

## Navigating the Tradwife Debate: Feminism, Patriarchy, and the Role of Women in Modern Society

In recent years, the rise of popularity of the “traditional wife”, or “tradwife”, especially on social media, has sparked intense debates within feminist circles. This phenomenon, marked by women embracing so-called traditional gender roles within marriage and family life, stands in stark contrast to the principles of feminism. The clash between the two ideologies illuminates the problem with Western societal expectations of women.

Tradwives claim to advocate for a return to “traditional gender roles”, where women prioritize homemaking, child-rearing, and supporting their husbands over pursuing careers or independent goals. They find fulfillment in creating nurturing home environments and adhering to “traditional values”. This lifestyle choice represents a rejection of the perceived failures of modern feminism, which they argue has devalued “traditional feminine roles and family structures”.

However, feminists view the tradwife movement with skepticism and concern. According to them, embracing traditional roles can perpetuate gender inequality and restrict women's rights. For them, the popularity of tradwives is a toxic one that perpetuates gender roles (the man works, the woman takes care of the household) and patriarchy and reinforces the belief that women are not equal to men.

Ultimately, the clash between tradwives and feminism reflects the problematic view of the societal role of women in the West. This debate has exposed the true views of feminism. There is no room for women to make their own choices when they choose to be a stay-at-home wife and mom. Feminism exclusively praises and supports women who prioritize career and become a source for economic growth.

The rise of popularity of tradwives, on the other hand, unveils the need for redefining the role of women. And meanwhile the interpretation of tradwives seems to come a bit closer to the interpretation of women's role in Islam, but it is nothing like that since Islam does not classify a woman who fulfills her role and obligations as a mother and wife as traditional or conservative.

Firstly, in Islam Allah (swt) created men and women equal to each other in regards of reward and punishment for obeying or disobeying the orders of Allah (swt). In the eyes of Allah (swt), there is no such thing as a superior gender or more beloved gender. They are equal in their worth and responsibilities.

Secondly, Islam's perspective aligns with the nature (fitra) of men and women. The roles and tasks assigned to each gender are based on their inherent differences. Women, for instance, are naturally inclined towards homemaking and childcare due to physical differences and nurturing abilities. However, Allah (swt) has given women the right to pursue a career that is in accordance with what Allah (swt) pleases, and that which will not make her negligent of her primary responsibilities. Men, on the other hand, are providers and protectors, expected to work and maintain their families. These roles are neither traditional nor patriarchal. 'Abdullah b. Amr reported Allah's Messenger (saw) as saying: «الدُّنْيَا مَتَاعٌ وَخَيْرُ مَتَاعِ الدُّنْيَا الْمَرْأَةُ الصَّالِحَةُ» **“The whole world is a provision, and the best object of benefit of the world is the pious woman.”** Sahih Muslim.

Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by  
Sumaya Bint Khayat