Abstract
Attitudes about gender are important for understanding political attitudes, especially in areas of social policies such as abortion, legal rights for sexual and gender minorities, etc., and because of the political influence of social policies in the United States since the 1970s. In particular, legislation of access to abortion has had a strong influence on American politics during this time period. Some have suggested that attitudes about gender are linked with attitudes about abortion. In one example, interviews with abortion activists suggest that attitudes about gender essentialism should be especially important to attitudes about abortion, but no previous work has examined how widespread this relationship may be outside of the activist community.

In this project, I use a representative data set to assess the relationship between agreement with gender essentialism and agreement with support for legal abortion. I hypothesize that agreement with the idea that men and women are different and that these differences are due to biology—a concept I call “biological gender essentialism”—will be especially linked to views on abortion. I find that among men, there is a relationship with between agreement with biological gender essentialism and lower support for legal abortion, but not among women. These findings have implications for understanding the important relationship between gender ideologies and political issues in the US.