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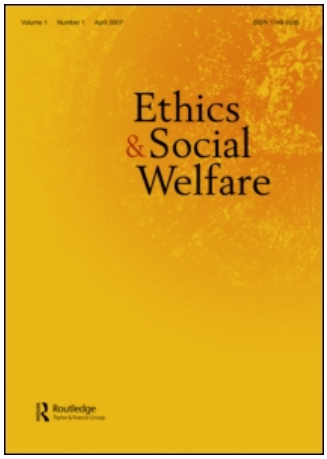

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Empowerment and the Role of Advocacy in a Globalized World

Christine M. Koggel

To understand empowerment, I argue, we need to situate it in a context of the growing impact of economic globalization on groups, communities, countries, and the people in them. I begin by using feminist and postcolonial insights on relations of power at local and global levels to sketch the central concepts of empowerment, advocacy, and globalization. I then use these insights to examine the World Bank's recent work on empowerment. While the World Bank is alert to the complexity of empowerment processes, it ignores the ways in which the local is increasingly being reshaped by features of economic globalization. This lack can be explained by the World Bank's role in the global context, one that assumes that economic globalization can alleviate the disempowerment of "poor people in poor countries". This position undercuts its claims to advocate for the poor. Its role as advocate is problematic because it fails to attend to relationships at the global level, including relationships it develops with poor people and Third World countries. To give substance to this critique, I discuss work being done by SATUNAMA, a non-profit, non-political organization that advocates for and works to empower people in different regions and sectors of Indonesia.

Keywords Development Ethics; Empowerment; Advocacy; Feminism; Postcolonial Theory; Globalization; Power; Relational Theory; Non-governmental Organizations

The concept of development has a *descriptive* as well as a *prescriptive* or *normative* use. In the descriptive sense, development is often understood in terms of processes of economic growth, industrialization, and modernization that result in a society's achieving a high (per capita) gross domestic product. Yet even this supposed *description* contains normative assumptions—it connotes progress, transformation, and liberation and it reserves the terms "under-developed" or "developing" for countries that have not yet achieved this kind of growth. These descriptions and their embedded normative assumptions are now being questioned in a literature critical of a history of development in which

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rich/North/developed countries assumed a Western, scientific, technological, and capitalist model of what constitutes development that then shaped projects in and interactions with poor/South/developing countries.

Development *ethicists* seek to uncover and question these assumptions about what constitutes *proper* development and they do so by exploring answers to overt normative questions about the morally relevant goals that a society ought to aim for and achieve. So while ethicists may agree that a goal of development is to achieve economic growth, that goal is theorized in terms of what kinds of growth help to satisfy or promote basic underlying values such as equality, justice, freedom, well-being, or human flourishing. Instead of assuming certain economic or political structures, theorists working with normative issues make human beings and the effects of development on them central to their accounts of what development ought to be or should entail. The basic underlying moral claim is that human beings ought to be able to deliberate about and make choices for themselves. This means that assumptions about who they are or what they need risk violating basic moral principles of equality, justice, and human rights.

These contributions by ethicists and political and social theorists more generally have been crucial for generating what is now a general agreement among development theorists and practitioners that development projects should not be imposed on people, even if they help to overcome economic and social deprivation, but ought to be *empowering* for those who are meant to benefit from them. This agreement is reflected, for example, in the World Bank's turn to the concept of empowerment in recent titles such as *Empowerment and Poverty Reduction* (Narayan 2004) and *Measuring Empowerment* (Narayan 2005). Yet this general agreement is belied by continued disagreement about answers to descriptive and normative questions about what empowerment is and requires. Why is empowerment morally salient? Are there kinds and levels of empowerment? What sorts of factors can hinder or promote empowerment? Do factors at the global level affect possibilities for empowering people at the local level? If those needing to be empowered have little power or voice, who should speak or advocate for them?

In this paper, I explore answers to these kinds of questions by locating them in our contemporary context of economic globalization. My main argument is that to answer questions about empowerment we need to be aware of the growing impact of economic globalization on groups, communities, countries, and the people in them. To give substance to this argument, I structure my paper in the following way. In the first section, I do background work of sketching the central concepts of empowerment, advocacy, and economic globalization. These discussions make use of feminist and postcolonial insights on power relations and on accounts of local practices, structures, and conditions and the global institutions that affect them. In the second section, I apply these insights by examining the World Bank's work on empowerment. While the World Bank is to be applauded for recognizing the complexity of the concept in its endorsement of the need for sensitivity to the particularities of specific contexts, its awareness of the multi-dimensional and multi-leveled aspects of empowerment, and its use

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of a cross- and multi-disciplinary approach, I argue that the account is not complex enough and that there are issues missing that are relevant to analyzing processes of empowerment in a global context. The gist of my critique of the World Bank is that they fail to acknowledge that the local is being increasingly shaped and reshaped by features of economic globalization.

In the final two sections, I show that this deficiency in the World Bank account of empowerment undermines its own claims that it advocates for ''poor people in poor countries''. Its role as advocate is problematic precisely because of its lack of attention to relationships at the global level, including relationships it is in and continues to develop with poor people and Third World countries. To give substance to this critique, I discuss some of the work being done by SATUNAMA, a non-profit, non-political organization that advocates for and works to empower people in different regions and sectors of Indonesia.

Empowerment, Advocacy, and Economic Globalization

In ''Rethinking Power'', Amy Allen distinguishes three types of power—power-over, power-to, and power-with—as a way of resolving the debate between what she refers to as ''empowerment feminists'', who are too optimistic about women's power-from-within to transform themselves and the world and thereby fail to acknowledge the strength of the structures under which men dominate and have power-over women, and ''domination feminists'', who are too pessimistic about the strength of patriarchal structures and thereby neglect or negate the forms of power that women do have and exercise over others. Allen argues that feminists need a conception of power that is ''sufficiently complex to illuminate the multifarious relations of power that feminists seek both to critique and transform'' (Allen 1991, p. 31). For Allen, kinds of power reflect kinds of relations. Male domination is reflected in the ''particular kinds of power that men are able to exercise *over* women'', empowerment and resistance is the ''power women have *to* act in spite of or as a response to male domination'', and solidarity and coalition building is ''the power that women exercise *with* each other and with men in allied social movements'' (Allen 1991, p. 33). Feminists need to be aware of all three modalities of power to understand the complex relations of power that shape structures of domination as well as possibilities for resistance and solidarity. This explains the moral salience of empowerment in terms of understanding relations of power in order to resist and change forces of oppression. An analysis of empowerment, therefore, needs to explain who has power-over resources and people and what structures, practices, and conditions act as barriers to empowerment, resistance, and solidarity efforts.

Looking ahead, and for the purposes of my argument, two points emerge from Allen's account. First, power-to as the power that an individual has to attain ends is more frequently discussed in the literature of empowerment than power-with as a collective ability to act together. I take both kinds of power to be important to processes of empowerment and use the term empowerment to refer to both.

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Second, Allen's call for illuminating the multifarious and complex relations of power creates a role for advocacy: the need to have those with power speak for, represent, and help mobilize those without power in order to encourage or enact the modalities of power-to and power-with. To borrow from an important defense of advocacy by Lorraine Code, advocacy is ''a cluster of liberatory practices whose goal is to (re)enfranchise epistemically disadvantaged, marginalized, disenfranchised Others'' (Code 2006, p. 165). Code goes on to sketch an account of advocacy practices that are responsible and responsive in their claims to know about others and their needs. I shall return to these ideas in the sections that follow. For now, I want to turn briefly to a discussion of *Rethinking Empowerment*, a postcolonial feminist collection that makes use of Allen's account of modalities of power and applies them to a broader set of issues in the global context.

The editors of *Rethinking Empowerment* note a history of development that has led from projects being imposed from the outside by rich/Western countries to projects now designed to improve the effectiveness of empowerment measures at the local level. They agree with the rejection of the former, but they also argue that a focus on the local has ''profound limitations'':

> it tends to underplay or ignore the impact of the global and national forces on prospects for poor people's (especially women's) empowerment, and encourages a rather romantic equation between empowerment, inclusion and voice that papers over the complexities of em(power)ment, both as a process and as a goal. (Parpart *et al*. 2002, p. 3)

They agree with several aspects of Allen's account of power. Empowerment is not simply the ability to have power-over people and resources; empowerment involves understanding, challenging, and subverting a complex set of power relations; empowerment has elements of both individual power-to as well as collective power-with; and attention to the specificities of time and place means that what works to empower people is fluid, often unpredictable, and changes as relations of power change. They add to this their argument that because global forces leave virtually no one untouched, empowerment ''must be analysed in global and national as well as local terms'' (Parpart *et al*. 2002, 4). This insight about the effects of global forces on the local is central to postcolonial feminist analyses, a goal of which is to uncover aspects of neocolonialism in development. The analysis is evident, for example, in Chandra Mohanty's work in which she assesses the effects of globalization on women's work in specific locations and sectors (Mohanty 1997; Koggel 2003a, b).

In general terms, globalization represents increased flows of things such as technology, trade, information, markets, capital, and people themselves. This flow has made borders ever more permeable, an effect that can be said to have had positive effects on normative debates about cross-cultural dialogue and the meaning of concepts such as human rights, justice, democracy, and equality. An overarching feature of globalization is that we live in a context of *economic*

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globalization, one in which open markets, multinational corporations, international financial institutions, powerful countries, and world trade organizations shape the issues and circumscribe their effects on people in a whole range of areas such as labor, migration, culture, education, healthcare, and the environment.

I have argued elsewhere that economic globalization is neither all good nor all bad and that we need an approach that is case by case rather than globally anti-globalization (2003a, b, 2006). Not everything that has emerged from economic globalization has been or needs to be harmful or damaging. More open markets have provided jobs where little opportunity existed before, jobs that have in turn increased household income and national wealth, improved access to education and healthcare, and challenged gender norms and practices in many parts of the world. But the corporate quest for profit has also resulted in the exploitation of workers in Third World countries and the destruction of families, ways of life, and communities when corporations move to countries with even lower wage labor or when rich countries or international financial institutions place paralyzing conditions on countries through aid or debt payment plans. While economic globalization may have positive effects, these sorts of negative effects have *magnified relationships of power* between rich and poor countries and in ways that shape its effects on citizens of a country and the power they have, either individually or collectively, to change oppressive conditions. These effects of the global on the local, I argue, are relevant to understanding relations of power-over and for enabling processes of power-to and power-with. That they are ignored in recent literature on empowerment can be said to be a function of the fact that economic globalization is so overarching and omnipresent as to be invisible in the sense that it is taken for granted by powerful bodies and countries who believe that it only needs to be tweaked to achieve its goals of empowering people and eradicating poverty.

These globally dominant understandings and expectations are now being referred to as ''methodological territorialism'' and it results in ownership of and control over discourse by powerful countries and bodies about the causes of and solutions to problems such as the disempowering effects of poverty. This discourse is evident in the UN millennium report *We the Peoples* that notes that ''Countries that a mere generation ago were struggling with underdevelopment are now vibrant centres of *global economic activity and domestic well-being''* (United Nations 2000, p. 19; my emphasis). At the same time as the report tempers optimism about gains with evidence that economic globalization has not made a significant impact on reducing levels of poverty or closing the gap between the rich and poor, it takes for granted that economic globalization, with its commitment to ever more open markets and neoliberal policies, is here to stay and can be made to work. This discourse and these expectations dominate development theory and policy at the international level—including that which prescribes empowerment as a morally worthy goal at the same time as it promotes the ends and means of economic globalization. Embedded in these descriptions and discourse, as noted in the Introduction, are Western, capitalist,

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and neoliberal assumptions about proper kinds of economic structures and what they can achieve.

In accepting the machinery of economic globalization, powerful institutions and countries are unlikely to acknowledge the negative effects of globalization or to recognize the ways in which features of it can work to undermine the goal of empowering people. Attending to the negative effects of globalization can sometimes mean that rejecting aspects of economic globalization may be the best or only way to empower people—at least in some contexts. To return to insights gleaned from postcolonial feminism, to assess the effects of globalization we need detailed accounts of location, people, conditions, structures, roles, beliefs, and practices and of the effects of global factors on them. To return to insights gleaned from Allen's account of empowerment, we need to pay attention to the complex and multifarious network of relationships of power in order to understand kinds of domination and possibilities for empowering people through modalities of the resistance of power-to and the solidarity of power-with. Putting these insights together means recognizing how overarching factors of economic globalization shape and reshape power relations at local, national, and global levels. This sketch of what is needed is what I take to be missing in the World Bank's work on empowerment.

The World Bank on Empowerment

Deepa Narayan opens *Measuring Empowerment* by explaining that empowerment needs to be viewed "broadly as increasing poor people's freedom of choice and action to shape their own lives" (Narayan 2005, p. 4) and that it is "the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives" (Narayan 2005, p. 5, 2002, p. 14). Narayan states that empowerment efforts need to "focus on changing the unequal power relationship between the state and poor people" and that the "same analysis can be applied to the relationships between poor people and private businesses or civil society organizations" (Narayan 2005, p. 8). More specifically, she argues that "in attempting to measure the empowerment of those previously excluded, it is essential to locate individuals within the historical, social, and political context of their social groups in order to correctly interpret the impact of development interventions" (Narayan 2005, p. 17). What is missing and in need of analysis, however, is an account of unequal power relationships between various kinds of global institutions or corporations and the states, private businesses, civil society organizations, members of disadvantaged groups, and the poor more generally that are affected by them—including relationships with the World Bank that conducts the studies, does the defining and measuring, and has the power to negotiate and implement policies at both national and global levels.

A section entitled "Level of Application" opens with what seems to be a promising and complete list of institutions relevant to measuring empowerment:

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"the concept of empowerment and the conditions that enable empowerment of poor men and women can be considered at the individual household, group, community, local government, or national government level or, indeed at the global level" (Narayan 2005, p. 18). However, that section contains no further discussion of the global or factors at that level that may impact on the other levels that are discussed. Slightly later, the World Bank report mentions that the economic dimension is that most frequently studied in assessing empowerment. But in listing the different levels at which the economic dimension can be studied, it notes the following:

> women's control over income can be studied within the household. At the community level, women's access to employment, common property, membership in trade associations, and access to markets may be key. At the national level, women's representation in jobs, the inclusion of women's economic interests in federal budgets, and laws guaranteeing equal pay for equal work may be important. (Narayan 2005, 20)

But no mention is made of a global level and a context in which factors of globalization shape and reshape the economic dimensions that are listed; of access to employment, markets, and property and of membership in unions and participation in the shaping of policies and laws that affect them.

The upshot is that the World Bank restricts its analysis of empowerment within the borders of nation-states: what can be done to empower poor people given the structures of formal and informal institutions and the conditions of access to resources or barriers to participation faced by them in their own countries. While the kind of detailed descriptions of the particularities of local and state institutions in specific countries is necessary, it does not go far enough in showing how relationships at the local and state level are affected by relationships at the global level and in ways that perpetuate dimensions of power-over. This is relevant at the macro level of relationships between specific countries identified as developing or poor and the multinational corporations, international banks, and world trade organizations located in or dealing with them. It is also relevant at the micro level of World Bank employees interviewing poor people in poor countries with the goal of advocating empowerment strategies for them. This goal of advocating is stated as central to the World Bank's multivolume work *Voices of the Poor* that preceded its work on empowerment (Narayan 2000, p. ix) and is followed up in its Community Empowerment & Social Inclusion (CESI) learning program.

The World Bank describes CESI in the following way: "The program looks at issues of empowerment and governance, thus making the crucial link called for in recent Bank analytical work to strengthen the voices of the poor in influencing public policies, as well as in making institutions more accountable and responsive to their needs." CESI endorses advocacy as "supporting the establishment of an appropriate balance of power between citizens and institutions of government . . . Advocacy is about influencing or changing relationships of power" (Mayoux 2003, p. 5). It then identifies three kinds of advocacy: representation

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(speaking on behalf of the voiceless), mobilization (encouraging others to speak with you), and empowerment (supporting the voiceless to speak for themselves) and notes that the last of these is the most important (Narayan 2003, p. 5). The World Bank takes itself to be advocating in all three ways of representing, mobilizing, and empowering, but I want to argue that its stated role as advocate for the poor is problematic given its failure to acknowledge the effects of imbalances of power between it and the people and governments of Third World countries.

While global institutions such as the World Bank should be credited for recognizing that the voices of the poor are important to the analysis of what needs to be done to alleviate poverty, how they interact with ''the poor'' and how they listen to what is said and interpret what is heard are impacted by their position on the global scene. Their role as advocate is likely to be distorted by their accepting and being perceived as accepting the machinery of economic globalization and as having confidence that it can ease or eradicate poverty. They have power-over those interviewed in ways that may determine what the poor are willing to say in encounters that have the potential to change their lives. Or those interviewed may take themselves to be powerless to control the discourse or the policies that are implemented at the national or global levels. Or they may be situated in histories of colonialism, imperialism, and dictatorships that shape their lack of trust in institutions as well as their beliefs about the virtues of globalization. I take these relationships of power and the situated perspectives on them by those in them to be relevant to an account of possibilities for empowerment in both senses of individual power-to (being able to resist and challenge domination) and collective power-with (being able to mobilize for change).

In the next section I tie the parts of the paper together by discussing some of my observations of and work with a local NGO in Indonesia. Doing so will provide additional support for my argument that local events and conditions are impacted by the global as well as by the regional and national and in ways that can hinder as well as promote power-to and power-with strategies. It will also help establish the argument that power-over relationships between powerful institutions and countries and those living in or governing Third World countries make it difficult for those with this power to do advocacy work that reflects knowing well and responsibly how to empower people in specific contexts.

Empowerment Work of a Local NGO

The local NGO is SATUNAMA, an acronym that translates into English as ''Social Movements for Justice''. SATUNAMA has a staff of about 50, all but one of whom are native Indonesians. In the cafeteria at the main office in the north of Yogyakarta in Central Java hangs a poster that describes its vision:

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> The members of this partnership affirm that development assistance is a process of enlarging people's choices. We affirm that human development is a dynamic life process coming from within an individual, a community, or a nation. We believe that sustainable development requires optimum use of local resources in terms of both people and materials. We believe that the heritage of wisdom and knowledge found in the traditional is an invaluable resource that must be conserved and enhanced for appropriate modern use. This calls for recognition, understanding and cooperation of the community of scientists and learned people with traditional people who are practitioners with time proven knowledge and skills.

A research project entitled ''The Ethics of Empowerment'' had a co-researcher and anthropologist, Jan Newberry, and I arrange to observe and work with SATUNAMA in June 2006.

SATUNAMA's complex and integrated vision of empowerment is incorporated into all its eight divisions, the largest of which is its People Empowerment Project. Its work involves a range of activities, at a variety of levels, and in a number of sectors and places in Indonesia. For example, it has a Training Division that offers courses in Civic Education for Future Indonesian Leaders, for Local Politicians, for Religious Leaders, and for Rural Leaders. It has a Governance Reform Unit that focuses on political education for community leaders, members of parliament, and government officials to help build an infrastructure of democratic political mechanisms and institutions in Indonesia. The Fund Raising Unit has the job of expanding and diversifying the funding base to remove dependency on any one institution, whether local, national, or international, and to enhance the organization's autonomy, freedom, and identity. The Radio Unit runs its own radio program and trains groups in other regions of Indonesia to use radio to provide basic information about healthcare and other resources and to promote democracy, human rights, solidarity, and activism in society.

The People Empowerment Project applies a participatory approach to activities aimed at empowering target communities through programs such as developing small-scale and informal-sector enterprises and improving their access to market facilities; encouraging organic farming by identifying and developing local seeds, making use of local wisdom, and advocating for farmer groups; and strengthening civil society by training citizens at the local level in participatory and financial skills, including skills needed to negotiate with state and multinational companies. The division's fieldwork includes a range of additional programs such as providing basic needs to marginalized communities that lack natural resources and public facilities, promoting healthier living conditions by supplying clean water resources and sanitation facilities, and using a mobile library to bring books to children in remote areas.

Thus far, the descriptions show SATUNAMA's role as an advocate for different people in different sectors and regions. Even though we find SATUNAMA engaged in the same kinds of advocacy described by the World Bank of speaking on behalf of and representing the voiceless, mobilizing to encourage others to speak with you, and empowering the voiceless to speak for themselves, there are important

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differences in how these are conceived and practiced. SATUNAMA does its work in the context of promoting values that it takes to be universal. These values are central to what SATUNAMA is about, evident in what we observed in the fieldwork that it does, and embraced in the education and training that shape the empowerment projects. For example, the People Empowerment Project makes the enhancement of gender equality and children's rights central to all its training and fieldwork programs. The three Rs of Rights, Resilience, and Respect are endorsed in all the literature and in their training courses. And the children's mobile library program is touted as having the aim of promoting the ''universal values'' of non-violence, gender equality, fairness, environmental protection, and compassion. Some of its divisions and programs deal specifically with issues of inter-ethnic and inter-faith factions that have grown in particular regions by encouraging freedom of expression and tolerance of beliefs as a way to develop effective and peaceful local governance.

I take the integral connection between SATUNAMA's work and the values it promotes to reflect its commitment to understanding and combating forces of domination or power-over; whether it be on the basis of gender, religion, the environment, culture, or resources. I also take it to be endorsing values that have acquired universal status in the global context. However, its understanding and application of these values emerges from living and working in communities and engaging with and learning from the people in them. It emerges from the kind of embodied engagement in the history, culture, and practices of Indonesian lives and communities that is not and cannot be part of relationships between the World Bank and those it claims to represent, speak for, and empower.

This embodied engagement with others in specific contexts and for specific purposes puts this local NGO in a better position than the World Bank (or me and for different reasons) to advocate for and work to empower Indonesians from different walks of life. Whereas I learned about the work of this NGO as an observer and not as a participant or citizen, SATUNAMA has had a long history of participating in and developing relationships with people in various communities, relationships that are built on the kind of knowledge and trust that legitimizes its role as advocate. Built into this knowledge of the local is a first-hand awareness of how factors at the global level can threaten, change, and endanger people and communities at the local and national level. There is perhaps no better way to illustrate this work of empowering people through responsible advocacy than to say a little about SATUNAMA's work in the aftermath of the earthquake that struck on 27 May 2006 and measured 6.3 on the Richter scale, lasted a full minute, was felt more than 150 kilometers away, killed about 6,000 people, injured more than 70,000, destroyed more than 150 schools, and left 600,000 homeless.

SATUNAMA continued its regular fieldwork and training programs at the same time as it directed some of its efforts to disaster relief, efforts that now incorporated their main goal of empowering people in the context of people made powerless by the earthquake. People lost loved ones, their homes, jobs, and livelihood and many had little or no access to food and water. They also lost

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trust in their own homes and their own bodies in relation to a natural disaster over which they had no control and felt powerless to go on with their lives in the very ordinary and everyday ways of eating, sleeping, and moving around (Koggel 2007). We heard about and also witnessed numerous families who slept outside their homes because numerous aftershock tremors had left them too afraid to be in homes that might collapse on them in the night.

This intimate knowledge of the effects of the earthquake at the level of a powerlessness that had people question themselves and their values was less accessible to people who did not experience the earthquake or do not know the background history and conditions. I would argue that this knowledge is relevant to understanding two events organized by the people of this region in response to plans for national and international aid. The first was a rally organized on 13 June in Bantul, the epicenter of the earthquake south of Yogyakarta, and the second was a meeting in Yogyakarta the following day of some 83 representatives from NGOs around the world, officials from various countries, and Indonesian ministers. SATUNAMA helped organize both events in advance of meetings to be held in Jakarta between the Indonesian government and representatives of the World Bank and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The rally was prompted by worrying reports that some people were refusing aid from particular religious groups and some were destroying what remained of their homes. Spiritual and political leaders gathered to express gratitude that lives were spared and to ask for strength and courage to move on in solidarity and unity as Indonesians and not as members of particular religions or political parties. They spoke about Indonesia's struggles with and emergence from colonization by the Dutch and from natural disasters such as the tsunami in 2004. People were told that a government that reneged on its promise to give money to each Indonesian family that lost its home only days after making it could not be trusted either to deliver on its promises to provide aid or to spend money it received from new loans on resources for rebuilding. Furthermore, people were asked to reject a solution of passively accepting handouts and to take control of their own lives and their communities by working with local and international NGOs who were supplying aid and resources directly to the region.

These calls for tolerance, strength, and resilience through solidarity and unity were powerfully conveyed when the Indonesian flag, flown at half mast since the earthquake, was raised during the singing of the national anthem. The three Rs of Rights, Resilience, and Respect were evident in the appeals to those who lost their homes, their families, and members of their communities to pull together and move on. The rally was indeed a call to empowerment by the people and for the people, a call to them to take control of their own lives rather than wait for government help that was not likely to come or likely to be wasted through ineffective or inefficient policies or corruption. The event was covered by the media and the hope was that Jakarta would hear the message that this region could and should manage the resources given to it either through direct aid from international agencies or from the government—no big new loans, no conditions tied to loans, and no orders about how to rebuild communities and lives.

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The meeting in Yogyakarta the day following the rally produced four specific recommendations for the government to consider in its meetings with the World Bank and other international organizations: (1) to remind countries to immediately implement any policies/laws they had in place that allowed loans to be written off in the event of disasters; (2) have countries and international financial institutions consider debt swap arrangements, either swapping aid for debt relief or revising debt repayment plans instead of taking out new loans; (3) let Central Java, an area relatively free of conflict and with a people who live in harmony and solidarity, control and use resources to rebuild the region themselves; (4) urge that countries planning to give money to international aid agencies consider giving at least part of their aid directly to local NGOs and organizations. Coverage of the meetings in Jakarta confirmed that the government took out huge new loans and ignored virtually all of these appeals by people in the region.

In concert with other local NGOs, SATUNAMA assumed the role of advocate by representing, mobilizing, and empowering those who were left powerless by the earthquake and ignored by the government and the international institutions negotiating and making deals with them. SATUNAMA can be said to have knowledge of histories, conditions, resources, people, and issues specific to communities and gained through years of fieldwork aimed at empowering people in different sectors and regions. It would know, for example, where the aid is needed and what kinds of aid will work given the conditions of the communities it has worked with and in for decades. This knowledge positions it to pay attention to the details of people's lives in specific communities and regions in ways that makes it aware of both the harmful effects of globalization on socio-environmental communities and the positive effects of a global discourse on universal values. Concepts such as rights, respect, resilience, compassion, solidarity, transparency, accountability, gender equality, and environmental protection are articulated, applied, and taken to be universal at the same time as they have a specialized meaning and manifestation in specific contexts and through context-specific measures. These are all positive features of responsible advocacy at the grassroots level, but it is an advocacy that is tenuous and difficult in a global context in which international institutions have the power to control and shape policies in specific communities and countries.

There is reason for pessimism because people in this region ultimately lacked the power to prevent or even influence the deals made between their government and institutions at the global level. But there are also spaces for optimism in the long-term positive effects of SATUNAMA's work in representing, educating, advocating, and empowering various sectors of civil society and government institutions.[1] These strategies of empowerment, solidarity, and mobilization from below can help create other spaces for advocacy work by those who have learned

1. I need to qualify this claim about SATUNAMA's role in Indonesia by saying that not all local NGOs can play this positive role of advocating for and empowering people in their communities and countries. Some argue that the strength of the NGO sector in Indonesia emerges from its history in a way that has expanded its role as a broker between the local and the regional and the regional and the national (Hikam 1999).

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from and can represent and speak for SATUNAMA. This may be the role that I play, for example, in writing this paper. Finally, there are spaces for positive change at yet a higher level in the cooperation and solidarity of South to South NGOs and in the efforts of anti-globalization movements from all over the world that challenge the discourse and the policies made by powerful actors at the global level.

Conclusion

In its recent work, the World Bank is explicit about its role as advocating for poor people throughout the world by listening to, interpreting, and then recommending empowerment strategies for improving these lives. But its powerful place in the global context, its acceptance and endorsement of a discourse and set of policies about the virtues of capitalism and global markets, and its funding that ties aid to the implementation of neoliberal policies undermine the idea that it can hear or interpret well what is said by ''poor people in poor countries''. Advocacy emerges from a commitment to knowing well and responsibly, which in turn requires the kind of embodied engagement with others, in their lives and in their habitats, that does not fit with the World Bank's agenda of shaping theory and policy at the global level. Perhaps I did a better job than the World Bank of being, doing, and thinking within the context and lives of particular others, but my positioning leaves me better able to speak for and represent what I learned from this NGO about the need to challenge globally dominant discourse and expectations than to advocate by mobilizing or empowering people in this context to speak and stand up for themselves.

I agree with the World Bank that a complex set of factors needs to be considered when providing an account of empowerment. But I have argued that additional levels and kinds of complexity are highlighted when factors of economic globalization and the positioning of global institutions are taken into account. These are aspects of domination and power-over that feminist and postcolonial theorists are committed to uncovering, challenging, and changing. How the World Bank and global institutions more generally are perceived and received when they study people in poor countries around the world and operate with assumptions about what is needed by way of economic reform, loans, and resources are factors relevant to understanding domination and engaging in the empowerment work of effective resistance, mobilization, and solidarity. There is something to be learned from both SATUNAMA's rejection and its assimilation of specific aspects of globalization and from the mobilization and empowerment programs that put this into practice. The brief discussion of responses to the earthquake shows just how context specific the issues can be. It shows too that responsible advocacy involves knowing and respecting the inequalities in relationships between those advocating and those being empowered. And it involves knowing the ways in which people, practices, conditions, and structures are affected by factors in our postcolonial and globalized world in ways that can thwart and also promote empowerment efforts.

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