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ABSTRACT*

In mid-1992 survey research in the CIS still abounds in difficulties which commonly render results unreliable and misleading. Against a political background of decades when candid expression of attitude or opinion could be costly or fatal, the new demand for, and reliance upon surveys far outstrips the capacity for its proper conduct. This paper, by a leading western expert who has been practicing and teaching the profession in the CIS for a number of years, describes and illustrates the daunting problems facing native efforts to build survey research organizations and conduct survey research. Those problems include:

- unprecedented legal uncertainty;
- monumental communications problems;
- inflation and other currency obstacles;
- sampling, supervision and control difficulties;
- lack of qualified instructors and a crisis in education;
- a multiplicity of languages and cultures not only across borders but within states and settlements;
- competitive isolation and a lack of professional standards.

There are reasons for optimism for the future: the profession is profitable and prestigious, and is attracting dedicated and bright people who still exhibit that perseverance and resilience which for decades enabled them to plow forward in the face of adversity.

*Prepared by NCSEER.
SOCIOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF SURVEY RESEARCH

IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES'

Survey research is providing fascinating evidence on social conditions in the territories of the former Soviet Union. However, the institutions conducting these surveys are themselves constituents of the very social structure they study. They interact with the citizenry and with other social institutions in their struggle to survive and even prosper. It makes sense, then, to pose sociological questions about the enterprises conducting surveys. Doing so yields colorful illustrations of the social processes unleashed in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). \(^2\)

But more importantly for our purposes, sociological inquiry can enhance our insight into the usefulness and prospects of survey research in the CIS.

Several sociological questions come to mind about the structure and function of survey research centers in the CIS. In what ways do governmental or political institutions impinge upon them? Similarly, how does the economic infrastructure affect their ability to organize as necessary to cover the territories in their samples? How are recruitment and training managed? What unusual social factors come into play in the construction and interpretation of questionnaires? And what are the prospects for professionalization and development in this new industry?

THE POLITICAL MILIEU

We need not dwell on political intrusion into survey research in the former Soviet Union, since it has been so well documented in Vladimir Shlapentokh's *The Politics of Sociology in the Soviet Union* (Westview Press: 1987). Suffice it to say, many populations were off limits, if only because local authorities feared that results would reflect badly on them. Questionnaires
were invariably heavily censored, so sociologists were often unable to put their best questions to respondents. The paltry results that found their way past censors into print were so incomplete that often one could not even ascertain the wording of key questions, let alone examine tables with appropriate control variables.

This is not to imply that Party officials opposed all survey research per se. The Institute for Concrete Social Research (later rechristened the Institute of Sociology) maintained a sizable division devoted to secret research for the Party and KGB. The division was closed only in the late 1980s after a progressive sociologist, Vladimir Yadov, was elected director of the Institute.

Also, Party officials sometimes saw fit to support potentially useful academic research. But what the Party gave it could just as easily take away. Consider the landmark public opinion research conducted by Boris Grushin in Taganrog during the late 1960s. Officials found the results of the research they had financed to be so threatening that they attempted to destroy both the messenger and the message. Grushin lost his job in a purge of his institute; an entire printing of books in a warehouse was destroyed, and the right to publish other books was denied; and during the early 1970s, the KGB made a concerted, albeit unsuccessful, effort to eradicate the raw data. ³

The political situation has obviously changed for the better. Admittedly, survey research can still be risky in regions experiencing ethnic conflagrations or in territories, such as parts of Central Asia, where political transformation has not truly consolidated. However, throughout the CIS government leaders have to an amazing extent turned openly to social science in hopes of coping with their problems. Indeed, at times they seem to place more faith in it than some of their Western counterparts do.

The first indication of this trend came in 1988, when Gorbachev's Politburo began
allowing growing numbers of Soviet graduate students to enroll in foreign degree programs in sociology. A year later, political science and economics were added to the list of disciplines warranting outside help. Moreover, the first university faculties of sociology and of political science in the history of the Soviet Union were established.

Now, legislation often mandates sociological research, and government leaders frequently commission public opinion polls, as Gorbachev’s advisors did before he gave his blessing to German reunification. Politicians have even taken to using polls to assess their own prospects during the coming elections. In other words, the relationship between political institutions and survey research centers has become bilateral: the centers are now being called upon to exert influence on political developments. Unfortunately, given the deleterious effect of years of privation on the condition of social science in the CIS, the demand for sophisticated research far outstrips capacity.

THE ORGANIZATION OF SURVEY RESEARCH

In any country, a host of everyday operations in survey research ultimately depend on laws and regulations. Consider, for example, laws on employment, remuneration, incorporation, property rights, contracts, access to official statistics, confidentiality, money, banking, and taxation. In the West, legal precedent is such that we can usually determine where we stand with respect to such laws and can plan accordingly. In the CIS, by contrast, laws on all these subjects are in revolutionary flux. Indeed, the nature and function of law itself is in question. Political leaders speak openly about the need to establish a law-based government, thereby implicitly acknowledging that they do not currently have one. They are quite correct. There are laws galore, but there is no Law.4
On the one hand, the flux has facilitated the growth of survey research enterprises in several ways. For example, it allows private enterprises to incorporate and establish bank accounts; individuals, by contrast, are only allowed to open savings accounts. It permits them to hire part-time employees on a contractual basis for as much money as necessary; formerly, such hiring would have been treated as exploitation, a capital offense. And it permits them to print questionnaires without the approval of censors; until recently, even elementary school teachers reproducing class assignments on duplicating machines had to submit materials to (low-level) censors.

However, those attempting to build institutions of survey research still face unprecedented legal uncertainty. Imagine trying to run a business when, on a moment's notice, the president can declare all fifty- and hundred-ruble notes to be worthless as cash; the local government can unilaterally change the tax rate guaranteed in your articles of incorporation and apply it retroactively to bank balances from a previous year; a contractor can with impunity refuse to fulfill obligations because a more lucrative deal has materialized; or, a business cannot legally sell you a 5,000-ruble Xerox photocopy cartridge because it can only accept bank credits, while you unfortunately have 100,000 rubles in cash. As citizens are wont to say: "This is Soviet reality."

But large-scale organization requires not only a predictable legal environment; it depends on a strong communications infrastructure. Here, too, the organizers of survey research face monumental obstacles. Nothing flows freely except rumors. At least one region of Moscow cannot be dialed directly from other regions of the city; however, unlike other citizens of the CIS, at least a majority of Muscovites have telephones. The postal service might as well not exist; express mail from Moscow to Tashkent can require seventeen days for delivery. Few survey organizations possess more than a single vehicle, and maintaining their vehicles is a
constant struggle. Aeroflot's reservation service is so wretched that people in, say, Moscow cannot normally reserve flights between Kiev and Leningrad, and no transaction can be conducted by telephone. As for banking, it takes about three weeks to transfer money from one bank to another in Moscow, and it is sometimes impossible to transfer money between branches of the same bank in different cities. Indeed, some firms must now spend weeks attempting to deposit their cash into banks, since cashiers must often count suitcases full of small denominations under current inflationary conditions. And last but not least, information—when it exists—does not flow. For example, many of the census statistics which we take for granted in designing samples are nonexistent or inaccessible.

Naturally, this lack of infrastructure hinders the everyday workings of survey research centers. Take, for example, the task of collecting completed questionnaires from distant affiliates. The possibility of shipping them via the postal service or indigenous shipping firms never occurs to a survey director. Rather, representatives sometimes wrangle plane or train tickets in order to hand-deliver the questionnaires. Far more commonly, they pay conductors or travelers in the process of boarding trains or planes to serve as informal couriers, then telephone headquarters with orders to meet, say, train number 19 to get 37 questionnaires from a gray-haired male wearing a blue jacket in car 14.

However, the main point is not merely that the lack of infrastructure complicates daily operations, but that it impedes efforts to institutionalize and routinize large-scale survey operations. Consequently, most centers are obliged to rely primarily on ad hoc arrangements to cover the territories falling in their samples.

Sample Design. It seems fitting at this juncture to dwell briefly on the issue of sampling, since samples inevitably place demands on the organization of institutions undertaking survey
research. Organizations must balance sample quality and organizational costs, and from the above discussion it should be obvious that costs are formidable in the CIS.

All survey researchers in the CIS claim to draw "representative" samples. Unfortunately, even the most respectable ones seemingly never document their sampling adequately—that is, with enough detail so that the sample can be technically evaluated and, if need be, reproduced. Thus, one is usually left with only vague explanations on how cities were selected; how individuals were selected from voting lists in the middle of a Central Asian desert; or how random-walk procedures were implemented in the utter absence of adequate local statistics.

Admittedly, this lack of documentation does not prove that sampling itself is inadequate, and samples can be found to please at least non-purists. However, sustained scrutiny reveals that, even in the prominent survey centers (led, incidently, by people of integrity who are willing to describe their procedures), so-called "representative samples" have often included national samples with only 25 primary sampling units; cities chosen because they are "typical" (thus eliminating extremes in the distribution); and interviewers with substantial unjustified discretion in the selection of their respondents. Even non-purists are likely to be disturbed by this unseemly underside of sampling.

Supervision and Control. Whatever the quality of the sample, the weak infrastructure impedes efforts to supervise and maintain control. Here is a typical example. A Muscovite gets a chance to bid on a lucrative contract that must include, say, Central Asia. Without any affiliates there, he (or she) inquires around frantically in the effort to locate a viable subcontractor, and signs a contract with someone known to a friend of a friend. However, this subcontractor in Central Asia is also stretched thin by the demand to cover much of Central Asia, and in turn has to sign a subcontract with an acquaintance of a friend to organize the survey of sample
points located 1,000 miles from his headquarters--points accessible only by a three-day train trip from one of the Central Asian capitals. The subcontractor in the hinterlands, in turn, most likely has no cadre of interviewers, so makes ad hoc arrangements with anybody willing to conduct the interviews. Incidentally, lesser survey centers utilize similar unreliable ad hoc arrangements to cover even small regions around a single city.

The few best centers do much better than this. They work with established affiliates or they have enough contacts to maintain relatively good standards. However, even these suffer from difficulty in maintaining routine communications and supervision. I have, for example, even heard people in one of the most prominent centers, with more than two dozen affiliates, complain: "In Magadan [the Far East], our [student] interviewers may just be interviewing other students. We have no control."

Unfortunately, the importance of close supervision cannot be overestimated. My Russian colleagues have kindly instructed me at length on the Soviet institution of khaltura--creating the impression that work has been done well when in fact it has been done in a totally slipshod manner. Of course, this phenomenon exists everywhere in the world. However, inhabitants of the former Soviet Union lay claim to being the world champions in creating, as it were, Potemkin villages in the realm of labor.

RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING

This raises the question of the quality and commitment of professional workers in survey research. In countries with strong survey research traditions, positions can be filled by either promoting those who have worked up through the ranks or by hiring graduates of institutions of higher education. In the CIS, unfortunately, neither option is currently viable.
The first option is impracticable since, until recently, very few survey operations existed in which people could undergo on-the-job training. The primary exceptions were small groups in the Institute of Sociology and in a few other institutes of the USSR Academy of Sciences.

However, surely no more than five percent of the professional staffs of the institutes were engaged in survey research, and due to inexperience and political intrusion, some of their work was so problematic as to provide questionable on-the-job training for participants.6

Regrettably, institutions of higher education cannot yet be viewed as sources of trained workers for survey research either. Although the precursor to the Institute of Sociology was established more than three decades ago, as of this writing the first faculties of sociology and of political science have not existed long enough to graduate any students. Students who do graduate in the near future will suffer the effects of shortcomings typically found in new programs--most notably that many of their instructors are unqualified. For example, seeking to avoid layoffs, some of the five hundred former instructors of Marxism-Leninism at Moscow State University have managed to transfer to the new Faculty of Sociology where, in abysmal ignorance of empirical sociology, their arid lectures parch the interest of the bright new students attracted to the discipline.

Interviewer Training. Some mention of interviewer training is also warranted here. Even though interviewers occupy the lower rungs of the research hierarchy, high quality in their work is indispensable. Defective work cannot be overcome at any other stage of research by more senior employees.

Almost all centers claim to offer interviewer training. However, by "interviewer training" they usually mean anything from half an hour to two hours devoted to explaining procedures for the survey at hand, with perhaps some comments on peculiarities in the question-
naire. General training which lasts two to four days is virtually nonexistent (if only because it is monumentally difficult to organize transportation and housing). Thus, one frequently encounters interviewers who erroneously consider it their professional duty to translate, reword or interpret questions for respondents.

The consequence of this lack of general training was well illustrated early in 1992, when my Russian colleagues and I began developing video tapes for the standardized training of supervisors and interviewers in our own studies. We invited 50 supervisors from all over the former Soviet Union to Moscow to observe the proper general training of two groups of ten relatively new interviewers. The trainees first heard a two-hour lecture supported by both audio and video materials. They were then drilled for several hours over a three-day period by a gifted Western instructor who is completely fluent in Russian.

In a standard exercise, the instructor played the role of respondent while the trainees took turns reading questions to him as though an actual interview were underway. When, at fifteen minute intervals, he publicly compared the answers recorded by the trainees, supervisors and trainees alike were astonished. In the early stages of instruction, though the trainees had all simultaneously heard the selfsame answers from the instructor-respondent, they repeatedly argued vigorously with one another over what should have been recorded. There was much variation even in recorded answers to closed-ended questions.

Of course, this will come as no surprise to experienced survey directors. That is why thorough interviewer training is emphasized. Unfortunately, until such training becomes standard practice in the CIS, researchers may well find themselves analyzing variation in response generated in no small part by interviewers rather than by respondents.
DERIVING SOCIAL MEANING FROM SURVEYS

Thus far, we have focused on the relationship of survey research centers to political and economic institutions, as well as on their ability to meet organizational demands. It is also fruitful to raise sociological questions about the survey process itself.

Questionnaires and interviews cannot be regarded as dispassionate transfers of information from respondents to survey researchers. Instead, they are highly social exchanges in which the actors--interviewers and respondents--take into account how they will be perceived by others as they choose their own words. For example, certain respondents give socially desirable answers so as to impress interviewers. On the other hand, well-trained interviewers guard their intonation to avoid revealing incredulity. Of course, thoughtful analysts attempt to minimize, or at least take into account, response effects introduced by such social behavior in surveys.

By quashing free expression, the political climate in the Soviet Union added a thick layer of response effects to survey research. Under Brezhnev, for example, even telling a political anecdote became legally punishable--though in practice, such offenses were typically only recorded in personnel files maintained by the so-called "first department" (the KGB) of each enterprise, to be resurrected when offenders sought promotions, vacations, or other privileges. This, however, was sufficient to produce the intended effect. It was exceedingly abnormal to express viewpoints with any political overtones outside the company of one or two trusted friends. If one violated this norm by expressing opinions in the presence of mere acquaintances, one might well be taken for a KGB provocateur attempting to elicit objectionable opinions from unsuspecting acquaintances. This pathology is well illustrated in the words of one of my respondents in the late 1970s:

Once a friend of many years told me a political anecdote in the presence of
someone we did not know well. I was dumbfounded. I looked at her as if to say:

"You mean, all along you have actually been an informer, and I trusted you?"

But it turned out that she had merely slipped up.

Another respondent described the climate at work as follows:

They come into the smoking room and say: "Well, what do you think of the invasion of Czechoslovakia?" If you are really smart, you learn how to disentangle yourself from situations like this without being too obviously scared—without showing the guys you know they are informers. Just try not to antagonize them, and at the same time give them an answer without sounding like you are a fool; try to sound orthodox—flexibly orthodox.

Obviously, then, survey researchers had no basis for expecting candor on the broad range of topics that might arouse the ire of authorities. There was no public opinion.

Fortunately, this too has changed for the better. Although citizens view much of the monumental transformation of their society with skepticism or even cynicism, they nonetheless seemingly believe in the transformation enough to feel safe in expressing their opinions about a very wide range of topics—including their dismay with the social revolution and its leaders. It seems possible to raise almost any question nowadays.

This optimistic conclusion, however, requires qualification on two accounts. The sample design employed by most survey organizations in the CIS draws names from housing or voting lists. Consequently, interviewers seek their assigned respondents by name. This introduces a measure of difficulty in convincing respondents that their replies will in fact be kept confidential. Candor in interviews is also conditioned by cultural factors other than the political milieu. For example, traditional married Moslem women in Central Asia often give answers dictated by their
husbands, who position themselves close at hand: the husbands, in turn, often give answers which they think would be deemed useful by the head of their community (obshchina).

Questionnaire Content. Response effects by no means exhaust the list of challenges to those analyzing survey results. The proper interpretation of the distribution of answers to a survey item—say, about faith in institutions—often requires comparing the results of numerous studies using the same question over time and across sub-populations. Given the vagaries of sampling and the short history of unimpeded public opinion polling in the CIS, such comparisons are seldom possible now. As regards the less language-sensitive questions of fact or behavior—does the respondent plan to buy a refrigerator?—only the very best researchers can draw from experience to choose a question that has been shown to work.

However, language and cultural differences generate even greater challenges both cross-nationally and within individual countries of the CIS. Understandably, Western clients and collaborators normally show up with questionnaires which they want translated and administered as soon as possible. The least conscientious survey centers give them what they ask for; the most reputable ones try to adjust the questionnaire to "Soviet reality" or at least to assist the foreigners in avoiding grievous errors in interpretation.

Pitfalls abound. For example, one item in a sexism scale used in the U.S. and Western Europe states: "Spouses should be equal in decisions on how to spend money." A great many married Russian men routinely hand their wages over to their wives (but not their bonuses, which they use as spending money), so I doubt their response to this item connotes the same thing that it does in the U.S. Similarly, using terms (or concepts) such as "the political right" or "liberal" or "market economy" is fraught with obvious danger.

But it is not enough to tinker with words or questions. When viewed in their entirety,
foreign questionnaires may be out-of-sync with reality in the CIS. The best way to illustrate this is to turn the tables. Imagine a well-funded Russian showing up for a two-week sojourn in the U.S. to contract for a survey on the health of citizens. Suppose that the questionnaire included a long battery of items on where each household acquired various kinds of food, including an intricate section on how many pounds of carrots, potatoes, cabbage and the like were grown in each household’s garden last year--and how many pounds of mushrooms were gathered in neighboring forests. Suppose the health questions failed to mention cholesterol levels or smoking, but included an extensive list of natural herbal medicines, as well as an item about how often family members missed work last year because their "heart hurt." Such a questionnaire, so finely tuned to Russian categories, would at best do no harm except to waste effort that could have been devoted to the real sources of health variation in the U.S. But the questionnaire would manifest ignorance and put off respondents, just as Western questionnaires utilized in the CIS sometimes do.

Unfortunately, linguistic and cultural differences wreak havoc not only across international borders, but within the borders of the former Soviet republics. Even with the breakup of the empire, most of the former republics have tremendously heterogeneous populations--so much so that national surveys in them actually entail all the care of cross-cultural, multilingual research. In Uzbekistan, for example, one must use both Russian and Uzbek, and in some areas Tadzhik, as well. A similar problem crops up even in Ukraine. According to census statistics, the majority of adults in Kiev consider Ukrainian to be their native language; yet in a 1990 study, most chose to be interviewed in Russian when given a choice. An interviewer often cannot be certain in advance which language will be required.

Even setting aside translation problems, cultural differences complicate survey research
within individual countries. In Russia, for example, a question about attending religious services does not have the same meaning for Russia’s many Tatar women as it does for Christians, since devout Moslem women in this region are typically not allowed to attend services.

Finally, it should not be forgotten that the vast territory of the CIS contains some peoples of pre-modern mentality for whom surveys on attitudes and opinions may be irrelevant or meaningless.

PROSPECTS

Given the thoroughly daunting circumstances which have impeded the normal development of survey research in the CIS, one can heartily praise its finest practitioners for all they have managed to accomplish. Make no mistake about it: their best work is indeed worthwhile and exciting.

Nevertheless, in the short time since they were given license to operate freely, naturally they have been unable to establish strong institutions and reliable procedures such as have taken decades to develop in the West. Thus, the Moscow correspondent for the Economist (June 23, 1990: 42) was on the mark when he queried: "... is Soviet opinion so volatile, or are the pollsters doing something wrong?" Deficiencies in sampling alone could easily generate substantial spurious differences in surveys conducted across time and regions.

Unfortunately, given the lack of credentialing of any sort, anyone in the CIS who is savvy enough to utter the words "representative sample" can call oneself a survey researcher and get away with it. For example, one enterprising undergraduate who is unschooled in survey research, in all earnestness draws the merest wisp of a sample of Russia; gives his results a professional appearance, complete with the stationery of his incorporated firm; and talks his
results into the best Russian newspapers from time to time. There, the results can in turn catch
the eye of foreign correspondents and take on a life of their own. The reputable survey
researchers ask: "Why are we working so hard?"

What, then, are the prospects for further professionalizing survey research in the CIS?
Not surprisingly, it appears that two factors will hinder professionalization. In the first place, it
will get no succor from academia. Not only is academia currently unequipped to train survey
researchers on any appreciable scale, the research branches of the Academy of Sciences and of
institutions of higher education are hard pressed to fund any substantial research in the social
sciences whatsoever. Academia, once touted as Soviet reality at its best, is currently teetering on
the verge of financial disaster and suffering a massive brain drain to more lucrative industries and
countries.

This is not to imply that survey research has ceased to be conducted in academia. Some
academics have succeeded in seizing opportunities to work with Western collaborators or clients.
This has been very salutary in that it has occasioned cross-fertilization and financed much-needed
equipment. On the other hand, in the quest for hard currency, sometimes important research has
been abandoned for trivial polls. Clearly, even in academia, the quest for financial gain is
setting much of the agenda in survey research.

The other circumstance dampening professionalization is that survey research centers,
whether academic or commercial, work in isolation from one another. Since there are so few
opportunities to cultivate contacts through conferences or computers, "networking" has not yet
entered the vocabulary. In fact, in the social sciences, there are at most only a handful of
refereed journals. Thus, although survey results can be found scattered throughout the mass
media, where they are much in demand, there is no exchange of methodology and experience
amongst survey researchers unless they consider themselves partners. In fact, survey research enterprises are so fiercely combative in their struggle to attract monied clients that they appear to be utterly uninterested in cooperation. It would seem that establishing a professional association for mutual benefit is an idea whose time has not yet come.

There is, however, reason for optimism, too. The demand for survey research from government agencies and the indigenous mass media, not to speak of well-heeled foreign clients, has rendered it both profitable and prestigious. It is attracting some dedicated and bright people who, through increasingly frequent exchanges with more experienced practitioners, are being socialized to meet world standards. And in speculating about their future accomplishments as survey researchers, we should not overlook their resilient character. They still exhibit that perseverance and pluck which has for decades enabled them to plow forward in the face of adversity.
Footnotes

1 I wish to acknowledge the financial support of the National Council for Soviet and East European Research, whose funding for my large-scale surveys in the European part of the former Soviet Union (#805-17) and in Central Asia and Siberia (#806-42) provided some of the experience upon which this article is based. The National Council, however, is not responsible for the contents or findings.

2 Inasmuch as the Baltic states were much affected by their annexation, many of my observations are applicable to survey research in those countries as well.

3 Some results from the 73 studies conducted there were later published in B. Grushin and L. Onikov (eds.), *Massovaia Informatsiia v Sovetskom Promyshlennom Gorode* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1980). I am currently financing a project to create computer files containing the original raw data.

4 Recently, the vice director of an institute attempted to renege on a contract to provide space for large-scale interviewer training. When I protested that I possessed a legal contract, he explained: "Unfortunately, we don't have laws. We have bosses."

5 Documenting a national sample typically requires a report 50 to 100 pages long. However, in preparation for a project with Leslie Kish to develop model samples of the territories of the former Soviet Union by mid-1993, I have as yet found only one technical description longer than seven pages, and none that would pass muster in a sampling class.

6 Nor would one be well advised to draw on government statistical agencies, though they have long existed on a large scale. As Senior Consultant for Field Operations in a study being fielded by the official Russian statistical agency, I have become aware of breathtaking
deficiencies—not the least of which is that regional agencies have routinely doctored figures before passing them up to the central agency for compilation.

"Error variation is also introduced in the process of data entry. Double-entry verification is exceedingly rare; instead, it is frequently argued that disallowing out-of-range entries is good enough. Likewise, multiple-pass cleaning runs to remove branching errors have yet to be introduced in most centers.

"Translation is commonplace, but unfortunately, serious back-translation performed early enough to allow meaningful changes in the original translation is the exception, and at least one prominent center even allows interviewers to translate items during the course of interviews.

"The first all-union convention of sociologists was held only in 1991. INTERNET and BITNET are now available in much of the CIS, but are usually prohibitively expensive. There are several efforts afoot to establish new journals, but they are usually proposed with the unrealistic expectation that they will earn substantial profit through sales in the West."