

Study Summary

Amon Ashaba Mwiine's PhD Study entitled "*Promoters of Gender Equality? A Study of the Social Construction of Specific Male Parliamentarians as 'Male Champions' in Uganda*", engages with the phenomenon of male politicians who speak to gender equity issues in parliament in Uganda. What is particularly interesting about this is that these politicians are selected by women gender activists to speak on behalf of them in a parliamentary context in which men are taken more seriously than women. In the popular media and in some of the sociological literature, these men are often referred to as 'male champions', as if to express gratitude to and celebrate as unexpected, the significant role these men are seen to play in promoting gender equality. In contrast, my research - which draws on ethnographic observation of parliamentary debates and interview conversations - raises questions about whether gender equality is promoted through the mediation of particular men or whether their idealisation as champions actually serves to institutionalise gender inequalities. Informed by critical masculinity studies, post structuralist and African feminisms, the study engages with parliament, itself, as an important ethnographic site in which gender inequalities are produced through everyday social practices and gendered performances in which women parliamentarians are undermined and infantilised. Study findings further demonstrate how the women who participated in interviews in my study (as well as some men) critiqued discourses that celebrated men as 'champions' in ways that erased women's agency and the role they play in promoting gender equality in legislative debates.