



The 4th Annual International Igbo Conference

Theme: *Igbo Womanhood, Womanbeing and Personhood*

SOAS, University of London

April 17-18, 2015

Igbo womanhood has been central in the conceptualisation of several African feminist theories. African *Womanism* is influenced by ‘the Igbo concept of *Odozi ani*, the “rehabilitator”: the person who wants to make amends to ensure that the country supports its people from an environmental, ethical, and judicial viewpoint’. *Nego-feminism* or a ‘negotiated feminism’ is inspired by the Igbo/African woman’s experience as it is argued that ‘the theology of nearness grounded in the indigenous installs feminism in Africa as a performance and an altruistic act. African women do feminism; feminism is what they do for themselves and for others.’ In this sense Igbo womanhood which has developed within the milieu of Igbo tradition and culture, has been important in the exploration of African women’s experiences, located within local and global discourses.

One Igbo scholar pronounced that ‘several concepts among the Igbo are identified with woman, for instance, freedom, stability, morality and justice’, yet suggests that there is an inherent paradox of womanbeing. This paradox, it is argued, centres on the differing treatment of wives and mothers by their male counterparts in which mothers are extolled whilst wives are not. Scholars have documented the economic empowerment of Igbo women in pre-colonial and colonial Nigeria, in part facilitated by flexible gender systems within Igbo culture.

This conference seeks to create a platform through which to engage with various conceptions of Igbo womanhood, vis-à-vis the changing position of Igbo women and the changing practises in Igbo culture. It seeks to explore Igbo traditions in relation to the role and status of women and examine the numerous social and political contributions made by Igbo women.

This conference invites papers that examine a variety of aspects of Igbo womanhood which include, but are not limited to:

- Igbo Women’s Writing
- Ritual and Female Participation
- *Ogu umunwanyi* or The Igbo Women’s War of 1929
- Igbo Womanbeing and Personhood
- Mammy Water, Female Deities and Masquerades
- ‘Male Daughters’ and ‘Female Husbands’
- Women and Igbo Cosmology
- Male and Female Principles
- Igbo Women and the Ancestors
- Gendered Spaces

- Igbo Women's Titles
- Widow Practices
- Igbo Women in the Arts and Sciences
- Representations and Participation of Igbo Women in Nollywood
- Historicising the Changing Position of Igbo Women
- Igbo Women and the Family; Umuada (Lineage Daughters) and Nwunye (Lineage Wives)
- The Politics of Inheritance
- Igbo Women's Aesthetics
- Motherhood vis-à-vis Womanhood
- Igbo Women in the Diaspora
- Political Participation of Women in the Pre-colonial, Colonial and Post-independence Eras
- Igbo Women in Digital Spaces
- Feminism, Womanism and the Igbo World

Please email abstracts of up to 200 words including the paper title, your name (first name followed by surname), current position, institutional affiliation, email address, mailing address and phone number to Dr Louisa Uchum Egbunike: le7@soas.ac.uk no later than **16th January 2015**.

Please send abstracts in an attached word file, and please **do not use all capital letters** when writing. Participants are welcome to present in English or Igbo, but if presenting in Igbo please provide an English Language translation of your paper. Participants who require a British visa are encouraged to submit their abstract as soon as possible.

Participants are responsible for sourcing their own funding for travel, accommodation and conference fees. For information on the Igbo Conference, please visit www.igboconference.com and www.soas.ac.uk/cas/events/conferences/igbo-conference