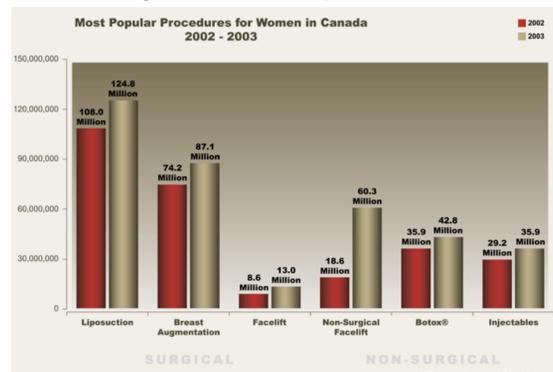


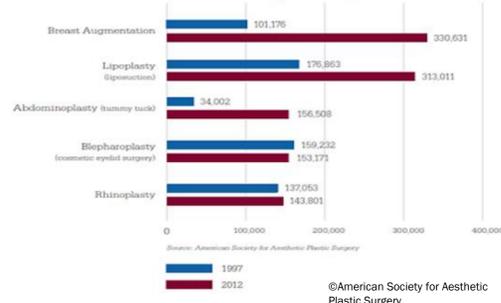
# Violence against Women: Breast Implantation in Neoliberal-Capitalist Patriarchal Society

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## Why Breast Implantation?



2003- 85.5% of all cosmetic enhancement procedures in Canada undergone by women  
Surgical Procedures: 16-Year Comparison, 1997-2012



As of 2011- breast augmentation remains 2<sup>nd</sup> 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?

*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.*

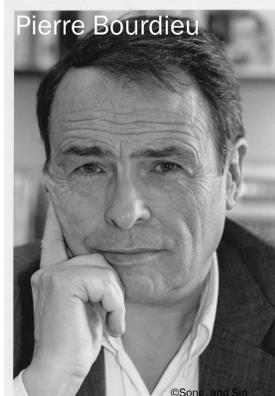
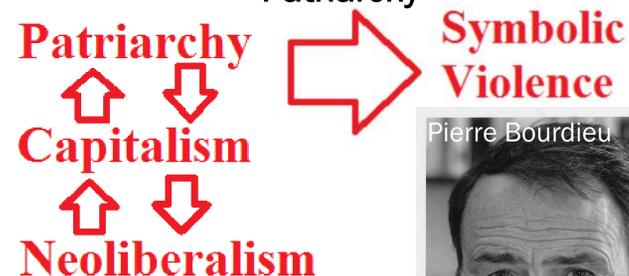
## Methodology

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

- ❖ The male gaze of patriarchal culture → Internalization of socially constructed ideal feminine body → Policing of the self and others
- ❖ Technologies of the self to attempt to approximate ideal feminine body → Alienation
- ❖ Reinforcement of subordination

## 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	Women's Mental/Emotional Experiences
<p>Symptoms directly related to implants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ruptures</li> <li>• Deflations</li> <li>• Scar tissue</li> </ul> <p>Symptoms associated to implants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint pain</li> <li>• Hair loss</li> <li>• Chronic infections</li> <li>• Headaches</li> <li>• Chronic fatigue</li> <li>• Dizziness</li> <li>• Loss of sex drive</li> <li>• Chest pain</li> <li>• Loss of nipple sensation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inner conflict</li> <li>• Anger</li> <li>• Shame</li> <li>• Self-consciousness</li> <li>• Feel like sex object</li> <li>• Alienation from body</li> </ul> <p>Those who suffered complications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Denial of illness</li> <li>• Isolation</li> <li>• Loss of job</li> <li>• Loss of self</li> </ul>

## Women's Experiences as Mediated by the Medico-Legal Complex

- Medicalization of women's bodies: Hypomastia and its legacy
- Both institutions = profit-led and male-dominated, work in tandem to capitalize off of women's bodies and subordinate them
- Suffer secondary violation if challenge in court



## Conclusions

- ❖ Neoliberal- capitalist patriarchy → 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.

