

Open Access Publishing – A Challenge for Russian Psychology

Boris B. Velichkovsky
Moscow State University

Berlin, 24th July 2008

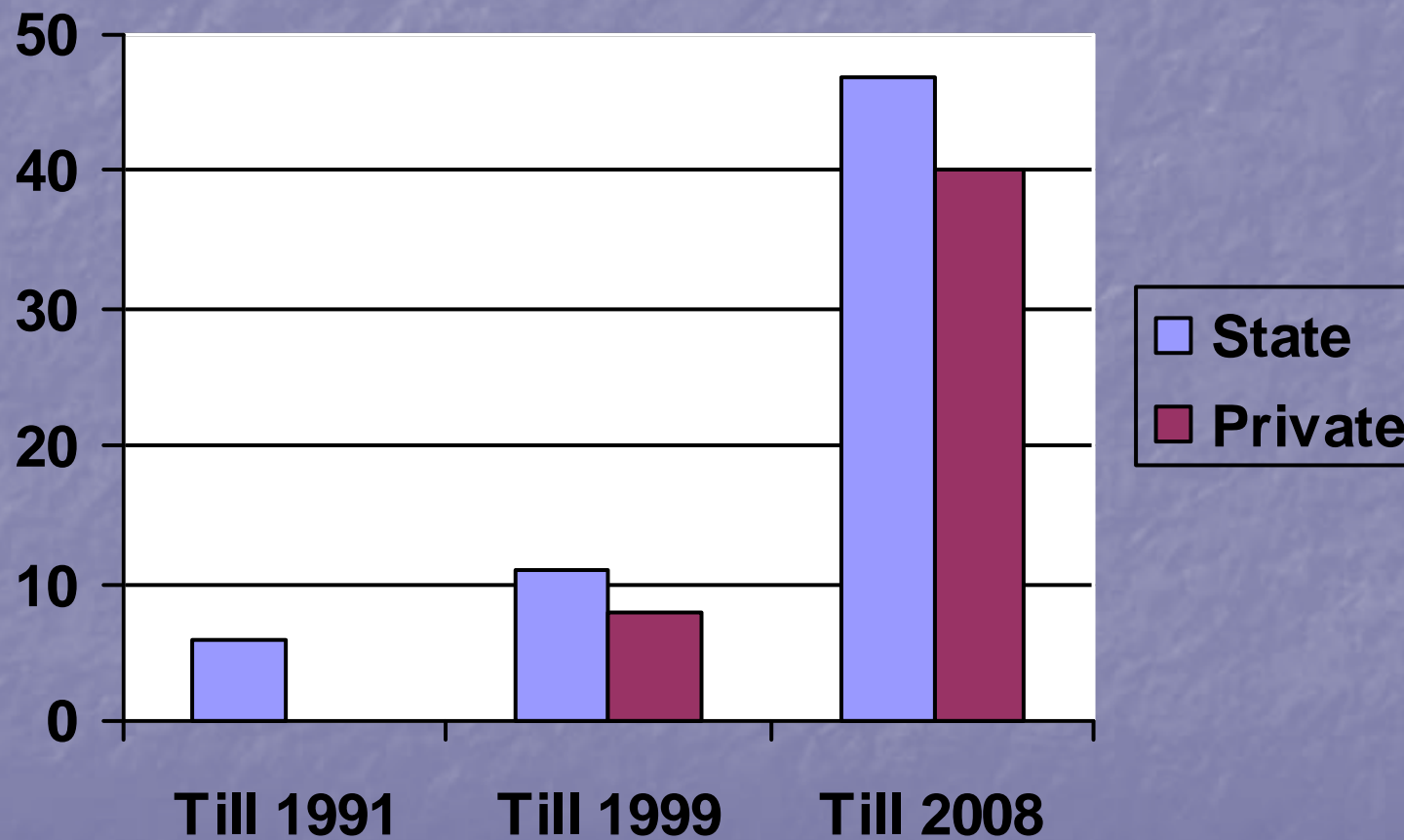
Publication practices in Russia

- Publication practices in Russian psychology underwent a considerable change in the course of dramatic social and economic changes
- They still does not fully match their Western counterparts
- Open access publishing is a promising new publication technique, which can bring considerable benefits to Russian psychology
- Is it possible to implement Open Access in psychology with Russian participation?

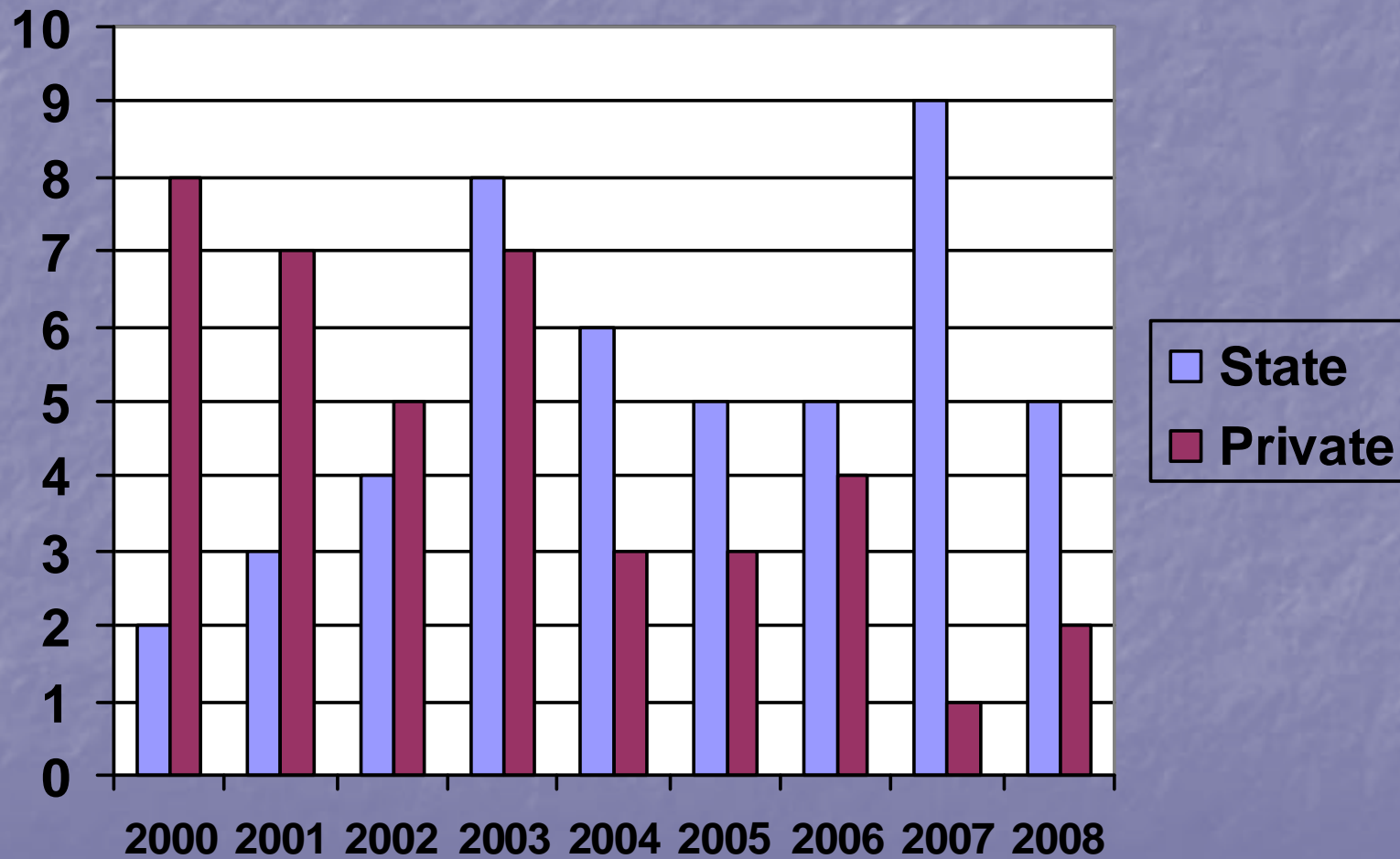
The RSL sample

- How many scientific psychological journals are there in Russia?
- A good lower bound estimate is given by inspecting the periodicals catalogue of Russian State Library (Moscow)
- The publishers are in many cases obliged to provide the Library with content
- The Catalogue lists 122 journals under 'Psychology', 7 of which are commercial magazines aimed at general audience

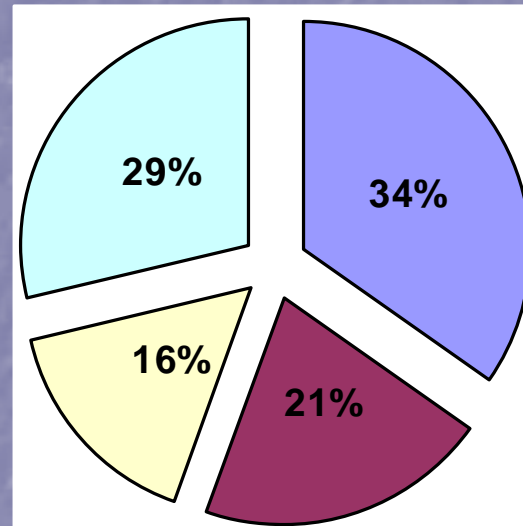
The temporal dynamics



The temporal dynamics



The distribution of journals' topics



- Psychology
- Pedagogical psychology
- Psychotherapy & Clinical Psychology
- Other

Economics

- Price per issue (N=30): $M = 8.4 \text{ €SD} = 3.8 \text{ €}$
- Printing costs are high – a journal is profitable if having >1000 subscribers
- Publications fees are common, ranging ca. 5-8 €a page
- No honoraries are paid (with few exceptions)

Accessibility

- Distributed mainly through subscription
- Many journals have a Web-site
- Some commercial publishers provide paid access to latest issues
- Some publishers provide electronic archives of previous abstracts
- Distribution of previous issues in form of CD-ROMs with searchable databases is sometimes practiced (*VP*, 35 €, 1986-2005)

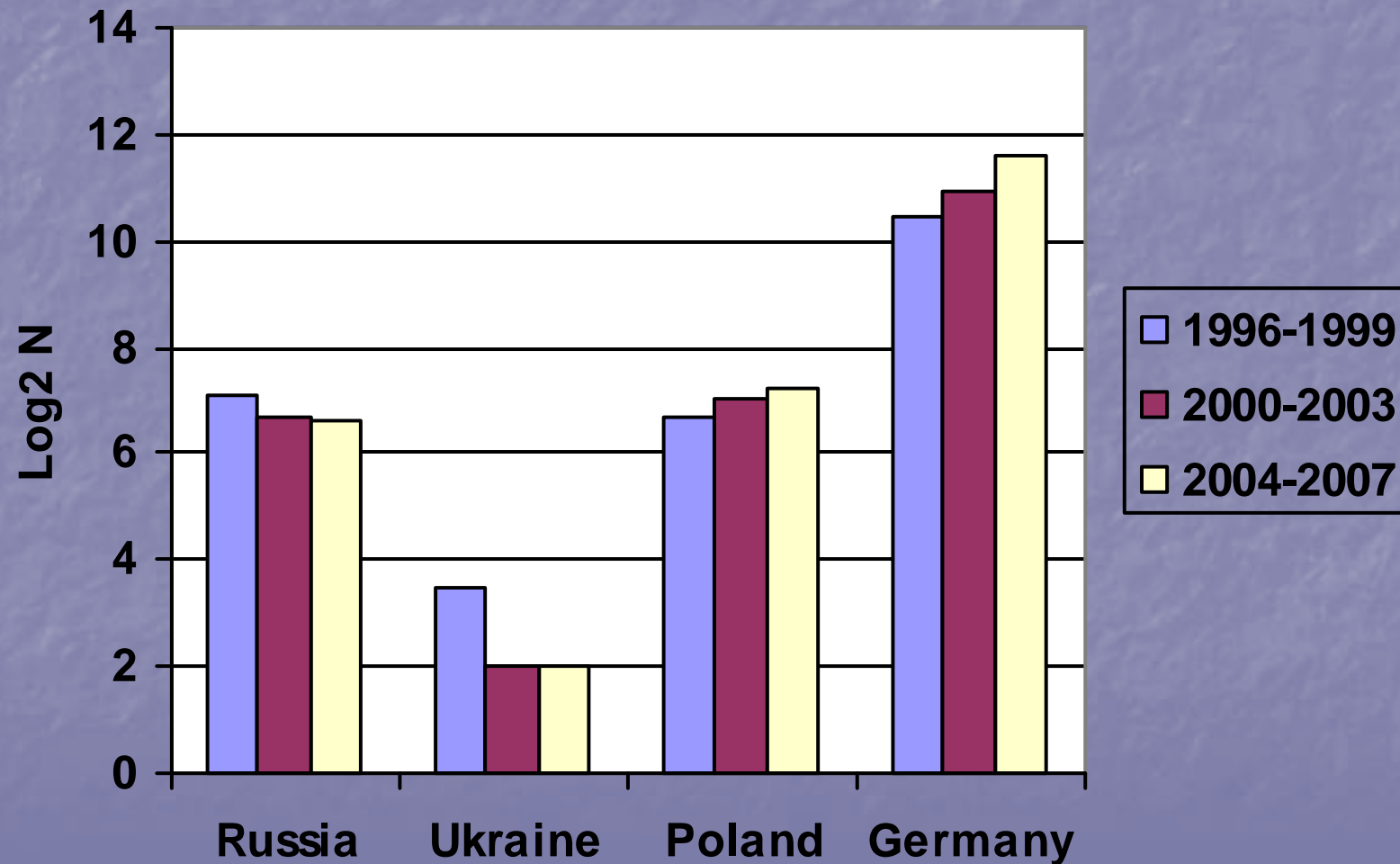
Reviewing

- Implemented in the majority of journals, published by state institutions
- Reviewers typically work blind to authors identity and affiliation
- Outcome: 1 page written statement
- No formal criteria of the quality
- No encouragement to be critical

Impact of Russian journals

- 5% of all Russian scientific journals are represented in international citation indexes
- Russian psychology is sure to be underrepresented
- International impact-factors for Russian journals in “hard” sciences estimated as *low* and *very low*
- Even highly decorated scientist do not pay attention to their citation indices (or do not know what it is)

International publishing activity



Career progression

- For a PhD, 1 publication in a peer-reviewed journal is required
- For a second dissertation, 7 publications in p-r journals are required
- Typically, the sheer number of publication is all that matters for career progression (if at all)
- Academic career progression is dependant on many other factors

OA in Russia – the *pros*

- Is Russia a developing country? OA is capable of breaking the vicious circle of lacking integration into world's psychological process
- Readers:
 - Free access to latest scientific results
- Authors:
 - Increased room for publishing (important with rising # of psychologists in Russia)
 - Increased impact-factor effect of OA is multiplied
 - Self-development though the need to comply to rigorous standards of Western peer-reviewed journals

OA in Russia – the *cons*

- The linguistic problem
- The background problem
- The processing fee problem
- The quantity problem

Conclusions

- OA provides some clear benefits for Russian psychology
- However, some new skills must be acquired
- This must be done under conditions of under-financing of scientists in Russia
- Self-archiving is the ideal beginning for OA in Russian psychology
- No-fee OA journals can benefit from Russian participation, but there will probably be little content of sufficient quality
- Fee-based access journals will have it harder to get Russian authors in