The information that political leaders utilize is critical to the kinds of policies that emerge in their decision processes. Politicians can solicit information that will legitimize policies they already plan to pursue, or they can use a variety of data sources to help them decide the best course of action. Soviet leaders have followed both tactics in the area of science policy. They have encouraged the development of naukovedenie, a field of research that supports the government's role in planning for science and one that also generates empirical data that could contribute to policy changes. The political impact and significance of naukovedenie depend, of course, on the perceptions and attitudes of decisionmakers and on the constraints that normally impinge upon the transformation of policy options into social action.

In this article, I examine the information that naukovedy have gathered through the conduct of survey research in the USSR. Much of that research is based on the Soviet attempt to rationalize the decision process for science. An assumption inherent in the Soviet literature is that it is possible to identify a clear-cut set of national goals for scientific development and a series of short-term and long-term plans toward the achievement of those goals. This presumes a high degree of rationality in policymaking and systematic controls over the implementation of science policy.

If we were to look for rational goal attainment in Soviet science, we would expect to see science specialists playing an increasingly important role as they gather empirical data on the attitudes and behavior of scientific personnel. If social science in the USSR is a handmaiden to politics in other areas of social planning, then why not in the area of science? Indeed, if we examine the literature on naukovedenie that has developed since the mid-1960s, we see a strong...
orientation toward the rationalization of science management. Naukovedy have used their research to address the national goal of improved scientific output. They have tried to correlate levels of efficiency (and inefficiency) in scientific performance with a wide range of variables in the Soviet research environment. One could argue that the social science data thus generated has the potential of becoming a central part of the planning process for Soviet science.

The politics of decision making in any country is not always rational, however. Publicly articulated goals are not necessarily the goals that politicians pursue. With complex issues, such as those related to science, there are so many actors trying to influence decisions that the work of social scientists often gets lost in the shuffle. The immense number of factors that must be considered in the planning and management of scientific research are compounded by conflicting opinions and advice, competing vested interests, and different sources of information. Even among the naukovedy, there are conflicting viewpoints, some of which go so far as to challenge the traditional Soviet views on research management.

It is often thought, both by Western and by Soviet scholars, that the problems that arise in the performance of scientific research derive primarily from poor management and from the inability of the economic system to provide adequate equipment, supplies, and support services. To a large extent, this is true, but it does not tell the whole story. If we look at the problems in Soviet science solely in terms of economic management, we are, for all practical purposes, viewing the scientist as a passive victim of a system he cannot control. It is just as important to view the scientist as a person who contributes actively to the way the system works. In order to understand the behavior of Soviet scientists, therefore, one must look beyond the external factors of the research environment to such social and psychological variables as the scientist's motivation, skills, and professional satisfaction.

In writing this article, I make no assumption of rationality (or irrationality) in Soviet science policy. I do not delve into the politics of science in any detail, nor do I focus on the economic and managerial problems of scientific research. Nonetheless, the reader should keep these three elements in mind while reviewing the material under discussion. My primary purpose here is to illustrate some of the data that Soviet naukovedy have generated on the following four topics: recruitment into science, professional motivation, satisfaction with working and non-working conditions, and professional mobility. In the conclusion, I suggest ways in which the information derived from Soviet surveys can be related to science policy.

Recruitment into Science

One would expect that if a student is genuinely interested in the intellectual challenge of a scientific specialty and in the process of scientific research,