Māori Data Sovereignty

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The replacement of the traditional census with administrative datasets such as through the IDI can pose risk to the principle of Rangatiratanga (Authority) and Whakapapa (Relationships). The census has provided historical data allowing Māori communities to understand population size, age, education, and characteristics. Using Administrative datasets are not created for Māori need but instead about individual units like people, households, or businesses. As IDI integrates data from diverse sources, it may fail to capture important distinction such as iwi affiliation, descent, language use. This can lead for Māori governance to be undermined where it can lead to Māori information to be invisible and incomplete in future statistics, affecting policy decisions and resource allocation for Māori communities. Misclassified data can erode the trust and reliability towards the government.

To mitigate the risks, it is recommended for Stats NZ to incorporate Māori governance and intervention towards the re-design of the census, through Te Kahui Raraunga. By having co-design with Māori representatives, allowing error free and informed data collection where the categories are reflected towards Māori standards. This will sustain and maintain accuracy towards the representation of Māori populations, upholding MDS principles.