

Cultural brokers—environmental groups, prominent journalists—shape public discourse on GMOs

A Zurich-based think tank [asks](#): “Who is influencing the way we think today? Whose ideas are determining ours?” To answer that question, it teamed up with an MIT researcher to [rank](#) the world’s top 100 thought leaders of 2014.

The Oxford dictionary [defines](#) a thought leader as someone “whose views on a subject are taken to be authoritative and influential.”

In a [talk](#) I recently gave at Cornell, I discussed how some thought leaders have shaped GMO perceptions and public discourse on agricultural biotechnology.

I’m relatively new to the GMO debate. But when I started paying closer attention to it three or four years ago, I was struck by the amount of misinformation and ingrained [myths](#) that had taken root in the media. And I was really surprised by who was responsible for this, as I [wrote](#) in *Slate* in 2012:

I’ve found that fears are stoked by prominent [environmental groups](#), supposed [food-safety watchdogs](#), and [influential food columnists](#); that dodgy science is laundered by [well-respected scholars](#) and propaganda is treated credulously by [legendary journalists](#); and that progressive media outlets, which often decry the scurrilous rhetoric that warps the climate debate, serve up a comparable agitprop when it comes to GMOs.

Whether these cultural brokers I talk about are trustworthy sources on GMOs is for you to decide. For me, it comes down to the stories they tell (often repeatedly) and when you look closely at some of them, [as I have](#), you may discover that they are just as bogus as [that story recently retracted](#) by *Rolling Stone*.

Read full, original article: [On GMOs, Cultural Brokers, and Sticky Narratives](#)