Open Organizations and Organizing Openness

Openness as a Paradigm

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Armbrüster, T., and Gebert, D. (2002). Uncharted territories of organizational research: The case of Karl Popper's open society and its enemies.

Group I

▸ How could daily work-life in closed organizations be truly considered beneficial for an open society, given that one assumes the longing for closedness to be rooted in human nature and embedded in basic psychological patterns?

▸ The open society emphasizes the individual and quick adaptation to a fast changing environment. What happens to those, who are not able to adapt?

Group II

▸ Many of the modern approaches on how to structure organizations (e.g. teamwork) are described by the authors as steps towards closedness in Popper's terms. Can there even be a contemporary & open organization?

▸ Which types of organizations can be considered to have some 'open characteristics'?

Group III

▸ Even if bureaucracy fosters openness in organizations, in what way could they pose a threat to openness, what could be examples where this has happened?

▸ Isn't bureaucracy (the ideal type) an ideology, too?

Group IV

▸ How much openness in Popper's sense is possible in a strictly profit-oriented company?

▸ How much open is good for organizations regarding fast decision making?

Background: Popper on Falsification

> **❝** Induction is logically invalid; but refutation or falsification is a logically valid way of arguing from a single counterinstance to - or, rather, against - the corresponding law.
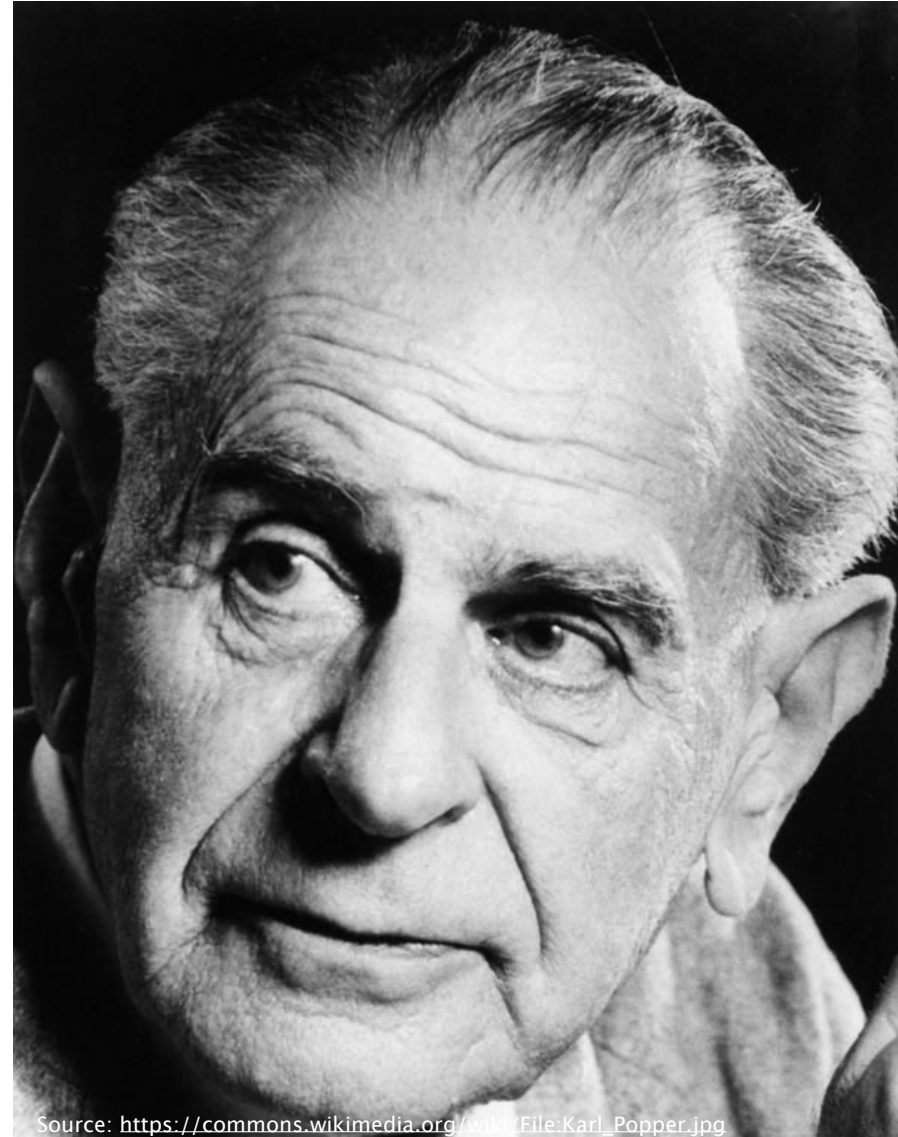
(Popper, 1934, p. 27)
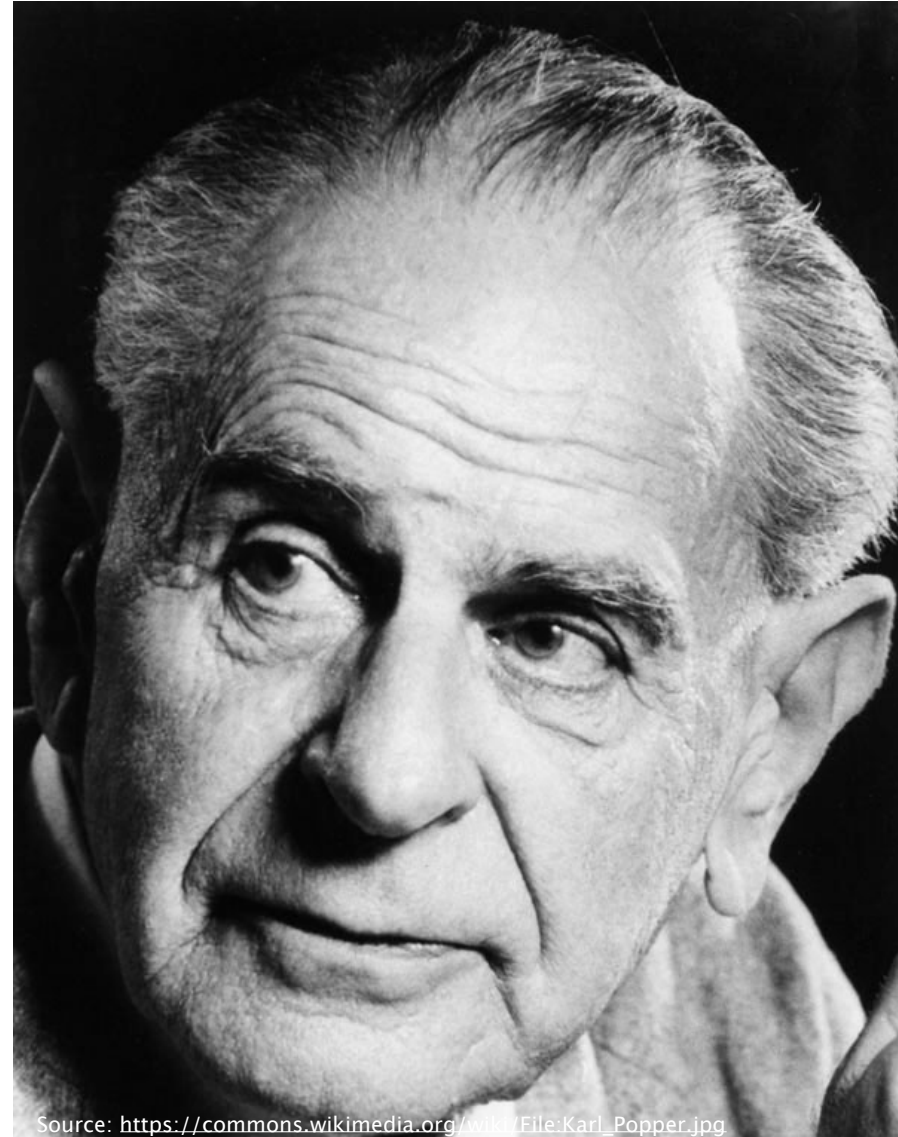
Background: Kuhn-Popper-Controversy


vs.

Background: Critical Rationalism

" Whenever a theory appears to you as the only possible one, take this as a sign that you have neither understood the theory nor the problem which it was intended to solve. Popper (1972)

▸ **Fallibilism**: there is no definite knowledge

▸ **Methodological Rationalism:** there are rational ways to choose between theories

▸ **Critical Realism:** (meta-physical) assumption that an objective reality exists

Background: "Tyranny of Structurelessness"

> 66 Contrary to what we would like to believe, there is no such thing as a structureless group.

(Freeman, 1974, http://www.jofreeman.com/joreen/tyranny.htm)
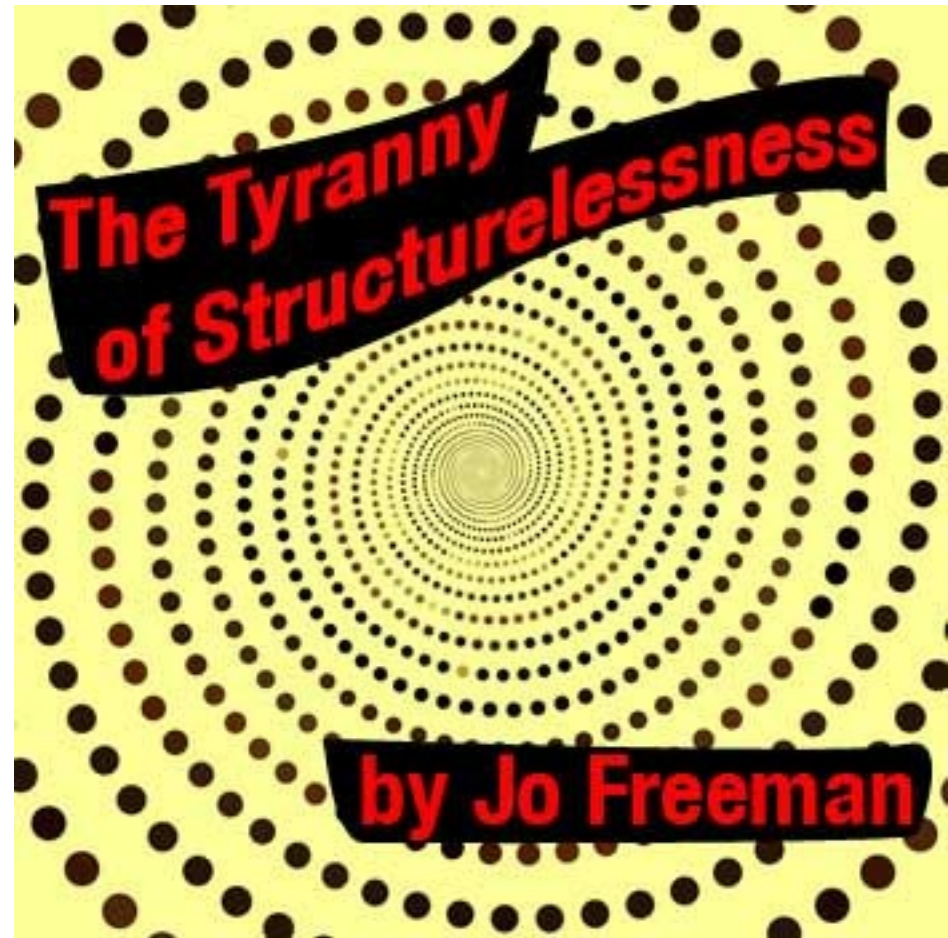
Freeman: Principles of Democratic Structuring

1) **Democratic Delegation** of specific authority to specific individuals for specific tasks
2) **Responsibility** of those with authority
3) **Distribution of authority** among as many people as possible
4) **Rotation of tasks** among individuals
5) **Allocation of tasks** along rational criteria such as ability, interest, and responsibility
6) **Diffusion of information** to everyone as frequently as possible
7) **Equal access to resources** needed by the group

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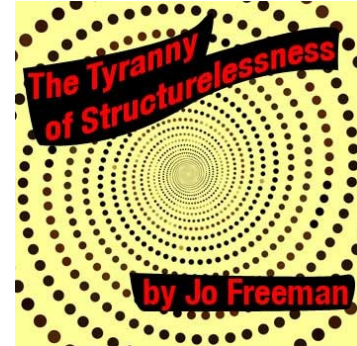
Tkacz (2012):
From open source to open government:
a critique of open politics.

Group I

- The text states: "the logic of openness actually gives rise to, and is perfectly compatible with, new forms of closure" (p. 400). How can openness give rise to new forms of closure?
- Do you think open societies or organizations are connected with more insecurity in its structure than the closed ones?

Group II

- How can we protect our knowledge with regard to competitive advantages, while following the trend of openess?
- Doesn´t openness also open up the possibility for the exploitation of people who participate? Because the people themselves don´t get anything for it whereas the company (e.g. Google) uses the knowledge and the contributions

Group III

▸ I do agree with Tkacz that openness is congenitally political but I don't think that openness is intrinsically neoliberal. Is this a rather US-centric view?

▸ In what respect is the open society interchangeable with Popper's understanding of democracy?

Group IV

▸ According to Stallman's view on an open society, how could highly cost-intensive research und developement be financed, if there is a complete open access to all human knowledge?

▸ "To describe the political organisation of all things open requires leaving the rhetoric of open behind." (p. 404). How could we apply his advice to dispense the language of openness in describing contemporary society?
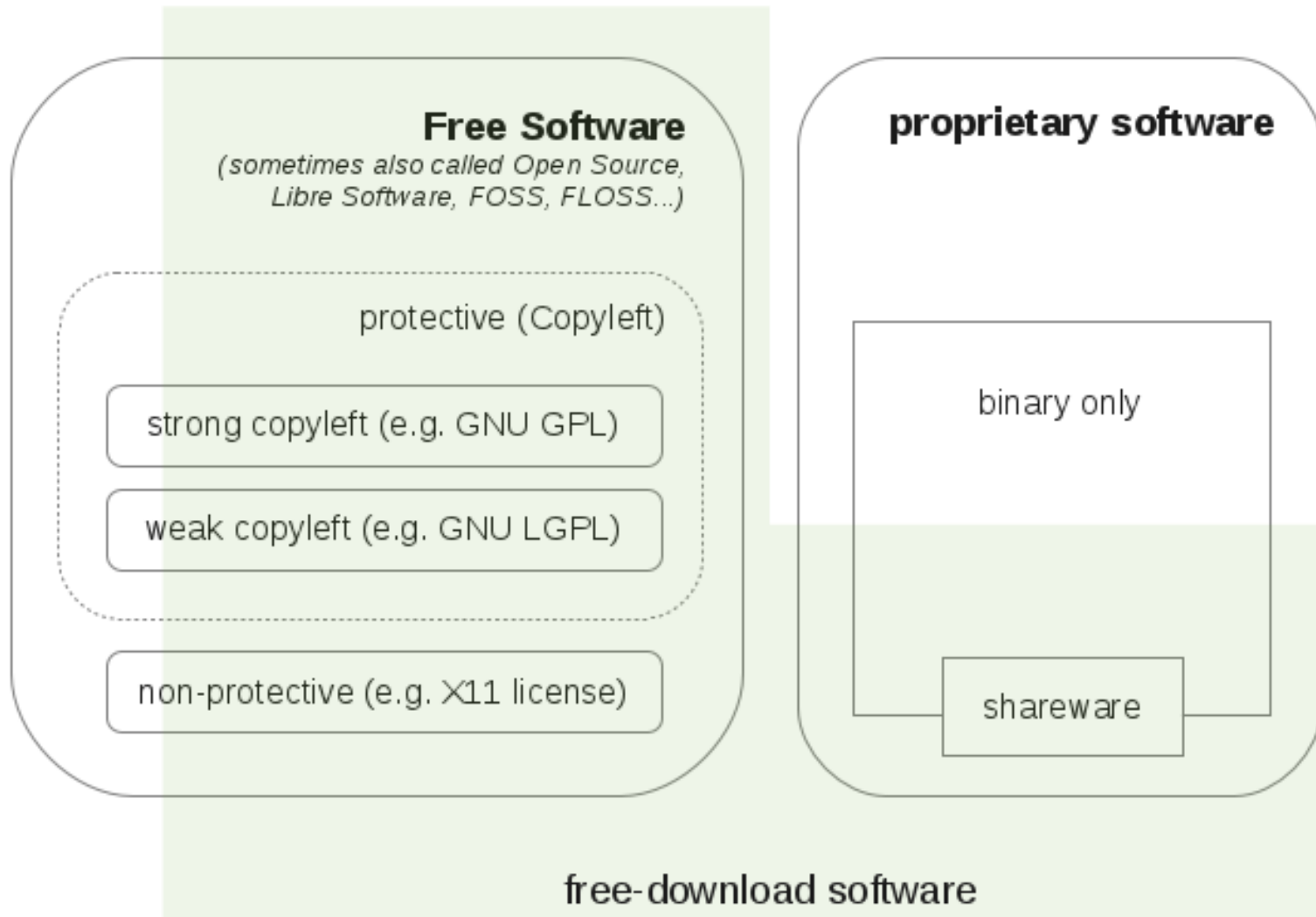
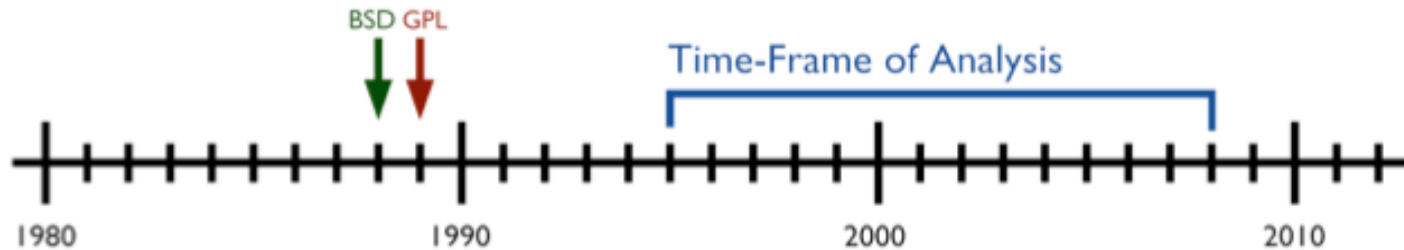# Free Software vs. Open Source Software
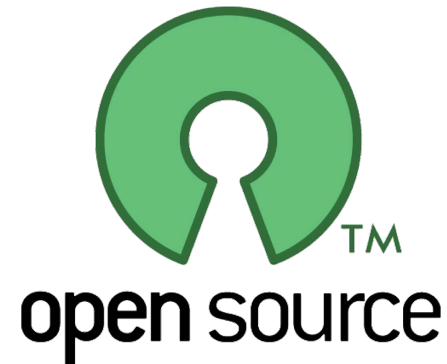
- ▸ Focus on (downsides of) commodification

- ▸ Free as in 'free speech'

- ▸ Philosophy important

- ▸ Focus on (potentials of) organization

- ▸ Critique of 'free' as 'gratis'

- ▸ Business important

Free Software vs. Open Source Software

Free Software
(sometimes also called Open Source, Libre Software, FOSS, FLOSS...)

protective (Copyleft)

strong copyleft (e.g. GNU GPL)

weak copyleft (e.g. GNU LGPL)

non-protective (e.g. X11 license)

proprietary software

binary only

shareware

free-download software

Data on GPL License Usage

Total added Source Lines of Coding (SLoC) per month
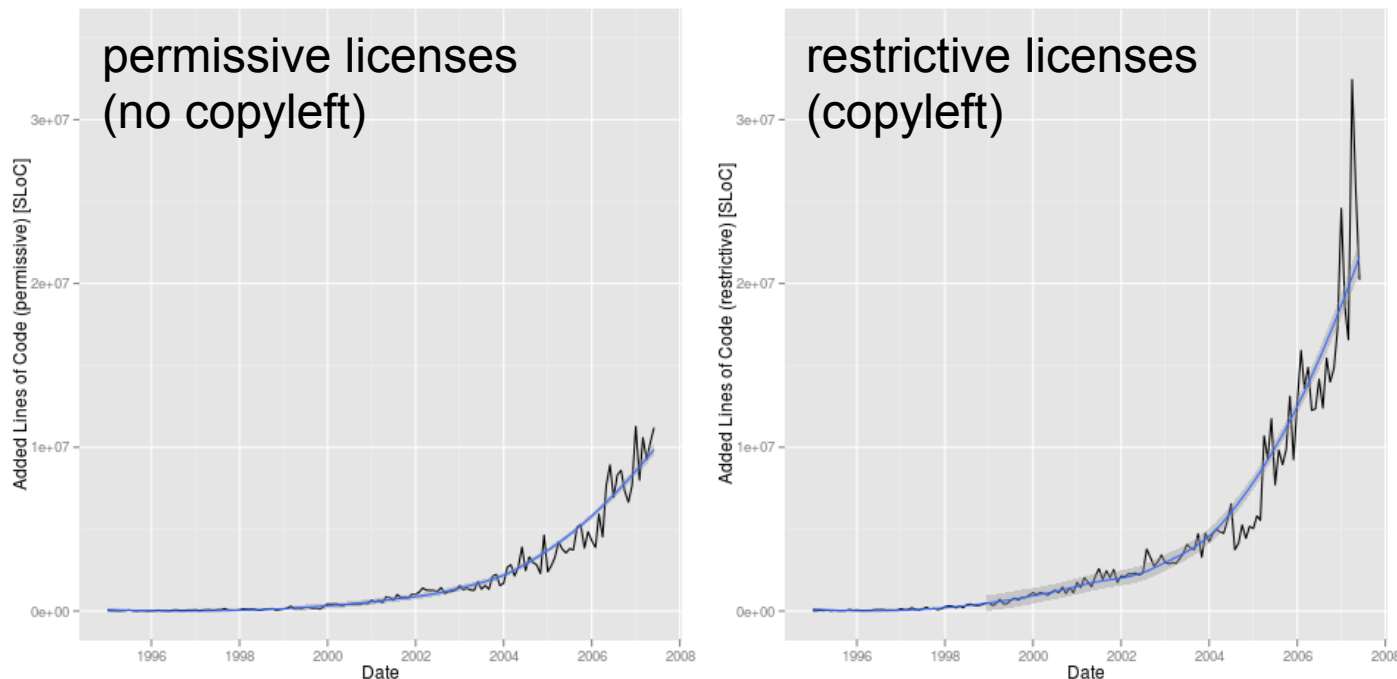
permissive licenses
(no copyleft)

restrictive licenses
(copyleft)

Source: Hofmann, G., Riehle, D., Kolassa, C., & Mauerer, W. (2013). A dual model of open source license growth.
In Open Source Software: Quality Verification (pp. 245-256). Springer Berlin Heidelberg.

Data on GPL License Usage

BSD GPL

Time-Frame of Analysis

1980   1990   2000   2010
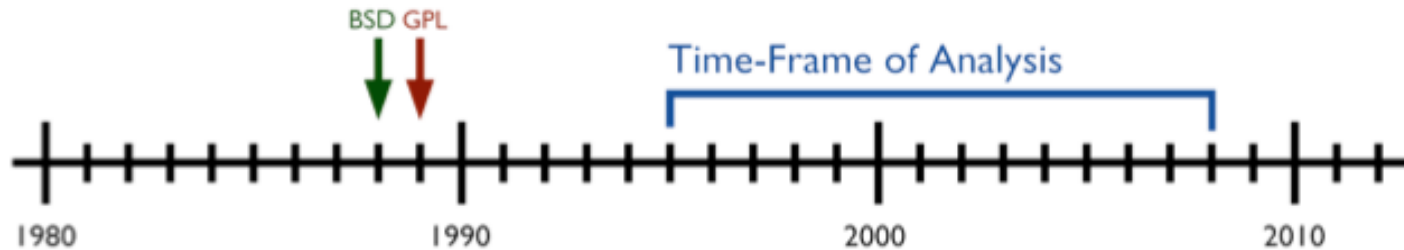
Log-scale of total added Source Lines of Coding (SLoC)

permissive licenses
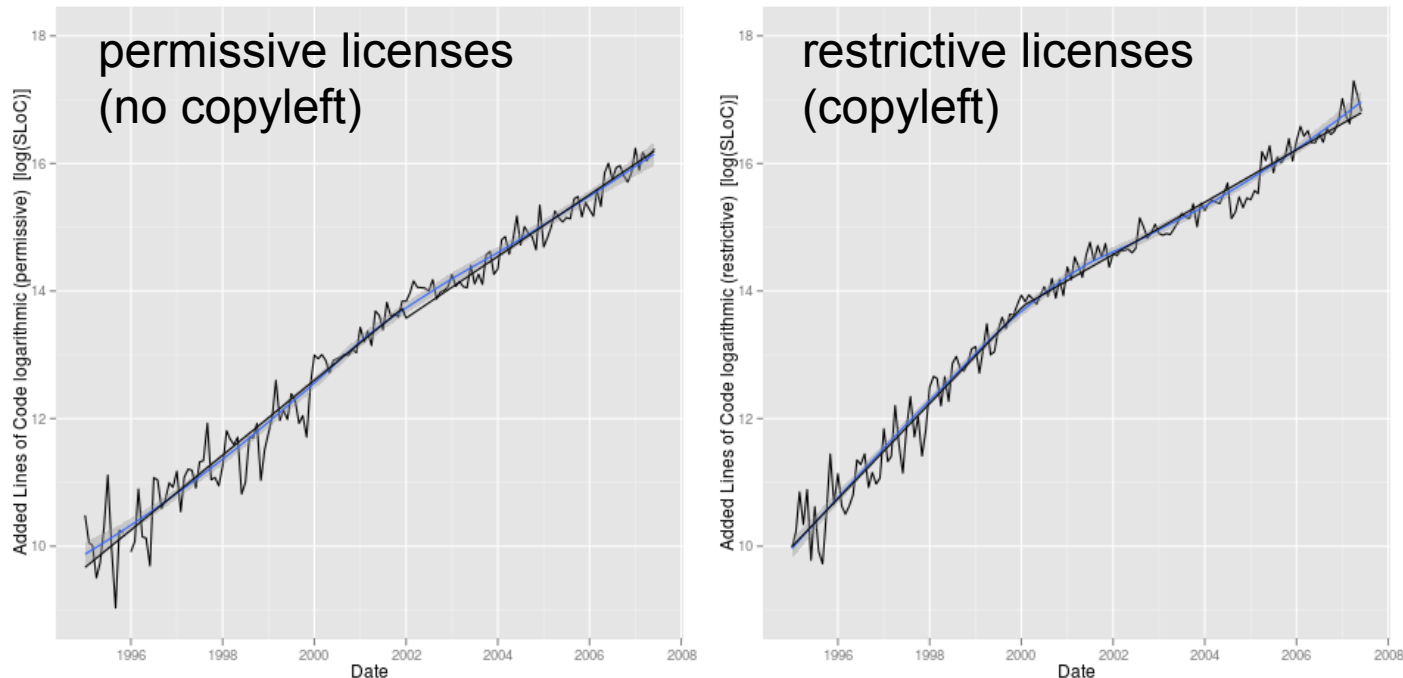(no copyleft)

restrictive licenses
(copyleft)

Source: Hofmann, G., Riehle, D., Kolassa, C., & Mauerer, W. (2013). A dual model of open source license growth.
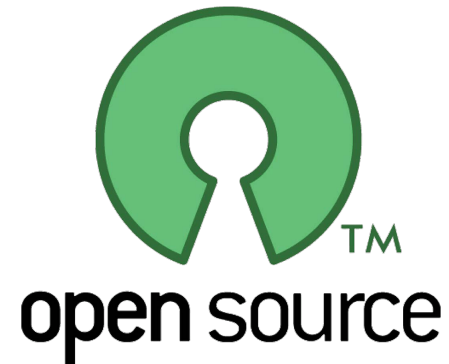In Open Source Software: Quality Verification (pp. 245-256). Springer Berlin Heidelberg.

Free Software vs. Open Source Software

Which one is 'more open'?

Popper's Asymmetries & Negative Definitions

" I suggest the term 'democracy' as a short-hand label for a government [that can be removed 'without bloodshed']. Popper (1944)

▸ **Democracy**: not possible to elect best leaders, but possibility to remove bad leaders

▸ **Falsification:** not possible to verify theories, but possible to falsify them

▸ **Piecemeal Engineering:** not possible to make people happy, but possible to reduce hardship

Moment of Zen

" the curious situation of openness emerging within a supposedly already-open society

<div align="right">Tkacz (1944)</div>

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