



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on September 16, 2014

Women More Likely to Commit Domestic Violence, Studies Show

Football player Ray Rice's video-captured February attack on his then-fiancée has once again brought domestic violence into the public's consciousness.

Or has it?

Critics would say that while it has placed a spotlight on violence against women, that isn't at all synonymous with "domestic violence."



Because studies show that most domestic violence may actually be violence against men.

This has just been brought to light by *Guardian* columnist Glen Poole, who recently [asked](#) why British actress Kelly Brook has "got away with punching two men"? Complaining that there "is little room for the female perpetrator or the male victim in mainstream modern discourse around violence and [sex]," he goes on to point out:

Women are committing violence against men and boys on a daily basis.... International research suggests that as much as half of domestic violence is committed against men, but in the UK, fewer than [sic] 7% of convicted perpetrators are female. So what can we learn from Brook's refusal to take responsibility for her own celebrity violence? She is clearly no ordinary women [sic], but the gender script she is performing is predictably ordinary.

Yet not only is this information about sex and violence nothing new, some would say Poole is understating the case. For example, Sophie Goodchild reported in a 2000 *Guardian* piece on a study showing that women were actually more likely to initiate violence in relationships, [writing](#):

The study ... is based on an analysis of 34,000 men and women by a British academic. Women lash out more frequently than their husbands or boyfriends, concludes John Archer, professor of psychology at the University of Central Lancashire and president of the International Society for Research on Aggression.

... Professor Archer analysed data from 82 US and UK studies on relationship violence, dating back to 1972. He also looked at 17 studies based on victim reports from 1,140 men and women.... [H]e said that female aggression was greater in westernised women because they were "economically emancipated" and therefore not afraid of ending a relationship.

This is likely only a small part of why women have become more violent, however. Other observers point out that some women will take advantage of domestic-violence laws and procedures, knowing that if a man they assault retaliates, calling the police will generally result in the onus being placed on him. In addition, increased female domestic assault is part and parcel of a decades-long rise in female violence in general. As Meda Chesney-Lind [wrote](#) in a 2001 edition of *Criminal Justice* magazine:

Girls in the juvenile justice system were once dubbed the "forgotten few." That concept has rapidly faded as the increase in the number of girls arrested has dramatically outstripped that of boys for



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most of the last decade. Girls now account for one out of four arrests, and statistics show the greatest increase in arrests is for violent offenses. This shift highlights both the need to better understand the dynamics of female delinquency and the need to tailor the criminal justice system's response.

... Between 1989 and 1998 ... arrests of girls for serious violent offenses increased by 64.3 percent and arrests of girls for "other assaults" increased an astonishing 125.4 percent.

The research group The Future of Children [adds](#), "Between 1985 and 2002, the overall number of delinquency cases for girls increased 92 percent."

Moreover, while the rise in female violence seems to have slowed since the early 2000s, the pattern is continuing and is reflected across the Western world and, to an extent, beyond. For instance, while the number of criminal offenses committed by young men has dropped slightly in the U.K., the "number of crimes committed by girls has jumped by a quarter over three years," [wrote](#) the BBC in 2008. There is also evidence that schoolgirl bullying, historically emotional in character, is becoming increasingly physical.

Experts say there are multiple reasons for this. For starters, while feminist doctrine impugns masculinity, it has quite paradoxically cast many male norms (and even vices) as a gold standard to be embraced by girls seeking true emancipation. Thus have females been encouraged to be lustful in the name of "sexual liberation"; thus have they been fed "girl power" messages stressing assertiveness; and thus have they been exposed to masculinized female characters on TV who model violent behavior, fighting like — and usually with — men. Being ladylike is viewed today as existence in a patriarchal pillory.

Then there's the Bonnie and Clyde factor. Dr. Ann Hagell, who co-authored a major study on anti-social behavior, points out that while youth of yesteryear socialized mainly in single-sex groups, girls today "come into contact with boys who provide the temptation" to violence, [wrote](#) the BBC. As psychologist and author Elie Godsi [put it](#), "There's a lot more of a 'ladette' culture where young women are aping and mimicking the traditional behaviour young men engage in." (This lends support to the thesis that girls are imbibing the feminist conception of male behavior as gold standard.) Related to this is that some girls admit to engaging in violence for the same reason boys often do: to impress others — in the girls' case, older boys.

Yet since men still greatly predominate in the violent-crime statistics — and since, owing to greater male size and strength, women constitute the bulk of those seriously injured through domestic violence — the finding that women are more likely than men to engage in domestic assault may seem counter-intuitive. But it makes sense. After all, boys to a great degree are still raised with the prohibition "You don't hit girls"; there is no corresponding prohibition for females, however, and they're no longer raised with the companion teaching, "Ladies don't hit at all."

But while ladies aren't always ladies and may be hitting more, the men they assault aren't talking more. As the *Guardian's* Ippo Panteloudakis [wrote](#) in March:

[A] lot of men say they are embarrassed to talk about what has been happening; that they should be able to cope because they are men; and that people will laugh at them if they disclose that their partner hits, slaps, punches, swears, belittles or abuses them in any other way. They say they will not be believed, that the police will not take them seriously, or that they don't want to press charges against their partner.



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And their worries are well founded. Just consider [this](#) video, involving male and female actors role-playing violent intra-relationship disputes in public. When the man assaulted the woman, bystanders intervened, took a strong stance against him and threatened to call the police. When the woman assaulted the man, however, both male and female bystanders just stood by, smiling and chuckling at the girl-power display.

So if girls were once sugar and spice and everything nice, it appears that recipe has changed. And, unfortunately, this seems to suit many modern palates just fine.



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