



"Are you just pissing and moaning, or can you verify what you're saying with data?"

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HOW TO INTERPRET POLICY STUDIES

STEPS TO ANALYSIS

Policy analysis is pervasive and critically important for the policymaking process at all levels of government. To determine which studies are credible and which are not, and which might be used as a basis for making policy decisions, students of public policy need to hone their analytical skills. How to do this? One way is to ask questions such as the following:

- What is the purpose of the study, and who conducted it?
- Does it seek and present objective information on the nature of the problem and possible solutions?
- Does the information seem to be valid, and what standard should you use to determine that?
- Is the report's argument logical and convincing?
- Does the report omit important subject matter?
- Does the study lay out the policy implications clearly and persuasively?

We will address these kinds of questions throughout the book when summarizing particular studies.