



Trad Wives vs. Sad Wives?

It's a sign of the times that "trad wives" are a growing phenomenon on the internet. Oh, it's not just that this movement — of traditional women content tending to hearth and home — represents a rebellion against feminism-driven female careerism. It's that this special status reflects how society has been completely transformed. After all, not long ago in history the term "trad wife" didn't exist because the role was the default.

Something close to it still might be if American women had their way. A 2015 Gallup poll [found](#) that 56 percent of women with children would rather stay home than go to work and that 39 percent of childless women under 18 said they wanted to be homemakers. (This is interesting given how intense careerist conditioning has been.) In light of this, perhaps it's not surprising that trad-wife influencers are gaining in popularity and sparking conversation.

As to that conversation, one Jo Piazza at website Bustle [asked](#) in a recent title, "Are Trad Wives Happier Than Women In Equal Relationships?" (This is actually impossible to answer because "equal relationships" don't exist. More on that later.) While Piazza doesn't definitively answer the question and isn't going to become Donna Reed anytime soon, she does confess that she sometimes longs for the order and simplicity of the traditional arrangement. Her opening story perhaps explains why.

"During a recent argument with my husband over chores, kid stuff, and who was doing more for our household, Nick threw up his hands and muttered:

'What do you want?'" Piazza relates.

"'I want a wife,' I spat through gritted teeth," she continues.

Claiming "wife" was the wrong word, Piazza then explained, "I wanted someone to silently cook and clean and care for the children while I focused on work." (Piazza should perhaps ponder how work is not an end unto itself; for a parent, family life is the end and work, when necessary, is a means to that end.) She then explains that such a "wife" actually does exist — on social media.

"Over the past year, there's been a rise of content on TikTok and Instagram of the 'trad wife,' a woman who claims to be submissive to her husband in all things and who dedicates herself solely to cooking, cleaning, and child-rearing without complaint," Piazza writes. "They're often found in flowery dresses with their hair perfectly coiffed, because that is the way their spouses like them to look. These women are largely white, conservative, and Christian, though they are often not politics- or religion-forward when it comes to describing themselves and their brands on social media."



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Now, as Piazza points out, at least some of this is an act, as being an “influencer” is performance art.

Nonetheless, as she also mentions, “At the very least, these trad wife accounts portray motherhood as something dignified, as a real purpose that has value.” Most true.

But what of Piazza’s opening question about happiness? The first thing we must establish is what we’re actually comparing the trad wife model to — and it’s not that marital unicorn called an “equal relationship.”

In reality, it’s hard finding many American men today who aren’t dominated by their wives. How common it is to hear the poor saps say things such as, when asked if they can do something, “Well, I’ll have to speak to the *boss* first”; or, when talking about the prospect of doing something “unapproved,” “Yeah, but then you’ll *get it* when you come home.”

These can’t just be dismissed as jokes, either, for you never, *ever* hear women talk that way. The reality is that the hen-pecked man — as portrayed even in older sitcoms such as *The Honeymooners* and *Amos ‘n’ Andy* — has long been the American norm.

In fact, a marriage can’t be wholly equal because, as C.S. Lewis pointed out in *Mere Christianity*, there cannot be a democracy of two — for the votes cancel each other out.

Someone must cast the deciding vote.

So now that the “equality” myth is put to bed, let’s move on to another misconception. Research (for whatever it’s worth) [paints](#) a mixed picture on whether homemakers or career women are more content. As for Piazza, she asks, “If I could concentrate on my home and kids instead of on the six jobs I’m doing right now — in addition to running our household — would that make me happier?” Is this, however, the right question?

How about this instead: “If I could concentrate on my home and kids instead of on the six jobs I’m doing right now — in addition to running our household — would my children benefit and the home be better run?”

We all want happiness, of course. But, first, the inordinate focus on our *own* happiness is self-centered. Second, you do not find happiness by seeking happiness; you find happiness by seeking virtue, part of the exercise of which involves serving others (such as spouse and kids). Fixation on self doesn’t yield contentment, but leaves you empty.

Speaking of which and going back to data, what we do know is that young, liberal, white women — the antitheses of traditional ladies — appear the most unhappy of all. To wit: A 2021 Pew Research Center study found that 56.3 percent of these women [have been diagnosed](#) with a “mental health” problem.

Returning to the matter of homemakers, perhaps no one sang the role’s praises better than G.K. Chesterton. As he [wrote](#), a mother is surrounded “with very young children, who require to be taught not so much anything as everything. Babies need not to be taught a trade, but to be introduced to a world.”

“How can it be a large career to tell other people’s children about the Rule of Three [arithmetic], and a small career to tell one’s own children about the universe?” he elaborated. “How can it be broad to be the same thing to everyone, and narrow to be everything to someone? No; a woman’s function is laborious, but because it is gigantic, not because it is minute. I will pity Mrs. Jones for the hugeness of her task; I will never pity her for its smallness.”



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Of course, you could just focus on being the same thing to everyone, on that career — until you die, and then you'll again be the same thing to everyone: forgotten.



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