



In Kooperation mit der
ETH-Bibliothek

CHES lecture

Mittwoch, 11. Oktober 2023
17.00 – 18.30 Uhr
mit anschließendem Apéro

ETH Zürich, Campus Zentrum
LEE E 101
Leonhardstrasse 21
8092 Zürich

Prof. Dr. Emanuel Kulczycki

Professor für wissenschaftliche Kommunikation,
Adam Mickiewicz Universität, Poznań, Polen

«Reframing scientometrics:
How ontological understanding
of science influences what we
count and how we interpret it»

Moderation

Dr. David Johann

Gruppenleiter Knowledge Management
ETH-Bibliothek

Scientometrics faces challenges in addressing criticism of university rankings and publication metrics. Merely developing new indicators is not enough; understanding what is being quantified and the reasons behind it is crucial. This lecture explores how an ontological understanding of science influences what we count and how we interpret it. It argues that scientometrics should focus on information flows and view scientists as part of a self-organizing system, rather than competing entities.

The lecture highlights how contemporary scientometrics and the effects of research evaluation regimes, including publication pressure and the misuse of metrics, stems from an atomistic and individualistic ontology pioneered by Derek J. de Solla Price. By examining Price's approach, we gain insights into the shaping of our current understanding of science measurement.

While Price's paradigm remains unchallenged in Western scientometrics, this lecture explores alternative perspectives that emerged in Central-Eastern European countries over a century ago. It examines the Science of Science movement in Poland and the Russian and Soviet research evaluation system, along with Nalimov's marginalized alternative ontology for scientometrics. By shedding light on neglected historical reflections, this lecture reveals that many attempted solutions were unsuccessful due to underlying ontological assumptions. In conclusion, the lecture outlines lessons from this historical analysis to inform current scientometric practices at both local and global levels.

Emanuel Kulczycki is professor of scholarly Communication at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland, and a science policy advisor. Served as the chair of the European Network for Research Evaluation in the Social Sciences and the Humanities (2018–2020) and is a co-founder of the Helsinki Initiative on Multilingualism in Scholarly Communication. Recently published *The Evaluation Game: How Publication Metrics Shape Scholarly Communication* (Cambridge University Press, 2023) and co-edited the *Handbook on Research Assessment in the Social Sciences* (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2022). More information: <http://emanuelkulczycki.com>

Das CHES will die Selbstreflexion der Hochschulen und der Wissenschaften stärken und die Herausforderungen thematisieren, welche durch die veränderten gesellschaftlichen Erwartungen von den zunehmend autonomen Hochschulen bewältigt werden müssen.