Methodology

Literature reviews on definitions of violence, overview and contrasting of feminist theories and research qualitative studies of women’s experiences

 Violence as a violation of integrity

 Symbolic Violence: Social control through the consent of subjects to legally sanctioned domination which serves to reproduce social hierarchies and thus subordinate those subjects. A construction of “social reality in ways that enable or are likely to enable various forms of harm to persons by altering the conditions under which conscious choices in one’s best interest can be made” (Colaguori 131)

Our Social Context: Neoliberal-Capitalist Patriarchy

Feminist Theories: Women’s Bodies and the Policing Gaze

Women’s Experiences as Mediated by the Medico-Legal Complex

As of 2011, breast augmentation remains 2nd most practiced surgical cosmetic procedure worldwide sitting at 18.9% of all cosmetic surgical procedures.

Research Question

What is the relationship between women’s individual choice to undergo breast implantation in North America and the social, economic and political context in which it is made?

Methodology

Literature reviews on definitions of violence, overview and contrasting of feminist theories and research qualitative studies of women’s experiences

 Violence as a violation of integrity

 Symbolic Violence: Social control through the consent of subjects to legally sanctioned domination which serves to reproduce social hierarchies and thus subordinate those subjects. A construction of “social reality in ways that enable or are likely to enable various forms of harm to persons by altering the conditions under which conscious choices in one’s best interest can be made” (Colaguori 131)

Our Social Context: Neoliberal-Capitalist Patriarchy

Feminist Theories: Women’s Bodies and the Policing Gaze

Women’s Experiences as Mediated by the Medico-Legal Complex

As of 2011, breast augmentation remains 2nd most practiced surgical cosmetic procedure worldwide sitting at 18.9% of all cosmetic surgical procedures.

Findings: ‘Choosing’ Breast Implants

Patriarchy + Neoliberal-Capitalism → Particular and limited construction of the female body

Reification (Objectification) of the female body whereby the body is modified to attain conformity

Decision – consenting to harm, simultaneously coerced and voluntary

Discussion: Why Is This Significant? The Impact of Symbolic Violence and Breast Implantation on Women

Uninformed Consent

Skewed Representations of Risk

Women’s Physical Experiences

Symptoms directly related to implants:
- Ruptures
- Deflations
- Scar tissue

Symptoms associated to implants:
- Joint pain
- Hair loss
- Chronic infections
- Headaches
- Chronic fatigue
- Dizziness
- Loss of sex drive
- Chest pain
- Loss of nipple sensation

Women’s Mental/Emotional Experiences

- Inner conflict
- Anger
- Shame
- Self-consciousness
- Feel like sex object
- Alienation from body

Women who suffered complications:
- Denial of illness
- Isolation
- Loss of job
- Loss of self

Hegemonic gendered expectations of femininity in neoliberal-capitalist patriarchal society constitute a symbolic violence that entices women to undergo breast implantation in North America. Breast implantation itself constitutes the visible violent by-product of this symbolic violence, affecting women’s physical and mental/emotional well-being. This violence is both undertaken and further exacerbated by the medico-legal complex.

Conclusions

Symbolic violence → Women’s decision to undergo breast implantation → Physical/ mental/ emotional violence → Subordinate position maintained

The symbolic and ‘hard’ violence enacted against women through breast implantation in neoliberal-capitalist patriarchal society can only be mitigated once it is named as such; violence against women.