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**‘And the Oscar Goes to . . . *Daybreak in Udi*’:  
Understanding Late Colonial Community Development  
and its Legacy through Film****Ben Page**

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**ABSTRACT**

This article analyses the 1949 film *Daybreak in Udi* and the influential ideas of its ‘star’ Edward Rowland Chadwick, a District Officer, with a view to understanding the legacy of the colonial policy of Community Development in Eastern Nigeria and Cameroon. The film, which is freely available online, follows an African community using ‘self-help’ methods to construct a rural maternity home. It helps visualize the colonial practices of ‘mass education’ and ‘community betterment’ but is not just a drama-documentary: it is also an argument in favour of community development. The article argues that Chadwick’s ideas had a profound influence within the region where he worked, and that colonial community development more generally provides a key source for ‘participatory development’. The film also discloses a late colonial ‘socio-geographical imaginary’, articulated through a hierarchy of specific social categories (administrative officers, teachers, peasants, elders, women and troublemakers), spatial locations (urban, rural) and the distinctions between them (modern/reactionary, leader/worker, audible/silent). The article shows that colonial community development not only played an important role in fixing these categories within subsequent development thinking, but that it also ran up against one of the ongoing paradoxes of ‘self-help development’, namely that it usually requires an outsider.

**INTRODUCTION**

Our object is to induce in the people a desire for progress and the will to achieve it by their own efforts. (E.R. Chadwick, 1950)

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I am very grateful to the three anonymous referees for their detailed, thoughtful, knowledgeable and useful comments on the first draft of this paper.

*Development and Change* 45(5): 838–868. DOI: 10.1111/dech.12119

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Community development, bottom-up development and participatory development are all related notions that serve as important conceptual models for a number of NGOs in the way they deliver self-help development projects around the world. For a time in the 1980s and 1990s, they were also influential in government development ministries. However, since the turn of the millennium such institutions have generally preferred to emphasize technology, markets or good governance in their development policies. Unexpectedly, some of these international development ideas about self-help have recently reappeared in the UK under the guise of discussions about ‘the Big Society’ (Ishkanian and Szreter, 2012). What is sometimes forgotten in accounts of these approaches is their colonial origins, so this article sets out to examine an early moment in the history of self-help development in West Africa.

Formal ‘Community Development’ policies have a long history in anglo-phone Africa and this study aims to analyse their form and legacy in Eastern Nigeria and the Southern Cameroons from the mid-1940s to 1960, the last part of the British colonial period. It follows the work of Edward Rowland Chadwick, a British government official, who achieved prominence (relatively late in his career) as an advocate for community development approaches within Nigeria. Chadwick has left a wide range of written materials,<sup>1</sup> but perhaps the most interesting source of information is the Oscar-winning 1949 film *Daybreak in Udi*,<sup>2</sup> a documentary about a community development project, in which he plays a younger version of himself. The main objective of this article, then, is to use the film to disclose Chadwick’s ideas and worldview in order to better understand the practices and legacies of colonial community development in Eastern Nigeria.

With a duration of thirty-eight minutes, *Daybreak in Udi* is the most substantial in a group of films the British Government’s Crown Film Unit shot about community development in the Eastern Provinces of Nigeria in the late 1940s.<sup>3</sup> *Daybreak* is immensely useful as a visualization of colonial

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1. Chadwick wrote about community development in pamphlets aimed at African villagers, newspapers for urban African elites and African nationalists, bulletins for other District Officers in Nigeria, journals such as *African Affairs* and the *Nigerian Field*, magazines such as *The Spectator*, aimed at the British public, and in official reports for the Colonial Office and UNESCO. The same anecdotes from his personal experience appear frequently, but sometimes contradict themselves in terms of dates and places.
  2. *Daybreak in Udi* can be seen in its entirety on the website of the Colonial Film: Moving Images of the British Empire project (<http://www.colonialfilm.org.uk/node/252>). Besides the 1950 Oscar, it was also awarded the prize for Best Documentary at the third British Academy Film Awards (later known as the BAFTAs) in May 1950 and later received awards at film festivals in Edinburgh and Berne. Much of the footage was re-used in a 1954 documentary entitled *Savage World*, when it was combined with a film about colonial anti-poaching measures.
  3. Roseleen Smyth (1992) refers to another film (made in 1948) called *Village Development*, which she claims was the inspiration for *Daybreak in Udi*. However, there were also films on community development made in Okigwi Division, Awka Division and Ashoada

development practice, but it must also be read more critically, as a very specific argument about how to steer rural communities towards self-help and as a piece of colonial propaganda.<sup>4</sup> As a government-funded film it had implicit political work to do as well as having an explicit development function as an example of instructional film (Shaka, 1999).

The film-makers had three audiences in mind. The first comprised other African rural communities who might be inspired or provoked into undertaking self-help projects of their own. The film was certainly used for this purpose and was shown in travelling cinemas throughout Africa, although its impact is not clear (Morton-Williams, 1952; Shaka, 2004). Writing in the Nigerian newspaper *The Sun*, Austine Amanze Akpuda argues that the Egwugwu story in Chinua Achebe's classic novel *Things Fall Apart* (1958) was probably influenced by seeing or, at the very least, hearing about *Daybreak in Udi*, which was shown in Umuahia in 1949 (Akpuda, 2014). The second audience was a generic British public who might be impressed by the achievements and attitudes of African villagers, thereby mobilizing support in the UK for an emerging idea of 'international development' in the years of post-war austerity. The film justified the use of British taxpayers' money for colonial development schemes by emphasizing Africans' desire to help themselves rather than wait passively for British financial aid. In the film, the narrator explicitly addresses this British audience and talks about the willingness of British citizens to help Africans who are ready to help themselves. The third potential audience was made up of critics of European colonialism, who were being shown the benign and progressive role of the British administration and the benefits of its policies in rural areas of Nigeria. It is hard to measure how effectively the film reached any of its audiences, though its Oscar in 1950 must at least have facilitated its international distribution, as it was certainly screened in Africa, Europe, the Far East, Australia and the USA. We do know, however, that it earned the disapproval of urban Nigerian nationalists at the time; because of the use of nudity in the film they regarded it as a typical European representation of African backwardness.

This article argues that *Daybreak in Udi* provides a summation of Chadwick's ideas about community development, even though its final text and form were also influenced by the writer (Montagu Slater) and the director (Terry Bishop). It develops this claim by looking at how the content of the film changed over successive drafts of the screenplay and how closely it relates to Chadwick's own personal professional experience. The main thesis is that Chadwick's individual efforts and ideas between 1943 and 1960 were profoundly important in establishing the techniques, principles and institutions of community development in Eastern Nigeria and Cameroon.

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Division, all produced primarily for local audiences. P. Morton-Williams screened *Community Development in Awgu* as part of his research into the impact of film on rural audiences in Nigeria (see Morton-Williams, 1952: 22).

4. For a discussion of recent critical readings of development in film see Lewis et al. (2013).

Yet, this form of development project emerges within a broader context and should not be seen as the product of just one individual's activities or vision. Understanding how community development becomes a valid and viable development strategy also requires us to consider the general policy from Whitehall or Lagos, the experiences from community development elsewhere in Britain's African colonies and, crucially, the views and actions of African participants. The fact that a single colonial official could have had such a dramatic impact on policy within a region tells us as much about the *ad hoc* character of colonial government in rural West Africa, the scanty staffing of the Community Development Department and the lack of financial and technical resources in Nigeria as it does about Chadwick and his ideas.

Conceptually this paper is aligned with the broad project of post-colonial theory insofar as it argues for the significance of the colonial period in shaping the ideas and practices of development policy, politics and psychology after independence in Africa. It sees colonial media representations and literary tropes as key to the process of producing post-colonial subjectivities. It emphasizes continuities of consciousness in terms of how Africans imagine themselves, their communities and their societies after the transition from colony to post-colony (Mbembe, 2001). As such it sets out to use the film to understand how colonial officials involved with community development, such as Chadwick, imagined Africans and African communities and social relations within African society.

The key concept used here is of a 'socio-geographical imaginary', a largely taken-for-granted spatial and social mental ordering of the world (Kothari, 2006b; Watts, 1999). Analysis of such an 'imaginary' combines reflection on both the *object* being imagined (society in the Eastern Provinces of Nigeria) and also the *subject* doing the imagining (the colonial officials and later the post-colonial African elites). The claim is that it is possible to characterize a particular and influential late-colonial socio-geographical imaginary associated with community development. This imaginary is articulated through visualizing a hierarchy of specific social categories (administrative officers, teachers, peasants, elders, women and troublemakers), spatial locations (forest, farm, urban, rural) and the distinctions between them (modern/reactionary, leader/worker, audible/silent, tamed/wild and civilized/uncivilized). Such categories are integral to perpetuating what Mahmood Mamdani (1996) described as 'the bifurcated state' in post-colonial Africa in which 'traditional' rural subjects are ruled/developed in one way and 'modern' urban citizens in another. This colonial socio-geographical imaginary matters because it becomes real over time, and produces a set of ideas from which participatory development has subsequently found it hard to escape (Cooke and Kothari, 2001; Hickey and Mohan, 2004). The once abstract categories of the imaginary have become concrete. The legacy of colonial community development is as much about this way of imagining African rural communities as it is about a set of

strategies for development practice. The article not only argues that colonial community development played an important role in reifying these social categories within development thinking, but that it also ran up against one of the universal paradoxes of self-help, namely that it usually requires an outsider.

The article starts by showing how the practice of community development in Eastern Nigeria emerged and how it related to the broader policy developed by the UK government in Whitehall. This first section also positions the case study in relation to existing historical work on community development elsewhere in Britain's African colonies. This is followed by a very brief introduction to the organizations engaged in documentary film-making in the colonies before focusing on the film *Daybreak in Udi* itself. The film is summarized before being used to reveal Chadwick's ideas about community development and how they relate to his career. The next sections consider how the script evolved through three different versions, and look at the actors in the film and the development categories they represent. The discussion and conclusion return to the question of the colonial legacy in contemporary development by tracing the practices and ideas of community development forward in both Nigeria and Cameroon. They also return to the idea of the 'socio-spatial imaginary' by arguing for the significance of the way particular categories used in the colonial era have subsequently been reified.

### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN LATE COLONIAL NIGERIA<sup>5</sup>

In 1943, E.R. Chadwick — a colonial official in Udi,<sup>6</sup> a district in Onitsha, Eastern Nigeria — received a group of Ibo elders from the Abaja clan who had come to his office to request that civilization be brought to their village. On being informed that there weren't sufficient financial resources available for the Government of Nigeria (a British colonial state) to bring them the roads they wanted, the Africans fell silent until one of the delegation suggested that they should just build the roads themselves. With Chadwick's encouragement and 12,000 man-days of unpaid labour, the first such road was built and community development in the Eastern Provinces of Nigeria was born. However, this co-operative work was not seen as new; rather it was portrayed as a revival of West African customs of social collaboration, which were being applied to new challenges. The following year, 1944, the Colonial Office in London published 'Mass Education in African Society' and, in 1948, 'Education for Citizenship in Africa'. These two reports both advocated precisely the kind of 'community development' approach to rural

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5. For the previous stage of British Colonial Development Policy (1914–40) see Constantine (1984).

6. The population of Udi in 1947 was 264,063 (UK National Archives [UKNA] File CO 1018/36).

development that was already happening in Udi and as a result the district achieved a degree of recognition among colonial officials in Lagos and London.

This, at least, was Chadwick's version of the creation-story of community development in *his* Nigerian District. It is a history of which he was the author. It was a story he told frequently to a wide range of audiences and in a number of different formats over the next ten years, including in *Daybreak in Udi*. This was not a deliberate act of self-aggrandizement, though it did make Chadwick an early development celebrity in his field. By the end of the 1950s Chadwick was still in Nigeria although he had been promoted several times to become Community Development Secretary for the whole of the Eastern Provinces (including the mandated territory of the Southern Cameroons). He had been awarded the OBE<sup>7</sup> for his work and praised in the British parliament. He wrote reports for a number of United Nations organizations, worked with the Ford Foundation and was a valued speaker at community development training events. Whether in Enugu, Lagos or Whitehall, Chadwick's knowledge and ability to foster self-help community development were seen as exceptional. Though he initially explicitly distanced himself from those he rather sarcastically described as 'so-called experts on mass education' (Chadwick, 1948: 36), by the end of the 1950s, there was no doubt that like many other colonial officials of the era, he had segued into the post-colonial age and become a development expert himself (Kothari, 2005, 2006a, 2006b).

Colonial community development was initially called 'mass education' by the Colonial Office and focused on adult literacy classes in rural areas (Skinner, 2010). After 1948 it became known as 'fundamental education' or 'community development' and started to address a wider range of issues such as agriculture, health, transport, and even infrastructure (Smyth, 2004). In effect it became what would now be called an 'integrated rural development strategy' and from the outset ideas of 'self-help' were central.

Community development moved from the margins to the centre of British colonial policy when Arthur Creech-Jones (who had been active in the Fabian Colonial Bureau during World War II) became the Secretary of State for the Colonies in Clement Attlee's Labour government in October 1946 (Holford, 1988).<sup>8</sup> He had been personally involved in the production of the 1944 report 'Mass Education in African Society', which first advocated this development strategy for rural Africa. Creech-Jones viewed mass education as a necessary precursor to decolonization and raised its profile significantly. In an important circular it was declared: 'Debate by dispatch and memorandum has gone on too long. The conception of mass education by community effort should now be accepted as settled policy and on this basis mass

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7. Order of the British Empire, an award within the British honours system.

8. A post he held until 1950 when he lost his seat in the general election.

education along with the development of local government should be placed at the forefront of our development policy in Africa'.<sup>9</sup>

The appeal of this approach for the Colonial Office was not only that it was cheap, but also that it schooled 'their' African subjects in the responsibilities of citizenship. It was about making a certain kind of citizen who understood what government could and, perhaps more importantly, could not do for them. Thus, alongside the provision of rural services, community development emerged as a way for the British to claim that they were responding to demands (from the USA and USSR, for example) that the old powers should be moving faster towards granting independence to their colonies. The argument was that community development accelerated this process by mentally preparing African subjects for self-government (Skinner, 2011: 307). Much colonial community development (particularly as conceived by Chadwick) was preoccupied with the *minds* of villagers rather than with the material benefits of specific initiatives. On occasion he went as far as saying that the success or failure of the project itself was irrelevant as long as leadership skills of the community were enhanced in the process.

Community development in the late 1940s had multiple formal definitions, but Chadwick coined some of the most concise and catchy. Community development, he wrote, is: 'the raising of the standard of living within the community, by the community's own effort and not by some outside agency' (Chadwick, n.d.)<sup>10</sup> and 'community development planning must be planning with the people rather than for the people' (Chadwick, 1952a: 2). In practice, community development in Eastern Nigeria usually entailed a salaried representative of the colonial state engaging with rural people in the setting of a community meeting. These meetings helped communities to identify their ambitions and then translate those hopes into specific projects (such as the construction of health facilities, transport infrastructure or marketplaces). These projects entailed voluntary community labour, the donation by the community of local resources (timber, stone, sand, etc.) and the generation of finance by the community. The colonial government then supplemented these efforts with technical support and some imported materials. The local finance was generated through such initiatives as creating a village shop or opening a women's co operative farm. Community meetings were an integral part of the strategy designed to achieve consensus, understanding and cooperation (Chadwick, 1951a, 1951b).

A number of historians have examined this colonial moment looking either at the colonial community development policy in general (Abloh and Ameyaw, 1997; Holford, 1988; Smyth, 2004) or at the specific experiences

9. Circular, Subcommittee on Mass Education and Development Planning, 1948, 3 (UKNA File CO 852/941/3).

10. The quotation comes from an article in the *Eastern Outlook and Cameroon Star*. This government-subsidized newspaper was published in Enugu in the 1950s and was addressed to urban Africans. Open Shelves Cameroon National Archives (Buea), hereafter CNA.

in Ghana (Skinner, 2009, 2010, 2011), Kenya (Lewis, 2000, 2001a, 2001b, 2011) and Tanzania (Burton and Jennings, 2007; Jennings, 2003, 2007). This article adds to the existing case studies by drawing attention to the previously neglected example of Eastern Nigeria and Cameroon (but see Kwo, 1984; Omolewa, 2008). Methodologically this is not a trivial exercise because it is easy to get caught by the temptations of presentism. For many people, their interest in this topic (as for example in this article) is precisely in understanding the legacy of this colonial policy to the current era of development practice, but historians are quick to remind us that this is problematic because it means we are viewing the past through the lens of contemporary concerns. To avoid this danger it is vital to treat each case with care, drawing out its specificities and placing it in the context of the time and place in which it emerged (Skinner, 2011: 299). Furthermore, despite the fact that identical instructions were issued to different African colonies from the metropolitan centre of empire in Whitehall, the story of community development varies significantly from place to place.

Although Nigeria is now the dominant state in West Africa it was very much in the shadow of the Gold Coast (Ghana) in the 1940s, so it is not surprising that the Nigerian case study has been largely passed over. The Southern Cameroons, though officially a United Nations trusteeship from 1946, were effectively run as an extension of the Eastern Provinces of Nigeria. Cameroon was an even less significant territory from the perspective of the Colonial Office. However, it turns out that this part of Nigeria has an important place in the history of colonial community development. Within Whitehall, the work in Udi was the best known example of the new ideas being put into practice successfully. When in London on leave in 1947, Chadwick went to the clearing house for material on mass education at the Institute of Education where he was informed 'that the Udi experiment was at that time the only one on record where full scale social, and economic, development were proceeding, on the basis of voluntary communal development fully integrated with a Mass Literacy campaign. Other Mass Literacy campaigns had not led to all round reconstruction of village life by voluntary effort' (Chadwick, 1948: 37).

Two years later, officials in London were still of the view that Nigeria was the pace-setter in responding to Creech-Jones's key 1948 dispatch on community development in Africa. 'It is clear that Nigeria is far further ahead than any other colony, which has so far replied, to working out the general principles of the dispatch and particularly in the most important point of all namely the re-orientation of ideas'.<sup>11</sup> In 1950 Nigeria was being treated as a potential model for others to follow (alongside other successes in Kenya and Nyasaland). As a result, the initial lack of interest in community development

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11. Harvey (London) in response to Foot's reply from Lagos to the Creech-Jones dispatch prioritizing community development (UKNA File CO 847/53/7, minute dated 24 June 1949).

in Lagos swiftly changed and money became available to support village-level projects. In 1946 just GB£ 4,000 had been set aside for community development in the Nigerian National Development Plan (where it came under the heading of Village Improvement) but by 1950 this had risen to GB£ 250,000. Nigeria continued to lead the way in the early 1950s through the establishment of community development leadership training schools in Awgu and Man O' War Bay (Southern Cameroons), with which Chadwick was initially involved (Dickson, 1960; Jackson, 1956).<sup>12</sup>

In summary then, community development was a policy that took centre stage from around 1948 and which led to experiments across Britain's African colonies, and in which the Eastern Provinces of Nigeria led the way, largely because of the parallels between existing work in Udi and the new ideas coming from London. Chadwick's experiments in community development, which began in 1944, pre-date their formal adoption as colonial policy across Africa and justify the claim that they should be given greater prominence in histories of this strategy that has subsequently become so influential.

#### **DOCUMENTARY FILM PRODUCTION IN BRITISH COLONIAL AFRICA**

The British Government was interested in the use of film as an education, development and propaganda tool in Africa from the 1920s onwards. However, it wasn't until the Carnegie-funded Bantu Education Kinema Experiment in the mid-1930s that significant numbers of films made in Africa for an African audience were produced (Smyth, 1979). With the outbreak of World War II, the investment in this approach increased dramatically with the creation of the Colonial Film Unit (CFU), funded by the Ministry of Information (MoI), which became the most significant producer of documentary films in British Africa. The CFU produced over 200 films in its lifetime, almost all explicitly directed at colonial subjects. After the war the Ministry became the Central Office of Information, a non-ministerial government body, which continued to support the CFU until 1955, though no new films were made after 1952 (Smyth, 1983, 1988). In the post-war period the focus switched to development issues and towards the end of the 1940s, the CFU sought to Africanize film-making by decentralizing and creating separate units such

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12. Ian Jackson was the Principal at the Awgu Community Development Training Centre in the late 1950s. He then transferred to the post-colonial Nigerian Ministry of Internal Affairs until at least 1962. UKNA file CO554/631 has correspondence between Alec Dickson, Principal at the Man O' War Bay centre and Oliver Lyttleton, the Secretary of State for the colonies in 1952. Dickson had come from working in community development on the Gold Coast (see Gibbs, 1999) and went on to found Voluntary Service Overseas. The reference, however, is to his wife Mora's memoir of their time in Man O' War Bay.

as the Nigerian Film Unit, though it was not until 1965 that management was fully transferred to Africans (Smyth, 1992).

The Crown Film Unit ('Crown'), which made *Daybreak in Udi*, is much better known among film historians than the Colonial Film Unit, though not usually for its work in the colonies. It was a completely separate body though it followed a similar trajectory and operated under a similar remit. Under its original name (the 'GPO Film Unit') it had achieved a high profile as the sponsor of a highly-regarded British documentary tradition in the 1930s. With the outbreak of war, however, it too was incorporated into the MoI and its name changed. It redirected its efforts to war-time propaganda on the home front. After the war, the rationale for Crown's existence was less clear and it also looked to the colonies as a source of subjects and started to produce films such as *Daybreak in Udi* alongside its British documentaries. It was closed down by the British Government in 1952 (Harding, 2004).<sup>13</sup>

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13. The closure of Crown coincided with a spat over the ownership of the Oscar statuette for *Daybreak in Udi* (UKNA file INF12/265). In April 1952, Ken Cameron, the last remaining member of the *Daybreak* production team still employed by Crown and based in their studios at Beaconsfield, was in possession of both the Oscar statuette and a letter of redundancy. However, the British Information Services (BIS) in New York (another war-time propaganda unit seeking a peace-time function), which had distributed *Daybreak* in the US and which had submitted the film to the Academy, wanted the statuette for their office lobby in the Rockefeller Center. Their ongoing function as a supplier of British films in the US would, they claimed, be enhanced by the presence of the statuette which would add to their credibility in the eyes of American film distributors. Cameron, who was clearly bitter about the closure of Crown, decided to hold on to the statuette. He was initially supported by his boss Ralph Nunn-May (brother of the famous spy Alan Nunn-May who had supplied nuclear secrets to the Russians), who claimed that the plaque under the statuette (which said it had been awarded to the BIS) must be a fake on the grounds that the Academy would never have presented it to a distributor as opposed to 'creatives'. Embarrassed officials at the Central Office of Information (COI) in London were obliged to relay their problems in retrieving the statuette to New York. The BIS then contacted the Academy in Los Angeles in an effort to establish official ownership of the Oscar. Margaret Herrick (Executive Director of the Academy) replied that the statuette was owned by the British Government which didn't really resolve matters since Crown, the COI and BIS were all government bodies. She did, however, report that the full citation of the award was 'Academy First Award to British Information Services for the most outstanding documentary feature of 1949 "Daybreak in Udi" Produced by the Crown Film Unit' but that the last six words had been accidentally left off the plaque. She also offered to sell a duplicate statuette for US\$ 60. On the promise that the BIS would use the statuette to make a permanent memorial in their New York office to the work of Crown, Cameron was finally persuaded to hand the Oscar over to the COI in July 1952. However, the last that was heard of the statuette was from the dockside at Southampton; a telegram was sent to London saying that the Oscar had been deemed too heavy for hand luggage and unsuitable to go in the sea trunks. The statuette was not known to Sir Geoffroy Millais (who worked at BIS in New York in the 1960s), but there are claims that it appeared on the British TV news programme *Nationwide* in the early 1980s when it was presented to the film's director Terry Bishop by the well-known actor Sir John Mills.

**AND THE OSCAR GOES TO . . .****Film Synopsis**

*Daybreak in Udi* describes the story of a village community (Umana) building a maternity home through their own efforts under the benign and knowing gaze of the colonial administration represented by the District Officer (DO), Chadwick, who guides African leaders and intervenes at village level when necessary. The DO is presented as an ‘authority’ not just in the sense that he is the powerful senior representative of the colonial state in Udi, but also because he has seen many projects like this one before and is therefore able to give clear advice. For example, he directs the project leaders to tell the women of the village to organize themselves into a co-op in order to sell produce and thereby generate money to pay for the salary of the mission-trained midwife who will staff the maternity home when it is completed. He is presented as someone who appreciates when to step in at general village meetings and use his political power to support those individuals he has identified as progressive. Yet he appears to be someone who knows how to operate within the values and mores of the village — showing respect to elders, observing protocol, giving traditional greetings, visibly enjoying dance and song. However, crucially for the point of the argument within the film, the building project is initiated and led by three ‘modern’ educated, local Africans (Dominic, James and Iruka), who work as literacy teachers on the mass education programme in Umana and who enlist the support of the village elders and, in Iruka’s case, specifically the village women. Chadwick’s influence over the villagers operates largely remotely via these modern Africans who are effectively being trained as future leaders through their involvement in this project.

The film opens with a scene showing what colonial mass education looks like. Several hundred men, women and children are gathered in a huge crowd in a clearing in the village rote-learning their ABC using blackboards. They are guided by African teachers, the same individuals who will initiate the self-help scheme later. This scene helps a twenty-first century viewer to visualize colonial literacy education in a fairly straightforward way. But for the purpose of the film’s narrative this is little more than background — an establishing shot that shows the viewer what challenges Chadwick (and by implication, the British colonial administration as a whole) are up against. Given this starting point, the film implicitly asks two questions: is literacy what rural Africans need? And, are rural Africans really ready for independence?

Significantly, the film starts the main story in the DO’s Office. The essential paradox of participatory development is captured in the fact that the ‘point of origin’ for this community development project is within the site that is most obviously external to the community itself. The isolation of the DO is obvious — his office is an island of British order and sober decorum

in the middle of the fecund African jungle. Before the maternity home is discussed Chadwick has to deal with a child custody case. A local man had paid bride price, but the woman has taken another man for her husband with whom she has a child. The first man is claiming ownership of the child even though he is not the father because the bride price has never been returned. Chadwick's judgment is firm and unambiguous: the child wants to live with his father and the man who is disgruntled about bride price should pursue a civil case through the Native Authorities to get his money back rather than disrupt the child's family setting. Including this case in the film allows Chadwick to establish his credentials as a wise and fair arbiter alert to both the modern colonial legal code and the nuances of local custom. The implication is that in order to enable effective community development, the 'outsider' has to know the people he's working with inside out. Local knowledge is a prerequisite for effective leadership for community development. Though apparently not explicitly connected to the story of community development, the case sits comfortably within the metaphorical register of the film: it is a case about parents and children, modernity and tradition. Chadwick and his African allies are parents to the mass of illiterate villagers. The village is a coherent family unit to be kept together rather than broken apart by reactionary gripes and wilful misinterpretations of tradition. At the end of the child custody scene, the three literacy teachers from Umana come to Chadwick and ask for his help in the construction of a maternity home.

Much of the remainder of the film is given over to an extended construction sequence that demonstrates the capacity for self-help within the village, the determination of the modern African leaders and the extensive scope for the use of local materials. Here the intended audience goes well beyond other African communities.<sup>14</sup> The message is that with some gentle cajoling, Africans are building a new Africa and (in the process) *some* are also becoming modern citizens. What is being constructed is not just a maternity home: it is a new relationship between citizens and state.<sup>15</sup> Emphasis is placed on the ability of African leaders to make the project happen and on the capacity of the villagers to work hard and in an organized way. The new building starts to rise.

At this point in the narrative, a drama is generated because the maternity home is opposed by a reactionary village 'traditionalist' (Eze) who seeks to undermine the efforts of those who would bring 'progress' to the community by spreading misinformation, playing on fears of change and invoking dark

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14. At one point Chadwick, speaking as the narrator, addresses the film's audience directly over a shot of the completed maternity home: 'Well there it is. It probably doesn't look much to *you*. It didn't look much to the midwife; she didn't like it at all. You see, she came from the town and got her training as a midwife in the hospital there; she'd never been in the bush before' (emphasis added).

15. Again the relevance of this changing relationship would have been very clear to a British audience in the wake of post-war changes in the social contract at home with the creation of the Welfare State.

spiritual forces to prevent the move towards self-help and enlightenment. In the dramatic climax of the film, Eze launches a nocturnal assault on the finished maternity home in an attempt to spook the new urban-trained African midwife by appearing as a juju. Unsurprisingly, he is defeated by the brisk common sense of Iruka, one of the local teachers, who throws a bucket of scalding water over the advancing masked figure. Soon afterwards, the first baby is born in the maternity home and Eze's predictions are exposed as lies.<sup>16</sup> Dawn arrives and the villagers celebrate their successful project in an elaborate dance sequence. Then they move on to their next step towards civilization — the construction of a road. By helping themselves, the villagers are creating a new relationship not only with the state but also with their own future, as illustrated in the closing words of the film: 'Our road goes far, who knows where it will go . . . who knows'. The future is pregnant with exciting possibilities.

*Daybreak in Udi* is not really a documentary so much as a drama. It was shot in 1949, funded by the Central Office of Information at the Colonial Office with a budget of around GB£ 30,000.<sup>17</sup> It was directed by Terry Bishop and based on an original screenplay by Montagu Slater. Bishop went on to a high-profile film and TV career in the UK; Slater was already a relatively well-known playwright, poet and novelist (and lifelong communist) who a few years earlier had written the libretto for Benjamin Britten's famous opera *Peter Grimes*.<sup>18</sup> However, the first name mentioned after the opening title shot was not one of the professional film-makers, but 'E.R. Chadwick OBE Senior District Officer, Colonial Administrative Service'.

### Chadwick's Career

E.R. Chadwick was born in 1907, had a Diploma in Anthropology from the University of Oxford and began work in Eastern Nigeria in 1928, a year after the introduction of Native Administrations (Starsberg, 1950). He continued to work in the administration in Eastern Nigeria until the late 1950s, refusing several attempts to transfer him elsewhere. He was a staunch defender of the value of the District Officer and the policy of the Native Administrations, which he felt were a vital precursor to rural development and to emerging institutions of local government (Chadwick, 1948). He was also clearly an

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16. The parts of this scene involving the masked assault on the maternity home were shot in the UK for reasons that are not clear. The four masks were hired from the village of Amokwe for GB£ 5 each (according to a contract signed by the 'Village Chief', Anocke Chene), and were exported in February 1949. A year later the Acting Secretary of the Eastern Provinces was forced to write to the Crown Film Unit for an explanation of why they had not yet been returned to Nigeria (UKNA Inf6/403).

17. See UKNA File INF 6/403.

18. Slater was paid GB£ 900 less his airfare to go to Nigeria to research the material and produce a script (UKNA INF 6/403).

admirer of Ibo culture and society, though this was predictably married to a condescending epistemological sense of superiority linked to claims to 'know' the Ibo and therefore to be able to draw generalizations about their character. One of Chadwick's favourite tropes is to make some broad claim about the Ibo and then assert the essential similarity of Africans and Europeans. For example:

Ibo society — by its very democracy — tends to atomise itself, sept breaking away from sept, village from village, quarter from quarter. It has been like this for centuries and it is not going to be changed overnight. Yet this chain reaction of atomization has to be stopped or we get nowhere. The Ibo has to learn to think Federally and he finds it as difficult as the European.<sup>19</sup>

Chadwick's anthropological interests led him to write a series of short ethnographic pieces about Ibo 'custom' and material culture for the journal *Nigerian Field* (1935, 1937a, 1937b, 1938a) which were supplemented by historical pieces in the same journal (1938b, 1952b). He continued to publish in an anthropological idiom into the 1950s (1953). Unsurprisingly, his anthropological writing shows a particular interest in the unusual, spectacular and exotic. His extensive photographic collection of anthropological and historical subjects was left to the British Museum, which has made it available online. Photos from this collection now occasionally appear on the web as a source for the Nigerian diaspora when searching for historical images of Ibo architecture and culture. Some of his masks are part of the Pitt Rivers collection in Oxford. Though Chadwick married and had three daughters, his family never lived in Nigeria. As a result he spent intermittent but long periods of leave in the UK, a common practice for DOs (Kirk-Greene, 2006).<sup>20</sup>

In 1943 Chadwick was appointed as the District Officer in Udi Division, a rural area to the southwest of Enugu. Sometime in the late 1940s he was promoted to Senior District Officer and was also at one point Acting Resident for Onitsha. He was awarded the OBE in the late 1940s for his administrative work and in particular for his work on community development. According to Chadwick, 'Mass Education is merely my hobby not my job' (1949a: 19), but by the end of that year the claim was no longer true. One of the Government of Nigeria's responses to the sudden elevation of importance of the policy of community development was to create a new regional role for Chadwick in 1949.<sup>21</sup> Not only was he charged with implementing the policy in the whole of the Eastern Region, but also in the British sphere of the United Nations mandated territory of the Southern Cameroons. This was

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19. Chadwick, speech in Slater's first treatment of the film provisionally titled *The Moving Finger* (UKNA INF6/403).

20. There was also an extended period of poor health in the early 1950s, during which Malcolm Milne took over as Community Development Secretary (Milne, 1999).

21. 'Mass education in Nigeria', letter from H.M. Foot (Officer administering the Government, Lagos) to Creech-Jones 8 June 1949 (UKNA file CO 847/42/3).

an appointment that earned approving comments at the highest level from Arthur Creech-Jones: 'It is most gratifying to me to learn that the special expertise of this subject possessed by Mr. Chadwick has been recognized by his appointment as Community Development officer for the whole of the Eastern Provinces'.<sup>22</sup> According to one of his colleagues, Chadwick had effectively stumbled across his passion, but once he had done so it was clear he had found his *métier* (Milne, 1999).

He was promoted again from Class 1 to a Staff grade in 1952<sup>23</sup> and was further commended for his work by John Tilney, a Conservative MP, who toured West Africa in 1953 and who wrote to Oliver Lyttleton, the new Secretary of State for the Colonies, saying: 'I was immensely impressed by Chadwick's community self-help in the area south of Enugu. Has he had adequate recognition, and is his work being copied elsewhere through British West Africa?'.<sup>24</sup> However, there is also a countervailing tendency in the archive files, which whilst recognizing the importance of Chadwick's role in explaining the success in Udi also articulated a worry that he might be getting too high a profile, which could actually have a negative effect by implying the successes in Udi were primarily a result of his own abilities, knowledge and personality and not a credit to the strategy itself:

The work at Udi is a great achievement, but we do want to hear of similar activities elsewhere in Nigeria, particularly because we do not want others to explain away Udi as the work of an exceptional man or exceptional people; we want it to be made clear that mass education or community development can catch on amongst all sorts and conditions of men.<sup>25</sup>

Whilst Chadwick would have been unlikely to concede this point at a personal level, it is not far from the logic of his own conclusions about *one* of the criteria for success in community development:

There must also be leadership outside the community, preferably that of the DO in charge of the Division. To be successful in this respect the DO must first win the confidence of the people. Personality, and personal contact are important, and it is worth remembering that this sort of confidence does not depend solely on a reputation for fairness and impartiality, or mere approachability. . . . Moreover for complete success the District Officer must co-ordinate all the forces of his potential supporters, particularly of the African intelligentsia, and the Tribal Unions where they exist. (Chadwick, 1948: 40)<sup>26</sup>

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22. 'Mass education in Nigeria', Arthur Creech-Jones to Sir John Macpherson Governor of Nigeria, 19 August 1949 (UKNA CO 847/42/3).
  23. 'Nigeria Community Development correspondence', minute dated 25 February 1953 (UKNA CO 554/630).
  24. 'Nigeria Community Development correspondence', letter dated 18 February 1953 (UKNA CO 554/630).
  25. 'Mass education in Nigeria', minute dated 13 January 1950 (UKNA CO 847/42/3).
  26. The Tribal Unions were voluntary associations of urban migrants whose members had a shared ethnicity or hometown. They took on a role of advocating the interests of their 'tribe' in dealings with the colonial state and are sometimes seen as precursors of nationalist politics and political parties.

Chadwick regarded community development to have emerged symbiotically from African 'tradition' and from the creation of Native Authorities, and therefore to represent continuity of the process of developing institutions of government. As a result he was adamant that it should be the preserve of the Administration in general, and DOs in particular, rather than a field in which specialist colonial Community Development Officers were deployed. This contradicted the view developed in the 1948 report 'Education for Citizenship', and so Chadwick used *Daybreak* to show why he felt the DO was the right person for the task.

Much of Chadwick's own efforts in the early 1950s were focused on establishing training facilities that would support African leadership for community development. In 1950 he was sent to Kenya and Uganda in order to talk about the work in Udi<sup>27</sup> and later in the same year he attended a course near Eastbourne in the UK (run by the Colonial Education Unit — part of the Institute of Education in the University of London) where he lectured other officials on community development techniques. When he returned to Nigeria he set up a course, based on the one he had just attended, directed towards Africans. This was an initiative that was greatly applauded in London and which led ultimately to the creation of the community development training centres at Awgu and Man O' War Bay.<sup>28</sup> Chadwick remained active until at least May 1959 when he was trying to ensure funding for community development training activities from the Ford Foundation as Nigerian independence approached.<sup>29</sup>

Understanding Chadwick's career matters for the overall argument for four key reasons. It perfectly illustrates the trajectory of a number of officials (and therefore a number of ideas) through the last three decades of colonial rule up to independence and sometimes beyond. This is central to the claim that many colonial policies and institutions continued past independence and into the post-colonial era. Second, it also shows how a particular colonial official's long term influence has to be understood through the coincidences of 'being in the right place at the right time'. Thus, Chadwick's formula emerged because there was little money for rural development and a lot of interest in questions of African citizenship in Eastern Nigeria in the 1940s. By chance, the strategy deployed in Udi then converged with the policy ideas coming from Whitehall so that Chadwick's ideas about how to foster self-help started to receive attention. Third, his ideas and his worldview evolved over three decades of experience in a specific region; his 'socio-spatial imaginary' cannot be understood without following that career. Finally, his

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27. Mentioned in a handwritten note on Community Development Circular No. 4 by A. Dickson (ADO [Buea], 10 October 1950. CNA [Buea] File No Se[1950]2).

28. 'Community Development Nigeria', minute, Mr. Porch dated 4 August 1950 (UKNA CO 843/53/7).

29. D.M. Smith, minute discussing the future of community development in the context of Nigerian Independence dated 27 May 1959 (UKNA CO 554/2117).

career explicitly shows the centrality of the ‘expert outsider’ in models of self-help development.

### The Evolution of the Film

Chadwick not only starred in the film but was clearly integral to the whole project of making it. For Chadwick, *Daybreak in Udi* was the culmination of five years of energetically promoting community development as a policy for the delivery of education, health services and infrastructure in Udi (which he called ‘amenities’ or ‘civilization’). Chadwick must have worked very closely with Montagu Slater because almost all the separate stories that make up the film can be found elsewhere as anecdotes from Chadwick’s own writing. For example, the scene near the start of the film in which he adjudicates over a domestic case around the ownership of a child and the non-repayment of bride price was based on having to resolve an identical case at Awgu when he was Acting Resident.<sup>30</sup> *Daybreak* is really a collage of Chadwick’s interpretations of his experiences over an extended period in Udi presented as an apparently straightforward narrative about one village and its maternity home. If it was Slater’s capacity for story-telling that produced a potentially Oscar-winning film, it was Chadwick who gave him the material to work with. There is a strong impression that Chadwick must have more or less lectured Slater, who had no previous African experience (though he went on to write a book about Kenyatta). Furthermore, the basic story in the film was a version of events that Chadwick had already set down in his writing (Chadwick 1948, 1949b).

Slater and Chadwick were brought together because officials in Lagos explicitly wanted to use the success of community development in Udi to try to goad other communities into similar activities by fostering a spirit of competition between villages and regions (Jackson, 1956). This idea of using the film to stimulate interest in community development in other parts of Nigeria was absolutely central to its justification and form. According to Roseleen Smyth, when the Crown Film Unit first arrived in Lagos in 1948, they consulted government departments about potentially useful subjects and it was through these channels that Slater was directed to Udi (Smyth, 1992: 167). Though Chadwick’s salary continued to be paid by the administration while he worked with the CFU, he was given special dispensation from his administrative duties for some months in order to help with the film.

Slater arrived in Nigeria in February 1948 and by May had produced an elaborate first treatment for the film entitled *The Moving Finger*, a reference to children learning their alphabet by drawing letters in the sand in a Mass Education lesson. Terry Bishop arrived in September 1948, and it is his name which appears on a second (much simpler) version of the script entitled *The*

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30. UKNA INF6/403.

*Udi Experiment*. In the end the story was simplified even further in a third screenplay before shooting began on a script called *Daybreak in Udi*. At each step, whole themes were cut from the story. The process of editing and simplification is important because it shows the careful way in which this film was constructed. *Daybreak* is not a description of a project or place so much as Chadwick's *argument* about a process: how it happens, how it can fail and what role the government takes. It is an argument about the state of relations between African societies and colonial government and an argument about the merits of community development.

Slater's original narrative version of the story (*The Moving Finger*) included not only a long introductory journey up the river carefully taking the viewer beyond the geographical limits of civilization and into the dark forest, but also two sub-plots that were ultimately dropped from the final film, one essentially romantic but designed to enable a sociological discussion about the character of marriage arrangements in Ibo society, the other about an inter-village dispute over a community development water supply. The fact that the opening journey upriver was dropped in the final film probably had more to do with practicality (cost, length of the movie) than with the fact that it was about the stalest cliché in European tales of journeys to the dark heart of Africa. The other two elements that were not included are more interesting.

The story about an inter-village dispute over an improved water supply engages with the theme of community rivalry and was intended to show how such competition can be problematic as well as motivating. The premise of this particular dispute was that one village had provided the community labour to improve their shared water supply while the other village refused to participate. Now the people of the first village resent the fact that everyone is using the improved supply and fights have broken out at the spring. According to the narrative voice in the screenplay: 'At first it seems there is nothing Chadwick can do except berate both sides soundly. He does this anyway, giving everybody a good verbal drubbing — and a verbal drubbing from Chadwick is something to remember . . . There will have to be another solution and we gather Chadwick is feeling his way toward one'.<sup>31</sup>

Chadwick is given the line in the script, 'Such disputes can kill all hope of development',<sup>32</sup> and we can see that the purpose here is to show how the government is expected to overcome such obstacles if community development is to succeed. Ultimately his rather underwhelming solution is to form an 'inter-village development committee' to resolve the conflict, but what this illustrates is Chadwick's real-world dilemma by 1949, namely, how is it possible to scale-up this community development strategy beyond a single village?

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31. *The Moving Finger* (UKNA INF6/403).

32. *Ibid.*

The job of the development committee is to co-ordinate schemes so that they make sense not simply for one town or village but over the area as a whole and having done that they've got to anticipate and prevent disputes, see that people keep their promises, keep up the competitive spirit between town and town in development schemes without letting rivalry degenerate into bad temper.<sup>33</sup>

Within the draft film script, the new committee meets and deliberates, concluding in the end that they've had enough of Mass Literacy classes and deciding instead to collaborate on the project of using self-help to build a shared cinema. Later in the narrative, reflecting on the cause of another inter-village conflict, Chadwick seeks to articulate an explanation of the psychology and motivation behind this inter-village competition, which is the central motor driving colonial community development: 'You talk about development. You talk about civilisation but what you really like is a little old-fashioned blood-letting. Anyway maybe it's just human nature, perhaps that's the real truth of it all, that we can't do anything with human nature whether its African nature or European nature, it always lets you down'.<sup>34</sup>

For all its nod towards universalism, this essentially fatalistic and pessimistic view is presented as the wisdom of an experienced DO, placing Chadwick in a position of irrefutable expert — the judge not just of village development and Ibo society, but of human nature in its entirety. Unleash the forces of competition between communities and you will end up with conflicts that need to be managed by the state. Given that both Slater and Bishop were explicitly left-wing, such an essentially conservative position is unexpected and maybe it was this (along with the inelegance of the speech) that led it to be cut from the final film.

The dropping of the romantic element of the film is interesting in that it removes some of the material that would have made the African characters a bit more complex and less one-dimensional. In the first draft (written by Slater), the central character and narrator was not Chadwick but Dominic Nkala, an educated African returning to his natal village to teach literacy. As Slater writes 'Dominic tells the story but he is also an active participant. He is the "I" and is in some sense therefore the hero as well as the narrator'.<sup>35</sup> In the final film Dominic has lost both his central starring role and his African family name (though he remains an important figure). Ultimately he occupies not the centre but a liminal position, moving between the DO and the African population, acting as both Chadwick's emissary and his translator. This switch hangs on one of the essential ambiguities of community development: it is meant to be a participatory process led from within the community, yet it is also a process which invariably requires steering. The switch from an African hero to a European one did a better job of presenting British colonial policy in a positive light by showing how the colonial officials

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33. *Ibid.*

34. *Ibid.*

35. *Ibid.*

acted as midwives to self-government. At a cruder level this reassertion of the centrality of the DO retreated into established and untroubled colonial hierarchies in which the DO's superiority is unquestioned.

There is no doubt that the third and final version was a better film script to work from in that it was clearer and more coherent given the short length of the film. There is a sense in which Bishop's interest in Ibo society (for example discussions of marriage, inter-village relations) is less nuanced than either Slater's or Chadwick's. At the same time it was the film-maker (Bishop, 1949) who was clearly impressed by the visual impact of Ibo culture, particularly in relation to dance: 'It is impossible to describe the impression of latent, hardly tapped power which these demonstrations give . . . the whole spirit of the village seems to find expression in an elevated display of strength and *élan*; to be seen and heard to be believed'.<sup>36</sup> The film contains an extended dance sequence towards the end, which it would be too easy to dismiss as simply a typical European exercise in exoticism. Rather, there is a sincere sense of recognition of the beauty, power and significance of dance in Ibo society. So, whilst the main conclusion here is that the film owes most of its ideas to Chadwick, both Slater and Bishop also had a significant impact on its final form despite their lack of knowledge about Africa or about development.

### Actors and Voice

*Daybreak in Udi* captures the key categories of people that theorists of community development like Chadwick used to understand rural African society. The film provides the five key categories of 'actor' in the mind of colonial community development: the external expert; the modern, educated, westernized, local Africans acting as interlocutors between two cultures; the traditional leaders; the backward African troublemaker who is an obstacle to progress; and the pliable, persuadable, excitable, willing, hard-working and, ultimately, rational African masses, including the women. The scenes in which a small group of modern Africans in European dress engage in a logical discussion 'man to man' with their colonial colleague stand in stark contrast to the scenes of frenzied activity when the village Africans fill the screen, presented like a crowd of ants: stirring up a cloud of dust with their mass labours, at once coordinated but anarchic, their latent energy harnessed and contained for the goal of self-help.

In the film, Chadwick directs development at one remove via the community leaders with a combination of paternal encouragement, occasional stern admonition and material help (at least when the villagers have made a visible commitment to progress). He is patronizing, with all the ambiguities that implies. On the one hand he clearly adopts a position above the

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36. Narrative comment in the draft of *The Udi Experiment* by Terry Bishop (UKNA INF6/403).

Africans he is working with, on the other he clearly genuinely cares for them — like a father should. As the local representative and embodiment of the colonial Nigerian Government, he is also a patron in the sense that he is the provider of good things: he supplies cement, a corrugated iron roof and a trained African midwife as a reward to Umana. Ultimately, the community is inspired by their success to undertake further development efforts as a new spirit of cooperation has been born, and they are prompted by their neighbours into action through competition.

In addition to Chadwick (the lone European, embodying the institutions of the state) there are five named non-professional African actors: Harford Anerobi (Dominic), J.B. ‘Fanny’ Elumeze (Iruka), Ement Emehel (James), Joseph Amalu BEM (Eze) and Joyce Mgabaronye (the Midwife). Some of them were recruited through the Catholic mission, for example Joyce Mgabaronye, who was a mission school teacher and Fanny Elumeze, who came from Enugu (who was paid GB£ 100 plus expenses and transport costs for the three months’ work on the film).<sup>37</sup> Of these, it has been possible to find out a little more about Joseph Amalu, who seemingly needed some persuasion to participate. Amalu, whom the *Catholic Herald* described as ‘a very forward thinking African . . . who has done great pioneer work in Udi’,<sup>38</sup> was reported as particularly reluctant to take on the role of Eze, the villain in the film. He was listed as having been awarded his British Empire Medal in January 1949<sup>39</sup> and was a member of Abaja Native Administration and Owa Native Court. He was also mentioned by Chadwick in person (1949b) as a key early supporter of community development. In other accounts of the history of community development in Udi, Chadwick traces the origins of the movement very specifically to July 1943 to Ogowofia village, where Joseph Amalu was the driving force (Chadwick, 1948).

The hundreds of anonymous Africans who play the role of the ‘community’ are also credited in the film (though generically) as ‘the villagers of Umana, Amansiodo and Mgabagbu Owa’. A contract survives, which is signed by Chadwick, Bishop and representatives of the three villages. It shows that in exchange for performing the role of villagers in the film, they were supplied with the money to pay for the building that was constructed in the film and which became a working maternity home after the film was completed. Such a move seems to run quite counter to Chadwick’s frequently expressed view that only when communities paid for their own projects was the goal of self-help really delivered. It does, however, capture a sense of

37. Contract dated 6 December 1948 (UKNA INF6/403).

38. ‘A neat twist to the story is given in that the “villain of the piece”, who tries to wreck the maternity home, is in real life a very forward thinking African, Joseph Amalu, B.E.M., who has done great pioneer work in Udi. He was only persuaded to play the part of the devil-mask man who tried to frighten away the young midwife, with difficulty’ (*Catholic Herald*, 1949).

39. *London Gazette* Honours List of 1 January 1949.

his wily opportunism and desire to access resources for the district and its villagers.

Apart from Chadwick's lines, the film is entirely dubbed and the soundtrack was produced at CFU in Beaconsfield in the UK with black actors recruited in London (Edric Connor, Pauline Henriques, Doreen Renner, Harry Quashie) to speak the African roles. The accents they use are rarely appropriate for the Ibo characters they are giving voice to. Several of these actors were relatively high profile, though as sound artists from central casting they never received a credit in the film, and we only know of their participation through archive copies of their original contracts.<sup>40</sup> So the film shows African actors whose voices we never hear, whilst we hear voices on the soundtrack of black actors whose names we are never told.

It would be all too easy to make a glib claim about 'voice' and the irony that in a film about Africans participating in development, they are unable to 'speak' — but that is too simple. Some Africans are given a voice by the film script, albeit speaking lines that clearly emerge from a set of ideas over which they have no authorship even as it is being claimed in the film that they are the authors of these ideas. They are given a very specific voice within a specific set of parameters — speech is permitted, with all that that implies about the structures that give permission. There are professional black actors voicing amateur African actors speaking lines written by a British poet who is himself channelling a senior British colonial official who has thought deeply about the development strategy he is following, but is not so conscious of the way he is imagining the world he is looking at. The idea of Africans acting out a specific European script can just as well be applied to many of the utterances of twenty-first century participatory development, where a certain set of terms and ideas provides a narrow vocabulary and defines a limited range of possibilities, whilst simultaneously claiming that the authorship of words and ideas has been divested.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The main aim of this article was to use the analysis of *Daybreak in Udi* to reveal Chadwick's ideas and worldview in order to better understand

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40. Pauline Henriques (born Jamaica 1914) was the first black actress to appear on British television when she appeared in Eugene O'Neill's *All God's Chillun' Got Wings* in 1946. Soon afterwards she tired of her bit-parts and switched to social work under her married name Pauline Crabbe. In 1966 she became Britain's first black woman magistrate and in 1969 she was awarded an OBE. Quashie was born in Ghana in 1914 and appeared in a number of films in the 1950s of which the most well-known was *Simba* (starring Dirk Bogarde and Donald Sinden) in 1955. Edric Connor (1913–68) had an acting career in Hollywood and London but was better known as a calypso singer (famous for the Manchester United Calypso). Connor had multiple film and TV roles including co-starring with Rita Hayworth, Robert Mitchum and Jack Lemmon in the 1957 film *Fire Down Below*. He founded an important agency for black actors in 1956.

the practices and legacies of colonial community development in Eastern Nigeria. The 'recipe' for community development that emerges entailed voluntary African labour using local materials and funding with limited external technical and material support to construct a range of social and economic development projects. A community was engaged through a series of public meetings in which a variety of leaders (both modern and traditional) are involved in identifying and organizing those projects and persuading the wider community of the project's merits and the community's obligations. At the outset, small-scale easy projects were advocated in order to ensure success. Formal celebrations at project completion were an essential part of the psychology as they were a celebration of success. In the background a spirit of competition between communities is fostered in order to provide the motivation to spur communities into further action. The strategy was as much about the minds of potential 'citizens' as it was about the building projects concerned because community development was a school for leadership and self-government. These projects were backed up by written circulars filled with tips and technical ideas for the external experts whose job was to enable community development, and formal technical and leadership training schools were established for members of communities who were picked out as potential leaders. Self-help was identified as morally superior to government aid.

Chadwick's efforts as an individual official between 1943 and 1960 were key to establishing this formula in the region where he worked. However, he was only able to have such a profound influence because his ideas were closely aligned with those emerging from the Colonial Office, and because in the context of very limited resources there were few alternative strategies for rural development being offered. In addition he successfully asserted the idea that these 'new' development techniques were actually an evolution of older African ideas of cooperation, which was an important element of garnering African support. This form of development, which relied on voluntary labour and mass participation, could not work without African support and consent. So whilst the article has put Chadwick at its centre and argued for his significance as a figure in this history, it is important to place his achievements in a wider context. What started as a hobby became a passion and a career. There is something haphazard about the way he stumbled across this approach and then about the way it became institutionalized, which can only partially be accounted for by his zeal.

### **The Socio-geographical Imaginary of Late Colonial Community Development**

The article has also argued that there is an important distinction to be made between the conscious 'recipe' for delivering community development, on which Chadwick reflected extensively, and the taken-for-granted 'imaginary' which underpins it. This unconscious worldview is articulated through

relations between the specific social and spatial categories that Chadwick uses when he imagines an African community. The long legacy of colonial community development is as much about this way of imagining African rural society as it is about a set of strategies for organizing development practice. Absolutely central to this is a way of imagining relations between technical experts, government officials, 'modern' educated Africans, 'traditional' African elites and the African masses. But there are other aspects to this imaginary too; for example, a sense of rural Africa as a space where 'tradition' and 'custom' still cohere and where a mosaic of separate but bounded 'communities' sit side by side. Such communities relate to one another primarily through the language of competition.

Chadwick imagined a world in which Ibo society was comprehensible. Partly this was because, in this vision, Ibos were human beings like any others anywhere else in the world. Like all humans their behaviour was governed by base biology and psychology. In this sense, the geographical 'othering' that is so central to most accounts of imperial imaginaries slips away here. (Within the film, however, this universalism is often lost to the aesthetic needs of the director to revel in the alluring possibilities of the exotic.) But comprehending the Ibo takes on a more sinister epistemological quality too. This knowledge of the Ibo is authorized in this imaginary from the experience of managing Africans over decades. Chadwick's sense was that only the colonial handover notes between District Officers who stayed *in situ* over time could 'fix' this knowledge and that such knowledge was a vital precursor to steering community development efforts in positive directions. This sense of knowing the communities you worked with is closely linked to a rigid, bounded, localized, timeless sense of what these rural Africans were 'like'. Chadwick speaks with confidence about knowing precisely what would happen with any project because he claimed to know the people involved and their interests. Such claims to 'know' are central to an act of racist colonial appropriation, albeit one based in Chadwick's case on a stated sense of admiration for the Ibo and Ibo society — including his repeated claim that the cooperative sentiment which underpinned community development was a pre-colonial feature of 'traditional' Ibo culture. Community development, he argued, was about re-awakening that old tradition that he so admired. It was precisely this imaginary that fuelled Chinua Achebe's desire to use his novels to show 'that the white man did not wake the black man from a deep slumber' (Akpuda, 2014).

Chadwick also imagined a world in which the relationship between the subject (the colonial administration) and the object (African rural communities) was mediated by modern Africans. It is hard to over-emphasize the significance of the role of these Janus-faced community leaders in Chadwick's vision. Wise to the protocols of both the colonial administration and also of the communities they were part of, these were the people on whom the claim that this was self-help really rested. It is only by becoming quasi-Europeans that Africans can take on a progressive leadership role. One of

the unknowns of the analysis of this film is how the central figure in the narrative slipped from being Dominic (the African) in the early scripts, to Chadwick (the European) in the final film. Was it felt to be a necessity for the geopolitical aspects of the film? Or was it to elicit empathy amongst the Western viewing public? In any case there is little doubt about the important role ascribed to the category 'modern Africans', so much so that Chadwick spent most of the 1950s trying to find ways to create, train and empower them.

Ultimately this socio-geographical imaginary reveals a series of contradictions in community development thinking in relation to issues of race and agency. Rural Africans were competent and hard-working but, like children, they were biddable and easily misled by reactionary elements, particularly when 'tradition' was invoked or 'land' threatened. Some were capable of stepping up to the role of modernizing leaders or becoming agents, but it wasn't clear what it was about these individuals that set them apart from their fellows. Nor was it clear that they could be trusted to lead, without themselves being led by the hand by a European who would keep them on the right path.

### **The Historical Legacy in Nigeria and Cameroon**

The precise historical project of exploring the colonial legacy to contemporary participatory development remains incomplete and there is only limited space here to start sketching out what happened next in Nigeria and Cameroon. The colonial legacy of tripartite ethno-nationalist sentiment was the principal feature of post-colonial politics in Nigeria's First Republic, so much so that ten years after Chadwick had left the Eastern Provinces they were engulfed in civil war. The conflict must have eradicated many of the material structures of colonial community development, but the ideas survived and by the 1980s the practices of community participation in rural development projects were once more at the centre of discussions (Adejunmobi, 1990; Allen, 1981; Hay et al., 1990; Jones, 1983; Kolawole, 1982; Madu and Umehali, 1993; Muoghalu, 1986; Vaughan, 1995). In addition the explicit memory of the community development training schools at Awgu and Man O' War Bay lives on in Nigeria through the Man O' War uniformed youth organization and through the Citizenship and Leadership Training Centre (a parastatal under the Federal Ministry of Youth Development), which trace their roots directly to the centres established by Chadwick (and Alec Dickson). The CLTC claims to have trained more than seven million Nigerians 'from all walks of life' using the Outward Bound techniques pioneered in the early 1950s as part of colonial community development leadership training. The centre still operates from Awgu alongside five other sites chosen as challenging physical environments.<sup>41</sup>

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41. See <http://cltcnigeria.org/> and <http://manowar.com.ng/>

In Cameroon, however, the history was quite different. Here there is a formal Community Development Department, a unit within the Ministry of Agriculture, still using a strategy that is very close to that originally expounded in the 1940s. In some fields (such as the construction of self-help rural water supply in Cameroon), this continuity was a consequence of a shared vision between African politicians and civil servants and new foreign civil society actors (the Swiss Association of Technical Assistance) who took the template provided by colonial community development as efficient, effective and morally right (Helvetas, 1989). Hundreds of villages in the Northwest and Southwest Regions have used this model to organize their development (Helvetas, 1989; Kwo, 1984, 1986). Formal community development training also continues unbroken. This took place first at Man O' War Bay, then at the Community Development and Specialization Training School (CDSTS) in Kumba, which recently graduated its twenty-ninth year of Community Development Technicians. Much of what happens today in the name of community development in Cameroon would be recognized by Chadwick.

### **The Broader History of Community Development**

How does development studies write its own history? This article has drawn attention to the long history of community development in Nigeria, which is often neglected or ignored by development studies (c.f. Adesoji, 2008; Gofwen, 1999; Omolewa, 2008). It is worth returning to Chadwick's work and ideas because so many contemporary development initiatives and published analyses appear to treat 'community participation' as innovative yet, as *Daybreak in Udi* shows, this is a strategy that external institutions have deployed in West Africa for seventy years. The contradictions and ambiguities as well as the merits of participatory development were as present in the mid-twentieth century as they are in the twenty-first century (Mosse, 1994). This is not an original point, but given the ongoing blindness to the history of community development in development studies, it is one that merits repeating.

Perhaps there is some discomfort entailed in remembering the colonial period in an apparently positive light, but making the connection between colonial policy and participatory development is not necessarily an attempt to defend the British Empire. Just because participatory development is generally considered a 'good thing', it doesn't mean that imperialism can be defended because it named, institutionalized and codified it. Today, self-help strategies are often considered not only to be more *effective* in the long-term, but also more *democratic* than orthodox, large-scale top-down development planning, especially among rural communities. They are considered more democratic because of the active role played by project beneficiaries in the selection, planning, implementation, ownership and maintenance of

development initiatives. Self-help is now widely accepted as an important and empowering form of development practice in both rural and urban areas across Africa and other regions of the global South (Hickey and Kothari, 2008; Mohan, 2008). But it is vital to remember that colonial community development was a tiny element of a vast imperial enterprise. Even if the British Empire was the origin of formal participatory development, and even if that approach were flawless (which it is not), it would not redeem the centuries of inhumane exploitation that were at the centre of the imperial project.

Assessments of British policies in West Africa during the late colonial period tend to be unhelpfully digital. Either they condemn an imperial brew of racism, exploitation, self-interest, under-investment and over-rapid retreat, or they present an apologia based on the belated realization in Britain of obligations to African subjects, the merits for Africa of integration into world markets, and the heroic efforts of individual colonial officers. The reality is both more complicated and more awkward. The example of colonial community development in the 1940s and 1950s is a case in point. On the one hand it speaks to the genuine belief of a few colonial officials in African agency, autonomy, values, history, competence, capacity and empowerment. On the other hand it maintains racial hierarchies, draws attention away from the failure of the colonial state to develop infrastructure and perpetuates a Eurocentric development teleology. It left European colonial officials as the authorities on African development, even as they simultaneously tried to distance themselves from it. In addition, for all of its paternal optimism, colonial Community Development was basically firmly embedded in fiscal miserliness and imperial geopolitics.

A final reason for retracing this particular historical episode is that it can contribute to the literature trying to question the way 'neoliberalism' is often used to explain everything — including the rise of participatory development. There is a convincing argument in circulation that since the 1980s, participation has played an important enabling role in the shrinking of the state, and that as a strategy it speaks to an individualistic ideology of self-help (Mayo and Craig, 1995). It is undoubtedly the case that participatory development articulates with many of the policies grouped under the banner of neoliberalism by providing basic rural facilities as the state withdraws. In the absence of government facilities (and staff), low-standard basic technology services delivered to rural areas via self-help community development have come to the rescue. However, given its seventy-year history in West Africa, it is clear that community development is not an explicit response to the current episode of neoliberalism, which is usually thought to have begun in the late 1970s. Participatory development may articulate well with neoliberalism, but it was not created by it.

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