



ADAM MICKIEWICZ UNIVERSITY IN POZNAŃ  
Scholarly Communication Research Group

# 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 unequal power relations 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.

**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 acadêmica; geopolítica da ciência

**PALABRAS CLAVE**  
Revistas depredadoras; centros de comunicación académica mal ubicados; centro y periferias; comunicación académica; geopolítica de la ciencia

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

**RESUMO**  
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

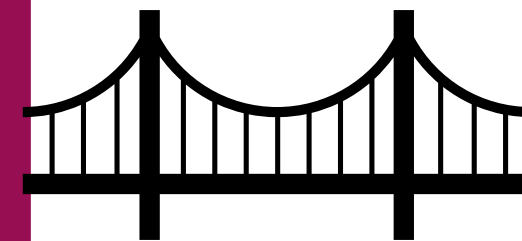
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If a journal meets two criteria, it is considered a mislocated center

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



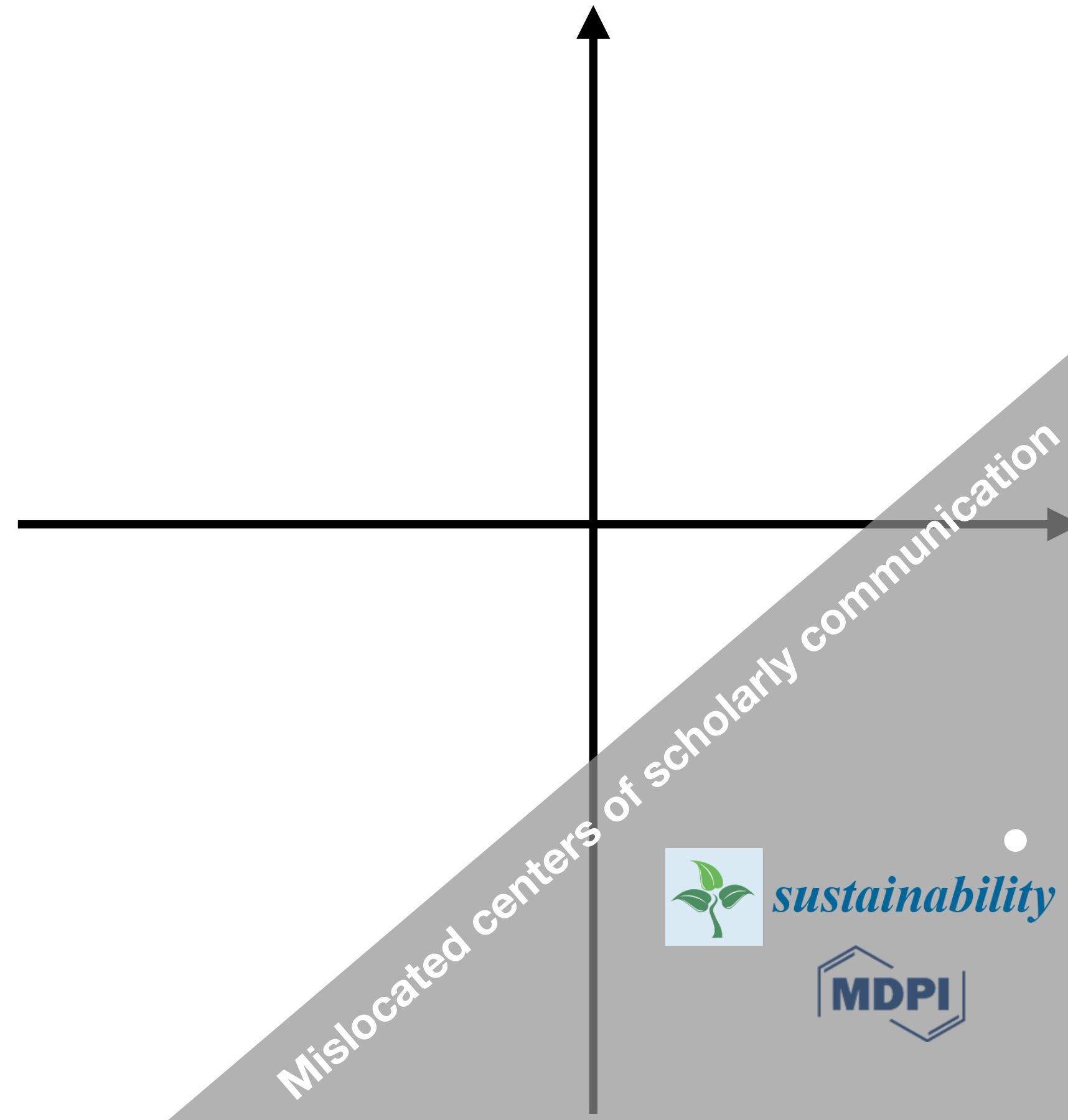
It is **legitimized** in the  
(semi)periphery  
due to its perceived  
connection to the center.



# Geopolitical 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**



# Summarizing the mislocation

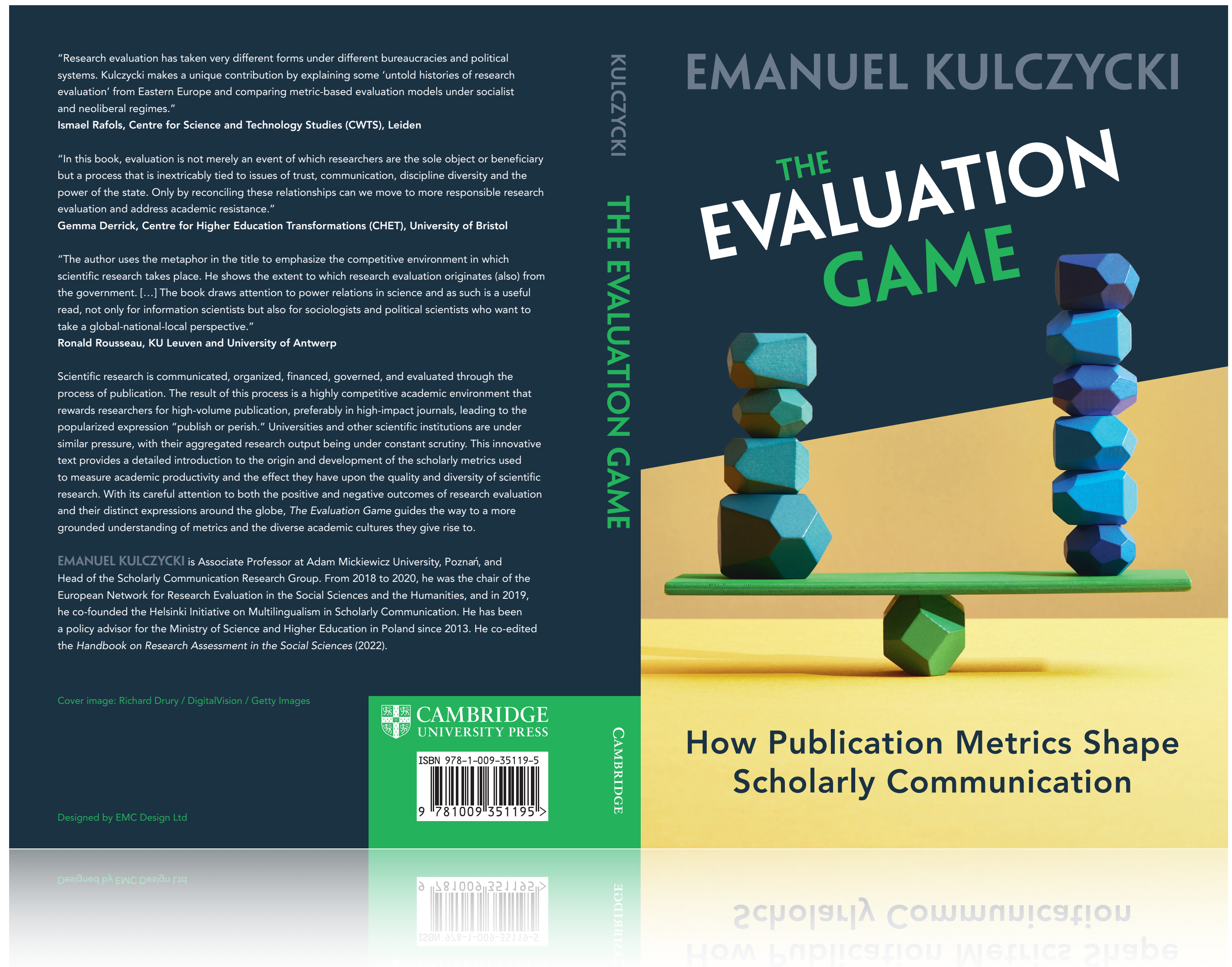
- ▶ Mislocated centers arise from peripheral actors' **misjudgment** of a journal's geopolitical position.
- ▶ Such journals emerge because the center is an essential **source of legitimization** in the peripheries, and because there is considerable uncertainty in the peripheries over what is central 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.**



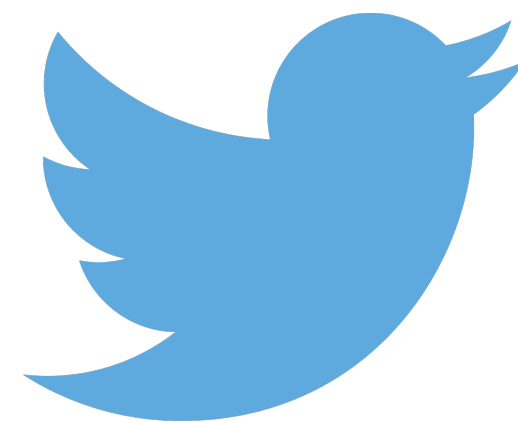


# Thank you

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