



ADAM MICKIEWICZ UNIVERSITY IN POZNAŃ
Scholarly Communication Research Group

Transformations in scholarly communication and the impact of research evaluation systems



Prof. Emanuel Kulczycki, PhD

Aim of my talk



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My goal is to demonstrate how the use of metrics in academia **contributes to publication pressure** and drives scientists to publish their results in a way that allows them to maintain their jobs and positions (but it is not a struggle for new resources!).



Two driving forces of academia

Emily

Published several articles
between 2013 and 2015

During this time she moved
from the University of
Strasbourg to
the University of Cambridge





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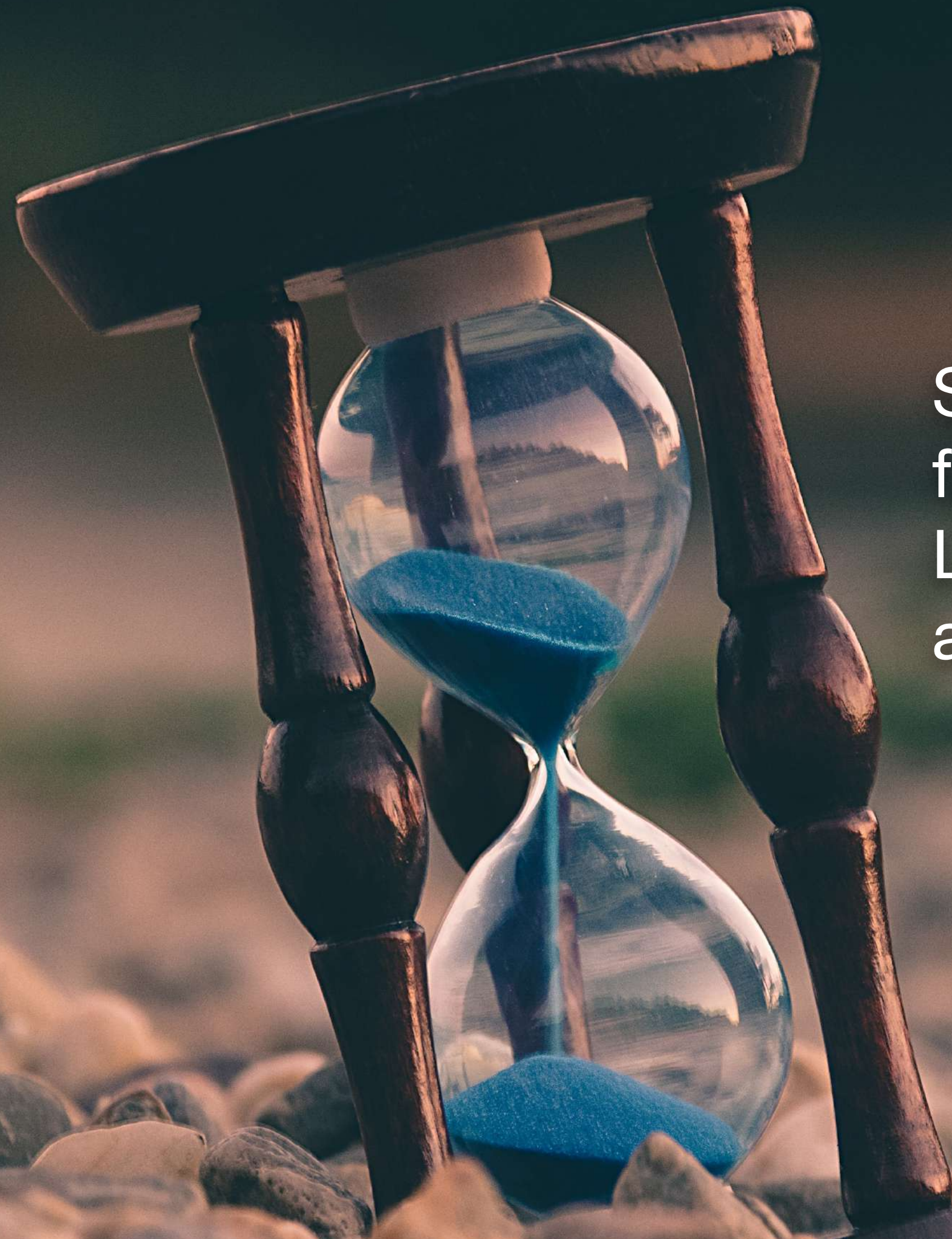


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- ▶ The creator of Emily published some papers with superiors who were also subjected to the same publication pressure.



19 minutes before midnight
October 21, 2014.

Senior members of a medical
faculty of Imperial College
London received
an email



”

If anyone is interested how Professors are treated at Imperial College: Here is my story.

Prof. Stefan Grimm





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- ▶ Professor Grimm was found dead on September 25, 2014 after being told he was "struggling to fulfill the metrics."
- ▶ Before his death, Grimm was told that his grants had ended and he had not obtained new ones.
- ▶ He learned that he had to generate £200,000 a year. However, this requirement was not part of his contract.



Two driving forces which enable the emergence of (metrics-based) research evaluation systems



Metricization



Economization

Metricization

Reducing every aspect of
academic activity to metrics
and reducing all scholarly activity
to publication output

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Economization

Focus on using funds for science to boost the economy, while ensuring accountability of the science sector comparable to other market sectors

Research evaluation

“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

“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

“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

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.

EMANUEL KULCZYCKI is Associate Professor at Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, and Head of the Scholarly Communication Research Group. From 2018 to 2020, he was the chair of the European Network for Research Evaluation in the Social Sciences and the Humanities, and in 2019, he co-founded the Helsinki Initiative on Multilingualism in Scholarly Communication. He has been a policy advisor for the Ministry of Science and Higher Education in Poland since 2013. He co-edited the *Handbook on Research Assessment in the Social Sciences* (2022).

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KULCZYCKI

THE EVALUATION GAME

EMANUEL KULCZYCKI

THE
EVALUATION
GAME



How Publication Metrics Shape
Scholarly Communication

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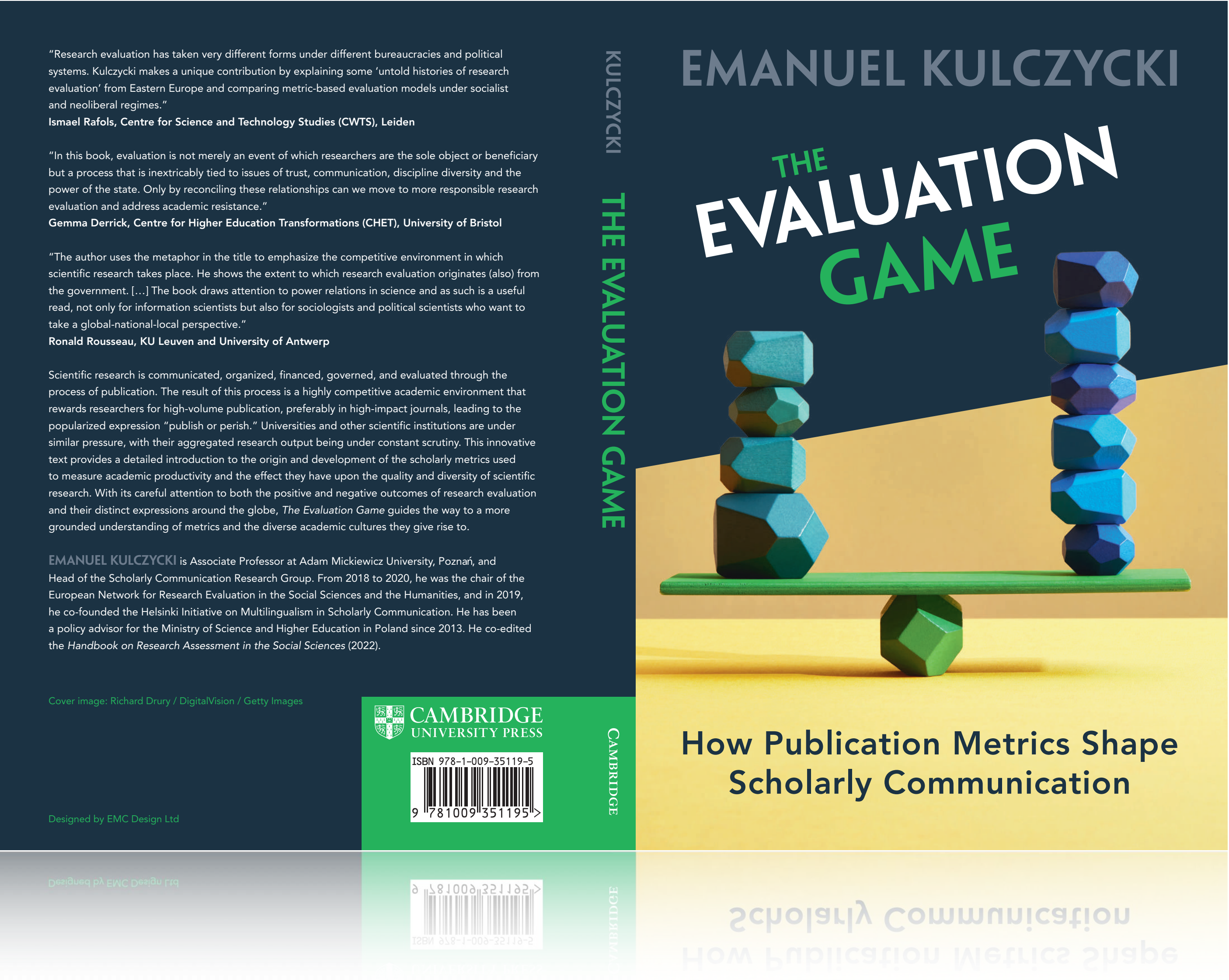
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Scholarly Communication
How Publication Metrics Shape

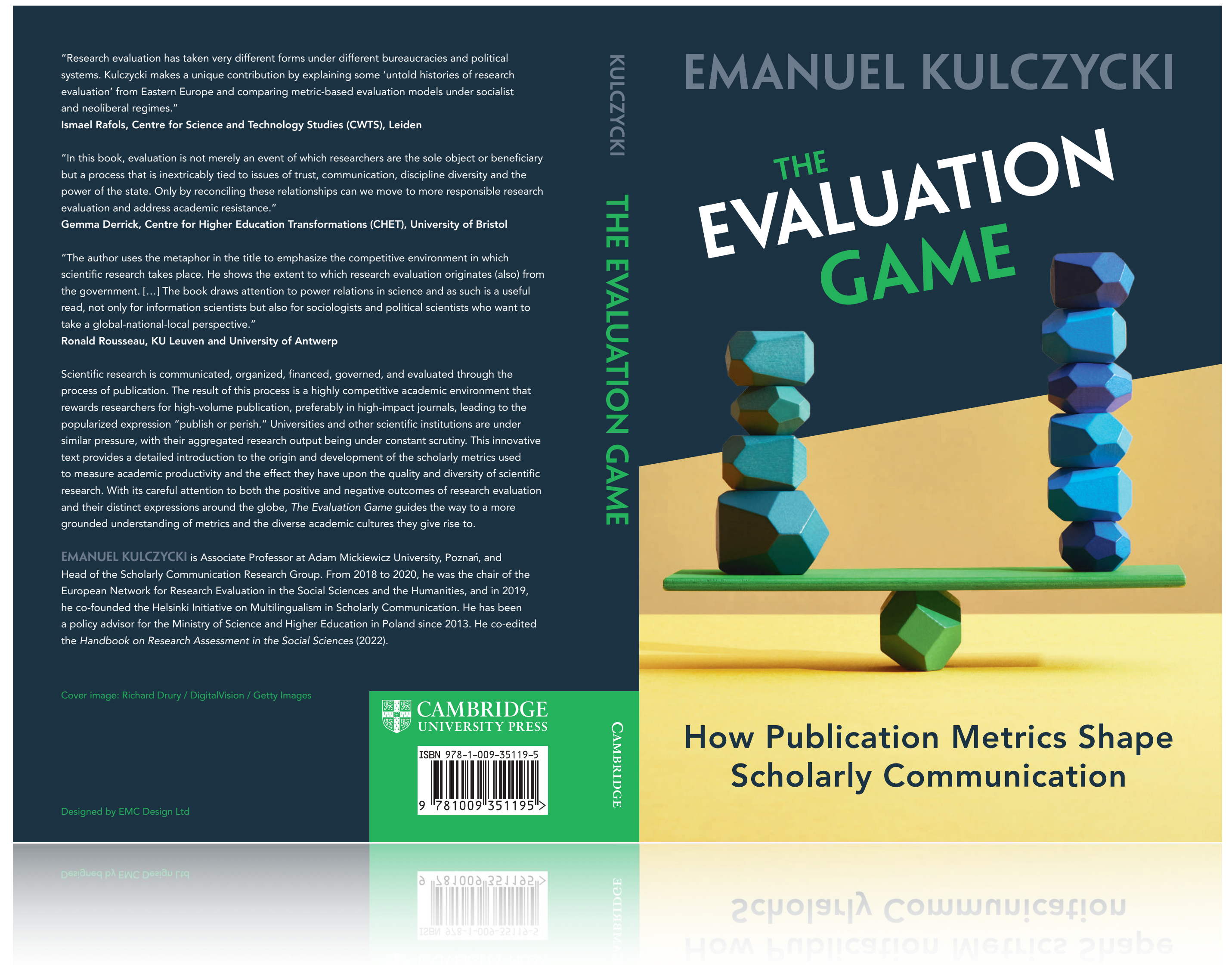
Research evaluation

► Evaluating research by counting publications has a 200-year history.



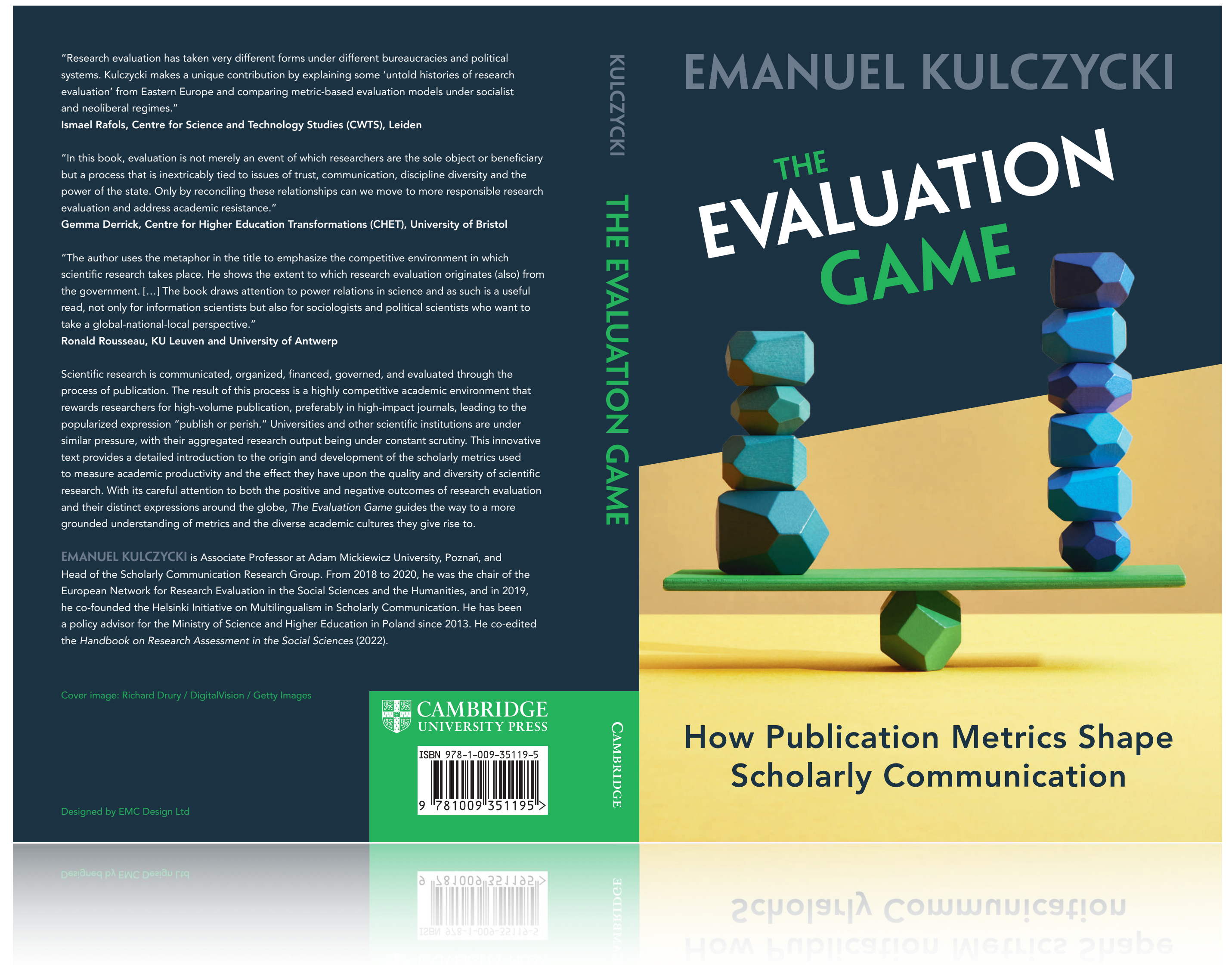
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Research evaluation

- ▶ Evaluating research by counting publications has a 200-year history.
- ▶ Researchers have always found a way to play the evaluation game.
- ▶ When playing the game, researchers must balance *institutional loyalty* with *disciplinary loyalty*.



A row of various colored pencils and pens standing vertically against a blue background. The pencils are of different colors, including blue, green, and brown, and some are sharpened. The pens are also of different colors, including blue and green. The pencils and pens are arranged in a slightly curved line, with some standing upright and others slightly tilted. The background is a solid, vibrant blue.

Untold histories of Russian science measurement and scientometrics

National research evaluation (and monitoring) system



The uniform of the faculty of St.
Petersburg University (1834)

National research evaluation (and monitoring) system

- In 1823-1833, the Russian Ministry of National Education sent all institutions the forms on which employees had to report their activities.
- The practices of compelling university professors to **produce a publication every year**, first enforced in the 1830s, continued through most of late imperial and Soviet history.
- In 1833, the ministry created its own scientific journal, in which each employee of a university „could” publish at least one scientific article.
- Authors had to describe *societal impact* (called „usefulness”) of their research at the start of their articles.
- Each university (and later, departments) began to publish its own journals to provide a publication channel where their employees could publish and meet the ministry’s expectations.



The uniform of the faculty of St. Petersburg University (1834)

**How do researchers, institutions,
and other stakeholders respond to metrics?**

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Following the metrics

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Following the metrics

Adjusting practices

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Neglecting metrics

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Gaming the metrics

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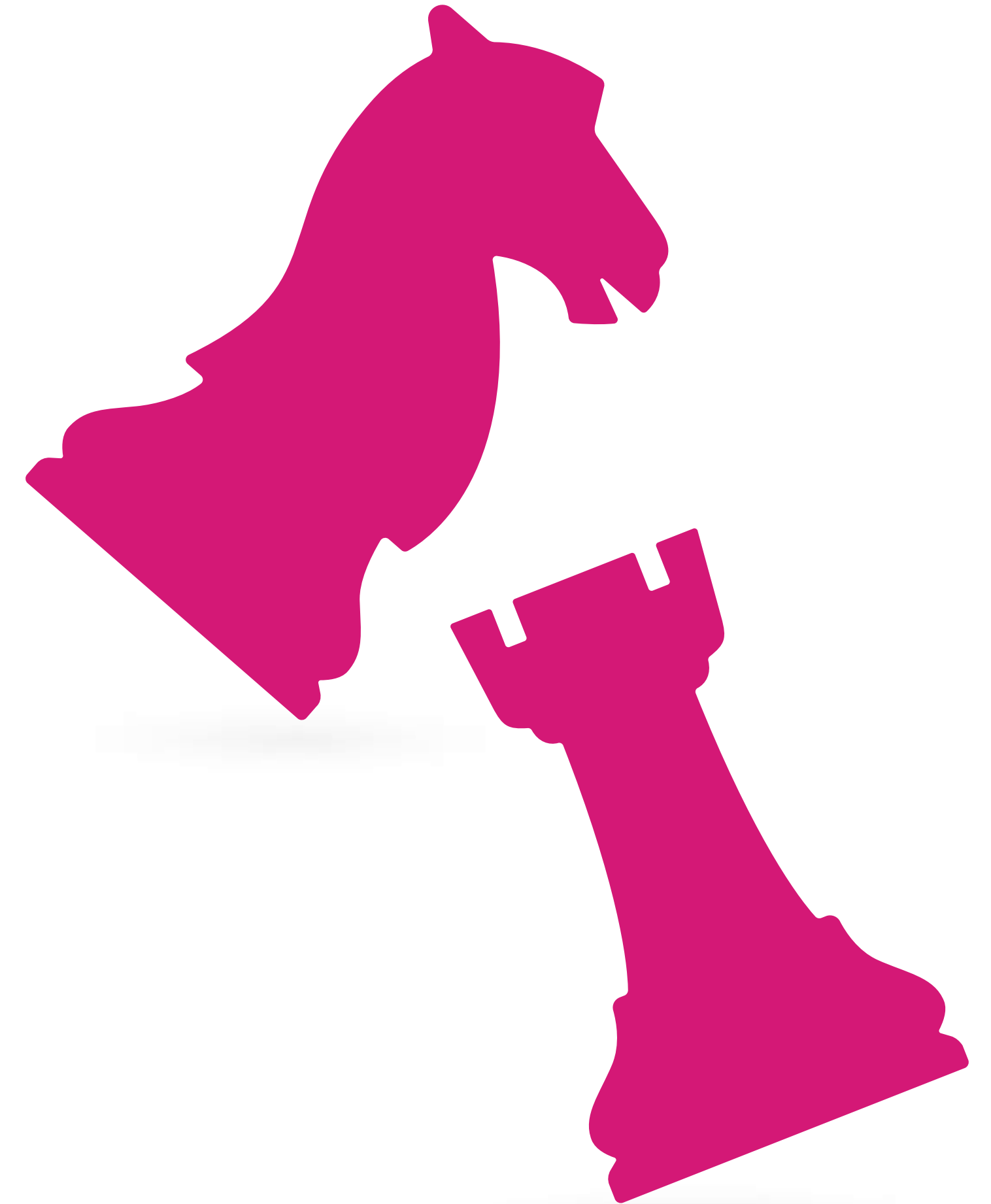
Gaming the metrics

Playing the evaluation
game

Difference between
gaming (evaluation regime)
and **playing the evaluation game**

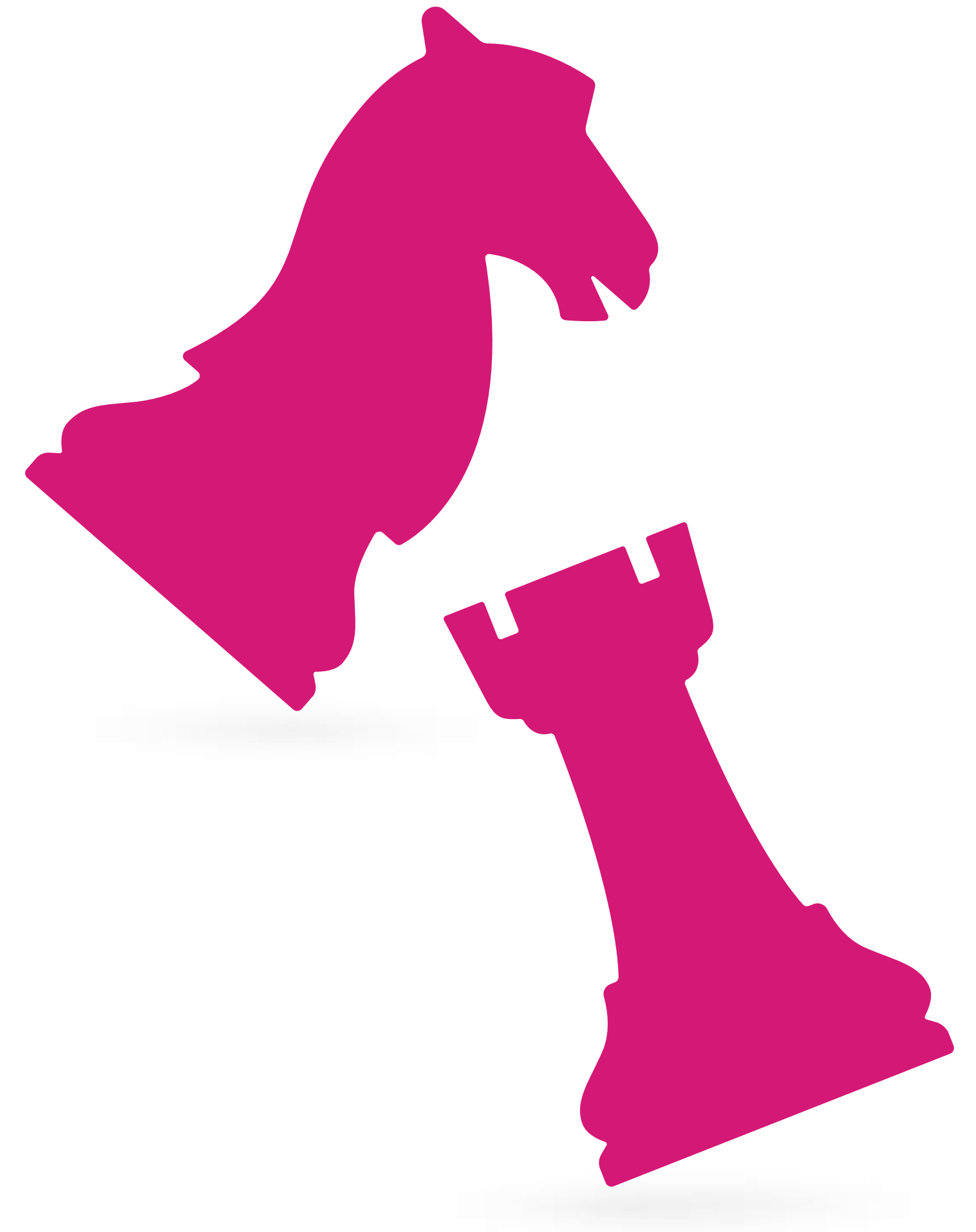


Gaming



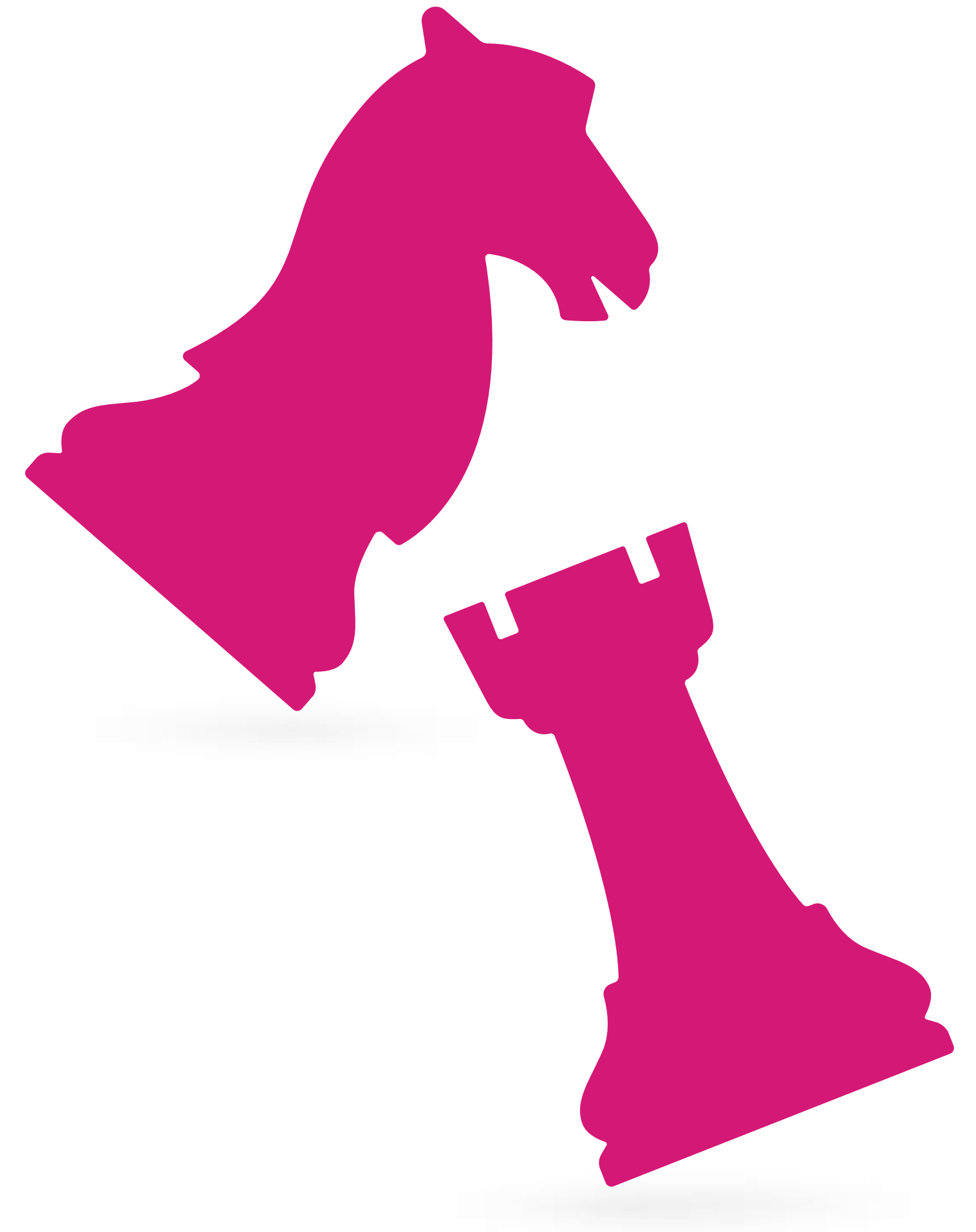
Gaming

- ▶ Gaming is a strategy to maximize profits (including financial) which is fully in line with the rules but it is often combined with finding loopholes in the legal system (e.g., through unforeseen but permitted interpretations of the rules).

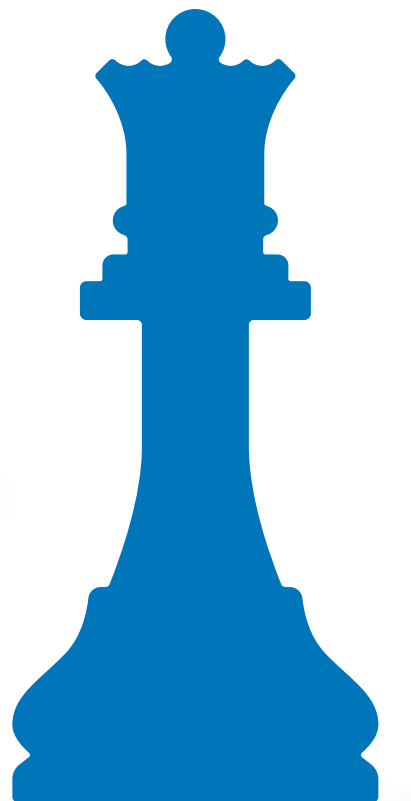


Gaming

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- ▶ Thus, gaming, although perfectly legal, can be seen as unethical in that it violates scientific ethos (= *disciplinary loyalty*).

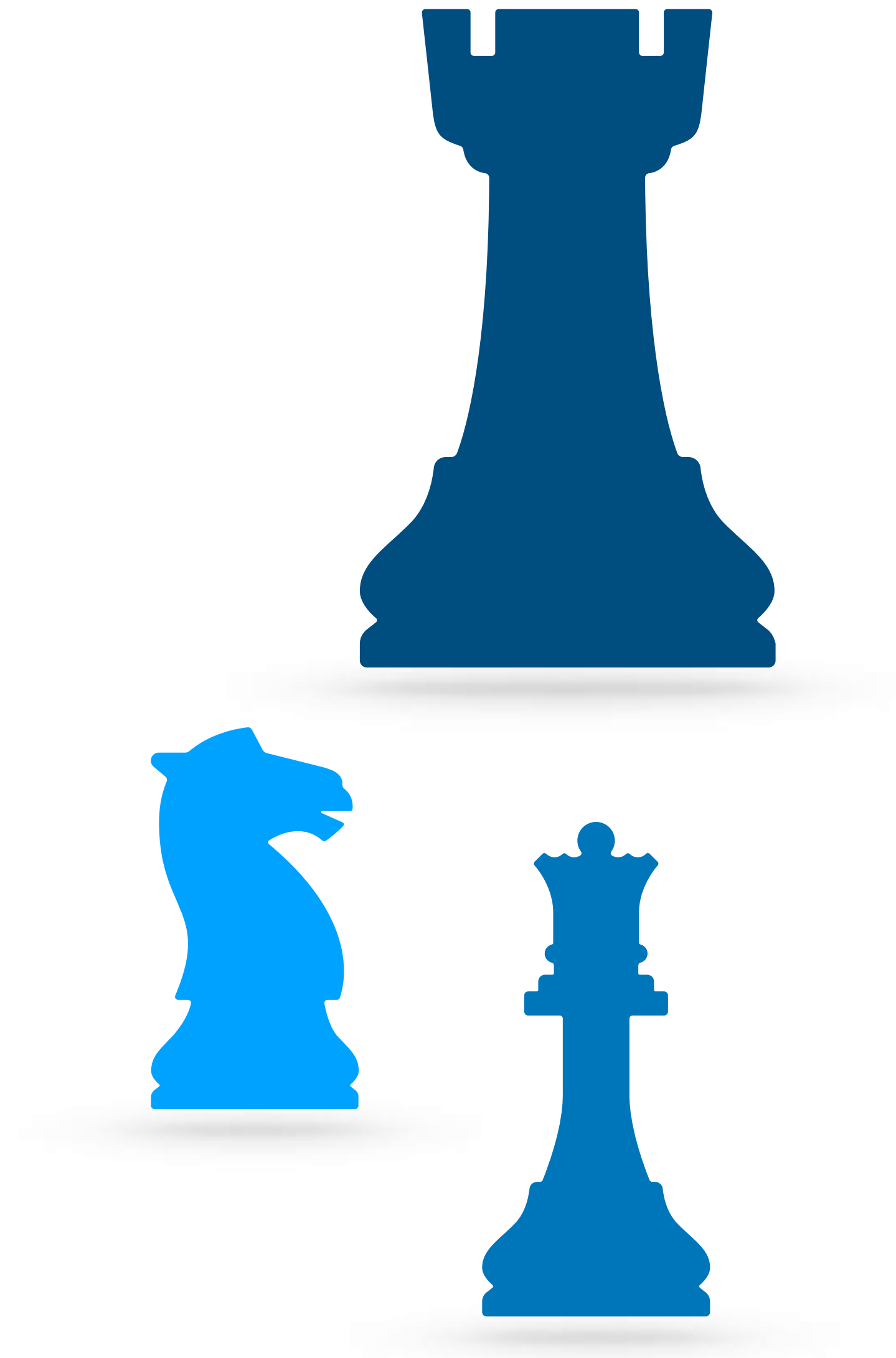


Playing the evaluation game



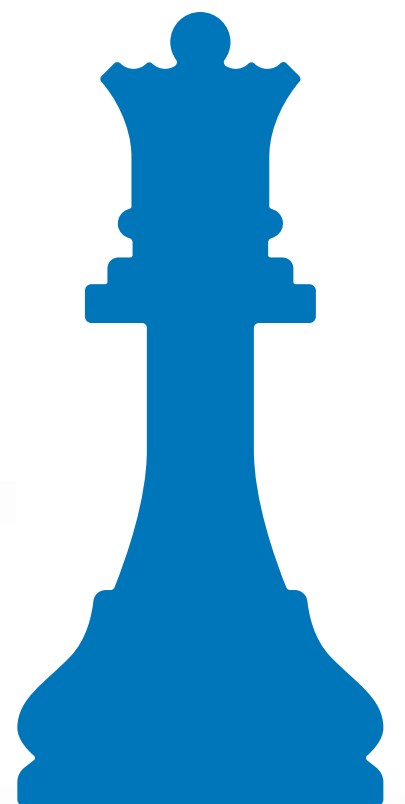
Playing the evaluation game

- ▶ Like gaming, it is fully compliant with legal principles, but is not as easy to evaluate in moral terms as is gaming.



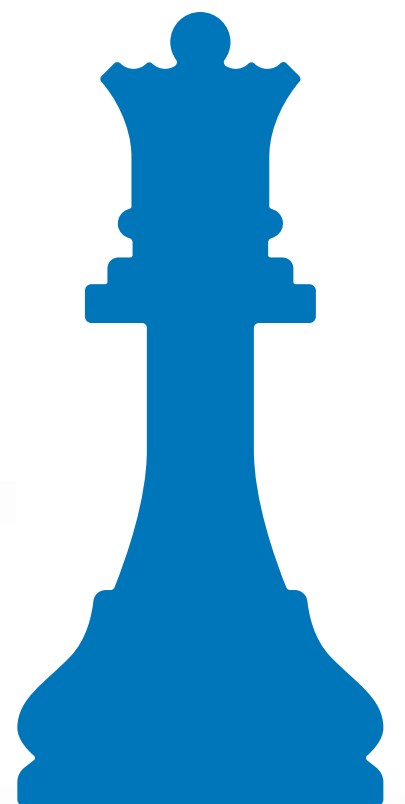
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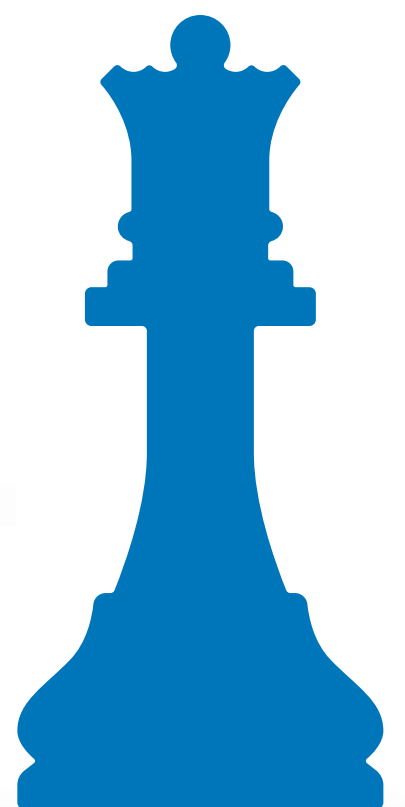
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- ▶ The goal of players of the evaluation game is most often to maintain the status quo (e.g., keep their jobs, meet evaluation requirements) by following the rules at the '**lowest possible cost**', not to maximize profits.
- ▶ Following the rules at the 'lowest possible cost' is crucial in the distinction between 'playing the evaluation game' and 'gaming'.
- ▶ Assessment of the ethical aspects of playing the evaluation game, however, must take into account additional structural dimensions, that is, how the institution—whose rules are met through playing the game—provides resources for the work needed to meet its requirements.



**What can we do with the
proliferation of metrics?**

Seven Recommendations for Academia Not Driven by Individualistic Metrics



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We should support an academic environment that brings out the best in scientists and managers, not the worst. Let's appreciate actions that serve the community. Activities that benefit the common good should be defined within a long-term perspective (of at least a decade).



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Academic institutions should guarantee stable employment conditions and good salaries, including for early career researchers.





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If metrics are to be part of research evaluation, all data used to calculate them must be completely transparent and accessible to all.



Thank you

emanuelkulczycki.com

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