The growth of policy research in the United States, but also in European countries like Sweden, Great Britain and West Germany, has been widely associated with the expansion of the "welfare state," i.e., with the proliferation of governmental intervention through economic and social policies. This expansion has taken place in these countries throughout the 1960s and 1970s under activist governments committed to social reform policies. It has now come to a halt as conservative governments seek to reduce public expenditures for benefits and services as well as the tax burden on private and corporate incomes. At the same time, other European countries like France or Spain are experiencing a wave of social reform activism, but now in the setting of global recession and tight restrictions on public spending.

What is the role of policy research in this context? Has policy research merely been a "fad" in times of ample public funds? What can policy research contribute to a re-assessment of government's role in the management of economic and social affairs in the midst of the most severe economic crisis since the Great Depression? These were some of the questions on the minds of policy researchers from eleven European countries (including Turkey) and the United States who met for a conference on "The Development and Present State of Policy Research" in West Berlin on June 2-3, 1983. The conference was convened by the Science Center Berlin (Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin) and chaired by Prof. Meinolf Dierkes, the president of the Science Center, and Prof. Hellmut Wollmann from the Freie Universität. The participants did not read prepared papers but discussed the experiences and problems of policy research in the various countries on the basis of a prepared list of questions concerning:

- The development of policy research on the background of changing and conflicting political attitudes towards governmental interventionism;
- Institutional and organizational arrangements for policy research;
- Theoretical, methodological and conceptual issues; and
- Institutionalized transfer between researchers and their audiences.

The eleven country reports which opened the conference made it clear very quickly that there are no easy answers for those initial questions. The picture emerging from these reports is one of wide variety between the countries represented. While in some
European countries, particularly in Scandinavia, policy research has a fairly long tradition and is firmly established in the policymaking procedures, there are other countries like Spain, Italy, or Turkey where policy research is still "in the cradle." Great Britain and West Germany are somewhere between these groups; these countries have experienced a rapid growth in academic and/or commercial research, but here it is not as widely used in the preparation of policy decisions as in Scandinavia or in the U.S.A.

In those countries where policy research has grown recently (like the U.S.A., Great Britain and West Germany), the research community and governmental actors shared a sense of optimism about the application of social science knowledge to social problems and the introduction of systematic analysis into decisionmaking for public policies. This optimism is now muted, and while researchers have improved considerably the methodology and analytical capability of policy research, the demand for analysis and evaluation has dropped in at least the three countries mentioned in what could be called a renaissance of conservative ideology as a legitimizing base for public policy. Demand, however, and project funding from governmental and public institutions is critical for a young and application-oriented discipline such as policy research which has not yet been able to establish an independent institutional base. The notion of "demand cycles" for policy research was extensively discussed, alluding to the "issue-attention-cycles" found to be characteristic of public attention for social problems. The discussion brought out that while these cycles may be bad for policy research as an "industry," because they threaten carefully developed research capabilities, they may be good for policy research as a discipline because slumps in demand will redirect attention to quality standards and methodological refinement.

As far as the causes for a varying demand for policy research are concerned, experiences from the U.S.A., Great Britain and West Germany indicated that the philosophic outlook of the dominant political party is an important factor. However, a cross-check with the situation in the other represented countries quickly revealed that a simple formula that associates conservative dominance with low demand for policy research and progressive dominance with high demand does not hold. It was suggested that there are at least three other factors which can help to explain the variations observed between the countries in the usage of policy research:

- The intellectual tradition: "Northern" countries in the Protestant intellectual tradition appear to be more inclined to make use of policy research than, for instance, the Mediterranean countries;
- The perception of democracy: countries with a strong pluralist tradition and consensus-oriented patterns for policy decisions (like the Scandinavian countries) make more use of policy research than countries with high levels of political conflict in which alternating governments emerge from highly competitive elections;
- The "conversion structures": if public agencies, commissions, etc. which convert political decisions into administrative action are staffed by lawyers and depend on