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**THE IMPACTS OF A MAJOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECT  
ON WOMEN'S LIVES: A CASE STUDY OF MINING  
IN LIHIR, PAPUA NEW GUINEA**

**A Thesis Presented in Partial Fulfilment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of Master  
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## DEDICATION

This Dissertation is dedicated to my father, Blasius Bai, and my late mother and uncle, Rita Lagea and Noah, whose love and perseverance in seeing me through my early education I will always cherish, and whose wisdom and guidance I will strive to follow.

## ABSTRACT

Most forms of development in the past have followed the mainstream model of development, the 'top down' approach, which assumes that benefits of development will reach the grassroots people through time. This has rarely been the case and many disadvantaged groups of people in local communities, especially women, have become marginalised and suppressed by this approach to development. Thus the concept of empowerment has been adopted by those supporting an alternative development approach emphasising the sharing of power in decision-making and planning, and equitable sharing of the benefits of development.

Nevertheless, many large-scale projects, such as mining, are still going ahead 'in the national interest' with little regard for the interests of local communities. This thesis, acknowledging the complexity of the issue, sets out to assess the case of Lihir, Papua New Guinea, where a large-scale mining development is taking place and the mining company has made public statements about their commitment to ensuring local people benefit from the development. Coming from an empowerment perspective, this thesis asks questions such as whether or not Lihirian women, as traditional landowners, have been involved in the decision-making, planning, and negotiation processes regarding the mining development, and whether they have benefited from the development to date.

The overall finding is that Lihirian women have been marginalised and disempowered by the current mining development. Women have had far fewer opportunities than men to benefit from the improved employment, business, transport and training services provided by the mining development and meanwhile they have had to endure certain burdens such as increased workloads due to absence of husbands, drunkenness of spouses and social decay. The uneven development characterising the Lihir mining development raises important gender issues which deserve greater interest from human geographers.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>BCL</b>	Bougainville Copper Limited
<b>BDO</b>	Business Development Office
<b>BHP</b>	Broken Hill Pty. Ltd. (Australia)
<b>CMG</b>	Catholic Mama Group
<b>CMP</b>	Chamber of Mining and Petroleum
<b>CRA</b>	Conzinc Riotinto Australia
<b>CRD</b>	Community Relations Office
<b>IBP</b>	Integrated Benefit Package
<b>K</b>	Kina (PNG currency)
<b>LGT</b>	Lihir Gold Times
<b>LMALA</b>	Lihir Mining Area Landowners Association
<b>LMC</b>	Lihir Management Company
<b>MOA</b>	Memorandum of Agreement
<b>MRL</b>	Mineral Resources Lihir
<b>NDA</b>	Nimamar Development Authority
<b>NGO</b>	Non Governmental Organisation
<b>NIP</b>	New Ireland Province
<b>NIPG</b>	New Ireland Provincial Government
<b>PNG</b>	Papua New Guinea
<b>PWA</b>	<i>Petزتoreme</i> Women's Association
<b>RMU</b>	Resource Mapping Unit
<b>RTZ</b>	Rio Tinto Zinc
<b>TIA</b>	<i>Tutom me Isokol</i> Association
<b>UCWFG</b>	United Church Women's Fellowship group
<b>UPNG</b>	University of Papua New Guinea
<b>VSD</b>	Village Services Database