

# Mission GDPR: An Exploring Adventure in Personal Data Security Through the Galactic Data-Realm to Uncover Stellar-Results

The Protection of Personal Data Pursuant to the GDPR - A Mixed Methods Approach  
Master Thesis Project - Collins 2020

## Background and Objectives

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) aims at “the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data”. Before the GDPR became applicable it spurred extensive media coverage, including contentious debates, polemical statements or dire predictions. To evaluate the understanding of the subject to the law is imperative as the data subjects should be aware of the rights conferred by the same.

## Qualitative Research Question

- What do people subject to the General Data Protection Regulation (“the data subjects”) know about the aims of the regulation and their rights conferred by the same?

## Quantitative Hypothesis

- There exists a correlation between knowledge about the GDPR and the attitude towards the GDPR. This correlation is moderated through the own professional activity.



Image of Explorer generated using Midjourney (2024)<sup>5</sup>

## Results

- Attitudes towards GDPR are complex; people see it as both important and excessive.
- Recognition of GDPR's importance coexists with criticism of its complexity.
- Those viewing GDPR as excessive tend to be passive about it.
- Proponents of GDPR are concerned about its implementation and enforcement.
- Data subjects often possess limited or inaccurate information about GDPR.
- Misinformation leads to uncertainty and reluctance to engage with GDPR.
- Knowledge about GDPR is influenced by various framework conditions such as sources of information in general, experiences and points of contact, as well as attitudes, values, and uncertainties.
- There is a strong correlation between knowledge and perceived importance of GDPR.
- Knowledge positively impacts perceived importance but has limited influence on attitudes.
- No significant link found between professional GDPR experience and other variables.

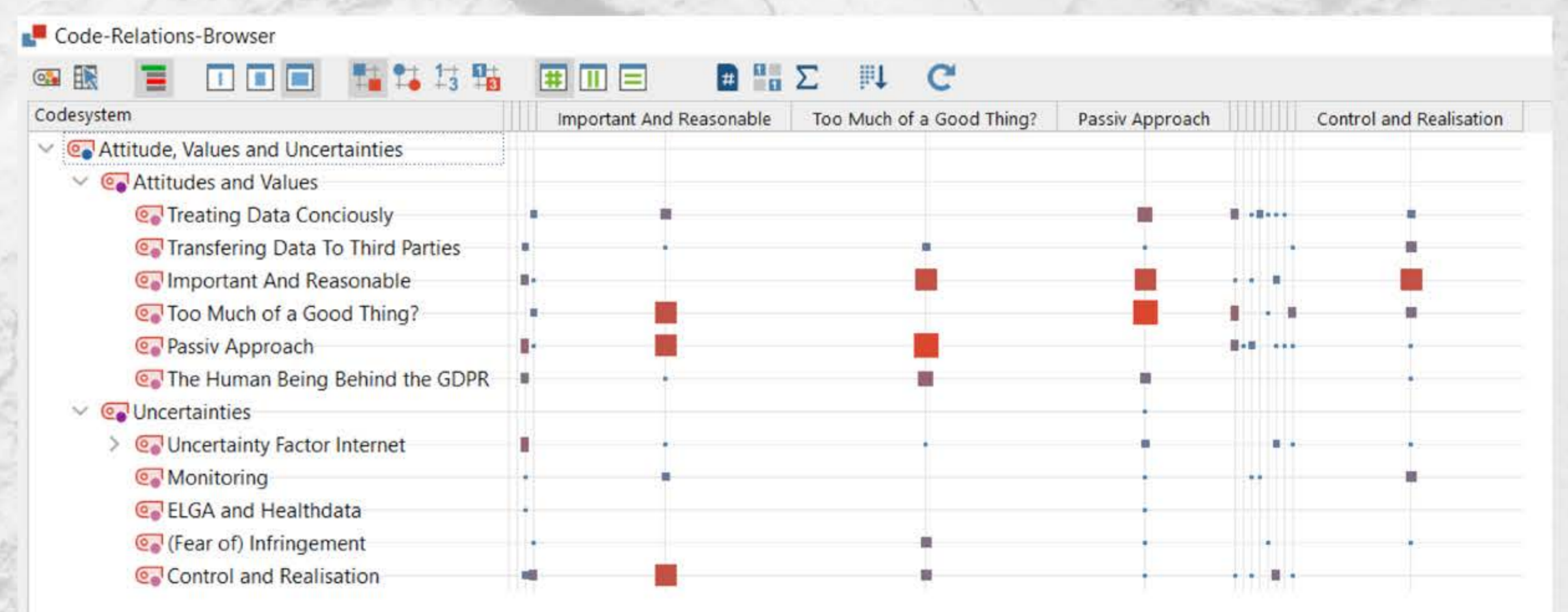


Image of Data-Realm generated using Midjourney (2024)<sup>5</sup>

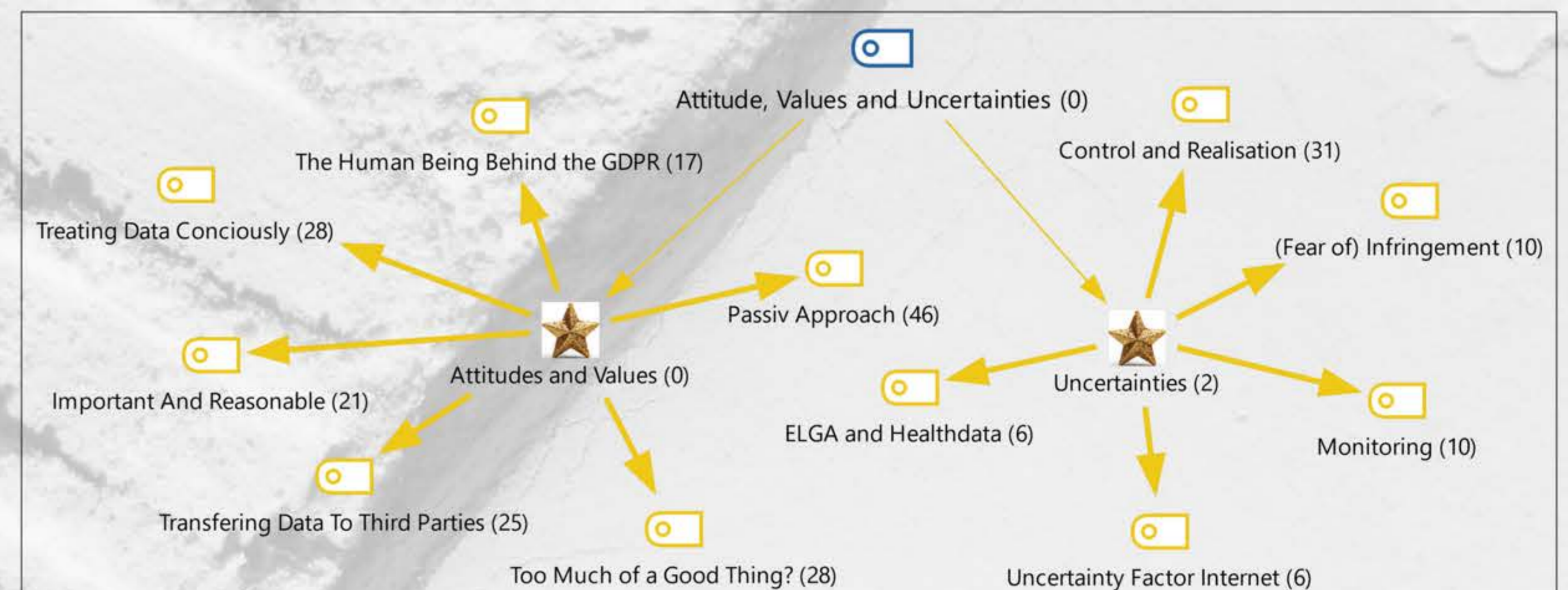
## Methods

“The Exploratory Sequential Mixed Methods Design” Creswell and Plano Clark (2018)<sup>2</sup>

- **Phase 1**- Qualitative/Interpretive: To collect qualitative data, 15 guided interviews were conducted. For the interviews an interview guide, comprising 12 open questions with some sub questions, was formulated. MAXQDA was used to analyse the interview data, applying the qualitative content analyses of Mayring (2015)<sup>4</sup>.
- 88 pages transcript have been analyzed with MAXQDA using different tools e.g. Code Relations Browser, Creative Coding, Summary Grid, Max Map etc.
- **Interim Phase** - The results of the qualitative part were used to develop quantitative questionnaire.
- **Phase 2** – Quantitative: The questionnaire mainly tested: Attitudes, Uncertainties, Importance and Knowledge. Quantitative Data was analyzed with IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 26). For the graphical illustration Tableau Software Inc. (2017)<sup>1</sup> was used. To examine the correlation between the individual elements of the questionnaire, a path analysis was conducted.



With the code relations browser in MAXQDA the relation and the proximity of codes according to Kuckartz (2010)<sup>3</sup> has been analyzed for the category of “Attitudes, Values and Uncertainties”.



Creative Coding: Results Attitudes, Values and Uncertainties

## Conclusion

- COVID-19 pandemic limited qualitative sample; 15 interviews achieved saturation.
- The quantitative questionnaire showed potential despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 restrictions.
- Advocacy needed for GDPR awareness and simplified information dissemination.
- Lack of correlation between professional involvement and GDPR knowledge suggests room for internal compliance improvements.
- Further research required on GDPR attitude, knowledge, and work experience interplay, considering potential personality trait influences.
- Study suggests avenues for enhancing GDPR implementation in Austria; basis for further research

## References

- REGULATION (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, OJ 2016 L 119.
- <sup>1</sup> Arbuckle, J. L. (2014). *AMOS (Version 24)* [Computer software]. IBM Corp.
- <sup>2</sup> Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2018). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (3rd ed.). Sage.
- <sup>3</sup>Kuckartz, U. (2010). *Einführung in die computergestützte Analyse qualitativer Daten: Lehrbuch* (3rd ed.). VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.
- <sup>4</sup> Mayring, P. (2015). *Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse: Grundlagen und Techniken* (12th ed.). Beltz.
- <sup>5</sup> Midjourney. (2024). *Midjourney (Version 6)* [Text-to-image model]. <https://www.midjourney.com/>