

# AGE OF EMPOWERMENT: A FEMINIST DISCOURSE SUPPORTING TRADITIONAL WIVES

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*This essay seeks to explore the complex historical relationship between conservative women and feminism, examining the religious influences that shape the worldview of trad wives, and synthesizing recent research to elucidate the motivations behind the rise of traditional wives and the feminist discourse surrounding this phenomenon. By delving into these intricacies, I aim to foster a deeper understanding of the evolving landscape of gender politics and cultural ideologies in contemporary society.*

## Introduction

The emergence of a faction known as "trad wives," a contraction of "traditional housewives," has caused a significant stir on social media, highlighting the convergence of conventional gender roles, American Christian values, and anti-feminist rhetoric. Alena Petitt, who proudly identifies as a housewife, has defined the role as one of "submitting to and spoiling her husband like it's 1959." Moreover, she underscores the significance of etiquette—a subtle reference to her area of expertise—by emphasizing the importance of "traditional English manners, lifestyle, and values" (Hunt, 2020).

While not all women adhere to identical notions and semantic definitions of what it means to be a trad wife, the underlying

belief in Christian values generally remains prevalent among women in this category. The Global Network on Extremism and Technology conducted a ten-month study on thirty-six women who self-identified as trad wives, revealing that "these women use ideological radicalization, social media influencing, and a sophisticated understanding of social media platforms to commodify right-wing ideology" (Sykes & Hopner, 2023). To clarify, right-wing ideology aligns with conservative views on aspects such as supporting free markets and limited government, rugged individualism, traditionalism, opposition to LGBTQIA+ rights, progressivism, reproductive autonomy, and feminism.

Centering on traditionalism, this paper will delve into the specific intersection and relationship between trad wives and feminists. As Gloria Steinem, founder of

*Ms. Magazine* and a leader of second-wave feminism, articulates, "Feminism is simultaneously a struggle for women's lives and bodies and a struggle against the authoritarian mindset" (McGhee & Ikebe, 2011). In the context of trad wives, the liberatory core of the feminist movement aims to advocate for the right and ability of all women to have autonomy and the choice to live their lives as they see fit. This inherently underscores feminist support for women choosing to become housewives if that is their preference.

Nevertheless, trad wives, situated at the intersection of Christian traditional values and opposition to feminism, embody a foundational principle of rejecting feminism. Often, these women perceive feminism as pitting femininity against feminism, eradicating men from the family structure, posing a threat to Christian religious values, and undermining the familial structure, along with various detrimental and crude stereotypes such as the imagery of burning bras (Proctor, 2022). This mindset can be traced back to the radicalization of the term "feminism" in many Christian denominations, distorting the concept of women's liberation to appear anti-theological, anti-Christian, and anti-Biblical. As a result, a prevailing norm has emerged within this group of women, opposing feminism on the grounds that it is considered un-Biblical and not aligned with their view of femininity.

Clearly, the principles of feminism provide numerous inherent reasons why those identifying as feminists should support trad wives: feminism advocates for women's autonomy. Within the framework of feminism, women's autonomy is

considered an inviolable right that is consistently fought for. Examining the emergence of trad wives contributes significantly not only to the feminist discourse but also to the evolving conversation about women in religion. A literature review will encompass the established benchmarks in this field, followed by a research methods section leading to the synthesis of this paper in the discussion and conclusion sections.

### **Literature Review of Christian Nationalism**

To comprehend the underlying risks associated with "trad wives" and Christian ideologies, it is crucial to grasp the foundation of Christian Nationalism. Amanda Tyler, representing the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty, a religious organization dedicated to upholding the separation of church and state in support of religious liberty, succinctly encapsulates the essence of Christian Nationalism:

At its core, this idea threatens the principle of the separation of church and state and undermines the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. It also leads to discrimination, and at times violence, against religious minorities and the nonreligious. Christian nationalism is also a contributing ideology in the religious right's misuse of religious liberty as a rationale for circumventing laws and regulations aimed at protecting a pluralistic democracy, such as nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQI+ people, women, and religious minorities (Graves-Fitzsimmons & Siddiqi, 2022).

Christian nationalism has roots that extend far beyond recent hashtags, with documented cultural shifts reflecting its influence over decades. What is notably new, however, is the widespread dissemination of Christian nationalist ideas through channels such as email, social media, television, news networks, and various platforms designed for the rapid exchange of information. Beyond mainstream platforms like X, Instagram, and Facebook, individuals often leaning towards extremism converge virtually on platforms such as Gab, Natural News, Brighteon, and CloutHub, which “out themselves as havens of free speech on an Internet that has begun (belatedly, according to some) to police conspiracy theorists, armed right-wing groups, white supremacists and Christian nationalists” (Jenkins, 2021).

Moreover, fifty percent of Americans believe that the United States should be declared a Christian nation, with thirty-nine percent advocating for U.S. laws to be rooted in Christian values. Among all Americans, twenty-nine percent identify as Christian nationalists or sympathize with the ideology (Public Religion Research Institute, 2023). This reveals the substantial dangers associated with this detrimental ideology and its potential to shield individuals from embracing alternative perspectives. In presenting a counter argument, it becomes imperative to explore the impact of Christian nationalism online, examining factors such as the reach of its influence, connections to extremist groups, search frequency, and the prevalence of disinformation in search results.

Previous research on understanding the connection between the Christian rejection of feminism and Christian nationalism is crucial for grasping the inherent risks associated with certain ideologies within the Christian community. This research provides comprehensive insights into Christian nationalism, highlighting its roots, impact, and widespread dissemination across various channels. The essence of Christian nationalism, as articulated earlier by Amanda Tyler from the Baptist Joint Committee, is not a mere abstract concept but poses tangible threats to the separation of church and state. It fosters discrimination, violence, and the misuse of religious liberty to circumvent laws intended to safeguard a pluralistic democracy. The revelation that fifty percent of Americans consider the United States a Christian nation, with a significant portion advocating for laws rooted in Christian values, underscores the substantial dangers associated with this ideology.

Furthermore, the above writing accentuates the contemporary dimension of Christian nationalism, emphasizing its online presence and influence on platforms that often attract individuals leaning toward extremism. Given that a sizable percentage of Americans identify with or sympathize with Christian nationalist views, the paragraphs underscore the urgency of exploring the impact of this ideology, particularly in the online realm, where it may shield individuals from embracing alternative perspectives and perpetuate disinformation. In essence, studying the connection between Christian nationalism and the rejection of feminism unveils

critical insights into the socio-political landscape, contributing to discussions on religious influence, extremism, and the preservation of democratic values. My research builds off this framework.

### **Rejection of Feminism by Christian Women**

Christian women who reject feminism often do so due to a complex interplay of factors deeply embedded in their religious beliefs. Hawkgrrrl's 2017 blog post on Wheat and Tares, a website name inspired by religious roots, touches upon various dimensions of concern. One significant aspect is the apprehension about religious extremism, where certain extreme interpretations or practices within the faith may deter women from identifying with feminist ideals. The patriarchal roots and context of the Bible also contribute to this rejection, as traditional interpretations may reinforce gender roles that align with a more conservative worldview. Furthermore, hawkgrrrl's blog post highlights the presence of individuals who actively benefit from maintaining the inferiority and subjugation of women. These individuals may exploit certain interpretations of scripture to justify and perpetuate gender inequalities. Such manipulation of religious teachings can instill apprehension among Christian women, creating a reluctance to embrace feminist principles.

There is also a perceived risk associated with deviating from traditionalism towards women's autonomy and liberation. The fear of eroding a traditional family structure and disrupting other Christian norms adds

another layer to the hesitancy toward feminism. The comfort derived from adhering to familiar and established practices within the faith becomes a significant factor in resisting change.

Wilcox's (1989) article titled "Feminism and Anti-Feminism Among Evangelical Women" delves into the divergence of thought and practice present in biblical interpretations. While the Bible contains passages that can be construed to support both feminist and anti-feminist readings, the prevalence of anti-feminist interpretations within evangelical preaching is emphasized. The research suggests that biblical teachings form a foundational framework for some evangelical women's political attitudes. Consequently, these teachings may act as constraints, preventing them from adopting certain feminist positions due to their commitment to a particular scriptural interpretation. The intricate interplay of religious, social, and political factors underscores the complexity of the relationship between Christian women and feminism within the context of their faith.

Expanding on the reasons why Christian women might reject feminism, it is essential to explore the intricate interplay of religious, social, and political factors that shape their perspectives. The academic insights provided by Wilcox (1989) shed light on the dichotomy inherent in biblical interpretations. The Bible, as a foundational text, presents passages that can be interpreted to support both feminist and anti-feminist readings. However, the prevalence of anti-feminist interpretations within evangelical preaching becomes a notable focal point in understanding the

divergence.

The research underscores how evangelical women influenced by their religious community often find themselves exposed to anti-feminist narratives that become ingrained in their belief system. The commitment to a particular scriptural interpretation acts as a significant constraint, shaping their political attitudes and guiding their rejection of certain feminist positions. In essence, the teachings derived from biblical scriptures form a fundamental framework that informs the worldview of these women, influencing their stance on gender-related issues.

A pertinent and compelling example is a widely viewed TikTok video by content creator Lily Kate, who has a follower count of nearly 50,000 and is accumulating over 1.6 million likes. Posted on December 12, 2023, the video has garnered almost 4 million views, 7,319 shares, more than 23,000 saves, and over 250,000 likes. In the video, Lily Kate declares, "I'm not a feminist," before offering a series of statements such as, "I can see men and I don't immediately feel threatened," "Of course I can wear dresses and feel pretty," "I don't hate children," and "I can actually cook" (Kate, 2023). Although not explicitly identifying as a trad wife, a deeper exploration of Lily Kate's social media profiles reveals her alignment with Christian, pro-life, anti-feminist, and conservative ideologies, solidifying the link between her views and anti-feminism.

This case is significant as it exemplifies another instance of Christian women rejecting feminism. Lily Kate not only

disseminates misinformation but also perpetuates misconceptions about feminism. It is worth noting that feminism affords her the freedom to appear on talk shows, practice her religion, hold her beliefs, and dress as she pleases in public. The dissemination of such misinformation not only distorts the true essence of feminism but also harms women's perception of it.

The detrimental effects of misinformation about feminism and women are evident. Lily Kate's example is emblematic of this harm. Christian women often maintain a complex relationship with feminism, rejecting it on grounds of perceived biblical, traditional, and moral conflicts. As illustrated earlier, their rejection stems from viewing feminism as incompatible with their beliefs and values. This dynamic relationship between Christian women and feminism within the context of their faith is further nuanced by the societal and political landscape. The complexity arises as these women navigate the intersections of their religious beliefs, societal expectations, and political ideologies. By highlighting the multifaceted nature of these influences, Wilcox (1989) emphasizes the need for a comprehensive understanding of the factors contributing to the rejection of feminism among some Christian women.

In the broader scope of my paper, this research sets a foundational understanding of the framework, moral considerations, and the fundamental nature of Christian women who reject feminism. It not only explores the reasons behind their stance but also emphasizes the need for a comprehensive examination of these factors. By doing so, this research

contributes to a more nuanced and informed discussion about the complexities surrounding the rejection of feminism within certain Christian communities, providing valuable insights for further academic inquiry and societal dialogue. While there is still more research needed in spheres such as politics, voting blocks, trends in age behavior, and beyond, my study specifically focuses on the relationship between feminists and trad wives through the medium of TikTok.

### **Trad Wives on Social Media and Their Impact**

The presence of traditional wives and conservative Christian influencers holds significant weight. The search term "Conservative Christian Women" garners upwards of 25 million views, while "Trad wife" boasts over 73 million views, accompanied by more than 19,000 posts. The hashtag #tradwives collects over 50 million views and includes 1,486 videos. Similarly, #conservativewomen boasts over 41,000 posts, and #christianwomen has over 70,000 posts.

One self-proclaimed trad wife, Estee Williams, has over 178,000 followers and a total of over 1 million likes. Estee features a pinned video on her TikTok page captioned "What is Tradwife" (2022). This video alone has garnered 1.5 million views and has been shared over 3,000 times. Estee's TikTok content delves into conservative beliefs with titles such as "For better, for worse. NOT divorce," "How to be a Traditional Wife part 1," "Tips to Attract a Masculine Man," "Biblically Submissive Wives," "Independence doesn't equal

fulfillment," and "The Trad wife Movement". Notably, "The Trad wife Movement" (2022) video has amassed over 117,000 views and 380 shares. "Independence doesn't equal fulfillment" (2023c) has over 120,000 views, 331 shares, and 780 saves. "Tips to Attract a Masculine Man" (2023d) boasts over 147,000 views, 347 shares, and 983 saves. "Biblically Submissive Wives" (2024) has accrued over 342,000 views, 152 shares, and 1,123 saves. Lastly, "How to be a Traditional Wife part 1" (2023a) has soared to over 1.3 million views, 6,216 shares, and 8,553 saves. Evidently, the reach of influence of just one trad wife influencer is extensive.

As another example, a woman with the profile name Gwen The Milkmaid boasts over 66,000 followers and a total of 1.5 million likes (n.d.). Her pinned and most-watched video on her profile is a testimony (2023b) she shares of coming to God while she bakes in the kitchen. In the video caption, there are hashtags #christiantestimony and #godsaves. When searching #tradwife on TikTok, one of her videos appears from March 25th, 2023. In it, she lip-syncs to a sound that says, "I think men are better than women," with another voice in the audio interjecting, "she's kidding," to which the original speaker responds, "no, I'm not; they provide for us, and we must obey them because they are our masters" (2023a). This video has garnered over 347,000 views, 382 shares, and 823 saves. Clearly, this is another example of a woman linking traditional Christian values with being a traditional wife. As the audio implies, she believes women must submit to men as they fulfill their expected gender role of provider.

To contextualize the impact of TikTok creators like Estee Williams and Gwen The Milkmaid within the social sphere, a mere scroll through the #tradwife search results reveals a plethora of videos featuring these self-proclaimed trad wives. Additionally, one encounters content from individuals who may not explicitly identify as trad wives but incorporate the hashtag into their video captions. These videos typically depict activities associated with perceived traditional wife roles, such as cooking, cleaning, childcare, and serving their husbands in various capacities.

A 2022 study delves into the ramifications of these women's presence on social media. The study elucidates,

A growing alt-right community on YouTube known as traditional or "trad" wives create videos about femininity, beauty, and relationships. However, viewers who seek out these channels for clothing or hair styling tips leave with another kind of styling: populist messaging that frames feminism as an elitist threat to the "real" femininity of everyday women (Zahay, 2022).

In essence, this research underscores how the infusion of Christian moral values and rigid gender norms recontextualizes feminism as a threatening force to be avoided.

With their extensive reach, these women cater to a diverse audience, often extending beyond their immediate sphere of influence. However, the danger arises when alternative forms of femininity are stigmatized, and feminism is portrayed as something to be feared and shunned.

To grasp the significance of these women's

presence on social media, it is essential to establish the framework within which they operate, the extent of their content's reach, and the demographics of their audience engagement. This section provides an overview of these aspects, laying the foundation for understanding the connection between trad wives' rejection of feminism (albeit from a skewed perspective), the complex dynamic between feminists and Christian women, and the expansive influence wielded by trad wives through their content.

To conclude this section, it is crucial to recognize that, like much content on social media, the portrayal of traditional wives may not always reflect reality. For a woman to adopt the traditional wife role and stay at home, she typically requires substantial financial support from her husband. While this arrangement provides her with the chance to concentrate on domestic responsibilities, it also results in her financial dependence on him. This underscores the socioeconomic privilege embedded in single-income households, where one partner can afford to stay home, and raises concerns about potential financial disputes and abuse.

Moreover, it is important to challenge the notion that traditional wives do not engage in work. While they may eschew office or corporate jobs, the tasks they undertake at home, such as cleaning, cooking, childcare, and household management, constitute significant labor, both physically and mentally. Ironically, feminists have long recognized the value of this work and have advocated for houseworkers to receive wages, thereby granting financial autonomy and empowerment to women in

similar circumstances (McKeen, 1994).

It is worth noting that the situations of traditional wives may differ from those of women advocating for wages for housework. However, both underscore the importance of recognizing and valuing the labor performed within the home, challenging traditional notions of work and gender roles.

To synthesize, the influence wielded by traditional wives and conservative Christian influencers on social media is significant and far-reaching. The sheer volume of views, likes, and shares garnered by content related to traditional wifedom underscores its resonance within online communities. Through platforms like TikTok, influencers including Estee Williams and Gwen The Milkmaid have amassed substantial followings, disseminating messages that intertwine traditional Christian values with the roles and expectations of a traditional wife.

The impact of these influencers extends beyond mere entertainment or lifestyle content. Studies such as Zahay's (2022) reveal how the portrayal of traditional femininity on platforms like YouTube can subtly frame feminism as a threat to traditional values, fostering a narrative that divides women into opposing camps.

It is essential to recognize the complexities inherent in the portrayal of traditional wives on social media. While these influencers may champion traditional gender roles and domestic duties, their portrayal may not always align with the realities faced by women in similar situations. Financial dependence on a spouse and the

undervaluing of domestic labor are just some of the challenges faced by traditional wives.

Moreover, the dichotomy between traditional wives and feminists highlights broader societal debates about gender roles, autonomy, and empowerment. By acknowledging the nuances within these discussions and the diverse perspectives at play, we can better understand the evolving landscape of gender politics and cultural ideologies in contemporary society.

## Research Methods

In the initial phases of this research endeavor, a comprehensive approach was adopted to gather data from TikTok, encompassing both qualitative and quantitative dimensions. The objective was to procure measurable metrics such as video shares, views, saves, post counts, view counts associated with specific hashtags, follower counts on individual accounts, and total likes on those accounts.

Given TikTok's prominence as the second most popular platform among Gen Z, constituting forty-five percent of usage as of 2023 (Statista, 2024), the exploration primarily focused on various TikTok hashtags. These encompassed #tradwife, #tradwives, #traditionalwives, #traditional-wife, #christiangirl, #christian-woman, and #christianwife.

Furthermore, an inquiry was conducted into automatically generated search terms following the "trad wife" query on TikTok. These terms spanned a spectrum of topics, including "tradwife propaganda," "tradwife

outfits," "tradwife divorce," "tradwife satire," "tradwife meaning," and "tradwife controversy."

It is worth noting that the majority of videos surfaced by these searches and hashtags did not originate from authentic trad wife content creators. Instead, they featured women from diverse backgrounds, including atheists, non-believers, feminists, other Christians, and general commentators, who vocalized opposition to the trad wife movement. These creators cited concerns such as the spread of misinformation, negative impacts of religious indoctrination, or marginalization based on religious principles. Moreover, they advocated for enhanced education on social issues, particularly regarding the accurate definition of feminism, and highlighted potential risks associated with embracing the trad wife lifestyle.

Despite the initial intent to locate videos featuring self-proclaimed feminists or women expressing support for trad wives, such content was notably sparse. Those that did emerge often presented arguments grounded in biblical interpretation favoring the trad wife lifestyle. Remarkably, these videos were typically categorized under hashtags #tradwife and #feminist, representing distinct ideological spheres. The prevalent content observed predominantly comprised women critiquing and responding to trad wife narratives, underscoring the potential hazards associated with extreme manifestations of this lifestyle and ideology. The synthesis of these studies, coupled with existing literature on feminism and traditional Christian wives, contributed to a

comprehensive understanding of the dynamics shaping the relationship between feminism and trad wives.

On a personal and reflective note, my journey into this research was propelled by a dual fascination: firstly, with the intriguing sociological dynamics at play, and secondly, by my unique position straddling the spheres of faith and feminism. As someone deeply interested in understanding how societal norms and beliefs shape individual identities, I found myself drawn to the complexities surrounding traditionalist wives and feminists. Throughout my graduate studies, my aim is to delve deeper into this complex interplay, uncovering the intricate web of influences that mold perceptions and behaviors within these communities. This includes examining phenomena such as Christian nationalism, Christian feminism, civic religion, and the evolving discourse surrounding women's rights within the sphere of faith. My focus lies in unraveling the multifaceted connections between religious and political ideologies, seeking insights into the social, political, environmental, and behavioral factors shaping the interaction between these two demographic groups. Through rigorous analysis and exploration, I hope to contribute to a deeper understanding of the nuanced dynamics that define contemporary gender discourse.

Undertaking this thesis challenged me, as I find certain aspects about trad wives deeply disturbing, challenging, and confusing. Nevertheless, as an intersectional feminist, I made the decision to confront these complexities and research the history between feminists and

trad wives, striving to uncover the true essence of trad wife ideology. While my research predominantly discusses the dangers inherent in the ideology and practices of trad wives, it is crucial to acknowledge that videos in support of trad wives are not solely tied to conservative, Christian women with extreme views. Instead, they often depict women exploring and embracing the roles of wifehood and motherhood, finding fulfillment in staying home to care for their households.

To capture a comprehensive understanding, I turned to TikTok, which is a significant repository of data reflecting the attitudes and behaviors of Gen-Z. My methodology encompassed a thorough exploration beyond mere hashtags, extending to search terms, related queries, videos, profiles, and any pertinent content touching upon trad wives, feminists, and the discourse in between. Adopting a meticulous and impartial approach, I committed to watching entire videos without bias or selective filtering, ensuring the integrity of my data collection process. Every piece of content—be it a video, hashtag, soundbite, or other TikTok source—was meticulously documented to inform my findings.

Throughout my research journey, I remained mindful of the intricate intersections of gender and identity. Upholding principles of equity, I navigated through TikTok's diverse landscape with care and diligence, leveraging all available data without prejudice or preconceptions. By incorporating a wide array of perspectives and experiences into my analysis, I aimed to present a nuanced and inclusive portrayal of the relationship

between trad wives and feminists within the digital realm. This thorough approach allowed me to uncover patterns and insights that contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics at play in online discourse surrounding gender roles and ideologies.

## Results

The research collected data from TikTok, employing both qualitative and quantitative methods to obtain measurable metrics such as video shares, views, saves, post counts, and follower counts associated with specific hashtags. Focus was placed on hashtags including #tradwife, #tradwives, #traditionalwives, #traditionalwife, #christiangirl, #christianwoman, and #christianwife, as well as auto-generated search terms following the "tradwife" search on TikTok.

The majority of videos surfaced by these searches and hashtags did not originate from authentic trad wife content creators. Instead, they featured diverse voices including atheists, non-believers, feminists, other Christians, and general commentators expressing opposition to the trad wife movement. Concerns highlighted included misinformation spread, negative impacts of religious indoctrination, and potential risks associated with embracing the trad wife lifestyle.

Content featuring self-proclaimed feminists or women expressing support for trad wives was notably scarce. When present, it often offered arguments grounded in biblical interpretation favoring the trad wife lifestyle, typically categorized

under hashtags #tradwife and #feminist.

Overall, the prevalent content observed predominantly comprised critiques and responses to trad wife narratives, emphasizing potential hazards associated with extreme manifestations of this lifestyle and ideology. This synthesis of data contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics shaping the relationship between feminism and trad wives within the digital realm.

## Discussion

At the outset, it is crucial to establish a clear understanding of the terms under examination. Trad wives, as a contraction of "traditional housewives," embody a commitment to traditional gender roles, emphasizing women's role as primary caretakers of the familial household and their submission to husbands. However, alongside this characterization, it is pertinent to acknowledge the potential dangers associated with this mindset.

Research has shown that certain individuals within the trad wife movement utilize social media platforms as tools for ideological radicalization, leveraging sophisticated strategies to promote right-wing ideology, including anti-feminist beliefs (Sykes & Hopner, 2023). This not only underscores the complexity of the trad wife phenomenon but also highlights the nuanced interplay between traditional values, social media, and political ideologies.

In contrast, feminism, as a movement advocating for social equality, women's rights, and the freedom to choose one's

path, stands as a counterpoint to the traditionalist values espoused by trad wives. Yet, within the realm of feminist discourse, there exists a spectrum of perspectives on the trad wife movement. While some feminists critique the restrictive nature of trad wife ideology and its potential to perpetuate harmful gender norms, others advocate for a more nuanced understanding that recognizes the agency and autonomy of individual women, including those who choose to embrace traditional roles.

The culmination of the collected data reveals a prevailing trend among feminists on TikTok: the lack of support for trad wives, underscored by concerns over the repressive nature of the lifestyle, the propagation of disinformation targeting feminism, and the broader issues encompassing domestic abuse, financial autonomy, and extremist political ideologies.

It is pertinent to acknowledge the distinction frequently made by women, whether trad wives or not, between the roles of homemaker, stay-at-home mom, and trad wife. While the former two roles are often viewed as personal choices aligned with individual circumstances, the latter is deeply entrenched in the notion of male dominance and spousal submission. This distinction is vividly illustrated in instances such as the video featuring Gwen The Milkmaid (2023a), where she lip-syncs to an audio asserting the superiority of husbands over women.

Despite the rarity of TikTok content explicitly supporting trad wives, those few who do often intertwine feminist principles

with the concept of empowering women to live as they see fit. For instance, a user named Steph | Name Consultant, challenges the traditional notion of a trad wife by advocating for a feminism that champions choice and equity. In her TikTok video, she aptly states,

As I see more and more 20ish year old trad wives talking about submitting to their husbands and blaming feminists for the loss of femininity...Remember you can chose to stay home, wear makeup, keep house, watch the children and also be a raging feminist without submitting to jackshit" (2023).

Her video title says it best, "Feminism is about choice and equity, it's a positive term". This perspective emphasizes the idea that feminism encompasses the freedom to make individual choices, including the option to embrace traditional domestic roles while retaining autonomy and agency.

Moreover, while some videos express support for trad wives, they also caution against romanticizing the role of the homemaker, emphasizing the labor-intensive nature of household responsibilities. These expressions of support are often accompanied by disclaimers reflecting the nuanced discourse surrounding feminism and the diverse interpretations of its tenets.

Despite varying interpretations, a common thread emerges from definitions of feminism: the pursuit of equity and the freedom to choose one's own path. Dictionaries and academic sources alike define feminism in terms of social equality, women's rights, and the opportunity for fairness and equal rights. For example,

Merriam-Webster uses the words "social equality" and "women's rights and interests" in its definition (2024). The Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary & Thesaurus uses the words "rights, power, and opportunity" in its definition (n.d.). The APA Dictionary of Psychology uses words such as "opportunity", and "fairness and equal rights" to define feminism (American Psychological Association, 2018). Ultimately, this data underscores the fundamental essence of feminism: empowering women to lead lives of their choosing.

In synthesizing the gathered data, it becomes evident that while tensions between trad wives and feminists persist, there are nuanced perspectives within both movements. Feminism, at its core, encompasses the principles of choice, autonomy, and equity, which extend to women's choices regarding their roles and identities. As such, feminists should support the agency and autonomy of trad wives, even as they critique the potential limitations and harms associated with traditionalist ideologies. By fostering dialogue, understanding, and solidarity across ideological divides, we can navigate the complexities of gender, religion, and ideology, ultimately striving towards a more inclusive and equitable society where all individuals are empowered to live authentically and pursue their aspirations freely.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the culmination of this research journey sheds light on the intricate relationship between traditionalist

wives and feminists within the digital landscape of TikTok. Through a comprehensive approach encompassing both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, data was gathered to explore the dynamics shaping this complex interplay.

The findings reveal a predominant trend of opposition to the trad wife movement among diverse voices on TikTok, including atheists, non-believers, feminists, other Christians, and general commentators. Concerns raised encompassed the spread of misinformation, negative impacts of religious indoctrination, and potential risks associated with embracing the trad wife lifestyle. While content explicitly supporting trad wives was scarce, those few who did often intertwined feminist principles with the concept of empowering women to make choices aligned with their own aspirations and values.

Furthermore, the discourse surrounding trad wives and feminists on TikTok highlighted the nuanced perspectives within both movements. While tensions persist, feminism, as a movement

advocating for choice, autonomy, and equity, inherently supports the agency of women in defining their own paths, including their roles within traditional or non-traditional domestic settings.

Ultimately, this research underscores the importance of fostering dialogue, understanding, and solidarity across ideological divides. In our current times, where reactionary comments are more commonplace, there is a pressing need to comprehend both the foundations of feminism and the principles of trad wifery. It becomes evident through the examination of pioneering feminists and academic definitions of feminism that feminism inherently supports the choices of women, including trad wives, despite the explored research highlighting the negative reception and dangers associated with trad wifehood. By acknowledging the diversity of perspectives and experiences within both the trad wife and feminist movements, we can navigate the complexities of gender, religion, and ideology, striving towards a more inclusive and equitable society where all individuals are empowered, validated, and autonomous.

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