

The “celebritization” of development – Bono Vox and Angelina Jolie as actors in development¹

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Abstract

This text explores the topic of celebrities in development, which is a phenomenon the boom of which has kept accelerating since the 1980s. Its subject matter lies in celebrities partaking in setting the agenda of development on the world stage. Even though the origins of this phenomenon date back to the 1950s, the 1980s in particular are connected with organizing a series of Live Aid concerts and can thus be considered a distinct milestone regarding the permeation of celebrities into the world of development. In the article we offer a general assessment of the phenomenon of celebrities in development as well as two concrete examples (Bono Vox and Angelina Jolie) that vividly demonstrate how it works in practice and what strategies celebrities opt for.

Key words: celebrity diplomacy, development, Bono Vox, Angelina Jolie, *Live Aid*

Introduction

The discussions about development and its individual development issues have undergone a profound transformation throughout the past 60 years ranging from theoretical approaches to analyzing the abovementioned (from the modernization theory, over the dependency theory, to post-development), to practical tools to solve particular issues (covering large development projects that often end up as “white elephants” as well as the unprecedented rise of grass-root projects). One of the areas that illustrate the shift in the development discourse is the participation and nature of players entering development matters. Whereas the first few decades of development were marked by a distinctly state-oriented approach that considered a state the sole actor in the field of development cooperation, the gradual transformation of the development discourse and the increasingly frequented assertions about grass-root development made non-state actors the new significant players in the field of development.

Apart from various non-governmental organizations or local groups individuals, too, have become a considerable section capable of profoundly influencing and setting the trends in the international development agenda. As such, celebrities represent a specific group that impacts development issues and the importance of which for the development discourse has begun being more thoroughly examined since the 1990s, which is related to the expansion of new communication networks (the Internet) and to the celebrities’ abilities to express their political views to world public. For the “celebritization” of development, which has been increasingly taking place since the 1980s, two crucial moments stand out

– an unprecedented expansion of the number of (and, consequently, the significance of) NGOs that, given their nature, tackle topics connected with development, human right issues and, at the same time, with organizing a series of so-called live concerts which ushered in a new era of the media coverage of development issues (Thrall – Stecula 2017: 3). Even though the public engagement of individuals in political matters is anything but a brand new phenomenon, with the rise of mass communication means and new media the possibilities of celebrities for influencing political (and development) issues have been considerably broadened and today celebrities represent notable movers of the development discourse (West 2008: 5). In line with the more perceptible appearances of celebrities in the media, with their abilities to introduce pivotal topics of the public life, and with them playing the roles of (un)official ambassadors, the phrase celebrity diplomacy has been frequented through which numerous development issues are paid attention unheard of before (Cooper 2008a: 10).

With the expansion of celebrity politics, activism and advocacy, questions arose about whether its positives outweigh (or not) the negatives and about the extent to which celebrities are capable of contributing to agenda-setting. Part of the discussion on the importance of celebrities in solving development issues lies in considerations about the legitimacy of celebrities who, as personalities none voted for, are not subjected to any system of independent policing and can freely set the agenda as they see fit. There are also those concerned with why celebrities in particular should have the ability to determine the development discourse and whether they have the required expertise to assess the individual issues in a wider context. On the other hand, the proponents of celebrities' engagement highlight their aptitude in appealing to, and galvanizing, global society, and in making the citizens of countries in the North ponder over the issues of the global South (Yrjölä 2014: 10).

This article endeavors to capture the phenomenon of the “celebritization” of development, while utilizing two personalities – Bono Vox and Angelina Jolie – to more closely illustrate its premises. The first part of the text is devoted to operationalizing the basic terminology and typology of the “celebritization” of politics from which the “celebritization” of development stems (development is one of the topics celebrities engage in, but not the sole one). Afterwards comes a section dedicated to a brief overview of celebrity politics. Using the examples of two celebrities we intend to demonstrate how these introduce development topics, what areas they focus on, and what strategies for the purpose of agenda-setting they select. Bono Vox poses as such a preeminent celebrity engaged in development that Cooper (2008: 48-51) even coined the term the “bonoization” of development to refer to a particular type of celebrity diplomacy. The second celebrity is Angelina Jolie who “ascended” the development stage in 2000 as a consequence of her personal experience with the situation in Cambodia during the filming of *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider*.

Although both personalities can be considered important actors in the “celebritization” of development, the reasons for their involvement in it differ considerably, which corresponds with a generally ambiguous assessment of the celebrities’ engagement in development.

Celebrity politicians, political celebrity, celebrity diplomacy, celebrity expert

The discussion about the nature of the “celebritization” of development needs to commence with defining celebrity politics from which the “celebritization” of development is derived. As such, we encounter various typologies the authors of which always follow some particularly selected factors and use them to characterize the individual categories of celebrity politics. Perhaps the easiest, but also the easiest one to understand, is a typology introduced by Jogn Street (2004, 2011, 2012) who specifies two categories – celebrity politicians (CP1) and political celebrity (CP2). The CP1 category includes 1. politicians with some background in the field of show business or in the entertainment industry, who, for some reason, decided to enter politics. To exemplify, we can mention former American president Ronald Reagan or Jesse Ventura, who left the world of sports to become a governor of the state of Minnesota. 2. Professional politicians utilizing show business tools in their political careers to ameliorate their media image belong to the CP1 category too. Former German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder who shared the stage with a famous band called Scorpions, a musical performance by Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi who, in tandem with Tom Cruise, performed a song by Elvis Presley, or a well-known saxophone number by Bill Clinton as part of the *Arsenio Hall Show* would all meet the definition.

The CP2 category (Street 2004: 438) consists of musical, film or sport celebrities who take the advantage of their positions and fame to publicly present their political opinions, yet their goal is not to run for elections (or somehow strive for legitimacy). This group entails a myriad of Hollywood stars such as Cher, Susan Sarandon, Robert Redford or the above-mentioned Bono Vox and Angelina Jolie. It is this exact category on which the article focuses and by using two examples it demonstrates the ways political celebrities follow to bring attention to development issues.

The term celebrity diplomacy the nature of which emanates from an assumption that in the contemporary world diplomacy is not confined to professionals only, but, in fact, everyone can exercise it, is, without any doubt, connected with celebrity politics (Cooper 2008a: 2). Through celebrity politics famous personalities articulate selected topics and attempt to, using their specific networks, confront the public with issues they deem crucial. The range of topics celebrities cover is very wide, nevertheless, the overwhelming majority of them, one way or another, revolves around development issues. Today the best-known example of celebrity diplomacy is appointing famous personalities UN Goodwill Ambassadors or Messengers of Peace (Fall – Tang 2006: 2).

For celebrity diplomacy to succeed it is imperative that a particular personality is famous and popular enough, which, to an extent, hinders the phenomenon of the successful “celebritization” of development in the North. Even though the countries of the South have their own well-known celebrities (Uruguayan actor Osvaldo Laport or African singer Youssou N’Dour), their reach pales in comparison to personalities such as Angelina Jolie, Brad Pitt, Bono Vox, Cher or Madonna, and in the countries of the North, from which the vast majority of means for development comes, hardly a handful knows them. Individuals we can label celebrity diplomats have at their disposal good access to the media that are willing to listen to them and by doing so contribute to setting the topics celebrities consider fundamental. The media find such personalities interesting because of their fame and popularity among the masses of individuals pliable to their opinions. Also, celebrity diplomats boast special ties with important world politicians and, alongside them, take part in key international negotiations during which various topics are discussed.

The term celebrity expert, itself referring to celebrities who concentrate on a particular, oftentimes a narrowly defined, segment of topics, is closely linked to celebrity diplomats. Such experts offer a plethora of concrete pieces of information gained during field trips in affected areas, while their “encounters” are regularly accompanied by a camcorder that documents the “sobering” of a celebrity. Celebrity experts are believed to be able to better mediate the suffering and the issues the developing world struggles with, because their experience is, all in all, on par with the experience of a regular person (Richey – Budabin 2016: 6).

History of the engagement of celebrities in development issues

The phenomenon of important personalities openly commenting on the public life has a long history with the first known character being American writer Mark Twain who criticized the policy of American president T. Roosevelt at the beginning of the 20th century (Wheeler 2013: 49). We can also mention the participation of Ernst Hemingway in the Spanish Civil War, the engagement of famous pilot Charles Lindberg in the American policy of isolationism in the 1930s, the endorsement given by actors Paul Newman and Jane Fonda in a campaign to end the war in Vietnam, or the outspoken stand Stevie Wonder took against the apartheid regime in South Africa. In the 1980s the issue of nuclear energy and its usage became a substantial topic for celebrities with a series of concerts titled “No Nukes” raising the awareness about the threats connected with using them (West 2008: 2-3).

Leading experts in the field of celebrity development consider the year 1953 to be a landmark regarding the engagement of publicly known personalities in development, when famous American actor Danny Kaye was asked by the UN to become the first Goodwill Ambassador, which earned him the nickname *Mr. UNICEF* (Thrall – Stecula 2017: 3)². His voyages to Thailand, the Korea Peninsula or Indonesia were captured in a documentary titled *Assignment Children* that has been seen by more than 100 million spectators.

Actor Peter Ustinov took this thought one step further by pronouncing himself a “world citizen” with Russian, Swiss, French, Italian and Ethiopian roots and not only became a notable proponent of the UNICEF, but also of the UN as a whole. In the 1980s Audrey Hepburn officially broadened the ranks of Goodwill Ambassadors of the UN, who, given her childhood spent in the occupied Netherlands while being exposed to starvation, turned into an extraordinarily revered activist that shared her experience from Somalia or Ethiopia with the American Congress (Wheeler 2011: 12). Given her civil and humane approach, Hepburn in particular inspired other celebrities with respect to some appropriate means of promoting the media coverage of development issues.

Other famous personalities include actor Marlon Brando, who helped the UN acquire the resources for combating famine, or George Harrison, whose concert organized in the 1970s attracted much publicity and its revenue was distributed to Bangladesh to aid starving refugees. At that time Norwegian actress Liv Ullman became a Goodwill Ambassador of the U.N., whose activities were oriented toward child protection with due attention paid to the situation in Cambodia devastated by the rule of the Khmer Rouge. Singer Harry Chapin also merits our attention given that in the 1970s he managed to amass around 500 000 USD per year to combat famine (West 2008: 2-3). One of the most famous actresses partaking in development issues is Sophia Loren whose engagement aptly demonstrates the weaknesses of celebrity development. Even though Lauren succeeded in popularizing the thought of celebrity development, during the first few years of her activity one could repeatedly see her inability to reconcile her new role with her former career as an actress. Her arrival to a UNHCR meeting in a luxurious Rolls Royce showed a complete lack of understanding of the symbolism of her behavior, and supported the voices repeatedly hinting at the inaptness of celebrities to comprehend the full extent of the issues they promote in the media (Cooper 2007: 128). The matter of human rights, too, permeated the agenda of Richard Gere who chaired the *International Campaign for Tibet* insofar that his zeal for protecting the rights of Tibetans led to a conflict with the UN, which he accused of devoting insufficient interest to this issue (Wheeler 2011: 12-13).

From “live” concerts to global partnership

Nevertheless, an era-defining breakthrough regarding celebrities and their abilities to draw attention to development matters came to pass in the 1980s with the organization of a series of “live” concerts titled *Live Aid*, which were orchestrated by Bob Geldof, an Irish musician. These concerts, meant to aid starving Ethiopians, unleashed an unprecedented interest of world public in development issues and marked the beginning of an era in which celebrities broadened the ranks of the architects of the development discourse. Thanks to television, people in 150 countries were able to watch the event, which induced mass feedback initiating a wave of solidarity like never before³. The reasons explaining why Geldof in particular became one of the symbols of the successful “celebritization” of development have something to do with, inter alia, his origin. Geldof, as an Irish middle class member, never belonged to the privileged social class, which lent his statements and

activities much credibility. When Geldof spoke about the marginalization of Africa, he was fully aware of him facing something similar in his life and thus his appeals to straighten the relations between the rich North and the poor South were perceived as completely authentic. Geldof managed to foster an image of an apolitical activist capable of poignantly contemplating the challenges surrounding Africa and making notable world politicians pay attention to his postulations. Even Paul Wolfowitz, the president of the World Bank (who can hardly be considered an eager proponent of solutions to development issues) commended Geldof on his rhetorical skills and called him “*an inspirational man* (Yrjölä 2014: 90).”

Despite the mounting criticism concerning *Live Aid* that started to emerge as years were passing (a portion of the accumulated resources ended up in the hands of armed groups, which used them to purchase weapons), the idea of organizing live concerts caught on insofar that in 2007 it made manifest again in the form of organizing *Live Earth* and in 2010 the *Hope for Haiti Now* concerts (Thrall – Stecula 2017: 3). This effort to promote public activism during a concert performance also occurred within the context of human rights issues, thanks to, most notably, Bruce Springsteen and Sting who joined forces with the Amnesty International and staged concerts drawing attention to the topic of political prisoners (West 2008: 3).

From the 1990s onward we have witnessed a considerable increase in the interest of various kinds of celebrities in global issues from which climate changes – a topic so popular it even became a theme of the “carbon neutral tour” of the bands *Pearl Jam* and *Coldplay* or movies *The 11th Hour* with Leonardo DiCaprio as its lead actor – warrant due attention (Boykoff – Goodman 2009: 398). The transformation of climate also stroke a chord with actor Orlando Bloom who, after having finished filming *Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End*, paid a visit to Antarctica and stated: “*I saw how tragically fragile the ice caps are* (Boykoof – Goodman 2009: 399),” which earned him an applause and guaranteed high attendance of his movies. Ben Affleck took a considerably more elaborate approach to such issues, when, in 2010, he became a celebrity expert on the region of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Apart from his fellow colleagues from show business he not only underwent spectacular journeys to unusual places, but after having acquainted himself more thoroughly with the situation in this central African country he established the Eastern Congo Initiative with a goal of initiating its socio-economic development. Affleck’s activity endeavors to popularize the challenges in the DRC, and also promote the cooperation with high-ranked US representatives responsible for American development so as to enlighten them about the bottlenecks of the American development model. (Richey – Budabin 2016: 14).

Madonna qualifies for being put in the category of humanitarian celebrity given her engagement in the south-African state of Malawi since 2006. She focuses on child orphans and on improving their living conditions via the Raising Malawi organization that she initiated for this purpose. Yet her activity has sparked many controversies.

Critics have repeatedly accused her of inspiring false hope among the locals and that at her heart lies the intention of promoting her own marketing brand. Madonna's organization has aroused big expectations among the locals and as such their evaluations are regularly more positive, because the locals feel (rightfully so?) that Madonna has been doing more for popularizing Malawi than local politicians (Richey – Budabin 2016: 15-16).

Much credit in the taking-off of the “celebritization” of development needs to be given to former UN General Secretary Kofi Annan, who saw the participation of celebrities in UN activities as a welcome means of not only raising the awareness about, and the prestige of, the UN itself, but also of obtaining more financial resources for its functioning⁴. As one anonymous observer described his tenure: “*The UN has become a celebrity hotel[...]* and anyone in Hollywood who wants to show there's nothing trivial about them checks in with Kofi” (Cooper 2008: 28). Thus, a project called *Celebrity Advocacy for the New Millennium* became a practical expression of Annan's effort that strove to involve celebrities in solving development issues. Furthermore, the establishment of this project was supposed to correspond with the eighth MDG, which endeavored to create a global partnership for development. During the initial meeting with the selected Goodwill Ambassadors of the UN – soccer player Ronaldo, actor Ustinov and a trio of Nobel Prize for Literature holders Nadine Gordimer, Harry Belafonte and Seamus Heaney – Annan called for support of *the Millennium project* in coordination with all who can contribute to fulfilling its goals (Cooper 2008: 28; Thrall – Stecula 2017: 4). Nowadays Emma Watson has attracted the awareness of world public when her emotional appearance at the UN headquarters marked the beginning of the *HeForShe* campaign, which aims to empower gender equality (Dwight 2016: 19).

Bono Vox and the phenomenon of the “bonoization” of development

The personality of Bono Vox, born as Paul David Hewson, belongs to the most often discussed examples of the “celebritization” of development and serves to illustrate how a media star can become an influential player in the field of setting the development agenda. His career with the U2 band propelled him to stardom during the 1980s and made an Irish singer an acclaimed and world-known musical celebrity. His journey from a pop star to a humanitarian activist commenced in 1984, when he joined Bob Geldof and his *Band-Aid project* that was meant to accumulate financial resources for drought-stricken Ethiopia. The Band-Aid project was immediately followed by a series of *Live Aid* concerts in London and Philadelphia in 1985, which marks the year of Bono's ascension to the development stage (Yrjölä 2014: 85). After a few fairly unsuccessful attempts to draw media attention to particular topics (the environment, the struggle against apartheid, the criticism of the “American way” in Nicaragua), the brink of the 1990s brought a spectacularly resounding entry of Bono into world politics. To uncover this sudden shift, we need to invoke several occurrences. First, the end of the Cold War fostered much interest across the international environment in development issues and so their solutions were no longer a mere side-lined agenda.

At the same time, Bono fixed his gaze and energy upon the fight against global poverty as a root-cause of all the other development issues. Among the most popular instances of Bono's activity belongs the support for the Greenpeace campaign against nuclear energy, the heightened media coverage of the war in Bosnia or the meeting with Pope John Paul II in 1999, which strove to raise awareness about the situation in Africa and secure the increase in development resources disbursed by international donors (Bhatnagar – Mittal 2011: 55).

Establishing ties with the Pope unraveled another of Bono's particular traits – a deeply religious undertone embodying his engagement and stemming from his family background. For religious branches are precisely the ones who considerably promote and catalyze the pervasion of Bono's thoughts into conservative segments of society that remains largely unaffected by media outputs on social media networks.

Bono's activities became such a distinctly prominent trait of the “celebritization” of development that it made A. Cooper (2008: 48-51) coin a brand new term for this kind of behavior – “bonoization” – which is based on Bono's (or other celebrities') abilities to combine two perspective during his actions – the perspective of a celebrity outside world politics (an outsider), and the perspective of an active ambassador who puts his new diplomatic tools to a good use and is capable of commanding respect among notable personalities from world politics (an insider). As a famous musician, Bono manages to appeal to the masses via his concerts, which are primarily apolitical in their nature, yet during which he excels at conveying his political conviction to his audience in an acceptable form. The power of Bono's approach also resonates with him having a sufficiently large enough amount of relevant information at his disposal that he then takes the advantage of during the dialogues with world politicians, which makes him (rightfully so) seem knowledgeable about the subject matter. Therefore, the “bonoization” of diplomacy represents an apparent example of how individuals can transform world politics and introduce new issues for discussion beyond the mere scope of rewarding media appearances (e.g. during film or musical award ceremonies) by disseminating their messages through serious news sources too.

Jubilee 2000 and DATA

The first case aptly illustrating the “bonoization of development” may revolve around the *Jubilee 2000* campaign the slogan of which was “*drop the debt* (Make Poverty History 2017)”, and its goal to convince the largest world creditors that debt relief is a “sine qua non” for improving the situation in third world countries. The origins of the Jubilee 2000 campaign are not associated with Bono, yet its founder Jammie Drummond saw celebrities as a means of drawing attention to the issue of the debt relief of the most heavily indebted countries. World public, which had remained lax and disinterested up until then, was, thanks to Bono's performance during the Brit Awards ceremony in 1999, notified of the *Jubilee 2000* project and outline the impacts of international debt on the economies of

the poorest countries in the world. Next day an article was published in the *Guardian* in which Bono appealed to the governments of the developed world and drew some concluding remarks in favor of debt relief (Friesen 2012: 68–69). The publication of the article in a reputable journal was precisely what revealed one of Bono’s strategies of addressing social elites through the prism of on-point, restrained and emotionless arguments. This strategy was further magnified by Bono’s cooperation with Jeffrey Sachs, who belongs to globally acclaimed economists lecturing at world’s leading universities, and whom the *Time* magazine labeled one of the hundred most influential personalities around the globe. Bono wrote a preface to Sachs’ 2005 book *The End of Poverty*, which is viewed as one of the most influential current publications exploring third world issues. During the year of the release of this book Bono was named the *Time Person of the Year* on the basis of a poll of the abovementioned *Time* magazine (Time 2005).

Bono’s second engagement in a struggle against international indebtedness is centered around the *DATA project*, which stands for Debt, AIDS, Trade, Africa, in return Democracy, Transparency, Accountability for Africa, and was established in 2002 (Cooper 2008b: 7). The name of the project implies that its chief task is to improve the awareness about the phenomenon of international indebtedness and its consequences with respect to Africa. The *DATA project* thus demonstrates another trait of the “bonoization” of diplomacy – a close partnership with international politicians. Bono’s ties with Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, with whom Bono repeatedly met at the beginning of the new millennium and who pledged to articulate debt relief issues in important international meetings, profoundly affected the incorporation of debt relief issues into the international discourse. In 2001 Bono partook in a G8 summit, yet his participation was mired in an incident. One of the photographs showed Bono smiling, which, given that the summit venue was swarmed with protests against the domination of the G8 countries, was deemed rather inappropriate. Many activists have labeled Bono a person befriending those responsible for the indebtedness of African countries and denigrated him for servility when approaching the G8 negotiations (Jackson 2008: 116-117). In order to gain more substantial financial support for his project Bono visited a meeting of the *World Economic Forum* in Davos in 2005, where he, together with Bill Clinton, Thabo Mbeki or Tony Blair, presented himself as a proponent of cutting international indebtedness.

Despite criticism that Bono has had to face, thanks to his personal ties with the Canadian Prime Minister, French President Chirac and British Prime Minister he indeed succeeded in incorporating the matter of international debt relief into the agenda of the G8 summit, which represented a remarkable accomplishment of Bono’s activism. As part of *the DATA project* he, together with other influential personalities (cyclist Lance Armstrong or actor Chris Tucker), staged a road trip across America in hopes of appealing to wide public and introducing them to the importance of the overall project. One of the key moments came to pass with an interview published in the *Christian Today* journal, which saw him attempt to contextualize his motives for the DATA campaign within a broader religious nar-

rative, and to invoke Christian arguments to convince American religious adherents that aid is their obligation. In the end, Bono was able to harvest the fruits of his labor with one of the most distinct achievements of his DATA campaign being the executive order signed by American President G. W. Bush in 2003 that established the *President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief* (PEPFAR), which eventually tripled American ODA disbursed in Africa (Jackson 2008: 123-129).

Within the context of the “celebritization” of development, the DATA platform fulfils another role by serving as a hub for professionals and advisors for other celebrities such as Angelina Jolie, whose closest mentor named Trevor Neilson happens to work for the DATA. Similarly, Brad Pitt or George Clooney searched, at the inception of their engagement in development, among the DATA activists for individuals who would advise them on how to set development issues and how to reach success in celebrity politics. in political celebrities (Cooper 2007: 128-129).

During his negotiations with world politicians Bono also uses, apart from promoting the media coverage of concrete issues (an innate aspect given his celebrity status), conventional diplomatic tools, which is a substantial departure from the strategies of other celebrities. Whereas numerous celebrities rely on the power of media presentation and on emotional appearances, Bono is well aware of the fact that in order to successfully push a topic one is largely dependent on the ability to pragmatically negotiate with power holders. In comparison to e.g. Geldof, Bono uses the weak points of world politicians to his advantage, pits the individual representatives against each other and attempts to engage in a political game at the end of which lies the acceptance and tabling of his interest (Cooper 2008a: 7-8).

The ONE and RED campaigns

The One campaign followed a 2004 DATA project and sought not only the identical goals as the DATA, but also the expansion of American ODA by 1% (Jackson 2008: 164). Apart from Bono other notable celebrities too ((Justin Timberlake, Brad Pitt and George Clooney) lent their hands to promote this cause with Bono combining the insider and outsider approach again during the campaign. As an insider he spent much time with world politicians and beside the abovementioned dignitaries he personally negotiated with the then US Foreign Secretary Condoleezza Rice or with the President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso (The Guardian 2005). As an outsider he staged a series of 8 *Live Aid* concerts, which took place shortly before the G8 summit so as to put informal pressure from ordinary citizens interested in African issues on the participants of the summit. Even though Bono was disillusioned with the conclusions of the G8 negotiations, his activism has remained unwavering and in the next years he began turning his attention to the G20 platform, which also encompasses influential emerging powers such as China, Brazil, India or the Republic of South Africa (Cooper 2011).

One of the branches of the ONE campaign is titled the RED or PRODUCT (RED)TM campaign the nature of which emanates from the idea of corporate social responsibility that postulates that large transnational corporations share certain societal responsibility and should also financially endorse projects improving the living standards of ordinary people. Financial resources gained from the sales of products of various TNCs should be invested into fighting against HIV/AIDS in Africa. This project has seen the participation of multiple brands such as *Emporio Armani*, *GAP*, *Converse*, *Cola-Cola* or *DELL*, that had their products sheltered by the RED activity branded with the red color (Cooper 2007: 130, RED 2017). Despite fairly considerable media attention that the campaign, thanks to the involvement of large corporations, attracted, one serious drawback of de facto justifying consumerism merits further notice. The crux of the campaign lies in purchasing consumer goods that many of their consumers do not need at all, while their purchases are justified on the grounds that they donate to a good cause. Current brands involved in the campaign are more often than not considered too luxurious, which makes them affordable for some buyers only. These buyers tend to be accused of eschewing the responsibility to contribute to development via their purchases of RED products, because they feel that “they have done simply enough already.” This may negatively impact the overall sum allocated to development activities (for more about the criticism, see e.g. Richey – Ponte 2008).

Angelina “Angie” Jolie

Whereas Bono represents a celebrity engaged in development partly because of his strong religious background, Angelina Jolie exemplifies a celebrity affected by personal experience from a developing country. The year 2000 and the shooting of the flick *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider* in Cambodia, where Jolie got to know a local orphan, marked a milestone in her transformation from an actress to a development activist. She liked him so much that she named him Maddox and adopted him in 2002. During the next couple of years she resorted to this move two more times regarding an Ethiopian girl called Zahara and a Vietnamese boy named Pax (Jackson et al. 2016: 155, Tracy 2008: 96, Cooper 2008a: 33).

Since its inception, “Angie’s” involvement was primarily focused on aiding children in the developing world, which reflects her personal experience gained in 2000. Since 2000 “Angie” has begun undertaking voyages to the developing world so as to better acquaint herself with the local living standards, while paying close attention to child orphans living in difficult conditions in refugee camps. In 2001 UN acknowledged her efforts by granting her a Goodwill Ambassador of the UNHCR (UNHCR 2017) status; a breaking point which ushered in a resounding surge in Angie’s activities. During the following years Angie undertook a swath of journeys to developing countries (Sierra Leone, Kenya, Namibia, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, etc.) and as a celebrity diplomat she succeeded in introducing the phenomenon of international refugees to various important international forums. A case in point of her involvement is best seen at her visit of the Mae La refugee camp on the borders between Thailand and Myanmar in 2009. Her one day stay was accompanied by much attention from the world media, which helped bring the issue of refugees in this

part of the world into the limelight and was positively viewed not only by local inhabitants for being paid well-deserved attention to, but also by the global media that, to an extent, took the advantage of fusing Angie's attractiveness as a popular actress with a then marginalized topic. It was especially thanks to Angie's personal charm that the phenomenon of refugees was taken up by the inhabitants of the North, who were considerably astonished by a popular actress embarking upon journeys into dangerous corners of the world and emotionally presenting a situation she found herself in (Richey – Budabin 2016: 12-13). In 2012 her position at the UN was strengthened by the then UNHCR António Guterres who appointed her a UNHCR Special Envoy (Dwight 2016: 20).

Angie's growing interest in development issues was significantly buttressed by her personal transformation accompanied by e.g. the change of her look and the way of her presentation. Her attractive appearance in tandem with her enormous fervor for the developing world made the *People* magazine label her the “*most beautiful person in the world*” in 2006 (Duvall 2007: 6). The media repeatedly emphasized her transformation from a woman “vamp” to a loving mother-wife fearlessly crossing inhospitable places and drawing attention to hot-button issues of the third world. Angie's transformation, backed by the media, from an open-minded woman “vamp” using her charm, to a woman in the service of higher good for humanity left the impression of a “corrected” woman among the world public, which understood what her true destiny was. This earned her the “*Ambassador Mom*” nickname conferred by the aforementioned *People* magazine. Her transformation is well captured in a documentary called “*What's Going On?*” where she starred as a guest, or her own book *Notes From My Travels* documenting her experiences from humanitarian journeys (Duvall 2007: 14-16).

Presenting motherhood as an actual fulfilment of woman's fate turned Angie into a symbol of a “mother without borders” and represents her crucial strategy of achieving development goals (Mostafanezhad 2013: 492). In line with Angie's interest in issues facing children in the developing world, experts on the “celebritization” of development began hinting at one common feature shared among celebrities involved in development issues. Whereas for famous men, such as Geldof or Bono, one may generally invoke their inclinations to meeting with top world politicians, women such as Angie, Hepburn or Madonna typically concentrate on topics associated with children or women rights and utilize emotional tools (adoption) for presenting them in the media. A question remains, though, whether such generalizations can serve to boost stereotypes paying a lip service to men's rationality and women's emotionality, and undermine development (which should be based on gender equality, i.e. the equal treatment of both sexes) itself.

A landmark moment of Angie's engagement in development came as a consequence of her wedding with a well-known and popular actor named Brad Pitt. This famous couple, nicknamed “Brangelina,” literally unleashed a media craze at the end of which was an international audience fascinated by the range of activities this married couple started to undertake in the field of development. Apart from the aforementioned adoption of two

orphans this famous pair also established *the Jolie-Pitt Foundation* in 2003 through which various projects are financed. It is noteworthy that Pitt himself donated many financial resources for this joint project the distribution of which depends on Angie alone (Kapoor 2013: 17).

Drawing heavy inspiration from, and dedicating the individual projects to, her children, Angie has also made inroads in other areas beside child orphans, with one of the larger topics being environmental issues and communal development. In this context, the year 2003 saw the establishment of *the Maddox-Jolie Pitt Foundation*, which fixes its gaze upon one particular province in Cambodia (Duthel 2012: 17). Another foundation – *the Shiloh-Jolie Pitt Foundation* – is named after Angie’s biological daughter Shiloh born in Namibia, and aims at protecting sites of natural heritage in one region of Namibia (Naankuse 2017). *The Zahara Children’s Center* bears the name of her daughter Zahara, and seeks to aid children affected by the HIV/AIDS (Global Health Committee 2017). In relation to giving birth to Shiloh, Angie’s biological daughter, one strand of criticism about Angie’s behavior as a development actor emerged. The birth, which took place under hard-line security conditions, sparked much public interest and raised a question of whether the famous couple could have spent this moment somewhere private without the costs incurred and/or donated such resources to one of the many development causes. Similarly, Angie’s triple adoption incited criticism by some observers for rendering women in the developing world incapable of taking care of their children and awaiting the arrival of a “white” woman willing to offer a helping hand.

The final notable topic centers on the issue of girl and woman rights especially within the context of sexual violence that many women in the developing world have to face. The *Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative*, established in 2012, which endeavors to provide support for the victims of sexual violence and ensure adequate prosecution of the perpetrators, would merit closer attention (Myrntinen – Swaine 2015: 496).

Conclusion

This article captures selected aspects of the “celebritization” of development, which, as a phenomenon, we have been encountering more regularly. Popular personalities have been increasingly more active in venturing into the field of diplomacy and through their opinions conveyed to the world public profoundly shape the international development discourse. The first examples of the public engagement of celebrities in development date to the 1950s, yet it was not until the 1980s and the 1990s that the “celebritization” of development expanded and was propelled to new heights owing largely to the expansion of the new media

Bono Vox became a role model for the “celebritization of development,” whose involvement in the field of development remains so substantial that his way of exerting influence on international politics was labeled the “bonoization of diplomacy.” The nature of this approach stems from the ability to link the dimension of a celebrity appealing to masses

with being an active participant in important international political meetings, during which top world politicians deliberate and make decisions about solving development issues. His prowess in mobilizing the public and, at the same time, in poignantly discussing with, and convincing, power holders represents a symbol that the majority of other celebrities held in much reverence. Regular consultations of other celebrities with Bono himself or his team members who are involved in various projects serve to prove this point.

Angelina “Angie” Jolie stands for a celebrity who “corrected” herself and traded her careless, freethinking life for developmental activism, while the characteristic feature of her involvement rests on emphasizing her role of a mother travelling around the world and showing compassion for abandoned children. Her transformation was considerably amplified by the media that shun some positive light on the diverse feats of Brangelina, the famous couple, and created a media image of a pair that devotes all its time to development issues.

Yet when evaluating the role of celebrities in development we should not let the media, which sometimes create a mere illusion of reality, carry us away. The participation of celebrities should provoke questions about whether it is indeed appropriate for celebrities, merely because of being interested in a particular topic, to influence the scale and the character of international aid and to determine how the international community should proceed in tackling development issues. A question also remains about the extent to which the interest of celebrities in the developing world is genuine and how much of it is merely a part of their media campaigns directed at boosting one’s own popularity.

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Notes

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² The meeting between Kay and the UN representatives was a random one and took place during an airline between London and New York that had to undergo an emergency landing. During the landing, Kay made acquaintance with Maurice Pate, the executive director of UNICEF, who brokered a meeting with the then UN General Secretary (Wheeler 2011: 11).

³ It is estimated that the concerts yielded around 60 million USD (Ponte – Richey 2008: 716; Jackson 2008: 30).

⁴ An often quoted example illustrating the heightened awareness about UN activities is the participation of Nicole Kidman in the UNIFEM project, about the existence of which the overwhelming majority of world public had no idea before 2006 (Bhatnagar – Mittal 2010: 51).