

Daddy's Little Princess: Paternal Relationships and Self-Objectification

by

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*Certificate of Approval*

This is to certify that the accompanying thesis by Taylor Ann Berntson, Hannah Linnea Bouwman, and Pascale Beatriz Carpentier has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for graduation with Honors in Psychology.

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## Abstract

In today's society, women suffer from the objectification of the female body in the media and in everyday interactions. This objectification leads women to self-objectify by adopting a third-person perspective of their bodies. While the effects of mother-daughter relationships on self-objectification have been studied, there is minimal research examining the effects of father-daughter relationships on self-objectification, specifically during the period of adolescence. In this study, adolescent girls ( $N=102$ ,  $M=16.5$  years) completed a survey measuring perceived paternal closeness, perceived paternal benevolent sexism, and self-objectification. Analyses indicated that perceived paternal closeness was negatively correlated with self-objectification. Paternal benevolent sexism was not significantly correlated with daughters' levels of self-objectification. Additionally, the Appearance subscale of benevolent sexism was positively correlated with the Control subscale of self-objectification; however, it was negatively correlated with the Body Surveillance subscale of self-objectification. These findings suggest that while paternal closeness may act as a protective factor against girls' self-objectification, benevolent sexism in the context of father-daughter relationships may be more complex than in other male-female relationships.

*Keywords:* self-objectification, benevolent sexism, paternal closeness, adolescents, father-daughter relationships

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“Hey, princess, let me get that for you.” Comments like this are pervasive in patriarchal societies, especially within the context of father-daughter relationships. While these comments may seem benevolent and caring on the surface, their underlying message reflects a sexist ideology in which women are viewed as inferior to men (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Benevolent sexism has many negative consequences for women (Dardenne, Dumont, & Bollier, 2007; Dumont, Sarlet, & Dardenne, 2010; Calogero & Jost, 2011; Shepherd et al., 2011); however, the link between benevolent sexism and self-objectification remains unclear. Self-objectification is the internalization of the male gaze and results from the objectification of women in the media and in interpersonal interactions (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). This objectification is deeply rooted in sexism (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997); therefore, it is problematic that there is such little research examining the effect of fathers' sexist behaviors on their daughters' levels of self-objectification. Father-daughter relationships are especially influential during the period of adolescence in which identity formation occurs (Marcia, 1980). During this period of development, adolescents become aware of the beliefs and attitudes held by their parents and compare them to their own independently developing self-concepts (Gold & Yanof, 1985; Golombeck, Marton, Stein, & Korenblum, 1987). A daughter who receives benevolently sexist messages from her father may then incorporate these messages into her self-identity. The current study aims to examine paternal closeness and paternal benevolent sexism within father-daughter relationships and their effects on daughters' levels of self-objectification.

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Objectification Theory posits that women's bodies are treated as sexual objects in the media and in everyday interactions (Fredrickson, Roberts, Noll, Quinn, & Twenge, 1998). Further, this theory suggests that the bodies of men and women differ not only in their biology, but also in the social and cultural contexts in which they exist (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Women's bodies are subjected to the male gaze in person and in the media far more often than male bodies are subjected to the female gaze (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Beginning at a very young age, girls may experience these evaluations by others in day-to-day interactions, which can shape their social life outcomes (Holland & Skinner, 1987; Margolin & White, 1987; Snow & Harris, 1985). As adolescent girls grow older, they may also pay an increasing amount of attention to the media and Internet because they view it as essential for their social interactions with peers (Kowalski, Limber, & Agatston, 2012). However, media outlets have been found to continuously sexualize the female body (Malkin, Wornian, & Chrisler, 1999; Tiggemann & Miller, 2010). In fact, one content analysis revealed that 94% of ads in American fashion magazines promote hyper-sexualized and ultra-thin women (Malkin, Wornian, & Chrisler, 1999). Therefore, avoiding media that objectifies female bodies has become almost impossible in the United States. This unrealistic depiction of the female body has several negative consequences for women's mental health.

One particularly damaging consequence of society's sexualization of women is self-objectification, which occurs when women internalize the male gaze and adopt a third-person perspective of their bodies (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Engaging in self-objectification leads women to constantly monitor the size and shape of their bodies and to be generally more preoccupied with what their bodies look like rather than what their

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bodies can do (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). This constant appearance monitoring requires significant cognitive resources and consequently limits the mental resources women have available for other cognitive tasks (Fredrickson et al., 1998). Other negative effects of self-objectification include increased shame and anxiety about one's appearance, an insensitivity to bodily cues, a decrease in "flow" states, as well as an increased risk of developing eating disorders, sexual dysfunction, and depression (Fredrickson et al., 1998; Harper & Tiggemann, 2008; Noll & Fredrickson, 1998).

Interactions with others that make one's body or gender salient may increase levels of self-objectification. For example, engaging in "fat talk" with friends or family has been associated with an increase in perceived sociocultural pressures to be thin as well as an increase in body shame and body dissatisfaction (Arroyo & Harwood, 2012; Gapinski, Brownell, & LaFrance, 2003). Mothers who self-objectify or are hyper critical of their own weight or appearance have also been shown to negatively influence their daughters' subsequent levels of self-objectification (Arroyo & Andersen, 2016). Additionally, mothers who show a greater internalization of media messages about thinness are more likely to have daughters with eating pathologies and negative body image (Cooley, Toray, Wang, & Valdez, 2008). More broadly, experiences with sexism may also lead to an increase in self-objectification, as sexist comments and behaviors communicate messages to women about the expectations of their gender (Tylka & Augustus-Hovarth, 2011).

Sexism can be broadly defined as the unfair treatment of women based on their gender (Glick & Fiske, 1996). However, Ambivalent Sexism Theory posits that sexism can be further broken down into two subcategories: hostile sexism and benevolent sexism

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(Glick & Fiske, 1996). Hostile sexism is the “traditional” form of sexism in which individuals, typically men, blatantly assert their gender’s superiority or act aggressively towards others based on their gender (Becker & Wright, 2011; Glick & Fiske, 1996). Benevolent sexism, on the other hand, can be defined by comments and behaviors towards women that are positive in valence or feeling, but actually reinforce negative female stereotypes and male superiority (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Specifically, these positive comments or behaviors communicate information regarding women’s restricted roles in society, their subordinate position to men, and their status as sexual objects that men desire (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Glick & Fiske, 2001). For example, in an attempt to compliment his daughter’s cooking ability, a father may say “you really are learning your way around the kitchen and will make your future husband very happy someday.” While this statement may be intended as a compliment, it actually highlights stereotypical female gender roles. Other benevolently sexist comments convey the idea that women are fragile and need to be protected by men (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Glick & Fiske, 2001). For instance, a father may indicate to his daughter that she is his “little princess” and that he will carefully inspect all of her potential suitors before he allows her to date one of them. In this scenario, the father is not only communicating to his daughter that she is to be protected and cherished by men, but also that she is unable to make informed decisions for herself. Lastly, a father may compliment his daughter’s physical beauty and joke that he will “do bad things to anyone” who tries to date or sexually pursue her. These types of comments suggest that a daughter’s appearance and level of attractiveness is an important part of her identity and that she will be evaluated as a sexual object by men. While the positive nature of benevolently sexist messages makes them hard to recognize, these

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messages are ultimately harmful to women as they reinforce an androcentric view of the world in which women are viewed as inferior to men.

Experiencing benevolent sexism can be more harmful than encountering hostile sexism (Dardenne et al., 2007; Dumont et al., 2010; Calogero & Jost, 2011; Shepherd et al., 2011). When women are confronted with hostile sexist comments, they are able to consciously recognize them and then combat their negative effects (Dardenne et al., 2007). However, benevolently sexist comments are subtle in nature; therefore, these comments are harder to recognize and easier to internalize (Dardenne et al., 2007). Consistent with this, benevolent sexism has been shown to have many detrimental effects on women's self-esteem and body image (Calogero & Jost, 2011; Dardenne et al., 2007; Dumont et al., 2010;; Shepherd et al., 2011). Dardenne et al. (2007) found that women who were confronted with benevolent sexism reported more self-doubt and mental intrusions as well as lower levels of self-esteem during a working memory task than those confronted with hostile sexism. Women exposed to benevolently sexist statements also reported allocating more time in the future to exercising and trying to lose weight (Calogero & Jost, 2011). With regard to the effect of benevolent sexism on women's body image, Calogero and Jost (2011) found that when women read statements that included examples of benevolent sexism, they reported higher levels of self-objectification, self-surveillance, and body shame than those who read statements that included examples of hostile sexism. Shepherd et al. (2011) similarly found that women who witnessed an act of benevolent sexism reported higher levels of body surveillance and body shame compared to those who did not witness an incident of benevolent sexism; interestingly, however, these women did not report higher levels of self-

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objectification. These conflicting findings regarding self-objectification may be due to differences in the extent to which the women viewed the benevolent sexist acts as personally relevant. This draws attention to the need for further research that examines women's personal experiences with benevolent sexism and their subsequent effect on levels of self-objectification.

Benevolently sexist acts may be particularly harmful to women when they occur in the context of a close male relationship (Moya, Glick, Exposito, De Lemus, & Hart, 2007). This can be explained by the theory of Symbolic Interactionism, which posits that individuals come to understand themselves by recognizing how the significant people in their lives view them (Manis, Meltzer, & Manis, 1972). Encompassed within the theory of Symbolic Interactionism is the "looking-glass self," which states that individuals largely define themselves based on how the significant people in their lives behave towards them (Cooley, 1964). Therefore, because a father typically plays a crucial role in his daughter's life, his behavior towards his daughter may significantly influence her self-perception. Considering the "looking-glass self" alongside the known harmful effects of benevolent sexism, a daughter whose father behaves in a benevolently sexist manner may internalize these beliefs and incorporate them into her self-concept.

While benevolent sexism has not been examined in the context of father-daughter relationships, Miles-McLean, Liss, and Erchull (2014) did examine the effect of paternal overprotection on daughters' body surveillance, body shame, and eating attitudes. They found that women who reported high levels of paternal care and low levels of paternal overprotection had the fewest negative eating attitudes (Miles-McLean, et al., 2014). Additionally, daughters who reported high levels of paternal care and high levels of

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paternal overprotection had the highest levels of body surveillance and body shame (Miles-McLean et al., 2014). These findings provide initial support for the idea that when daughters are particularly close to their fathers, paternal overprotection may negatively influence their body image and eating attitudes. Considering that overprotection is one element of benevolent sexism, it is possible that fathers' benevolently sexist comments or behaviors may have a similarly negative effect on daughters' body image and self-objectification. Given prior research that highlights the negative effects of benevolent sexism (Dardenne et al., 2007; Dumont et al., 2010; Calogero & Jost, 2011; Shepherd et al., 2011), it is important for future research to examine the construct of benevolent sexism in father-daughter relationships.

While fathers may negatively contribute to their daughter's self-perception, there are many positive aspects of parent-child relationships, such as closeness. Parental closeness can be defined as the level of warmth, kindness, and mutual understanding between a parent and child (Burnett & Demnar, 1996). High levels of parental closeness have been associated with positive outcomes for children and adolescents. Paulson, Hill, and Holmbeck (1991) found that levels of both maternal and paternal closeness were positively correlated with children's self-esteem and expressiveness. Additionally, both maternal and paternal closeness have been positively correlated with adolescents' levels of life-satisfaction (Young, Miller, Norton, & Hill, 1995). Maternal relationships characterized by high closeness have been associated with less risky sexual behavior in adolescents (Sieving, McNeely, & Blum, 2000). High levels of closeness also foster the transmission of cultural and social knowledge from parents to their children (Nord & Zill, 1996). While most studies of parental closeness focus on parents in general or mothers

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exclusively, there is a small but growing body of research that focuses on father-daughter relationships.

The level of closeness a daughter feels to her father greatly impacts her self-concept and self-worth. Rostad, Silverman, and McDonald (2014) reported that women who perceived low levels of paternal psychological presence were more likely to engage in risky behaviors during adolescence than those who perceived high levels of paternal psychological presence. Another study showed that the level of closeness daughters felt to their fathers was negatively correlated with their levels of food-restraint as well as their concerns about eating, body-shape, and appearance (Horesh, Sommerfeld, Wolf, Zubery, & Zalsman, 2015). While there is research that examines the effects of paternal closeness on daughters' body image, there is a crucial need for more research that delves specifically into paternal closeness and daughters' levels of self-objectification.

The goal of the present study was to examine the effects of paternal closeness and benevolent sexism on adolescent girls' levels of self-objectification during adolescence. During adolescence, girls experience a new pressure to conform to their gender identity, which unfortunately includes being viewed as a sexual object by males (Crouter, Manke, & McHale, 1995). As a result, girls must face the challenge of integrating their physical changes with societal definitions and expectations of gender-appropriate behavior and appearance (Bem, 1981; Petersen, 1988). Their fathers may play a crucial role in this process by communicating their views and expectations of women through benevolent sexism. Therefore, adolescent girls with benevolently sexist fathers may be particularly likely to engage in self-objectification. We hypothesized that there would be a negative correlation between perceived paternal closeness and self-objectification. Further, we

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hypothesized that there would be a positive correlation between perceived paternal benevolent sexism and self-objectification. Finally, we hypothesized that paternal closeness would moderate the relationship between paternal benevolent sexism and self-objectification. We chose to make this a non-directional hypothesis due to the small body of research on this topic and the possibility that perceived paternal closeness may either buffer or amplify the effects of perceived paternal benevolent sexism on self-objectification.

### **Method**

#### **Participants**

Participants were adolescent females ( $N=102$ ) from across the United States, primarily residing in California and Washington. The participants ranged in age from 14 to 18 ( $M=16.51$ ,  $SD=1.12$ ).

#### **Procedure**

Participants were recruited in high school classrooms and through personal contacts, with a snowball sampling effect. Researchers explained that they were recruiting adolescent females to take a 10-minute survey that examined parent-child relationships and views of the self. Participants were asked to fill out a survey online after completing an assent form and having their parent sign an online consent form. After completing the consent and informed assent forms, participants were directed to a survey that took roughly 10 minutes to complete. The survey measured perceived paternal closeness, perceived paternal benevolent sexism, and self-objectification. At the end of the survey, participants completed a demographics questionnaire that asked participants to identify their age and whether or not they lived with their father full-time, part-time, or

not it all. Once the surveys were complete, researchers debriefed the participants, thanked them for their time, and compensated them.

### **Measures**

**Paternal closeness.** We employed the Closeness to Parents Scale (CPS; Buchanan, Maccoby, & Dornbusch, 1991) to measure paternal closeness. This is a 10-item Likert-type scale ranging from *not at all* (1) to *very* (5), including questions such as “How well does your father know what you are really like?” and “How interested is your father in the things you do?” Higher scores indicate higher levels of perceived closeness to parents (in the case of this study, just fathers;  $\alpha=0.83$ ).

**Paternal benevolent sexism.** We created our own scale to measure perceived paternal benevolent sexism. The measure includes three subscales: Appearance (e.g., “My father compliments me on my appearance;” 6 items;  $\alpha=0.77$ ), Gender Roles (e.g., “My father tells me I am great at cooking and cleaning;” 5 items;  $\alpha=0.57$ ), and Protection (e.g., “My father insists that he accompany me to new places or events;” 6 items;  $\alpha=0.57$ ). This is a 17-item Likert-type scale ranging from *never* (1) to *always* (5). Higher scores indicate higher levels of overall perceived paternal benevolent sexism ( $\alpha=0.81$ ; Appendix A).

**Self-objectification.** Self-objectification was measured using the Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (OBCS; McKinley & Hyde, 1996). The measure includes three subscales: Body Surveillance (e.g., “During the day, I think about how I look many times;” 8 items;  $\alpha=0.85$ ), Body Shame (e.g., “I feel ashamed of myself when I haven’t made the effort to look my best;” 8 items;  $\alpha=0.84$ ), and Control (e.g., “I can weigh what I’m supposed to when I try hard enough;” 8 items;  $\alpha=0.69$ ). This is a 24-item Likert-type

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scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (7). Higher scores indicate higher levels of overall self-objectification ( $\alpha=0.81$ ).

### Results

The primary goal of the present study was to examine the relationship between perceived paternal closeness, perceived paternal benevolent sexism, and self-objectification. On average, participants reported moderately high levels of paternal closeness (see Table 1). Levels of perceived paternal benevolent sexism, as measured by the overall scale and the subscales of Appearance, Protection, and Gender Roles were moderately low. Levels of self-objectification, as measured by the overall scale and the subscales of Body Surveillance, Body Shame, and Control were moderate. Paired-samples t-tests indicated that, on average, Body Shame subscale scores were lower than Control and Body Surveillance subscales scores,  $t(100)=7.98, p < .001$  and  $t(100)=12.60, p < .001$ , respectively.

Before examining our specific hypotheses, we first looked to see if there were differences in paternal closeness, paternal benevolent sexism, and self-objectification based on whether adolescent girls lived with their fathers full-time, part-time, or not at all. In this sample, 82.4% of participants reported living at home with their father full-time or part-time, 14.7% reported not living at home with their father, and 2.9% chose not to respond and were not included in further analyses. A series of three one-way ANOVAs indicated a main effect of father's residency for paternal closeness,  $F(1,96)=14.83, p < 0.001$ , but not for paternal benevolent sexism,  $F(1,95)=0.39, p=0.53$ , or self-objectification,  $F(1,97)=1.45, p=0.23$  (see Table 2 for descriptive statistics). Thus,

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father's residency was only considered in subsequent analyses regarding paternal closeness.

Regarding the specific hypotheses of the current study, we first predicted that there would be a negative correlation between paternal closeness and self-objectification. Consistent with our hypothesis, paternal closeness was negatively correlated with overall levels of self-objectification as well as the Body Surveillance and Body Shame subscales of the self-objectification measure (see Table 1). Additionally, because the one-way ANOVA indicated a main effect of fathers' residency on paternal closeness, we ran separate correlations between paternal closeness and self-objectification among girls who resided with their father full-time or part-time and those who did not live their father. For girls living with their father full-time or part-time, paternal closeness was negatively correlated with self-objectification  $r(81)=-0.30, p=.006$ . For girls not living with their father, there was not a significant correlation between paternal closeness and self-objectification  $r(13)=-0.08, p=.78$ .

Second, we hypothesized that there would be a positive correlation between paternal benevolent sexism and self-objectification. Inconsistent with this hypothesis, paternal benevolent sexism and self-objectification were not significantly correlated (see Table 1). Next, we examined the relationship between the subscales of paternal benevolent sexism and the subscales of self-objectification. The Appearance subscale of paternal benevolent sexism was negatively correlated with the Body Surveillance subscale of self-objectification. However, the Appearance subscale was positively correlated with the Control subscale of self-objectification.

Third, we hypothesized that paternal closeness would moderate the relationship between paternal benevolent sexism and self-objectification. To examine this hypothesis, we ran a linear regression model predicting overall self-objectification. After centering paternal closeness and overall paternal benevolent sexism and computing the paternal closeness-paternal benevolent sexism interaction term (Aiken, West, & Reno, 1991), the two predictors and the interaction variable were entered into a model. The model explained 10 percent of the variation in self-objectification ( $R^2=0.10$ ,  $F(3,93)=3.54$ ,  $p=.018$ ). Results indicated that paternal closeness was negatively associated with self-objectification ( $b=-0.33$ ,  $SE=0.11$ ,  $\beta=-0.33$ ,  $p=.003$ ) and paternal benevolent sexism was not associated with self-objectification ( $b=0.81$ ,  $SE=0.13$ ,  $\beta=.071$ ,  $p=0.52$ ). The interaction between paternal closeness and paternal benevolent sexism was not significant ( $b=0.056$ ,  $SE=0.17$ ,  $\beta=.034$ ,  $p=0.74$ ).

### **Discussion**

In today's society, many women engage in the harmful act of self-objectification (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). While there is a small but growing body of research that examines the effect of mother-daughter relationships on daughters' self-objectification (Arroyo & Andersen, 2016; Cooley et al., 2008), there has been little research to date that examines the effect of father-daughter relationships on self-objectification, specifically during the period of adolescence. Considering that fathers often play a crucial role in adolescent girls' lives and may be a particularly influential "male gaze" that adolescent girls are exposed to, it is imperative that the link between father-daughter relationships and self-objectification be studied. The goal of the present study was to add to the literature regarding father-daughter relationships by examining the relationship between

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adolescent females' levels of perceived paternal closeness, perceived paternal benevolent sexism, and self-objectification.

We hypothesized that there would be a negative correlation between daughters' levels of perceived paternal closeness and their levels of self-objectification. This hypothesis was supported, meaning that those who felt closer to their fathers reported lower levels of self-objectification than those who felt less close to their fathers. Additionally, there was a negative correlation between perceived paternal closeness and the Body Shame subscale of self-objectification. This finding mirrors prior research by Miles-McLean and colleagues (2014) who found a negative correlation between paternal care and body shame. Taken together, our findings add to prior research that demonstrates the positive effect of paternal closeness on daughters' body image (Horesh et al., 2015). These findings also suggest that paternal closeness may be a protective factor against daughters' self-objectification.

Although we found a negative correlation between girls' levels of perceived paternal closeness and self-objectification, further examination showed that this correlation was significant only for girls who live with their fathers full-time or part-time. There was no correlation between paternal closeness and self-objectification for girls who do not live with their fathers. At first glance, it may seem that girls who do not live with their fathers are not experiencing the potential positive effects of paternal closeness. However, this is not the case, as girls living both with and without their fathers reported equal levels of self-objectification. This suggests that girls who do not live their fathers may have other factors in their life protecting them against the negative effects of self-objectification.

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Moving to our second hypothesis, we predicted that there would be a positive correlation between daughters' levels of perceived paternal benevolent sexism and self-objectification. This hypothesis was not supported, which is not in line with previous research that shows the many negative effects of benevolent sexism (Dardenne et al., 2007; Dumont et al., 2010; Calogero & Jost, 2011; Shepherd et al., 2011). One possible explanation for the discrepancy between our finding and prior research is that benevolent sexism might function differently in the context of father-daughter relationships than in other male-female contexts. In a cultural context, fathers are expected to protect and nurture their daughters, which often is expressed through helping behaviors and endearing comments. When these behaviors and comments occur in the context of a father-daughter relationship, they may actually be benevolently sexist, yet they still fit with the prescribed cultural norm of what it means to be a good father. Therefore, it is possible that when a girl hears a benevolently sexist comment from her father, she interprets it as an example of her father conforming to this prescribed social role, rather than a statement about female stereotypes or male superiority. However, when benevolently sexist comments or behaviors are performed by another male, such as a co-worker or even a stranger, they may have a more negative effect as they do not occur in the context of a preexisting relationship that may include closeness or affection, which has the potential to overshadow the negative effects of benevolent sexism (Moya et al., 2007). While further research is needed to gain a better understanding of how benevolent sexism functions in father-daughter relationships, it is possible that it is not as harmful in these relationships as it is in other male-female contexts.

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Although there was not a significant correlation between daughters' levels of overall perceived paternal benevolent sexism and self-objectification, further examination of the subscales of both of these constructs revealed a few interesting correlations. The Appearance subscale of paternal benevolent sexism was positively correlated with the Control subscale of self-objectification. Control refers to how much agency and responsibility a girl feels that she has in her own body shape and weight. A sample item of the Control subscale of self-objectification is "I can weigh what I want to if I try hard enough" (McKinley & Hyde, 1996). We can make sense of the positive correlation between the Appearance subscale of paternal benevolent sexism and girls' control beliefs by looking to self-serving biases (Rotter, 1966). A self-serving bias occurs when one makes internal attributions regarding positive events or outcomes and external attributions regarding negative events or outcomes (Rotter, 1966). It is possible that the girls who experience more positive appearance-based comments from their fathers may develop an internal locus of control regarding their appearance. Unfortunately, when women believe they have more control over their appearance, they may also engage in negative behaviors such as restrictive eating (McKinley & Hyde, 1996). While the overall measure of paternal benevolent sexism was not correlated with the overall measure of self-objectification, the positive correlation between Appearance and Control does suggest that appearance related comments from fathers may have a negative impact on adolescent girls.

Contrary to the previous finding, the Appearance subscale of paternal benevolent sexism was negatively correlated with the Body Surveillance subscale of self-objectification. Body Surveillance refers to how much a girl surveils and criticizes her

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body weight and shape. A sample item from the Body-Surveillance subscale is, “During the day, I think about how I look many times” (McKinley & Hyde, 1996). This negative correlation between Appearance and Body Surveillance is in line with a small body of research that suggests that fathers’ appearance-based comments may in some cases have a positive effect on girls. For example, one study found significantly lower levels of body shame and greater body esteem in girls who believed their fathers positively evaluated their appearance (McKinley, 1999). However, both the present study and the McKinley (1999) study only examined the effects of positive appearance-related comments. It is possible that girls who receive positive comments from their father, an important male figure in their life, may feel that they have already achieved the cultural standard of beauty set by society; therefore, they may feel that they do not have to engage in as much body surveillance. However, ambiguous or negative comments from fathers may have a negative impact on adolescent girls. In fact, weight teasing from either a mother or a father has been associated with body dissatisfaction as well as unhealthy and extreme weight control behaviors (Neumark-Sztainer et al., 2010). This conflicting research highlights the complexity surrounding appearance-based comments from fathers to their daughters and draws attention to the need for more research that examines the effects of both negative and positive appearance-based comments.

While the present study sheds light on the complexities surrounding father-daughter relationships and their effects on girls’ self-objectification, there were a few limitations. One of these limitations is that we used an online survey. This may have impacted the validity of the study, as self-report measures are potentially inaccurate and biased. Additionally, we did not include racial identity in the demographics section of the

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survey. This is an obvious limitation, as previous research has shown differences in levels of self-objectification among racial groups (Adams et al., 2000; Harrison & Fredrickson, 2003; Powell & Kahn, 1995). Considering that our participants were from all over the United States, we may have been able to add to the body of research regarding racial differences and self-objectification had we included this demographic question. Finally, our survey only asked whether daughters lived with their fathers full-time, part-time, or not at all. While daughters' living situations did in fact predict the level of closeness that daughters felt to their fathers, there was not a main effect of fathers' residency on daughters' perceived paternal benevolent sexism or self-objectification. Ideally, we would have asked how much time daughters spent with their fathers, as this may have more accurately measured the level of communication between a father and daughter. Given that verbal and nonverbal communication is the only way in which benevolently sexist messages are conveyed, we believe that measuring time spent together rather than actual physical proximity would have better predicted daughters' levels of perceived paternal benevolent sexism and self-objectification.

Future directions should include measuring fathers' own benevolently sexist beliefs, as well as reports from other family members regarding the fathers' endorsement of traditional gender roles and benevolently sexist behaviors. It is possible that girls in our study were not accurately perceiving their fathers' levels of benevolently sexist behavior and thus reports from fathers and other family members may be more accurate predictors of daughters' self-objectification. Future research should also examine adolescent girls' views of benevolent sexism and traditional gender roles, as their own beliefs may make them more likely to accept the objectification of women in society and

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thus objectify their own bodies. Additionally, it may be interesting to compare the effects of benevolent sexism within father-daughter relationships to the effects of hostile sexism within these relationships. Ultimately, our results suggest that benevolent sexism in the context of father-daughter relationships is more complex than we initially thought. The impact of father-daughter relationships on adolescent girls' self-objectification remains a crucial topic of inquiry, and future research should strive to identify potentially negative aspects of these relationships in order to eventually combat them.

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Table 1

*Means, Standard Deviations, and Relations Among Predictor Variables*

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Age	16.51	1.12	.14	-.14	-.13	-.05	-.12	.10	.06	.14	-.02
2. Paternal closeness	3.74	0.80	1	.35**	.31**	.21*	.28**	-.26**	-.21*	-.37**	.13
3. Paternal BS (overall)	2.29	0.63		1	.83**	.72**	.77**	-.05	-.15	-.14	.25*
4. Appearance	2.37	0.78			1	.40**	.41**	-.09	-.20*	-.18	.28**
5. Gender Roles	2.20	0.78				1	.43**	.02	-.02	-.08	.18
6. Protection	2.24	0.83					1	-.01	-.08	-.03	.11
7. Self-objectification (overall)	4.02	0.71						1	.81**	.84**	.25*
8. Surveillance	4.62	1.08							1	.64**	-.17
9. Body Shame	3.39	1.21								1	-.12
10. Control	4.63	0.86									1

Note, \*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$  \*\*\*  $p < .001$ . BS = benevolent sexism. Paternal closeness scores range from 1 to 5, with higher scores indicating higher levels of perceived closeness to fathers; Paternal benevolent sexism scores (and the subscales Appearance, Gender Roles, and Protection) range from 1 to 5, with higher scores indicating higher levels of perceived paternal benevolent sexism; Self-objectification scores (and the subscales Surveillance, Body Shame, and Control) range from 1 to 7, with higher scores indicating higher levels of self-objectification.

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Table 2

*Means and Standard Deviations for Paternal Closeness, Paternal Benevolent Sexism, and Self-objectification by Daughter's Residency*

Variable	Daughter's Living Situation				Total Mean	Total <i>SD</i>
	With Father (Full-/Part-Time)		Without Father			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Paternal closeness	3.84	0.63	3.04	1.19	3.72	0.79
Paternal BS	2.30	0.61	2.18	0.75	2.28	0.63
Self-objectification	4.18	0.73	4.41	0.61	4.22	0.71

*Note.* BS = benevolent sexism. Paternal closeness scores range from 1 to 5, with higher scores indicating higher levels of perceived closeness to fathers; Paternal benevolent sexism scores range from 1 to 5, with higher scores indicating higher levels of perceived paternal benevolent sexism. Self-objectification scores range from 1 to 7, with higher scores indicating higher levels of self-objectification.

**Appendix A: Paternal Benevolent Sexism Questionnaire**

5 point Likert-type scale ranging from *never-always*

1. My father compliments me on my appearance.
2. My father calls me “cute” or “adorable.”
3. My father encourages me not to go anywhere at night without being accompanied by a man.
4. My father compliments me on my good taste in clothing and decor.
5. My father makes jokes along the lines that he will “do bad things” to anyone who breaks my heart.
6. My father tells me I am great at cooking and cleaning.
7. My father tells me that I am his “princess.”
8. My father will not allow me to date unless he has met and approved of the potential suitor first.
9. My father tells me I will be a great mother someday.
10. My father comes to my defense if he thinks anyone is mistreating me.
11. My father tells me I am good with kids.
12. My father notices when I have put extra effort into my appearance and compliments me on it.
13. My father refers to me as his “little girl.”
14. My father makes jokes about how much I like to shop.
15. My father offers to carry heavy things for me.
16. My father insists that he accompany me to new places or events.
17. My father compliments my beauty.

Items by Subscale

Appearance= 1, 2, 7, 12, 13, 17

Gender Roles= 4, 6, 9, 11, 14

Protection= 3, 5, 8, 10, 15, 16