

Biological gender essentialism is a belief that differences between men and women are primarily of a biological origin and thus they are stable and immutable. Belief in stability and immutability of gender differences may be related to stereotypical vision of men and women. Indeed, there is some evidence, both correlational and experimental, for the link between gender essentialism and various gender-related stereotypes and prejudices - including lack of support for women's and transgender people's rights and reluctance toward people who do not fit the traditional gender roles.

In my previous studies I demonstrated the link between gender essentialism and rape myth acceptance as well as disbelief toward women who report their experience of an acquaintance rape. In the proposed research project I intend to check whether biological gender essentialism predicts not only beliefs and attitudes, but also behavior. Thus I am going to use different versions of a computer chat paradigm. In a study based on this paradigm the participant is told to talk for a while with an unknown person (in fact, with an artificial intelligence bot).

I want to check whether exposure to information about the origin of gender differences (in one group presented as immutable and primarily of a biological origin, in the other- as resulting from a complex interaction between biology and environment) predicts:

- (1) sending unwanted sexual content to another person (Study 1 and 2)
- (2) rape victim blaming (Study 3)
- (3) reaction against rape (Study 4)
- (4) different forms of collective action in favor of the survivors of sexual violence (Study 5 and 6)

The project will allow for better understanding of the phenomenon of biological gender essentialism and its influence on human behavior. Essentialism occurs not only in the context of gender differences but also other differences between people, e.g. in terms of sexual orientation or ethnic background. Thus the results of my studies may be an inspiration for further research concerning the link between essentialism and various kinds of social behavior, like discrimination or hate speech. The project can be considered a contribution to basic research, nonetheless, the results of the studies may be an inspiration for violence prevention specialists- it may provide them with clues on how to talk about gender differences.