

Chapter 1

Introduction

Let us begin with a lie told to a princess.

The princess was important. Princess Diana, recently departed from the British Royal Family, was then at the height of her fame. It was also an important lie. For as a result of it Diana became involved in The International Campaign to Ban Landmines, collaborating with the Mines Advisory Group (MAG) and the Landmine Survivor's Network (LSN), among other organisations. Her interest in the cause, visits to minefields and meetings with landmine survivors, won it tremendous publicity and moved landmines up the political agenda. According to Kenneth Rutherford, the co-founder of the LSN, 'Princess Diana's involvement helped MAG and LSN transform the landmine debate from a military to a humanitarian issue in many people's minds, including those of many diplomats'. He also states that her lobbying encouraged the then British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, to honour his party's election promise to ban mines.¹

Diana's last public appearance in August 1997 was with landmine survivors in Bosnia. A few weeks later she died in a car accident just days before the international conference convened in Oslo to negotiate the treaty banning landmines. As Rutherford notes, this meant that the conference 'came on the heels of an emotional week of outpouring for the death of Diana'. More attention focused on the meeting, and pressure increased for a satisfactory resolution. Her influence was apparent in the rhetoric of those present. The Norwegian Foreign Minister, speaking in the first session, stated that 'We shall spare no effort . . . to achieve the goals she set for herself'. The British Foreign Secretary said that the treaty's 'achievement is due in part to the work of Diana . . . who did so much to focus the attention of the world on the horrific effects of anti-personnel landmines'. The US did not sign the treaty after its attempts to water down some of its provisions were defeated. This prompted US President Bill Clinton to complain that his proposals 'were rejected, partly because the Landmine Conference was determined to pass the strongest possible treaty in the wake of the death of its most famous champion, Princess Diana'.²

It is impossible to gauge what Diana's impact was on the Campaign or the treaty negotiations.³ Indeed it would be misleading to focus too much on any one person. The treaty to ban landmines was the work of many social movements and many individuals. The six founding organisations of the Campaign grew to over 1,000 groups; 130 NGOs attended the Oslo conference, and 350 the signing ceremony.⁴ In October 1997 the Campaign and its co-ordinator, Jody Williams, were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. It was accepted for the Campaign by Rae McGrath, who founded MAG, and by Tun Channareth, a Cambodian landmine survivor. They did so on behalf of a multitude.

Nonetheless, even though she joined the campaign late, and was just one of many, Diana's individual contribution was considerable. And for that reason we need to get back to the lie. For it explains how she got involved with the campaign – with the momentous consequences I have described. To understand how it came about we must listen to Rae McGrath's account of a meeting he had with her.

Rae is an unassuming recipient of the Nobel medal. I once invited a Nobel laureate to talk at my University and was told this normally commanded a \$50,000 speaking fee, plus expensive air tickets. Rae, in contrast, met me for our interview at the train station near his home in an old and battered car. He was then still pursuing his profession, managing programmes in refugee camps in dangerous parts of the world. The Nobel medal hangs unobtrusively on the wall amidst other pictures and memorabilia and he did not seem to mind that I was unaware that he had received it. Rae also has a felicitous mix of pragmatism, opportunism, a good sense of humour and a delight in the ridiculous that has given him many interesting stories to tell, and a good way of telling them. The story of Diana's recruitment to the cause is best told by him partly for that reason – and partly because it was he who told the lie. I therefore quote extensively from my interview with him below.⁵

Diana had visited Angola with the British Red Cross in February 1997, and pictures of her walking in a minefield in full protective gear had covered the world's papers. It was a wonderful publicity coup for the landmine cause. However, when speaking to reporters on that trip Diana said that she thought the landmines should be banned. This was not then the UK government's position, and ministers accused her of meddling in politics. The iconic images suddenly seemed to portray a celebrity out of step with the issues and their politics.

Rae, however, noted her words. He had found it difficult to get the Campaign's view into the tabloids, and was frustrated because the UK government's position was prominent in the popular press. He was keen to engage Diana's powers of obtaining good media coverage.

His opportunity came when he attended a conference in Japan starting the national campaign to ban landmines there. Diana had been invited, but, unable to come, had written to send her apologies. The conference organisers asked Rae what the protocol was for conveying their thanks for her letter. He advised them that it should be sent in person, and that he was prepared to take it to her. The organisers accordingly asked Michael Gibbons, Diana's secretary, if she could receive Rae in order that he might convey their thanks to her. This was arranged and Rae had his invitation to Kensington Palace.

It was a rather daunting prospect:

'I took some gifts from the Japan campaign and the conference report to Kensington Palace to meet Diana. It was like Coronation Street and East Enders all rolled into one.'

And it was a meeting with a problem, because it was meant to be a simple gesture of thanks, but Rae wanted to use it to invite a publicity-conscious person to get involved in a cause in which she had already been somewhat humiliated publicly. Neither Rae nor Diana was well prepared for it:

'I roll in there, this complete anti-royal, and no idea what I was going to say or how I was going to twist this thing round to make it work. She came in and as you'd expect was very charming and everything but probably had no idea what this was about. She'd have had a briefing document on me, so she'd know a little bit about me, she knew about MAG and she thought I was going to give a report about the Japan thing.'

As it turns out, when Rae made his pitch, it may well have been better for its spontaneity:

'So I shook hands with her and we sat down on these remarkable ancient sofas they had there. [We had] a cup of tea and I got rid of the Japanese conference in two or three minutes. [I said] "It was very good and they asked me to bring you these" and put them on the table. She said "How lovely" and everything. And then there was just this moment where I realised that this was going to end two minutes later or I was going to be able to do it and I just said "So how much are you interested really in landmines?" And I deliberately said it quite bluntly as a challenge. And she became quite defensive and said "This was the most terrible thing I've ever seen." She didn't talk about the minefield at all, she talked about the hospital wards. And she said "Have you ever seen it?" and I said "Yes, absolutely, that's why I asked you. You said you thought that landmines [should] be banned, can you help us?" She said "I wish I could. What can I do?"

So then we started a discussion. I said "Well the first thing is that you have got to know more, because you saw one minefield but they are all over the place and that's [just] one country." I just gave her a very quick briefing about the countries and the problems and particularly the impacts on youngsters and the fact that these things were just growing, and they were making more. They were becoming less controllable because they were air delivered and then add to that the problem of cluster munitions and I painted this picture very, very quickly and I said "We need help." And I bluntly said "I can talk to the Guardian and I can talk to the Telegraph [but I cannot talk to the tabloids]." She then completely opened up, rang the bell got more tea, had a word with Michael Gibbons which was obviously cancelling whatever was next and we got into it.'

So Diana was now really interested in helping, but her input needed a focus. This is when Rae's pragmatic streak took to the fore.

'I realised that this couldn't go on for ever and I needed to bring it to what's going to happen next. And she said "I have been wanting to make a keynote speech; something that really says what I feel about this." And I just lied through my teeth and said "But that's perfect because we are in the process of organizing an NGO seminar on landmines and we don't have a keynote speaker and I don't

want it to be someone political.” And of course it was just complete lies I was just inventing it.’

It was only a brief lie. For at the very moment he spoke it Rae was rather actively planning that seminar. He had to. For a start he needed to conjure up some more details about this meeting to make it an attractive and realistic prospect for Diana to attend.

‘She said “Well where will it be?” and I thought “Oh fuck” because I knew that instantly if I said the wrong place it wasn’t going to happen because anything where royalty goes takes months and months to actually approve. They have to send security people to check it. I had walked past the Royal Geographical Society on the way there so I said “The Royal Geographical Society” because Prince Philip talks there. She said “That’s wonderful because they have everything.” I said “Yeah, it would be great if you could do it.” She said “What date?” I said, “Well, we’ve got a couple of dates at the moment but because we didn’t have a speaker we have been trying to keep it loose, but it’s in about a month’s time.” She said “We’ll sort that out in a minute.” We went out and saw Michael Gibbons [who] gave me two dates.’

Well, Diana was on board. But unfortunately none of the other participants were. Nor yet was the rather prestigious venue aware that it was going to host this gathering. Rae had a realistic approach to the challenge, as he put it:

‘I’d given myself a massive fucking problem.’

And in such a situation it helps to appeal to other people’s pragmatic streaks.

‘First of all I called MAG and I spoke to my brother and said to him [we need] a seminar on landmines, he said “That’s a bit short notice.” I said “Yes, Princess Diana is going to be the keynote speaker.” He said “OK, right, we’ll get everything moving.”’

Two other NGOs quickly joined the meeting. This is technically called ‘convening power’ in the celebrity literature. It describes the ability famous people have of making all the rest of us abandon our plans to fit around their agenda and needs.

But NGOs hungry for publicity are easy to enrol. Booking out the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) at just a month’s notice was going to be a harder prospect. Rae knew this and after finishing the call with his brother, he quickly called the RGS.

‘The bookings co-ordinator started to be negative and I said “I’m just up the road can I come and see you” because I knew on the phone I was just going to get a “no”. So I went and explained the whole thing, about MAG and about the work we had been doing and I didn’t mention Diana. And the co-ordinator said “Well, what are the dates?” And I gave the two dates and the co-ordinator opened the book and said “No, they are both [taken]”. And I said “O damn, I am going to have to somehow sort this out because these are the only dates that Diana can do it.” And the co-ordinator said “Diana?” I said “Yes, Princess Diana, she’s going to be the keynote speaker. I’ve just come from Kensington Palace, she’s agreed, but

these are the only two dates.” And of course the co-ordinator said “Hmm, well these people haven’t confirmed; they should have confirmed two days ago. OK, well we’ll pencil you in.”

Convening power, it seems, could even work with the RGS. A conversation over a cup of tea had blossomed rather remarkably. In the space of a couple of hours, as Rae put it, ‘I had the RGS, I had three NGOs, I had Princess Diana’.

The seminar, moreover, occurred in June 1997 just a month after the new Labour government of the UK had taken office. They were keen to adopt a different stance from their Conservative predecessors. Clare Short, the Minister of the newly created Department for International Development also spoke as the second speaker (Rae recalls ‘I absolutely loved telling her she wasn’t the keynote’). Diana’s speech was written by the late Lord Bill Deedes, a patron of MAG, based on key campaign themes and emphases agreed by Rae and Princess Diana. That speech, the seminar of which it was part and Diana’s subsequent involvement are credited by Rutherford as helping the Campaign move the landmine issue from being a military problem to a humanitarian cause. A mountain of publicity and a determined, motivated Oslo conference all derived from one small but momentous ‘lie’.⁶

But the story is not quite complete. For if we see this as merely a piece of brilliant opportunism by media hungry NGOs we will only see their side of it. We will miss Diana’s own needs and skills. According to Rae:

‘She had this extraordinary understanding of how the whole media mechanism [worked].’

She delivered the speech on the day very well:

‘She was a very clever speaker. She broke down the speech into a number of sectors she felt comfortable with. She had this ability to deliver a speech very well, she was very clear about the optimum length she could give. She learnt it [and] knew when to look up at the press.’

She was also thoroughly, and, in Rae’s experience of public figures, unusually engaged:

‘What was important about her and what made her a good personality in that way was that she understood that what she was talking about was something important. It is not enough to go and see a hospital ward to do that. I don’t think that it comes with intellectual capacity or cleverness or education. [The landmine cause] was something that made her angry and upset and she believed that she could make a difference and so she gave time to it. That to me is quite rare.’

Furthermore, while MAG and other organisations could inform her about important issues, she had to put all this into her voice and in a way which would appeal to the people she knew listened to her.

‘We needed her to say the right things but at the same time in her voice. If she was going to say the same things that I said or that MAG said or anyone else it

was just a princess. And for me that was not useful. You needed to use her personality, her voice and her world. Who are the people who listen to her who don't listen to us? What would she be interested to say and what would they be interested to hear her say? What would make them engage with what we were doing?'

This was a task she clearly achieved.

Moreover Diana combined that skill and passion with a more personal reason to take up this cause. She explained all of this to Rae at their first meeting in Kensington Palace.

'One of the extraordinary things was that she completely opened up then and was completely honest in the way that I tend to be and just said "Look, I'm not pretending. I care about this but I also realise that if I am going to survive, in the situation I am in, I have to be visible, I have to be engaged. I'm engaged on AIDS. I need to be engaged with things that people care about."

Basically she knew that, if you fuck up the Royal Family, if you are to survive, you need to have the right sort of profile. And in that way she did not come across as fluffy headed. She was able to put the two things together in a very logical way and then talk business about it.'

Author: 'The two things being?'

'Well her personal need to do it and the fact that she cared about it.'

Her 'personal need' refers to her need for a good public image and favourable publicity with causes that mattered to the public. This mix of motives strengthened her ability to serve the Campaign:

'The two things [are] to me perfect. You have got somebody who has a personal commitment, a survival commitment, and at the same time they really do care about it and they've seen something of it. Fantastic, that was all I wanted.'

The Context and Purpose of this Book

This book examines celebrity advocacy for development and humanitarian causes. I began with the story of Diana's (re)recruitment to the landmine campaign because it captures some of the book's key themes. First, and most importantly, it demonstrates the central role NGOs have played in pursuing and developing relationships with public figures, even re-organising their operations to work better with them. Diana's advocacy is significant because it marks the beginning of a new era of intensified relations between NGOs and celebrity – and probably even contributed to that intensification.

Celebrity advocacy has now become an important part of the constitution of humanitarianism and international development. It is systematically organised by development and humanitarian NGOs with potentially significant repercussions for public understanding of development and fundraising. It affects their politics and policy decisions. Celebrity advocates are significant new actors within the terrain of

development advocacy and their work is recognised as a discrete social activity by the British public.⁷

The prominence of celebrity advocacy in development is visible in numerous ways. Most of the major development NGOs devote web space to their celebrity ambassadors, and they have permanent full time celebrity liaison officers among their staff. This is part of a shift within the practices of the NGO sector that allows it better to accommodate and work with celebrity supporters, and corporate interest in those supporters. Relationships between NGOs and these supporters have become systematic and organised. They constitute an established niche of the celebrity industries. Most celebrities, and the vast majority of the most famous celebrities, publicly support charitable causes.⁸ All this has happened relatively recently but the relationships had begun to prosper so thoroughly that in 2005 *Time* magazine was talking about the 'year of charitainment'.⁹ In his analysis of development campaigns from 1991 to 2011 Brendan Cox included a special section on the impact of celebrity because he said that 'every single one of the case studies mentioned celebrity as a core element of their influencing strategy'.¹⁰

Part of the purpose of this book then is to explore what the rise of celebrity advocacy has achieved for international development. But this advocacy is not just important for what it does to development issues, or to development and humanitarian NGOs. It is part of a bigger struggle. For the story of celebrity advocacy, of the work of the famous in good causes, indeed the very activities of 'development' itself, are part of a long battle within the democracies that govern us. The battle is about the ability of elites to determine the character and structure of our societies. Celebrities are, by definition, members of those elites. At the same time, some of them can be populist and popular; they can join with and speak 'for the people'. This ambivalent terrain is contested. Corporate and political elites will want celebrities to speak for them and to reinforce their views, legitimacy and privilege. Other groups will want them to challenge such inequalities. Celebrity advocacy matters because it is a means of speaking to power.

But there is an important twist here, a peculiar ambiguity at work in celebrity advocacy. It attempts to engage the public, but the public can be nonplussed by these efforts. The very act of public engagement in the form of celebrity can alienate. This response, however, is not widely recognised. For the most part it is accepted that celebrities engage the public. In particular those who are most invested in this belief in celebrity's popular power are the elites themselves. Celebrity advocacy works with elites, *despite* its lack of resonance with much of the public, because elites believe it to. Celebrity advocacy then is not just a means of working with elite-dominated politics, it is a reshaping of politics according to the imagination of the elites who dominate it.

This complicated situation provides another reason to start with the story about Princess Diana. For Diana's role in The International Campaign to Ban Landmines illustrates one of the central issues, and paradoxes, that celebrity advocacy raises for the function and characteristics of democracy. For her role appeared, to most of us, to be about raising public awareness. But her work was part of a broader strategy that Cox characterizes as 'a predominantly elite-level campaign'.¹¹ Popular support was important, and, with Diana's influence, clearly provided a powerful imperative to the treaty negotiators. But much of the work was done behind the scenes with elites.

Moreover Diana's influence clearly worked there. Her convening power extended to the RGS. And as Rutherford reported (page 1 above), it was her influence on 'many diplomats', who were doing the actual negotiation, that was vital.¹²

Diana's example is also important because it is frequently mentioned as an emblematic case of celebrity advocacy. But it is an example that must be used with care because it is unusual. Diana's popularity can disguise the general lack of engagement that I contend characterises many responses to celebrity and celebrity advocacy. My point here is that we cannot extrapolate from Diana's popular advocacy to celebrity advocacy generally.¹³ She was plainly exceptional. When we consider public responses to celebrity advocacy it is not reasonable to use her example as a model for others.

In this book I want to look beyond unusual cases and distracting individuals. My purpose, the book's purpose, is better to understand the economic and political circumstances surrounding the rise of celebrity advocacy, and thus also better understand its consequences, at home and abroad. As I will make clear in chapter three, central to that understanding are concepts of 'post democracy'.¹⁴ Post-democracy describes politics which are characterised by a loss of democratic verve and the corresponding rise of government by elite, and particularly corporate elites. The task of government becomes managing societies and economies in the interests of corporate power – and they do so with at least the passive consent (little more is possible) of most of the electorate.¹⁵ The contribution of this book is to consider how celebrity advocacy helps us to grasp the nature and form of this elite rule.

The Argument

The argument of this book hinges on four paradoxes of celebrity advocacy. The first paradox is that celebrity advocacy occupies a significant proportion of the public domain, but does so without always engaging particularly well with much of the public. Celebrity is populist in form, but not always popular in character. Second, that failure to engage the public does not really matter. Celebrity advocacy can be a remarkably effective tool for working with corporate and government elites. It works partly because they experience closer, less mediated, encounters with celebrity advocates and partly because these elites, and the NGO elites lobbying them, are unlikely to notice any lack of engagement by the general public. It would be hard to. Good evidence of what public engagement with celebrity constitutes is scarce. The assumption that celebrity advocacy is popular is deeply rooted. What matters, however, is that they *believe* that celebrities are embodying the affective will of the people.¹⁶ Third, it is not just elites who may be deceived as to the nature of celebrities' influence, in the glare of publicity we, the viewers and consumers of celebrity spectacle, are also blinded. We may think that the publicity is the important aspect of celebrity. But publicity can be a sideshow; what matters goes on behind the scenes.

My argument therefore is that celebrity advocacy which is now so well organised by NGOs marks, ironically, a disengagement between the public and politics, and particularly between the public and the civil society organisations which try to represent development and humanitarian needs. It is not an expression of the popular will because the evidence indicates that interest in celebrity seems rather thinner and more variable than we might expect. Its rise has not been fuelled by popular demand

but by corporate power. Celebrity advocacy is by and for elites. It provides a means for NGO elites to work more effectively with corporate and policy elites, not the broader population. As such celebrity advocacy is part of the lived practices of post-democracy.

And what are the consequences of this state of affairs for the achievements of celebrity advocates for development? My argument here is that thus far the influence of celebrity on development issues and problems per se has been relatively limited. Celebrity is rather good at sustaining an NGO sector, but not necessarily good at tackling inherently problematic development issues. However I will also argue that the new development actors that celebrities constitute could be used more imaginatively, and progressively, than at present. The final paradox is that the very post-democratic politics which can make elites oppressive may also contain within it the possibilities of making celebrity advocacy progressive.

Unpopular Celebrity?

The astute reader will have noted some apparent contradictions in the lines above. I seem to think that celebrity is both a vital and important part of our societies *and* that it is significantly over-rated. Its influence, I seem to be saying, is both widespread and exaggerated. Other readers may struggle with my suggestion that celebrity might be populist, without being popular. This will probably sound odd, if not just plain absurd. Celebrity fills the news and media all around us, surely most people must be interested in it?

The contradiction disappears if we distinguish between the nature of celebrity's influence, and *belief* in its influence. It is precisely because celebrity's influence is exaggerated that it is widespread. One of the clearest results of the surveys I conducted is a majority of Britons say that they are not taken in by celebrity advocacy, but that most people believe, falsely, that most other people are. The force of celebrity derives from the perception of its power. It is because so many people, and particularly so many members of elite groups, are mistaken as to celebrity's actual influence that it becomes so influential. There is therefore no contradiction here. Rather we have a paradox that constitutes the very possibilities for celebrity politics.

As for the idea that celebrity is populist but not popular, I admit that celebrity is all over the news, but surely the relevant question here is 'how do people consume this material'? It is surprisingly hard to discern what people might think about celebrity.¹⁷ Those data which I have been able either to find suggest that if you ask Britons about their consumption of celebrity, many seem to pay much less attention to it than you might first expect.

Note too the key word 'Britons' in the preceding paragraph. My work was conducted among the British public, and I am talking about the reach and influence of celebrity primarily in British politics and public affairs. The prominent role of British-based organisations in development affairs internationally makes the country a good case study. But it means that we have to extrapolate to other countries with caution, just as we should be cautious about extrapolating from others (particularly the US) to the Britain.¹⁸ I will make some observations about other countries, but in the main, with respect to audience responses, I can only talk about Britain.

Authentic Advocacy?

My final reason for beginning with the story of Princess Diana and landmines is that it gives me the opportunity to distance this book from the debate about whether celebrities ‘really’ care about the charities they support or whether they are just after the publicity. I do not find the authenticity of celebrity altruism a particularly interesting issue. But given its prevalence I need to say why.

In part the problem is that this debate misrecognizes the nature of the need for publicity and its significance for celebrity supporters. Many famous people do not need the extra publicity that charitable activities can bring – Diana least of all. But even Diana had, as we would say nowadays, to manage her ‘brand’. Her work for charity was part of the public persona she cultivated. And, as those close to her work with landmines testified, cultivating that public persona was compatible with caring deeply about an issue. Mixing publicity considerations with her desire to oppose landmines did not compromise her support. It simply demonstrates that she, as almost all other supporters of any cause, had more than one motive for working with the campaign.¹⁹

The debate about celebrity motivation somehow presumes celebrities to be an exceptional form of volunteer who are only altruistic. But research on volunteers demonstrates clearly that their motives are mostly mixed. Pure altruism, oddly demanded of celebrity advocates, is rare. Sean Kelly’s master’s thesis provides a useful corrective here. He surveyed 169 celebrity advocates who he was able to contact via their shared interest in the charity Sparks, finding a mixture of altruistic and egotistical motives at work, with the altruistic ones dominant.²⁰

But, perhaps most importantly, this issue entails a problematic use of ideas of ‘authenticity’ itself. There is not space to do justice to this topic here but suffice to say that the nature of authenticity has changed over time.²¹ In Victorian times being authentic meant internalizing a set of ideal values. Self-realisation was achieved by becoming a model character and embodying ideals of honesty, politeness and self-control. By the later decades of the twentieth century this was reversed. Authenticity was about expressing one’s true inner core, despite the constraints of social demands. Somogy Varga argues that this has in turn been replaced by a form of authenticity based on performance.²² Inner qualities are important, but what matters most is how they are performed, for demonstrating your difference makes the authentic ‘you’ visible. In this respect authenticity is non-referential. It does not refer back to an ideal type, but rather collates and creates a plausible ‘performance of difference’.

As I will demonstrate later (chapter six) authentic celebrity advocacy is not given within people’s character, experience, history or expertise. It is a potential which is recognized and brought into effect. It is also, and this is crucial, *performed* to the media for broader public consumption. Authenticity therefore is constructed, negotiated and mediated over time and between people and institutions. Authentic celebrity advocacy is not about internalizing a required set of advocacy norms, nor is it about expressing one’s real self. Neither of these can suffice. It is about collating a plausible set of associations, experiences, connections and insights.

Whether celebrities ‘really’ care or not is the wrong question to ask. Instead we need to ask how potential advocates are recognized and enrolled. We need to ask how they

perform. For the rise of celebrity advocates in recent years denotes neither a new compassion, nor a new celebrity hunger for publicity. It reflects the changing circumstances and organisation of celebrity advocacy.

We need to see authenticity as constructed and performed in order to understand the power and function of celebrity spectacle in post-democratic politics.²³ Authentic celebrity advocates provide resources for politicians and NGOs who need to be seen to be popular, or populist. Likewise, associating with politicians and policy-makers lends celebrity advocates gravitas and significance. The construction of authenticity is an integral part of the lubrication and manipulation of elite-dominated politics.

I am therefore not interested in this book in trying to sift 'genuine' support from publicity-driven support. I will not try to determine what motive is pre-eminent in the minds of celebrity advocates. These considerations have little bearing on my argument. Instead I will be trying to understand the processes constructing celebrity advocacy.

Methods

I have drawn upon numerous sources which I summarise briefly here and discuss in more detail in Appendix One. One of my most important activities was a series of interviews with over 120 NGO staff, journalists, employees in the celebrity industries and other researchers. I promised all interviewees anonymity and refer to them as numbered sources in the text below. I explored attitudes to celebrity in the British public by means of two large surveys (to 1,111 and 1,999 people respectively) administered to the UK Public Opinion Monitor. The Monitor is panel database which means that successive surveys are posed to the same group of people – it is not composed of two random samples. I also conducted 9 focus groups to explore responses to celebrity advocacy. Finally, I undertook surveys of newspapers and magazines, using electronic records and library deposits.

There are significant omissions in these methods (discussed in Appendix One). Nevertheless I believe they make a contribution to what Nick Couldry calls, following Bourdieu, 'a practice approach' to the use and production of media forms, and to Graeme Turner's call to improve understanding of the production and consumption of celebrity.²⁴ I look at how media, celebrity and NGO professionals are constructing and creating diverse forms of celebrity advocacy across all sorts of media. I also enquire as to how publics in Britain, and corporate and political elites respond to these representations and relationships. The result goes some way to meet Couldry's desire to explain the power of the media (in this case celebrity advocacy) in ways which takes into account the 'plurality of practices' surrounding celebrity advocacy on the ground.²⁵

An Outline of the Chapters

In brief the book proceeds as follows: the next two chapters discuss the important ideas and writings with which any study of celebrity advocacy has to engage. I then review the history of celebrity advocacy (chapter four). Chapters five and six examine respectively the current state of celebrity advocacy and how it is co-ordinated and managed by NGOs. Chapters seven and eight explore the different responses to celebrity advocacy in elite groups (chapter seven) and British publics (chapter eight). The

conclusion (chapter nine) examines what we have learnt from all of this and its implications for development and post-democratic politics.

In more detail the substance of the chapters is as follows:

I begin by examining the problems of portraying the needs of distant strangers, and the sorts of public awareness of development with which NGOs are wrestling, and producing (chapter two). This review demonstrates the limited public understanding of development with which celebrity advocacy must contend, as well as emphasizing the importance of looking at celebrity advocacy with elites. Chapter three examines debates about celebrity advocacy more specifically, and the broader debates about media and democracy of which they are part. I discuss thinking about the role of elites and elite lobbying in post-democracy, and contrasting views about the democratic implications of new media forms of which celebrity is part, focussing specifically on critiques of celebrity advocacy. I argue that these critiques have not sufficiently got to grips with the anatomy of celebrity advocacy– the nuts and bolts as to how it is done.

These two chapters cover the main theoretical ground with which we need to be familiar if we are to understand and analyse the phenomenon of celebrity advocacy for development and humanitarian causes. Each chapter ends with the important questions that I distil from the literature, and which I will attempt to answer in the conclusion.

I then offer a short history of celebrity interventions in development and humanitarian causes (chapter four). This, rather surprisingly, goes back a long way. In fact it is arguable that the real peak of celebrity advocacy for development occurred in the Victorian era. I will show that the relationship between fame and development has been patchy and intermittent since then, but has become increasingly intense in the last ten years. But in describing that long relationship I also show that the current crescendo of celebrity philanthropy differs from previous eras, and particularly from earlier decades. The change derives from the changing nature of the contest over what development means. For that contest is now marked by the dominance of neoliberal thinking, which in turn both engenders and is nurtured by post-democratic politics. Thus a political space for celebrity interventions in development and humanitarianism is forged.

We can then review the current state of celebrity advocacy (chapter five). This chapter makes two important points for the argument as a whole. First, I make plain that behind the crescendo of celebrity advocacy in the last 10-15 years there lies a profound reorganization and systematization of the relationships between the celebrity and NGO sectors. Second, when we evaluate the achievements of celebrity advocates, personal, unmediated, encounters between NGO supporters and celebrity supporters always appear useful. This will help us to understand celebrity advocacy's effectiveness with elites later.

Having explored how interactions have changed over time, and what sort of celebrity advocacy is now going on, we can examine how these interactions are constructed. The sixth chapter traces a number of common experiences and practices that shape the interactions of NGOs and the celebrity industry which are now taught by celebrity liaison officers in workshops and disseminated in blogs and websites. It then examines the forces shaping the presentation of celebrity advocacy and particularly celebrity field

trips overseas. In this chapter we explore in more detail the nature of the authenticity that celebrity advocates for development display.

Chapters five and six constitute one of the three key pillars of this book, for they make the case for a systematic and organised set of NGO relations with celebrity amongst the largest development and humanitarian NGOs. Effective lobbying in post-democracies has required new forms of civil society organisation and operation. These chapters explain how celebrity advocates are organised and marshalled to enable development and humanitarian NGOs to work more effectively in post-democracies.

Crucial to the shaping of celebrity advocacy practices with NGOs, and their workings in post-democratic polities, are the way in which celebrity advocates and elites interact, and these we explore in chapter seven. Business elites are keen to encounter and work with public figures, political elites love meeting them, and being seen to do so, celebrities love meeting other elites, and media elites need access to all these groups. On the basis of interview data examining when and with whom celebrity works, and by drawing on grey literature from elite gatherings, this chapter explains how well celebrity advocacy works in elite-dominated politics.

Chapter seven provides the second pillar of the book. For it demonstrates the importance of corporate interests in shaping NGO strategies, the effectiveness with which celebrity ambassadors then work with political and corporate elites and how thoroughly elites believe in the power of celebrity advocacy. It also shows that relationships between celebrities and NGOs are constitutive of post-democratic elite governance, particularly with respect to international development.

But what are different audiences making of all of this? Chapter eight examines how Britons respond to celebrity advocacy using the survey data and focus groups. These data show that interest in celebrity is a minority affair, but that it is popularly, and falsely, believed to be popular. Nonetheless Britons help to build its edifice because they demonstrate widespread *belief* in its efficacy. That belief is founded on celebrity's place in the glamorous 'media world', and because they believe charitable donations are an effective way of engaging in politics.

This chapter provides the final pillar of the book. For it presents the evidence that celebrity is not as popular as it might first appear. It shows that celebrity advocacy can signal a form of disengagement from publics, not populist engagement with them. Celebrity advocacy is thus one of the components of the separation of the demos from the institutions which rule them.

And so we come to the issue of what all this means for international development. What does this study add to our understanding of celebrity, to development and the world that celebrified development is creating? What does it portend for international development itself? I examine in the conclusion how celebrity advocacy affects public understandings of development and what prospects there are for using celebrity effectively to combat international economic inequities. Here I present the argument that in post-democratic politics more celebrity lobbying, elitist though it is, may well be required. I suggest that those who argue for more powerful democracies and democratic deliberation of development policies need to consider the character of the

public sphere in post-democracies for their recommendations about globally just economic policies to take effect.

Finally in my last word, the Afterword, I present a more personal reaction to all that I have just written, and its prospects for international development.

¹ Rutherford, 2011: 102-3.

² All cited in Rutherford, 2011: 107-114.

³ A treaty signing ceremony had already been announced before Diana joined the campaign, and the process to negotiate the clauses that would be discussed in Oslo in September 1997 was underway when she first went to a minefield in Angola. Diana's posthumous influence was on the negotiation of those clauses. According to Rutherford, the sessions were recorded but he was unable to find copies of the tapes, and it is not clear where they are held (pers. comm. 27th June 2012). Without them it will be difficult to determine what lies behind the rhetoric of ministers proclaiming her influence. With respect to her influence in setting the political agenda and facilitating dialogue and meetings Rutherford writes 'In my personal day-to-day dealings on landmines during that time period, the words "Princess Diana" were on everyone's lips [with] regards to landmines . . . agenda setting, opening doors, attracting political and media attention, were less challenging with her involvement period' (pers. comm. 27th June 2012). On reading a draft of this introduction he wrote 'At the Center for International Stabilization and Recovery, we all personally think your conclusion should be that her influence continues today. Almost everyone we meet who knows where we work brings up Princess Diana; she was a huge influence on the world on this topic' (pers. comm. 28th September 2012). Brendon Cox's analysis of the campaign notes Diana's influence, but does not assign it a crucial role. Instead he emphasises the importance of the close working relationship the campaign enjoyed with the Canadian government (Cox, 2011: 46). See also Scott (2001) and Huliaris and Tzifakis (2010).

⁴ Cox reports over 1,000 groups being part of the ICBL (2011: 34); Rutherford reports attendance at the treaty negotiations and signing ceremony (2011: 110, 117).

⁵ I have smoothed the transcript of the interview, missing out 'erms', 'you knows', 'sort ofs', and occasional asides and I have not indicated with '...' where those cuts fall. This polished version reads better, and is thus a more accurate experience of listening to Rae's well-told story. Rae has also checked this version. I am grateful to him for permission to use it.

⁶ More well-known lies in celebrity advocacy, which were also momentous, were those told by Bob Geldof (a musician) to the managers of the bands he was persuading to make the record *'Feed the World'* in aid of famine relief to Ethiopia in 1984. He told them that the other bands were on board, when in fact they were not. Collectively deceived, they all joined in (Geldof, 1986).

⁷ Note that advocacy has an interesting homogenizing effect across different types of celebrity. For example Joanna Lumley (an established actress) and Olly Murs (a less established X Factor finalist) may appear under the same organisation's website as 'celebrity advocates' (see entry to SightSavers in Table 5.1) other organisation websites (such as the Red Cross) lists consecutively different public figures of different renown.

⁸ Thrall et al found that 63% of a random sample of 147 celebrities on Celebopedia, and 90% of the Forbes top 100 celebrities in 2006 were engaged in celebrity advocacy (Thrall et al., 2008).

⁹ Poniewozik, 2005.

¹⁰ Cox pers. comm. 8/1/2013

¹¹ Cox, 2011: 10.

¹² In October 1996 (months before Diana's first involvement) the Canadian government announced, unilaterally that it would host a treaty signing ceremony in December 1997, thereby precipitating the intense diplomatic activity required to produce the clauses for negotiation in Oslo. Hence influence on diplomats involved in that negotiation was important.

¹³ Cf Brown et al 2003: 601.

¹⁴ Crouch, 2004. 'Post-democracy' is also described by Jacques Rancière and Chantal Mouffe (Nash, 1996; Rancière, 1998; Mouffe, 2005).

¹⁵ Rancière, 1998: 113.

¹⁶ My thanks to Lisa Richey for that phrase.

¹⁷ Cf Turner, 2006 in the notes of which there is mention of a discussion with Nick Couldry about what evidence there is as to the actual grassroots appetite for celebrity as opposed to its industrial consumption.

¹⁸ Cf Couldry, 2001: 173; 2012: 179. The US has dominated research on celebrity, particularly, but not only with respect to marketing research, as we shall see in chapter seven (and Appendix Three). We need to see US engagements with celebrity as specific to that country, not typical of others. The histories of celebrity and cinema in the US suggest that it is an unusual case (Barbas, 2001). Central to Laurie Ouellette and James Hay's intimate and detailed study of Reality TV in the US (2008) is the fact that such TV can only be understood in the context of broader political, social and economic contexts found in their country – and that other Reality TV programmes in other countries need to be understood according to

those contexts. Cooper has also recognized that the significance of celebrity advocates differs between the 'Anglosphere' (ie US and UK) and continental Europe (Cooper, 2008b). Grainger and colleagues analysis of celebrity sports advertising hinges on the different way different celebrities are received around the globe (Grainger et al., 2005).

¹⁹ For example, Diana once told Ken Rutherford that she went to Bosnia because 'reporters and photographers have made my life horrible, so I would like to make their life horrible by taking them to places they normally otherwise would not visit and covering issues they normally would not cover.' (Rutherford, 2011: 108). Tempting the paparazzi to stray into a minefield may have made walking through one about as pleasurable as it can get, but it was unlikely to be her only reason for going.

²⁰ Kelly, 2012.

²¹ For detailed discussions of the concept see Goffman, 1959 (1990); Berman, 1970 (2009); Trilling, 1971; MacCannell, 1973; Taylor, 1989, 1991; Benjamin, 1999; MacCannell, 1999 (1976); Lindholm, 2002; Guignon, 2004; Lindholm, 2008; MacCannell, 2008a, b; Varga, 2011.

²² Varga 2011.

²³ Cf Chouliaraki 2013: 114.

²⁴ Turner, 2010; Couldry, 2012: 37

²⁵ Couldry, 2012: 65