

Book review

Zarafonitou Ch., Tsiganou I., Collaboration: Ch. Tatsi and Project Team (2020). *Framework of Rules of Ethics of Criminological Research. In the light of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)*. M.A. "Criminology" of Panteion University, Athens: Dionikos.

Reviewed by: Christina Tatsi¹

The book titled “*Framework of Rules of Ethics of Criminological Research. In the light of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)*”, co-authored by Professor Christina Zarafonitou and Dr. Ioanna Tsiganou in collaboration with the project team of PhD candidates Elli Anitsi, Katerina Kalafati-Michailaki, Penelope Kollia, Elena Sirmali and Christina Tatsi (who was also the project team's co-ordinator) was recently published by Dionikos Publications in the frame of series “Criminological Studies” by the Program of Postgraduate Studies (MA) in Criminology of Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences

The book is prefaced by reputable scientists with special knowledge and experience in this field, such as Mrs. Calliope Spinellis, Emeritus Professor of Criminology at the Law School of National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA), Mrs Maria Kranidioti, Assistant Professor of Criminology at the Law School of NKUA and Mrs Evangelia (Lillian) Mitrou, Professor of Aegean University in the Department of Information and Communication Systems Engineering, who in their preliminary texts present important concerns and ethical issues arising during the conduct of criminological research.

¹ Lawyer, PhD C. Criminology, Panteion University

The introductory chapter of the book sets out the institutional development of data protection from the first attempts to secure the right to privacy to the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (2016/679/EU-GDPR).

In Chapter I, and to facilitate the reader, details of key concepts as they are defined in Article 4 GDPR, are given. Those concepts are extensively analyzed in the book. Indicatively, the definitions of "personal data", "processing", "pseudonymization", "consent", etc. are given. Afterwards, the general principles which researchers must bear in mind during the conduct of the research, are mentioned. Specifically, principles such as "General rules on the security of the research", "principle of legality, objectivity and transparency", "the proportionality principle", "confidentiality assurance", "informed consent", principles applicable in the research procedure to minors, detainees, addictive substance users, etc.. The general principles set out in this chapter are analyzed in detail on the subsequent chapters of the book.

A detailed reference is then made in Chapter II, setting out the rules to be taken into account by researchers in carrying out a research. The sub-chapters describe in detail the duties and ethical obligations of researchers, who are obliged to be professional, to be bound by their activities and to enhance the overall progress of the group, equality and respect.

One of the most important ethical obligations for researchers is the protection of intellectual property. Researchers are obliged to report to both, the author and the source, when carrying out their research. The same rights (of intellectual property) are acquired by the researchers on the research subject. At the same time, they are prohibited from incorporating ideas and extracts from third parties into their work without reference to them.

In the same chapter, reference is also made to the violation of the research's integrity. According to the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, failure to observe good research practices, such as the construction of research results, the falsification or alteration of research material and plagiarism constitute a violation of professional duties. Scientific experts must therefore ensure that all ethical rules and the provisions of the legislation in force are complied with, when the research is carried out. Conflicts of interest may arise, which may affect various aspects of a research study. In this case, the researcher should be aware that any conflict of interest may negatively affect the

research and also confirm that no conflict of interest regarding himself/ herself at the time of undertaking his/ her duties exists. At the same time, the research team has to manage this conflict.

Chapter III, entitled 'Ethical issues in research involving natural persons', and is divided into three main sub-chapters concerning information and consent, confidentiality and financial consideration.

The information and consent (informed consent) of the participants is an essential precondition for scientific research to be carried out on natural persons. Participation in criminological research must be voluntary and the participant's consent shall be given after being informed in detail and having understood the conditions of the research conduct. Clear and understandable language should be used in order to inform the participants, consent should be given in writing, and the researcher should inform the participant concerned that the refusal to participate in the research does not lead to any consequence.

The question of ensuring confidentiality includes the concepts of anonymity and confidentiality. The researcher shall maintain confidentiality and protect the participant's interests even when he or she does not understand the risk posed by the disclosure of his or her data. The principle of anonymity does not concern the researcher who collects the data, but any third party, while confidentiality concerns everyone.

Finally, reference is made to financial compensation. The practice of providing financial exchanges to participants as an incentive to participate in the research may alter their freedom of will and should therefore be avoided.

Chapter IV refers to "Special cases of research", in particular research concerning minors, prisoners, users of addictive substances, victims of domestic violence, mentally ill patients and victims of human trafficking. During conducting a research, specific ethical issues may arise because of the specific characteristics of the groups mentioned in this chapter which are indicative. In these cases, greater attention is required as the disclosure of any personal data and the failure to understand the scale and results of the research carried out in these groups, can have multiple adverse effects on the lives of the individuals compared to other groups in the population. Thus, except for the general principles which are applied to each survey, when it comes to conducting a research

into vulnerable groups of people and in particular cases, more specific approaches are required, always in compliance with the legislation.

In the next Chapter V- “Compiling personal data files”, a detailed reference is made to the processing of personal data, but also to the rights of data subjects such as the right to rectification, the right to erasure (right to be forgotten) and the right to restriction of processing, as detailed, in the sub-chapters concerned and protected by the GDPR. In addition, extensive reference is made to the conditions of third party access to the personal data of the participants. The last sub-chapter of Chapter V sets out the measures to be taken by the controller and the processor about the security, privacy and anonymity of the research participants.

The last chapter (Chapter VI) of book deals with the “Security of individuals and data”. There is extensive reference to the measures that researchers and participants must take and to the rules that must be followed while they are conducting the research, storing and securing the collected data. The possibility of damage (physical and mental) should be minimized, and all necessary protection measures should be taken, with respect to the dignity and rights of the participants. Meanwhile, data should be collected for specified purposes and processed in a way that guarantees their security. Finally, reference is made to the Data Protection Officer.

At the end of the book, the reader will find a variety of appendices, in order to be informed about the licensing process of research projects and the role of Research Ethics Committees. In addition, the reader may obtain accompanying forms in order to get the authorization to conduct research, as posted on the websites of the Panteion University, the National Centre of Social Research, the Democritus University of Thrace and the University of Crete. At the end of the book in the latter pages, the reader can also be informed about the legislative and ethical texts concerning the conduct of research.

The need to create a framework of Rules of Ethics of Criminological Research has been more urgent than ever, especially since the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation. The aim of the book is, on the one hand, to close these gaps by responding to ethical issues, which may arise during the conduct of research and, on the other hand, to provide a useful methodological tool for the wider research and academic community.