



From Girl Boss to Girl Math: Social Media's Role in Domesticating the Modern Woman.

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# From Girl Boss to Girl Math: Social Media's Role in Domesticating the Modern Woman

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## **Abstract**

This research paper investigates the nuances of so-called feminist social media trends that have emerged alongside the political shift towards traditional conservative values. Specifically, I will interrogate the “girl boss” feminist movement of the 2010s in comparison to 2020s terminology such as “girl math,” “tradwives,” and “bimbo feminism,” demonstrating a noticeable ideological shift concerning a woman’s place in society. These conceptions of modern-day feminism are not what they claim to be; they are roles rooted in stereotypes that the patriarchy creates and reproduces. Because of this, they are inherently anti-feminist. However, through careful language construction and intentional marketing strategies, corporatized (neoliberal) feminism masquerades as progressive, ignoring and simultaneously contributing to the consequences of adopting these beliefs. Executives of billion-dollar media conglomerates profit from attention-grabbing trends that foster a false sense of identity among women

that sustain and reaffirm the patriarchal values of male supremacy. Since women are often presenting and engaging with these trends, viewers may perceive them as inclusive and empowering. Collective liberation cannot exist when it is poisoned with patriarchal values.

**Keywords:** Feminism, choice feminism, patriarchy, social media, neoliberalism, intersectionality, conservatism, domesticity

**N**ew, catchy terms seem to arise from the depths of social media every few weeks, and it is not long before they transgress beyond the boundaries of our phones and into our everyday conversations. The specific vernacular I challenge in this paper is the use of the terms “girl boss,” “girl math,” “tradwives,” and the reclamation of the term “bimbo” as acts that supposedly further the feminist movement. I argue that these terms support and reinforce patriarchal hierarchies rather than pursuing a radical feminism that seeks to liberate all. Despite social media’s relatively short history, it is widely understood that our vocabularies have become permeated by ideas we engage with online. Language has the power to shape our social lives—just as our social lives have the power to shape social media.

There are a few prominent stances on this issue: the conservative perspective that is against the so-called “policing” of language, the liberal perspective that understates language’s importance altogether, and the leftist perspective—or what has been deemed as “woke”—that believes in deconstructing language in an effort to realize its impact on social life. In this way, language is a portal

to understanding our own oppression, and the goal of analyzing it is to liberate ourselves from such marginalization. This paper lends itself to the latter perspective. By employing Foucault's (1976) idea that discourse(s) inherently affect social life, I emphasize why it is notable that patriarchal language has crossed into the popular vernacular of *both* social media and our daily lives. My perspective varies from Foucault's, as I argue that these shifts in discourse are intentionally produced by institutions and claim-makers seeking to benefit from certain ideologies gaining popularity in the public sphere. These claim-makers include executives and stakeholders of billion-dollar social media platforms who profit from increased engagement, as well as political parties who benefit and gain power when their ideological beliefs are affirmed by popular trends (Giroux & Bhattacharya, 2017). First, I will explore how a new genre of terms entered mainstream vocabulary during the COVID-19 pandemic. I will then compare them to once culturally accepted pre-pandemic liberal feminist trends, highlighting why these contrasting perspectives may have shifted in popularity to respond to changing political and economic values. Next, I will trace how these trends have garnered popularity and tangibly impacted individuals' lives. Seemingly, a big misconception within both conservative and liberal perspectives is that language (and the critical analysis of it) is unimportant, or, according to many young internet users, is "not that deep". This paper demonstrates precisely why language *is* important and why we should be paying attention.

### **"Girls," "Girlbosses," and Negotiated Political Identities**

The term “girl boss” and its accompanying movement are strong examples of language that is deemed empowering but, in truth, upholds patriarchal values. As a result of fourth-wave feminism, “girl boss” emerged on social media during the 2010s to describe women who are successful in male-dominated occupational spheres. The term saturated popular culture and became integral to the modern feminist movement by creating its own designation under the umbrella of choice feminism. Girl boss feminism is embedded in neoliberalism in that it defines liberation solely on economic terms, such as celebrating the female CEO and idolizing the female billionaire, rather than challenging capitalist structures that perpetuate systemic violence and oppression against women (Alexandersson & Kalonaityte, 2020). This form of feminism is still centred around the lives and experiences of men in how its solution to all oppression is simply to include women within the (exploitative) labour force.

Feminist movements have long excluded marginalized groups for this same insistence on capitalist reproduction. Consider the example of Marie Howland, a 19th-century feminist scholar who was ahead of her time in vehemently advocating for women’s economic independence (Blake, 2015). However, Howland has now been discredited because her activism only extended this privilege to white women. We can see how the very idea of “economic independence” is based on a white, heteropatriarchal idea of capitalistic success—one that does not challenge systemic hierarchies but instead seeks to climb to the top of them. Feminist theory cannot be all-encompassing or liberatory when its scope is limited from the start.

In this way, the liberal focus on identity politics ignores any semblance of reorganizing social hierarchy and instead maintains and obscures how the oppressed perceive the material conditions that keep them marginalized (Alexandersson & Kalonaityte, 2020). While a successful woman in a male-dominated field is the epitome of liberal feminist empowerment, these gendered dynamics are not challenged in ways that would collectively liberate women (or anyone involved in the labour exchange). As Byrne and Giuliani (2025) state, “the girlboss merges a complex blend of masculine entrepreneurial heroism and feminine care, sparking profound tensions” (p. 14). Neoliberalism blends the traditionally male-dominated spheres of employment with a new kind of “radical” femininity where women are transgressing labour-based gender roles without changing men’s anticipated responsibilities (Alexandersson & Kalonaityte, 2020). While this girlboss shift was initially embraced, the economic downturn of the early 2020s led to a reactionary response from North American governments, where conservative policies were reinstated and favoured (Giroux and Bhattacharya, 2017). Instead of looking to corporations or governments for the fault of the pending recession, it is much easier to scrutinize the actions of individual women. Today, amidst diluted feminist ideals, we see similar trends prioritizing the ideals of individual choice that illiberally favour conservative values. It is no coincidence that “girl” discourse rose to popularity as authoritarian governments (re)gained control in North America, which stands to challenge the so-called empowering intent of girl boss feminism. I keep this in mind as I examine today’s terms such as “girl math”, “tradwives”, and “bimbo feminism”, in the North

American context. If girl boss feminism was supposed to liberate women through economic advancement, why did it not work?

### **“I’m Just a Girl”**

The word “girl” is a portal into understanding how women’s place in society is viewed. Many examples can be found on social media, including the beloved phrase “I’m just a girl”. The phrase first originated in American rock band No Doubt’s 1997 hit single “I’m Just a Girl”, where Gwen Stefani sings about the frustrations of being continuously belittled in a male-dominated society. Decades later, the phrase is most commonly used to justify a woman’s personal inadequacies, which are seemingly attributed to her unavoidable, inherent femininity. When searching for the phrase on social media platforms, one will find countless TikTok videos of women displaying the aftermath of their poor driving skills or imperfect behaviour, all while No Doubt plays in the background. The constructed identity of the patronized “girl” shields women from responsibility, accountability, intelligence, and competency, deeming them incapable while suggesting that these are inherently masculine qualities. Similar online terms like “girl dinner” depict women engaging in small, erratic, and disorganized meals and eating patterns—an ironic act of infantilization given the prolific stereotype of women’s domesticity. Internet users have also developed a tendency to tack the word “girl” onto any profession performed by a woman in a given instance (for example, “girl doctor”, “girl pilot”, “girl philosopher”). There is even a trend to “colour” occupations and labour into “pink” or “blue” jobs, where domestic

tasks are defined as pink while duties that require physical labour are identified as blue (MegantheDoula, 2015). This “pink job” trend returns us to gender essentialism, reinforcing the belief that certain tasks are supposedly hardwired in our biology and, thus, should be satisfied to achieve a harmonious society. Perhaps one of the most damning terms to emerge is “girl math”, which *The Cut* (2024) defines as women engaging in “fiscally questionable behaviour that is risky but mostly harmless in the big picture” (Cohen, 2023). However, the online embrace of the term ignores the societal implications of re-gendering the concept of the economy and the modern woman’s place within it, overlooking how these prefixes are misogynistic in the first place. Not only does the use of a feminized prefix sustain harmful gender roles, but the word “girl” is problematized in this context because it implies a particular age and intelligence level of the woman in question. Alexandersson and Kalonaiyte (2021) aptly point out that the “commercialization of girlhood [may be] a problematic neoliberal co-optation of its non-threatening features” (p. 417). When the word “girl” is used in an infantilizing manner, it depoliticizes the female experience. A “girl” is more docile than a woman who might demand agency, recognition, and systemic change.

### **Reclamations of Femininity: Bimbo Feminism and Choice Feminism**

Another concept recently embraced online is “bimbo feminism”, a supposedly well-meaning attempt at reclaiming the term “bimbo” which has long been negatively associated with the idea of “an attractive but unintelligent or frivolous young woman” (The Commonwealth Times & Matthews, 2023). However, “bimbo feminism” is implicated in reproducing the harmful patriarchal stereotypes

that it claims to critique by representing women and their endeavours as intellectually inferior to those of men. A fascinating case study of “bimbo feminism” can be found in the famous TikTok creator Nikita (@nikitadumptruck). Boasting nearly one million followers on TikTok, the young, fashionable, and conventionally attractive Nikita has amassed online popularity by explaining current events through stereotypically feminine metaphors and interests, such as shopping and gossip. Her online persona revolves around intentionally speaking with an “upspeak”—an inflection associated with unintelligent women and a necessary element of the bimbo archetype. Though Nikita’s content is amusing, educational, and appears harmless, her bimbo feminist schtick reinforces the oppressive belief that women are incapable of comprehending knowledge and logic to the same standards as men (or are simply uninterested in complex topics). @nikitadumptruck’s content is celebrated under the guise of female empowerment, but its implications are more dire: women are not smart enough to grasp politics, so we must dumb it down for them to understand.

A common defence of “bimbo feminism” (as with all of the slang terms discussed in this article) is that women should get to *choose* how they engage with their femininity. While true at its core, these conceptualizations of femininity are inherently patriarchal and ignore why conforming to gendered stereotypes is harmful. Conforming to stereotypes *is* an exertion of agency, however it is *not* liberatory. These internet-derived terms, while appearing as a bold act of reclamation, do not change how women view oppressive forces. It instead perpetuates the same problems that it claims to

challenge. While choice feminists believe that a woman's right to choose is inherently feminist because it is an exertion of agency and, therefore, a path to liberation itself (Sykes & Hopner, 2024), Ferguson (2010) explains choice feminism as “motivated by a fear of politics”:

[Choice feminism] arises in response to three common criticisms of feminism: that feminism is too radical, too exclusionary, and too judgmental. In response, choice feminism offers a worldview that does not challenge the status quo, that promises to include all women regardless of their choices, and that abstains from judgment altogether. Moreover, it enables feminists to sidestep the difficulties of making the personal political: making judgments and demanding change of friends, family, and lovers. Yet judgment, exclusion, and calls for change are unavoidable parts of politics. (p. 247)

Perpetuating choice feminism contributes to a culture that depoliticizes the actions of individuals under institutional control and assimilation (Ferguson, 2010). It is important to note that “bimbo feminism” is not explicitly anti-feminist in the way that misogyny is, but conceals a persistent *layer* of misogyny. Just because a movement is pursued by a woman does not mean it is feminist.

### **“Tradwives” and the Manipulation of Optics**

The development of the term “tradwife” (an abbreviation of “traditional wife”) has continued the trend of promoting gender essentialism—specifically, women's return to domesticity. Online, the “tradwife” is typically depicted through lifestyle content where stay-at-home mothers detail their

homemaking practices by way of short-form, skillfully edited TikTok videos (West-Rosenthal, 2024).

Sykes and Hopner (2024) define the “tradwife’s” characteristics:

All Tradwives shared a rejection of feminism and identification as feminine, not feminist. [...]

The role of women in society, as interpreted by Tradwives, is to be and act as a feminine woman should (to cook, clean, bear children, and support her husband). [...] [They] advocate for a societal reinvigoration of conservative religious and/or traditional heteronormative beliefs about sex and gender. (p. 474)

Nara Smith (@naraazizasmith), a 23-year-old influencer with over twelve million followers on TikTok, has been celebrated and critiqued in popular discourse for her “tradwife” content in recent years. She initially garnered attention for making all of her children’s meals and snacks from scratch while dressed in elaborate, expensive clothing. Smith’s appeal relates to her carefully-curated aesthetic, part of what makes “tradwives” enticing is the 1950s nostalgia they evoke (Sykes and Hopner, 2024). This nostalgia is trapped in the perpetual romanticization of a time before modern feminism: a fantasy that survives because it commodifies white, Western feminine ideals into a culturally and historically protected package (Estey-Burt, 2024).

Aside from her domestic tasks, Smith is also an ultra-thin professional model who dons luxury fashion that is typically modest and conforms to the traditional housewife aesthetic. This portrayal of perfect domesticity—always “done up” to do simple household chores—is not only unrealistic but also

contributes to an unattainable standard of motherhood and femininity for women to live up to. Online “tradwife” content is also rife with an (un)subtle tone of condescension relating to what constitutes a “good” mother. Because these “tradwife” influencers are stay-at-home moms, they position themselves as more present, active, and loving caretakers than so-called liberal, career-motivated women. One must remember that “tradwife” influencers selectively curate and perform their lifestyles for the attention economy of the internet. This conveniently conceals that influencers like Smith are typically wealthy and privileged enough to live on one stream of income (their husband’s), ignoring the many class-based obstacles that would lead mothers to balance a family and a career.

The purpose of Smith’s lifestyle content is to encourage and glamorize homemaking, promoting a return to the white nuclear family who follow conservative (Christian) family values. It is also important to note that Smith is a mixed Black woman in a biracial relationship with a white man. This modern conception of the nuclear family would be generally unacceptable in the 20th-century pre-feminist nostalgia that she is promoting, a tension she does not address (Samuelsson, 2025). While it might seem that Smith is remodelling the idea of what a traditional family can look like, her depictions of femininity and motherhood are based on the model white housewife, leaving white heteropatriarchal ideals and aesthetics unchallenged.

However, while Smith may be subscribing to the patriarchy in ways that are visible to the public, the fact remains that she earns an income from her social media content—she ironically

benefits from a dual-income lifestyle that is branded as “liberal”. In a 2025 interview, Smith denounced her status as a true “tradwife” by admitting that her paid labour in modelling, brand deals, and social media content restricts her ability to devote herself entirely to homemaking and childcare (Jay Shetty Podcast, 2025). She elaborates that her and her husband have a more egalitarian relationship than what may be deduced from her online content (Jay Shetty Podcast, 2025).

Social media is a burgeoning and relatively opaque form of employment. Algorithms and brand deals obscure the public from knowing exactly how much Nara Smith and other influencers earn from their content, allowing Smith to fly under the radar as a high-earning woman while sustaining a facade of passivity and unchallengeable femininity (Sykes & Hopner, 2024). Though Smith has led the “tradwife” online wave in recent years, her recent attempt to divorce herself from this identification discloses that this was apparently accidental. Naturally, this provokes me to wonder: why did Smith separate herself from the “tradwife” label when she undoubtedly profits from it? Does it benefit her brand to distance herself from the archetype, or could Smith herself be feeling like she is failing to live up to these unattainable standards of femininity and motherhood? Regardless of the reason behind Smith’s public distancing from the “tradwife” label, her choice to do so reifies and substantiates it as an identity marker, which is monumental in itself.

### **Trend Adoption and Shifting Ideologies**

Having explored the terms and their positions within contemporary discourse, I now turn to the genesis of these trends and investigate how users engage with and adopt certain identities and dominant ideologies. Sun and Ding (2024) define an influencer as someone who “[gains] followers and fame by producing content on platforms” (p. 1). Not only do influencers promote products through brand deals, but endorse *themselves* and their lifestyles by “self-branding [...] and selling it on the labour market” (Sun & Ding, 2024, pp. 1–2). Influencers themselves are the product which people buy with engagement. Sun and Ding also note that influencers encourage subliminal messaging surrounding gender politics). This is illustrated in the content of both @nikitadumptruck and @naraazizasmith, who promote patriarchal archetypes of women. But who leads this shift in ideology: the figureheads or the audience?

In Zhang et al.'s (2016) longitudinal study examining how trends reach mainstream audiences and patterns of engagement, they found that while a term might originate from one or two users, mass engagement is what creates a widespread trend. The authors observed that there are two chances (or two “spikes” in collective usage of a word) for a new term to “receive collective attention and become a trend”, which occur approximately 103 days apart (p. 3). An initial spike in word usage suggests that a term did achieve some traction, but eventually fizzled out. However, a second spike confirms that the term gained another wave of popularity among additional users who continue using it. With the case of “bimbo feminism”, it is not solely because of influencers like @nikitadumptruck that the movement

achieved widespread attention. While singular influencers may introduce their audiences to words and phrases in a specific context, a larger crowd must validate the use of a term for it to become a trend.

It is important to emphasize that trends do not become widespread without capitalist support; social media platforms are not neutral (Cunningham, 2024). “Girl boss” and “girl math” emerged during periods when the terms could be of the most benefit to the hegemonic sociocultural narrative, both deeply tied to the economic conditions of their time. While “girl boss” discourse was popularized during a wave of liberal power where identity politics (rather than structural change) were a main priority (Hetland & Goodwin, 2013), “girl math” has developed during a conservative and fascist resurgence that uses fear-mongering as a form of social control (Giroux & Bhattacharya, 2017). Cunningham (2024) states that when “girl boss” language took over the feminist landscape around 2017, it allowed capitalist beneficiaries (large corporations, political parties, and the 1%) to reap the benefits of the paid labour of women while neglecting structural inequalities. This model of feminism claims that women and men will be equal when women are allowed a seat at the boardroom table (Cunningham, 2024), while dismissing how a focus on identity politics conceals the realities of material inequality based on the characterization of labour itself (Hetland & Goodwin, 2013).

If “girl math” discourse recognizes women as socially and economically inferior to the male sex by playing into stereotypes of the financially irresponsible woman (Matthews, 2023), policymakers can easily exploit this by suggesting women return to the home and become “tradwives”, allowing so-called

deserving men to continue accumulating economic and social capital. Sykes and Hopner (2023) argue that “tradwife” content accelerates the societal return to a more traditional, conservative culture. Similarly, Mitchell (2021) stresses that when women perform sustained unpaid domestic labour, men are offered more opportunities for economic success, which continues to limit opportunities for women. In the case of Nara Smith, there is a unique irony in engaging with *paid* labour through the promotion of her *domestic* labour. Smith is an example of how the lines of economic and domestic labour become necessarily blurred by neoliberal cultural norms that work to transform domesticity as a position financially feasible in itself (Sykes & Hopner, 2024). However, she has not publicized (until recently) that social media is a source of her income because this income is contrary to everything she claims to stand for. Smith benefits from the core of liberal feminism—the ability to join the workforce—while subliminally progressing the ideology of choice feminism and traditional gender roles (Sykes & Hopner, 2024). “Tradwife” influencers reveal the performance of domesticity while simultaneously concealing themselves behind the curtain of the digital marketplace.

Oftentimes, “tradwife” influencers eventually launch their own companies or brands, which directly contradicts their self-proclaimed domesticity. The young Mormon women of MomTok, a collective of influencers who have enjoyed mainstream attention through their hit reality program *The Secret Lives of Mormon Wives* (2024), are worth exploring. These mom-influencers initially gained notoriety through fun and well-crafted lifestyle content, later shifting to advertise themselves as personal brands funded by corporate sponsors. This employment arrangement—social media

influencing as a primary source of income—is only available to women with the material conditions and aesthetic for an enviable lifestyle (Samuelsson, 2025). MomTok consists of thin, economically privileged, conventionally attractive, (mostly) white women with their white husbands, maintaining the same heteropatriarchal family ideals that “tradwifery” promotes. Upholding an external appearance of a certain lifestyle is more important than what occurs behind the scenes; this kind of content sells because it is attractive and pleasing for viewers to engage with. It offers an ideal to live up to, ignoring the disconnect that makes this lifestyle possible for some and not for others.

An individual’s economic conditions drastically impact the strength of the feminist movement. As bell hooks (2004) discusses, when some reformed feminist women “[gain] power, and especially economic parity with the men of their class, they [...] pretty much [lose] interest in feminism” (p. 110). In response to a period of polarization, economic precarity, and the proliferation of right-wing politics, the gendered roles we inhabit in society are up for debate once again. Forces that benefit from patriarchal hierarchy, such as the government, the corporate elite, and claims-makers, adapt to extract as much labour and capital as possible while maintaining the conditions for this extraction through obfuscation. It is no coincidence that “tradwife” culture “commodifies the politics of division and intolerance that inevitably threatens social cohesion” (Sykes & Hopner, 2023).

### **Identity Markers, Social Media, and Politics**

But are these discourses really changing anyone's politics, or are they simply reigniting previously held beliefs? In researching the link between a young adult's social media behaviours and political affiliation, Morales (2021) finds that young adults are especially "skeptical of mainstream institutions" and, therefore, rely on social media as their primary news source (pp. 14–15). A key influence in the development of a young person's political framework is the sense of community that they feel when engaging with others online; in this case, the terms "tradwife", "girl dinner", or self-describing as "just a girl" become ways to engage in camaraderie with their fellow internet users and form an emotional bond that sustains these political frameworks over time. This phenomenon is researched by Ozymenko and Larina (2021), who investigate the psychological and emotional response to particular kinds of media. The authors attribute the mass media's effect on society to a manipulation of fear among audiences, stating that "emotional events are recalled better than neutral events" (p. 748). By using inflammatory language, the media can inflate topics or manufacture panic around the sanctity of the traditional nuclear family. This coincides with the rise of conservative governments and their intentional use of affective politics: the use of fear for control and manipulation of the population (Giroux & Bhattacharya, 2017). This is a classic symptom of populist discourse; fear is used as a mobilization tactic by privileged individuals against vulnerable groups to facilitate precarity and reassert power. Giroux and Bhattacharya (2017) describe the conditions of this language:

Anti-democratic tendencies, extending from the militarization of everyday life to the takeover of the commanding institutions of society by the financial elite, work in tandem to neutralize

dissent, eliminate antagonisms, and create spectacles to divert the masses from real social and political problems. In addition, empathy is paralyzed by the mobilization of hate, and sympathy for the other is replaced by a culture and politics of vengeance. (p. 505)

Populist discourse is dangerous, not only due to how it restricts individual choice into traditional conservative frameworks, but also for how it mobilizes mass hatred and precarity. It eliminates the capacity for nuanced discussion and healthy debate by exacerbating fear. This sort of language is exactly what sells on social media; it is click-worthy, attention-grabbing content that social media companies encourage. More time spent on their platforms means more money in their pockets, regardless of the social and individual consequences of having this information at our fingertips whenever we desire.

Research identifies that mass audiences adopt these patriarchal ideologies due to intentional, spectacle-oriented algorithms and the profit-oriented gaze of media executives. Discourse shapes our understanding of ourselves, the world, and our place in it as we reify our senses of self through performance and imitation (Foucault, 1976). Terms like “girl boss” and “tradwife” give form to abstract political and economic patriarchal motivations, turning domination (and relation to it) into aesthetic identity markers to ascribe to. This is why it matters that women are only offered a subordinate identity if they want to belong. Rharzouz et al. (2024) state that a woman’s self-efficacy is directly linked to her achieved success. If successful in promoting “popular” patriarchal ideas, these social media platforms push misogynistic expectations of *incapability* onto women, presumably to

alter actionable behaviours and life trajectories. If women can make well-informed economic decisions and feel confident in doing so, these narratives may not hold as much weight. When women see themselves as capable, agentic individuals, femininity can go beyond “just” girlhood.

### **Implications for Sociological Knowledge and Practice**

It is important to be conscious of how the narratives presented to us become the truths we live by. I perceive the playful and seemingly harmless nature of terms like “girl math”, “girl dinner”, and phrases like “I’m just a girl” as a facade that distracts internet users from understanding these trends as reconstructions of oppressive ideals. Despite research establishing that social media trends gain traction through authentic, widespread audience engagement, it is also true that platforms and corporate actors benefit from these profit-maximizing tools of capitalism; if something’s gaining traction, someone’s making money.

Literature demonstrates that popular internet trends and the influencers who market them emerge in response to prevailing societal attitudes, as larger audiences must adopt them in order for them to cross into the mainstream. One must remember that social media platforms are not neutral tools—they are used by political parties and individual claim-makers to promote viewpoints that sell or benefit their political projects. Popularity is profit, and social media platforms have no true stake in either side of an argument except for the profit that the executives can extract (Cunningham, 2024). Women are affected by these patriarchal, oppressive discourses in varying ways, which differ based on class, race, and location, especially in the realization of a single-income ‘traditional’ lifestyle.

In the wake of “bimbo feminism”, “tradwives”, and “girl math”, the liberal feminist “girl boss” is replaced because the concept is no longer marketable in a time when conservative politics dominate governments and popular culture alike. It is more beneficial for domestic womanhood to be positioned as a normative and *satisfying* prospect so women can better fulfill their destined role as a mother and wife, rather than question why those are their only options. Even though these trends are often presented *by* female influencers, it is vital to identify how these women are (perhaps accidental) agents of the patriarchy by endorsing them. If feminism is supposed to interrogate patriarchal systems and norms, it is only successful when its analysis is targeted and comprehensive. It should challenge widely accepted norms and call for structural changes that destabilize and overthrow the patriarchy. Choice feminism—the ethos that enables the patriarchal internet phrases analyzed in this paper—is a neoliberal attempt at avoiding these systemic issues and simply reducing liberation to a matter of individual choice. Every slang term examined conceals a combination of misogynistic elements with an underlying capitalist stance. The term “girl boss” both demeans and encourages a woman’s place in the paid workforce, bimbo feminism and “girl math” patronize women as simply incapable and unintelligent individuals, and “tradwife” is an attempt to return to mid-century conservatism and domesticity. Coining or defending these terms as “feminist” within patriarchal, capitalist structures is a futile effort. We cannot “girl math” our way to collective liberation.

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