

What risks to Māori dignity arise from non-consensual scrapping of Census data related to MDS/G?

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Māori data is a *taonga* governed by *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* principles. Scraping Census data without Māori consent threatens Māori Data Sovereignty by enabling analyses that may stigmatise communities. This creates deficit-based narratives and undermines ***Manaakitanga***, which requires respect, consent, and the protection of Māori dignity in data use.

The potential impact of such practices includes the perpetuation of harmful narratives that misrepresent Māori realities and reinforce structural racism. When Māori data is taken and used primarily for external benefit rather than Māori aspirations, it becomes an act of data colonialism. This ruins trust in researchers and institutions, weakens Māori governance over their own data, and eliminates the Māori community ability to control how their stories are told. In this way, non-consensual data scraping hinders the reciprocal relationship of ***Manaakitanga*** and risks causing damage to Māori dignity and wellbeing.

To mitigate these risks, researchers must uphold Māori authority by ensuring Māori leadership in data access, interpretation, and use. Instead of scraping, Census data should be accessed through approved channels under Māori Data Governance frameworks. Analyses must also be grounded in Māori cultural contexts and reflect both strengths and challenges, ensuring data use aligns with ***Manaakitanga***.

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