Psychology of Women Quarterly
2015, Vol. 39(1) 67-84

DOI: 10.1177/0361684314521784
pwq.sagepub.com
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You Looking at Her "Hot" Body May Not be "Cool" for Me: Integrating Male Partners' Pornography Use into Objectification Theory for Women

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Abstract

Within objectification theory research, sexual objectification is typically operationalized as interpersonal sexual objectification—being targets of body evaluation and unwanted sexual advances. We argue that women's male partners' pornography use could be integrated within objectification theory as another form of sexual objectification and negatively linked to women's well-being. College women ($N = 171$) rated how often their current and previous male partners viewed pornography and whether pornography use bothered them. They also completed measures of objectification theory constructs, internalization of cultural beauty standards, relationship attachment, self-esteem, body appreciation, and negative affect. The extent to which women were bothered by partner pornography use was controlled in all analyses. Path analysis revealed that previous partners' pornography use (a) directly predicted interpersonal sexual objectification, internalization, and eating disorder symptomatology and (b) indirectly predicted body surveillance and body shame through internalization. In hierarchical regressions, previous partners' pornography use inversely predicted self-esteem and body appreciation and positively predicted relationship anxiety and negative affect. Current partners' pornography use was not linked to any criterion. Researchers should more comprehensively examine partners' pornography use in relation to women's distress. Practitioners may consider exploring male partners' pornography use in female clients' relationship histories and its potential associations with their well-being when relevant to them. *Additional online materials for this article are available to PWQ subscribers on PWQ's website at http://pwq.sagepub.com/supplemental.*

Keywords

pornography, objectification, media exposure, body image, well-being, eating disorders, relationship quality

> I am no longer a sexual *person* or partner to him, but a sexual *object*. He is not really with *me*, not really making love to *me* when we have intercourse. He seems to be thinking about something or someone else—likely those porn women—or he is just inserting me to play a role in some novel sexual scenario that he saw somewhere. He is just using me as a warm body.

The above quotation was taken from a participant in Bergner and Bridges' (2002, p. 197) qualitative study and represents a woman's reactions to her male partner's frequent pornography use. This woman describes experiencing *sexual objectification*, defined by Fredrickson and Roberts (1997, p. 174) as "being treated *as a body* (or collection of body parts) valued predominantly for its use to (or consumption by) others," from her partner's pornography use. Objectification theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) serves as a useful framework for studying sexual objectification among women. This theory specifies that being sexually objectified encourages women to adopt an observer's perspective of their body (i.e., to self-objectify), which is deleterious to their well-being in a multitude of ways. Within objectification theory research, sexual objectification has been operationalized as being the receiving target of gaze or body evaluation, unwanted sexual advances, and sexually objectifying media content (Aubrey, 2006; Augustus-Horvath & Tylka, 2009; Calogero, 2004; Engeln-Maddox, Miller, & Doyle, 2011; Moradi, Dirks, & Matteson, 2005; Morry & Staska, 2001).

Women's male partners' pornography use also can be considered a form of sexual objectification (Attwood, 2004). Pornography promotes sexual gaze by creating "highly idealized

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fantasies made precisely to the fantasizer's order" (Bergner & Bridges, 2002, p. 202). Women in pornography are presented as the object of this sexual gaze, and they are defined according to how they will bring pleasure to the observer—for example, the title describes the specific acts they perform and physical attributes they have so the observer knows exactly what to expect (Strager, 2003). When women know that their male partners view pornography, their concern regarding their partners' sexual attraction toward their own body increases (Schneider, 2000; Zitzman & Butler, 2009). Being aware that her male partner is "watching" other women's bodies likely directs her thoughts to how her partner may be "watching" and "assessing" her body; thus, she likely self-objectifies by adopting her partner's perspective of her own body (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Also, women in pornography tend to conform to cultural beauty ideals (i.e., they are thin or curvaceously thin), with a small waist and an average-to-large bust size (Owen & Laurel-Seller, 2000). For example, the average Playboy model has a body mass index of 18.0 (Sypeck et al., 2006), which is underweight (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013); a large bust-to-waist ratio (of 1.53; Seifert, 2005); and a bra cup size between C and D (Belle Curves, 2013). Therefore, knowing that her male partner is looking at and likely masturbating to thin/curvaceously thin women in pornography could heighten a woman's body focus and pressure to lose weight.

Studying partners' pornography use as a form of sexual objectification is timely given the prevalence of pornography within Western culture. In the United States, the pornography industry generates an estimated US$13 billion per year (US$100 billion worldwide; Ropelato, 2007), making pornography a bigger business than professional football, basketball, and baseball combined (Rich, 2001). Young adult men are the most frequent purveyors of pornography, with approximately 87% reporting that they view pornography: 50% viewing it weekly and 20% viewing it daily or every other day (Carroll et al., 2008). Pornography consumption has risen since 1995 due to the accessibility, affordability, and anonymity of Internet pornography, which is the primary source for pornography among young adult men (Manning, 2006; O'Reilly, Knox, & Zusman, 2007). Hence, many young adult women are confronted with knowledge that their male partners use pornography, making this form of sexual objectification a common occurrence.

Several researchers have qualitatively examined reports from women who were distressed upon discovering their male partners' pornography use and who sought emotional support and effective solutions from professionals. These women often reported feelings of sexual inadequacy, negative body image, and heightened awareness of their bodies as sex objects (Bergner & Bridges, 2002; Zitzman & Butler, 2005). Anticipating that their partners are critiquing their bodies against women in pornography was linked to them questioning their own appearance and sexual desirability (Zitzman & Butler, 2005). One qualitative study found that women labeled their bodies as "fat," "ugly," and "old" because they compared themselves physically to the women in pornography watched by their partners (Bergner & Bridges, 2002). Because objectification theory connects sexual objectification with women's orientation to their bodies, it may be a useful framework from which to include partners' pornography use. Although Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) acknowledged pornography as a form of sexual objectification, researchers have not yet examined partners' pornography use within the objectification theory framework. Thus, our first goal was to conduct a preliminary investigation of women's reports on their current and previous male partners' pornography use and determine whether this use is related to objectification theory constructs in a predictable manner.

Partners' Pornography Use and Objectification Theory

Figure 1 displays the model we examined in the present study. This model (a) includes the paths specified in objectification theory and upheld in research on this theory and (b) integrates male partners' pornography use into the model based on qualitative data from women who sought help for their male partners' pornography use. In the following, we present a rationale for each path.

Path a. Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) proposed that being sexually objectified through forms such as body evaluation (e.g., gaze) and unwanted sexual advances (e.g., touching against their will) encourages women to self-objectify, which is often operationalized by researchers as body surveillance (Moradi et al., 2005; Tylka & Hill, 2004). Research has supported the link from interpersonal sexual objectification to body surveillance (Augustus-Horvath & Tylka, 2009; Kozee, Tylka, Augustus-Horvath, & Denchik, 2007); thus, we included Path a in our model.

Paths b and c. Although not included in Fredrickson and Roberts' (1997) original theoretical conceptualization, internalization of cultural beauty standards is an important variable to include in our model, given that women portrayed in pornography often conform to these standards. To our knowledge, researchers have not yet investigated a link between women internalizing cultural beauty standards and their partners viewing pornography. However, it is plausible that women feel that their male partners are comparing them to the curvaceously thin women in pornography and then may internalize this body type as "most sexually attractive" and attempt to attain a similar figure to appear attractive to their partners. Some scholars have argued for the inclusion of internalization of cultural beauty standards in objectification theory research, asserting that "the extent to which one adopts cultural standards of beauty as one's own is an important intervening variable to consider in the relations of sexual objectification experiences with other objectification theory constructs" (Moradi & Huang, 2008, p. 386).

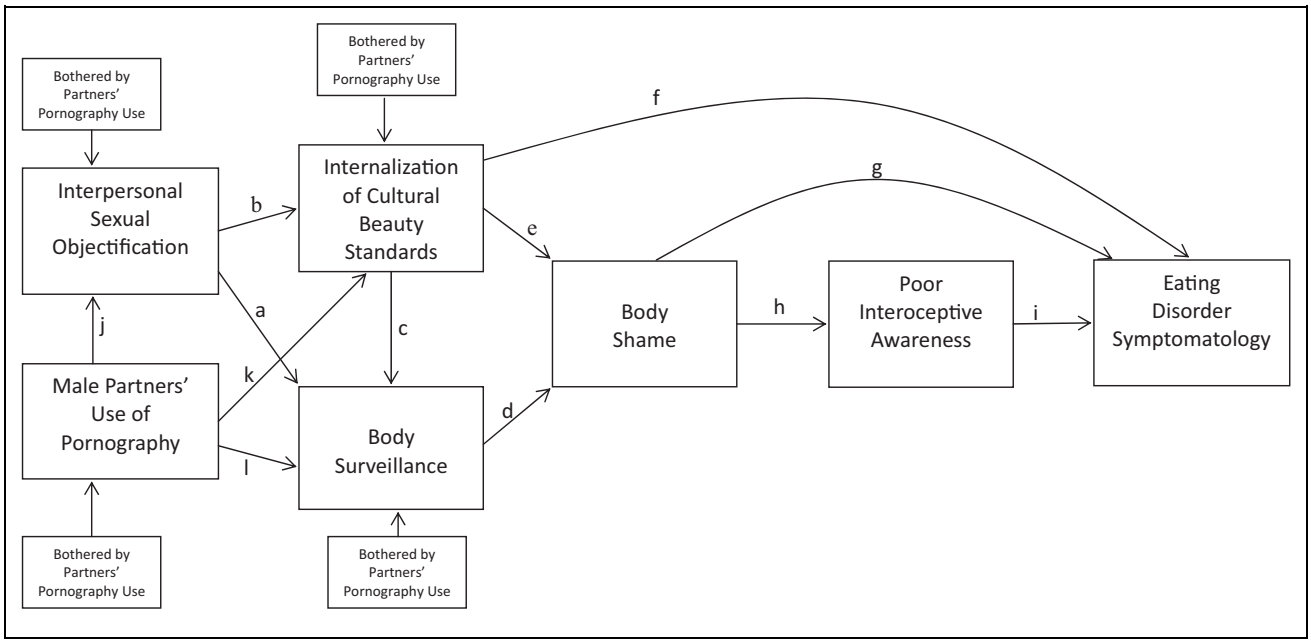

Figure 1. Hypothesized model integrating partner pornography use with the objectification theory framework.

In particular, internalization of cultural beauty standards appears to, at least partially, account for the relationship between interpersonal sexual objectification and body surveillance (Moradi et al., 2005; Myers & Crowther, 2007). Consistent with this research, we estimated a path from interpersonal sexual objectification to internalization of cultural beauty standards (Path b) and a path from internalization of cultural beauty standards to body surveillance (Path c).

Paths d and e. Body shame occurs when people "evaluate themselves relative to some internalized or cultural ideal and come up short" (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, p. 181). According to objectification theory scholars, habitually attending to outer appearance and internalizing cultural standards of beauty can promote body shame, and these links have garnered much empirical support among adult women (Augustus-Horvath & Tylka, 2009; Kozee & Tylka, 2006; Moradi et al., 2005; Tiggemann & Slater, 2001; Tylka & Hill, 2004). As such, we included paths from body surveillance to body shame (Path d) and internalization of cultural beauty standards to body shame (Path e).

Paths f and g. Proposed by objectification theory and supported by research (Moradi et al., 2005; Tylka & Hill, 2004), women who have internalized cultural beauty standards and are shameful of their bodies are more likely to engage in disordered eating. Hence, we hypothesized that internalization of cultural beauty standards and body shame would predict eating disorder symptomatology (Paths f and g).

Paths h and i. Objectification theory further argues that women who are ashamed of their bodies are more likely to suppress their internal hunger cues (perhaps these cues sabotage their weight loss attempts), and this suppression decreases awareness of these cues, which may facilitate and perpetuate disordered eating. These links are upheld by empirical research (Augustus-Horvath & Tylka, 2009; Kozee & Tylka, 2006; Tylka & Hill, 2004); thus, we specified Paths h and i.

Path j. Next, we conceptualized how male partners' use of pornography may be integrated within the objectification theory framework for women. Like other forms of media, pornography is a socialization agent for sexual attitudes and behavior (Svedin, Åkerman, & Priebe, 2011). Before and during sexual encounters, pornography often portrays men objectifying women via gazing at women's breasts and/or labia, nonpermitted aggressive and sexualized touching of women's body parts, making sexual and derogatory remarks about women's body parts, and engaging in forceful oral and anal sex despite women gagging and crying (Attwood, 2004). Moreover, pornography portrays women succumbing to this objectification, so male viewers may internalize a view that these behaviors are acceptable. According to the tenets of social learning theory (Bandura, 1983), men who view pornography may learn and transfer the objectifying behaviors they view in pornography to sexual encounters with their female partners (Check & Malamuth, 1986); therefore, men's pornography use may correspond to higher levels of experienced sexual objectification by their female partners. In fact, women reported being sexually objectified from male partners who heavily viewed pornography via expectations that they would engage in uncomfortable sexual positions and unpleasurable sexual acts (Bergner & Bridges, 2002; Zitzman & Butler, 2009). Thus, because pornography may socialize

men to treat their female partners in objectifying ways and believe that it is acceptable to do so, we specified a path from male partners' pornography use to women's interpersonal sexual objectification (Path j).

Paths k and l. The qualitative literature studying women who have sought help for their male partners' pornography use led us to hypothesize two additional paths. First, these women reported that their partners sexually desire women who conform to cultural beauty ideals (Bergner & Bridges, 2002). This realization may prompt women to adopt cultural beauty standards as a yardstick for determining what is sexually attractive. Thus, we included a path from male partners' pornography use to women's internalization of cultural beauty standards (path k). Second, upon discovery of their male partners' pornography use, women reported envisioning their bodies through their partners' eyes (Bergner & Bridges, 2002) and subsequently increased the monitoring of their appearance. We therefore specified a path from male partners' pornography use to women's body surveillance (Path l). The frequency women perceive their partners using pornography could determine the strength of these links.

Covariate paths. Importantly, we wanted to ensure that male partners' pornography use predicted the objectification theory constructs independent of women's reports that they are/would be bothered by this use. Girls and women are socialized that it is "cool" to participate in and embrace the sexualization of women (Attwood, 2004; Levy, 2005), which could include stating that they are not bothered by their male partners viewing pornography. We wanted to exclude any criterion variance contributed by their reports of being bothered by pornography use to ensure that it is indeed the behavior (i.e., the extent to which their male partners use pornography) that contributes to the objectification theory constructs. Therefore, to control for women's reports of being bothered by this anticipated or actual use, we included paths from this variable to male partners' pornography use and the variables that male partners' pornography use was anticipated to predict (i.e., interpersonal sexual objectification, internalization of cultural beauty standards, and body surveillance).

Mediation. Given that sexual objectification tends to work through internalization of cultural beauty standards to predict body surveillance (Moradi et al., 2005) and partners' use of pornography is a form of sexual objectification (Attwood, 2004), we examined whether internalization of cultural beauty standards mediates the link between male partners' use of pornography and women's body surveillance. Also, sexual objectification has been found to work through both internalization of cultural beauty standards and body surveillance to predict body shame (Moradi et al., 2005). Therefore, we examined whether both internalization of cultural beauty standards and body surveillance account for (i.e., mediate) the relationship between male partners' pornography use and women's body shame in our model.

Partners' Pornography Use and Women's Well-Being

Qualitative studies of women whose male partners heavily use pornography have revealed that these women reported lower relational and psychological well-being. First, women perceived that their partners' pornography use was connected to their inability to be intimately and authentically open and vulnerable within their relationships (Bridges, Bergner, & Hesson-McInnis, 2003; Zitzman & Butler, 2009). Women said that they felt insecure within their relationships, both in the present and the foreseeable future (Zitzman & Butler, 2009), suggesting attachment anxiety (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998). They also reported disconnecting and distancing themselves from their partners because they felt betrayed (Zitzman & Butler, 2009). Refraining from emotional intimacy is characteristic of attachment avoidance (Brennan et al., 1998).

Second, women from this qualitative research reported a personal struggle regarding the implications of their male partners' pornography use for their own self-worth and value (Bergner & Bridges, 2002; Bridges et al., 2003). Many women acknowledged thoughts that their partners' pornography use implied that they must be worthless and inadequate as partners and women. Many women criticized themselves for not leaving the relationship once they found out about their partners' pornography use and not taking a stand to demand respect within the relationship. Approximately 34% indicated that they questioned their self-worth after finding out about their partners' pornography use (Bridges et al., 2003).

Third, these women reported feeling less attractive and desirable after becoming aware of their male partners' pornography use (Bridges et al., 2003). They reported heightened attention to their body flaws and downplaying their bodies' positive appearance-related qualities (Bergner & Bridges, 2002). Overall, women had a hard time appreciating their bodies once they realized that their partners viewed pornography.

Fourth, women reported negative emotions surrounding their male partners' pornography use, indicating that it confronted them with a new world that they found "devastating, confusing, and incomprehensible" (Bergner & Bridges, 2002, p. 195; Schneider, 2000). According to Schneider (2000), these women experienced hurt, anger, and frustration—all indicators of negative affect—when discussing their partners' pornography use. Women who reported the highest perceived levels of partner pornography use were the most distressed about this use, even if they did not have overly unfavorable views of pornography use (Bridges et al., 2003).

Given that these findings were obtained from small samples of women who sought help for their male partners' pornography use, their levels and types of distress may not be representative of a broader range of women. We wished to determine whether these findings would transfer to quantitative research with women who were not recruited based on

whether they were seeking help for their male partners' pornography use. Therefore, our second goal for the present study was to examine whether partners' pornography use predicted psychological distress markers uncovered in qualitative research with selected samples. We hypothesized that male partners' pornography use would be positively associated with relationship anxiety and avoidance and negative affect, as well as inversely associated with self-esteem and body appreciation. We explored these variables outside our hypothesized model because they were not included in Fredrickson and Roberts' (1997) theoretical framework. Although depression is included within this framework, women in this qualitative research reported negative affect as the only symptom of depression. Negative affect does not encapsulate the entire depression construct (Watson & Clark, 1994).

Instead, we posited that male partner pornography use would directly predict women's relationship anxiety and avoidance, self-esteem, body appreciation, and negative affect because women in the aforementioned qualitative research attributed difficulties in these particular areas to their partners' pornography use and not to their own self-objectification (Bergner & Bridges, 2002; Zitzman & Butler, 2005). For example, these women connected their perceived decrease in self-esteem to feeling as if they were weak—from letting their partners treat them in degrading ways, for not leaving, and for not taking powerful measures to respect themselves and their personal limits—not as a result of their own self-objectification (Bergner & Bridges, 2002). When exploring these relationships, we controlled for the extent women are/would be bothered by male partners' pornography use to ensure that it is indeed partner pornography use per se that contributes to women's well-being and not women's own perceptions of the acceptability of this behavior. We also controlled for women's levels of interpersonal sexual objectification in these analyses. Because women in the qualitative research stated that they felt sexually objectified by their partners during sexual encounters (Bergner & Bridges, 2002), it is important to ensure that men's pornography use itself, and not women's feelings of objectification independent of their partners' behaviors, is driving these relationships.

We assessed women's perceptions of both their current and previous male partners' pornography use to determine whether the temporal proximity of this use is associated with the hypothesized associations. We chose to examine women's perceptions of their male partners' pornography use rather than assess their partners' reports of their actual use because (a) perceptions shape individuals' attitudes, behaviors, and psychological well-being to a greater extent than reality (Kelly, 1955); (b) it would not be feasible to access all participants' previous male partners to get a reliable estimate of their actual pornography use; (c) measures of interpersonal sexual objectification examined within the objectification theory framework have been based on women's perceptions rather than actual levels of sexual objectification (Augustus-Horvath & Tylka, 2009; Moradi et al., 2005; Tylka & Hill, 2004); and (d) we wanted to measure the amount of pornography use about which women were aware rather than the amount that their male partners have hidden from them (indeed, there is no reason to expect that what participants are unaware of will be related to their attitudes, behaviors, and well-being).

Method

Participants

A total of 171 women ($M_{age} = 20.84$, standard deviation [*SD*] $= 6.28$, range = 18–56 years old) from a regional campus of a large Midwestern university participated. In terms of racial identification, 133 (77.8%) identified as White, 19 (11.1%) as African American, 2 (1.2%) as Asian American, 2 (1.2%) as Latina, 1 (0.6%) as Native American, and 14 (8.2%) as multiracial. A total of 126 (73.7%) were first-year college students, 31 (18.1%) sophomores, 9 (5.3%) juniors, and 5 (2.9%) seniors. All self-identified as heterosexual ($n = 165$; 96.5%) or bisexual ($n = 6$, 3.5%). Participants reported their current relationship status as single ($n = 89$, 52.0%), involved in a long-term relationship ($n = 55$, 32.1%), engaged ($n = 9$, 5.3%), married ($n = 8$, 4.7%), divorced ($n = 4$, 2.3%), separated ($n = 3$, 1.8%), or partnered ($n = 3$, 1.8%).

Procedure and Materials

After receiving institutional review board (IRB) approval, our study was posted alongside other studies on the psychology department's research management website. The study was described as an investigation of how relationship variables are linked to body attitudes, eating habits, and well-being among women. Interested students clicked a link to a webpage that hosted the informed consent sheet. After providing their consent, they were directed to the survey webpage, completed the survey from a computer and location of their choice, and were awarded class credit. Measures were counterbalanced to control for order effects.

Due to an IRB mandate, participants were informed that they could still receive full class credit even if they exited the survey early and/or left any item(s) blank. Therefore, 11 participants exited the survey before completion, and 13 participants had significant missing data (not completing at least 80% of each measure). These participants were deleted from the data set. An additional 23 participants who failed at least one of the five embedded validity questions (e.g., "To make sure you are paying attention, please answer 'seldom' for this item") were deleted. Finally, participant codes were screened; no duplicate cases were found. No participant reported being lesbian.

These screening procedures reduced the initial data pool of 313 participants to 266, of which 171 reported on their partners' pornography use (of the ones deleted, 70 did not know their partners' pornography use, 19 had not had a relationship

yet, and 4 reported that the question was too sensitive to answer). Analyses were conducted with data from the 171 participants. On average, participants took 38.14 (SD = 12.15) minutes to complete the survey.

Male partners' pornography use and reactions. Participants were instructed to refer to male partner(s) and answer these items: "To my awareness, the person I am dating views pornography (Internet sites, magazines, videos, etc.)" and "To my awareness, people I have dated in the past have viewed pornography." Each item was rated along the following scale: 6 (*always*), 5 (*usually*), 4 (*often*), 3 (*sometimes*), 2 (*rarely*), and 1 (*never*). Three other options followed, which were not scored: "I don't know," "This question is too sensitive for me to answer," and "I am not in a romantic relationship" (first item) or "I have not had a previous romantic relationship" (second item). An additional item ("If I was in a relationship and my partner viewed pornography, I would be bothered by it") was designed for this study to measure how participants would feel if their male partners viewed pornography. This item was rated 5 (*strongly agree*), 4 (*agree*), 3 (*neutral*), 2 (*disagree*), and 1 (*strongly disagree*).

Generally, multiple-item measures are better than single-item measures because they reduce the potential for random error variance. However, we chose single-item indicators to assess pornography use by current and previous male partners and whether women would be bothered by their male partners' viewing pornography because these items are concrete rather than abstract (Bergkvist & Rossiter, 2007), unambiguous (Sackett & Larson, 1990), and designed for adults (Robins, Hendin, & Trzesniewski, 2001). Under these circumstances, it is appropriate to use single-item measures.

Interpersonal sexual objectification. The 15-item Interpersonal Sexual Objectification Scale (ISOS; Kozee et al., 2007) assesses the degree to which participants experienced body evaluation (e.g., "How often have you noticed someone leering at your body?") and unwanted explicit sexual advances (e.g., "How often have you been touched or fondled against your will?") within the past year. Items are rated along a scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*almost always*) and then averaged, with higher scores corresponding to greater objectification. Among college women, scores on the ISOS yielded evidence of internal consistency reliability ($\alpha = .90$), stability over a 3-week period ($r = .84$), convergent validity via associations with sexist degradation ($r = .55$), and discriminant validity via a negligible correlation with impression management ($r = -.15$; Kozee et al., 2007). In the present study, Cronbach's α was .92 for ISOS items.

Internalization of cultural beauty standards. The 8-item Internalization subscale of the Sociocultural Attitudes Toward Appearance Questionnaire–Revised (SATAQ-I-R; Heinberg, Thompson, & Stormer, 1995) measures the extent to which women have internalized the media body ideal as their own personal standard. Items (e.g., "Women who appear in TV shows and movies project the type of appearance that I see as my goal") are rated along a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*completely disagree*) to 5 (*completely agree*). Higher averaged scores reflect greater internalization. Among college women, this subscale was found to yield internally consistent scores ($\alpha = .90$; Tylka, 2006) and was strongly related to perceptions of ideal body type (rs = .62–.64; Tylka & Subich, 2004), lending support for its psychometric properties with young adult women. Cronbach's α was .92 for SATAQ-I-R items in the current study.

Body surveillance and body shame. The Body Surveillance (8 items; e.g., "I often worry about whether the clothes I am wearing make me look good") and Body Shame (8 items; e.g., "I feel ashamed of myself when I haven't made the effort to look my best") subscales of the Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (OBCS; McKinley & Hyde, 1996) were used. OBCS items are rated along a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Items are averaged, and higher scores reflect greater body surveillance and body shame. Among college women, Body Surveillance ($\alpha = .89$) and Body Shame ($\alpha = .75$) demonstrated internally consistent scores and construct validity evidence via Body Surveillance's relationship to public self-consciousness ($r = .73$) and Body Shame's inverse relationship to self-esteem ($r = -.51$; McKinley & Hyde, 1996). In the current study, Cronbach's αs were .87 for both Body Surveillance items and Body Shame items.

Poor interoceptive awareness. The 10-item Interoceptive Awareness subscale of the Eating Disorder Inventory-2 (EDI-2-IA; Garner, 1991) gauged participants' disconnection to their emotions, hunger, and satiety. Items are rated along a scale ranging from 1 (*never true of me*) to 6 (*always true of me*). Garner (1991) originally specified that *never*, *rarely*, and *sometimes true of me* receive scores of 0, whereas *often*, *very often*, and *always true of me* receive scores of 1, 2, and 3, respectively. However, we used continuous scoring to prevent range restriction in nonclinical samples, which has been done in previous research using the EDI (Augustus-Horvath & Tylka, 2009; Tylka & Subich, 2004). Higher averaged scores indicated decreased interoceptive awareness. Past research has indicated its scores are internally consistent ($\alpha = .86$; Augustus-Horvath & Tylka, 2009), stable over a 3-week period ($r = .85$; Wear & Pratz, 1987), and related to alexithymia ($r = .77$; Tylka & Subich, 2004). For the current study, its Cronbach's α was .87.

Eating disorder symptomatology. The Eating Attitudes Test-26 (EAT-26; Garner, Olmsted, Bohr, & Garfinkel, 1982) measured participants' levels of disordered eating attitudes and behaviors. Its 26 items (e.g., "I avoid eating when I am hungry," "I vomit after I have eaten") are rated along a scale ranging from 1 (*always*) to 6 (*never*). We followed the continuous scoring method advocated by other researchers (Mazzeo, 1999; Tylka, 2004) for college samples. Therefore, we

averaged all item responses to arrive at the composite score, with higher scores corresponding to greater symptomatology. Scores on the EAT-26 have been found to be internally consistent ($\alpha = .91$; Tylka, 2006), stable across a 3-week period ($r = .86$; Mazzeo, 1999), and strongly related to an eating disorder diagnostic instrument ($r = .66$; Tylka & Subich, 2004) for college women. In the present study, Cronbach's α for EAT-26 items was .91.

Relationship anxiety and avoidance. The Experiences in Close Relationships Scale (ECRS; Brennan et al., 1998) assesses relationship anxiety (18-item subscale, e.g., "I need a lot of reassurance that I am loved by my partner") and avoidance (18-item subscale, e.g., "I am nervous when partners get too close to me"). Items are rated on a scale ranging from 1 (*disagree strongly*) to 7 (*agree strongly*) and averaged; higher scores reflect greater relationship anxiety and avoidance. Among college students, its scores have demonstrated evidence of internal consistency reliability (αs = .89 and .92; Iannantuono & Tylka, 2012), 6-month stability (rs = .68 and .71; Lopez & Gormley, 2002), and convergent validity via inverse relationships to social support for Anxiety ($r = -.35$) and Avoidance ($r = -.44$; Mallinckrodt & Wei, 2005). Alphas were .92 for Anxiety items and .95 for Avoidance items in the current study.

Self-esteem. The 10-item Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES; Rosenberg, 1965) measures perceptions of self-worth. Its items (e.g., "I take a positive attitude towards myself") are rated on a scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*). Item responses are averaged, and higher scores reflect greater self-esteem. Supporting its psychometric properties, its scores are internally consistent ($\alpha = .90$) and related to proactive coping ($r = .63$) and optimism ($r = .73$) among college women (Tylka, 2006). Cronbach's α for RSES items was .93 in the current study.

Body appreciation. The 13-item Body Appreciation Scale (BAS; Avalos, Tylka, & Wood-Barcalow, 2005) assesses acceptance of, favorable opinions toward, and respect for, the body. Its items (e.g., "I feel good about my body") are rated along a scale that ranges from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*always*). Item responses are averaged, and higher scores reflect greater body appreciation. Among college women, its scores are internally consistent ($\alpha = .91$), stable over a 3-week period ($r = .90$), and inversely related to body shame ($r = -.73$) and body surveillance ($r = -.55$; Avalos et al., 2005). In the present study, Cronbach's α was .94 for BAS items.

Negative affect. The Negative Affect (NA) subscale of the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule-Expanded (PANAS-X; Watson & Clark, 1994; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988) contains 10 emotions (e.g., "irritable," "upset"). Participants rated the degree they experienced each emotion in general along a scale ranging from 1 (*very slightly or not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*). Item responses are averaged, with higher subscale levels corresponding to greater NA. Among college students, NA subscale scores have found to be internally consistent ($\alpha = .85$), stable over a 2-month period ($r = .71$; Watson & Clark, 1994), and valid via correlations with depressive symptoms ($r = -.58$; Watson et al., 1988). Cronbach's α was .87 for NA items in our study.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

Of the 171 participants, 23 (13.45%) had at least one missing data point. The count for missing data points ranged from 0 to 1.8%. Data were missing completely at random according to Little's analysis, $\chi^2(514, N = 172) = 507.91$, $p = .567$. Therefore, missing data were estimated by multiple imputation procedures within Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 19.0. Mean scale/subscale scores were each examined for normality of distribution. The largest absolute value for skewness was 1.08, and the largest absolute value for kurtosis was 1.54. No score was transformed because these values were well below values that may pose problems in regression and structural analyses (i.e., skewness > 3 and/or kurtosis > 10; Kline, 2010).

Of the subsample of participants who reported how often their current partner viewed pornography ($n = 107$), 1 (0.9%) indicated *always*, 1 (0.9%) *usually*, 4 (3.7%) *often*, 24 (22.4%) *sometimes*, 31 (29.0%) *rarely*, and 46 (43.0%) *never*. When asked to report on previous partners' pornography use ($N = 171$), 4 (2.3%) indicated *always*, 8 (4.7%) *usually*, 16 (9.4%) *often*, 71 (41.5%) *sometimes*, 35 (20.5%) *rarely*, and 37 (21.6%) *never*. Participants reported higher levels of pornography use from their previous partners than from their current partners, $t(106) = -7.99$, $p < .001$ (see Table 1). When reporting on whether they would be bothered by their male partners' pornography use ($N = 171$), 53 (31.0%) indicated *strongly agree*, 40 (23.4%) *agree*, 33 (19.3%) *neutral*, 28 (16.4%) *disagree*, and 17 (9.9%) *strongly disagree*.

The longer a couple is together, the more aware they may become of their partners' behaviors. Therefore, we thought that it was important to determine whether relationship length was positively related to reports of their current male partners' pornography use. Although we did not assess for actual relationship length, we explored this question using women's perceived relationship length based on reports of their current relationship status. Women who reported being single but having a current partner ($M = 2.03$, $SD = 1.01$) did not differ from women who reported being in a long-term relationship, engaged, or married ($M = 1.86$, $SD = 1.01$) in terms of how frequently they reported that their current partner viewed pornography, $t(102) = 0.80$, $p = .426$.

Table 1 presents the variable means and *SD*s as well as the correlations between male partners' pornography use (both controlling for and not controlling for women being bothered by pornography use), interpersonal sexual objectification,

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations Between Male Partner Pornography Use and Study Variables.

				Partner Pornography Use				
Variable	*M*	*SD*	Possible Range	Current No Control[a]	Current Control[b]	Previous No Control[a]	Previous Control[b]	ISO
Male pornography use—Current partner[c]	1.94	1.02	1–6	–	–	.62***	59***	.09
Male pornography use—Previous partner	2.62	1.19	1–6	.62***	.59***	–	–	.27***
Male pornography use—Bothered by it	3.48	1.34	1–5	−.50***	–	−.31***	–	−.10
Interpersonal sexual objectification	2.43	0.64	1–5	.09	.05	.27***	.23***	–
Internalization of cultural beauty standards	3.18	1.12	1–5	.11	.14	.21**	.25***	.21**
Body surveillance	4.72	1.22	1–7	.08	.04	.26***	.28***	.15*
Body shame	3.50	1.35	1–7	.00	−.01	.23**	.26***	.19*
Poor interoceptive awareness	2.73	0.79	1–6	.05	.06	.20**	.26***	.31***
Eating disorder symptomatology	2.43	0.72	1–6	.13	.17	.32***	.46***	.43***
Relationship anxiety	4.02	1.14	1–7	.14	.12	.27***	.30***	.22***
Relationship avoidance	2.87	1.22	1–7	.08	.08	.04	.04	.16*
Body appreciation	3.56	0.79	1–5	−.16	−.13	−.36***	−.35***	−.14
Self-esteem	3.11	0.56	1–4	−.08	−.15	−.24***	−.30***	−.07
Negative affect	2.39	0.68	1–5	.14	.12	.30***	.36***	.07

Note. $N = 171$. *SD* = standard deviation. ISO = interpersonal sexual objectification.
[a]Not controlling for the extent women are/would be bothered by partner pornography use.
[b]Controlling for the extent women are/would be bothered by partner pornography use.
[c]$n = 107$.

and the remaining study variables. For these analyses, only bivariate correlations of $r = .20$ and above were considered, given that correlation coefficients under this value account for less than 4% of shared variance and are not considered practically significant (Dusick, 2012; Walsh & Betz, 2001). Our sample, even for current partner pornography use, exceeded the sample size needed ($N = 100$) for $r = .20$ to be considered statistically significant at the $p = .05$ level. Current partner pornography use was not related to objectification theory constructs or well-being measures and thus not examined further in analyses. However, previous partners' pornography use was moderately related (i.e., *r*s around .30; Cohen, 1992) to all objectification theory constructs and most well-being constructs (with the exception of relationship avoidance) in the expected direction and was explored in the main analyses. As can be seen in Table 1 in the columns indicating "Control," the correlations between partner use of pornography and the criterion variables were not mitigated by women's ratings of how much they were bothered by partner pornography use. For correlations between all model variables, see Table 2.

Tests of the Hypothesized Model

Tests of model's paths. Figure 1 was evaluated using path analysis procedures contained in Mplus Version 6.12 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998–2011). Previous partners' pornography use and the extent to which women would be bothered by their partners' pornography use were each entered as a single-item measured indicator. Mean scale/subscale scores served as measured indicators for all other model variables. The sample size exceeded the minimum 5:1 participants-to-parameter ratio needed to confidently examine a model (Bentler, 1990). Adequacy of model fit was determined using consensus among three indices recommended by Hu and Bentler (1999): the comparative fit index (CFI), the standardized root-mean square residual (SRMR), and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). Specifically, CFI values around .95 and higher, SRMR values around .08 and lower, and RMSEA values around .06 and lower indicate a relatively good fit of the model to the data, whereas CFI values of .90–.94, SRMR values of .09–.10, and RMSEA values of .07–.10 indicate an acceptable fit. Values outside these ranges suggest an unacceptable fit.

Overall, the model presented in Figure 1 did not fit the data, CFI = .894, SRMR = .076, RMSEA = .145 (90% confidence interval [CI] = [.107, .184]), $\chi^2(12, N = 171) = 54.88$, $p < .001$. We explored modification indices (MIs) to determine whether the data revealed paths that should be estimated (Kline, 2010). MIs were large for the following three paths: previous partner pornography use→eating disorder symptomatology (MI = 14.26), interpersonal sexual objectification→eating disorder symptomatology (MI = 18.60), and interpersonal sexual objectification→poor interoceptive awareness (MI = 11.90). We added these paths to the model and controlled for the extent women were bothered with pornography use on eating disorder symptomatology. The addition of these paths significantly improved model fit, CFI = .992, SRMR = .030, RMSEA = .049 (90% CI = [.000, .110]), $\chi^2(8, N = 171) = 11.34$, $p = .183$, $\Delta\chi^2(4) = 43.54$, $p < .001$.

The standardized path coefficients were not significant for the following two hypothesized paths: interpersonal sexual objectification→body surveillance and previous partners'

Table 2. Variable Intercorrelations.

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Current male partner porn use	—												
2. Previous male partner porn use	.62***	—											
3. Bothered by male porn use	−.49***	−.31***	—										
4. Sexual objectification	.09	.27***	−.09	—									
5. Internalization of thin ideal	.13	.22**	.01	.23**	—								
6. Body surveillance	.10	.26***	−.11	.16*	.60***	—							
7. Body shame	−.02	.23**	.03	.18*	.59***	.47***	—						
8. Poor interoceptive awareness	.06	.20**	.03	.32***	.40***	.23**	.49***	—					
9. Disordered eating	.13	.32***	.09	.43***	.53***	.43***	.65***	.56***	—				
10. Relationship anxiety	.15	.28***	−.04	.22**	.36***	.31***	.46***	.46***	.36***	—			
11. Relationship avoidance	.10	.05	−.05	.17*	.19*	.10	.25**	.39***	.20***	.20***	—		
12. Body appreciation	−.15	−.36***	.11	−.13	−.61***	−.53***	−.66***	−.37***	−.60***	−.41***	−.23***	—	
13. Self-esteem	−.08	−.24**	−.11	−.07	−.42***	−.34***	−.60***	−.49***	−.50***	−.45***	−.30***	.64***	—
14. Negative affect	.14	.30***	−.02	.08	.37***	.26**	.41***	.60***	.41***	.50***	.25**	−.45***	−.51***

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

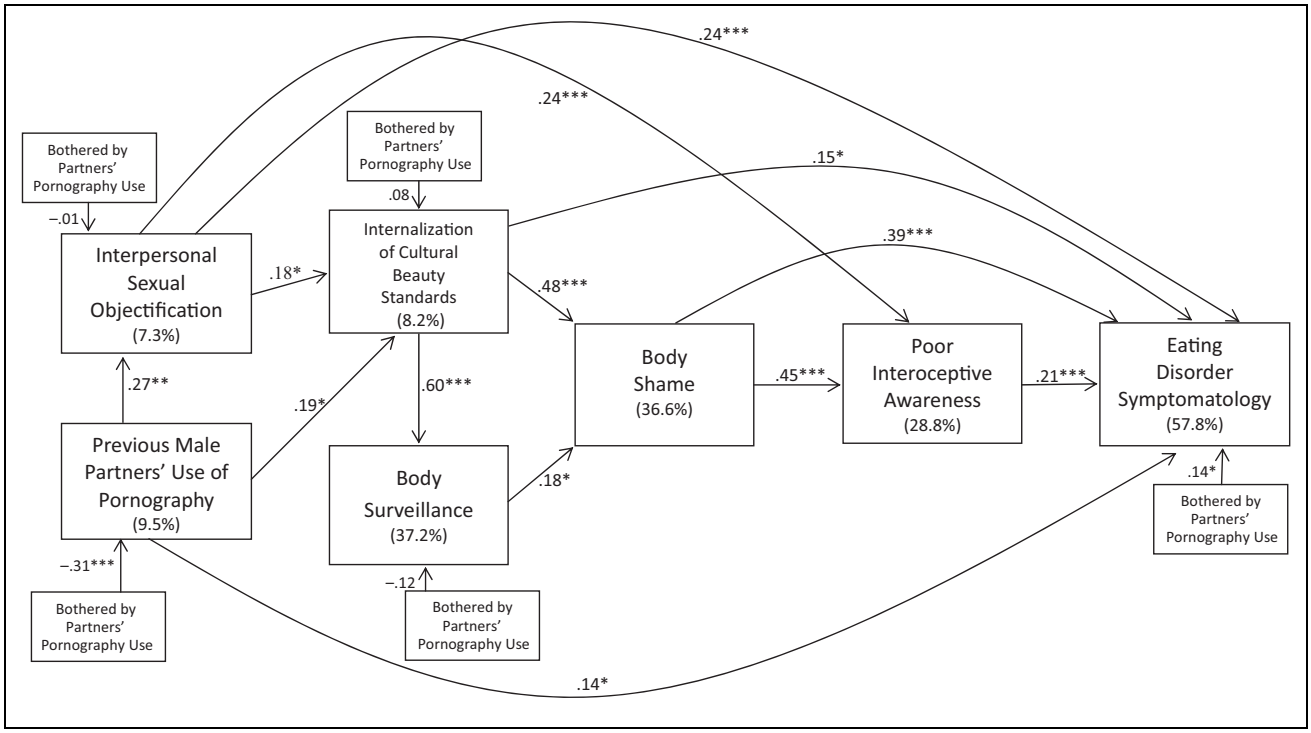

Figure 2. Final model. Standardized path coefficients are presented, and the percentage of variance accounted for by the predictors are included below the criterion variable names.
*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

pornography use→body surveillance. Eliminating these model paths did not significantly reduce model fit, CFI = .989, SRMR = .036, RMSEA = .051 (90% CI = [.000, .105]), $\chi^2(10, N = 171) = 14.43$, $p = .154$, $\Delta\chi^2(2) = 3.09$, $p = .213$. Thus, we interpreted this trimmed model because it is more parsimonious. Standardized path coefficients and the percentage of variance accounted for in each criterion variable are included in Figure 2. It is particularly notable that, within this model, previous partners' use of pornography predicted unique variance in interpersonal sexual objectification, internalization of cultural beauty standards, and eating disorder symptomatology.[1]

Mediation analyses. Internalization of cultural beauty standards was examined as a mediator between (a) previous partners' pornography use and body surveillance and (b) previous partners' pornography use and body shame. We did not examine body surveillance as a mediator between previous partners' pornography use and body shame because the path from previous partners' pornography use to body surveillance was not significant, precluding mediation.

Shrout and Bolger's (2002) bootstrap procedures were used to estimate the significance of the indirect effects. We specified Mplus to create 1,000 bootstrap samples from the data set by random sampling with replacement and to generate indirect effects and bias-corrected CIs around the indirect effects when analyzing the final model in Figure 2. Indirect effects (βs) are significant if the 95% CIs do not include zero. Full or partial mediation was resolved by exploring whether the direct relationships between previous partners' pornography use and the criteria (body surveillance and body shame) were significant once internalization of cultural beauty standards was included in the equation (if significant, indicative of partial mediation; if not significant, full mediation).

Both indirect effects were significant. Internalization of cultural beauty standards fully mediated the links from previous partners' pornography use to both body surveillance ($\beta = .118$, $p = .019$; CI = [.018, .228]) and body shame ($\beta = .105$, $p < .034$; CI = [.018, .217]).[2]

Partners' Pornography Use and Women's Well-Being

Four hierarchical regressions explored the incremental contributions of previous male partners' pornography use to four aspects of women's well-being: anxiety within romantic relationships, self-esteem, body appreciation, and negative affect. Because previous partners' pornography use did not predict avoidance in close relationships, we did not perform an analysis with this criterion. The degree to which women would be bothered by their partners' pornography use and interpersonal sexual objectification were controlled for by entering them into Step 1, and previous partners' pornography use was entered at Step 2, in the prediction of each of the four

Table 3. Incremental Variance in Psychological Functioning Accounted for by Previous Male Partners' Pornography Use.

	Cumulative R^2	ΔR^2	ΔF	β	*t*
Anxiety in romantic relationships (criterion), $F(3, 168) = 6.21$*					
Step 1	.046	.046	4.09*		
Bothered by pornography				−.01	−0.12
Interpersonal sexual objectification				.21	2.83*
Step 2	.100	.054	9.99*		
Bothered by pornography				.06	0.81
Interpersonal sexual objectification				.15	2.00
Previous male partners' pornography use				.25	3.16*
Self-esteem (criterion), $F(3, 168) = 6.05$*					
Step 1	.020	.020	1.74		
Bothered by pornography				−.12	−1.60
Interpersonal sexual objectification				−.09	−1.11
Step 2	.098	.077	14.41*		
Bothered by pornography				−.21	−2.71*
Interpersonal sexual objectification				−.01	−0.15
Previous male partners' pornography use				−.30	−3.80*
Body appreciation (criterion), $F(3, 168) = 8.46$*					
Step 1		.030	.030	2.64	
Bothered by pornography				.10	1.36
Interpersonal sexual objectification				−.13	−1.71
Step 2	.131	.101	19.50*		
Bothered by pornography				.01	0.07
Interpersonal sexual objectification				−.05	−0.62
Previous male partners' pornography use				−.35	−4.42*
Negative affect (criterion), $F(3, 168) = 5.80$*					
Step 1	.005	.005	0.47		
Bothered by pornography				−.01	−0.11
Interpersonal sexual objectification				.07	0.95
Step 2	.094	.088	16.39*		
Bothered by pornography				.08	1.09
Interpersonal sexual objectification				−.01	−0.08
Previous male partners' pornography use				.32	4.05*

Note. $N = 171$.
*$p < .013$ (i.e., .05/4).

criteria. The p level was adjusted to .013 (.05/4) in order to control for Type I error. A statistically significant increment in R^2 at Step 2 would indicate that previous partners' pornography use undermined women's well-being. Findings from these analyses, which are presented in Table 3, support the incremental contributions of previous partners' pornography use to women's increased anxiety in romantic relationships and negative affect as well as decreased self-esteem and body appreciation. All R^2 values at Step 2 were small-to-medium in effect size (Cohen, 1992), ranging from .054 to .101.

Discussion

When describing objectification theory, Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) offered pornography as one example of how women are sexually objectified. However, no known study to date has examined pornography or pornography-related constructs within the framework of objectification theory. Acknowledging women's personal accounts of experiencing distress related to their intimate male partners' heavy use of pornography (Bergner & Bridges, 2002; Bridges et al., 2003; Zitzman & Butler, 2009), we conceptualized male partners' pornography use as a form of sexual objectification and integrated it within the framework of objectification theory. Our findings supported this integration for college women. Specifically, in a path analysis, previous male partners' pornography use was uniquely associated with women's reports of interpersonal sexual objectification, internalization of cultural beauty standards, and eating disorder symptomatology. Previous male partners' pornography use was also indirectly associated with body surveillance and body shame through internalization of cultural beauty standards. These links held when controlling for the extent women reported being bothered by pornography use.

Therefore, higher perceived frequency of former male partners viewing pornography was associated with women's greater felt interpersonal sexual objectification. This finding upholds comments made by some women regarding their partners who heavily viewed pornography; these women

reported feeling that their male partner transferred the objectifying treatment of women in pornography onto them (Bergner & Bridges, 2002). Given that we examined instances of interpersonal sexual objectification within the previous year, some former relationships may have occurred within this time frame given the frequent turnover of romantic relationships in college.

How often women perceived their former male partners viewing pornography was also positively linked to women's internalization of cultural beauty standards. It is possible that women with former partners who viewed pornography may have inferred in these relationships that their own bodies are not "good enough" to satisfy their partners and that being thin and big breasted, much like images of women in pornography, is only considered beautiful and desirable. Consequently, the importance of looking like cultural beauty standards may have been heightened in these relationships. For women who equate sexual desirability with being thin/curvaceously thin, the present study suggests that this learned association may not be present during the relationship but may emerge after the relationship dissolves. Internalization of cultural beauty standards may then link previous male partners' pornography use to women engaging in body surveillance and experiencing body shame. Similar mediational links have been found with interpersonal sexual objectification in lieu of partners' use of pornography (Moradi et al., 2005). Thus, internalization of cultural beauty ideals may be a key variable in connecting various forms of sexual objectification to body surveillance and body shame, supporting its inclusion in objectification theory research.

The present study's findings suggest that women do not necessarily need to internalize cultural beauty standards for previous male partners' pornography use to be associated with women's eating disorder symptomatology, however. In other words, a direct link from previous partners' pornography use to eating disorder symptomatology was evidenced in our model. This direct link may indicate that women could have inferred from past relationships in which their partners viewed pornography that they need to be thin to be able to sexually attract and maintain the attraction of their partner. Therefore, even if they have not adopted thinness as a personal standard, they may have taken their previous partners' pornography use as a sign that they need to lose weight, even if it means that they have to use unhealthy means to do so. If some women do indeed believe that they must lose weight to appear sexually attractive, in this way, pornography confronts these women with the threat that they are at risk for "losing" their male partners if their bodies do not appear like female bodies their partners see in pornography.

In addition, previous male partners' pornography use was found to incrementally predict other forms of women's distress, such as experiencing greater negative affect and relationship anxiety and lower self-esteem and body appreciation, independent of women's reports of being bothered by pornography use and being targets of interpersonal sexual objectification. Thus, not only is previous partners' pornography use related to a woman's negative view of herself and her body, it is also negatively linked to her satisfaction and comfort within her current romantic relationship and emotional well-being.

Importantly, the present study's findings hold even after considering the extent to which women report being bothered by their male partners' pornography use. Specifically, the correlations between previous partners' pornography use and the criterion variables did not decrease after controlling for the extent to which women are bothered by this use. Given the enormous cultural pressure for women to participate in and embrace the sexualization of women (Attwood, 2004; Levy, 2005), some women may express that they are not bothered by this use (they will not be a "cool" girlfriend/wife if they object) and/or resist the belief that this use could impact their well-being. Interestingly, we found that previous male partners' pornography use was inversely related to women's reports that they were bothered by this use. This finding stands in contrast to qualitative research that concluded women who reported the highest perceived levels of partner pornography use were the most distressed about this use (Bridges et al., 2003). Perhaps the different sample constitution (i.e., women who sought help for their partners' pornography use due to their distress vs. college women who are not seeking professional counsel regarding their partners' pornography use) or the study design (i.e., qualitative vs. quantitative) contributed to these divergent findings. This difference supports the need to examine the connection between male partner pornography use and women's well-being with different samples of women using varied methodologies.

Curiously, current male partner pornography use was not found to be related to any of the objectification theory variables, relationship distress, body appreciation, or psychological well-being. Perhaps negative associations between partners' use of pornography and distress develop early in the course of women's relationship histories; beginning relationships may set forth the learned associations, making current relationships null. For example, if a woman's first few relationships are with male partners who constantly view pornography, she may learn that thinness is the gateway to being sexually desired, whether she internalizes it as a personal standard or not, and experiences enhanced distress in various ways. Conversely, if a woman's first few relationships are with partners who do not view pornography, she may not develop as strong of an association between being thin and sexually desirable and therefore may not experience as much distress. Once these associations are formed, it may be harder for subsequent partners to alter them.

Another possible explanation for these null findings is that women may underrate their current male partners' frequency of using pornography. When compared to their current partners, women were more likely to report that their previous partners viewed pornography. This difference in rating may have occurred as a way of reducing any psychological

discomfort experienced by acknowledging the actual frequency at which their current partner views pornographic material, as explained by cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957). To lessen this discomfort, women may underreport the degree to which their current partner actually views pornography. Because women are no longer romantically involved with their previous partners, they may more accurately report their previous partners' use of pornography. Thus, cognitive dissonance may have tempered the strength of the relationships among current partners' pornography use and their well-being. Alternatively, upon examining their previous relationships, women may have concluded that they do not want partners who view pornography and chose a current partner who views pornography less than previous partners. Still, their previous partners' pornography use may be a deleterious indicator of their present well-being based on the associations between previous partners' pornography use and women's distress in many domains observed in the current study.

When focusing on variables originally specified in objectification theory, the significance and strength of the paths were consistent with previous theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) and research (Augustus-Horvath & Tylka, 2009; Moradi et al., 2005), with three exceptions. Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) asserted that interpersonal sexual objectification should be associated with poor interoceptive awareness and eating disorder symptomatology indirectly through self-objectification (i.e., body surveillance). In the present study, however, data revealed that interpersonal sexual objectification directly predicted poor interoceptive awareness and eating disorder symptomatology, and interpersonal sexual objectification did not directly predict body surveillance. Thus, interpersonal sexual objectification did not work through body surveillance to predict poor internal body awareness and maladaptive eating behaviors; the direct links evidenced in this study suggest that interpersonal sexual objectification may be more deleterious to women's eating behaviors than previously thought.

Limitations and Future Research

Although our study was the first known to explore male partners' use of pornography within the context of objectification theory and revealed some important findings, there is much room for development within this research area. To begin, our study relied entirely on women's self-reports of their previous and current partners' frequency of pornography use. Women may not provide accurate reports of their partners' pornography use, especially if their partners use pornographic material secretly. However, the amount of partner pornography use about which women are aware is likely to be related to their well-being more so than actual levels, which may contain hidden use (and there is no reason to believe that hidden use would impact women's well-being because they are unaware of it). Nevertheless, because we assessed perceptions, other variables may have altered the extent to which women reported that their partners used pornography. That is, women with higher internalization of cultural standards of beauty and preexisting body concerns and/or lower self-esteem may be more sensitive to recognizing or believing that their partners used pornography and overestimated the amount of this use. Therefore, the links between previous partners' use of pornography and other study variables may be more precarious due to our assessing perceptions of use rather than actual use.

Moreover, single-item indicators and their corresponding response scales were not sophisticated estimates of partner use of pornography. Although it was appropriate to use single items in this context (Bergkvist & Rossiter, 2007; Robins et al., 2001; Sackett & Larson, 1990), researchers may want to develop measures that more carefully assess this construct. For instance, having women report the approximate length of time per week they believe their current and former male partners view pornography may provide a more accurate estimate than the *always* to *never* response scale used in the present study. Women also may vary in how they define pornographic material (e.g., women may differ in whether they consider magazines such as *Maxim* and *Sports Illustrated*'s swimsuit issue to be pornographic material). Operationalizing this construct for participants may be beneficial. One recently published measure, the Perceived Partner's Pornography Use Scale (Stewart & Szymanski, 2012), may be promising for the operationalization of current partner pornography use. This scale contains two subscales: Perceptions of Frequency of Use (9 items) and Perceptions of Problematic Pornography Use (8 items). However, it does not assess previous partner pornography use, and it does itemize the various forms of pornography (e.g., Item 2 assesses frequency of pornographic magazine use, Item 3 assesses frequency of pornographic videos/movies/films, and Item 4 assesses frequency of Internet pornography). If a partner uses one form exclusively (e.g., Internet pornography), the other 2 items (e.g., adult magazines and movies) may dilute the pornography use mean subscale score. Therefore, individual items may need to be analyzed on such measures as well. Siegel (1997) warned about structuring measures of partner pornography use too broadly and discussed that individual items may need to be analyzed separately. Moreover, institutional ethics review boards may want said measures to be as short as possible to avoid potential participant distress (indeed, this was an issue with the current study). We encourage researchers to develop and refine scales that measure current and previous partners' use of pornography with these challenges in mind.

We did not differentiate the types of pornographic material that women's male partners used. It is possible that certain types of pornographic material could predict greater interpersonal sexual objectification and decreased psychological, body-related, and relationship well-being than others. For example, women's levels of these variables may be shaped differently depending on whether their partners'

pornography consists of thin, young women who conform to cultural body standards or more realistic women as seen in amateur pornography. Women whose partners frequently view still-images of "soft-core" pornographic material (e.g., *Playboy* magazine) may not feel as objectified as women whose partners frequently view "hard-core" pornographic videos that brutalize women (e.g., Gonzo porn). Alternatively, still-images of soft-core pornographic material could prompt body comparison and thin-ideal internalization because women who tend to be in magazines like *Playboy* almost exclusively conform to the thin (or curvaceously thin) ideal with their imperfections airbrushed (Sypeck et al., 2006). Also, still-images could prompt more body-related distress for women because the focus is exclusively on the model's body (an appearance-based attribute) rather than the sexual activity (a functionality-based attribute). The type of sexual activity demonstrated and sex of the participants in the material (e.g., lesbian, gay, and heterosexual) may also influence women's feelings of objectification, resulting in differences in the objectification theory and well-being variables. Thus, future studies could explore how various types of pornography used by partners contribute to women's psychological and relationship functioning.

We also did not assess whether women themselves viewed pornography. Indeed, women are becoming more frequent purveyors of pornography (Carroll et al., 2008). Perhaps women's own pornography use precipitates body comparison with women in pornography, which then may contribute to their internalization of cultural beauty standards and eating disorder symptomatology. Researchers are encouraged to explore this prediction. Similarly, we did not tease apart whether partners' pornography use was solitary or within the context of women's partnered relationships. A study with Norwegian heterosexual couples found that 15% of couples used pornography together to enhance their sex life (Daneback, Træen, & Månsson, 2009). These authors found that couples who viewed pornography together reported less relationship distress than couples in which the male partner viewed pornography in a solitary manner. In the present study, if women were with their partners while they were viewing pornography, then the relationships uncovered may be attenuated. Researchers could explore whether couple versus solitary use of pornography moderates the links between male partner pornography use and women's well-being.

Given that we collected data for the present study from one time point, we cannot argue that previous male partners' use of pornography leads to women's distress. It is possible that partner pornography use indeed results in increased sexual objectification and internalization of cultural body standards. However, it is also possible that men who use pornography may seek out women who have already internalized cultural beauty standards via being highly invested in their appearance, and/or women who have internalized cultural beauty standards may be drawn to men who view pornography because those men's views of attractiveness are consistent with their views of what women should look like. Longitudinal research designs examining the directionality and strength of these associations over time are important to conduct to identify potential explanations for links between male partners' pornography use and women's distress. It would be particularly informative to conduct longitudinal research starting in adolescence, given that male pornography use is believed to start then and may be relevant to adolescent girls' early relationships (Sabina, Wolak, & Finkelhor, 2008).

The current sample was relatively homogenous because it comprised predominantly White, nonmarried, heterosexual, young adult women, all of whom were college students from the same geographic region. Women of various ethnicities, sexual orientations, and ages may experience their partners' pornography use in different ways. Indeed, Bridges, Bergner, and Hesson-McInnis (2003) found that, when discussing their partners' online pornography consumption, married women reported more distress than women in dating relationships. Thus, the results from the current sample may not generalize well to other more diverse samples. We encourage additional research of partners' pornography use and women's well-being among diverse groups of women, acknowledging that the intersection of their social identity statuses may alter their experiences and distress.

Although we asked women to report their current relationship status using a number of indicators (i.e., single, in a long-term relationship, engaged, married, divorced, separated, or partnered), we did not assess actual relationship length. Thus, we relied on women's reported relationship status to assess differences between women in short-term (i.e., in a current relationship but self-identified as single) versus long-term (i.e., in a long-term relationship, engaged, or married) relationships, which may not be an accurate reflection of the actual length of their current relationship. Future research should explore actual length of women's current relationships as a variable that may influence the relationship between current partner use of pornography and women's reported levels of distress. Indeed, Stewart and Szymanski (2012) found that relationship length strengthened the association between current partner problematic pornography use and women's sexual dissatisfaction, suggesting that relationship length is an important variable when investigating associations between male partners' pornography use and women's well-being.

Finally, we narrowly defined trait self-objectification as body surveillance. It would be useful to determine whether male partners' use of pornography was associated with women adopting an observer's perspective of the body and valuing appearance-based attributes over competence-based attributes because measures of these constructs are theoretically and empirically distinct dimensions of a broader construct (Calogero, 2011). In addition to assessing different conceptualizations and manifestations of trait self-objectification, we encourage researchers to explore other potential variables that may vary according to whether women's partners view pornography. For instance, women may be more motivated to seek

cosmetic surgery to get liposuction and breast enhancement. It also would be important to identify variables that buffer the link between previous partners' pornography use and women's well-being.

Practice Implications

Our study is one of the first known to examine male partners' pornography use and its association with several indices of women's well-being. It is clear that more research needs to be conducted in this area to better understand the directionality and strength of these paths for women of various ages and social identities before specific clinical directives and implications are offered. Nevertheless, the present study's findings provide preliminary suggestions for professionals in clinical and prevention settings. For female clients who report disordered eating attitudes and behaviors, clinicians may want to inquire about previous male partners' pornography use in these clients' relationship histories. Of the clients who report that their previous male partners viewed pornography, clinicians may want to work with them to determine the extent this use may be connected to their current internalization of cultural beauty standards and disordered eating attitudes and behaviors. If applicable, media literacy interventions may be useful (a) for clients to understand that unrealistic media appearance standards and the sexual objectification of women also appear in pornography and (b) to facilitate the adoption of more flexible standards of beauty (see Tylka & Augustus-Horvath, 2011, for a review).

In pornography, women are objectified and very rarely complain about or resist it; in fact, it is often designed to have women express sexual excitement over being objectified (Attwood, 2004; Bergner & Bridges, 2002). Men who view pornography, then, may internalize this objectifying treatment and minimize its consequences, which may then shape how they treat their female partners (Check & Malamuth, 1986). Given that a majority of men consider pornography to be an acceptable way to express their sexuality and that their pornography use typically begins when they are in early adolescence (Carroll et al., 2008), it serves as an important (yet negative) tool for their sex education. Therefore, adolescent boys and men who view pornography are encouraged to consider (a) that their pornography consumption can be negatively related to their female partners' psychological and body-related well-being and/or positively related to their female partners' relationship anxiety after the relationship ends and (b) that the normalized behavior toward women in pornography can be objectifying, which also has the potential to negatively contribute to women's well-being. Programs could be developed for boys and men who frequently utilize pornographic material to increase their investment in girls' and women's psychological, relational, and body-related well-being, perhaps by showing them how their pornography use could plausibly be related to their own decreased well-being (Tylka, 2015).

Conclusion

Given its accessibility, affordability, and anonymity (Ropelato, 2007), as well as its mission to bring pleasure to the male observer at whatever cost (Strager, 2003), pornography can be considered a form of sexual objectification that many women will frequently encounter in their relationships with male partners. Thus, exploring the links between male partners' pornography use and women's well-being is critical. In our study, we integrated male partners' use of pornography within objectification theory, as well as examined its associations with additional psychological and relational indicators of distress for women. We found that previous, but not current, partners' use of pornography was linked to all but one of these indicators. Within objectification theory, previous partners' use of pornography was (a) directly related to the extent to which women were sexually objectified, internalized cultural beauty standards, and reported eating disorder symptomatology and (b) indirectly linked to the extent women engage in body surveillance and experience body shame via internalization of cultural beauty standards. Even after controlling for women being bothered by male partner pornography use and the extent women have encountered interpersonal sexual objectification, previous male partners' pornography use was associated with women's lower body appreciation and self-esteem and higher negative affect and relationship anxiety. We hope this preliminary research serves as a springboard for additional research into pornography's links to women's well-being.

Authors' Note

Portions of these data were presented at the 2013 annual meeting of the American Psychological Association.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Notes

1. As an exploratory analysis, we ran a fully saturated model that estimated all possible direct effects. However, given that the fully saturated model was not theoretically driven, we do not interpret the individual findings. Interested readers are referred to Supplementary Table 1, which is available as an online supplement at http://pwq.sagepub.com/supplemental.
2. In the post hoc fully saturated model, we also estimated all possible indirect effects. Interested readers are directed to Supplementary Table 2, which is available as an online supplement at http://pwq.sagepub.com/supplemental.

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