The Impact on Māori Data Sovereignty and Governance from Scrapping the Traditional Census

Stats NZ scrapping the traditional Census and using administrative data, could pose a serious threat to Māori Data Sovereignty and Governance (MDS/G), creating data quality and completeness risks. These datasets often miss people who don't engage with government services, particularly rural Māori avoiding official contact. In the Census, people identify themselves, including their ethnicity, iwi, and language. Administrative records may record Māori incorrectly, incompletely, or miss some data. Some individuals might also give false details to agencies for personal reasons, affecting data accuracy. This breaches the principle of **Rangatiratanga** (authority), where Māori should control decisions about their own data. The information in these systems was collected for other purposes, without clear permission to be used in this way, which breaks the **Whakapapa** principle and damages trust. The result could be that smaller iwi groups and rural Māori communities aren’t properly counted, which affects how resources are shared and how policies are shaped. One solution could be Stats NZ partnering with Māori leaders, establishing a Māori governance panel with decision making power to verify and correct administrative records and targeted data collection to reach missed communities, which would help protect Māori interests and values.

Student Id: 26760701