



# The Effects of Anti-GMO Rhetoric on a Potentially Life-Saving Crop: Communication Analysis

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# Background Information

- 5 children under the age of 5 die every minute from VAD (WHO, 2022)
- A solution was developed: Golden Rice (Plant Physiology, 1990)
- GR successfully passed all safety tests, but it remains sidelined (IRRI, 2020)

(FDA, 2023; New Zealand FSA, 2017; Health Canada, 2017)

## Why We Oppose Golden Rice - Earth Island Journal



<https://www.earthisland.org/journal/index.php/...>

Web Oct 9, 2020 · Golden Rice is a failed and useless product, and that is why we continue to resist and oppose it. Time and again, huge agrochemical companies, ...

## [PDF] WHY WE OPPOSE GOLDEN RICE - Navdanya international

<https://navdanyainternational.org/wp-content/...>

Web We, the Stop Golden Rice Network (SGRN), believe that Golden Rice is an unnecessary and unwanted technology being peddled by corporations purely for their profit-making ...

## Why We Oppose Golden Rice – Stop Golden Rice Network

<https://stopgoldenricenetwork.org/about-us/why-we-oppose-golden-rice>

Web In particular, Golden Rice is now being proposed as a solution to the worsening hunger and malnutrition associated with the pandemic. Agrochemical transnationals (TNCs) and ...

## Why We Oppose Golden Rice | Bioscience Resource ...



<https://bioscienceresource.org/why-we-oppose-golden-rice>

Web Aug 24, 2020 · In the hope that future media coverage will be more accurate, SGRN sets out its scientific and social justice reasons for opposing GMO Golden Rice. These range ...

## Why we oppose golden rice - GMWatch

<https://gmwatch.org/en/106-news/latest-news/19501-why-we-oppose-golden-rice>

Web Golden Rice is a failed and useless product, and that is why we continue to resist and oppose it. Time and again, huge agrochemical companies, philanthrocapitalists and ...

## Why We Oppose Golden Rice - CounterPunch.org



<https://www.counterpunch.org/2020/08/10/why-we...>

Web Aug 10, 2020 · Golden Rice is a failed and useless product, and that is why



Artifact:

## "WHY WE OPPOSE GOLDEN RICE"

- Replication of the Stop Golden Rice Network's article as evidence by a google search

### Figure 1

Google Search Screenshot  
Note: Screenshot taken by  
Anton

# Research Question:

"How does the anti-GMO narrative created by the Stop Golden Rice Network article affect the acceptance and consideration of this crop as a potential life saver?"

# Roadmap

1. Content analysis of the artifact
2. Synthesize Ernest Borman's Symbolic Convergence Theory
3. Apply theory to the "Why We Oppose Golden Rice" article
4. Develop implication theories

# Significance

- After 30 years of successful testing, GR is still rejected
- Condemning millions of children to a premature death

(Department of Agriculture, 2021)

# Methodology

- Content Analysis
- Developed coding scheme
  - Three categories: Corporate power, dangerous, and not effective
- Applied results to Symbolic Convergence Theory

## Figure 2

### Coding Chart

Created by Lindsay Anton

Category- Repeated Themes	Description	Codes
"Corporate Power"	Statements that denounce and accuse GMOs of being solely created for corporation advantage.	"GMOs are purely for <b>corporations profit-making agenda</b> " (para. 3). "Huge agrochemical companies, <b>philanthrocapitalists</b> and <b>pseudo-public agencies</b> have done everything in their power to deny the people's right to participate in decisions about their food and agriculture" (para. 15). "The push for <b>corporate-led solutions</b> to hunger and malnutrition is alarming" (para. 1). "Golden Rice will only <b>strengthen the grip of corporations</b> over rice" (Para. 3). "Large tracts of agricultural lands are being <b>converted either to industrial or commercial land uses...</b> that hardly serve the nutrition needs of the people" (para. 8). " <b>The increasing control of corporations over agriculture</b> and food is preventing farmers and their communities from having access to these safe and nutritious foods" (para. 15).
"Dangerous"	Using emotionally charged language or vivid imagery to critique Golden Rice as being dangerous.	"It will <b>endanger</b> agrobiodiversity" (para. 3). "Packing more nutrients, like Vitamin A, in rice... <b>would make this worse</b> " (para. 6). "Ultimately it will <b>undermine people's capacities to strengthen</b> their local food systems" (para. 15). "Golden Rice's unresolved <b>safety issues</b> " (para. 3). " <b>No meaningful safety tests</b> have been done" (para. 17).
"Not Effective"	Specific words or images used to evoke meanings of not effective.	"Golden Rice serving as the <b>Trojan Horse</b> to lure the people into social acceptance and <b>false security</b> " (para. 15). "Malnutrition is prevalent... This is not because of the absence of an important nutrient or vitamin" (para. 5). "We assert that Golden Rice is simply a ' <b>band-aid</b> ' solution" (para. 9). "Golden Rice is <b>unnecessary and unwanted</b> " (para. 9). " <b>Golden Rice is a failed and useless product</b> , and that is why we continue to resist and oppose it" (para. 15).



# Synthesis of Theory

Ernest Borman's Symbolic Convergence

Three Tenants:

1. Recurring phrases are deployed
2. Phrases gain widespread adoption
3. By using those common phrases, the group conscience creates their own symbolic reality

(Borman, 1985)

# Apply Tenants to Artifact

1. Repeated phrases/themes symbolizing GR (Mallikarjuna et al., 2021)
2. People accepted GR as a symbol of evil (Hirschi, 2020)
3. Countries believe the narrative is indicative of public opinion (Wu et al., 2021)

(FDA, 2023; WHO; 2021, American Medical Association, 2012; Baveye, 2021; Shew et al., 2021; Lynas et al., 2021; Nyhan et al., 2021)

# Return to Question

"How does the anti-GMO narrative created by the Stop Golden Rice Network article affect the acceptance and consideration of this crop as a potential life saver?"

# Develop Implications

1. Weaponized rhetoric tears us apart (Wu et al., 2021)
2. Weaponized rhetoric keeps us from progress (UNICEF, 2021)

# Limitations

One researcher

Lack of sources  
from local  
authorities in  
Africa

GMO hate is  
created by more  
complex factors  
than what is  
simply presented  
in this research

# Conclusion Overview

1. Synthesis of communication theory:  
Symbolic Convergence
2. Synthesis of artifact: "Why We Oppose  
Golden Rice" article
3. Developed implication

Questions?

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