

Questions for Tracking Survey on Official Statistics
12/16/2011

“Now I have some questions on a different topic. At a few points throughout this next series, I will ask you tell me how you came up with your answer to that question. This will be helpful information as we try to understand how different people interpret our questions.”

1. I will read you some numbers that you may have heard of or read about on the radio, TV, newspapers, the Internet or somewhere else. Please tell me if you have heard of them:
 - a. The Unemployment rate?
 - b. The total number of people in the United States, or the population count?
 - c. The poverty rate?
 - i. *If yes*, You mentioned that you have heard of the unemployment rate. Do you happen to know who measures the unemployment rate? (field coded)
 1. Dept. of Labor
 2. Bureau of Labor Statistics
 3. Census Bureau
 4. Federal Government
 5. Media
 6. Other, specify _____
 7. Don't know
 - ii. *If yes*, You mentioned that you have heard of the population count. Do you happen to know who conducts the population count? (field coded)
 1. Dept. of Commerce
 2. Census Bureau
 3. Federal Government
 4. Media
 5. Other, specify _____
 6. Don't know
 - iii. *If yes*, You mentioned that you had heard of the poverty rate. Do you happen to know who measures the poverty rate? (field coded)
 1. Dept. of Commerce
 2. Dept of Labor
 3. Census Bureau
 4. Bureau of Labor Statistics
 5. IRS
 6. Federal Government
 7. Media
 8. Other, specify _____
 9. Don't know
2. Numbers like the unemployment rate, the population count and the poverty rate are federal statistics produced by federal statistical agencies that are part of the federal government.

Have you ever *used* federal statistics for study or work? (Yes, No, DK) (Adapted from Fellegi, *ibid.*; personal relevance)

3. When important decisions need to be made based on statistics, which of the following sources is the most believable to you: (*credibility*)
 - a. A University
 - b. An agency of the Federal government
 - c. A private company
 - d. A political party
 - e. The Media
 - f. None (silent)

4. Personally, how much trust do you have in the federal statistics in the United States? Would you say that you tend to trust federal statistics or tend not to trust them? (*trust, integrity, Eurobarometer*)
 - a. Tend to trust them
 - b. Tend not to trust them

5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about federal statistics? Do you Strongly agree, Somewhat agree, Somewhat disagree, or Strongly disagree?
 - a. Policy makers need federal statistics to make good decisions about things like federal funding. (*Relevance, federal*)
 - b. State and local government officials need federal statistics to make good decisions about things like where to locate hospitals and schools. (*Relevance, local*)
 - c. Statistics provided by the federal agencies are generally accurate. *Do you agree strongly, etc.* (*accuracy, ONS, adapted*)
 - d. The unemployment rate gives a true picture of what is happening to unemployment. (*accuracy, UK, adapted*)
 - e. Statistics provided by federal agencies are often biased. (*impartiality*)
 - f. Elected officials interfere with the production of statistics by federal agencies. (*Impartiality*)
 - g. Federal statistics are made public only if approved **by the president or congress**. (*Impartiality*)
 - h. People can trust federal statistical agencies to keep information about them confidential. (*confidentiality protected, OECD*)
 - i. Federal statistical agencies give personal information about people to the IRS. (*confidentiality protection, data sharing*)
 - j. Federal statistical agencies give personal information about people to marketing firms. (*confidentiality protection, data sharing*)
 - k. People can easily find out exactly how federal statistics are produced. (*Openness/transparency*)
 - l. Federal statistical agencies are honest. (*integrity*)

- m. Federal statistical agencies have the experts they need to produce high quality statistics. (*credibility*)
 - n. Private companies could produce more accurate statistics than Federal statistical agencies. (*credibility*)
6. Now I'm going to read you a list of organizations in American society. Please tell me how much confidence you, yourself, have in each one – a great deal, quite a lot, some or very little?
- a. Newspapers
 - b. The military
 - c. Federal statistical agencies
 - d. Congress
 - e. Banks
7. In order to produce statistics, federal agencies can ask people for information in a survey or get it from another source. If you knew your name and other information would never be singled out and would only be used for statistics, would you prefer that federal statistical agencies:
- a. Ask you for your employment information in a survey or ask a state agency, like the employment or workforce office for it?
 - a. Ask me in a survey
 - b. Ask a state agency
 - c. Neither
 - b. Ask you for information on your use of healthcare services in a survey or ask your insurance company for it?
 - a. Ask me in a survey
 - b. Ask my insurance company
 - c. Neither
 - c. Ask you for information on your purchases in a survey or use commercial records, like grocery store loyalty cards?
 - a. Ask me in a survey
 - b. Use commercial records
 - c. Neither

