



Running Case Study 9

Other sources?

One evening, Rebecca browsed the Internet to broaden her view on ethics. While surfing the web she came across a paper on the ethics of managers and entrepreneurs with an empirical analysis based on the European Social Survey. To her surprise the data used were freely accessible (www.europeansocialsurvey.com). Looking at that website, she discovered that the European Social Survey is a very large survey held every two years in almost all European countries among representative country samples. The number of respondents is astonishingly large; the sample size is about 40,000 for the whole sample and at least around 1,000 for the samples of each country. In 2004, the survey contained an additional questionnaire about economic morality. In total, each respondent answered 30 questions on economic morality (see below). Rebecca was fascinated by this rich source of data. So she downloaded them and played around with them.

Thirty additional questions on economic morality in the European Social Survey 2004

I now want to ask you about how citizens and members of society should behave. Please rate the statement below on a scale from 1 (completely agree) to 5 (completely disagree).

- 1 Citizens should spend at least some of their free time helping others.
- 2 Society would be better off if everyone just looked after themselves.
- 3 Citizens should not cheat on their taxes.

How much would you trust the following groups to deal honestly with people like you? Please rate the groups from 1 (distrust a lot) to 5 (trust a lot).

- 4 Plumbers, builders, car mechanics and other repair people.
- 5 Financial companies such as banks or insurers.
- 6 Public officials.

How often, if ever, have each of these things happened to you in the last five years? (Answers from never to more than twice).

- 7 A plumber, builder, car mechanic or other repair person overcharged you or did unnecessary work.
- 8 You were sold food that was packed to conceal the worse bits.
- 9 A bank or insurance company failed to offer you the best deal you were entitled to.

- 10 You were sold something second-hand that quickly proved to be faulty.
- 11 A public official asked you for a favour or a bribe in return for a service.
- 12 **We have just asked you about experiences of being treated dishonestly over the past five years. Using this card, how worried are you that things like this will happen to you (not all worried is 1 and very worried is 4)?**

How wrong, if at all, do you consider the following ways of behaving to be? Please rate between 1 (not wrong at all) and 4 (seriously wrong)

- 13 . . . someone paying cash with no receipt so as to avoid paying VAT or other taxes?
- 14 . . . someone selling something second-hand and concealing some or all of its faults?
- 15 . . . someone making an exaggerated or false insurance claim?
- 16 . . . a public official asking someone for a favour or bribe in return for their services?

How much do you agree (1) or disagree (5) with these statements about how people see rules and laws?

- 17 If you want to make money, you can't always act honestly.
- 18 You should always strictly obey the law even if it means missing good opportunities.
- 19 Occasionally, it is alright to ignore the law and do what you want to.

How much do you agree or disagree with each of these statements about the way the economy works these days?

- 20 Nowadays businesses are only interested in making profits and not in improving service or quality for customers.
- 21 Nowadays large firms work together in order to keep their prices unnecessarily high.
- 22 Nowadays customers and consumers are in a better position to protect their interests.
- 23 **Suppose you planned to get benefits or services you were not entitled to. How many of your friends or relatives do you think you could ask for support? (Answers from none to almost all)**

How often, if ever, have you done each of these things in the last five years? How often, if ever, have you . . . (Answers from never, once, twice, or more than twice).

- 24 . . . kept the change from a shop assistant or waiter knowing they had given you too much?
- 25 . . . paid cash with no receipt so as to avoid paying VAT or other taxes?
- 26 . . . sold something second-hand and concealed some or all of its faults?
- 27 . . . misused or altered a card or document to pretend you were eligible for something you were not?
- 28 . . . made an exaggerated or false insurance claim?
- 29 . . . offered a favour or bribe to a public official in return for their services?
- 30 . . . over-claimed or falsely claimed government benefits such as social security or other benefits?

Yesterday Mehmet had an interview with Gerrit Pans, the director of the starter centre of the local Chamber of Commerce. One outcome of the interview was that Gerrit Pans offered Mehmet access to the databases of the Chamber of Commerce. These databases contain basic descriptive information of all businesses in the city, such as legal form, date of foundation, sector, address, names of the owners. Moreover all businesses are required to deposit their balance sheet and larger businesses are also required to provide some information on their profits. However, the database is far from perfect. It contains many firms that are still registered at the Chamber of Commerce but do not operate anymore. Moreover, many firms do not keep their records up to date. The financial information seemed especially rather messy.

Somehow Mehmet had the feeling that Mr Pans was mainly looking for a student to work on their data. He would even do it for free, if the data would really add something to his thesis. But currently he had the feeling it would take days if not weeks to understand the database and to get some useful information out of it.

- 1 How could Rebecca combine her primary data collection with the secondary data of the European social survey?
- 2 Should Mehmet use the secondary data at the municipality level as suggested by the Chamber of Commerce manager? What are the disadvantages of incorporating those secondary data in his case study research?
- 3 Which sources could be useful for Rebecca and Mehmet? Start with those mentioned in Appendix A.