

A Risk on Māori Data Sovereignty When Scrapping the Traditional Census

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Scrapping the census in favour of using administrative data will fail to capture all the data Māori need for decision making. Administrative data won't contain metadata (context of data) such as origin, or context of collection because administrative data isn't collected for research purposes. Therefore, administrative data cannot capture enough information to respect the principle of Whakapapa (relationships) in Māori data sovereignty. Whakapapa must be considered because lineage and identity (iwi and descent) is a crucial aspect of Māori culture that demands respect. Scrapping the census will exaggerate the problem of Māori data being used without significant input from people of Māori. Furthermore, individual identity and lineage within Māori data is effectively erased, which insults Māori culture and the sacredness of Māori data. Not only will Māori have difficulty capturing all the relevant data needed for informed decision making, but this also insults Māori culture and disrespects data that's considered sacred. One solution that can alleviate this problem is conducting thorough surveys of Māori while working with people of Māori or with Māori world views. This ensures the Māori data being collected will have relevant context needed for proper decision making while also respecting Māori data sovereignty.

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