perceived the previously existing opportunities for the public to participate in decision-making about divisive issues such as agricultural and biosafety policy, whether they felt that the country-wide GMO-free territories campaign had generated changes in these opportunities, and how those changes measured up to their own ideals and expectations. This dialogue with the different stakeholders, and particularly with MaT activists, allowed me to uncover three distinct orientations that movement activists adopt towards public deliberation, namely: (i) partisan resistance (PRO); (ii) transpartisan inquiry (TIO); and (iii) generative empowerment (GEO).

How public deliberation is constructed by activists subscribing to each orientation is illustrated in the following three quotes about the process of advocating Municipal Councils to declare themselves as GMO-Free Territories:

The march was done solely with spirit, no money, we were all crazy, there we went, and went, and went with what we had, collecting food, passing the hat (...) but people felt we had a lot of legitimacy. (...) This of course led, in the heat of three months, practically 70% of the declaration of Transgenic-free counties in the country, some days even two or three municipalities issued their declarations (...) It was the clustering of social fabric that came from the [DR-CAFTA referendum campaign] plus the tool of social networks (...) And in every place we went we delivered this package (...) of information, and we spoke with people in parks, we were working like ants, it was a Quixotic task (...) and so we achieved this, I dare say, this domino of transgenic-free territories.

(Fabian Pacheco, PRO activist)

The issue is, since it was not created as a campaign, nobody decided that the boom of concern over transgenic corn should be a campaign. Then, certain manifestations of collective actions started (...) at some moment somebody felt: 'Oh! It is a campaign! Let's keep informing all the other municipalities, because this is booming! Because we are going to declare the whole country GMO-free.' But the process as such was not thought out by anyone, and it began to happen, and one thing led to another, and it was a concatenation

(Ivan Mora, TIO activist)

Our process of 'building' was a lot about generating not just sensitivity, but awareness, and not just awareness but for it to lead to the commitment and the construction of organizational coordination links. And the capacity to coordinate with the movement at the national scale. It was very much a community-building process that established foundations unlike many other places [where leaders found] a modality, and believed that the alternative was writing letters and making their way into the Municipal Councils and battling it out there, alone. We have debated this with Jaime [Garcia] several times.

(Juan Arguedas, GEO activist)

As shown in the three previous chapters, while MaT's activists view themselves as acting in coordination and working towards shared objectives, there are diverse perspectives on how to build and defend a collective narrative and how to push for a change in state policies for agricultural production and biosafety regulation. The interplay between orientations in the movement is complex and dynamic. As the prior three chapters have illustrated, there is a diversity between the orientations in terms of some of their fundamental features, and also in terms of their practices. As explained in Chapter 3, I use the term features to refer to common

attitudes and aspirations of activists who subscribe to a given orientation: how they view themselves and others, the types of knowledge that are credible, and the vision of change sought. I use the term practices to refer to the repertoires of organized activity enacted by activists aligned with a specific orientation.

In this chapter, I consider how these orientations relate to prior efforts in social movement scholarship to categorize social movements, particularly categories of social movement 'logics' (also known as action or tactical repertoires). First, in section 7.2., I examine the nature and implications for the movement of the interactions between the features of the plural orientations. In section 7.3., I examine the implications of the interactions between the practices of the three orientations. Finally, in section 7.4, I propose how this Plural Orientations Approach to understanding social movements can contribute to the scholarship and practice of public deliberation.

7.2 Interactions between the features of the movement's orientations

In this section I examine the interactions between the features of the different movement orientations. For this purpose, I build on past scholarly efforts to categorize social movements through the field of social movement scholarship, as well as on the efforts of deliberative democrats to discern the role and effect of social movements in deliberative democracy. In the Research Methodology Chapter (Chapter 3), I introduced four characteristics that facilitate an analytical differentiation of the distinctive features of the three orientations: (a) **notions about credible knowledge**, (b) **conception of insiders**, (c) **conception of outsiders** and (d) **vision of change sought**. These four characteristics help demarcate the distinctive aspects of an orientation. I developed them inductively from the data collected through the interpretive fieldwork, but they are also informed by a thorough analysis of past scholarly approaches for classification of social movements, which I explain in my Literature Review and Research Methods chapters (Chapters 2 and 3).

In my empirical findings chapters (Chapters 4-6), I have discussed in turn the features for each of the three orientations. In Table 7-1., I provide a summary description of the key features of each orientation. In the remainder of this section, I will explore how the features of the MaT's three orientations have worked together, frequently in ways that complement the movement's ability to advance its goals, and sometimes generating tensions that the movement has needed to balance to maintain its resilience. I will first discuss the ways in which the movement has

benefited through the interplay of the diverse features of its orientations. as a result of its plural features. I will then discuss the tensions that have resulted from this plurality.

Table 7-1 Synthesis of MaT orientation features

\Orientations Features\	Partisan Resistance (PRO)	Transpartisan Inquiry (TIO)	Generative Empowerment (GEO)
Norms about credible knowledge	Recognition of marginalized rural perspectives and livelihoods in alignment with a radical global political ecology	Appeals to reasoned judgment and equitable standing for diverse perspectives,	Primacy of situated understanding and autonomy responsive to long-term local needs
Conception of Insiders	Diversity, interconnectedness, creativity, horizontality, decentralization	Diffident camaraderie, epistemic reconsideration, and discrete inward critique	Community-oriented identity-building, reticence towards urban activism
Conception of Outsiders	Stereotyping and conflation of dissenters and antagonists	Recognition of dissent and complexity in reasoning	Distrust of urban elites, disposition for alliance-building along communal interests
Vision of change sought	Official banning of GM agricultural activities and promotion of agroecological alternatives and values	GMO rejection as a result of decision-maker and expert accountability and informed public participation.	Local political and economic empowerment, sustained capacity-building, increased grassroots control over local resources.

7.2.1 Beneficial integration of plurality

I will first examine four aspects through which the movement was able build cohesion in the midst of difference, and even generate synergistic strengths from its diversity. Four areas were identified in this regard: cohesion under a dominant agenda, deep democratization of knowledge, elevated standing of marginal actors, and multi-level push for accountability.

7.2.1.1 Cohesion under a dominant agenda

One important aspect of the interaction between the orientations is the way in which they mutually support each other, while at the same time, one specific orientation, PRO, advances a dominant agenda. I refer to PRO as dominant for the movement, because the perspective and strategy of the activists who subscribe to it predominantly shape how the movement is described by outside observers, including its antagonists, popular media, and other researchers. My own initial approach to the movement was also shaped by this perspective. To offer one example, the movement was described thus by (Monge, 2014) in the environmental issues magazine *Ambientico*:

Its fundamental goal at the circumstantial level is for the Central Government and local authorities to prevent the entry of GMO corn into the country, as a means to protect human health and to defend agricultural production and the environment. At the structural level, the movement denounces and resists the transnational logics of trade that place profit ahead of environmental balance, respect for local cultures, environmental sovereignty, and the common good. Until November of 2012, the anti-transgenic movement has as the main subject of its claims the Costa Rican State, in the figure of the Central Government. However, given this inability of this actor to process the social demands and offer a response to the conflict, the gambit of the movement was to decentralize the conflict and locate it strategically at the local level. (p. 20).

The above description portrays the movement's efforts in ways that strongly align with vision of change of PRO activists, and either omits other elements that are central to the visions of TIO and GEO activists (such as the increased public judgment and accountability and the strengthened capacity for community self-organization) or portrays them as incidental strategic "gambits" to achieve greater political leverage. While the movement's plurality comes with certain specific cleavages where strains are visible, the movement portrays itself outwardly as having a plural composition and a united front. For the most part, attention is not drawn publicly towards differences of opinion. In the case of the only exception that I detected, when GEO activists have argued for the superiority of their approach to building community support, this is still portrayed as a difference in engagement approach, and not as a fundamental disagreement.

7.2.1.2 Deep democratization of knowledge

I have identified the thrust towards the deep democratization of knowledge as the strongest unifying feature across the diverse orientations. As an integrated movement, the MaT has developed multiple fronts for drawing out countervailing information about biosafety, agroecology, and the social, cultural and economic effects of GMO production. This work is guided by diverse notions about credible knowledge as already explained in Section 7.2.2. In this sense, while the PRO perspective weaves together situated needs with a radical global framework, the TIO perspective pursues a broad reflective engagement with countervailing knowledge, and the GEO perspective stresses the bottom-up construction of situated understanding. By drawing on differentiated capacities from its orientations, the movement has been able to target multiple leverage points in order to question the pre-existing monopoly on legitimate arguments about GMOs and biosafety. Through the networking and clearinghouse capabilities of TIO activism, the movement can introduce and divulge new countervailing information from the global anti-GMO movement and articulate coordinated responses to the biotechnology industry lobby. Through the grassroots engagement capability of GEO activism,

the movement is able to promote and gather local experiential knowledge. Finally, through the fusion of diverse methods into its modes of protest, and particularly through the incorporation of civic onsite monitoring of GMO seed nurseries and their surroundings, the PRO activism expands the domains of knowledge that enter into the public discourse about the issues, risks, and affected parties of GMOs and biosafety.

7.2.1.3 Elevated standing of everyday rural actors and livelihoods

The MaT also blends orientation features that, through their integration, elevate the status of actors whose localities and livelihoods are likely to be affected by the use of GMOs, and who have been conventionally excluded from participating in policy deliberations. PRO activists incorporate radical political ecology framing that situates the contestation of GMOs within the frame of national and global resistance to neoliberal economic reforms, and global bio-colonization. Radical arguments drawn from the work of global radical intellectuals like Vandana Shiva and Joan Martinez-Alier are integrated with the decentralized grassroots activism of prior anti-neoliberal campaigns, like the campaign for the referendum against the ratification of the Free Trade Agreement with the United States (DR-CAFTA). An important role is played by small rural organized groups such as youth organizations (such as the Ecological Cultural Front in Paraiso de Cartago, the first self-declared GMO-Free Municipality), different folk culture networks or “Peñas” across the Guanacaste and Occidente (Western Central Valley) Regions, and rural civic watchdog groups (most notably the Cañas Civic Committee activists that monitored GM cotton regrowth in public lots and worker intoxications in GM seed nurseries).

GEO activists link this radical political framing with place-based demands for community needs and local participation in the governance of local resources. Their work promotes seed exchanges among peasant farmers, the establishment of a communal seed bank in the indigenous region of Talamanca, and agroecological exchanges between Guanacaste campesino farmers and peasant indigenous farmers in Nicaragua and Bolivia. For some empowerment-oriented organizations, their work was structured under the “Campesino-a-Campesino” (Peasant-to-Peasant) model that originated in persecuted Maya communities in Guatemala and was spread as a tool for empowering disenfranchised peasant communities throughout Latin America (Holt, 2008). It stresses the leadership of communal actors, especially campesino and indigenous farmers as stewards of native seeds varieties, local agroecological traditions, and even culturally-base health and health and longevity impacts of cultural practices.

Finally, the TIO activists advocate increased openness toward the views and concerns of everyday citizens to stimulate reciprocal listening, and the expression of the movement's position in terms that are relatable to the particular concerns of everyday folks. The integration of these elements enables the movement to align itself and connect with the existing decentralized web of natural resource and community-based organizing efforts, to build grassroots awareness and engagement momentum in several communities, and nourishes the capacity within the movement to engage with disbelieving or dissenting citizens in a more other-regarding and constructive manner.

7.2.1.4 Multi-level push for accountability

The movement's orientations also work synergistically to push for greater institutional accountability of authorities in the legislature, local governments, the agricultural policy sphere, biosafety regulation, and academia. In the arrangement of this multiplicity of action lines, there is a melding of instrumental planning, decentralized initiative, and contextual opportunism. Documentation from early stages of movement strategic planning mentions an initial gamut of strategies, allies and issue frames that the movement had recognized as essential (Rojas, 2003). However, the process of decentralizing mobilization practices often relied on situated forms of action that were initiated autonomously by local organizations. These decentralized actions sometimes replicated strategies that have been successful elsewhere or in different contexts, but other times constituted innovations that responded to specific local opportunities.¹⁹ Whether these practices emerged from an intentional overall strategy or through decentralized innovation, PRO activists were very skilled at weaving them together into a tapestry that could be used to bolster the movement's claims, whether as evidence of technical legitimacy or of popular support. This diverse tapestry was then brandished in support of the movement's claims in other arenas. One key example was the use of the movement's minority representation in the National Technical Commission on Biosafety (CTNBio) as an early warning mechanism to draw the attention of the movement and the public to any new GMO license requests.

Complementary to this, TIO activists contributed their disposition to examine the reasoning process of decision-makers and to seek to enhance their process of formulating a sound judgment. This approach to stimulating considered judgment by decision-makers, whether or

¹⁹ The very first instance of a Municipality being declared a GMO-Free Territory, in Paraiso de Cartago, is cited often as the classic example of an action that came about sparked almost spontaneously by a single community leader's initiative, but was subsequently recognized for its strategic value and replicated across the country. (Instituto de Formación y Capacitación Municipal y de Desarrollo Local, 2010). In contrast, the civic monitoring of cotton plantations was implemented by community activists as a novel strategy with some basic assistance from a German investigative journalist (Sprenger, 2008).

not they agree with the movement's claims, broadens the focus of the movement from defeating a derided foe to enhancing collective wisdom. Finally, GEO activists seek to build local demand for the protection of communal interests, through a gradual process of generating localized understanding. They also promote lasting alliances between local institutions and community organizations to enhance the management of community assets, the preservation of cultural heritage, and the enhancement of local livelihoods, in ways that are locally monitored and accountable to local needs.

7.2.2 Tensions between different features

While there are substantial synergies between the features of the MaT's orientations, they also exhibit some notable tensions. As has already been outlined, through its multifaceted nature, MaT is able to mobilize a broad range of abilities and commitments in its membership. However, achieving progress in the aims of a certain orientation of the movement may occur in tension with success in other facets. This section discusses three such ensuing tensions: (i) between stimulating open expert dialogue and discrediting hegemonic discourses, (i) between invigorating public reflection and generating compelling symbols, and (iii) between demonstrating abundant support and building resilient commitment.

7.2.2.1 Stimulating open expert dialogue vs. discrediting hegemonic discourse

The vehemence of contestation by PRO activists can be accompanied by a level of general disparagement of those outside the movement who are dissenters, or who have diverging or sceptical views about the stance of the movement. This is exemplified by Fabian Pacheco's expression that that previous ruling political party, as a whole, "is Monsanto", and were "butlers of Monsanto", or by Julio (surname withheld) another MaT activist who recounted quite jubilantly how a spokesman for the biotechnology lobby had been recurrently interrupted by the gallery audience when speaking before the Sarapiquí Municipal Council. In contrast, TIO activists focus on respectfully promoting and participating in the process of reasoning jointly with dissenting or undecided actors. This difference can manifest as a tension in the potential roles that the MaT can take when engaging with dissenters.

One clear example of this is the role of MaT's members who hold the only two civil society seats in the National Technical Biosafety Commission (CTNBio). MaT members view themselves as a small, overpowered minority whose objections to GMO licenses are regularly dismissed by the remaining ten government and National Academy of Science delegates. While the movement continues to raise arguments in this forum, it sees the process as fruitless and predominantly uses the space as its "early warning system" for flagging new regulatory

actions and elevate new public complaints in the media and through its activism networks. This generates a tension between its role as a peer in this technical decision-making forum, and acting as a whistle blower and detractor. This allows the movement have other avenues for contention by shifting the arena to public opinion. However, this accomplishment may come at a cost to the aspiration, according to the TIO perspective, for enhancing public debate. In my interview with University of Costa Rica geneticist Federico Albertazzi, he expressed willingness to critically question some aspects of GMOs, but also indicated his frustration and annoyance at what he regarded as the movement's penchant for politicizing technical issues, as well as resentment about the blanket demeaning of all its detractors as subservient to the biotech industry and especially Monsanto. Equating all incidences of dissent to manifestations of subservience to the biotechnology industry is problematic for the MaT's resistance platform, because it constrains the movement's potential to calibrate its engagement with the diversity of actors who have divergent perspectives

7.2.2.2 Stimulating public reflection vs generating compelling symbols

Also connected to the goal of enhancing public judgment is the movement's interest in inducing public reflection. For the TIO activists, this can only be achieved through a process where lay citizens can take interest in the issue, become able to access information that allows them to form a broad picture of the issue, feel competent to understand this information, and develop the motivation to engage with this information through reflection in order to arrive at an informed judgment. For some of the movement's TIO activists, a first step in this process for lay citizens can come through encountering images about GMOs, such as those of "Frankenstein crops", that are disconcerting and thus elicit curiosity and interest to find out more about GMOs. However, other inquiry activists believe that encountering these symbols might instil an oversimplified and potentially distorted view of the consequences of GMOs and not lead the public to engage with the complexity related to these issues. Furthermore, they are concerned that criticism and ridicule over the use of these symbols may impair the credibility of the movement. In general, the movement considers these issues as complex and warranting greater public discussion. However, the lingering questions pertains to the appropriate way of inducing this reflection.

Another TIO activist, Ana Beatriz Hernandez, commented during our interview that this discussion of complex issues may require a more gradual process, since a prior generation of mutual trust and respect is often necessary, before people are ready to consider complex issues. Ms. Hernandez thus calls for the recovery of "tertulia" (informal gatherings to exchange perspectives) in the dynamics of environmental movements. In this sense, the actions of TIO

activists substantially expand in their scope the MaT's PRO activists' dominant approach towards engagement with the public on complex issues. PRO activists' view is critical of established power structures, but it is also limited in its reach towards the public, because it presumes that there is a unifocal narrative that ought to be embraced by all those affected by GMOs. PRO activists view MaT's outreach as a form of "alfabetización" (literacy training), a means of bringing the correct view to the public. In contrast, TIO activists believe that a more inclusive and mutually regarding approach is required. However, for the most part, TIO activists do not openly contest the dominant approach and perspective of PRO activists.

7.2.2.3 Demonstrating abundant support vs. building resilient commitment

As discussed in Chapter 6, the GEO activists stress the importance of a gradual and inclusive generation of local understanding, a homegrown commitment to preventing the perceived risks of GMOs on the local ecosystem and livelihoods, and a self-sustained organization to raise claims before local authorities. Although this is a core vision of GEO activists, it has also been an effective and valued perspective embraced across all of MaT's orientations, and it led to a well-coordinated and enduring coalition that endured more than a decade after the emergence of the movement. The expansion of this community outreach progressed slowly, since this is taxing work on organizations' resources, and funding from food sovereignty campaigns dwindled after the initial years. As the movement encountered continued resistance to its central government policy demands, its public support and cohesion began to dwindle by the end of 2010.

However, a new opportunity presented itself at the end of 2012. When the MaT began to object in the public media about the submission of new license applications for GM corn seed nurseries, these concerns were increasingly echoed by general public opinion. As a result, some of the movement leaders, particularly PRO activists, recognized an opportunity to extend the movement's reach across the country by promoting the adoption of new Municipal GMO-free territory declarations, particularly throughout those localities that had been least involved in the debate. Given the movement's scarce resources and recent difficulties in persuading central government politicians, a growth in tangible municipal opposition offered an opportunity to display a broad united front in opposition to GMOs across the country. However, given the haste and the limited resources in the movement, this entailed setting aside the gradual approach to solid grassroots understanding and organization that had been advocated by GEO activists. This has produced some overt tensions within the movement; for example, some of the MaT's GEO activists have expressed disdain towards the municipal declarations that were obtained without strong grassroots engagement, considering them merely "symbolic".

Moreover, certain empowerment-oriented organizations that had a strong role in the initial years of the movement have subsequently dialled down their involvement in the anti-GMO movement, and moved in the direction of other issues that are also related to rural livelihoods and sustainable agriculture at the local scale. In these cases of stepping aside, the organizations remain vigilant to prevent any measures that seek to roll back the anti-GMO municipal declarations, but refrain from taking other actions to promote the issue. There is some distancing and reduced enthusiasm for mutual collaboration between some GEO activists and some of the PRO activists who are visible MaT leaders, but this has not risen to a level of antagonism or efforts to mutually discredit each other. In a sense, it has evolved into more of an uneasy alliance, where some organizations identify each other as belonging to different strands of a plural environmental movement (even beyond the GMO issue). From a perspective of the “logics of protest” of social movements, the concerns of GEO activists seem to move beyond the formulation offered by Della Porta and Diani (2006) of the logics “of numbers”, “of harm”, and “of bearing witness”, introducing a new logic that I will call “of incubation” which is directed at nurturing an enduring and situated understanding, commitment and organizing capacity relative to both the contested issue and, more broadly, to the long-term local wellbeing.

7.3 Interactions between the Practices of the Movement’s Orientations

Identifying the prevailing practices enacted by the activists who subscribe each orientation illuminates the differences in the preferred modes of mobilization that exist within a plural movement. Since MaT has a very extensive and diverse repertoire of practices, making meaningful comparisons between them requires some way of classifying them according to a discrete range of categories. In the Research Methods chapter (Chapter 3) I introduced three analytical categories that help to delineate the characteristics of each orientation’s practices: norm conformity with conventional politics, mobilization intent, and type of deliberative space.

The combined elements from this analysis offers a more integrated insight into the overall behaviour of the Costa Rican Movement Against Transgenics (MaT) despite its wide diversity. It shows a movement that emphasises persuasion as its core strategy and directs considerable and persistent efforts to developing its collective capacity to confront the dominant discourse on GMOs and biosafety. It also points to a movement that functions predominantly in public view, including in the process of building its own capabilities, and directs little effort to sheltering its range of action from the public view. However, it is a movement that also devotes substantial effort to engaging with empowered space, seeking to both influence formal

decision-making arenas and demand greater accountability from them. Finally, it highlights how the movement has evolved a delicately balanced relationship with the norms of conventional politics. It demonstrates a strong competence for engaging in conventional political settings, ranging from courtrooms to printed media to municipal councils, while at the same time generating a public discourse that is highly critical and disruptive of entrenched power in agricultural and biosafety governance. Hence, the MaT has been able to sustain a strong challenge to the status quo without needing to escalate its disruption into the level of physical confrontation or violence.

In the remainder of this section, I will examine how the plurality of these practices interacts and generates an integrated effect on public deliberation. I will also point out, through a comparative lens, the salient and unique strengths of each orientation.

7.3.1 Convergent practices

In this subsection, I will outline three integrated effects of the practices of multiple orientations. The first of these relates to the significance given to diverse efforts for self-education across the movement. The second relates to the movement's capacity to confront entrenched forms of power, and especially the exclusion of nonexperts the determination of policy decisions about biotechnology and biosafety. Finally, the third convergent scope of practices related to the promotion of agricultural alternatives and the dignification of marginalized livelihoods, particularly those of campesino and indigenous farmers.

7.3.1.1 self-motivated learning

A common thread in many of the practices of the three orientations emphasizes the central role of an ongoing self-driven critical pedagogy within the movement. Although the TIO activists express the highest concern for stimulating public reasoning across all social actors and settings, all of the orientations align with some form of key concern with promoting critical learning. In the case of PRO activists, the concern with critical learning is primarily focused at enhancing the movement's capacity for informed and persuasive leadership. This is mainly reflected in two of the PRO practices: self-education and contextualization. Self-education involves an ongoing stimulation of active study and integration of countervailing arguments to the dominant biotechnology narrative. Contextualization involves learning to weave an integrated narrative that merges three dimensions: the generic information about the risk of GMOs acquired through self-study, the radical framework of political ecology drawn from national and international exchanges, and the situated needs and grievances of Costa Rican rural communities. Self-motivated learning is also fundamental to most TIO activists' practices:

individual reflection, circulating complex information, organizing public seminars and lectures and promoting activist-driven research. In fact, these TIO practices largely supply the resources necessary for PRO activists to enact self-motivated learning. Finally, GEO activists emphasize the bottom-up generation of understanding within local communities through prolonged dialogue, and the conservation and peer-to-peer exchange of local knowledge about agroecological alternatives. All the practices outlined here promote the interest and capacity for the generation of knowledge in ways that integrate countervailing narratives and lived experiences.

7.3.1.2 Challenging exclusionary forms of authority

The second element of convergence in the practices of the different orientations is the contestation through multiple arenas to defy the power of the biotechnology industry and research institutions over the formal decision-making mechanisms on GMOs and biosafety. While the highest diversity of practices, and the strongest emphasis on contention, are enacted by the PRO activists, all the three orientations contribute elements to this diversified contestation. In the case of the resistance orientation, one of the most significant areas of focus has been to expose ineffective control and regulation by the State Plant Health Service (SFE). This work has incorporated onsite citizen monitoring of unintended release or regrowth of plants from seed nurseries, as well as incidents of seed nursery workers' pesticide intoxications.

With regard to TIO activists, the challenge to entrenched power entails pushing for a greater level of openness within government bodies and academic institutions to debate about issues of GMOs and biosafety. One action that sought to promote greater transparency in the use of public media was the exposure by inquiry activists of the "advertorials" published by PR firms hired by the biotechnology lobby in the form of local newspaper stories, without disclosing that the authorship was tied to the industry.

In the case of the GEO activists, their focus in contesting entrenched power rested in their efforts to establish civil society networks and institutional arrangements that secured inclusive local participation in the governance of what they considered to be, as Wilmar Matarrita mentioned during his interview, "strategic resources of the local territory". These resources included tangible assets, such as coastal regions ecological services, groundwater, biodiversity and heirloom seed varieties, and intangible assets, such as traditional agricultural and ethnobotanical knowledge, cultural practices, and longevity-producing healthy lifestyles.

From the empowerment outlook, fighting entrenched power entails validating cultural practices and reclaiming communal control of strategic local resources.

7.3.1.3 Making agroecological knowledge visible and valued

The third and final element of convergence entails the elevation of the visibility and value of community-based agroecological practices that both constitute alternatives and can be negatively affected by the model of agricultural production promoted by leading GM development companies like Bayer (and previously Monsanto, which Bayer recently acquired). Here the practices of the PRO activists assign a prominent role within their campaign dynamic to staging public knowledge sharing events, such as seed exchange fairs, or traditional food festivals featuring recipes produced with heirloom crops. In the words of Fabián Pacheco, an important leader in the resistance orientation,

For us in this movement, it is important to highlight that we are, I feel, being very coherent, as a movement because we are not just saying “No!” but we are also growing, we are building a whole organic agriculture movement. [A movement] that rescues seeds, that cultivates the land with respect without agrotoxic substances, without transgenics. [A movement] that holds fairs filled with life, with abundance, with food, with seeds, with alternatives, with information. So, this has greatly nurtured the movement.

As for the GEO activists, they have emphasized the needs of local marginalized livelihoods, promoting alternative markets and the peer-to-peer exchange of campesino knowledge. Campesinos are respected as both bearers of traditional knowledge and competent experimenters in adapting knowhow from other campesinos to their own local environments. In my interview with FEDEAGUA leader William Allen and campesino group member Roger Alvarez, William highlighted the learning process undertaken by Roger to introduce successional agroforestry system techniques that he had travelled to the Bolivian Amazon to learn, with sponsorship from FEDEAGUA and COPROALDE.

Roger is a master of systems. It took us, how long, Roger, almost five years?... to technically break through the paradigm of an agroforestry system in the Southern Dry Tropics. When all the traditional systems surrounding [Roger's] agroforestry system plot were dry, Roger's system was the only green dot in April of last year. In April of last year [the tail end of the dry season in this region] you could find tomato there, you could find capsicum, you could find coriander, green! right there! You could go and pick ten or fifteen things to eat!

Finally, TIO activists contributed to upholding the dignity of marginalized farmers by conveying the voices of grassroots and campesino leaders through the seminars and activist research studies that inquiry activists organized and promoted. Women community leaders from Sol de

Vida, an organization that promotes peer-to-peer exchange of solar cooking technology, and which was instrumental in promoting that the Municipality of Santa Cruz declare itself the second GMO-free territory in the country, have repeatedly attended sessions of University of Costa Rica School of Biology Open Seminar about GMO Social and Environmental Issues. The seminar is organized by Jaime García, and is offered both for credit and as an open session. When presenting, Sol de Vida members often combine sharing their experiences and their traditionally cooked food using heirloom corn varieties in homemade solar cookers. Research studies, such as the undergraduate social psychology thesis of TIO activists Eva Carazo and her colleague Erika Valverde (2009), also present the perspective of campesino and indigenous farmers about the social meaning that seeds have in their everyday lives.

7.4 Insights for Deliberative Democracy

This thesis presents a new approach to categorizing diverse orientations within social movements based on their features (understood as common attitudes and aspirations of activists who subscribe to a given orientation) and their practices (understood as repertoires of organized activity enacted by activists aligned with a specific orientation). Subsequently, the integration, tensions and distinctions between the features and practices have been examined. For such analysis, the features and practices have been drawn solely from the findings of the preceding empirical chapters (Chapter 4-Chapter 6). In this section, I reflect more broadly on how this multifaceted understanding of social movements offers to scholars and practitioners of deliberative democracy.

As discussed in Chapter 2, and in earlier sections of this chapter, I have outlined key issues on the role of social movements raised by deliberative democrats. The earliest discussions deliberative democrats highlighted the role of social movements as “emerging subpublics” that express excluded views in public discourse (Bohman, 1996). However, some deliberative democrats have noted that social movement activists, like other partisan actors, generally hold rigid pre-deliberative commitments and are more likely than lay citizens to employ symbols to distort and manipulate the issues (Niemeyer, 2011). Other scholars have looked at how social movements can make strategic decisions to either participate and support certain deliberative forums, or to engage in protest and obstruct deliberation, or to do both simultaneously, depending on the existing power dynamics and the perceived opportunities provided by the deliberative setting (Dodge, 2013; Hendriks, 2006; Mansbridge et al., 2012). Furthermore, deliberative systems scholarship has argued that non-deliberative action, including protest, by partisan actors such as social movements, may sometimes enhance the deliberative system, primarily “as a remedial force introduced to correct or publicize a failure or weakness in fulfilling

any or all of its key functions” (Mansbridge et al., 2012, p. 18). Additionally, Mendonça (2016) has contended that one meaningful potential role of activists in deliberative systems may be to induce connectivity between different settings and procedural moments of the deliberative system, by being intensely engaged in multiple arenas. Furthermore, Barvosa (2018) has argued that habitually, social movements deploy divisive rhetoric in ways that hinder large-scale deliberation, however, the presence of certain preconditions and conducts can lead to the emergence of large-scale deliberative systems. These preconditions include the presence of certain triggering events, information packages, networks, and forms of rhetorical action and leadership.

How does understanding the plurality of orientations within movements, and examining their interactions, illuminate these diverse considerations about the engagement of movements with public deliberation? In the final section of this chapter, I examine the contribution that an orientations-approach to the diversity of social movements can contribute to their engagement with public deliberation with regard to two key aspects: the recognition and inclusion of marginalized perspectives, and the different modes of protest and expression.

7.4.1 Recognition and inclusion of marginalized perspectives

The findings of this study corroborate that social movements can play a fundamental role in elevating certain excluded perspectives in the public view. A central concern is the perspective of campesino and indigenous small farmers whose livelihoods, culture and spirituality are threatened by the environmental and socioeconomic implications of GMO production. While the perspective of nature is not emphasized, it is incorporated in terms of the meaning of seeds in the campesino and indigenous worldview (Carazo & Valverde, 2009). Over the course of slightly more than a decade, MaT brought into the public view the issues of GMOs and biosafety, which had previously been the sole province of biotechnology specialists in certain circles of industry, academia and government agencies. It pushed the discussion of a moratorium into the public agenda, obtained open formal support from diverse high-profile entities, like the Professional Agronomers’ Guild Organization, the National Ombudsman, the Ministry of Culture, and emerging political parties. It was able to gain formal representation in the CTNBio, the technical body where biosafety and GMO public decisions were deliberated. Moreover, it further decentralized the public debate to municipal councils, with widely varying degrees of local citizen engagement, and achieved an extremely high rate of local government endorsement across the country. All of these accomplishments gave the movement standing as a legitimate participant in the policy discussion in both public and empowered spaces about GMOs and biosafety. However, the significance of these gains for the inclusion of marginalized

perspectives can vary depending on which orientation of the movement prevails in inducing these changes in specific contexts. To illustrate these differences, I will analyse the specific context of three different practices: lobbying (specifically of Municipal Councils), citizen onsite monitoring, and activist research.

7.4.1.1 Engaging Municipal Councils.

I first address the context of the 81 municipalities that the MaT lobbied (with a successful outcome in 75 of them²⁰) given the breadth and diversity of activity that they represent. After a nearly spontaneous forerunner in 2005, the process progressed gradually through a small series of local grassroots awareness and organization efforts that stalled in 2010; it regained momentum in November of 2012 with a surge in concern prompted by new GM corn seed nursery license requests, producing a flurry of municipal declarations that overtook most of the country in a matter of a few months. While these cases present a wide range of difference, in general, they reflect two distinct approaches. The original approach sought to gradually build situated grassroots understanding and commitment, to induce a demand by the local population to its leaders, while this approach was initially embraced by the whole movement, it is primarily championed by GEO activists. After the surge in concern over GM corn, MaT adapted its outreach process in response to the growing receptiveness by municipal councils. It disseminated information packages with generic arguments supporting municipal declarations. It encouraged municipal councils to make decisions in a shorter time span, sometimes after one council meeting or over a few successive meetings, and organized speakers to attend council meetings. It urged councils to forward their agreements to other municipalities, and stimulated visibility of the campaign through public events, including a march across the country that lasted several days, and social media posts tracking the campaign's progress. The campaign's social media posts also claimed "no municipality wants to be the last one to approve a declaration against the planting of transgenic crops in its territory". (Bloque Verde, 2014). From the perspective of the PRIO activists, that subsequent scaling up strategy marks a significant success and an important source of legitimacy for the movement. For TIO activists, it was partly successful, in stimulating a national-scale discussion, but in some instances, it failed to induce sufficient reflection by decision-makers, or sufficient understanding of the issues by citizens. For those GEO activists that I interviewed, this was a less effective strategy, because it generated a widespread formal action by local

²⁰ Out of these 75 Municipalities, 73 still stand, but there was subsequently one mayoral veto, in Alvarado, and one repeal in La Cruz.

governments that was predominantly symbolic and lacking in community-based support and pressure across the territory.

With relation to the inclusion of marginalized views, the grassroots-building approach, championed by GEO activists, entails a greater level of inclusion by marginalized communities in shaping the policy and decisions in their territory. It also has a greater potential for sustained development of grassroots capacities to organize around other local concerns and demand action from local authorities. Thus, it shifts the structural conditions for deliberation at the local scale by incubating the deliberative and organizing capacity of citizens at the decentralized grassroots level. On the other hand, the scaled-up approach widely promotes consideration of marginalized actors more indirectly, by amply disseminating an information package amply distributed by the MaT (that includes reports and audio-visual materials critical of GMOs that discuss the risks for vulnerable actors). It encourages community participation in events to raise claims before local authorities, but devotes much less time to building this awareness and organization locally. It politicizes the process at a national scale, and pressures local government officials to be accountable to a more aggregated national public of activists and citizens, rather than to organized local communities. It then uses this generalized local governments support to appeal to public opinion, and to leverage its claims before other entities. It can then be said to work as a connector of the local and national scales, by disseminating information to strategic local settings, and harvesting those outcomes to shift the agenda and generate accountability at the broader national scale.

7.4.1.2 Citizen onsite monitoring.

Citizen onsite monitoring field auditing was a practice implemented by community activists of the Cañas Civic Committee (CCC) with support from other national and international environmental organizations between 2004 and 2006. The practice involved inspecting the areas surrounding the location of GM seed nurseries and interviewing nearby residents. This led to the identification of uncontrolled spread of GM cotton plants in surrounding plots, which were reported to the National Plant Health Service and prompted technical inspection and eradication activities. Monitoring also involved tracing reports of worker intoxication due to pesticide exposure in GM seed nurseries. The record of these events was used by the MaT as a central element supporting its argument that the regulatory authorities did not have the capacity to contain the spread of GM crops, nor to protect human health associated with GM cultivation. This instance of community monitoring through civic science provided citizen activists with a powerful voice backed by their own situated experience in a field that had been dominated by elite technical experts. The setting where this work was carried out is also

significant because Cañas was one of the counties where GM seed nurseries were situated and had significant political influence.

I have classified civic monitoring as a practice that fits within the scope of PRO activism, because despite being grounded in the work of local activists, it was centrally aimed at collecting evidence to support arguments for blocking GMOs. It was not enacted as an effort to gradually develop grassroots awareness and commitment, in the way that the empowerment-oriented municipal outreach campaigns were. It was also not linked to an effort to develop local alliances emphasizing community control over strategic resources. In fact, it did not involve local government authorities in its outreach efforts, but instead channelled its complaints directly through central government agency regulators. These diverse factors contributed to the paradox that, after being the epicentre of a unique civic monitoring effort, Cañas later became the only Municipality to declare itself as a GMO-friendly territory, as a result of lobbying by GMO proponents in 2014.

This instance highlights an important limitation that social movement community outreach enacted from a predominant partisan resistance orientation may face. While it can offer opportunities for strengthened the voice of marginalized actors, achieving lasting change requires a strengthening of grassroots capabilities to organize and generate a vision for transformed power relations. Otherwise, this strengthened voice may simply become a short-lived strategic asset to the movement.

7.4.1.3 Activist research.

Activist research is another practice that the movement enacts to make the perspectives of excluded actors visible and valued. This practice is predominantly associated with the transpartisan inquiry orientation, which is most engaged in promoting the assemblage and examination of diverse sources of information for consideration and reflection on the issues addressed by the movement. Activist research has explored a vast range of topics, ranging from legal arguments, to the use of contentious tactics and discourses, and even to the lifeworld perspectives of diverse affected actors. The latter instances probably constitute the purest example of recognition of the value of marginal actors' perspectives. A prominent example is the honours undergraduate thesis in psychology of Eva Carazo, a well-known member of the Biodiversity Coordination Network (RCB), cowritten with Ericka Valverde (2009). Carazo's thesis, on the psychosocial meaning and seeds and associated practices for agroecological campesino farmers, examines the cultural role of traditional seed exchanges, the diverse traditional social meanings of seeds, and the everyday practices of resistance

enacted to protect these practices from the influence of commercial agriculture. These instances of activist research generate recognition and assigns value to the traditions of marginal actors and highlight their cultural and social vulnerability, an element which is generally neglected in the consideration of the laboratory studies that are used to support the claims of innocuousness of the biotech industry.

7.4.2 Public expression, protest and systemic remediation

A second broad aspect of interest for deliberative democrats relates to the way social movements engage with other actors to advance their goals, either through broad communication in the public sphere or through avenues of protest and pressure. In this section I discuss the connection between the orientations and specific modalities of expression, protest and pursuit of systemic and policy changes by the movement.

7.4.2.1 Cultural and community-based events

Expressing the uniqueness and vulnerability of campesino and indigenous farmer traditions has consistently been an essential element of MaT's strategy. By highlighting the socioeconomic significance of seed exchanges, the cultural value of heirloom grains, and even the longevity impact of traditional farming and culinary habits, the movement is able to reshape the public agenda concerning the dimensions of GMO impact that need to be addressed by regulators. By reshaping the public perception of what is at stake, MaT gains greater influence over the determination of who is entitled to take part in formal decision-making about GMOs and biosafety. In this sense, the emphasis on expression is strongly intertwined with the movement's key strategic intent, confirming the growing view in social movement scholarship that a binary social movement typology as expressive or strategic may not be a useful categorization (Taylor & Van Dyke, 2004). However, I believe that an orientations approach to examining the plurality within movement can contribute to unpack the relationship between expressiveness and strategy in a movement. From the PRO standpoint, creative expression and local contextualization are vital aspects of a movement's authenticity that can strengthen the amplitude of the movement's resonance. Furthermore, these forms of expression underscore a wide range of social and livelihood issues that are absent from the consideration of biotechnology promoters and government regulators. Hence, the movement gains greater strategic leverage from using these novel languages.

From the TIO perspective, these seed and cultural exchanges are settings where participants in the movement, members of affected communities and the general project can encounter one another and share experiences. Thus, they are sites of mutual recognition and reflective

conversation where people can learn from one another's stories. In addition to the peer exchanges taking place, TIO activists often facilitate talks or lectures within these settings to introduce local actors to the existing knowledge resources about GMOs. Finally, from the GEO perspective, these opportunities for swapping seeds, agroecological knowledge, culinary or medicinal recipes, and life stories, are the exemplar of the organizing networks and capabilities that GEO activists aspire to build and sustain over time. These public exchanges of communal agricultural and intangible assets constitute an important resource in MaT's efforts to contest the entrenched technocratic power dynamics around agricultural and biosafety governance. They represent a strong use of alternative modes of communication, including folk culture, humour, testimony and storytelling, to disseminate the movement's arguments and reframe the issues under contention. This resonates with a significant and growing recognition by deliberative democrats that "communicative democracy" is fundamental to deliberative democratic inclusion (Curato et al., 2017) and reflects the integration of early conceptual critiques by Lynn Sanders (1997) and Chantal Mouffe (1999). However, taking an orientations approach can further highlight how these practices are not only plural in their modes of expression, but also in their intent. In the case of the scaling-up of municipal GMO-free territory declarations, where a typical PRO activist would see a pathway to building legitimacy and undermining the technocratic control of public issues, a typical TIO activist would see an effort ridden with tensions between broadening public salience and enhancing public reasoning, and a typical GEO activists would see a rushed process that produces symbolic outcomes but lacks the necessary grassroots engagement to generate sustained change.

7.4.2.2 Public protest

The intent and forcefulness of social movement protest have long been matters of interest for deliberative democracy scholars. With regard to the intent, the central question has been whether protest is enacted to impose an outcome that favours a particular interest, or to remedy a structural constraint to free and open deliberation, such as "fundamental inequalities of power and the systematic bias of the public sphere" (Aitchison, 2018, p. 671). The related concerns about the forcefulness of protest considers what circumstances may justify, according to the deliberative ideal, the use of coercion in order to remedy systemic barriers to deliberation. The orientations approach that I am putting forward can cast additional light on this plurality of intent with which protest actions are undertaken. It can also examine the basis of justification for the allowable degree of coercion, not from the normative ideal of deliberative democracy, but rather from the outlook of each orientation within the movement.

In MaT's repertoire, the practices that fit most closely the generic notion of public protest are the demonstrations and marches, which are predominantly a practice associated with the PRO activism. Demonstrations and marches intertwine what Della Porta and Diana (2006) have referred to as the "logic of numbers" and the "logic of bearing witness". In demonstrations, MaT members express their commitment by gathering in public locations expressing symbolic elements such as protest signs, chanting of slogans, and displaying "Frankenstein-crop" mascots and other representations to express their concern over GMO industry practices and government regulatory actions. Marches are protest actions that involve an organized group marching from one public location to another, attracting attention and broadcasting their message along the way²¹. Both of these practices signal to the public that the movement has a strong committed membership. This strengthens the motivation and the close bonds between its members through shared experiences of participation and expression, including facing the risk of public exposure or the hardships of an extended march across the country.

While I have associated demonstrations and marches predominantly with PRO activists, all three orientations have linkages with these practices, and all orientations are aware of the relevance of these practices in advancing the movement's objectives and raising its visibility. The enactment of demonstrations and marches is connected to the deliberative role of "democratic correction" that I have introduced in Chapter 2 and further elaborated when I examined PRO activism in Chapter 4. However, there are important nuances in how the different orientations understand the function of protest in relation to their own sense of what needs to be corrected. PRO activists can be viewed as the most instrumental in their intent, given their key aim of blocking all GM production and use. However, the claims of PRO activists are rooted in a challenge to power imbalances and compel the recognition and inclusion of marginalized and vulnerable actors into formal decision-making and accountability process concerning GMOs and biosafety. For TIO activists, whose key aim is to transform the process of public understanding and reasoning about complex issues such as GMOs and biosafety, protest events offer a meeting ground for the diverse perspectives of movement members and the public. These practices enable TIO activists to communicate their countervailing claims and to appeal to their consideration and reflection by the public and decision-making elites. Finally, GEO activists seek to strengthen the capabilities of rural communities to enhance their living conditions by protecting their local livelihoods and their natural and cultural assets. From their perspective, demonstrations and marches support the organizing capabilities and sense of self-efficacy of grassroots actors, providing opportunities to formulate claims related to the

²¹. In Chapter 4, I discussed in greater detail the enactment of demonstrations and marches as a prevailing practice of PRO activists.

local wellbeing and to mobilize to raise those claims before the public and decision-makers in the communal and national settings.

Thus, from a variety of perspectives, the intent of the movement is to communicate new perspectives and to enhance the opportunities for reflection and agency. Furthermore, the degree of forcefulness remains at the mode of persuasion and symbolic disruption, and does not reach the level of coercion that is debated as potentially problematic for deliberative ideals. The question of whether social movements regard the use of coercive tactics to be justified is generally of significant interest to deliberative democracy scholars. The use of the orientations approach expands on this question by exploring how multiple visions of change and interwoven practices come together and support a specific choice for non-coercive action.

The main element where concerns about coercive communication arise involves the recurring use “mutant” or “Frankenstein” images to denote problematic aspects of the gene modification in agricultural biotechnology. The use of these symbols in public events and other media, has exposed the movement to criticism by its detractors, and has raised concerns in some TIO activists. While the movement has created multiple other channels to disseminate more complex information about GMOs, this issue highlights an important dilemma for the movement’s communication efforts. These symbols may stimulate lay citizens to become curious and seek out additional information, or they may transmit an overly simplified image that distorts the public’s understanding. Discerning which effect may be dominant would require further research about citizen’s perceptions and actions after being exposed to these symbols. However, through an orientation approach, deliberative democrats can gain valuable insights about how the diverse perspectives within social movements interact. Frequently diverse practices and aspirations are intertwined to support a shared commitment, as in the promotion of marginalized perspectives. However, in some cases, certain contradictions are left unresolved and navigated with some ambiguity, as in the use of these perplexing symbols, to provide latitude for the movement to respond to different contexts. Applying an orientations approach to examining a movement’s features and practices can assist deliberative democracy scholars to recognize these tensions and understand how movements address them when engaging with multiple actors on complex public issues.

7.4.2.3 . Mainstream and social media outreach

The movement has regularly reached out to mainstream media, especially printed news media throughout its life. It has also been heavily reliant in online social media that began to become a fast-growing element in social activism when the movement reached its surge in activity at

the end of 2012. In many ways, high circulation printed news outlets became a medium where the movement faced strong disadvantages, due to its much smaller purse compared to the agricultural biotech lobby and genetic research facilities. Activist and academic Jaime Garcia stated that one of their main challenges involved interacting with news outlets that refused to publish responses by movement activists to editorials published by the industry and research centre representatives. Often, movement activists needed to reach out to a different outlet (with a different readership) in order to get a response published to an editorial that had been published in the press in support of GMOs. One action, that Jaime Garcia regards among his major accomplishments dealing with the media, was managing to disclose that a series of publications presented as editorials were in fact paid advertisements (or advertorials) published by a public relations agency hired by the agriculture industry lobby Crop Life. Much of this effort as spokespersons of the movement in the news media was undertaken by Jaime Garcia, who is a TIO activist, and by Fabian Pacheco, who is a PRO activist. In addition to news media, Garcia, Pacheco, and other movement leaders also published in technical magazines and academic journals especially several compilations that reviewed the status of GMO production and regulation in the country, as well as issue briefs outlining the legal arguments justifying and supporting the authority of municipalities to declare themselves as GMO-free territories.

In the last decade, social media increasingly became a key communication and outreach medium for MaT. One of the movement's main waves of collective action rose to a crest with the social outcry about the possible licensing of Monsanto GMO corn seed production in 2013. At the time, social media was still in its infancy as a medium for social protest, but its influence was expanding rapidly in the wake of global phenomena such as the Arab Spring (Castells, 2015). MaT used social media to advertise its events, including seminars, demonstrations, and marches. Simultaneous or coordinated events were often organized over social media, including Facebook and WhatsApp. One strongly involved activists that I interviewed mentioned that he originally became a stand-alone anti-GMO digital activist by creating a Facebook page, and only later came into personal contact with other activists and began to participate in face-to-face group activities. Since the anti-GMO movement is a global movement with strong networks in the Latin American region, social media exchanges were often equally fluid beyond the country than within it. An accomplishment, such as a new declaration of a GMO-free municipality, would often be posted within hours of occurring in the social media pages of other Latin American anti-GMO movements

The issue of digital democracy and the impact of social media and 'communicative plenty' on deliberative democracy is a subject of growing scrutiny by deliberative democrats (Ercan,

Hendriks & Dryzek, 2019). The findings of my research highlight how the MaT has greatly shifted its presence in the public sphere as social media has become a more powerful channel of communication. It also highlights how specific orientations, particularly the PRO and TIO, are becoming more dynamic in their use of these media. Furthermore, the approach of PRO and TIO activists to using social media has differed. Although both take advantage of its potential to vastly distribute information, TIO activists seek to deepen the debate, while PRO activists seek to expand their leverage by publicizing their gains in different arenas.

7.4.2.4 Lobbying, accountability and litigation

The contexts of lobbying, accountability and litigation are of special importance because they represent the official institutional channels through which MaT has emphasized its efforts to gain power over its antagonists in order to achieve its goals. While MaT has generally declined from using physical disruption or the threat of cost levying in its public practices to compel the state and biotech industry to suspend the use of GMOs, it has adopted a wide repertoire of tactics to gain institutional support in blocking GMOs. These efforts have included lobbying the President and legislature to pass a GMO moratorium, successfully lobbying 75 municipalities to declare themselves GMO-Free territories, and undertaking litigation to gain a temporary injunction suspending new GM seed licenses. The movement has also reached out to a wide range of authoritative entities, from professional organizations to the National Ombudsman and the Ministry of Culture, to generate supporting statements and administrative acts that the movement can use in support of its claims. This suggests that the movement has seen a strong need to rely on institutional mechanisms, and that it considers them at least equally as promising a mechanisms of leverage as more disruptive forms of protest.

The three orientations regard and approach these institutional channels quite differently. PRO activists predominantly replicate tactics that have worked for the environmental movement in the context of other environmental or social justice cases (both in the country and abroad). It relies on past precedent, particularly when it comes to litigation, but when it comes to the political administration, it still considers most institutions to be generally untrustworthy and subservient to biotech industry interests. From the perspective of TIO activists, scientific experts and political decision-makers act in response to inadequate structural norms and information and neglect of their social responsibilities. TIO activists recognize that there are complex reasons why experts adopt these attitudes. From their perspective, it is therefore possible to change the quality and substance of public decisions by modifying the norms and expectations of the decision-making process. Finally, for GEO activists, local identity is paramount and the potential exists to engage local official and powerholders in collaborative

efforts if the local benefits can be made clear, and if local citizens can become empowered to demand that their leaders act according to the communal good.

For scholars and practitioners of deliberative democracy, it can be very helpful to understand how these diverse views of institutions coexist and overlap within social movements, in order to formulate the most suitable approaches to the design of democratic innovations. Barvosa (2018) has argued that there is a potential for a contentious social setting to be gradually recast into a large-scale deliberative system if the appropriate catalysts and conducts can be introduced. With regards to social movements in this context, she cites the tendency to enact divisive rhetoric and practices as one of the primary barriers. MaT offers a valuable examination of a multi-faceted movement that manifests diverse orientations, which can be differentiated according to distinct features and practices. One significant element that differentiates these orientations is that, while PRO, as the dominant, embraces a divisive rhetoric, the two supportive orientations, TIO and GEO, move beyond this divisive rhetoric. This provides the movement with a degree of flexibility in interacting with the institutions that can help the movement to exert power over its state and industry antagonists. However, the dominant orientation is still significantly fuelled by distrust and dismissal of dissent. This case can offer some valuable avenues for exploration of the possibilities to draw on the model proposed by Barvosa to design further interventions in contentious settings.

7.5 Chapter conclusion

I have reviewed the interactions between the three orientations of the Costa Rican Movement Against Transgenics (MaT): partisan resistance, transpartisan inquiry, and generative empowerment. The diversity of the features of these orientations generates important synergies that unfold in a dynamic of mutual support, even though PRO activists maintain a dominant influence both within the movement and over the external perceptions of it. Given the growing recognition that social movements are plural and diverse in their logics and tactics, the analysis of this chapter revisits these categorization efforts, but directs them to illuminating rather than obscuring the diversity within movements.

Chapter 8 Conclusions

This thesis has examined the plural, multifaceted ways in which a social movement engages with public deliberation, broadly understood. The empirical analysis has focused on the case of the Costa Rican Movement Against Transgenics (MaT) and its efforts to oppose the use and production of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) in Costa Rica between 1999 and 2015. During this period, MaT has engaged with multiple settings for public deliberation. The movement's engagement with some of these settings has been hailed as successful by local and international observers, particularly its effectiveness in persuading 92% of the country's Municipal Governments to declare themselves as GMO-Free Territories (Bravo et al., 2017; Monge & Moreno, 2014). My research examines how the movement makes sense of its own process of engagement with public deliberation, and the norms and dynamics in these settings that the movement seeks to transform. The two questions guiding the research in this thesis are: **“how do social movements engage with public deliberation?”**, and **“what are the implications of this engagement for the theory and practice of deliberative democracy?”**.

In response to the first question, the empirical findings outlined in my chapters 4, 5 and 6 revealed that MaT engages with public deliberation in diverse ways. By enacting mutually-reinforcing practices that mirror its diversity as a movement, MaT challenges the entrenched elite control over agricultural and biosafety policy and elevates the standing of excluded everyday citizens in public governance. The movement's diversity is reflected in three distinct orientations, an analytical construct that categorizes certain common aspirations and perspectives about the movement's actions, relational dynamics, and engagement with deliberative sites. These orientations have been the subject of the empirical and discussion chapters of this thesis, and I describe their characteristics ahead in the findings section of this chapter.

In response to my second question, the analysis presented in chapter 7 confirms that social movements perform the diversity of roles in deliberative systems that deliberative democracy scholarship contemplates: collaborative engagement, cautious scrutiny, democratic expression, democratic correction and instrumental contestation. In particular, the findings of this research highlight certain key anticipated democratic impacts of social movements: inclusion of marginalized views, contestation of the dominance of exclusionary technocratic discourse, and use of disruptive action to block perceived risks to communal assets (including cultural and ecological heritage) and livelihoods. However, the orientations approach of this research has introduced a pluralist framework for examining these diverse roles and impacts,

to better understand how they mutually reinforce one another, but also how tensions can arise as a result of the diversity within the movement (as will be described in the findings section).

Across the movement, the findings of this research evidence shared resonance on a number of key principles, such as promoting the recognition of diverse forms of knowledge, elevating the public regard for peasant farmers and their traditional livelihoods, and pushing for greater accountability by experts and decision-makers. However, there is no such resonance of vision, or even an explicit discussion within the movement, concerning a desired change in the norms and dynamics of public deliberation. Furthermore, the movement has not adopted a unified approach to engaging with the existing opportunities for deliberation.

In exploring the variety of perspectives about this issue within MaT, my findings suggest that members loosely converge around three “orientations”, each of which assembles a set of related aspirations and inclinations for action, in pursuit of the broader movement goals. I outlined the features and practices of each of these orientations in previous chapters: the partisan resistance orientation (PRO) in chapter 4, the trans-partisan inquiry orientation (TIO) in chapter 5, and the generative empowerment orientation (GEO) in chapter 6. Subsequently, in the first sections of chapter 7, I introduced a pluralist framework for classifying the features and practices of these three orientations, and examined how these interactions were handled in both their beneficial and problematic aspects by the movement’s activists. In response to the thesis’ second question, in the final section of chapter 7 I discussed several key implications of this research for deliberative democracy, including the inclusion of marginalized perspectives and the potential rehabilitative effect of public expression and protest. In the following sections, I will outline the key findings of the thesis, the original knowledge contribution and potential impact of this research, its limitations, and the implications for future research and policy.

8.1 Summary of findings

The movement’s orientations towards specific modes of action shape how the movement engages with, and seeks to influence existing spaces for public deliberation on GMOs and biosafety in Costa Rica. My research has identified three specific orientations namely: “partisan resistance” (PRO), “transpartisan inquiry” (TIO), and “generative empowerment” (GEO). Activists who subscribe to PRO, the dominant orientation of MaT, successfully redefine excluded actors as relevant to the biosafety and agricultural biotechnology debate, integrate insights from the global and national radical green politics and challenge the standing of entrenched powerholders. They enact and skilfully leverage a range of contentious practices

from lobbying to litigation to contentious representation in decision-making bodies in seeking to ban GMOs and promote agroecological alternatives. However, their discursive and relational approach can heighten divisiveness by stereotyping and dismissing those holding dissenting views on highly complex issues.

In contrast, the remaining two orientations, without overtly challenging the thrust of resistance in the movement, sought to address engagement with powerholders and with other interested actors differently. TIO particularly focuses on how public judgement on complex issues was shaped, and therefore sought to engage its dissenters and the general public through respectful dialogue, promote greater integration of diverse perspectives, and advocate accountability and social sensibility by scientific experts. On the other hand, GEO seeks to strengthen the capacity of grassroots actors and local communities to participate in the safeguarding of their livelihoods and cultural and natural resources. Hence through the work of its multiple orientations, the MaT has been able to challenge the pre-existing technocratic monopoly on arguments about GMOs and biosafety across multiple discursive arenas. It has also been able to advance the social recognition of excluded actors by elevating the standing of everyday citizens, and particularly peasant and indigenous farmers and their livelihoods, as legitimate and necessary subjects in the debate about agricultural and biosafety policy. Furthermore, MaT has been able to synergistically integrate its different practices in order to involve a broader range of actors (such as professional associations, cultural promoters, municipal elected officials, minority party representatives, and constitutional lawyers), on multiple platforms from social media, to municipal councils and constitutional court, where biotechnology industry and regulatory agencies can be questioned and held accountable for their actions and policy decisions.

By identifying and categorizing the different features and practices of orientations within a social movement, this research sheds new light on an empirical question within social movement scholarship that deserves revisiting: whether social movements can be characterized and distinguished for their manifestation of certain prevailing “logics.” Between the 1960s and 1990s a number of empirical studies studied this question, and found that some social movements could be regarded as “expressive”, or “identity-oriented”, given their heightened commitment to furthering a cultural transformation in accordance with certain closely held values, while other movements could be regarded as “instrumental” or “power-oriented” given their concern with taking over or influencing organized power, in order to achieve some concrete policy change (Rucht, 1988; Taylor & Van Dyke, 2004). The approach I have taken in this study suggests that it can be useful to examine “orientations” not as a way

to characterize and entire movement, but as a way to detect and clarify the nuances that exist within movements, and in this way further illuminate their diversity.

In order to classify and examine these orientations, I have employed two key notions throughout the thesis: features and practices. The notion of features refers to the elements that weave together the distinctive aspirations and perspectives of an orientation, and distinguishes them from each other. The process of inductive analysis revealed four types of features of the MaT's orientations: (i) the notions about credible knowledge, (ii) the conception of insiders, (iii) the conception of outsiders, and (iv) the vision of change sought. While the three orientations identified in this study derive from the specific context of the MaT case, these four features provide a useful template for future research comparing and categorizing public deliberation orientations in other social movements.

The notion of practices pertains to the specific forms of collective action that are enacted primarily by each orientation. For the classification of practices, I have focused on criteria that build on past efforts to classify the tactical repertoire of movements. The three analytical criteria that I adopted to classify the practices are (i) the movement's norm conformity with conventional politics, (ii) its primary intent when mobilizing, and (iii) the spaces of the deliberative system where the movements enact their practices. Examining these features and practices in an integrated way reveals that the movement has been predominantly persuasive, accompanied by a strong effort to consolidate the movement's own collective capacities. It also evidence that the movement's careful management of a delicate balance between challenging the monopoly over discursive authority, and employing the norms of conventional politics as a tool to constrain the ability of the state and the biotechnology industry to advance the production and use of GMOs. This has enabled the MaT to present a strong challenge to the existing power dynamics of the biotechnology sector, without needing to escalate its mobilization into the level of physical disruption.

Subsequently, I have explored how MaT has balanced the synergic and straining effects of its plurality. In significant ways, MaT has been able to complement the diverse features of its orientations to forge strong cohesion, push for the democratization of knowledge, assert the standing of lay citizens (particularly peasant and indigenous farmers in discussions about agricultural and biosafety policies), and diversify the arenas where experts and decision-makers are held to account. Although MaT enacts its three orientations through distinct practices, these practices reinforce each other and achieve integrated effects. Three integrated effects that resulted from the convergence of multiple practices across the different orientations were the enablement of widespread critical self-motivated learning, the robust

challenge to entrenched power, and the enhanced value and visibility of agroecological alternatives.

However, this diversity has also given rise to tensions when the movement's efforts pull in opposing directions. The three most substantial tensions identified in this research have been: the disdain for hegemonic authority versus the aspiration to engage experts in open dialogue; the aim to promote public reflection versus the reliance on compelling but oversimplified symbols; and the rapid scaling up decentralized antagonistic protest versus the gradual building of resilient community problem solving.

In the section on insights for deliberative democracy of my Discussion Chapter (Chapter 7), I outlined how the orientation approach developed in this research can aid future empirical studies of social movements and deliberative democracy, particularly the inclusion of marginalized perspectives, and the potential rehabilitative effect of public expression and protest. With regard to the inclusion of diverse perspectives, different orientations affect inclusion in diverse ways. For example, in MaT, PRO activism has raised radical discursive claims to scale-up the public visibility of the impacts on marginal actors, in order to influence top-level decision-making. In contrast, GEO activism has sought to enhance and sustain direct inclusion and ownership by grassroots actors in direct local policy decision-making. Since these orientations have been identified for the specific case of the MaT, it can be anticipated that other studies of social movements may reveal different orientations. However, the framework developed for this thesis can prove useful for mapping the diversity within other social movements.

An orientation approach to studying social movements can also reveal tensions that result from the movement's plurality in its efforts to promote more inclusive participation. Consider, for example, the contrasting approaches taken by PRO and GEO activists to generating local impact. PRO activists focus on community-based onsite monitoring, providing local activists with a powerful voice and allowing them to raise claims to regulators and even divulge them internationally, which served to strengthen the movement's anti-hegemonic claims. In contrast GEO activists focus on building a broader local organizing platform and vision for transformed power relations.

An orientations approach to studying social movements can also illuminate the processes through which a movement produces "deliberative packages" (Barvosa, 2018, p. 112) – understood as a collection and juxtaposition of contrasting concepts for reflection and supply relatable narratives for the movement. As part of this work of assembling deliberative

packages, the promotion of activist research has served as a practice that highlights the value of traditional cultural and social traditions of marginalized communities. The validation of these livelihood and cultural concerns as a viable subject of formal research provides an important leverage point for challenging the technocratic hegemony of biotechnology promoters and regulators

8.2 Contribution to knowledge

This thesis offers three original contributions to the existing knowledge on social movements and their relationship to public deliberation. The first contribution involves taking a novel interpretive approach that is sensitive to the differentiated attitudes and practices of social movements for engagement with public deliberation, broadly understood. The second contribution involves the development of an analytical framework for classifying social movement orientations according to their features and practices. The third contribution provides an enhanced understanding of the diverse ways that social movements engage with public deliberation, in light of evolving scholarship about deliberative systems.

An abductive frame of inquiry facilitates receptiveness to the wide range of activists' aspirations and practices for engaging with public deliberation, while remaining connected to the theoretical and normative questions that have driven the research about social movements and deliberative democracy. My inquiry about MaT's understanding of its engagement with local governments led to a puzzling finding: despite the movement's perceived high success in repeatedly lobbying local governments, there was a broad diversity of notions and ideals within the movement about engagement with institutionalized spaces. I adopted an abductive approach to consider this puzzle, first in order to delineate the diversity in perspectives, aspirations and tactical choices within the movement, and subsequently, to investigate how the movement handles this diversity, and how this has influenced its ability to achieve its objectives.

A second novel aspect of this research is the development of an analytical framework for classifying social movement orientations based on their features and practices. This framework innovates on past classification efforts that emphasized distinctions **between** movements (predominantly expressive versus predominantly instrumental movements) (Klandermans, 1993; Taylor & Van Dyke, 2004) offering instead a more nuanced way to illuminate the diversity **within** movements. By introducing a nuanced understanding of plural perspectives within the movement, this study fills a research gap by examining how a movement reconciles not only multiple practices, but also diverse perspectives. Hence, this study transcends past efforts that

have examined tensions in diverse movement practices while interpreting a unified strategic outlook across the movement (Dodge, 2010). Furthermore, this thesis also expands the scope of past studies that have looked at how plural movements negotiate very narrow aspects of their coordinated decision-making and activism in specific multitudinous global events (Della Porta, 2005; Scholl, 2015). The concept of orientations for categorizing the distinct action and relational outlooks of the movement innovates on past classification efforts, distinguishing first between two modes of reflection that emerged during fieldwork: the first of them had an emancipatory and counter-hegemonic emphasis, while the second had an “other-regarding” and more openly inquisitive emphasis. This distinction became the initial frame for categorizing the resistance and inquiry orientation. Subsequently, the identification of other sharp distinctions in the outlooks towards the pace and horizon for engagement with grassroots groups in remote areas, highlighted the difference between the resistance and empowerment orientations. The subsequent framework described in the Research Methods Chapter (Chapter 3) introduced four categories of features to delineate the broad perspectives and aspirations of each orientation and three analytical criteria for classifying the practices of each orientation (these categories and analytical criteria have also been outlined above in the findings section of this chapter).

My third contribution to knowledge situates the particular features and practices enacted by each orientation in their engagement with public deliberation in the context of the principles of deliberative democracy and the framework of deliberative systems. There has generally been a lack of coherence in the approach by deliberative democracy scholars to the role of social movements in deliberation. While deliberative democracy scholarship has continued to evolve its understanding of the role of social movements in deliberation, its analytical efforts continue to approach social movements in relation to their performance of a single role in deliberative systems: whether this role centres on disruptive protest (Curato, 2020), giving salience to excluded views (Dryzek, 2000), generating connectivity between different deliberative settings (Mendonça, 2016), or “prefiguring” new forms of democratic interaction (Della Porta & Doerr, 2018). This thesis takes an innovative approach by examining social movements as multi-faceted actors that perform and leverage multiple roles in deliberative systems. It also provides an empirical record of the contrasting attitudes by a social movement towards a wide range of settings of public deliberation over a span of more than a decade. It therefore broadens the evolving understanding of social movements in deliberative systems.

8.3 Practical implications

The findings of this research are relevant for social movements in their advancement and understanding of their own mobilization efforts and their management of members. In the case of MaT, while members recognized that the movement was highly diverse in its composition, they generally held a notion of an overriding unity in its approaches and goals (especially dominant PRO activists). Hence, a potential exists for greater awareness on the part of the movement about how it can integrate and manage the discernible pluralism in its features and practices that this research has uncovered and classified as orientations. Recognizing the plurality that underpins a movement does not dispute its ability to portray a united front and work strategically to meet its goals. Instead, it provides deeper understanding about how the movement is able to marshal diverse attitudes and enact complementing practices to advance multiple objectives.

The findings are also relevant to public managers and technical experts involved in divisive public interest issues, because they offer insights on the plurality of concerns and preferences that a social movement can encompass. The distinct features of a movement's orientation entail the predominant mode of knowledge recognized, the general conception of insiders and outsiders, and the orientation's vision of the desired change. Experts and public managers generally have an interest in ensuring that policy decisions on complex public interest issues are perceived as legitimate and fair by diverse stakeholders and the general public. The analysis of documentation and interviews with regulators and biotechnology research and industry representatives over the course of this study have shown that, prior to the activities of the MaT, they were uninvolved in informing the public about the operation and regulation of GMO seed nurseries. Moreover, once the MaT began broadcasting its claims to the public through protests and mass and online media, they determined that lay citizens had been influenced by the movement's fearful imagery and were no longer able to form a balanced opinion about the safety of GMOs. Hence, regulators and biotechnology research and industry representatives have viewed the movement's goals as politization and obfuscation of scientific debate. This generalization fails to recognize the work and aspirations within the MaT of TIO activists, who seek to enhance public reasoning and accountability. They represent a perspective within MaT that is interested in engaging proponents of GMOs in broader debates about the evidence of scientific studies, but also about the broader socioeconomic and cultural implications.

These attitudes by the public managers and experts indicate both a lack of familiarity with and ability in the design of citizen engagement processes, and an incomplete understanding of the

attitudes within MaT towards the engagement with public deliberation. As a result, the movement has been portrayed as disruptive and violent, when in fact it has predominantly used institutional channels to impact policy. The fact that much of its engagement has been adversarial is, at least in part, a result of the lack of implementation of public engagement initiatives to promote deliberation on complex public interest issues by actors in government and the scientific community. Understanding more clearly the plurality of the MaT can lead to the recognition that its inquiry orientation is predominantly interested in promoting the quality of public reasoning and greater openness and accountability by decision-makers regarding the broader social dimensions of GMOs and biosafety. This knowledge can be valuable in the design of efforts to promote public deliberation, since it can offer insights on how to design and implement processes of dialogue and deliberation that can produce more credible and responsive policy outcomes. Understanding the plurality of the movement can point to the diverse strengths and challenges associated with different representatives, however, this can only have practical value if the movement itself generates the spaces for recognizing its plurality and for discussing the value for the movement's goals and aspirations of having diverse orientations represented in different roles.

8.4 Limitations

The first noteworthy limitation pertains to the focus on a single case of a social movement. As a single case, the results are not meant to be viewed as a generalizable model on the dynamics of engagement of all social movements with public deliberation, nor as a complete system to classify the plurality of social movements. However, the case study has been purposely selected in light of the wealth of information produced during the movement's trajectory, its expansive influence in deliberative settings in a context of scarce democratic innovation, and its incorporation of diverse activist perspectives about public deliberation. These characteristics offer a unique information-rich, extreme and revelatory empirical ground for exploring the role and sense-making of social movement activists about their engagement with public deliberation.

Furthermore, despite being a case study of a single movement, the study offers substantial within-case diversity that permits comparison along multiple axes. Since the research has been undertaken through an interpretive case study approach, ongoing adaptation and reflection in order to determine the specific axes of comparison has been part of the abductive method of analysis (Yanow, 2014; Boswell, Corbett & Rhodes, 2019). As explained in the methodology chapter, the analysis proceeded in an adaptive and reflective manner in order to determine what the most significant axes of comparison would be. The process of analysis unfolded along

four axes that were examined in sequence to uncover the most revelatory dilemmas for examining the diversity of movement outlooks on its engagement with public deliberation: geographic comparability, site-specific practices, diverse modes of reflection, and finally, distinctive action and relational orientations. Thus, despite focusing on a single movement, the study identified important dilemmas that can emerge within a movement as it engages in diverse aspects of public deliberation. The examination of these dilemmas further illuminated how the movement's plurality enriched in some ways, and challenged in other ways, its achievement of its goals, and shaped its engagement with public deliberation. While these findings do not have the generalizable character of explanatory laws, they do allow the formation of plausible conjectures that inform ongoing debates on the role of social movements in deliberative democracy.

The second limitation concerns the bounding of the concept of engagement with public deliberation as explored by this study. Delimiting what constitutes engagement with deliberation has been a matter of diverse interpretation among scholars of deliberative democracy. At one point, this became somewhat resolved through *de facto* boundaries between the scope of different branches of deliberative scholarship (Hendriks, 2006). Macro-deliberative scholars would be predominantly concerned with public discourse, mass media, and wide-scale social phenomena such as protest and civil disobedience. Micro-deliberative scholars would be predominantly concerned with bounded settings of deliberation, ranging from legislatures to citizen forums and with the process of internal communication and decision-making within social movement organizations. With the systemic turn (Dryzek, 2016) these boundaries became more permeable and engagement with public deliberation could now be understood in relation to the specific deliberative system under study. One key aim of this study has been to transcend preestablished academic notions about the modes of engagement by social movements with public deliberation, and it was sought to investigate how activists within social movements conceive their engagement with public deliberation. However, it was found that activists in the MaT do not have a set nor a unified notion for what constitutes deliberation. Instead, they have a multiplicity of concerns and dispositions about different aspects of deliberation.

Starting with an analysis of multiple instances of GMO-free municipality declarations, in interpretive terms, a type of artifact (Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, 2015), that resulted from the movement's deliberative engagement, it became clear that movement activists made sense in different ways of these outcomes and the practices used to achieve them. The case analysis indicated that there were many other types of engagement that were significant for the movement's impact on public deliberation. These types of engagements included: participation

in technical commissions, legislative lobbying, litigation, publications in printed media, and community agricultural and cultural festivals. Furthermore, the findings suggested that there were affinities and contrasts in how certain activists understood and related to these broad range of settings of deliberation. This enabled the discovery of certain discernible orientations towards deliberative engagement within the movement, which I consider the key finding of this thesis. However, the notion of engagement with deliberation in this study is situated within the context of the MaT's activists' practices and dispositions, which entails, at best, an amorphous conception of deliberation. Hence, the scope of deliberation addressed in this study may transcend more bounded notions of deliberation adopted in other empirical studies (Doberstein, 2020; Dodge, 2009, 2010; Felicetti et al., 2016; Vrydagh et al., 2020). This will require some care in relating the results of this study to other empirical research on social movement or civil society engagement with public deliberation.

Finally, in contrast with the prior limitation, the scope of this study did not allow the examination in sufficient depth and richness of the dynamics of internal communication and decision-making within the social movement under study. This constitutes a notable distinction of this study with many other empirical studies of social movements in deliberative democracy where the focus is on internal organizational culture and issues of prefiguration. My empirical study was not able to capture a substantial richness of data about these internal issues for two main reasons. First, the fieldwork was carried out during a low phase of activity in the MaT's mobilization, and therefore it was not possible to observe a significant amount of coordination or decision-making interactions between the members of the movement. Second, while the activists were asked in general terms about their role and experiences participating in the movement, most of them were very succinct when it came to discussing their participation in group coordination and decision-making activities within the movement. When asked to reflect on their learning and significant experiences within the movement, the majority of answers were related to their outward involvement in public mobilization events. Thus, the fieldwork did not produce a significant amount of data on the practices and values of deliberative engagement in coordinating and organizing the movement's activities. This remains an area of inquiry where the plural orientations approach developed here can be applied in the future.

8.5 Implications for further research

The orientations approach developed in this thesis can be applied to explore the diversity of attitudes and practices of other social movements. This approach was developed specifically to examine the understandings and practices of social movements regarding their engagement with public deliberation. However, this approach and the framework I developed and applied

can be used to analyse a broader range of features and practices of social movements. For example, applying an orientations approach to study the Global Justice “movement of movements” (Della Porta & Doerr, 2018) could yield interesting insights about the specific orientations that manifest within a broad range of organizations across a large number of countries. Similarly, the orientations approach could be applied to investigate other international environmental movements, such as the movement to counter global climate change (Stevenson & Dryzek, 2014). It could also be used in multiple grassroots settings, for example in anti-mining activism or in local disaster relief efforts, to learn more about the different orientations in different cultural contexts. Hence, it would be viable to expand this research both in the strict sense of studying the engagement of other social movements with public deliberation, and more broadly, to explore other aspects of the plurality of practices and outlooks of social movements.

A second important direction for the continuation of this research would be to examine how the orientations approach can illuminate the internal dynamics of communication, coordination and decision-making of social movements, including potentially the case of this movement, and that of other social movements. How social movements adopt strategies to change society by embodying their espoused ideals about democracy in their everyday conduct has continued to grow as a central question of scholarship in the prefigurative turn in both social movement and deliberative scholarship (Della Porta & Felicetti, 2019; Maeckelbergh, 2016). The orientations approach could enrich this prefigurative scholarship by providing a framework for investigating the plurality of internal practices within movements.

Finally, it would be valuable for future research to explore how the plurality of social movements can be investigated as a means to understand and overcome the barriers for the adoption of democratic innovation, both in the specific setting of Costa Rica and in other geographic and cultural contexts. In the case of Costa Rica, despite being widely recognized as “Latin America’s oldest and most stable democracy” (Seligson, 2002, p. 161) the level of implementation in recent decades of citizen engagement and participation initiatives has been one of the lowest in the region (Zuñiga, 2019). An analysis of public opinion data over four decades revealed a sharp decrease since the turn of the century in the proportion of citizens who expressed strong support for the country’s democratic system and who showed high tolerance towards those having contrasting opinions (Programa Estado de la Nación, 2019). This decrease denotes a drop in public democratic attitudes from some of the highest levels in the continent in the late XX Century, to near the region’s current averages, signalling a possible end to Costa Rica’s celebrated democratic exceptionalism. In recent years, efforts aligned with the global open government partnership (OGP) approach have sought to

incorporate innovations that support greater public inclusion and engagement in governance (Araya & Avendaño, 2019; Pogrebinschi, 2017). However, as the analysis of agricultural biotechnology and biosafety governance in this study has highlighted, institutional and business interests often display little concern in promoting public engagement on technical policy issues when there is no visible public concern about that issue, and once social movements have raised public concern, they become reticent about public engagement because they complain that the framing by the social movement has politicized the issue.

With increased social polarization, it becomes more difficult to involve identify actors who may play a credible role as neutral promoters of public deliberation on the issue. The findings on this study suggest that MaT has been the predominant actor involved in promoting public discussion and participation in decision-making on this particular issue. However, as evidenced throughout the empirical chapters, MaT's different orientations have embodied distinct attitudes and practices for engagement with public deliberation. Therefore, it is a valuable line of inquiry for public managers and deliberative entrepreneurs to investigate how the understanding of social movement plurality through an orientations approach can be incorporated into the design and implementation of deliberative innovations, particularly in the case of divisive public interest issues.

8.6 Policy Recommendations

To conclude, this research has generated important lessons for policy makers and experts involved in the governance of agricultural biotechnology and biosafety, and more broadly, in the efforts to enrich the quality of democracy in Costa Rica. I hope that the following recommended steps are worthy of consideration by policy makers, academics and civic leaders interested in promoting more inclusive and accountable governance of complex public interest issues in the country.

- Incorporate the plural orientations approach developed in this thesis in future assessments of democratic quality, democratic dispositions and democratic participation in the country. Conventionally, survey research about democratic attitudes has inquired about the level of trust in public institutions, the support of certain “foundational political myths”, and in very general terms the participation in certain modes of political or collective association (Alfaro & Seligson, 2012; Programa Estado de la Nación, 2019). However, these surveys provide few insights into the diversity of attitudes towards democracy by citizens who are active participants in social movements. The research in this thesis provides helpful insights for the future design

and implementation of democratic innovations to respond to the growing social polarization and disenchantment with democratic institutions.

- Promote further growth and visibility of activist-research initiatives. The findings of this thesis have illuminated the role that activist-driven research can play in stimulating more insightful and reflective engagement by activists, and generating a growing trove of data about social movement challenges, approaches and perceptions towards divisive public interest issues. Fostering the growth of this stream of research, the compilation and dissemination of its findings, and the collaboration between activists, deliberative practitioners, public managers, and researchers in achieving an enhanced and situated understanding of the rich context and grassroots concerns surrounding many divisive public interest issues. It can also shed light on a diversity of perspectives related to collective mobilization on these issues, not only those of movement activists, but also those others who support, interact with or oppose them.
- Promote greater awareness by agricultural biotechnology and biosafety stakeholders about the value of broader public engagement and accountability. This research has recounted certain elements of success in the pursuit by social movement actors for greater inclusion and accountability, but it has also shed light on some important lost opportunities. The attitude of key state officials entrusted with the management and oversight of biotechnology and biosafety policy in Costa Rica has been revealed as highly reticent about greater public inclusion and accountability. It is crucial to that these elite actors become more aware of the opportunities for enhanced public trust and effective policy management that can be derived from a timely and transparent use of methods for public deliberation and accountability. It is advisable for other government and civil society agencies involved in promoting the public trust, such as the Open Government Partnership, the National Ombudsman, the National Council of Rectors (that brings together the leadership of all public universities), and the National Academy of Sciences, to become more vested in stimulating the adoption by the agencies that oversee biotechnology and biosafety governance of clear policies and protocols that guide public engagement and accountability.

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Appendix I – List of Interviewees

This appendix provides details of the interviewees for the case study. The interview log number (starting with the letter A), the name, the affiliation of each interviewee and the date and location of their interview is listed. Where information was withheld or a pseudonym was used at the request of the interviewee, this is indicated.

A1 Jaime García.

MaT activist and university Biology professor. RCB representative in CTNBio.

07/05/2015. School of Biology, UCR

A2 Grettel Montero.

MaT activist and journalist.

12/05/2015. Hoja del Aire Restaurant, San Pedro.

A3 Ana Beatriz Hernandez.

MaT activist and university Biology student.

20/05/2015. Cafeteria of the Economics Department, UCR.

A4 Ivan Mora.

MaT activists, organic agriculture technician, university Sociology student.

26/05/2015. At his place of work.

A5 Pablo Ramírez.

MaT activist, political scientist.

27/05/2015. Multiplaza Mall.

A6 “DANILO” pseudonym.

Biotechnology sector lobby organization staff.

3/06/2015. At his office.

A7 Alex May

Government regulatory official, SFE, President of CTNBio

4/06/2015. At CNTBio offices, Ministry of Agriculture

A8 “Julio” (surname withheld)

MaT activist, online healthy food activist.

6/06/2015. Spoon Restaurant, Heredia.

A9 Federico Albertazzi.

Director, Molecular Biology Research Centre, University of Costa Rica

8/06/2015. Offices of the Molecular Biology Research Centre

A10 Fabián Pacheco.

MaT activist and Director of INA Organic Agriculture Training Centre. FECON representative in CTNBio.

12/06/2015. Campus of INA, La Chinchilla, Cartago.

A11 Wilmar Matarrita.

MaT activist. Founder, FEDEAGUA.

20/06/2015. FEDEAGUA, Nicoya.

A12 Miguel A. Gutierrez.

Campesino organic farmer, Santa Cruz. Attendee Santa Cruz Seed Fair.

21/06/2015. Seed Fair UCR Santa Cruz Campus.

A13 Felix Alvarado.

Campesino organic farmer, Santa Cruz. Attendee Santa Cruz Seed Fair.

21/06/2015. Seed Fair. UCR Santa Cruz Campus.

A14 William Allen

Mat activist. FEDEAGUA.

22/06/2015 FEDEAGUA Nicoya.

A15 Roger Alvarez.

MaT activist. FEDEAGUA

22/06/2015. FEDEAGUA Nicoya.

A16 Marco Jiménez.

Mayor of the Municipality of Nicoya.

24/06/2015. Municipality of Nicoya.

A17 Mario Suazo.

MaT activist. CCC. Cañas.

26/06/2015. At the home of Giselle Mejía, Cañas.

A18 Giselle Mejía.

MaT activist. CCC. Cañas.

26/06/2015 At her home, Cañas.

A19 CONFIDENTIAL.

Information withheld per request for confidentiality

26/06/2015.

A20 Ana Julia Arana.

MaT activist. Founder of CCC. Cañas.

27/06/2015. At her home, Cañas.

A21 Eduardo López.

MaT activist. Agronomer.

19/07/2015. At the community Hall, Tinamastes.

A 22 Juan Arguedas.

MaT activist. COPROALDE.

22/07/2015. At his home-office, Heredia

A 23 Geovanny Garro.

Biotechnology Professor. Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica. GMO supporter.

23/07/2015 Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica. School of Biology. Cartago.

A24 Fernando Ramírez.

MaT activist. Researcher. Regional Center for Toxic Substances Studies. UNA.

14/08/2015 At the Regional Center for Toxic Substances Studies, UNA, Heredia.

A25 Viviana Alvarez

Executive Director. Federation of Municipalities of Guanacaste. GMO supporter.

21/08/2015. At the offices of the Federation of Municipalities of Guanacaste, Cañas.

A26 Edgar Porras.

Community activist, Confraternidad Guanacasteca.

21/08/2015. At his home, Angeles de Tilarán.

A27 Francisco Tacsan

President, Costa Rica Seeds. GMO Seed Nursery. Cañas.

22/08/2015. At the office of Costa Rica Seeds, Cañas.

A28 Alicia Bolívar

Community Activist. Development Association Barrio Hotel de Cañas.

22/08/2015. At her home, Barrio Hotel, Cañas

A29 Gadi Amit

President and activist. Confraternidad Guanacasteca.

23/08/2015. At his home, Playa Panama, Guanacaste.

A30 Lizanías Zúñiga

Mayor of the Municipality of Cañas.

24/08/2015. At the Municipality of Cañas

A31 Claudio Rodriguez

Vice-Mayor of the Municipality of Naranjo, Agronomist.

02/09/2015. At the Municipality of Naranjo.

A32 Hans Corrales

Municipal Council Member, and former Municipal President, Municipality of Naranjo. MaT supporter. Forestry Engineer.

02/09/2015. At his Office, Naranjo.

A 33 Mario Víquez

Municipal Council Member, Municipality of Cartago, MaT supporter.

04/09/2015. At the home of Carmen Vargas, Cartago

A 34 Carmen Vargas

Municipal Council Member, Municipality of Cartago, MaT supporter

04/09/2015. At her home, Cartago.

Appendix II – Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol

Introduction

In my research, I am interested in understanding how environmental and community organizations have responded to opportunities for citizen engagement in environmental governance. By environmental governance, I mean the different arrangements and institutions through which natural resource and environmental issues are decided and organized. I am especially interested in how environmental and community organizations have sought to change existing processes, or establish new processes, in order to allow greater voice and participation by concerned citizens.

I will be examining the efforts to declare “Transgenic Free Territories” at the municipal level. I am interviewing you because your knowledge and experience will help me better understand the context surrounding the Transgenic Free Territories process, and the perspectives of social actors around them. As outlined in the Information Sheet and Prior Informed Consent form, this interview should take no more than 60 minutes.

I have organized our conversation into four parts. First, I would like to ask briefly about your organization’s work, and your role in this specific participatory process. Secondly, I’m interested in your general sense about how the Transgenic Free Territories initiative has changed how the public engage on the issue. Thirdly, I want to ask about your own experience and understanding of the process of citizen engagement in this case. Finally, I would like to hear your thoughts about the outcomes and limitations of the participatory process, as well as the actions required to give it continuity.

Organizational setting and interviewee’s role

1. Can you briefly tell me about the work your organization does and your own role in it?
2. How did your organization come to be involved with the initiative to declare Transgenic Free Territories? Can you say a few words about your own personal involvement in this process?

Public engagement and changing arrangements

3. In the specific case of transgenic crops, PRIOR TO the initiative to declare “Transgenic Free Territories” what opportunities existed for the public to become engaged in how institutions addressed and made decision about the issue (for

example: in crop licensing, risk assessment, or monitoring)? How would you assess that level of public engagement?

4. How does the process of participation through the “Transgenic Free Territories” initiative differ from previous or existing opportunities for public engagement?

Personal experience and views on the process

5. How did you or your organization specifically participate in the participatory processes on this issue
6. How would you describe your experience of participating in the “Transgenic Free Territories” process?

Outcomes and continuity

7. In your view, what are the main things that the “Transgenic Free Territories” process has accomplished, with respect to the public’s engagement in environmental governance?
8. Were there significant challenges or limitations that affected what was accomplished? Can you mention any significant actions that your organization or others took in response to these challenges or limitations?
9. How do you think the participatory process could have been improved?
10. Are there actions that need to be carried out to sustain the impact of the process? Does your organization have a specific plan for undertaking these actions?
11. Is there anything you would like to ask me?

Thank you very much for talking to me.

Appendix III – List of Events Observed

List of Events Observed

Event	Location	Date	Organizers	Approximate duration
Lecture: "Seeds, Flavours, Colour and Health." by María Rosa López Municipal Vice Mayor of Santa Cruz (a GMO-free territory) and Santa Cruz regional activist Juan Arriaga of the NGO Sol de Vida, part of a UCR Semester-long open seminar series on GMO "Myths and Realities, based on evidence"	University of Costa Rica. School of Biology. Auditorium #180.	April 17, 2015	University of Costa Rica School of Biology, organized by MaT activist and UCR academic Dr. Jaime García.	2 hours
Lecture: "Constitutional Control of the GMO-Free Territory Declarations." by Sofia Barquero, law student and activist of Bloque Verde, part of a UCR Semester-long open seminar series on GMO "Myths and Realities, based on evidence"	University of Costa Rica. School of Biology. Auditorium #180.	May 8, 2015	University of Costa Rica School of Biology, organized by MaT activist and UCR academic Dr. Jaime García.	2 hours
Cultivando Pura Vida Organic Festival. INA, Oreamuno de Cartago.	INA Specialized Organic Agriculture Training Center. Oreamuno de Cartago.	May 30, 2015	INA Specialized Organic Agriculture Training Center.	8 hours
Lecture: "Impacts of GMOs" by Ray Seidler, Ph.D. retired US EPA senior scientists.	Legislative Assembly. Fernando Volio Auditorium.	June 18, 2015	Frente Amplio Party parliamentary block, and Bloque Verde	2 hours
Sol de Vida Seed Exchange Festival. Santa Cruz, Guanacaste	University of Costa Rica campus in Santa Cruz, Guanacaste	June 21, 2015	Sol de Vida Association	8 hours
Lecture: "Ethics and Political Economy of Science." by Gabriela Arguedas, Bioethicists, Human Rights and Intellectual Property specialist, part of a UCR Semester-long open seminar series on GMO "Myths and Realities, based on evidence"	University of Costa Rica. School of Biology. Auditorium #180.	June 26, 2015	University of Costa Rica School of Biology, organized by MaT activist and UCR academic Dr. Jaime García.	2 hours
Vida Auténtica Free Seeds Festival. Tinamastes, Perez Zeledón.	Tinamastes Community Hall	July 19, 2015	Vida Autentica	8 hours