

“TRADWIFE” vs. “GIRLBOSS”: How Body Politics Has Manufactured New Definitions of Womanhood

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Abstract

In this weakening era of neoliberal political structures, commodification of bodies, especially those of women, run rampant in post modernized societies and happens in a way that is subtle and veiled through complex digital jargon. This paper aims to find that how terms like ‘Tradwife’ and ‘Girlboss’ and phrases such as ‘lipstick on a pig’ function as regimes of body politics in digital culture. Current research on this topic shows that bodies are not natural and are socially constructed and ‘colonized’ by the state, cultural and social regulations so to ensure the conforming to set social standards. However, existing literature gap on this topic is due to the lack of explicit body politics analysis. Most studies focus on labour, ideology and feminism, but not on the body as an instrument of politics itself. The methodology used for this paper is Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA), which is an interdisciplinary approach that focuses on how trends, languages and discourses perpetuate gender dynamics, inequalities and so on. Findings of this paper support the idea that these kinds of terms are not opposing models of femininity, but rather interconnected regimes of neoliberal body politics. While it may seem like ‘Girlbosses’ refer to disciplined, hardworking women fixated on the idea of productivity and self-optimization and the ‘tradwife’ aesthetics focus more on the ‘divine-feminine’ side of women, reorienting the body towards domesticity and softness, both these terms reflect the way digital control and surveillance take place on physical entities like human bodies, essentially leading to a state of perpetual commodification. These trends help to echo the idea that women should act only in a certain way, and therefore fit into the existing labels of femininity.

Keywords: Girlboss; Tradwife; Feminism; Capitalism; Surveillance.

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I. Introduction

Context:

Emergence of tradwife and girlboss cultures:

During the pandemic era, social media saw a rise of content creators and influencers who embodied the 'traditional wife'- like features, and therefore catered to the right-wing and conservative audiences. They became a symbol of women who think that a woman's true position is always located at the private sphere, outside of the government's policies. They support the idea of themselves being a 'secondary sex' and argued that their choice of being caretakers of their family is a voluntary choice. The origins of the term 'tradwife' is not single-faceted, but rather, multi-dimensional. Even though the idea has always been present, it became a distinct subculture during the 2020s, mainly as a reaction against the Alternative subcultures like Goth, Punk, Emo --- whose main purpose was to rebel against the status quo. The aesthetic mirrored the decades of mid-19th century through the sense of styling, house work, submission to patriarchal figures, and so on.

On the other hand, the usage of the term 'girlboss' was popularized when Sophia Amoruso, the founder of 'NastyGal', used the term in her 2014 bestselling memoir named '#Girlboss'. It was intended to refer to women in a positive and empowering way to label ambitious, self-made women who are dedicated to build their own empires. However, the term received significant criticism by 2019 because according to some critics, it represented the idea of a woman's individual success, rather than the destruction of patriarchal stereotypes.

Social media as a site of gender identity production:

Social media serves as a digital laboratory and performance stage where gender identity is actively constructed, tested and negotiated. While it provides an unrestricted sphere for self-expression and exploration of non-binary and genderfluid identities, (McInroy & Craig 2020) it also acts as a medium that enforces the 'binary' or the traditional gender stereotypes. various studies which were conducted in the domain of developmental psychology, reiterate the idea that social networking platforms emphasis on the matter of external validation so much so that 'young people feel compelled to conform to normative gender expectations in order to gain social acceptance' (Bengtsson, 2024). While social media may try to uplift the cause of women and extend a hand in empowerment, many women agree with the fact that it has little to no impact in real life. Women in Jakarta, Indonesia, say that patriarchal norms run so deep in their own society that it is not an easy task for social media to unravel all the years of entrenchment. However, it is not possible to argue against the fact that

in the era of transnational feminism, social media has had a positive impact on women's mindset, regarding social norms. (Bengsston, 2024)

Research Problem:

Contemporary digital culture and space is increasingly shaped by gendered labels and discursive categories such as 'tradwife', 'Bossbabe', 'Girlboss'- which circulate on a wide extent in online spaces. Existing research on this subject has demonstrated how bodies are socially constructed and regulated through systems of power, institutional practices and cultural systems, largely focusing on issues based on labour, ideology, identity formation and feminist politics, without concentrating on how digital discourse operate as mechanisms of body politics in itself. This gap is of considerable importance as digital platforms increasingly influences perception of gender and sexual relations.

Furthermore, while body politics excels in analysing gender and patriarchal oppression, it frequently operates within a Western, Eurocentric framework. There is a significant gap in accounting for how bodily autonomy, physical labour, and self-representation are shaped by deeply different global realities, such as caste (e.g., in South Asia), colonial legacies, and indigenous cultures), thus the primary gap in body politics-the discipline examining how power, societal norms, and institutions regulate the human body, lies in its Western-centric bias and over-reliance on the female body.

The central research problem which is being analysed in this study is therefore the lack of explicit investigation and evaluation of how contemporary digital discourse constructs and governs bodies through the language of labels and stereotypes. This gap in turn, prevents us from understanding how language acts as a mechanism of power in digital spaces, shaping the socially and culturally acceptable and desired forms of femininity by reinforcing the binary. As social media increasingly becomes intertwined with the personal as well as the public sphere of one's life, it is crucial to understand how such labels lead to the normalisation, reinforcement, or contestation of gendered norms.

Research Question:

In light of the identified gap in the literature, this study seeks to answer the following research question:

How do terms such as 'tradwife' and 'girlboss,' along with phrases like 'lipstick on a pig,' function as mechanisms of body politics in contemporary digital culture?

II. Literature Review

Body politics and the regulation of the Female Form

To understand how the Internet itself aids in the construction of rigid definitions of womanhood, it is fundamental that we try to analyse existing theoretical frameworks of various scholars. The human body, especially the female counterpart, has never been a neutral biological entity. It has several added implications, with many of them being direct and indirect effects of socio-economic-political manoeuvring. Michael Foucault, in his 1975 book, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, explains the concept of docile bodies. In the 18th century, when punishment shifted from public torture to controlled discipline, human individuals were moulded into obedient, efficient, and self-regulating subjects. In the current age, where identity is often shaped by the digital media and trends, it represents the idea that modern institutions maintain control not only through physical force but by forcing individuals to be under a state of continuous self-surveillance.

This trend of physical regulation is also illustrated further in Judith Butler's concept of 'Gender Performativity' in which, she states that gender isn't who you are, but you actually do. According to her, gender is not a pre-existing essence, but it is produced through the steady repetition of several acts and gestures relevant to one's own culture. This theory transforms the idea of how digital culture police the idea of being a woman into reality. The modern digital landscape of Instagram and TikTok serve as hyper-visual amplifiers for this performativity. For example, Archetypes like 'Mob wife', 'Girlboss', 'Tradwife' etc rest on rigid visual compliance to strengthen and validate their political claims. The corporate power blazer and the vintage kitchen apron functions as disciplinary uniforms. All of this aesthetics, have a common ground, that is, they rely on a hyper-stylised performance of womanhood.

As a consequence, a critical tension emerges within the post-feminist discourse of the illusion of choice. While earlier feminist movements wanted bodily autonomy to free women from institutional control, modern day lifestyles often see compliance as empowerment. Susan Bordo, in her 1993 work named 'Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body', talks about how women are trained to find pleasure in bodily self-discipline by the internalisation of patriarchal and consumerist norms. Bordo uses Michel Foucault's concept of the 'docile body' to explain how social regulation transforms from external oppression into a highly internalized, self-policing mechanism. It is evident that in the current age, women submit to strict aesthetic trends just to seek digital validation.

Neoliberal Feminism vs Neo-traditional backlash

The commercialisation of feminism and feminist struggles in the neoliberal era gradually turned it into a system where equality is measured only in terms of market value. The 'Girlboss' aesthetic highlights how mass media and corporations appropriate feminist ideas, symbols and icons. Instead of focusing on radical movements, this commercialisation focused more on individual economic growth rather than community based social upliftment. In the book 'The Rise of Neoliberal Feminism', scholar Catherine Rottenberg (2014) talks about this. Rather than trying to dismantle these patriarchal and oppressive systems, this new version of feminism encapsulates the idea of women viewing themselves as 'human capital' for material gain and success. This shift in the definition of feminism --- from radical political uprisings to an economically driven model strips it away from its revolutionary ideal.

Angela McRobbie (2009), a prominent British Cultural theorist critiques the idea of post feminism by saying that this term marks a subtle shift from the reactionary and radical versions of feminist movements by an ideological retaliation against the idea, rather than progressing beyond it. One of the key concepts in her theory is the concept of 'Double Entanglement', in which she addresses how popular cultures often engage in promoting conflicting and inconsistent ideas. For instance, films and magazines are seen to be often promoting the idea of women's sexual freedom and lifestyle choices, while simultaneously promoting traditional family building and caring, women as domestic helpers, marriage and so on.

Consequently, as a reaction, the 'trad-wife' identity emerged, which disguised its alignment with the values of conservatism with the cloak of feminism, falsely claiming domestic submission as a form of anti-capitalist 'self-care'.

The Digital Panopticon and Algorithmic polarization

Womanhood, and the experience of being a woman is intricate, multifaceted and extremely nuanced. Experiences differ for every single woman--- from people of colour to women with various sexual identities. However, to gain profit, capitalistic structures and platform architecture do not reward nuance. They try to flatten and polarise the experience of womanhood to make them fit into binary aesthetics, which are highly marketable.

Ever wondered that how platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube seem to know exactly what you are interested in, even though you didn't actively search for it on the internet? The answer to this question lies in the fact that such platforms use behavioural modification to push users into rigid ideological boxes and generate high quantity of ad revenue. Surveillance capitalism, coined by scholar Shoshana Zuboff in the 2019 book, 'Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future

at the New Frontier of Power’ is an economic model where big techs harvest user’s personal data to create highly curated algorithms for a user, based on their personal experience. This is often done to predict and modify their choices in the future. This model sees the human experience as a raw material for the ‘behavioural futures markets’, which in turn threatens individual autonomy and privacy.

While Shoshana Zuboff focuses on human behaviour, psychology and surveillance, another scholar by the name of Nick Srnicek looks into the same tech giants through an economic and historical viewpoint. In his 2016 book--- ‘Platform Capitalism’, He argues that giant corporations act as intermediaries, since they usually own the platforms, and not explicitly the services they provide. For instance, let’s take into account the example of the app ‘Uber’. It is a platform that connects their drivers with users who need a ride. Does Uber usually own their own cars? No. they own the digital space which is necessary for running these platforms. Through this ownership, they extract and control personal preferences and data.

This digital ‘echo chamber’ amplifies the concept of tribalism, in which people organise themselves into groups based on shared identity, beliefs, values and choices. A woman who engages with ‘career motivation’ content is usually pushed towards hyper-capitalist spaces talking about the ‘Girlboss’, while others who engage with simply cooking and baking videos may find themselves in alt-right spaces, through their algorithms. While the entirety of womanhood should be a mixed space in terms of ideas and concepts, this polarisation has harmful effects, as different women belonging to different ‘aesthetics’ do not find topics on which they agree mutually, which in turn contributes to the ‘US vs. THEM’ thinking.

III. **Methodology**

Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) is a methodology that helps in examining how language, vocabulary and imagery help in constructing and reinforcing existing gender roles and asymmetrical power dynamics in the society. By synthesising feminist studies and critical discourse analysis, it investigates how language acts not only as a tool for communication, but how it perpetuates traditional rules surrounding gender and identity.

Feminist critical discourse analysis (FCDA) is highly suitable for this project as it enables scholars to deconstruct existing social media trends and thus contributes in the study of how trending phrases like ‘girlboss’ and ‘tradwife’ symbolise regimes of control that instruct women on how to use their own bodies. These trends see women not as people, but as vessels through which monetary and eco-

nomie profits and gains can be achieved. FCDA contributes to the study of how these trends when they reach maximum popularity, look like an example of modern-day female empowerment, while it is exactly the opposite; benefiting from systemic oppression of women.

The data corpus for this study involves of 30 Instagram reels which received high engagement on the platform from January 2025 to April 2026. This data was gathered by using the hashtags:

- #Girlboss,
- #Tradwife,
- #Bossbabe,
- #Feminism
- #Abortion
- #MAGA

The analysis follows a three-tiered approach. Firstly, it observes how specific words are used for specific trends, such as ‘grind’, ‘build’, ‘asset’ and ‘independent’ for the Girlboss trend and ‘submission’ ‘serve’, ‘natural’, ‘slow life’ acts as keywords for the Tradwife movement.

Secondly, the visual analysis decodes how different versions and styles of the female body is staged against each other, especially in corporate vs. domestic spaces--- the vintage dresses, soft lighting associated with the tradwife aesthetic as opposed to the power suits and the office spaces highlighted by the girlboss trend.

Thirdly, this detailed ideological examination aids in connecting these texts to the broader system of capitalist labour and patriarchal control.

IV. Results and Discussion

The ‘Girlboss’ gym/blazer routine versus the ‘Tradwife’ baking/apron aesthetic as forms of physical surveillance:

When individuals internalise social expectations and constantly monitor themselves and their behaviours to project an image of productivity, discipline and physical perfection, it is called panopticism. With the advent of modern-day technology, data storage has evolved. The girlboss routine involving gym and workouts also leads to a concept called ‘hyper-visible self-surveillance’. Workout

and dietary routines are often stored in apps with related functions to monitor body mass, weight, health complications and so on. While these apps preach the idea that everything is encrypted, it is merely a marketing tactic, and the government as well as big corporations and technological companies can easily have access to these datasets which in turn, help them to create newer marketing tactics to sell their products and services.

After analysing the girlboss trend on Instagram, it was discovered that through ‘GRWM’ (Get Ready with Me) and ‘day in my life as an [insert employment status] girlie’ routines, these trends, under the guise of serving as ‘inspirational’ content, make women more self-conscious about their choices, which can be both physical and mental. Instead of pursuing goals which are well curated with one’s social and economic standing, these types of content force women to adapt to the binary, as if clubbing every woman’s unique and unparalleled social experience is an easy task in itself. Take for example, the ‘clean girl’ trend, characterised with slick back buns and ‘no makeup’ make-up looks. While this was a trend that primarily concerned white women, it had several other implications. The slick back bun trend actually originated in various ancient civilizations, such as ancient Greece, India and black cultures. People of colour, especially south Asians, share experiences about how when they did the exact oily slick back bun back in middle and high school, they were relentlessly bullied, and while white girls popularised it, it quickly became a trend. Furthermore, portraying slicked-back hair, dewy skin, and bold lip liner when they are worn by white woman as ‘clean’ is also deeply racist as it reinforces the idea that gelled edges, hoop earrings, vibrant makeup which are associated with individuals of colours, especially black people, are ‘ghetto’ but when Caucasians become interested in it, it suddenly becomes a trend. The ‘slicked back’ bun isn’t inclusive either. BIPOC individuals usually have textured hair, where it is very difficult to achieve that look. If this trend eventually becomes the norm, it leads to a monotonous and uniform lifestyle, limiting individual creativity and artistry. Black women, have also used this trend to promote skinny beauty standards, making it non-inclusive for a majority of body types.

Similarly, the ‘apron’ aesthetic related with the tradwife culture may look like it is absolutely the opposite, but in reality, it is not. By voluntarily organising and broadcasting their domestic lives on the internet, these influencers portray the concept of matrimonial bliss, when often, they are not, in fact, happy with their own lives. Strict reliance to patriarchal figures like the husband leads to complete submission. As her physical and financial survival relies entirely on the male breadwinner, these dynamic mimics a hyper-localized surveillance state. Most of the tradwife influencers, like Hannah Neeleman, popularly known as ‘Ballerina Farm’, often promote ideas of domestic obedience and subservience while they themselves have a stable source of income from their job

of content creation. These women, who are making profit from the propagation of these ideas, have a safety net that they can fall back onto, unlike the people who they are influencing. Furthermore, they don't realise that they possess basic fundamental rights and powers--- the same rights which they use to sell obsolete ideas--- due to feminism--- a concept to which they are extremely opposed to.

The alt-right movement associated with this also deserves special recognition. To commodify right wing ideology, women associated with the 'tradwife' lifestyle use special marketing tactics to appeal to the masses about the 'simplicity' of the common life in comparison to the chaotic and 'woke' city life. This concept of maintaining a 'simple' life often gives way to ideas of racial purity and homogeneity, as more often than not they want a 'pure' bloodline- promoting ideas of racial superiority and supremacy. The treatment to LGBTQ+ communities also stay the same, as they tend to believe that it is 'some kind of woke liberal nonsense' and propaganda spread by the liberals and the radicals. Lilly Gaddis, a TikTok influencer, initially rose to fame after portraying the traditional, submissive housewife archetype. However, in mid-2024, she sparked major outrage after using a racial slur in one of her videos, which ultimately led to her losing her position at a home health-care company. Later on, when she appeared in an episode of 'Piers Morgan Uncensored' in May 2025, she went on to say that she frequently used the racial slur as she supports free speech. When asked about whether she would use the racial slur out of interest, she casually responded 'I do, frequently'.

The usage of the tradwife aesthetic to promote ideas of racial purity and segregation creates a strong desire to keep groups separate (Proctor, 2022; Watkin, 2025). Such families tend to block friendships with people from mixed backgrounds. In some cases, body policing is conducted often as pregnancy timelines and birth control usage are monitored to prevent racial intermixing.

The Labour Illusion:

Performative hustle culture relies on broadcasting exhausting work schedules, romanticising exploitation and underpaid labour. People subconsciously use effort to measure quality. Sophia Amoruso, the creator of the term 'girlboss' has admitted how the term has mutated from a simple synonym for self-made empowerment to a symbol of hyper-capitalist greed and toxic work culture. Amoruso has also expressed her concern regarding how unique the criticism against female leaders is. While this term fell from grace due to toxic workplace standards and scandals in various companies, it was always the women who had to bear the backlash. She pointed out the fact that male CEOs often aggressively most of the time without their gender's professional identity being mocked.

As mentioned earlier, the ‘girlboss’ rhetoric has inherently turned into a capitalistic model, which focuses more on consumer-driven success rather than dismantling the entire patriarchal system. Since hard work without adequate pay and relentless ambition are redefined as a form of personal liberation and not exploitation, many young women, do not realise the worth of their own efforts. It also collapses the boundary between the personal life and the private life, demanding that a woman’s existence and personal brand should become indistinguishable from her labour. By turning a woman’s physical identity and appearance into proof of her professional success, it leads to the enabling of the idea that woman should look and act a certain way to determine how successful they are in their particular field.

In her article ‘Labor and Love: A Critique of the Trad Wife Phenomenon,’ Aima Raza argues that influencers such as Nara Smith, who create trad-wife content without explicitly endorsing extremist ideologies, romanticise and promote this kind of lifestyle because:

“For influencers like Smith, choosing to be a stay-at-home mom isn’t just a personal decision — it’s a highly profitable branding strategy. The pristine homes, perfectly styled outfits and gourmet meals that populate their profiles are often made possible by significant financial resources. Behind the scenes, this lifestyle frequently depends on the invisible labor of others — nannies, cleaners and sometimes personal chefs — or the financial support of a partner.”

Furthermore, she argues that these influencers transform their lifestyles into marketable commodities by promoting products, participating in sponsorship agreements, and generating revenue through their social media content. In real life, this commercialisation and commodification is not possible for women belonging to middle and lower-income households. She critiques the concept of choice feminism, saying that these choices benefit them only because of their economic standing, upholding traditional gender roles.

Framing activities like baking bread from scratch, ironing, and childcare as acts of ‘self-care’ rather than daily toil, leads to dire consequences. In many cases, especially in south Asian households within patriarchal social structures, women who enter marriages without meaningful consent are expected to undertake extensive domestic and caregiving responsibilities. In a middle-class household, they have to cook, clean, wash, and engage in other kinds of unpaid domestic labour activities, much of which is performed manually. Beyond these duties, they are also expected to perform activities related to childcare, such as preparing meals for them, getting them ready for their schools, while the father usually stays away due to his job or business commitments. In several instances like

these, such women are also subjected to domestic abuse and dowry harassment. According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), India recorded approximately 5,737 dowry related deaths in 2024 alone. This means that on average, roughly 16 women died every day, or one in every 90 minutes (MAKTOOB). If women are unable to recognize that their responsibility for domestic and caregiving work is shaped by patriarchal expectations, they may view it as a personal choice rather than a social obligation, which is perpetuated by the existing patriarchal structures in the name of modern-day feminism. In this way, enforcement of traditional gender roles becomes a lot easier, as it is often termed as empowerment in contemporary feminist discourse.

Weaponization of these aesthetics in Public Policy and Governance:

These seemingly benign media trends revolving around the day-to-day lives of different kinds of women is not merely a reflection of the reality. It is a mechanism of power that establishes ideological discursive regimes.

This phenomenon can specifically be observed in the USA. Right-wing populist movements and organisations utilise this language associated with ‘traditional womanhood’ to market their institutions or highlight policy changes. Following the assassination of American conservative political activist Charlie Kirk, his wife, Erika Kirk, assumed the position of CEO of Turning Point USA. In one of the recent events organised by this institution, she argued that feminism often portrays traits traditionally associated with womanhood as barriers to progress rather than qualities to be valued and embraced. At the same event, several women shared their views about how they think that women do not deserve the right to vote, with one woman even saying, ‘I would as well give up my vote if I got rid of, like, things like abortion.’ One of the people who spoke in this gathering is Savannah Faith Stone, who is infamous for sharing her thoughts about how voting systems should be changed to a ‘one household voting system’. Upon further inspection of her Instagram posts, when she was asked about if she is pro-feminism or anti-feminism, she argued that feminism has created what she perceives as moral and social decline among young women by distancing them from the importance of marriage and committed relationships. According to her, feminism has fostered an ideology that encourages hostility between men and women rather than cooperation and mutual support. She further contended that it has promoted the use of birth control and the acceptance of abortion, which she regarded as harmful to family values and the well-being of future generations. In her view, these developments have contributed to the erosion of the nuclear family. Consequently, she stated that she is committed to restoring what she considers the values of marriage, family life, and traditional femininity, while highlighting what she sees as their beauty and social importance.

While discussing abortion, it is worth investigating how social media debates surrounding the topic have become a rhetorical tool of body politics for the government and other political institutions to act upon. They involve attempts to define and regulate women’s personal choices. As women’s bodies become a site of ideological contestation, several influencers try to influence public opinion about viewpoints surrounding reproduction. Capitalizing on the fact that apps like Instagram and TikTok serve as major information hub for Gen Z and millennials, these influencers use these platforms as a tool of propaganda to spread extremist and right-wing ideology. Estee Williams, who films her videos in a styled 1950s inspired look, wearing vintage dresses and aprons, occasionally shares her explicit anti-abortion (pro-life) viewpoints, linking her choice to stay at home directly with conservative Christian values.

Likewise, the ‘Girlboss’ movement has also influenced politics negatively, by promoting an individualistic ‘hustle’ culture. By masking isolation and exploitation with empowerment and social progression, it dilutes the actual meaning and value of feminism, as it equates women upliftment with corporate success. As a matter of fact, many prominent figures who actually benefitted from this movement replicated the same marginalizing workplace instead of changing the system. Sophia Amoruso, founder of ‘NastyGal’, fast fashion retail chain exclusively for women and the original creator of the term ‘girlboss’ came under severe criticism when it was revealed that several former ‘NastyGal’ employees sued the organisation, citing gender discrimination and alleging that multiple women were illegally terminated despite being pregnant. The organisation eventually went bankrupt due to a decline in revenue and toxic work culture. Amoruso herself admitted that she was ill-prepared for the administrative demands of a massive startup. A similar case involves Audrey Gelman, who resigned as the CEO of The Wing in June 2020 right after an intense employee revolt which revealed a toxic and racially discriminatory work environment which directly contradicted the image of the company marketed as a ‘feminist utopia’.

The movement also helped in creating a platform which allowed toxic executives to mask their management styles behind a façade of women empowerment. Anna Wintour, the ex-Editor-in-chief of the widely recognised magazine Vogue, faced decades of harsh critique for enabling a fear-driven and highly exclusionary workplace culture. She is quite literally referred to as ‘Nuclear Wintour’, and her unique management style paved the way for the creation of the famous movie ‘The Devil Wears Prada’ where the character named Miranda Priestly, is based on her.

This weaponization of the seemingly different aesthetics demonstrates how contrasting definitions of womanhood can actually serve the same purpose- that is, of being a political tool. Both can be strategically mobilized within public discourse and policymaking to promote specific ideological

agendas.

Conclusion

It is true that the tradwife movement emerged as a counter reaction to the philosophy of modern feminism, specifically attacking movements like the ‘Girlboss’ and ‘Bossbabe’ due to its deep association with exploitative corporate labour in the name of ‘Girl power’. However, it is important to know these polarizing definitions of womanhood do not serve any real purpose in advancing women’s well-being or social progress.

Women, through social media platforms, are often forced to live a single dimensional experience to be the epitome of a perfect woman. While we think that we are rebelling against the patriarchal standards by posting about what we like, it is just a product of male-led, money-driven systems. The idea seems liberating, but it is still a trap. By coercing women to pick ‘sides’ of womanhood, it fundamentally prevents the convergence of women within a shared ideological space. Instead of making the experience of being a woman a unifying force between the billions of women worldwide, these systems help in manipulating women, under the guise of true liberation and freedom, but in reality, they just do so because if every woman today decides to protest against the status quo, these systems won’t be able to perpetuate anymore.

Although these ‘girl power’ and domestic movements have helped many women find purpose in a chaotic society, this single observation does not invalidate the entire research. This study helps in expanding the concept of body politics beyond physical appearances, as applies the concept to digital spaces and performances. It also provides an understanding of how and why modern society and its women are so ideologically divided, as algorithms weaponize these identities to prevent collective feminist action.

Finally, it is time to highlight the temporal limitations of this study. Due to strict time constraints, this paper offers a localized snapshot of a rapidly evolving digital space. Social media trends and algorithmic structures shift at an unprecedented rate. As new platforms and digital subcultures emerge, the dynamics involving the trends studied, may evolve. This paper helps in providing a fundamental analysis of the current scenario of body politics, but further longitudinal research is absolutely necessary to determine if women can break free from these digital binaries.

You are a woman with a man inside watching a woman. You are your own voyeur.’ — Margaret Atwood, The Robber Bride, 1993

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