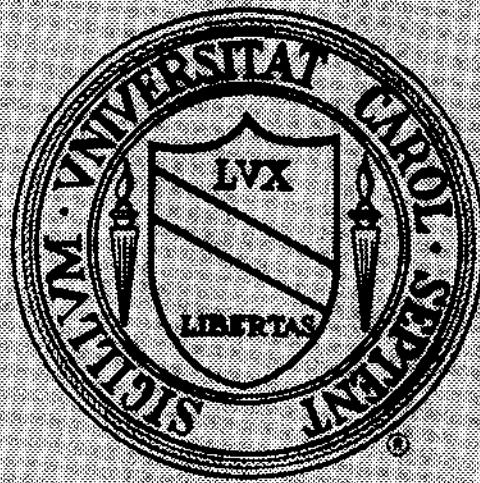


Southern Regional Policy Center

Questions & Answers



by

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ABSTRACT

The Southern Regional Policy Center is conceived as the means by which the South will link its many scattered policy resources, principally through its systems of higher education, and build a new region-wide set of "Foundation Factors" essential to the region's development, while striving to build new alliances and strengthen existing ones between policy researchers, policy makers, and local officials.

The coming decade will be a critical period of development in the southern states and regions of the United States. Much of the economic base and overall preparedness that brought initial prosperity to rural regions and the poorest workers will erode beyond recognition and repair. This plan identifies a number of new "Foundation Factors" important for economic development that appear to be emerging in small cities and metropolitan areas of the south; while significant, they alone are incapable of pulling the entire region and its neediest citizens into an ever more competitive mainstream that flows in directions set by international and technological advances.

The principal staff proposing this Center bring significant expertise in economic development and policy research, and have established networks of colleagues in the region and through out the nation. The Center will operate under the University of North Carolina umbrella and will build region-wide networks of research scholars, professional and community clients, and policy partners. Numerous core operations, significant policy research, and related regional development activities are envisioned.

The full set of documents that support the Center concept includes: 1) Prospectus, 2) Action Plan, and 3) Questions & Answers.

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**SOUTHERN
REGIONAL
POLICY CENTER**

**QUESTIONS &
ANSWERS**

The Southern Regional Policy Center is a fully developed concept that was supported with initial funding from the Ford Foundation (*See "Southern Regional Policy Center: Action Plan"*). As envisioned by its founding Principals, SRPC's ambitions exceed Ford's overall programmatic interests and available funding. To conduct the range and depth of policy research seen as necessary throughout the South, we are therefore approaching selected foundations, public agencies, and corporate sponsors. Supplementary funding is sought to conduct important tasks within our policy portfolio that are also closely aligned with the interests of potential sponsors.

During discussions of the SRPC Action Plan with program officers at the Ford Foundation, several points were raised that are answered here in some detail. They are sufficiently pertinent to funding considerations by any potential sponsor that we have repeated both the questions and our answers. The main questions are summarized briefly here and then responded to in the following paragraphs. These include:

1. How good and functional are SRPC's southern policy research networks; how will they promote the production of relevant policy research findings and deliver them promptly to public and community officials willing and able to act upon them? Can the Principals supply examples of previous work that demonstrate these possibilities?
2. How can SRPC effectively leverage the research and educational strengths of a first-rate research university in promoting good development policy without being compromised by conventional academic timetables?
3. What specific projects will SRPC be able to accomplish in the initial year(s) of base-level grant support? In subsequent years of declining base-level support? How will activities shift from start up to specific projects?
4. How does SRPC's repeated reference to the term "regional" promote a significant focus on questions of state and local development? Or on rural and urban communities? What evidence is there of our involvement and accomplishments in matters of state and local development?
5. What plans and prospects are there to ensure a long-term return on any potential foundation or corporate investment in SRPC? What assurances are there that lasting capacity to deal with regional development problems will result from these investments?
6. Since any given foundation or corporation is likely to fund only the fraction of SRPC's budget that reflects their institutional interests, what measures will be taken to widen participation among funding sources and institutional support?

1. *Track Record on
Policy Research &
Networks*

On the question of southern networks and their role in producing and applying policy research to development problems, it is reasonable to point to the accomplishments of Principals. The policy research paths traced by Bergman and Rosenfeld are instructive. They first collaborated to produce the Ford-Aspen funded study titled After the Factories, a widely cited and respected study of industrial change throughout the South. It was one of the most widely circulated reports issued by the Southern Growth Policies Board, forming much of the factual underpinning for 1986 Commission on the Future of the South (chaired by then-Governor Clinton) and the Commission's influential Halfway Home and a Long Way to Go. Rosenfeld and Bergman built on these two works with another, more detailed Ford-Aspen study that sought to trace the broad pattern of connections between poverty, employment, education and infrastructure in Making Connections. In these efforts, the main policy research interests reflected Southern Growth Policies Board concerns with its multi-state region and with broad commonalities addressable by its governors and their cabinets.

Their collaboration led to further work at local levels within individual or groups of states, although each pursued somewhat different issues and in conjunction with appropriate networks of policy makers. Rosenfeld launched his continuing studies of local manufacturing and technological change to understand why southern firms were unable to compete. He singlehandedly built the Southern Technology Council within the Southern Growth Policies Board, leaving in 1991 to found Regional Technology Strategies, Inc. These efforts have led to the establishment of the Consortium for Manufacturing Competitiveness that has kick-started improved practices among traditional two-year colleges. These new policy options have been widely disseminated through publications (including Competitive Manufacturing, a book recently published by the Center for Urban Policy Research), international conferences, papers and speeches. His initiatives have placed Rosenfeld squarely among several networks of state technology and industrial policy and led directly to the development of wholly new action networks of 2 year colleges.

Bergman took a different path in early 1988. President (then-Governor) Clinton called upon him to devise a policy analysis method to assess the relative contributions to the economic development of Arkansas from proposed improvements in elementary and secondary education and in highways. Governor Clinton needed to know the relative importance of these options because Arkansas could improve some of both, but the sales and fuel tax bases have low ceiling limits in a poor state such as Arkansas. Bergman (and Gunther Maier, an exchange professor from Austria) developed a policy simulation model that provided the answers for these two policies and for many other policies as well not originally identified by the Governor. This model was reported widely at conferences in the U.S. (including the National Rural Studies Committee, of which Bergman is a

permanent, founding member) and Europe, and was published in several forms, including a chapter in Reconsidering Regions, a book on new regional development paradigms for advanced industrial countries that was edited by Bergman, Maier and Franz Toedtling (now visiting Schumpeter Professor at Harvard).

Based on the usefulness of this model, Bergman, Maier and Rick Carlisle (then serving as Vice President of the N.C. Rural Economic Development Center) in 1990 concluded that the policy approach could be further modified to examine specific types of rural areas and a much broader range of policy options then under consideration in North Carolina. On the assumption that many policy officials are increasingly "video-friendly", but "document-averse," they further agreed that the results should be reported in full color graphs, maps and highlighted text using Storyboard, a simple IBM-designed presentation software for personal computers. Because this report included controversial findings indicating no additional beneficial economic development effects from interstate highways soon after North Carolina's massive highway building program (\$9.2 bil.) was funded, the results were featured prominently in a series of articles on highways vs. education published by the Independent, an influential local newsweekly. The results have been presented and debated among scholars and policy officials at several national conferences (Association of Public Policy and Management, International Regional Science Association, etc.) and among numerous environmental groups in NC and adjoining states; other distributions include local congressional delegations and gubernatorial candidates.

One group of scholars at South Carolina State University (an 1890 Land Grant college with which SRPC intends to work) read about the research in the National Rural Studies Committee Meetings Proceedings (1989) and prepared a proposal to USDA to replicate our model for their state. After initial contacts at the proposal stage, Bergman and Maier have supported the SCSC team, including a one-day pro bono seminar on research methodology in July 1992. Further support for this and other policy model replications throughout the South will be pursued with SRPC funding. These and related research experiences place Bergman within the policy research communities of the national organizations mentioned earlier and within the broader southern university community, including (with Judith Wegner) the historically black colleges and universities.

Our collective coverage of policy inquiry and outreach has gone well beyond academic research and studies to build new practitioner networks and to strengthen them with technical information, legislative remedies, and professional support. Carlisle, for example, has remained closely associated with professional and quasi-governmental organizations of local planners, administrators, and community officials. As founding Vice

President of the NC Rural Economic Development Center, Carlisle was instrumental in launching NCREDC, a private, non-profit corporation that employed university and private researchers to develop support for policy action in rural communities. In addition to collaboration with Bergman on policy modeling mentioned above (and on buyer-supplier practices among N.C. manufacturers, not mentioned earlier), he initiated several major projects of relevance to the proposed SRPC:

An analysis of North Carolina capital markets underpinned a series of legislative actions that created a new private, for profit development finance corporation and activated, for the first time ever, state support for a statewide development bank, minority credit unions, and a statewide network of community development corporations. The legislation generated \$20 million in stock purchases by the state and private corporations in the new venture, and \$8 million in appropriations to date for non-profit development corporations.

Who'll Foot the Bill, an analysis of state water and sewer project funding as compared with estimated needs, led directly to changes in the regulatory review process and funding criteria to direct increased funds to small, non-metropolitan systems

An analysis of inadequate sewage disposal systems (**Living Without the Basics**) stimulated state legislation to fund a study and planning process to estimate unmet needs and develop fundable proposals to provide basic waste disposal services for unserved rural North Carolinians.

Carlisle's experience demonstrates how carefully selected and conducted policy research can stimulate productive debate, permit useful policy conclusions to be drawn, and be properly packaged in ways that lead to beneficial action in communities. These examples demonstrate only some of many potential connections between development organizations and university-based research on state and local issues. Other issues of comparable significance also deserve our future attention: bank lending practices and the Community Reinvestment Act, economic development that benefits low income communities in environmentally sensitive areas, and how state line agencies can properly harness non-governmental organizations to deliver services in small towns and rural areas.

His experience also suggests that simple matchmaking or arms-length brokering among existing groups will not work. There is simply no substitute for **active membership in local practitioner networks**, particularly the continuing contact that helps stimulate the formation of a policy research agenda its members care about. Through such activity, the SRPC serves as their advocate and broker, thereby assuring that research needs can be built into ongoing scholar and university networks. To a considerable degree, the Center must operate like a southern policy

development group that conducts research, rather than a research group that studies southern policy. Some of the necessary contact thereby implied would require day-long forums, mini-think tanks and topic-specific policy institutes he expects to conduct as SRPC's Director.

Judith Wegner's work draws attention to the (in)capacities of local governments to manage their affairs when dealing with controversial issues that divide their communities. Disagreements among bordering jurisdictions or between towns and counties on a range of controversial issues would otherwise halt important development policies. Dispute settlement centers, proper roles for government and community officials, and assistance in conducting normal governmental operations in periods of acute fiscal distress are typically addressed by Dean Wegner when offering practical alternatives to litigation. She plans to expand these initiatives by working with others to develop useful conflict-management training programs for practicing officials and professionals, particularly on the most divisive issues that face local governments.

Among these are critical questions of education, housing, public health and public welfare that have been passed down the line as mandated obligations to be somehow met by the neediest rural places with the fewest resources. Conflict management in these circumstances is a necessary but wholly inadequate policy response, since the necessary resources and effective policy control lie higher up the ladder and across a larger number of public and private officials. Therefore, Wegner expects to continue drawing upon the combined strengths of professional school scholars like herself (law, education, city planning, public health, social welfare) and of equivalent service delivery groups to design and present well-considered state (or federal) level policy options. Such initiatives will require convocations of experts (much like the Education Convocation held at UNC early in 1992) to design legal and policy strategies, and draft model policies and legislation for adoption.

Finally, Wegner and Bergman are committed to engaging professional students directly in the process of policy research and design through courses, policy studies and directed internships. Wegner has sought foundation support to bring these issues directly to bear on the education of UNC law students by placing them in state and local government-not law firm-internships. These experiences are expected to improve their willingness to consider non-traditional career choices and options. Bergman continues to conduct policy and regional planning courses with strong field work obligations. One course that has been taught continuously for 15 years requires each student to be sponsored and hosted by some locality (county, city, CDC, Chamber, etc.) in exchange for the student's preparation of an in-depth memorandum that appraises the local economy. This is a widely subscribed program that sends students to all

parts of the country, particularly the rural or small town south where professional services are scarce or unaffordable. It has served many satisfied sponsors, but a huge number of unserved locales remain that cannot afford even the modest travel and local costs of UNC economic development students. This is particularly true for minority communities. SRPC funding would allow immediate subsidies for appraisals of the neediest communities, including follow-on assistance when necessary. Further refinements might include graduate assistantships for minority students and faculty symposia to disseminate this or similar instructional models of engaged scholarly service to other college and university programs throughout the South.

*2. Leveraging
UNC's Resources,
Getting Work Done
On Time*

This concern is one that can plague typical academic faculty and their departments, particularly those whose tenure and reputation are heavily responsive to academic peers, journals and theory. Accordingly, we have elected to position SRPC within the University of North Carolina along the lines of the professional school model, one which values faculty teaching of future professionals, policy research and professional practice directed toward practical policy issues.

Further, SRPC is **designed** to function effectively within this environment and thereby departs from typical academic centers in at least three significant ways. First, our Board of Visitors and Advisory Panels draws from the leadership of various policy fields and practitioners; their ability to identify emerging, salient policy issues that benefit from research efforts will cut lead times considerably and provide the necessary notice to "turn-around" projects on a timely basis. Second, SRPC's full-time director will not be a traditional academic, but rather is expected to maintain continuous contact with various client communities with whom results, findings and recommendations of research will enjoy ready placement and implementation. Finally, the opportunity to engage in recognized policy research as **public service** will appeal increasingly to many faculty quite outside the professional schools, particularly in difficult financial times when universities must increasingly demonstrate their relevance to legislators and other public officials whose decisions affect funding levels. In fact, one might easily expect that an improved model of "engaged scholarship as public service" might emerge at UNC that could be replicated in other state-supported research universities. On this point, Bergman, Chancellor Hardin, and others at UNC have planned a major, international conference to examine the public service role of universities; it is to be held in conjunction with collaborating universities of western and central-eastern Europe in May 1994.

Finally, the Principals are very familiar with conducting and managing the policy research enterprise, and have demonstrated their ability to work well

within the UNC family of schools and departments, including its Administration. For example, Dean Wegner brings the Law School experience and her working contacts with social work, education and public health to some issues, while Bergman brings regional planning, public policy and administration, and business to bear on other issues. They are also experienced in university-level administration (Wegner as Dean of Law School, Bergman as [former] Special Assistant to Dean of Arts and Sciences) and in drawing upon UNC's considerable system of research support. Carlisle and Rosenfeld have held key management or administrative positions in some of the most active and respected institutions (including the founding of some) concerned with southern development policy issues. University administration at UNC is fully supportive of the role SRPC and its Principals expect to play and is willing to promote arrangements that broaden campus-wide interest in southern studies without compromising SRPC's responsibilities to the policymaking communities.

3. *First Year
Start-up and
Subsequent Years'
Accomplishments*

This can be addressed in two ways: a. what proportion of time will Principals devote to institution building vs. policy research and development, and b. what specific policy development tasks will the Center tackle during start up and later?

On the question of time allocation, the Director will spend 100%, and the Principals about 20-25%, of total time during the first year to *start-up tasks and institution building* activities. These responsibilities would drop steadily until the third year to about 5% for Principals and 75% for the Director. Commensurately, the time devoted to *policy development* rises from 5-10% in the first year to about 30% in the third year (Principals average about 35% FTE on SRPC activities, with the balance of their time spent in home units). The transition will be accelerated to the degree that administrative staff, graduate students and visiting fellows can be usefully integrated into productive, ongoing Center procedures.

The first year's projects must in all cases be extensions and expansions of work programs already underway, although Principals will use such projects to build networks and to integrate the work of new members within the common, growing core of SRPC accomplishments.

In Bergman's case, this means:

1. working actively with researchers at South Carolina State University on their implementation of the policy simulation model and disseminate results from Arkansas and North Carolina much more widely;
2. building the WAIS bulletin-board for rapid, cost-free communication among southern (and other) policy scholars;

3. expanding subsidized appraisals among needy, rural southern communities;
4. beginning research design of an earnings and income inequality model to estimate development impacts at local and regional level.

For Rosenfeld, initial tasks include:

1. expansion of Consortium for Manufacturing Competitiveness to historically black colleges and European affiliates;
2. develop a methodology for doing sector-specific analysis of rural industrial clusters in the U.S.;
3. building capacity to support industrial network programs in Kentucky, Maryland, West Virginia and Virginia.

Carlisle builds on his considerable stock of recent projects to form new local policy maker networks around roles of quasi-publics and nonprofit delivery agencies. These projects include helping states establish capacity-building networks to improve the ability of local governments to make wise economic development choices; improving the value of state information systems for planning and decision making at regional and local levels; better ways to harness capacity of non-profit organizations to make productive use of state programs and funds for economic development. At the same time, he intends to remain abreast of other projects now underway that will help strengthen state-level networks of policy officials concerned with competitive advantages of states, policy choice based on hard information of what works and doesn't, and improved delivery of state lending programs.

Wegner expects to:

1. disseminate mediation techniques to professional organizations whose members are frequently engaged in development disputes;
2. expand internships for law students in a variety of local governments and development agencies;
3. conduct preliminary discussions with historically black universities within the UNC system, principally NC Central University in Durham;
4. begin brokering with other professional schools at UNC and other campuses on policy issues and research now underway.

The full proposal draft anticipates a likely series of long-term project topics and important policy issues now facing the South, although this list is certainly subject to change and annual updating as our networks grow and evolve. The long-term project agenda will expand further to pursue these and other projects underway by Principals, but it will be primarily

generated from the management and stimulation of SRPC's functioning networks and from suggestions drawn from SRPC's advisory bodies.

Some of the long-range projects must emerge as opportunities arise, i.e. research (and SRPC) support will surely be available to conduct work on certain topics that acquire unexpected or renewed importance by potential sponsors. This could easily happen should conditions continue to worsen, but new topics are far more likely to emerge with new political leadership at the national and state levels.

The Principals are broadly engaged on a wide front of policy activity, they remain in touch with significant networks and others whose concerns are important, and they work out of one of the South's most respected and energetic universities. These qualities work to ensure that important topics are recognized, researched and policies developed that improve the chances of the south's neediest, rural areas.

*4. Degree To Which
Relevant Develop-
ment Concerns Are
"Regional"*

We use the term regional in two ways. First, it refers to the common problems of the several states that comprise the South as one of our great national regions. As discussed at considerable length in the full prospectus, much of the South's development history and accumulated need is rural in origin, although its recent progress has been urban.

But the internal development pattern of this larger national "region" is itself quite unique and distinct. Other regions of the nation have large city and metropolitan regions surrounded by relatively unpopulated open, natural landscapes. However, the southern development pattern is much more smoothly graduated from small hamlets and rural settlements, up through a system of towns, small cities, suburbs and major metropoli. Together, these settlements form functionally interdependent regions of production and residence. The urban end of this smooth continuum is far more successful than its rural-formerly agricultural-counterpart, but both are heavily interdependent. One simply cannot make headway in southern rural or urban areas without accounting for their structural ties to the full development spectrum.

Our choice, then, of the term "regional" reflects the wide pattern and rich diversity of situations now facing the south. The term "rural" has unfortunately become loaded as a tightly constricted typology (often serving narrow, sectarian interests) that simply does not permit fully informed analyses or discussion of genuine policy choices. On the other hand, "urban" is too closely associated with stereotypical sunbelt success stories to reveal the underlying inequalities and distress building rapidly in them, often due to steady rural-urban migrations. Conversely, regional development is a term that permits a genuinely useful policy perspective on rural and urban places, yet carries none of the burdensome baggage that

now hampers unsuccessful efforts or sectarian tensions associated exclusively with either interest.

Accordingly, SRPC understands and is prepared to exploit these interdependencies for maximum development benefit. The Principals are well positioned to assess potentials for the rural and small town development and to formulate strategies that draw effectively on the south's urban strengths. To do so requires a sophisticated understanding of how regions function and the policies that apply to them. The Principals have considerable experience in applying development policy to the south in both senses of the term, and with particular attention to the context of state and local development institutions. A quick review of resumes will confirm many publications, memberships, research projects, presentations, courses and consultations with local officials concerned with state and local development.

*5. Long Term
Returns on
Programmatic
Investment in SRPC
at UNC*

This is a two-fold issue. First is the matter of relative permanence and security of investment placed in a university center. The risks inherent in an independently founded and managed policy research center are wholly avoided by working within the framework of a well-established and respected research university. Purely as a mechanism, UNC is fiscally conservative, competently administered, and regarded as the leading public research university in the South. By positioning SRPC as a significant, attractive public service activity that responds to the incentive structure facing the faculty and campus, there is every reason to expect SRPC to remain one of many regional service institutions (Institute of Government, Area Health Education Centers, etc) that took root and continue to prosper in Chapel Hill.

On the matter of SRPC remaining focused on the development issues of southern regions, UNC already enjoys an unrivaled reputation for its hospitality to such inquiry. Beginning with Howard Odum's landmark studies of the south and continuing today under Provost McCormick's efforts to stimulate even broader approaches to southern studies initiatives, SRPC can expect to play an immediate and continuing role of policy service to the south. SRPC will benefit enormously by the presence of one of the nation's top three planning schools (offering a PhD and Master of *Regional Planning*), its faculty and 125 graduate students. This enterprise includes joint degree programs with law, public administration, and business and has been augmented recently by two additional curricula in public policy analysis aimed at undergraduate and doctoral students. Likewise, the UNC School of Law's prestigious faculty and student body are increasingly turning their attention to questions of public service law in the state and throughout the south. The remaining professional schools (medicine, public health, social work, education, business) enjoy excellent reputations

and are equally focused on issues of concern to the south; they can be expected to enlarge SRPC's orbit while also becoming involved with its unifying, regional orientation.

*6. Partial Funding
of SRPC by Multiple
Sponsors*

From the outset, SRPC was envisioned as a policy research unit that would focus on the south, but also one that requires a variety of perspectives and funding sources to conduct its essential work. This implies an internal strategic development plan of sources, functions and clients that go beyond the amounts of base-level support and development project funding sought from the Ford Foundation.

In addition to base-level funding sources, SRPC's Principals are now actively working with the UNC Development Office to select the top ten corporate and foundation sources whose interests most closely align with SRPC. Several trips to these and other potential sponsors are planned in the coming months to discuss SRPC's program of activities and programmatic areas of policy research inquiry. The good offices of E. Walter Coward, Michael Lipsky and other program officials at Ford Foundation are available to help explore joint funding prospects.

Additional sources of policy research support (federal and state agencies, corporations, foundations) will be tapped by SRPC's research scholars and policy clients as relevant issues arise. Funding levels (and emerging opportunities) will also be leveraged upward by combining similar policy research interests in two or more southern regions through SRPC's brokering activities. Our individual experiences with submitting and winning policy research proposals confirm the value and viability of this approach. The possibility of supporting a substantial share of a policy research center's total agenda (and budget) through such means is amply demonstrated by the Northwest Policy Center's experience. However, even this may not be sufficient for our purposes.

Accordingly, we envision that SRPC will conduct activities that attract additional funding for educational support of policy and southern studies, for research and policy consultation with corporate sponsors with direct interests in southern development issues (banks, utilities, etc), and for comparative international research. Funds available from the U.S. Department of Education for improved research and teaching of applied, policy studies at 2 and 4 year institutions will be sought to support several of SRPC's research agenda. SRPC enjoys the unique advantage of being able to draw on the capacities of a research university to help other institutions of higher education conduct policy studies and offer supportive services to their communities.

Many corporations spread throughout the South now rely upon traditional business consulting and accounting firms unfamiliar with public affairs to

support civic activities and design local development initiatives. To the degree that corporate support of significant policy issues might benefit from SRPC's expertise, these opportunities will be pursued actively. Chances appear quite good that SRPC could gain substantial funding and development leverage, if the encouraging experience of the Center for the New West is extrapolated to the south. Particularly so if SRPC systematically began this initiative by soliciting research (or general) support from among the 200,000 living alumni who now occupy significant corporate positions and who consistently welcome opportunities to demonstrate loyalty and support of activities at their alma mater.

Comparative international policy research is another area where SRPC might expect to conduct funded research. A surprisingly large number of policy models have been introduced elsewhere in the world and adopted here (e.g., enterprise zones, free trade zones, microenterprise finance, 3rd Italy industrial districts), often with very little forethought. On the other hand, many of the world's liberalizing economies are experimenting for the first time with locally guided and initiated economic development as they move away from centrally directed governments and state enterprises. These present opportunities for mutually beneficial and reciprocal policy research experiments, including researchers and development officials alike. The German Marshall Fund, among others, has supported such efforts, but many others are likely to join if reasonable projects can be fashioned whose findings bear on the development practice of both continents. Rosenfeld, Carlisle and Bergman have been involved in several such projects and maintain active contacts with colleagues in West and East Europe. UNC is well organized to support such work on all continents, but with particular organizational strengths and faculty expertise in Latin America, Western Europe and Eastern Europe-CIS.

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