

The use of surveys for monetary and economic policy

Policy Panel

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Surveys: a key input for policymaking

- Surveys have become « routine anchor points » in key instances of decision making
 - Eg. ECB
 - SPF for Inflation (alternative to yield curve indicators / forwards)
 - BLS for analysis of credit conditions
 - They fulfil a *typological* function
- Sometimes they bear leading indicator properties
 - Timeliness vs reliability
 - Open question: early releases versus surveys (eg, for GDP / economic activity)
- Sometimes they even influence forecasts quantitatively
 - See comparisons of forecasts based on hard versus soft data
 - Forecasts are a case for caution

« Who runs the survey » : does it make a difference for policy making?



- Recent proliferation of DIY survey tools
 - Pros and cons
 - Key criterion: used to make predictions about a population?
 - Decision makers not always statisticians (and they don't have to)
 - So need for strict rules on data quality and representativity (by those who know the population best) → caution !
 - Survey design
 - Sampling
 - Questionnaires
 - Testing
- Investment in the quality of data creation often smaller than investment in research

The one (survey) too much?

- Reporting requirements have been inflated
 - Very true for regulated financial industry
 - Also true generally (eg, extra-financial accounting)
- ➔ reporting fatigue may lead to lower response quality (delegation, etc)

The Venn challenge for policymaking

- Keep focus on policy question while being data-driven
 - Keep up-to-date with evolving sources of information, methods, data – including surveys
 - Scientific evidence-building in the broadening sources of data
 - Observational data
 - Text analysis
 - Big data
 - Image/geospatial sources
- ➔ Surveys hybridated?
- ➔ Ethical dimension ?

