

What we collect

GESIS has the mandate to archive research data on empirical social research in the long term and to make these data accessible. The statutes determine the content of the services and thus the data offered. This is to support research into "social developments in a national, international comparative and historical perspective" as well as "international comparative research".

GESIS archives research data that are suitable for answering questions relevant to the social sciences. There is no thematic focus for inclusion in the collection. Data from student research projects are equally as welcome as the results of large international comparative research projects. The assessment of the data by GESIS varies depending on the possible user groups.

Social science research data depict sections of social reality. As a rule, they can be processed by machines and are used to study social phenomena. In principle, a distinction can be made between two large areas of data relevant to the social sciences:

1. data collected by researchers according to specific methods (e.g. by means of standardised surveys for the continuous observation of society), and
2. data that can potentially be used for social science research (e.g. process-produced data from public administration) if they relate to social phenomena.

In summary, the following criteria apply to archiving:

- The data are suitable for answering questions relevant to the social sciences.
- The data are processed and documented in such a way that they can be re-used (e.g. for secondary analysis) without major effort. Preparation here means that the data can be analysed with common statistical analysis software. The variables should be fully labelled, the missing values comprehensible and any weighting variables sufficiently documented.
- The data collection is comprehensible and documented, e.g. via a methodology description.
- The survey instrument is available.
- The data is quantitative.

GESIS cooperates nationally and internationally with other data-holding institutions to ensure the best possible access to research results for users. Cooperation may also include the recommendation of a partner institution where your data can be given higher visibility or more specific support (e.g. qualitative surveys).

Cologne, July 2013

Note: Please see German version for the official statement.