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**MALE BREADWINNER  
HOUSEHOLDS AND WORK:  
ALTERATIONS IN THE  
TRANSITION TO A LIBERAL  
WELFARE REGIME**

**A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
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## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines how the nexus between households and work in New Zealand has been altered by the transition from a wage earner cum social expenditure welfare regime to a liberal welfare regime. The proposition that welfare regimes are characterised by distinctive institutional arrangements and labour market outcomes is explored at the micro-level through household life and work histories. Life and work history data from a small number of Palmerston North male breadwinner households was used to examine the way individuals' lives have been affected by the institutional context at distinctive historical epochs. The thesis discusses the implications for household labour market activity and experience in each regime. Strong cultural and normative continuities are noted despite the trend towards dual earner households. Variation in the potential for labour market mobility across regimes is observed in terms of changing opportunities for skill acquisition. Change in the experience of unemployment and subsequent labour supply responses is examined. Increasing employment insecurity is found to be an outcome of increasing risk of job loss, declining levels of input into jobs and declining levels of protection from adversity in employment relationship. With fewer employment opportunities in the liberal regime, yet with increasing welfare selectivism, the nexus between households and work is found to be characterised by a greater level of income necessity. Households' responses include the supply of "additional" labour - an added-worker effect - whereby they take whatever work can be found, often lower paid and with poor conditions. The examination at the micro-level of how household labour market activity and experience had been altered by the transition to the liberal regime was found to enhance the understanding of change in the interface between work and welfare.

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