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Mislocated centers of scholarly communication as an emerging publishing model



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Predatory journals and predatory publishers

Easy to use labels to describe complex practices in scholarly communication.

However, these practices often result from <u>unequal power relations</u> between central and semi-peripheral countries and institutions.

The real predators are not where the labels point. They are the publisher oligopolies with their aggressive business models that exploit scientists.



Mislocated centers of scholarly communication



Why have we introduced a new term?

We introduced the term **mislocated centre of scholarly communication** to describe the role some publication channels play in the (semi-)periphery. It is geopolitically sensitive and does not blame scholars or imply publishers' bad intentions.

Many journals are established and maintained to publish papers that count in research evaluation regimes.

They are counted because they are perceived to be linked to central countries and institutions.

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On the geopolitics of academic publishing: the mislocated centers of scholarly communication

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ABSTRACT

Knowledge production is an important factor in establishing the geopolitical position of countries. In the recent heated discussion on predatory publishing, the geopolitical dimension of this topic is often ignored or treated superficially. In this paper, we introduce the term "mislocated centres of scholarly communication" to help better understand the emergence of predatory journals, and journals that bear similarities to them, in geopolitical peripheries. Mislocated centers of scholarly communication are perceived in the peripheries as legitimized by the center but are in fact invisible or illegitimate in the center. Thus, we argue the importance of viewing these mislocated centers as the result of unequal power relations in academia. To support our argument, we summarize the research on the topic of predatory publishing and demonstrate that predatory journals are a geopolitical problem because the geopolitical peripheries of science are much more often harmed by them than the center. Unlike predatory journals, mislocated centers of scholarly communication are not necessarily fraudulent but rather they are geopolitical roles imposed on some journals by a dynamic between center and peripheries. Our approach could help to criticize this system without discriminating against peripheral scholars or journals.

Sobre a geopolítica das publicações académicas: os centros desubicados da comunicação científica

A produção de conhecimento é um fator importante para estabelecer a posição geopolítica dos países. Na recente discussão acalorada sobre a publicação predatória, a dimensão geopolítica deste tópico é frequentemente ignorada ou tratada superficialmente. Neste artigo, introduzimos o termo "centro mal localizado da comunicação acadêmica" para ajudar a compreender melhor a emergência de revistas e periódicos predatórios que têm semelhanças com eles nas periferias geopolíticas. Os centros mal localizados de comunicação acadêmica são vistos nas periferias como legitimados pelo centro, mas na realidade são invisíveis ou ilegítimos no centro. Assim, argumentamos sobre a importância de

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KEYWORDS

Predatory journals; mislocated centers of scholarly communication center and peripheries; scholarly communication geopolitics of science

PALAVRAS-CHAVE Periódicos predatórios

centros mal localizados de comunicação acadêmica; centro e periferias; comunicação académica geopolítica da ciência

PALABRAS CLAVE

Revistas depredadoras centros de comunicación académica mal ubicados: centro y periferias; comunicación académica; geopolítica de la ciencia

If a journal meets two criteria, it is considered a mislocated center

it is **illegitimate** or invisible from the perspective of the center of knowledge production

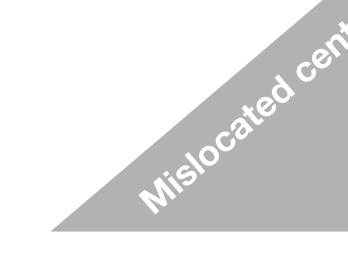
It is **legitimized** in the (semi)periphery due to its perceived <u>connection</u> to the center.



Geopolical landscape of scholarly communication

High visibility & legitimacy in the center

Perceived connection with the center gives no legitimization in the peripheries



Highly legitimized in the peripheries because of being perceived as connected with the center

No visibility & no legitimacy in the center

sustainability

Summarizing the mislocation

- Mislocated centers arise from peripheral actors' misjudgment of a journal's geopolitical position.
- Such journals emerge because the center is an essential source of legitimization in the peripheries, and because there is considerable uncertainty in the peripheries over what is central and what is not.
- The current academic system, established by the central actors, actively contributes to the creation of mislocated centers through the research evaluation regimes.



Research evaluation

- Researchers publish in mislocated centres in order to fulfil the evaluative expectations expressed in the metrics.
- They do this at the lowest possible cost, if universities do not provide them with adequate financial and material conditions (infrastructure).
- This phenomenon, which has a two-hundred-year history, is called playing the evaluation game.

"In this book, evaluation is not merely an event of which researchers are the sole object or beneficiary but a process that is inextricably tied to issues of trust, communication, discipline diversity and the power of the state. Only by reconciling these relationships can we move to more responsible research evaluation and address academic resistance." Gemma Derrick, Centre for Higher Education Transformations (CHET), University of Bristol

Scientific research is communicated, organized, financed, governed, and evaluated through the process of publication. The result of this process is a highly competitive academic environment that rewards researchers for high-volume publication, preferably in high-impact journals, leading to the popularized expression "publish or perish." Universities and other scientific institutions are under similar pressure, with their aggregated research output being under constant scrutiny. This innovative text provides a detailed introduction to the origin and development of the scholarly metrics used to measure academic productivity and the effect they have upon the quality and diversity of scientific research. With its careful attention to both the positive and negative outcomes of research evaluation and their distinct expressions around the globe, *The Evaluation Game* guides the way to a more grounded understanding of metrics and the diverse academic cultures they give rise to.

"Research evaluation has taken very different forms under different bureaucracies and political systems. Kulczycki makes a unique contribution by explaining some 'untold histories of research evaluation' from Eastern Europe and comparing metric-based evaluation models under socialist and neoliberal regimes."

Ismael Rafols, Centre for Science and Technology Studies (CWTS), Leiden

"The author uses the metaphor in the title to emphasize the competitive environment in which scientific research takes place. He shows the extent to which research evaluation originates (also) from the government. [...] The book draws attention to power relations in science and as such is a useful read, not only for information scientists but also for sociologists and political scientists who want to take a global-national-local perspective."

Ronald Rousseau, KU Leuven and University of Antwerp

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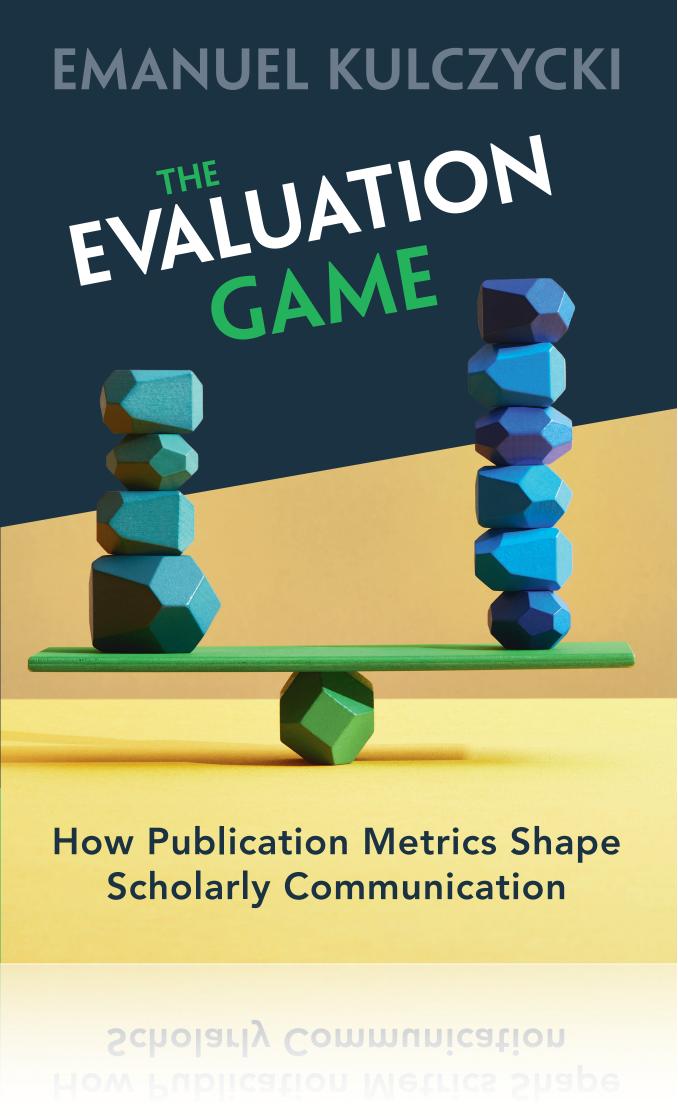
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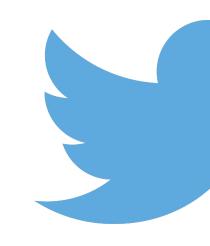
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Thank you

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