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GOVERNING FREE CHOICE:
A FOUCAULDIAN CRITIQUE OF REFORMS
IN NEW ZEALAND EDUCATION SINCE 1987

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ABSTRACT

The education sector in New Zealand has undergone an immense reform since 1987. Much of this has been underpinned by neo-liberal notions about government intervention as counter to freedom of choice. I argue that while the reforms purport to be liberating through a restoral of rights and a provision of choices, they instead lead us to constitute ourselves as “governable” rather than as free individuals. Using the work of French philosopher Michel Foucault, this thesis provides an alternative reading of the reforms and shows that what we come to know as freedom is a significantly regulated version of it.

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