Emotionally Fit: Emotional Labour and Group Exercise Instructors

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Abstract

Group fitness classes may appear to be an ordinary place where some people gather, however, this social space does offer a rich site to examine the interface between micro interactions and social structure. Indeed, the group fitness instructors in these fitness classes perform not only physical routines set to music, but also, navigate many social interactions that are emotionally laden. Exploring the emotional lives of group fitness instructors and understanding the impact their emotions have on these interactions, their perceptions of work, their relationships, and themselves as a focus of research, has only very recently come under scholarly attention (Parviainen, 2018; Prochnow et al., 2020).

This area of inquiry is an important focus of research because this occupation group is dominated by women and involves work where the emotional labour required is both unpaid and unacknowledged (James, 1989). The emotional experiences of group fitness instructors demonstrate how the embodied fitness instruction, gendered preferences in fitness routines (Dworkin, 2001, 2003), and the informal gender segregation of the fitness gym play a role of in the maintenance of gender norms associated with the binary model of gender (Dworkin, 2003; Dworkin & Wachs, 2009; Hird, 2002). The use of emotions and the emotional toll in providing group fitness experiences is also gendered.

This study involved over 500 hours of participant observation, 12 face-to-face, in-depth interviews, and a focus group meeting with seven people. The data was then transcribed verbatim and analyzed via thematic and comparative coding (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Ryan & Bernard, 2003). The findings from the research are grouped into one of three inter-connected conceptual categories developed from the analysis: the embodied nature of

emotional labour, emotional labour and sociability, and emotional labour in fitness instruction. These categories conceptualize emotional labour and illustrate the ways in which emotional labour is corporeal. Finally, a key finding in this work is the identification that the group fitness class is a "proximate social structure" where social discourses and relational practices including sexism, homophobia, fatphobia, ageism, and racism are maintained and reproduced (Jacobs & Merolla, 2017, p. 68).

Dedication

For anyone who sweats to find themselves.

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My loving, supportive parents prepared me for this moment by laying the foundation for a love of learning, literacy, and for seeing the beauty in taking the long way.

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Through 10 years, nine courses taught, five papers published, four babies born, two miscarriages felt, one family cottage purchased, one woodlot acquired, and one global pandemic, there is one finished dissertation.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In this dissertation I used a qualitative research design to examine how group fitness instructors perceive and manage their emotions while at work. In our everyday lives, emotions are integrally connected to and inform our actions. Thus, we feel and express emotions that comply with, resist, or transform the norms of emotional expression that, in everyday life, maintain the normative patterns of the interactions that make up society itself (Hochschild, 1979, 1990; Thoits, 1985). In analyzing these societal processes, I took a symbolic interactionist theoretical approach, including interactionist theories of emotions, to answer the research question: How do group fitness instructors experience emotional labour in the context of a group fitness class? Emotional labour refers to the management of emotions experienced by individuals as they interact with others in the workplace (Hochschild, 1990). Therefore, in order to answer this question, two related research questions were also asked: How do group fitness instructors negotiate the normative expectations of group fitness classes? And how do group fitness instructors experience their emotions while they navigate this occupational space? In addressing these questions and trying to understand how fitness instructors come to understand the meaning of the work they do, I analyzed the impact of emotional labour resulting from the interactions instructors had with their fellow colleagues, as well as with the people who took their classes.

The emotional experiences of group fitness instructors are worthy of study because the work that is performed in group fitness studios touches on many important areas in the study of emotions, gender, and work, including the use and performativity of the body,

relationship management, and expert service work (George, 2008). While group fitness classes may appear to be an ordinary place where some people workout, this social space does offer a rich site to examine the interface between micro interactions and social structure. This social space reflects how group fitness workers have come to internalize their company's mandated emotional labour, and in some instances, embraced those demands and further embody neoliberal[1] work mandates, including those that result in the reinforcement of neoliberal health discourses (Lupton, 1997; Pickard, 1998).

Exploring the emotional lives of group fitness instructors and understanding the impact their emotions have on their interactions, their perceptions of work, their relationships, and themselves as a focus of research, has only very recently come under scholarly attention (Parviainen, 2018; Prochnow et al., 2020). This area of inquiry is an important focus of research because the types of jobs that align with expert service work (hairdressers, personal trainers, personal assistants, etc.) are occupations generally dominated by women and involve work where the emotional labour required is both unpaid and unacknowledged (James, 1989, p. 16), all of which involves significant emotional labour on the part of these workers.

Among the key findings from my research are the techniques used by the group fitness instructors I spoke with to "look the part" of a fitness instructor including making efforts to present a fit and toned body, especially for female instructors. The emotional burdens these instructors carry due to the requirements to be sociable with the people who take their classes and the requirement that they also engage in underpaid and unpaid labour

[1] Neoliberalism is discussed more fully in Chapters Two – Theory and Chapter Three – Contextualizing Group Fitness.

in order to fulfil their roles as group fitness instructors is currently an under examined area in the literature. Thus, among the findings from my research is how group fitness instruction is poorly remunerated given the countless hours of training and practice required to perform their work. In their work, instructors must contend with the triple burden of the unpaid work they do in order to perform their job including the preparation and practice for teaching fitness classes in addition to expected sociability with members outside of class times, the time spent on social media promoting their classes, and time spent after class helping members through the choreography or exercises. They also experience the quadruple burden of unpaid work in the home, paid full-time work outside of the home, paid fitness instructor work, and unpaid fitness instructor work.

This research allowed me to analyze the unacknowledged and uncompensated burden of emotional labour among group fitness instructors which contributes to our understanding of how emotions are implicated in the performance of new forms of service work within the expanding field of expert service work (George, 2008) and contributes to a further understanding of the meaning of work and the role of emotional regulation and strategies in this process.With the unpaid and underpaid work that disproportionately falls on the unacknowledged emotional demands of lower paid workers, the fitness studio becomes an interesting sociological site of inquiry (Osterman, Locke, & Piore, 2002, p. 19). Further, there is likely to be an increased demand for group fitness instructors in the coming years given the changing trends in not only the labour market with a large portion of people set to retire but also with the health and active living trends where people are expected to engage in exercise and age well (Katz, 2001).

Finally, this research is important because of the influence gym culture has not only on the everyday lives of the people who use its facilities, but also on the larger society, given that the fitness gym is a heteronormative, gendered, fatphobic, and ageist space where sexism, homophobia, fatphobia, racism, and ageism are part of how the instructors present themselves and their bodies while they interact with class members and other instructors (Allain & Marshall, 2017; Coen, Davidson, & Rosenberg, 2021; English, 2020; O'Dougherty et al., 2009; Sykes & McPhail, 2008). Thus, a key finding of my research is the identification of the group fitness gym as a "proximate social structure" where social discourses and relational practices including sexism, homophobia, fatphobia, ageism, and racism are maintained and reproduced (Jacobs & Merolla, 2017, p. 68). All of these findings contribute to a greater understanding of individuals' emotional experiences at work and can yield insights related to well-being and interaction in the service economy more generally.

The Structure of the Dissertation

Below I discuss the structure of my dissertation including chapters on the theoretical perspective that framed my research; the social contexts in which the social world of the fitness gym is located; the research design and methodology I used; chapters that present how I conceptualizes emotional labour among the group fitness instructors that participated in my research; and a conclusion chapter where I discuss the sociological importance of my findings. In Chapter Two I discuss the symbolic interactionist perspective that frames my analysis as well as interactionist theories of emotions and the

expanding research on emotional labour. I include a discussion of key interactionist concepts such as impression management and role conflict as well as the serious leisure perspective. I also define other extant concepts from outside of the interactionist perspective that inform my analysis through Blumer's (1969) process of inspection, including such concepts as the active citizen (Pickard, 1998) and physical capital (Bourdieu, 1984).

In Chapter Three I discuss the social-structural setting for the experiences of the group fitness instructors I spoke with, including the historical, political, socio-cultural, and biographical contexts that frame the social world of the fitness gym. I begin by discussing the historical origins of group fitness, then examine the political discourse of neoliberalism and key Canadian health promotion policy initiatives in addition to socio-cultural discourses of health as the personal responsibility characteristic of a risk society (Beck, 1992). I conclude with a discussion of key aspects of the biographical contexts of the group fitness instructors who took part in my research, including occupation, social class, education, gender, age, and fit and fat bodies. In Chapter Four I describe the qualitative research design, methods of data collection, and mode of analysis I used to address my research questions. These include participant observation, face-to-face, in-depth interviews, and a focus group meeting that I analyzed via thematic and comparative coding (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Ryan & Bernard, 2003).

The findings from my research are presented in Chapters Five, Six, and Seven; each chapter is dedicated to one of three inter-connected conceptual categories developed from my analysis: the embodied nature of emotional labour, emotional labour and sociability, and emotional labour of fitness instruction. At the conclusion of each substantive chapter,

I discuss my research findings in relation to the theoretical concepts defined in Chapter Two and insights from the literature on group fitness and relevant aspects of social context that frame the experiences of the group fitness instructors who took part in my research (see Chapter Three). In Chapter Eight, the concluding chapter of my dissertation, I summarize the key findings from my research; highlight the contexts that frame my analysis; show how my findings illustrate the relationship between social structure and the actions of individuals; and provide suggestions for future research. In the chapter that follows, I discuss the major theoretical perspective, symbolic interactionism, used to frame my research, interactionist theories of emotions, and other theoretical concepts that aided me in conceptualizing my findings. These are findings that we should care about because they reveal that while these instructors become expert service workers in their field and display proficiency in their teaching practice, in doing so they simultaneously experience significant burdens of underpaid and unpaid labour and anxieties as they make efforts to be embodied role models for the individuals who take their classes. In addition, the emotion work they engage in while teaching group fitness takes place within the context of the fitness gym that reflects and reproduces sexism, racism, ageism, fatphobia, and homophobia.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORY

In this chapter I discuss the theoretical perspective of symbolic interactionism that frames my analysis. Consistent with Blumer's (1969, p. 42-44) process of inspection I also include in my discussion additional extant concepts I found useful in my analysis, including those from perspectives other than symbolic interactionism. I begin this chapter with a statement of the general assumptions of symbolic interactionism and go on to examine the ways in which symbolic interactionism has been used to understand emotions; drawing particularly on Hochschild (1979), Denzin (1983), and Thoits (1989); among others. I also engage with Goffman's (1959) insights regarding the interaction order, the presentation of self, and bodies as sign vehicles to further explain the experiences of group fitness instructors. Next, I discuss the concepts of emotional labour, body labour, aesthetic labour, and occularcentric labour to tease out nuances in a group fitness setting that further unpacks the experiences of aerobics instructors. To finish the chapter, other concepts that help to explain my research include the serious leisure perspective (Stebbins, 1982), occupational socialization (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979), strategic friendliness (Pierce, 1995), risk society (Beck, 1992), neoliberalism, and the generalized other (Mead, 1962[1932]) are examined.

Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism is a perspective that emphasizes the recursive link between the individual and society, namely how society is created via the interactions individual have with each other and how the meaning of social reality is shared within those

interactions (Blumer, 1969; Mead, 1962[1934]; Simmel, 1988). Thus, society emerges through what Blumer (1969) called "joint action." According to Blumer (1969, p. 97), "joint action" refers the negotiation, interaction, and participation in a social exchange that involves recognizing and interpreting what others are doing and adjusting one's own response to the actions accordingly. Attention to joint action allows symbolic interactionism to avoid determinist understandings of social structure and to examine the interactions that comprise and maintain social arrangements (Blumer, 1969). Symbolic interactionism highlights "individual accountability and agency and addresses structural, cultural, and material conditions as people experience and reproduce them in their day-to-day lives" (Fields, Copp, & Kleinman, 2006, p. 157). According to Blumer (1969, p. 2) symbolic interactionism rests on three fundamental assumptions:

> (1) human beings act towards things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them (2) the meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows (3) these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things … encounter[ed].

Symbolic interactionism examines the ability of individuals to construct, reconstruct, and give meaning to their everyday lives (Blumer, 1969; Goffman, 1959; Gonos, 1977) and stresses the autonomy of the individual in creating their own meanings through interactions with others. The construction of meaning does not occur in the objects themselves, but rather in the social. It is the meaning and importance of the objects (self, others, and relationships) that creates society. Blumer (1969, p. 2) emphasizes the importance of those interactions being an interpretative process, suggesting that people act towards things on the basis of the meanings those things have for them; and those meanings are constantly modified through interactions and exchanges.

I chose a symbolic interactionist perspective because, while it is not exclusively a micro approach, it is particularly adept at examining micro level interactions and how the meaning people give to things in social life shapes their actions. People learn to anticipate others' reactions to their behaviour and take on these reactions as their own (Mead, 1962[1934]). It further emphasizes how individuals are active in shaping their social world rather than simply being acted upon and how interaction simultaneously contributes to the development of the self (Azarian, 2015, p. 688). Given that the focus of my research is on how group fitness instructors manage their emotions in interaction with other instructors as well as engaging in emotional labour in interacting with the people who take their fitness classes; symbolic interactionism is a strong theoretical approach in which to study emotion work among group fitness instructors. The symbolic interactionist perspective is also appropriate given the variety of interactions that can take place in a group fitness studio, enabling examination of the lived emotional experiences and emotional labour of instructors of group fitness classes as well as emotion management techniques used by them (Greer, 2002, p. 118).

Symbolic Interactionism and the Self

Symbolic interactionist studies of emotions are based, in large part, on Mead's (1962[1934]), Blumer's (1969), and Goffman's (1959, 1963, 1967) understanding of the self. In *Mind, Self, and Society*, Mead (1962[1934]) theorized how people learn to anticipate others' reactions to their behaviour and take on these reactions as their own. A sense of self develops as people recognize that others in their social network have "particular expectations for and values attached to their actions, desires, and identities"

(Fields et al. 2006, p. 157). The "generalized other" according to Mead (1962[1934]), is the expectations one believes others have on an individual within a society. In other words, it is a term for expected behaviour, norms, and values considered the standard in one's community or society. According to Mead (1962[1934]), the "self" resides in the individual's ability to see oneself as a social being (Vail, 2007). In order to do this, people must take the role of the "other." The "generalized other" is the way we see ourselves through our sense of what others think of us (Holdsworth & Morgan, 2007, p. 415) and is a process rather than a static thing. Identification with what Mead (1962[1934]) calls the generalized other informs the development, institutionalization, and maintenance of the social ties and groups that constitute society and which people develop and maintain their sense of self (Fields et al. 2006, p. 157). And it is Mead's 1962[1934], pp. 154-158) term for the collection of role expectations and attitudes that people use as a behavioural guide in a social setting (Vail, 2007). According to Mead (1962[1934] pp. 154):

> selves develop in social contexts as people learn to take the roles of their consociates such that they can with a fair degree of accuracy predict how one set of actions is likely to generate fairly predictable responses. People develop these capacities in the process of interacting with one another, sharing meaningful symbols, and developing and using language to create, refine, and assign meanings to social objects (including themselves).

The Interaction Order and the Presentation of Self

According to Goffman (1983, p. 2) social processes are enacted in "the interaction order" of specific domains of social activity in which individuals engage in interactions involving speech and physical presence that follow certain shared norms and interface with broader features of social organization. By critically examining the micro interactions between individuals, it is possible to extrapolate more broadly and apply it to a more

general context, essentially to larger groups. Thus, framing the group fitness studio as a space in which the interaction order plays out with its own rules of social behaviour, and interpretation of this behaviour, provides a conceptual framework to understand these sites as micro-systems that both reflect and constitute the broader social world. For Goffman (1959, 1967) an essential part of the interaction order is how individuals engage in "impression management", through their presentation of self in interacting with others. The general crux of Goffman's presentation of self is that when people present themselves to others, they do so to signal to the social audience who they are, what they are doing, and how they would like to be perceived. This is achieved through social rituals, behaviour, language, staging props, and establishing frames, all of which are embodied practices for Goffman (1959). As Goffman (1983) argued in his presidential address to the American Sociological Society, that we do nothing in society without our bodies. In his words, "by definition we can participate in social situations only if we bring our bodies and their accoutrements along with us" (Goffman, 1983, p. 4).

He argues that social institutions and patterns of interaction are maintained when everyone plays their appropriate role in impression management. However, when impression management fails, the individual must, in Goffman's (1959, p. 6) terms "save face." Loss of face can be an emotional experience, whereby people may feel embarrassed or ashamed when they make a bad impression (Goffman, 1959, p. 40). Emotions thus guide interactions with others and help to establish and uphold social relationships. Emotional dynamics in social interactions and everyday encounters are an important part of Goffman's (1959, 1967) understanding of the presentation of self. Thus, my analysis is informed by Goffman's (1959, 1963, 1983) work on the presentation of self and how this process

governs social interaction that are circumscribed in particular social spaces, such as the group fitness class. His concept of impression management is likewise useful in my analysis of how group fitness instructors manage their emotions.

Managing the impressions others have of our self-presentations also involves the body as a sign vehicle, something of importance to my research given that the body is of particular relevance to group fitness instruction. Goffman (1959) argues that people use their bodies as sign vehicles in presenting themselves to the social audience. The body is literally what is worked on by class members and instructors and what is used by instructors for communicating with class members and in performing their classes. According to Goffman (1983, p.4),

> we can participate in social situations only if we bring our bodies and their accoutrements along with us, and this equipment is vulnerable by virtue of the instrumentalities that others bring along with their bodies.

For Goffman (1959, p. 2) the body as sign vehicle involves signs "given" and signs "given off" the body. In his words: "the expressiveness of the individual appears to involve two radically different kinds of sign activity: the expression that [the body] gives, and the expression that [the body] gives off." Bodily signs are given through the use of appearance and mannerisms and are intentionally to create a desired impression. In contrast, signs our bodies "give off" are those that are unintended and give a less than desired impression on the social audience. In these cases, the individual may be labelled as deviant and stigmatized by the social audience. Signs given off can lead to the individual being stigmatized which Goffman (1963, p. 3) defines as possessing "an attribute" of the person "that is deeply discrediting."

In relation to my study on fitness workers, the embodied nature of emotional labour is clearly on display as the workers negotiate their own changing bodies and expectations for their work. Goffman's (1959) concept of bodies as sign vehicles is particularly useful in understanding the meanings group fitness instructors place on both their clothing choices and hair styles while teaching their classes as they use their bodies, clothes, and language to not only conduct their classes, but to display messages to their class members, other instructors, and their employer. Finally, presenting ourselves in society necessarily involves managing emotions. Thus, emotions are integrally connected to and inform our actions (Fields et al., 2006, p. 164). That emotional labour is also embodied (Freund, 1990) is important for my research in understanding the social nature of the bodily reactions to stress and negative encounters with class members for the group fitness instructors that I spoke with.

Among the roles that these fitness instructors play in presenting themselves is that of a role model for the people who take their classes. For symbolic interactionists, role models are significant others that neophytes learn from through interaction and observation (Jung, 1986). The relations between the role model and the neophyte reflect both affective and instrumental bonds (Jung, 1986). Thus, another concept from symbolic interactionism that is important in my analysis is Simmel's (1949, p. 154-155) concept of sociability. According to Simmel (Simmel & Hughes, 1949, p. 154-155; see also Simmel, 1895; Simmel, 1917), sociability refers to the interaction between individuals that involves all forms of social events, and:

> Above and beyond their special content, all these associations are accompanied by a feeling for, by a satisfaction in, the very fact that one is associated with

> others and that the solitariness of the individual is resolved into togetherness, a union with others.

By associations, Simmel is referring to how people associate in everyday life as they interact and group fitness classes, and the social event the group fitness instructors who participated in my research engaged in with gym members are an example of what Simmel (1949) means by play and play is important because it is an instance of joint action and therefore a building block of society. As Simmel (1949, p. 155) writes:

> A special sociological structure corresponding to those of art and play... satisfaction lies in gymnastics, as in card-playing, [and] in music, and in plastic, something which has nothing to do with the peculiarities of music or plastic as such but only with the fact that both of the latter are art and both of the former are play.

An outcome of sociability between service workers and their clients is trust. Through talking with clients and through using other skills they acquire via occupational socialization (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979) people trust front-line expert service workers like hairdressers and other body workers, and thus trust is a relevant concept in my research on group fitness instructors (Soulliere, 1997).

The kind of trust that exists between fitness instructors and the people who take their classes is consistent with the qualities of Simmel's (1971[1908], p.143) conception of the role of the stranger. For Simmel (1971[1908], p. 145), the stranger is a social role that occupies a liminal space between attachment and detachment and is therefore a "synthesis … of both of these properties." The kind of trust that gets developed is reflected by the character of the relationship between the stranger and others in small group settings like the fitness gym where individuals are near because they share "common features" of the social world of the fitness gym but also distant, in Simmel's words characterized by

coolness, because “these common features … connect us only because they connect a great many people” (Simmel, 1971[1908], p.147). In other words, a person that is part of a social group but one that has “only certain more general qualities in common” with others, in contrast to the many specific qualities one has in common with close friends and family members (Simmel, 1971[1908], p.143). The embodied presentation of aerobic skills presented by these instructors contributes to this trust because it is directly related to the connection that joins all the individuals together in the group fitness class. Simmel’s understanding of the stranger, is, in turn, compatible with the concept of surface friendships (Harness et al., 2021). The concept of surface friendships is useful in conceptualizing how some group fitness class members assume friendships with instructors that instructors do not necessarily feel or reciprocate. This misunderstanding of an assumed relationship then has an emotional impact on instructors that creates a core element in the emotional labour instructors are forced to engage in throughout the course of their work.

The Sociology of Emotions

For my research I focused on the social interactions and interpretation of emotions among group fitness class instructors. Emotions are central to a symbolic interactionist understanding of social life (Franks, 2003; Kleinman & Sandstrom, 2005; Kleinman, 1991). This is because emotions motivate behaviour, shape relationships, contribute to a sense of agency and self-control, and create opportunities for social interactions; both positive and negative (Fields et al., 2006, p. 155). Further, these social interactions have “profound impacts on people’s emotional lives and thus affect perceptions, interaction, authenticity, and autonomy” (Greer, 2002, p. 118). Thus, concepts from the sociology of

emotions were integral to my research. Although sparsely referred to years before (Durkheim, 2008 [1912]; Goffman, 1959; Mills, 1959), emotions and the sociology of emotions began to gain serious academic attention around 1975 (Kemper, 1990, pp. 3-4) meaning that since the late 1970s there has been a steady increase in research on the emotions in sociological literature (Denzin, 1985; Hochschild, 1979, 1983; Kemper, 1978; Shott, 1979; Thoits, 1989).

Generally, those interested in the sociology of emotions seek to understand how emotions influence the self, how interactions are shaped by emotions, how people develop emotional attachments to, or sustain and change, or resist and negotiate social structures and symbols (Turner & Stets, 2005, p. 23). According to the interactionist perspective, emotions can best be understood by examining the processes by which they are created, interpreted, and expressed through social interactions with others (Denzin, 1983; Hochschild, 1979; Shott, 1979; Thoits, 1989).

Interactionist understandings of emotion build on Blumer's (1969) resistance to the reification of social institutions. Blumer argued that instead of using institutions (education, government, the family, etc.) as the units of analysis, sociologists should instead explore the joint actions of people who reproduce those institutions. In doing so, symbolic interactionists would better understand the conditions supporting the continuation of institutions and the day-to-day lives of those whom the institutions touch (Blumer, 1969). Understanding emotions from a symbolic interactionist perspective requires one to see that emotions are interpreted, controlled, and managed by social actors in their encounters with others in everyday life (Thoits, 1989, p. 331). Being nervous during job interviews, sad about the death of a friend, joyous for the birth of a baby; these emotions are felt personally

but how they are experienced and expressed are learned socially. These events also contain physical displays of emotions which are conveyed socially through the physical body. Emotions pervade human experiences, are learned through social interactions, and are the result of social influences; making emotions highly personal and individualized while simultaneously, socially constructed (Thoits, 1989, p. 319).

Therefore, as Barbalet (2002, p. 6) points out "no matter what the social phenomenon, its processes and outcomes can always be better understood when its emotional dimensions are identified. That is because the emotional dimensions of a thing [such as a process or outcome] determines its social significance and course." Therefore, a well-rounded understanding and appreciation of the sociology of emotions is critical to the comprehension of all human interaction (Barbalet, 2002, p. 2). For another example, symbolic interactionists' concern with the processes of social organization, meaning making, and social control has fostered a particular interest in what Shott (1979) has called "role-taking emotions." Role-taking emotions, such as guilt, embarrassment, shame, and empathy, require a social self (Scheff, 1988; Shott, 1979). Moreover, emotions are evident in "role strain" when the stress caused by the demands or tasks associated with the single role one is playing becomes challenging to maintain (Goode, 1960, p. 483). This includes the strain experienced by an instructor when incompatible behaviour, expectations, or obligations are associated with their instructor role, as was experienced by the instructors I interviewed. Examples from my research include female instructors who were sociable with members of their classes while also trying to remember what music and or movement patterns each class member liked and meeting the other physical requirements of their role

as fitness instructors including being an embodied role model for the people who take their classes.

In addition, role ambiguity, where the rules of behaviour associated with playing a role are unclear or contradictory (Jackson & Schuler, 1985) is an important concept in my analysis. For instance, role ambiguity occurred because of the unclear boundaries of what was expected of the instructors by the people who took their classes, such as having to listen to and recommend solutions to medical conditions that far exceeded the instructors' expertise. Other female instructors spoke about the number of intimate, personal problems gym members would discuss with them, often leaving the instructors both flattered to be a trusted confidant, but also uncomfortable knowing such personal information about a class member who was basically a stranger to them. The instructors would feel conflicted about what their role in the situation entailed, leading to role ambiguity.

With role taking there is always the possibility of role conflict, another concept useful in my analysis. Role conflict occurs when people experience a contradiction between the different roles they hold in their day-to-day lives (Katz & Kahn, 1978). Within my research, fitness instructors experienced role conflict between their roles as mothers, where the societal expectation is to invest and care for their children as their primary obligation, and their role as a gym employee, where they are expected to devote extra time and resources in their job performance.

With job performance, emotions that arise within those social interactions are corporeal and embodied. For instance, this embodied aspect is best illustrated by an instructor shouting out directions or movements and the entire class of exercisers follows along. The instructor might offer motivational cues so that class members may stretch taller

by encouraging them to stretch upwards towards the sky as if reaching for the clouds. This visualization cue not only engages everyone in the room into uniform movement, but it also creates an emotional and physical response to accompany the movement. In addition, the bodily nature of emotional interactions can be seen when a participant falls or trips during a fitness class. Not only does the sudden and out-of-place noise create a distraction from the workout, but it also brings all the focus onto that participant and their physical wellbeing. The emotions felt, expressed, and shared within this context are difficult to silence (Sassatelli, 1999b, p. 234), and thus "frame" (Goffman, 1967) the activities that transpire within the fitness space.

Emotion Management

Emotion management refers to the active effort of individual agents to align felt and expressed emotions with emotion norms; that is, the constructed and situation-specific expectations for what and how to feel (Hochschild, 1979, 1983). Emotions are not simply felt; they are created, suppressed, and transformed in everyday interactions. People manage their emotions and reactions to them by responding in appropriate displays or by intentionally displaying gestures that differ from their true feelings (James, 1989, p. 17). For Hochschild (2003), emotions are also a social process; more specifically, she asserts that societies have an emotional culture consisting of ideas about what and how people are expected to feel in social settings. These rules vary by gender (Shields, Steinke, & Koster, 1995), class (Bericat, 2012), body size (Sykes & McPhail, 2008), and race (Bonilla-Silva, 2019), as well as occupational setting (Pierce, 1995; Tracy, 2000). Thus, emotional life

requires a great deal of emotional management to stay within appropriate cultural and social bounds (James, 1989, p. 18).

Hochschild (1983) argues in *The Managed Heart* that emotions are not only shaped by broad cultural and societal norms but are also increasingly regulated by employers whose primary focus is profit driven. Hochschild (1983, p. 7) carved out a deeper understanding of emotion in the workplace and explained that when emotions are commoditized, that is, offered for sale or as part of a service, it becomes emotional labour. Emotion work is emotion management done in private life; whereby emotional labour is the emotion management done for a wage (Hochschild, 1990, p. 118).

Emotional Labour

Emotional labour is the process by which workers are expected to manage their feelings in accordance with employer defined rules, regulations, and guidelines (Hochschild, 1983, p.7). Hochschild (1983, p.7) postulates that a job requires emotional labour when its performance involves making vocal or facial contact with the public; when its performance involves producing an emotional state in the client or customer; and when the employer has an opportunity to control worker's emotional displays. Emotional labour "requires one to induce or suppress feelings in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others" (Hochschild, 1983, p.7). Accordingly, emotional labour primarily occurs in jobs that require workers to have face-to-face contact with the general public. Hochschild claims that workers are expected to produce a positive or negative emotional state in others and to endure supervision and control over their emotional activities (Turner & Stets, 2005, p. 38). For Hochschild (1983), individuals often

engage in strategic emotional performances that are not personally gratifying; making the cultural scripts, imposed on workers from their employers, many things, including incongruent with their true selves (Turner & Stets, 2005, p. 38).

Emotion management and emotional labour are governed by two types of norms: feeling rules and display rules (Hochschild, 1979, 1990). Hochschild (1979, 1983) introduces the term "feeling rules" to describe societal norms about the appropriate type and amount of feeling that should be experienced in certain social situations. These feeling rules "govern the intensity of the emotion (from strong to weak), the direction of the emotion (positive or negative) and the duration (fleeting to lasting) of the emotion" (Turner & Stets, 2005, p. 36). Emotional labour operates through feeling rules. These are the control mechanisms about what feeling is appropriate and are often socially shared rules about how one ought to feel in a certain social situation (Hochschild, 1979, p. 561). An example is to feel sadness at a funeral or pride at a graduation ceremony. Like most rules, feeling rules are parameters that have been socially accepted as "right" and "good."

Display rules specify when and how the expression of emotions in a given situation is to occur (Hochschild, 1979, 1983). When individuals follow these display rules, they are engaging in surface acting. According to Hochschild (1983), surface acting is accomplished when one purposely puts on a suitable emotion in order to change one's feeling. Surface acting involves changing one's outward appearance and behaviour so that they are consistent with normative expectations (Hochschild, 1979, 1983). For instance, managers expect their employees to treat customers in a courteous and friendly manner. Thus, the smile of the service staff and the emotional style of those offering the service becomes a part of the service itself (Hochschild, 1983, p. 5). The workers can, according

to Hochschild (1983), use two strategies to achieve the desired goal: surface acting and deep acting.

Deep acting is done when a person tries to change one of the determinants of the feeling itself (one's mental appraisal, heart rate, etc.). For example, in surface acting the workers change feeling from the outside in. In deep acting, the workers change feeling from the inside out. In the first case, one alters the surface performance to feel different. By smiling and pretending to be cheerful, the service provider actually might cheer up and be friendly. In deep acting, more than surface appearance must be changed. Examples of deep acting, are taking long deep breaths, talking to oneself, or visualization techniques.

Hochschild detailed these concepts in her studies of airline flight attendants, bill collectors, and couples trying to balance paid work and housework. The flight attendants, in Hochschild's research were encouraged to engage in such deep acting to provide that extra attention for the passengers. For instance, one flight attendant used deep acting when she had to deal with intoxicated passengers. The flight attendant would create scenarios or excuses for the behaviour to help her cope with the situation (Hochschild, 1983, p. 90).

Hochschild (1983) further claims that many jobs (and relationships) require emotional labour, and that the weight of that emotional labour falls more heavily on women because of the long association and the supposed naturalness of women's ability to care and nurture (James, 1989, p.22). James (1989, p. 22) further asserts that women were assumed to be naturally good at dealing with other people's emotions because "they are themselves naturally emotional." These sets of norms reflect the broader emotional culture and becomes a sort of emotion management to maintain a presentation of self that conforms to emotion ideologies, feeling rules, and displays rules (Turner & Stets, 2005, p. 37).

Hochschild's analysis of the emotional labour in flight attendants provides insight into the way that emotions have become a commodity, sold along with one's labour power in a capitalist society. Workers are constrained to adjust their emotions according to the feeling rules set down by their employers, rather than feeling the emotions that they would normally feel in similar circumstances (Turner & Stets, 2005, p. 14). Hochschild (1983, p. 49) further extends the analysis of emotional labour when she introduces the idea of management of emotions by others, specifically institutions; she explains that "within institutions various elements of acting are taken away from the individual and replaced by institutional mechanisms."

Hochschild (1979) is credited for having brought emotions into the main body of sociological literature; however, scholars have been divided in their interpretation of emotional labour (Wharton, 2009, p. 148). Some, including Hochschild, have seen it as a method for organizations to extend control over workers and is largely viewed as a negative aspect of working life. In contrast, others have claimed that workers find emotional labour satisfying because they enjoy the personal fulfillment of helping people (Shuler & Davenport Sypher, 2000, p. 52). Shuler and Davenport Sypher (2000, p. 54) concluded from their study on 911 dispatchers, that although emotional labour can play a stressful and demanding role, it can also serve as the social fabric that brings employees together and can increase workplace morale. It is fair to assert emotional labour as encompassing both positive and negative aspects of working life.

Central to Hochschild's theory was that jobs that require emotional labour, were more common in service work, in middle-class and lower-class work, and in what was commonly believed to be "women's work." In particular, management of emotion had

become an added qualification for female participation in the labour force, whereby work that required any type of care or nurturing duties was considered suitable for women. Hochschild's work also highlights the gendered ways in which emotions are negotiated in the workplace with her research on (mostly) female flight attendants where she challenges whose interests are being served by the application of the feeling rules in the airline industry. Hochschild (1983) contends that in the service economy, the jobs requiring more emotional labour are typically held by women; specifically, customer service and other client serving work. This association in part reflects deep-rooted gender stereotypes about who is best suited for particular kinds of jobs. This false association is rooted in the binary model of gender which assumes that there are only two genders and where women are naturally and normally best suited to caring and nurturing roles (Bornstein, 1994; Hird, 2002), attributes highlighted in service work (Hochschild, 1983).

Emotional labour tends to be associated primarily with feminized work due to normative constructs of gender, reflecting a binary model of gender, which rests on the incorrect assumption that women engage in affective rather than instrumental behaviour (Matud, 2019) and this work is generally undervalued and underpaid (Buchanan, 2014, Hochschild, 2003, Korczynski, 2003). Hochschild (1983) argues that women's higher representation in jobs requiring deference in the form of niceness and sociability coupled with their lower overall social status, gives women a disadvantage in the workplace. Hochschild (2003) asserts that emotional labour is laden with assumptions about primarily feminine skills, highlighting all the historical identification of attributes of femininity, patience, grace, and kindness within the world of work and the binary model's assumption that affective, that is feeling work, is the natural work of women (Matud, 2019).

Body Labour

Hochschild's (2018) latest work and that of other emotion scholars has focused on the intersection between class, race, and sexuality and the implications they have for emotional labour (Kang, 2003; Mears & Finlay, 2005; Pierce, 1995; Tracy, 2000; Tweedy, 2019). Kang's (2003) research demonstrates how perceived race and class dynamics are equally complex as is the gendered nature of service work itself (Wharton, 2009, p. 152). These dynamics are also inscribed on the body as Kang (2003) illustrates how the racial and class distinctions of customers plays out in the expectations of service from their immigrant nail technicians, thus adding another layer to the current understanding of emotional labour. For example, Kang (2003, p. 827) highlights "high service body labour involving physical pampering and emotional attentiveness serving mostly middle- and upper-class white female customers" in her research. The female presenting customers at this particular nail salon expected warm and polite conversation from their nail technicians on top of soothing, relaxing hand massages. This salon catered to mainly white women who expected English speaking conversation from their Korean nail technicians along with longer sessions of physical pampering on top of the nail art that was offered. Whereas the female clientele at another salon, mostly working- and lower-middle-class African American and Caribbean women, expected "expressive body labour involving artistry in technical skills and communication of respect and fairness" (Kang, 2003, p. 828). What was deemed important at the salon catering to Black and Caribbean women was the ability of the nail technicians to create expressive nail art that captured both the spirit of the community where the customer lived and the individual nature of each client. At the third location, nail services were provided with no extra frills or artistic skills, instead focused

on quick, clean, and efficient service. Kang (2003, p. 832) described this as "routinized body labour involving efficient, competent physical labour and courteous but minimal emotional labour when servicing mostly lower-middle and middle-class racially mixed female customers."

Kang (2003, p.826) defines body labor as the "exchange of body-related services for a wage and the performance of physical and emotional labor in this exchange." Kang (2003, pp.826-827) further describes three dimensions of body labor: (1) the physical labor of attending to the bodily appearance and pleasure of customers, (2) the emotional labor of managing feelings to display certain feeling states and to create and respond to customers' feelings regarding the servicing of their bodies, and (3) variation in the performance of body labor as explained through the intersection of gender with race and class.

Kang (2003) found that body labour necessitates service workers to manage their own feelings regarding the corporeality of their work while instilling a sense of caring to their customers at the decorative nail salon. Kang (2003, p.823) attests that the intersections of race, gender, and class shapes the performance of emotional labour specifically for immigrant women doing gendered work; concluding that body labour not only requires service workers to present their bodies in an appropriate manner, but also that they cultivate customers positive feelings about their own bodies.

Bodywork and Aesthetic Labour

Related to body labour is the concept of bodywork which refers to actively and consciously making an effort to create a certain kind of physicality (Brace-Govan, 1997), where physicality refers to the myriad of ways in which an embodied subject presents itself

in the social world (Seymour, 1989, 1998). The term bodywork has commonly been used to refer to work that individuals undertake on their own bodies (Gimlin, 2007; Shilling, 1993/2012, 2004), and to paid work performed on the bodies of others (Kerfoot et al., 2000; Wolkowitz, 2006). The jobs typically associated with bodywork, including group fitness instruction, not only demand a focus on the bodily performance of workers themselves, but also concern for clients' bodies, which includes the adornment, pleasure, discipline, and care for others' bodies (Wolkowitz, 2006, p. 497).

Bodywork can encompass a range of activities including decoration, such as hairstyling or body piercing, as well as active pursuits to train the body in particular physical movements, such as body building or dancing (Brace-Govan, 2002, p. 404). Gimlin's (2007) concept of bodywork refers to the unpaid work individuals do to modify their own bodies; where these "techniques of the self" (Mauss, 1973[1935]) can take considerable time and energy.

Here, the concept of bodywork, refers to both the unpaid work on one's own body and the paid work to others' bodies. Wolkowitz (2006, p. 8) argues for an expansion of the current understanding of unpaid bodywork to include those who "whose paid work involves the care, adornment, pleasure, discipline, and cure of others' bodies." Bodywork, for Wolkowitz (2006, p. 8) denotes, "paid work that takes the body as its immediate site of labour, involving intimate, messy contact" with others, such as dentists, hairdressers, or fitness instructors. Wolkowitz (2002, p. 505) argues by including paid work into the existing concept we are better able to see who benefits from the labour of others and who is performing the labour. Given Brace-Govan's (2002) notion of bodywork as unpaid work to one's own body and the urging of Wolkowitz (2002) to consider the paid work performed

for others' bodies; the occupation of fitness instructor can be better contextualized using these two frames.

Associated with bodywork is aesthetic labour which encompasses work in which individuals are compensated, indirectly or directly, based on the visual presentation of their own body (Mears, 2014, p. 1332) and is the "practice of screening, managing, and controlling workers on the basis of their physical appearance" (Mears, 2014, p. 1330). This practice is increasingly prevalent in the interactive service industry where employees are more likely to be hired based on their appearance (Nickson & Warhurst, 2001; Witz et al. 2003). In most instances of aesthetic labour, the display of the body is an important part of the job, but it is not the primary reason that the job exists (Mears, 2014, p. 1332). For example, in retail clothing sales, aside from staff looking good, there are other expectations of employment such as folding and displaying clothes, tidying the store, and assisting shoppers with sizes.

In my research, the display of the body and the way it moves is a vital part of my informants' employment; but the talk often focused on a very specific type of body, essentially a non-fat and toned body (Markula, 1995). The stigmatization of fatness was very nuanced in the word choices of my informants and was often veiled in phrases such as "looking the part" of a fitness instructor. Regardless of the gender of the instructor, the opposition to fatness was present.

Tyler and Taylor (1998, p. 167) found that aesthetic labour is a gendered practice; one that reinforces the notion of looking good as "women's work." The importance of looks is itself gendered. Because gender structures the social world in ways that make appearances more central to femininity (Mears, 2014, p. 1338), beauty is typically a more

valuable kind of capital for those who benefit from appearing feminine; that is to say, the convertibility of this capital varies by gender (Martin & George, 2006, p. 113). In the labour market as in most of Western society at large, women's bodies function as a kind of sign-bearing capital, in ways that men's bodies do not (Skeggs, 2004). Women tend to invest more in their appearance and are consequently judged more harshly than men for their adherence to hetero-normative beauty standards (Jackson, 1992).

In the service economy, the body can become a tool for advancing work opportunities and earnings, and its classed and gendered performances become "assets" for better social and economic returns (Lovell, 2000, p. 25). This is most evident in restaurant service jobs, exotic dancing, or bartending. The literature on emotional labour typically focuses on the expression or the suppression of emotion at the command of management (Hochschild, 1983). In contrast, aesthetic labour attempts to organize and control employees' corporeality, so they become the "physical embodiment of the corporate image and personality" (Warhurst & Nickson, 2009, p. 392). Aesthetic labour relies upon the physical form, or more specifically, the embodied capacities and the physical attributes of employees (Warhurst et al., 2000, p. 2).

Occularcentric Labour

Building on the conceptualization of emotional labour, together with elements from aesthetic labour, a new variation of emotional labour is occularcentric labour. Occularcentric labour refers to where the worker seeks the "adoring gaze of the client as the primary reward" (Sappey & Maconachie, 2012, p. 505). Occularcentric labour differs from both emotional and aesthetic labour in three distinct and separate ways. First, within

the workplace, the commodification of physical capital is paramount (Bourdieu, 1984; Sappey & Maconachie, 2012, p. 516). For Bourdieu (1984) physical capital refers to the bodily skills and attributes that contribute to one's social status and success in fields of endeavour. With occularcentric labour, the employee gains psycho-social rewards from their own body image and the praise and admiration from their participants resonates more with instructors than does direct cash earnings from their employment (Sappey & Maconachie, 2012, p. 516). Society places significant value on a slim, fit body (and stigma on those bodies that do not adhere to those standards); and the fitness gym is the place where those bodies are reproduced, made, and valued. Thus, the rewards of having a sculpted body and the public recognition of hard work are significant resulting in occularcentric labour occurring primarily in this environment.

Second, in this particular service arrangement, the emotional outpouring from the fitness participant to the fitness worker becomes one of adoration; with the "intrinsic exchange of adoration between workers and customer being two-way in nature, but disproportionately in the worker's favour" (Sappey & Maconachie, 2012, p. 517). Fitness participants' idolization and almost celebrity fandom for their instructor leads to what Sappey and Maconachie (2012, p. 517) refer to as "a life affirming experience" where workers begin referring to their job as "their passion." The immediate feedback and appreciation from the group fitness participant to the instructor creates a relationship that is fuelled by intense emotions and feelings.

Third, the workplace is also the direct site of consumption. With occularcentric labour, it is the adoration of participants that creates value and positional goods for the

employee. Generally, Sappey and Maconachie (2012, p. 517) found occularcentric labour in:

> (a) a workplace culture with strong, pervasive values of consumption, individualism and lifestyle which generate a perception of work as fun; (b) an orientation to work based on missionary-like zeal and a self-belief in the occupation; and (c) labour's elevation of psycho-social rewards as the outcome sought from employment rather than traditional trade union goals of improved working conditions.

Although these variations in labour are associated with employer strategies to appropriate employee attributes for profit, Sappey and Maconachie (2012, p. 506) assert:

> occularcentric labour seeks as its primary goal positional goods (social standing and prestige) as the reward for labour. It is the employees' own strategy and search for self-identity that attracts them to the work (and to gain access to the workplace and stage where their idealized body form has value).

Within a fitness gym context, the fit toned body; one that is strong and muscular for men, small and shapely for women (Markula, 1995) is valuable physical capital (Bourdieu, 1984). The medium of exchange in this economy is the social interaction that takes place between the fitness instructor and the fitness participant; with the rewards being the fitness participant's adoration towards the fitness instructor (Sappey & Maconachie, 2012, p. 506). Within this unique economy, group fitness instructors are willing to trade off standard conditions of employment (set work hours, livable wages, spaces free from sexual harassment, and a professionally managed workplace, etc.) for more intrinsic psycho-social rewards gained through their physical capital and reinforced by their participants (Sappey & Maconachie, 2012, p. 506).

Sappey and Maconachie (2012, p. 517) attest that what shapes the employment relationship are the employee's quest for the psycho-social rewards gained from their own body image as reflected in the approval of their participants. This means that the fitness

instructors sought out the recognition and admiration from the students in their classes and that was the reward or compensation for their employment (Sappey & Maconachie, 2012, p. 517). Further, they found that, for the instructors they interviewed, physical capital was "commodified and traded for recognition of difference and distinction, bringing with it elevated self-esteem and even celebrity" (Maconachie & Sappey, 2011, p. 9). It is in this context where the worker becomes both the site of production and consumption which is the key difference between occularcentric labour and emotional and aesthetic labour. Instead of the employee being the site of production with emotional labour or the site of consumption with aesthetic labour, the worker becomes both sites under occularcentric labour.

Simultaneously being the site of production and consumption adds a layer of complexity to fitness instruction as well as to the broader category of expert service worker. With occularcentric labour, the relationship between the worker and the client goes beyond a simple delivery of services, and instead turns into a mutually dependent exchange. Within fitness classes, the instructors depend on the engagement and reciprocity from their class participants, much in the same way as participatory theatre expects the audience to play along with the case. Harris et al. (2001) explained that in participative theatre productions audience members are really there to watch the performance; but their enjoyment level is increased only by their level of participation in the show's performance. Meaning that, when both providers of the service and the consumers who benefit from that service are co-producers of the labour, the significance of that labour changes (Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004, p. 360).

Other Extant Concepts

In addition to the theoretical framework of symbolic interaction and the key concepts that are part of that perspective as discussed above, I used Blumer's (1969, p. 43) process of inspection to find extant concepts from other perspectives that are relevant to my analysis. For Blumer (1969, p.43, 129-30), the process of inspection refers to the intensive focused examination:

> of the empirical content of whatever analytical elements [sociological concepts] that are used for purposes of analysis [including the] nature of the relations between such elements…. By analytical elements I have in mind whatever general or categorical items are employed … in the analysis, such as integration, social mobility, assimilation, charismatic leadership, bureaucratic relation, authority system, suppression of dissent, morale, relative deprivation, attitudes, and institutional commitment. As the examples suggest, such analytical elements may refer to processes, organization, relations, networks of relations, states of being, elements of personal organization, and happenings.

What is crucial to this process of inspection for Blumer (1969, p.129) is that these concepts are to be used in the manner of "sensitizing concepts" in the sense that they are purposefully chosen as they highlight something of particular relevance in specific research contexts and analyses but are used provisionally and are not then made definitely part of symbolic interactionism forever after. Below I define the extant concepts that proved useful to me in my analysis of the emotional labour of group fitness instruction. These concepts and all other all others defined in this chapter will be addressed in more detail in the discussion sections of each findings chapter and the conclusion chapter of this dissertation (see Chapters Five, Six, Seven, and Eight).

The Serious Leisure Perspective

Serious leisure encompasses those activities that are "sufficiently substantial and interesting in nature ... acquiring and expressing a combination of special skills, knowledge, and experience" (Stebbins, 1992, p. 12). Serious leisure is the pursuit of activities, hobbies, or interests that require a unique set of skills, knowledge, and or experiences and allows for a sense of self-fulfillment (Stebbins, 1982). Several concepts from the serious leisure perspective, "devotee work," "occupational devotion," and "devotee occupations," are important in my analysis of how group fitness instructors manage their emotions (Stebbins, 1982, 1992, 2000, 2009, 2017). Stebbins (2017, p. 155) notes that "devotee work is the activity that so closely resembles serious leisure as to make distinguishing the two very difficult." Devotee work diverges from serious leisure in that the former is financially compensated, where the latter is not. However, both offer the individual "a strong, positive attachment to a form of self-enhancing work" (Stebbins, 2017, p. 156).

The concept of "occupational devotion" is present in workers who engage in "devotee work." Stebbins (2017, p. 159) outlines four criteria that are required for a worker to demonstrate occupational devotion: (1) minimal cognitive separation between what constitutes work and leisure; (2) looking forward to going to work after time away; (3) encouraging friends and family to enter the field; and (4) willing to perform the work without financial compensation. Occupational devotion occurs mainly in self-improvement work, where there is an inherent sense of achievement and the line between what is work and what is leisure is easily blurred (Stebbins, 2017, p. 156). This devotion to the work is evident in the actions, lifestyle, motivation, and social relations of the worker (Stebbins,

2017, p. 156). When engaged in the "core activities" of the work, devotees often develop a combination of "cultural values, among them, success, achievement, freedom of action, and individual personality" (Stebbins, 2017, p. 156). Nevertheless, devotees are workers earning income. Occupational devotees turn up chiefly, though not exclusively, in the public and client-centered professions found in the arts, sports, scientific, and entertainment fields (Stebbins, 1992).

Occupational devotion generates deep intrinsic rewards within workers and "directs attention to the core activities making up a work role...it is those activities that attract people to and hold them in that role" (Stebbins, 2017, p. 159). The core activities in group exercise instruction is performing choreography set to music. The instructors in my study spoke about being able to pick the music, selecting tracks where they loved the movements and the music, being able to move and complete complicated exercises and otherwise feeling their bodies as competent.

To exhibit "occupational devotion" workers must be in a work environment that is conducive to devotion; literally, a devotee occupation. Stebbins (2017, p. 160-161) argues that there are six criteria for classifying a job into a "devotee occupation" and those are: (1) the core activities require specific knowledge, skills and abilities to perform, 2) the core activities offer variety, 3) the core activities allow for, and encourage, creative expression in the individual, 4) allowance for control over time spent in the job, 5) requires a certain aptitude or a desire for the job and finally, 6) requires an environment that promotes the core activities inherent in the job. Although Stebbins does not name it specifically as one of his occupations, group fitness instruction falls into the category of devotee occupation because it encompasses all six points outlined.

Expert Service Workers

According to Wharton, (2009, p.152) emotional labour research has been gradually extended to include a wider variety of interactive occupations, including professions such as lawyer and medical doctor. These professionals tend to have a much greater degree of autonomy than front line service workers in more routine, interactive service jobs yet still interact with clients or patients. These professions are often characterized and set apart by their expertise, power, and authority qualities (Freidson, 1970; Zola, 1972), and are reproduced in part through the professional reverence reserved for these careers (Freidson, 1970). Within these careers, people often receive some training in techniques of emotion management and almost certainly have access to resources for support (Wharton, 2009, p. 152).

Group fitness instructors do not fit seamlessly into the professional category described above. However, group fitness instructors also do not fit into the normative view of front-line service worker either. Instead, my findings suggests that group fitness instructors should fall into the emerging category of expert service worker. Expert service work sits on the margins of professionally recognized designations and the regulated service industry; examples of this work include life coaches, image consultants, and personal trainers (George, 2008, p. 109). Expert service work involves the performance of "knowledgeable, customized, interactive labour" (George, 2008, p.115) where the service is often highly customized, individualized, and the workers are largely self-supervised (George, 2008, p. 116).

The consumer market has permeated once private territories of everyday life by offering people the opportunity to reshape their identities, enrich their leisure time, and

upgrade their cultural capital through the differentiated use of goods and services (Bourdieu, 1984; Featherstone, 1982; Zukin & Maguire, 2004). Expert service work often takes place in unstandardized industries such as personal trainers, personal shoppers, or chefs and is marked with "ambiguous interactional roles" (George, 2008, p. 115). The widespread and growing interest in self-improvement and lifestyle management has facilitated the rapid expansion of the personal service industry on a broad scale. A continued and relentless push for self-improvement and lifestyle enrichment, has created a demand for individualized personal growth plans.

In contrast to frontline service work, most interactions within expert service work are unrehearsed and unstructured allowing much more freedom for the workers while making routinization of their behaviour challenging for organizations. These caveats to employment require expert service workers to navigate an occupational middle ground and balance contradictory demands; they are service workers expected to "cater to the needs of their clients as well as semiprofessional workers attempting to draw their authority from their specialized training" (George, 2008, p. 115). Without overt institutional support and accredited credentials, expert service workers tend to demonstrate their professionalism and qualifications through their interactions with clients (George, 2008, p. 123). For example, the fitness workers in my research, also rely on interactional signifiers to establish their authority, such as the presentation of their bodies, applications of new choreography, keeping up with the ever-changing fitness trends, and an overly friendly demeanor that indicates competence and confidence.

Occupational Socialization and Strategic Friendliness

Fitness instructors, like any other workers, undergo a process of occupational socialization. Occupational socialization rests on the notion that within any type of employment there are attitudes and behaviours that are learned which are necessary to that occupational social system (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979, p. 205). It is the "process by which an individual acquires the social knowledge and skills necessary to assume an organizational role" (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979, p. 205).

Among the attitudes and behaviours, the fitness instructors I interviewed learned as part of their occupational socialization is how to practice strategic friendliness. Pierce (1995, p. 72) defines strategic friendliness as a "form of emotional manipulation of another person for a strategic end ... in order to create a particular impression." In her research Pierce (1995) found that litigators employ "strategic friendliness" tactics to endear themselves to clients and to otherwise control an emotional relationship with colleagues and clients. The group fitness instructors in my study follow suit as they work to build and maintain a participant base in their classes by crafting relationships with their members. In doing so they carefully navigate and cater to the needs, requests, and demands of their participants.

Risk Society, Neoliberalism, and the Disciplining Gaze

The various types of labour that these group fitness instructors engage in happen within the context of risk society where individuals, not state institutions, are responsible for managing risks, including health risks (Beck, 1992). Thus, also important in my research are neoliberal discourses of health that are part of risk society (Boas & Gans-

Morse, 2009; Turner, 1990). According to Harvey (2007, 2016), neoliberalism is a globally dominant policy project designed to intensify the accumulation of wealth in the upper class. It is characterized primarily by "deregulation, privatization, and withdrawal of the state from many areas of social provision" (Harvey, 2007, p. 3). By social provision, Harvey (2007) means services once provided by the state institutions now become privatized and falls on the responsibility of individuals. Further, it aims to create an ideal neoliberal subject who seeks to take full control of one's life by investing in their human capital in order to fuel the consumption that will produce their own satisfaction.

Two concepts that are related to risk society and neoliberalism are the active citizen and the active consumer. Reflective of neoliberal discourses, the active citizen must be responsible for their own safety and wellbeing, and health status (Pickard, 1998). This makes them active consumers (Lupton, 1997) who engage in "self-improvement" that reflect state mandates of "developing and maximizing the potential of its population" (Lupton, 1999, p. 289); like engaging in body labour and body work through participation in group fitness classes. Finally, Foucault's (1979) notion of the disciplining gaze is ubiquitous within the historical context of risk society marked by neoliberalism. For Foucault (1979), discipline is the mechanism of power which regulates the behaviour of individuals within society and the way in which power relations are maintained is through disciplinary mechanisms, such as surveillance, individualization, normalization, and self-regulation. Neoliberal characteristics such as individualism and consumerism are reinforced through this disciplinary gaze in the setting of fitness studios by providing the opportunity to consume and maximize the material interests of individual wellbeing seen as integral to living in risk society so influenced by neoliberal notions. These are all

important concepts in this research and in conceptualizing my informant's experiences of self-consciousness in using their bodies to teach group fitness classes.

Social Status Concepts

Finally, several concepts related to social statuses including physical capital; sexism and the double burden; homophobia, heteronormativity, and heterosexism; in addition to ageism, fatphobia, and racism were essential to my analysis. The concept of physical capital is part of Bourdieu's understanding of social capital (Bourdieu, 1986, Shilling, 2012[1993]). According to Bourdieu (1986, p. 21)

> social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition—or in other words, to membership in a group.

Physical capital (Bourdieu, 1984), in turn, refers to the physical attributes necessary to succeed in one's field of endeavor in society and is therefore related to socio-economic status. Moreover, as Brown (2005, p. 19) argues, the concept of physical capital is central to understanding how one becomes a teacher of physical education. He writes,

> As agents construct and modify their habitus they begin to position themselves differently in the fields they are associated with…Such a perspective is particularly pertinent for those who are involved in structuring the habitus of others such as PETE professionals in university and school mentors.

Thus, the concept of physical capital is important to my analysis given the embodied nature of group fitness instruction. Work is not just about the job one holds; it often becomes an element of one's identity. Within fitness work, the identity being crafted is closely tied to the physical body, in so much that a "toned, ordered, and visible body" becomes a form of capital (Frew & McGillivray, 2005, p. 162).

In addition, Brown (2006, p. 164) argues that physical capital within the field of sport is deeply gendered (Coen, Rosenberg & Davidson, 2018) in that it is a field marked by what Bourdieu (2001) conceptualized as "masculine domination." Given this, and that group fitness is female dominated (Parviainen, 2014) expert service work (George, 2008), sexism, homophobia, heteronormativity, and heterosexism were concepts necessary in making sense of my findings.

Sexism and homophobia as practiced within the social world of the gym that I analyzed are tied to the binary model of gender. The binary model is a social construct that rests on a series of erroneous assumptions that there are only two genders, that gender does not vary through a person's life, and that genitals are the essential sign of gender (Bornstein, 1994; Hird, 2002). While the binary model does not reflect the empirical reality of gender diversity in society, it is still a construct that remains woven into institutional practices including those within the group fitness gym (Coen et al., 2021). The concept of sexism in this context includes both antipathy toward as well as positive constructions of the two sexes as defined by the binary model (Glick et al., 2000).

The binary model of gender also rests on the assumption that behaviour is determined by biological sex and that it is natural and normal that women are engaged in affective (emotional) behaviours in contrast to men who engage in instrumental (doing) behaviours (Matud, 2019). The concept of the double burden helps to explain how this biological determinism plays out in everyday life. The double burden is defined as the pressure, real or perceived, women feel who are employed outside the home and still expected to perform most of the household labour (Beagan et al., 2008, p. 656). The double

burden is similar to Hochschild (1989) concept of the "second shift" that refers to women who work outside the home and then are responsible for the child rearing as well.

Because of the normative nature of the binary model of gender, not only is the world of the fitness gym sexist, it also reflects heteronormativity, heterosexism, and homophobia. According to Chambers (2007, p. 663), "heteronormativity [is] ... the political power that heterosexuality has when it functions as a norm." When heteronormativity functions in society such as the social space of the group fitness gym it also becomes a space where homophobia and heterosexism are commonplace. Homophobia here refers to negative stereotyping and fear of, as well as prejudicial attitudes towards "sexual minorities" (Negy 2014, p. 138) and heterosexism is defined as "an ideological system that denies, denigrates, and stigmatizes any non-heterosexual form of behaviour, relationship, or community" (Herek, 1990). [2]

In addition to sexism and heteronormativity, ageism is also a part of social life within the world of group fitness because it is a social space where the young and fit body is valued (Jin & Harvey, 2020). According to Iversen et al. (2009) ageism can refer to either negative or positive stereotypes, prejudice and/or discrimination against (or to the advantage of elderly people on the basis of their chronological age or on the basis of a perception of them as being 'old' or 'elderly.' Ageism can be implicit or explicit and can be expressed on a micro-, meso- or macro-level (Iversen et al., 2009, p. 15). While ageism

[2] The term heterosexism is used by some in place of homophobia who argue that it focuses on actions towards others rather than fear of other and is defined as antigay attitudes, prejudice, and discriminatory behaviour (Sears & Williams, 1997).

can be both positive and negative in its consequences, it was very much the negative perception of aging that was experienced by the group fitness instructors who took part in my research.

Along with a young body, the social status of having a thin body is important for group fitness instructors in this social world. Sykes and McPhail (2008, p. 67) state that "fatphobic discourses construct the fat body as out of control, out of place, and out of shape" illustrating how narrowly defined what the acceptable body type is within the walls of the fitness gym. Although the term fatphobia was not used by the participants in my research, the negative connotations when the instructors spoke of their colleagues' bodies as "jiggly" or "ginormous" indicates the negative way fat bodies are viewed; making it quite clear that a fat body was not a desirable body to have in the fitness gym. Sykes and McPhail (2008, p. 67) also attest that "fatness is conflated with excess femininity, [and that] fatphobia also reinforces normative constructions of gender and sex." Thus, making a not fat body an important social status within the fitness gym.

Finally, because the group fitness gym is a space frequented almost exclusively by white people, it is a social space that is governed by whiteness, where, according to Alcoff and Mohanty (2006, p. 224) "simultaneous invisibility and universality, whiteness has enjoyed the unchallenged hegemony that any invisible contender in a ring full of visible bodies would experience." It is in such space that racism in all its manifestations, including banal forms of racism thrive. Racism is a multifaceted concept that includes interpersonal instances of prejudice and discrimination as well a systemic and structural racism where prejudice and discrimination are part of institutions and their procedures (Carter et al., 2021; Song, 2014). In the context of my research, the form of racism that most often

manifests is the banal form of racism that is evident in the use of the language of 'tribe' to describe group fitness gym employees or 'street' to characterize gym clothing, as well as in the adoption of the cornrow hair style some learn to associate with toughness through watching kickboxing videos, a hairstyle and association that reflects the racist trope of the angry Black woman (Hamilton, 2016). The issue of racism within group fitness instruction is discussed in more detail in Chapter Three, 'Contextualizing Group Fitness' and in Chapter Five, 'The Embodied Nature of Emotional Labour' (see pages 54 and 113).

In this chapter I discussed symbolic interactionism, the theoretical perspective that frames my research, the theories of the emotions and the presentation of self that are central to my analysis and defined other important concepts that were useful in understanding the experiences of the group fitness instructors that I interviewed. In the following chapter I discuss the literature on the social-structural contexts that frame the interactions of the group fitness instructors that took part in my research, including the historical, political, socio-cultural, and biographic contexts.

CHAPTER THREE: CONTEXTUALIZING GROUP FITNESS

In the following chapter I contextualize group fitness within the social-structural contexts in which this social world is embedded (Silverman, 1998). The meaning-making processes of embodied exercise requires situating it within the historical, political, socio-cultural, and biographical contexts of the fitness class. As Grosz (1994, p. x) puts it,

> Bodies cannot adequately be understood as ahistorical, precultural, or natural objects in any simple way; they are not only inscribed, marked, engraved by social pressures external to them but are the products, the direct effects, of the very social constitution of nature itself.

Therefore, below I discuss the literature in the historical, political, socio-cultural, and biographical contexts of group fitness instruction. The historical context of fitness instruction refers to the temporal frame of my analysis (Belgrave & Charmaz, 2015; Silverman, 1998). Political context refers to political ideology, legislation, and government policy within the historical frame. Socio-cultural context concerns relevant discourses of fitness and biographical context refers to the social statuses as well as other elements of Goffman's (1963, p. 2) notion of social identity held by the fitness instructors that took part in my research. These four social-structural contexts aid in understanding the micro-level actions of individuals that are both created by and shaped by these social-structural frames (Blumer, 1969).

The Historical Context of the Fitness Class

The Western manifestation of group fitness has multiple origins including those from dance culture, gymnastic traditions, the martial arts, yoga, and weight training (Brabazon, 2006, p. 66). Culminating from a rich background of leisure activities, group

fitness occupies a middle ground making it difficult to categorize under a pure sporting definition or simply aligning with a dance or gymnastics tradition. Andreasson and Johansson (2014, p. 95) date the emergence of modern European fitness culture to the "late-19th century" when building stronger, more muscular bodies was a key focus for government, physical education, and sport.

This particular interest in physical capital (Bourdieu, 1984) coincided with other changes occurring in capitalist societies; where class roles were changing, urban turmoil was rising, and consumerism had more appeal to the larger masses (Andreasson & Johansson, 2014, p. 96). Further, the keen interest in building bodies was less connected to an individual's health and well-being and more so for the "need for physically capable male bodies" to increase production and ensure industrial progress (Andreasson & Johansson, 2014, p. 95). Moreover, strong bodies were seen as representative of an "individual's mental strength and moral fortitude" as well as an indicator of "future stability and virility of the nation" (Gidney, 2015, p. 4). Coupled with the looming threat of war, the overall health and fitness of men became of particular importance where some universities campuses in Canada introduced compulsory exercises that resembled military drill (Gidney, 2015, p. 58). Consequently, "soft" bodies, particularly in men, were seen the state as unable to combat the growing threat of communism (Gidney, 2015, p. 60).

In the spirit of social and moral reform, physical culture and health services in Canadian universities also began to gain prominence as prime sites for the "salvation of society" during the 1920s and 1930s (Gidney, 2015, p. 141). Building a strong student body to combat the effects of disease and poor sanitation practices were seen by government as the responsibility of universities. In fact, schools played a major role in identifying and

containing the spread of disease, which was common in communal living. This led to a range of medical and health initiatives administered through the universities such as physical exercise training, the implement of health curricula, and the introduction of vaccines (Gidney, 2015, p. 141). Additionally, students were meant to play an essential part because of their future role in society as the "next generation of professionals, politicians, civil servants, social workers, and community leaders" (Gidney, 2015, p. 12). Ideally, these students would take the values and ideals learned in university into the home, workplace, and community and would flourish from there (Gidney, 2015, pp. 12-13).

The health promotion movement in Canada, which began in earnest in the 1920s and was codified in the Lalonde (1974) Report. This movement continued to grow primarily out of the changing economic and social condition caused by "industrialization, urbanization, mass immigration and the emancipation of women" (Gidney, 2015, p. 4; see also Low & Thériault, 2008).The Federal government's attention to the negative effects of the changing society including the rise of a service economy where fewer people engage in physical labour and more in sedenatry work practicies such as data entry were met with health promotion methods that included the development of physical training (Gidney, 2015, p. 141). Along with physical training, there was also the not-so-subtle promotion of values, specifically around notions of morality, character formation and gender ideals (Gidney, 2015, p. 60). Physical training was very much a part of gender formation and helped to create, define, and reinforce accepted gendered practices (Gidney, 2015, p. 13).

From about the early 1900s to 1970s, the focus in fitness culture was bodybuilding; specifically designed for men. Interestingly, women were not excluded from this as there was growing concern over "female frailty," with advocates of women's health began

encouraging women to engage with moderate exercise with calisthenics appearing in some girl's schools and women's colleges in the 1830s (Gidney, 2015, p. 60). An important icon for the early development of bodybuilding was Charles Atlas, who became known for creating and successfully marketing popular bodybuilding programs to men. Atlas also regarded muscle building as necessary for national salvation; in that, strong bodies were compulsory for protecting the country from internal (illness and disease) and external (war with other nations) threats (Andreasson & Johansson, 2014, p. 97).

In the USA, after the world wars, the changing roles of American men from more manual agricultural labour to more sedentary office or less physical factory assembly work led to a seeming crisis in masculinity; where Kimmel (1996, p. 127) argues that American men were trying to reaffirm their place in society and began to display their masculinity through a variety of ways, one of which was a strong, physical body. These early developments within physical culture and role models such as Atlas were forerunners to the bodybuilding culture which led to the development of Gold's Gym; an iconic bodybuilding gym of the 1970s (Andreasson & Johansson, 2014, p. 97).

This rather short historical period from the 1970s until present, includes a drastic rise in the number of commercial fitness gyms, private fitness clubs, franchised chains, international fitness magazines, professional trainers, and fitness instructors (Stern, 2011, p. 6). Prior to the 1970s, relatively few Americans (and arguably Canadians too) exercised regularly (Stern, 2008, p. 2). In 1960, for example, only 24 percent claimed to exercise regularly; yet by 1987, that number had risen to 69 percent (Stern, 2008, p. 3). In Great Britain, memberships in fitness clubs have risen steadily during recent decades, with 14 percent of the population attending a gym in 2000 (Crossley, 2006, p. 27). These figures

are well in line with studies of the health club population in the United States as well (Sassatelli, 2010, p. 81), and seem to be trending across the globe (Smith Maguire, 2008, p. 63). Toward the late 20th century there was a rise in sedentary lifestyles that resulted from changes in the workplace, the rise of car culture, and changes in entertainment, that turned people way from away from physical labour and other physical activities (Grint, 2005). In response a discourse of personal responsibility for health began stressing the importance of looking for wellness using a personal approach to fitness through privatized consumption practices via gym classes (van Hilvoorde, 2008, p. 1307).

The private sector responded with widespread opening of exercise facilities and businesses geared towards individual health and well-being. During the 1980s and 90s there was a massive expansion in gym and fitness culture (van Hilvoorde, 2008, p. 1308). The subculture of bodybuilding gradually began to reflect a more general trend in fitness gyms that supported the notion that the gym is a place for everyone and, in some cases, even a leisure activity (Smith Maguire, 2008; van Hilvoorde, 2008, p. 1306). With the increased availability of fitness gyms catering to a variety of physical activities, bodybuilding no longer became an exclusive activity reserved for large muscle men. Gyms reserved exclusively for bodybuilding still did and do exist, but they became increasingly harder to find as larger commercial enterprises took over the marketplace in their efforts to appeal to the broader population changing the notion of the gym from a "sub-cultural passion to a mass leisure activity, intertwined with pop culture" (Sassatelli, 2010, p. 17).

Fitness, in general, was also gaining in popularity not only with individuals but with corporations as membership in these facilities were rumoured to increase worker productivity, reduce absenteeism, enable recruitment and retention, and improve morale

(Beach, 1979, p. 78). Corporations quickly took note of exercise costs and benefits to their bottom line. Hundreds of firms established in-house fitness centers or contracted with local gyms or fitness centers to promote exercise for all their employees (Beach, 1979, p. 78). The rise and momentum of the fitness movement also entered hotels, universities, shopping centers, office parks, and even airports via fitness centers.

The Rise of Group Fitness

Group fitness has evolved substantially since the introduction of very successful home workout videos of the 1980s. Aerobics, in its formative years, was built on the premise that punishment (for eating high caloric foods) and sacrifice (time spent sweating in the gym) were the primary means for achieving a desirable, thinner, trimmer body for women (Kagan & Morse, 1988, p. 171). This narrow definition of what aerobics was and the importance to women's lives were perpetuated by the popularity of Jane Fonda's workout videos (Kagan & Morse, 1988, p. 171). Aerobic pioneers, like Fonda, developed specific choreographed movements to music and launched a new type of workout targeting women (Andreasson & Johansson, 2014, p. 102). Fonda endorsed the notion that fitness could be compatible with child-care and women's domestic work by making it possible to exercise at home in front of the television through personal home workout videos (Mansfield, 2011, p. 241). Encouraging women to work out at home also meant that their domestic duties, a form of workout in and of themselves such as childcare and household management (cooking, cleaning, mending) could still be maintained. Home workout videos emphasized not only the primary place where women ought to be, but also what activities in the home women were still responsible for (Mansfield, 2011, p. 242). Fonda's

first book sold 17 million copies, she released 23 workout videos and five additional books during the 1980s and 90s thus solidifying her place of importance and influence within the international fitness industry (Mansfield, 2011, p. 241). Brabazon (2006, p. 66) emphasized that the way in which "women are incorporated into physical culture is an indicator of their place and role in contemporary society." Home workout videos targeted almost exclusively to women indicated that they were expected to engage in physical activity within the domestic sphere while still tending to children and maintaining the family home and the Jane Fonda workout videos played an influential role in that messaging (Kagan & Morse, 1988).

On a global scale, group fitness participation became a larger phenomenon and there was an explosion of fitness franchises and increasingly more people from most social classes were drawn into a fitness lifestyle beginning in the 90s and early 2000s (Andreasson & Johansson, 2014, p. 102). Coinciding with this increased availability of fitness franchises; the key political discourse of neoliberalism began to dominate notions of health throughout the 1980s and 90s. As this neoliberal discourse began to off-load the responsibility for health from the state on to individuals, the private sector was set to capitalize on this policy shift and a booming fitness industry emerged.

The Political Context of the Fitness Class

Positioning any social activity within its specific political context involves examining public policy, legislative changes, and the general political climate of the time and/or place. Among the more influential Canadian public policy documents related to exercise are the two public health promotion policies put forward in reports by Canadian

Federal Ministers of National Health and Welfare Marc Lalonde (1972-1977) and Jake Epp (1986): *A New Perspective on the Health of Canadians* followed by *Achieving Health for All: A Framework for Health Promotion*.

The Lalonde Report outlined a conceptual framework for understanding health as the outcome of human biology, environment, lifestyle, and health care organization (Lalonde, 1974, p. 6). Epp's report (1986) added explicit recognition of the relationship between socio-economic status and health status. While these policy reports rightly argued that the health of Canadians is more than a matter of individual biology, in practice they resulted in a largely individualist approach to health policy and emphasized to the Canadian people that it was they themselves who had to assume responsibility for their own health and well-being (Low & Thériault, 2008).

The political discourse that stems from these two reports and the subsequent public health programming reflects a neoliberal position where responsibility for one's health rests solely and exclusively on individuals. Central to neoliberal ideology is the requirement of minimal government intervention (Ayo, 2012). Therefore, rather than using public funds to invest in the prerequisites of good health, such as income security, affordable housing, and other social determinants of health, the Lalonde Report focused on health and fitness as a matter of individuals' personal lifestyle choices (Ayo, 2012, p. 102). For example, Canadians were expected to engage in physical activities that they paid for out of their own pockets such as skiing and playing competitive sports (Low & Thériault, 2008). In this way, issues that were once seen as societal problems, quickly became individual failures requiring personal accountability. By not making the necessary social and structural changes which would improve the health and well-being of potentially the entire

population, the neoliberal approach, encourages individuals to take on the responsibility of changing their own behaviours (Ayo, 2012, p. 104). Individuals who did not follow the prescribed neoliberal path to health and well-being risk "social contempt, an attitude legitimized by the moralizing ideology of healthism" (Carter, 2015, p. 375).

With the publication of the Lalonde report and the subsequent politicization of health promotion, non-profit organizations addressing health and fitness emerged. For instance, ParticipAction (2022) a public service organization began in 1971 and to this day organizes activities and media spots encouraging Canadians to be more active. Moreover, private industry capitalized on this discourse (Ayo, 2012, p. 100). Private health clubs began to offer exercise experiences ranging from free weights and individualized cardio machines to organized, choreographed instructor led group fitness classes. As a commercial enterprise, the fitness gym is accessible to those who possess the cultural competence and the economic capital to act as a consumer (Sassatelli, 1999b, p. 229). And yet, by placing the responsibility for health squarely on the shoulders of individuals, they become both the product and the consumer. Prior to this, the health of the nation sat more squarely in the hands of public institutions; however, a shift away from a public good to a private good is increasingly evident in the latter part of the 20th century (Crawford, 1994, p. 1359). This is also when we began to hear more powerful health messaging and where the socio-cultural discourses around fitness centers take hold.

The Socio-Cultural Context of the Fitness Class

Socio-cultural discourses refer to how knowledge, behaviour, and events are depicted and defined in the assumptions, concepts, and ideas shared by people. They are

thus a framework through which people see the world and through which the way people use language constructs their social worlds are highlighted (Symbaluk & Bereska, 2018, pp. 58-59). Socio-cultural discourses spread via social institutions and shape the thought around a topic at a given period of time (Symbaluk & Bereska, 2018, pp. 58-59). More simply, socio-cultural discourses are ways of thinking, talking about things in society. The role of socio-cultural discourses is important for understanding the notions of health that relate to ideas about citizenship and personal responsibility that currently dominate the fitness world in the Western socio-cultural context.

The socio-cultural discourses surrounding the "active citizen" (Lupton, 1999) and "healthism" (Crawford, 1980) that frame life in a "risk society" (Beck, 1992) are at the crux of the individual's responsibility for their own health and greatly influences the social world of fitness classes. The concept of "healthism" that is embedded in these social policies (Crawford, 1980) reflects the newly emerging health consciousness of the 80s where everyone was expected to focus on ways to live which maximized their own health (Petersen & Lupton, 1996). This moral position not only benefits the individual, but it is also presumed by the state to work for the good of society as a whole (Petersen & Lupton, 1996). This hyper focus on health by government and citizens has been created by a capitalistic, neoliberal climate, whereby healthism and neoliberalism mutually reinforce the vision of the responsible citizen (Crawford, 2006, p. 416).

Beck (1992, p. 21) developed the notion of a "risk society" whereby he argues that risks, or what he refers to as "bads," inherent in modernity are assumed by everyone and could no longer be avoided based on social class or financial standing. This is what Beck (1992, p. 23) refers to as the "boomerang effect, which breaks up the pattern of class and

national society...even the rich and powerful are not safe from them." Thus, he concludes that a "risk society is a world risk society" (Beck, 1992, p. 23). To live in a risk society, Beck (1992) argues, is to be aware of the possibilities and uncertainties that accompany any chosen course of action. The risks inherent in modernization, such as risks to health from sedentary occupations and industrial pollution, are produce from those institutions that profit from them and become risks as well as to those who consume or are exposed to them (Beck, 1992, p. 21).

Beck (1992, p.25) also discussed "relations of definitions" to describe the way public discourse works to socially construct "risk". "Relations of definitions" are the "rules, institutions, and capacities that structure the identification and assessment of risks" (Beck, 1992, p.25). He elaborates that under the notion of "risk society," society is reshaping its social structure and creating more emphasis on the individual; thus, making individualization another main feature of Beck's (1992, p. 3) theory. Individualization leads to an increasing demand upon individuals and away from holding institutions responsible for social good. Social institutions, such as the education, health care, and the political system began divesting responsibility away from institutions and on to individuals.

If one wants to be classified as a good citizen within risk society, then one must manage their personal relationship to risk through self-surveillance and self-help (Scott & Williams, 1991, p. 3). The way to demonstrate the responsible self is through personal practices "that have been prescribed for minimizing risk; for instance, meditation, moderation, and attention to diet and exercise regime" (Petersen & Lupton, 1996, p. 52). Exercise or the pursuit of fitness is widely promoted as an opportunity to avert the risks of

a modern life; including obesity, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes (Glassner, 1989, p. 185).

According to Pickard (1998, p. 227), such discourses reflect the convergence of neoliberal discourses of health, aesthetics, and individual responsibility and can be conceptualized as the "active citizenship" whereby individuals are held responsible for their own positive health outcomes. An associated discourse is that of the "active consumer" (Lupton, 1997, p. 380). Consistent with neoliberal political discourses, the active consumer conceptualizes the individual as one who can engage in activities directed at "self-improvement" and "self-reflection" (Lupton, 1999, p. 289). In achieving critical self-examination, the active consumer is encouraged to align themselves with the goals outlined by legislative authorities for "developing and maximizing the potential of its population" (Lupton, 1999, p. 289).

Both Crossley (2004) and Allain (2020) found that people will trade off associated risks with certain physical activities if that activity brings them joy or pleasure. For Beck (1992, p. 127), modernization involved the self-reflexive agent actively engaged in shaping their own life chances and making decisions according to the careful calculations of risk. Individuals not seen as dedicated to a "risk-free" existence are then likely to be viewed as lacking self-control and not fulfilling their duties as a responsible citizen. Socio-cultural discourses also emerged surrounding pleasure-seeking behaviours and health promotion in older adults. According to Katz (2001, p. 27), such discourses are based on "ideals of positive aging" and "anti-aging" that "have come to promote a widespread anti-aging culture, one that translates their radical appeal into commercial capital." It does so through a discourse of life-long activity and consumption for individuals where "age is masked" to

widen the potential to market activities like fitness classes and products like anti-aging supplements to older adults (Katz, 2021; Katz & Marshall, 2003).

The concept of the active consumer and the active citizen thesis encompass the strongly held socio-cultural beliefs about what a fit and healthy body looks like (Greenleaf et al., 2004) and which bodies are deemed healthy (thin) by health professionals (Schwartz et al., 2003; Teachman & Brownell, 2001; White, Young, & Gillett, 1995). Thus, the pursuit of a healthy body has become "a mark of distinction that separates those who deserve to succeed and from those who fail" (Crawford, 1994, p. 1354). In part, fitness centres and by extension fitness classes, succeeded because people had a desire to be healthy and fit; where "being fit" became as much about conforming to a particular image as being physically healthy (Stern, 2008, p. 18). As a means to a strong, healthy and moral society, physical exercise was the lynch pin in countless health and moral reform movements and the accompanying commercial ventures. This creates two significant and related issues: health as a matter of personal responsibility and ill health as a sign of personal failing (Whorton, 1982, p. 95). Pursuing a healthy body is thus viewed as the ideal of the "self-contained and self-controlled individual" (Crawford, 1994, p. 1359).

The shift in responsibility away from public institutions and into the hands of individuals creates a competitive environment where the private sector poses solutions to a public health need (Stern, 2008, p. 12). Fitness facilities, gyms and private health clubs are a massive global business and this quest for health and fitness has turned into a highly individualized personal responsibility for most in the Western world (Andreasson & Johansson, 2014, p. 102). For instance, countries plagued by heart and lung disease coupled with ongoing inactivity and a perceived obesity epidemic meant people felt pressured to

assume at least some personal responsibility for their own health and well-being (Crossley, 2004; Stern, 2008, p. 12).

These societal changes along with the commercial viability of fitness facilities can be seen as the launching point for the development of a new, modern fitness culture, where the notion of the gym gradually shifts away from a typically masculine activity into one of mass leisure appeal. Increasingly, people use fitness classes and other auxiliary services (massage, nutrition advice, personal training, team training, etc.) provided by fitness gyms as an avenue to improve their own personal health (Frew & McGillivray, 2005, p. 169) and consequently, come to view gyms as places of wellness (Freund & Martin, 2004, p. 280). With a growing population, the activity of working out became part of an urban, middle-class lifestyle (Luciano, 2001, p. 10) that is gendered where women played an important role in expanding the fitness movement. Gradually, aerobics began gaining popularity as a specific form of exercise which appealed mainly to women consumers (Andreasson & Johansson, 2014, p. 102).

In addition to neoliberal discourses of the pursuit of lifelong health, wellness, and consumption; relational practices of sexism, homophobia, fatphobia, ageism, and racism are also part of the socio-cultural context of group fitness instruction. Sexism is reflected in the gendered segregation of group fitness spaces where women are steered away from lifting weights and instead towards aerobics classes (Valentine, Jackson, & Mayblin, 2014) and in the intense pressure for women instructors to present fit and toned bodies (Frew & McGillivray, 2005; Markula, 1995). Homophobia (Coen, Davidson & Rosenberg, 2021) is also pervasive in the socio-cultural context of group fitness. Two of the male instructors that took part in this research discussed their anxieties about teaching fitness classes to

music and bodily movements that they associated with being effeminate and worried they would be mistaken as gay having internalized heterosexist notions about "what men's bodies are not supposed to do" in the socio-cultural context of group fitness (Adams, 2005, p. 66). In addition to sexism and homophobia, ageism is a product of the socio-cultural context of this research. Fitness instructors, particularly women fitness instructors, were concerned about aging out of their jobs given the ideal of the young and fit group fitness instructor (Jin & Harvey, 2020). Ever present for fitness instructors is the awareness to not be fat; that fatphobic messages, either direct and indirect pressures from within the industry are constant in this social world.

Because the normative body in fitness culture is the white body (Coen, Davidson, & Rosenberg, 2021), and the group fitness gym is a space of whiteness (Alcoff, 2006), racism, both structural and banal operate in this socio-cultural space. In the case of my research, this is evident in one informant's bodily attire and also the language she used to describe her camaraderie with other fitness instructors. Specifically, this instructor chose to style her hair in in "cornrows," a hairstyle associated with the racist trope of the angry black woman (Hamilton, 2016) because she thought that this made her appear stronger and tougher in an audition to teach a boxing class. This was something this instructor learned via the banal racism that operates in the socio-cultural context of primarily white only spaces, such as the group fitness gym (Coen, Davidson, & Rosenberg, 2021). Finally, understanding the social space they occupy and the socio-cultural discourses and practices they embody requires discussion of the biographic contexts of group fitness instruction.

The Biographic Context of the Fitness Class

Group fitness instructors' biographic context refers to attributes of identity that include such things typically understood as social statuses like age, gender, sexual orientation, occupation, and education (Goffman, 1963). However, attributes of biographic context also include aspects of Goffman's (1963, p. 2) concept of "social identity." Generally, fitness instructors identify as white, heterosexual, middle to upper class, women; with at least some post-secondary education (D'Abundo, 2007; Hausenblas & Martin, 2000; Maconachie & Sappey, 2011). Most fitness instructors are between 23 and 58 years old with a median age of 34; some are executives, teachers, physiotherapy assistants, credit analysts, graduate students, or stay-at-home parents (D'Abundo, 2007; Hausenblas & Martin, 2000; Maconachie & Sappey 2011).

Goffman's (1963) understanding of social identity includes aspects of the person that are not generally thought of as types of social status such as possessing a body labeled as fat. Goffman (1963) argues that the term "social identity" is more explanative than "social status" because in addition to structural forms such as gender and age it takes into account other biographical attributes that are none the less social. Although not unique to fitness instructors exclusively, two important aspects of social identity of relevance to female instructors is maternal status and the maternal body. Socio-cultural discourses of the good mother led to the expectation that mothers devote, almost exclusively, all of their time, energy, and resources to their children at the expense of all other commitments, including care of the mother herself and the mother's paid employment obligations (Hays, 1996, p.115).

Occupation

The occupations of group fitness instructors are diverse (Crossley, 2008; Morling, 2000; Neville & Gorman, 2016). For instance, the informants in Laverie's (1998, p. 282) study of what motivates participation in aerobics were students, stay at home moms, executives, retailers, and professionals. Similarly, Coen, Rosenberg, and Davidson (2018, p. 35) found their informants ranged from managerial or supervisory positions to professional or skilled occupations to clerical or technical jobs with some students. Crossley's (2008, p. 484) study on circuit training classes also reflects a diverse cross section of occupations; where he found a seemingly borderless place that brought people together from varied socio-economic backgrounds.

Social Class

Fitness industry research supports Warhurst and Nickson's (2007) assertion that jobs demanding high levels of aesthetic appeal are dominated by the white middle class[3]. But generally, group fitness instructors do not rely on this work as their main source of income due to the precarious nature of it. Instead, it often serves to provide them or their families with supplementary income (Crossley, 2008). Fitness work as a secondary occupation, or at least a secondary family income for some, provides a means of achieving difference and boosting their personal social status and self-identity. This was reaffirmed in Maconachie and Sappey (2011, p. 19) study and is consistent with Warhurst and

[3] Warhurst and Nickson's (2007) research focuses mainly on retail and hospitality industries.

Nickson's (2007, p. 792) argument that aesthetic labour is perceived by both workers and wider society to have high status attached to it.

Fitness instructors perform physical routines for which they are often modestly financially compensated. Although some group fitness instructors may volunteer their time, the majority of fitness instructors are paid on a per class basis, meaning, they are only financially compensated for the exact duration of time they spend physically teaching a class (Sappey & Maconachie, 2012, p. 513). Time spent practicing and learning routines; maintaining the level of bodily fitness required to instruct classes; promoting their classes, or talking with members, is done during unpaid personal time (and in some cases at the personal expense) of the instructor (Sappey & Maconachie, 2012, p. 513). Time preparing for work provides group fitness instructors with a significant amount of autonomy and freedom, while at the same time disproportionately rewards those instructors who spend considerable amounts of unpaid personal time learning, honing, and perfecting their craft (Sappey & Maconachie, 2012, p. 514).

Education

Group exercise classes are led by group exercise instructors, who have varying levels of experience, skills, and abilities. Some privately owned gyms require that their instructors have specialized qualifications and lifesaving (CPR) training as a condition of their employment, whereas other community-based group fitness classes require less credentials (Maconachie & Sappey, 2011, p. 17). Fitness instructors are expected to maintain and further refine their instructional skills through seminars, workshops, conferences, and continuing education, most often at their own personal expense and time

(Les Mills, 2018). This upgrading of skills is commonly offered on weekends so as not to interfere with other paid employment that instructors most likely have (Les Mills, 2018). Regardless of the amount or type of formal training, the end goal is similar for most instructors: apply their skills to fill aerobics studios with beginner to advanced exercisers, creating a social atmosphere for working out (Crossley, 2004, p. 41).

Age

In the West, the early to mid-twentieth century saw the introduction of important structural and cultural changes including "changes in labour relations, social programs retirement, and demographic patterns, and the medical and cultural stretching of middle age into later life" (Katz, 2000, p. 28). All of these changes have contributed to the cultural assumption that being active should be a lifelong activity (Katz, 2000). No longer is it acceptable for individuals to live out old age resting in their rocking chairs, they must instead remain busy and participate in activities like group fitness classes to put off physical decline and reduce "the risks of dependency" (Katz, 2001, p. 143).

Within risk society, as the population ages, individuals under such societal pressure to age well are expected to manage the risks associated with advancing age (Allain & Marshall, 2017; Shimoni, 2018) where the individual managing these risks is primarily responsible for aging well (Allain & Marshall, 2017; Katz, 2001; Shimoni, 2018). Such successful aging is performed through practices such as eating a balanced diet, getting good quality sleep, and participating in moderate daily exercise (Featherstone & Hepworth, 1991; UKActive, 2017, p. 6). This societal pressure does not take account of the fact that older adults often experience disability, "illness, poverty, loneliness, and marginalization"

and that those who do not meet the socio-cultural standards of aging well can become targets of ageism (Katz, 2000, p. 29).

Aging, the aging process, and ideas around successful aging are all significant issues regarding the role of the fitness instructor. Most group fitness instructors fall between 20 and 58 years of age (D'Abundo, 2007; Greenleaf, McGreer, & Parham, 2006; Maconachie & Sappey, 2011), reflecting assumptions that gym culture and group fitness classes are mainly for the young (Johansson, 1996, p. 32). The fitness instructors who took part in my study saw themselves as role models on how to age successfully, and modeled ideals of successful aging that are part of popular fitness culture tied to discourses of neoliberalism for the people who take their classes (Katz, 2001).

There is an inherent contradiction in these discourses that reinforce the idea that people should always be striving for improvements to their bodies, their health, and their fitness levels in order to age successfully (Katz, 2001, p. 17) while at the same time they must contend with the embodied biological reality of their aging bodies (Tulle, 2008a, p.2). Further, in Tulle's (2008a) work on older elite runners, she concludes that there is a close connection between embodiment, identity, and habitus (Bourdieu, 1984) that helps to theorize ageing from a soci-cultural change perspective. She calls for a "socially rooted ontology" grounded in a "resistant embodied agency" that challenges the normative aging process as being deterministic; as one ages, one's body also declines. This is consistent with Featherstone and Hepworth's argument (1991, p. 93), that there is a "experiential difference between the physical processes of ageing and the inner, or subjective experience of the 'real self'" which paradoxically remains young. In addition to these contradictions of aging, the role of the fitness instructor is also deeply gendered.

Gender

Gender is a social status and it is through the process of social interaction in particular spaces that gender is both produced, reproduced, and actively performed and managed by the individual through the presentation of self (Goffman, 1959, 1967, West and Zimmerman, 1987). According to West and Zimmerman (1987, p. 126) performing gender "involves a complex of socially guided perceptual, interactional, and micropolitical activities that cast particular activities as expressions of masculine and feminine 'natures.'" Group fitness classes are social spaces framed by particular organizational cultures; shared understandings and behaviours of the work environment; as well as informal or symbolic interpersonal relationships where presentation of one's gender is actively managed through signs given and given off the body (Goffman, 1959; Dellinger & Williams, 2002; Hearn & Parkin, 1995). Management of self that is framed by the organizational culture of group fitness instruction and which includes, among other things, strong symbolic orders of gender that provide directions and boundaries around gender performance (Gherardi, 1995) and display making their presentation of a gendered self a form of guided "doing" (Gofman, 1974, p. 23). This is evident within the culture of group fitness, where fitness workers "do gender" (West & Zimmerman, 1987) through their clothing choices, song and music selections, as well as the gendered language used throughout the instruction of the class (Mansfield & Maguire, 1999). Gender within organizations thus becomes simultaneously and continually performed and institutionalized. While group fitness instructors may believe they are expressing purely personal choices in their dress or in their interactions with members and colleagues, their behaviours are strongly influenced by their

surrounding organizational culture (Dellinger & Williams, 2002; Gherardi, 1995; Morrill, 1995).

Thus, the fitness gym is not only a place where people go to exercise and be physically active; it is also a space for the construction of specific, and arguably, narrowly defined, gender identities (Johansson 2016, p. 32). Thus, normative constructions of masculinity (Gill et al., 2005) and femininity (Boyle, 2005) that reflect the binary model of gender (Bornstein, 1994; Hird, 2002) dominate the gendered space of the gym. Thus, fitness gyms contain particular spaces designed for the normatively female body with others designed for the normatively male body, leaving little space for bodies that do not align with this gender binary (Craig & Liberti, 2007, p. 677), such as non-binary bodies (Bergman & Barker, 2017).

Perhaps the most striking characteristic about aerobics, as an exercise activity, is the almost complete dominance of women, both in terms of who are the instructors and who are the people who take their classes (Haravon Collins, 2002, p. 85; Lloyd, 1996, p. 82). Although both men and women, can and do, teach group fitness classes, the occupation is overrepresented by women (Greenleaf et al., 2006; Haravon, 1995; Hausenblas & Martin, 2000; Markula & Chikinda, 2016; Martin & Hausenblas, 1998; Parviainen, 2011). For example, Reed (1989, p. 22) argues that group fitness classes are "one of the last places that women regularly gather without men around." Further, Brabazon (2006, p. 79) agreed that aerobics was "one of the few places where women of different ages, classes, ethnicities, and education levels can meet, mingle, and talk." Brabazon (2006, p. 79) also claimed that aerobics could indeed be seen as a collective activity, as unifying, creating a space where women gravitate towards and a space to build relationships with other women.

Given the prevalence of other male-dominated working environments, group fitness offers a uniquely feminine space (Craig & Liberti, 2007, p. 679).

Gender segregation is practiced in contemporary fitness spaces; specifically in fitness classes which are predominately populated by women (Brabazon, 2006; Brace-Govan, 2002; Dworkin, 2003; Laverie, 1998; Maconachie & Sappey, 2011; Paradis, 2012; Sayers & Bradbury, 2004; Smith Maguire, 2008). Most gyms are sectioned off into separate workout or exercise specific areas. While on the surface it appears benign to group certain equipment together for ease of use, upon closer inspection, these segregated areas also serve, whether intended or not, as a means of segregating women to the cardio equipment and aerobics studio and men sectioned into the free weight area (Andrews, Sudwell, & Sparkes, 2005, p. 881). That is not to say that there is no free movement between these spaces; just that it is rare. Put another way, cardiovascular exercise and weight training spaces can be divided as either feminine or masculine (Brace-Govan, 2004; Dworkin, 2001, 2003; Salvatore & Marecek, 2010; Sassatelli, 2010). The use of the space and equipment also varies with people presenting as male being more likely to use the chest press bench and load the bars up with weights they can barely lift (Andrews et al., 2005, p. 881). Dworkin (2003, p. 132) found that more women than men use the cardiovascular equipment and that fewer women use the weight rooms compared to men.

In contrast, those presenting as female are more likely to use the cable machines and use weights that they can physically move. Male presenting exercisers often lift heavy weights, but low repetitions, female presenting lifters often lift low weights with high repetitions (Andrews et al., 2005, p. 881), often concentrating on lower body exercises, such as squats and lunges. In contrast, male presenting lifters tend to focus on chest and

arm exercises. These preselected exercise activities reflect normative notions of what constitutes either the male or female body ideals (Jackson, 1992).

With emphasis placed on body size reduction and reshaping the body, group fitness classes and related cardiovascular activities have become highly feminized practices within gyms (Dworkin, 2003; Haravon Collins, 2002; Markula, 1995) where exercise regimes are targeted towards what are labelled "problem areas," those parts of the body that are seen as distinctly feminine such as the hips, buttocks, and thighs (Kagan & Morse, 1988, p. 171). While group fitness classes do have particularly high rates of women members and women instructors, classes with less choreography or dance inspired movements (e.g., kickboxing, boot camp, circuit training) tend to attract more male members and male instructors, than female (Brabazon, 2006, p. 67; Crossley, 2008, p. 484). Thus, motivation for gym attendance have been tied to weight loss for women (Kagan & Morse, 1988) and enhancing muscularity for men (McCabe & James, 2009).

Fitness classes and their relationship to traditional notions of what it means to possess a heteronormative body cannot be ignored within a fitness gym (English, 2020, p. 3). Scholars, such as Sailors, Teetzel, and Weaving (2016, p. 47) see women participating in fitness as part of a "contested terrain" that "involves traditional heterosexist ideals of women's body capabilities." Further, they argue that fitness regimes tied to heterosexual femininity serve to objectify women and present fitness as an opportunity to alter their bodies as a way to further please men. Group fitness specifically has been accused of contributed to the tyranny of slenderness (Bordo 2003) by encouraging women to exercise as part of an obligation to attain and maintain culturally defined images of how women ought to look (Sailors, Teetzel & Weaving, 2016, p. 54). When group fitness instructors

encourage their class members to burn calories in order to be thinner or lose weight, they are reinforcing patriarchal, heterosexist ideas about femininity (English, 2020, p. 10).

Group fitness instructors and the people who take their classes play a role in perpetuating the valorization of thinness and femininity stereotypes for women. According to Newhall (2010, p. 71-72), instructors, through their cues in class aimed at weight loss and counting calories, can "reinforce the need, for women especially, to adopt tendencies in order to measure their levels of success" and often "perpetuate the weight loss paradigm of exercise." These particular critiques of group fitness can reinforce patriarchal gender norms. However, others argue that fitness regimens have the potential to counter heterosexist gender norms, because it "presents a feminine form that is strong, resilient, and flexible" (Brabazon, 2006, p. 79). As Markula (1995), Brabazon (2006) and others have asserted, group fitness spaces can offer small forms of resistance to the gendered ideas about femininity and beauty standards. Physical activity, particularly group fitness, can provide women with the ability to challenge long held patriarchal gender stereotypes.

Fit and Fat Bodies

Inextricably connected to issues of aging and gender are the fit and fat bodies which are both salient aspects of these fitness instructors' biographic contexts. Reflective of contemporary Western bodily norms in general and the requirements of the culture of group fitness in particular, presenting a fit body is essential for group fitness instructors (Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2015). For female instructors, the fit body is one that is not only thin, but also toned (White, Young & Gillett, 1995, pp 162-163). Women instructors need to have muscles but not too much muscle definition whereas male instructors need to display muscle definition (Mathisen et al., 2020; White, Young & Gillett, 1995). Instructors understand the fit body as a

moral imperative (White, Young, & Gillett, 1995). White, Young, and Gillett (1995, p. 162) write of the changing nature in which bodies are displayed in contemporary society as sites of, and quite literally proof of, both "moral and physical health." Increasingly, the body becomes a billboard for "a specific embodied cultural ideal which serves as an external sign to others of the care that has been taken to promote health" (White, Young, and Gillett, 1995, p. 162).

In writing about the fit body Tulle (2008b, p. 49) found that "the ideal runners' body has to fulfill a set of characteristics including low body fat, long muscles, an efficient oxygen supply, and biomechanical efficiency." Tulle (2008b, p. 49) argues that this ideal of the fit body that runners use reflects a "mechanical metaphor" that is part of "biomedical discourse" which in turn reflects the legacy of Descartes' (Grayling, 2006[1637], p. 46) understanding of the body as "a machine made by the hands of God, which is incomparably better arranged, and adequate to movements more admirable than is any machine of human invention" composed of its corporeal parts.

Being fat in the West is often considered a moral deficit, labelled as a problem, and associated with inaccurate and negative assumptions of the person labelled as fat (Bombak, Meadows, & Billette, 2019; Mansfield, 2011, p. 82; Smith Maguire, 2008) when body size is in reality associated with poverty, food insecurity, and other social changes in work and play (Bombak, Meadows, & Billette, 2019; Grint, 2005). Thus, a related aspect of the social identity for some instructors is avoiding the fat body which is informed and reinforced by fatphobic anti-fat notions of health. Health promotion advocates have responded to medical concerns about statistics showing rising rates of obesity by arguing that physical activity is one key component to reducing the high rates of obesity (Hopps, Canino, & Caimi, 2011). Thus, group fitness classes aerobics' classes would fall under these parameters.

Goffman's (1973) concept of stigma is useful when understanding the fat body in contemporary society. Of particular importance to Goffman's (1973) examination of stigma and the self in terms of my research, are the ways in which bodies of the fitness worker become central in the personal interactions with other fitness colleagues and class members. Gyms, and specifically fitness studios, are places where anxiety around fatness is acutely felt and observed, not only by the people who take group fitness classes, but also the instructors (Mansfield, 2010, p. 82). For instance, the college students who participated in the Evans et al. (2005) study felt that the level of fitness required to be an instructor had to be high and that the instructors should have a thin, but not too thin, body in order to lead the class. The routines and classes that these instructors performed implied that only thin and fit bodies could manage the moves (Evans et al., 2005). Fernández-Balboa and González-Calvo (2018, p. 871) concluded in their study; the overwhelming belief that thinness is a prerequisite for being a fitness professional. Fernández-Balboa and González-Calvo (2018) also found that fitness instructors viewed getting older or becoming fatter were the opposite of "looking the part" for a gym instructor. Fernández-Balboa and González-Calvo (2018, p. 870) argued that the "ideal" body for their instructors aligned neatly with both Western notions of beauty and neoliberal ideas surrounding health; specifically desirable bodies are bodies that are not old or fat. The ideal body is also a gendered body.

In this chapter I have reviewed the literature on the historical, political, socio-cultural, and biographical contexts that frame the social world of group fitness and how group fitness instructors engage in emotional labour in interactions with the people who take their classes and other group fitness instructors. By understanding the broader context

of the fitness class, we can begin to understand that emotions are constituted and sustained by group processes; that they originate and develop in social relations and exist relative to social acts. Together, society and culture influence the shaping of emotions (Mattley, 2002, p. 364) which are "temporally and relationally rooted in the social situation" (Denzin, 1984, p. 52) where the experience of emotion shifts and changes within and between social situations (McCarthy, 1989, p. 57). Thus, emotions are entwined into the social fabric of life. In the following chapter, I discuss the qualitative research design and methods of data collection and analysis I used in answering my research questions: How do group fitness instructors experience emotion norms and expectations for behaviour in the context of a group fitness class? How do group fitness instructors negotiate the normative expectations of this context? And how do group fitness instructors navigate this occupational space?

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

I used a qualitative approach in my research on how group fitness instructors perceive and manage their emotional lives while at work in order to analyze the strategies they used in order to manage their emotions in interactions with others. I used participant observation, a focus group meeting, and in-depth, face-to-face semi-structured interviewing as methods of data collection and thematic analysis as the mode of analysis. The central research question I address in this research is: How do group fitness instructors experience emotional labour in the context of a group fitness class? In order to answer this question, two other related research questions were also addressed: How do group fitness instructors negotiate the normative expectations of this context? And how do group fitness instructors experience their emotions while they navigate this occupational space? For the purposes of my research, I follow Hochschild (1990, p. 118) distinction between "emotional labour" meaning the emotion management people do for a wage in contrast to "emotion work" referring to the emotional management people do in their private lives.

A qualitative research design is appropriate because qualitative methods are particularly suited to enhancing our understanding of the meanings that motivate people's actions and of the context in which interactions occur (Sofaer, 1999, p. 1102). Qualitative methods allow for "depth" in analysis and thus are appropriate to the "context of discovery" (Ambert et al., 1995, p. 880) and to provide explanations of social processes (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 10). Therefore, a qualitative research design enabled me to gain a better understanding of how emotions impact the group fitness instructors who participated in my study. It is particularly valuable because qualitative methodology acknowledges multiple viewpoints, allows for different accounts to develop and emphasizes "how social

experience is created and given meaning" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 4). Meaning, determined by social actors, emerges in social settings through social interactions and thus, qualitative inquiry is best suited for "understanding the processes that go on in a situation and the beliefs and perceptions of those in it" (Firestone, 1993, p. 22).

Recruitment

In this research I used a combination of purposive and convenience sampling to recruit informants. Convenience sampling refers to contacting informants known to the researcher (Curtis et al., 2000) and purposive sampling refers to selecting research participants for a particular purpose that fit a specific description or characteristics or those who have specific knowledge about the research question (Mays & Pope, 1995, p. 110). In my research, I selected certified group fitness instructors who taught pre-choreographed classes and were currently employed as fitness instructors. Pre-choreographed classes occur when instructors are provided the music, the exercises, the choreography and in some cases what to say from the fitness company that licenses their fitness programs to individual gyms. This means that the individual instructor has limited autonomy over the structure, flow, and construction of their class as opposed to freestyle instructors who completely create their own choreography, select their own music, do their own functional exercises, and are perceived to have more autonomy over their classes than those who teach pre-choreographed material. Instructors using pre-choreographed materials were selected for this research because talking with them allowed me to analyze the limited autonomy over the creative portions of the work and the burden that the increasing levels of automation

that have been introduced into this method of fitness training (Andreasson & Johansson, 2016).

At 6am on a Thursday in February 2017 I posted the following message on my personal Facebook page:

> Are you a group fitness instructor who teaches pre choreographed group fitness classes AND is currently employed (as a group fitness instructor) in the Maritimes? Would you be interested in participating in a research study on your experiences as a group fitness instructor? I am looking for about 20 group fitness instructors to participate in one 2-hour focus group and/or a 1-hour interview. If interested, send me a PM here or an email to lisa.thomson@unb.ca for more information!

By 9am on the same day 22 fitness instructors had expressed interest in participating either in the focus group and/or the interview. Next came the task of deciding who to put in the focus group and who to invite to an interview; all instructors who responded said they would participate in either or both the focus group and interviews. I picked a date for the focus group and sent this date to all instructors who expressed interest in the focus group. I confirmed the first eight instructors who said they were able to make the date, time, and location. Then I booked the individual interviews with the remaining instructors who did not participate in the focus group. Instructors who participated in the interviews selected the time and place of their choosing for the interview.

As expected, I was able to recruit more women than men to both the interviews and focus group. Group fitness instruction, according to Maguire and Mansfield (1998, p. 112), has been traditionally a feminine activity where women dominate in both participation and instruction. Because of my own position as an instructor, I have "insider awareness" and thus, used my personal knowledge and involvement in the fitness industry to recruit male participation in my research (Chavez, 2008, p. 481; Douglas, 1976). I used convenience

sampling to personally invite male instructors that I knew to participate in the research. I sent them a follow up email to gauge interest in participating in my study. Of the three men I reached out to, two decided to participate in the interviews and one declined. Overall, I was able to recruit seven instructors for the focus group (one man and six women) and 12 instructors to participate in the semi-structured interviews (four men and eight women). The 19 instructors who participated in my study choose whether they wanted to participate in either the one-on-one interviews or the focus group meeting, not both. A total of seven people took part in the focus group meeting and 12 people participated in the interviews.

My analysis is not predicated on numerical logic, rather the unit of analysis in this research is the concept not the case (the informant). Thus, while the number of informants is relatively small, the data they provide is conceptually rich (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Further, it was not the goal of this research to achieve "statistical representativeness" (Byrne, 2006, p. 31). The data analyzed in this research are used to make theoretical claims about emotional labour, the self and work, as well as to analyze social institutions and interactions that determine the material conditions of people's lives (Fields et al., 2006, p. 174). As Corbin and Strauss (1990, p. 9) stress,

> it is by theoretical sampling that representativeness and consistency are achieved...representativeness of concepts, not of persons, is crucial. The aim is ultimately to build a theoretical explanation by specifying phenomena in terms of conditions that give rise to them, how they are expressed through action/interaction, the consequences that result from them, and variation of these qualifiers.

In addition, data collected from three sources participant observation, a focus group meeting, and interviews adds to the richness of the data and enhances the validity of my analysis. Finally, as Low (2019) concludes, contextualizing the findings from the focus

group and interviews in the wider socio-cultural context is essential to theoretic saturation and is necessary for inferences to be made from even small sample sizes (see further discussion of generalizability below for more detail on this issue).

The 12 group fitness instructors I interviewed where white, heterosexual, and Canadian born, with eight self-identifying as women and four self-identifying as men. The average age of informants was 40 years old and their ages ranged from 22 to 64 years of age. The informants in my study were employed in a range of occupations including managerial or supervisory positions (two people); professional or skilled occupations (six people); clerical or technical jobs (three people); and a student (one person). In terms of highest degree earned, three people had a graduate degree, five people had undergraduate degrees, two people had earned a college diploma, one person was currently enrolled in an undergraduate program, and one person had earned their high school diploma. The homogeneity of the biographical makeup I found within the group of participants I recruited is consistent with what other scholars have reported in their research on fitness instructors (Andrews, Sudwell, & Sparkes, 2005; Crossley, 2008; Maconachie & Sappey, 2011; Markula & Chikinda, 2016).

Data Collection

In my research design I incorporated three sources of qualitative data, including data from a focus group meeting, 12 face-to-face, semi-structured interviews, and one year of participant observation. Using multiple sources adds to the richness of the data collected. As Becker (1970, p. 52) points out, the richness of qualitative data is so “detailed” that:

> they counter the twin dangers of respondent duplicity and observer bias by making it difficult for respondents to produce data that uniformly support a mistaken conclusion, just as they make it difficult for the observer to restrict his [her/their] observations so that he [she/they] sees only what supports his [or her/their] prejudices and expectations.

In addition, using observational data in addition to interview data enhances the rigour of the analysis as it allows the researcher to conceptualize what people do, not just what they say they do (Silverman, 1998).

I conducted the focus group meeting first, followed by in-depth interviews with individual group fitness instructors during the year of my participant observation. This strategy had the advantage of first identifying a range of experiences and perspectives through the focus group, and then drawing from those informants to add more depth where needed in the semi-structured interviews (Morgan, 1996, p. 134). The focus group also generated broader themes that I was then able to use in the interviews to explore specific responses and individual experiences in more depth. Throughout the interview and focus group meeting processes, I conducted participant observation at two field sites.

Participant Observation

Consistent with symbolic interactionism I used the practice of sustained engagement within the naturalistic setting to capture the nuances of everyday lived experience (Blumer, 1969; Denzin, 1992; Fine, 1993; Goffman, 1959). I conducted extensive participant observation in fitness gyms between 2017 and 2018 (one year in total, 4-6 days a week). Although my schedule of participant observation sometimes varied, I generally spent time in the field as follows (see Table 1):

Table 1: Field Observation at Gym Locations		
	Ultimate Gym	**Be Fit Facility**
Sunday	10:30am-1:30pm	No observation
Monday	4:30pm-6:30pm	9:00am-11:00am
Tuesday	9:00 am-11:00am	5:00pm-7:30pm
Wednesday	4:30pm-6:30pm	7:30pm-9:00pm
Thursday	9:00am-11:00am	5:00pm-7:30pm
Friday	12:00pm-2:00pm	9:00am-11:00 am
Saturday	No observation	9:00am-11:00am

I conducted participant observation at two fitness facility sites that I refer to through the pseudonyms "Ultimate Fitness" (located in a predominantly commercial area) and "Be Fit Fitness" (located in a more residential area). Both fitness gyms were located in the same city. The group fitness gyms I focused on in my research are not private spaces, they are public spaces gym where membership is unrestricted and for a relatively nominal membership fee anyone can make use of the fitness space. Therefore, they are not spaces where those individuals interacting in it have an expectation of privacy. In contrast, they are spaces where are purposefully surveilled by others and by full length mirrors that line these spaces. Given my familiarity with the gym and my status as an employee there, I had access to all areas of the gym, excluding the men's change room and while my observations began as soon as I entered the gym facility and was greeted by the front desk staff, followed me into the group fitness studio, and childminding area; I did not conduct observation or collect data in any of the private spaces within the gyms like bathrooms, changing rooms, and private offices where individuals do have an expectation of privacy. I was able to continue less frequent instances of participant observation after that first year because I remained a participant in exercise classes and an instructor at both gym locations. In sum I participated in and observed hundreds of interactions at both field settings.

During the year of observation, I was employed as a group fitness instructor. This meant that I was what Johnson, Avenarius, and Weatherford (2006) refer to as an active participation. I interacted with gym members, staff, and other instructors. I attended staff meetings and participated in group fitness classes. Being an insider engaged in active participant observation is an important opportunity to practice reflexivity by exploring the "researcher-self amidst competing (and perhaps false) dichotomies of the personal/professional life and the scholar/activist" (Johnson et al., 2006, p. 133). Because I researched my "own culture" (Johnson et al., 2006, p. 132) and particularly a subculture whose identity hinges on exercise in groups, it is important that as the researcher, I too am able to participate in group fitness classes. Therefore, my fieldwork included active participant observation as well as face-to-face interviews, and a focus group meeting as means of collecting data (Johnson et al., 2006, pp. 113-114; McCracken, 1988; Morgan, 1996). Active participant observation means that as the researcher I fully participated in the social world of my informants. Johnson et al. (2006, p. 114) advocate the adoption of a "normal" social role within the field site so as to blend in with the social environment and reduce the skepticism that often accompanies those on the outside. Johnson et al. (2006, p. 121) outline attributes of "active social roles" for participant observation that researchers may adapt while collecting data.

As an active participant observer and insider to this social world, I have "specialized knowledge", high "freedom of social movement", and easy "access to information" because of my status as a fitness instructor (Johnson et al., 2006, p. 121). Having these "active social roles" grants me the trust and acceptance of my informants and

they view me as belonging in the group. I was, and still am, an active participant while at the same time an observer of the interactions that take place (Johnson et al., 2006, p. 113).

I have been employed at both gym facilities for nine years and have been a familiar face around the group fitness studios for those years. Being an insider to this social space while I was conducting my research was less intrusive because members or other instructors would likely not have considered my participation in group exercises classes unusual or noteworthy because they are used to me being in this social setting (Chavez, 2008). Being a fitness instructor also gave me insider awareness, meaning access to information outsiders do not have. However, this position also meant that I needed to be aware of and distance myself from my tacit knowledge and any personal assumptions, being careful to not inadvertently include them in the data or analysis (McCracken, 1988, pp. 18-20; Silverman, 1998, p. 110). For example, during the interviews with fitness instructors I asked if they thought purposefully about what to wear when teaching. One informant, Linda, laughed as if I had made a funny joke and answered "Yeah. Oh, absolutely. I'm on a stage! I'm standing there, so yeah!" This illustrates that not only did I not make assumptions based on my own experience as a fitness instructor but also that practicing reflexivity by distancing from tacit knowledge means that sometimes the researcher has to ask 'dumb' but useful questions (Shaffir & Stebbins, 1991).

I also watched and participated as the fitness instructors who participated in this research conducted their own classes while I carefully and succinctly recorded field notes onto my phone (an electronic form of field notes). Observing participants in their everyday work life provided detailed information. Thus, I was able to use my detailed field notes and observations to deepen my sensitivity in analyzing the data from one-on-one interviews

and focus group and allowed me to analyze what these instructors did, not just what they said (Silverman, 1998, p. 106, 110).

While engaged in participant observation, I was dressed in gym attire, fully participated in fitness classes, or actively led a class myself. I also spoke with instructors. I would occasionally take minimal notes (both in a journal and on my phone) while in the gyms, the sight of someone jotting notes in a notebook or on their phone was not uncommon in any of the gyms I was in. Many people exercising at the gym, particularly those engaged in weightlifting routines; chart their progress in personal notebooks. It is also not uncommon to see people texting on their phones in the general weight area and in group fitness classes. Given the ubiquity of personal phones in the fitness space, gym members would not have deemed my recording of notes on my phone as obtrusive. While this observation was important in deepening my understanding of the setting— the social world of the group fitness gym that the instructors I spoke with work in— all observational data presented in my dissertation comes only from my personal experience of the research setting, my personal experience as a group fitness instructor, or from the interviews and focus group meetings I conducted.

The Research Setting

I carried out my research in fitness facilities in the Maritimes region of Canada because I am fitness instructor employed in this region and thus, I have the social and cultural capital to recruit gym members and group fitness instructors alike, enabling me to gain easy access to my research setting (Shaffir & Stebbins, 1991). The group fitness facility that I conducted my research in reflects what is found in the literature on fitness gyms more broadly. Fitness gyms are multi-use fitness facilities which provide a range of

fitness equipment (cardio and strength based), group fitness classes, personal training, and other amenities (Sassatelli, 1999b, p. 229). Despite localized differences in specific fitness facilities, ethnographic research found that there are striking similarities across sites that characterize the gym as a "specialized place" (Sassatelli, 2010, p. 230). In her work in Italian gyms, Sassatelli (1999, p. 233), attributes this to a shared "spatiotemporal organization which works at the work of the body" through which "the gym is thus constructed as a world, a domain of action which has its own rules and meanings." Socio-cultural studies have shown that gyms can function as hierarchical and informally (and formally) regulated social environments with particular norms, etiquette, and systems of informal surveillance (Andrews et al., 2005; Crossley, 2006; Frew & McGillivray, 2005; Markula & Pringle, 2006; Pridgeon & Grogan, 2012; Sassatelli, 1999, 2010). Crossley (2004, p. 39) attests that aerobics, in particular circuit training, is a social context "which both shapes the activity of the agent and is shaped by that (shaped) agent."

So too, gym space is integral to understanding the social interactions and emotional exchanges that take place in aerobics classes. Group fitness, by design is a social activity, one that involves interaction among participants before, during, and after class. Mirroring the literature, the setting I conducted my research in reflected the intimate nature of the sectioned off studio, complete with its own sound system, staging, lighting, and climate control. This type of setting creates an environment that is conducive to many and varied personal encounters (Crossley, 2004, 2006; Markula & Pringle, 2006; Sassatelli, 1999, 2010).

Reflecting what is documented in the literature on the fitness studio, the setting for my research has its own set of complex interaction rules and social norms; however, they

are predicated on whiteness, heteronormativity, anti-fat, anti-aging, reflecting the binary model of gender, and normative constructs of femininity and masculinity (Bornstein, 1994; Hird, 2002). Thus, the ideal fitness instructor is middle class, heterosexual, cis gender, white, and thin; in addition to being fit and toned. The benefits of being fit, as determined by popular culture are circulated through mass media, those in the health care system, state actors, and fitness professionals, and is observable in fitness spaces. Often the messages of being fit and healthy are couched in anti-fat language (White, Young & Gillet, 1995; Greenleaf et al., 2006, p. 376). The visual posters and advertisements that adorn most gym walls are often pictures of young, white, thin, muscle sculpted bodies showcasing the narrow definition of the ideal body (Johansson, 2016, p. 33). These visual messages are thought to be inspirational but can be exclusionary and intimidating to some gym goers who do not see themselves represented in the posters (Johansson, 2016, p. 34). Although there are no obvious restrictions regarding who may join a gym, there are certainly visible and invisible barriers, making it difficult for those outside of the narrow definition of this beauty ideal to participate fully in this space.

At the time of my research all of the instructors who took part in my study taught pre-choreographed classes. Pre-choreographed means that someone else (in this instance, a professional privately held company) creates the physical exercises, patterns, routines, and sets it all to licensed music. The music selection almost always falls under a strict licensing agreement. In order to teach pre-choreographed material, instructors are usually required to complete a training course in the program or class discipline they wish to teach. Certified group fitness instructors then pay for a licensing agreement from the professional company that provides their pre-choreographed material. The other option for these group

fitness instructors is to teach freestyle classes. Freestyle means the individual instructor creates their class, creates the patterns, routines, and moves and sets it to music of their choice. There is no formal agreement with any company and the instructors are then able to teach their freestyle class at whatever gym or facility they choose. Often, but not necessarily, the instructor is certified through a national or provincial sporting body.

My research was conducted in two fitness gym locations. The fitness gyms were for members only and a swipe card was necessary to gain entrance to the facility. Upon entering either gym facility, members are greeted by the front desk staff and asked to scan their membership card to gain access to the facility. Depending on the membership type, members may be offered a towel service. Both locations had a free weight area, cardio equipment, group fitness studio, cycling studio, change room/shower/sauna facilities, child minding services, towel service, and tanning beds.

Because I taught a variety of classes at different times, I was able to observe different cohorts of class members. Although both gyms have their distinct clientele, generally the 9am to noon crowd are retired people, new parents (or those with young children at home), and shift workers. These morning members tend to be more social, less concerned about time and looking for a more social experience to accompany their work out. The noon to 2:00 pm crowd often includes people coming for a quick workout during their lunch break from work. These members tend to be rushed and intense. They have limited time and generally want a quick, effective workout with minimal social interaction. The 4:00 to 6:00 pm crowd tends to come to the gym from work before heading home and are looking for a good workout and some sociability with other members. The crowd that comes to the gym after 6:00 pm tend to be parents of little ones, university or college

students, and singletons. There are exceptions to who comes at what time of day, but generally the mood of the gym changes throughout the day as the clientele changes.

In addition to the ambiance created by members of the gym, the facility where I conducted my research also reflected the youthful atmosphere created in other trendy fitness gyms (Morling, 2000, p. 76) where the aestheticized space of the gym is filled with the sounds of popular music and the walls are adorned with promotional displays of young, beautiful, white bodies (Sayers & Bradbury, 2004, p. 13). From the use, display, and promotion of technology in the clubs, to the prevalence of mirrors; the markers of popular youth culture are apparent and purposeful (Sayers & Bradbury, 2004, p. 14). Advertisements for club services, such as personal training or tanning, make "looking and feeling younger" a top priority in the gyms where I conducted participant observation. The messages in the advertising are powerful. The gym is not simply a room or configuration of rooms in which physical activities such as running, rowing, stair climbing, weightlifting, and group exercise occur. Instead, people's movements, actions, interactions, and behaviours reflect the gym space and help to create and shape it (Andrews et al., 2005; Gieryn, 2000; Henderson & Frelke, 2000; Sassatelli, 1999a). In addition to participant observation, I used a focus group meeting as a means of collecting data.

The Focus Group Meeting

The focus group meeting consisted of group fitness instructors who all work for the same employer and have worked together for at least a year; therefore, the focus group informants were familiar with each other which made it easy to tackle the questions without initial awkwardness or shyness from informants. Seven fitness instructors participated in

the focus group meeting. I conducted the focus group meeting on a Sunday afternoon in February 2017 which lasted about 2.5 hours. The meeting was held at a central location with free parking.

As recommended by Morgan (1996, p. 141), the size of the focus groups was kept small to allow for all voices to be heard and to ensure each informant was able to participate fully. Smaller group size also gives each informant more time to express their views and experiences. In addition, the small groups made it easier for me to moderate the active discussions that often accompany high levels of involvement and emotional topics (Morgan, 1996, p. 146). Following Morgan (1996, p. 146) I used low facilitator involvement which allowed the informants to guide the discussion around the topic areas (Kitzinger, 1994, p. 106). I came prepared with four questions to start the group discussion which provided for lively discussion (See Appendix A).

I began by asking, "what kind of instructor fills a class?" I followed this question with, "do you think instructors and members agree on what makes a good instructor?" These first two questions served as an ice breaker and to get the group fitness instructors thinking about their role as an instructor and their relationships to members in their classes. In keeping with the theme of relationships, I then asked how important is having a full class? I then asked for specific strategies and tactics that instructors use to retain and get members into class. I wanted to probe deeper into the interactions between instructors and members and asked, "how do you respond when members make comments (positive and negative) about your class?" I contrasted that with "what about when other instructors comment on your class?" And finally, I was interested in the emotional labour tactics instructors use when they did not feel like teaching a class, so I asked, "what do you do

when you don't feel like teaching a class?" And I followed it up with, "how do you make it through a class you don't want to teach?"

Semi-Structured Interviews

In addition to the focus group meeting and participant observation, I conducted 12 in-depth semi-structured interviews with group fitness instructors. Each interview was scheduled for one hour in duration, although the actual length of each interview ranged from one hour to three hours. The interview locations varied and were conducted at locations of the informants' choosing including in the informant's home; at my home; or in a quiet location at the University of New Brunswick Fredericton campus. Basic demographic information was collected from the informants, including their age, gender, family status, paid employment status, length of employment in group fitness, length of employment with the fitness gym and the types of fitness classes they instruct. Although I had prepared questions and prompts (see Appendix B) for the interview schedule, the questions were open-ended to encourage personal accounts to emerge throughout the interviews (McCracken, 1988, pp. 24-25). This allowed space to make adjustments as questions and inquiries arose (Altheide, 1987, pp. 75-76). I also took care in my questions and probes that I did not lead the informant, but rather let them direct the flow of conversation (Chavez, 2008, p. 489).

The interviews focused on informants' relationships with the gym, their gym environments, their experiences interacting with other instructors and gym members. When speaking with informants, I did not use the phrase emotional labour explicitly nor did I ask direct questions surrounding emotions while performing their jobs. I did not because, as

Becker, (1970) argues, there is more validity in informant information that emerges independently during the course of the interview because that information is not influenced by a direct question. Instead, I focused on questions that referenced what they liked and did not like about certain aspects of their jobs and their experiences teaching group fitness which yielded rich information about the emotional labour they experienced.

I recorded and transcribed each interview. I began by asking the fitness instructors general questions about their experience with aerobics, such as: When did you start participating in group fitness classes? Why did you choose this activity? What kind of aerobics do you do? I then asked them to describe some relationships or interactions with members in their classes and with other instructors. All of these questions yielded rich data concerning the emotions they experience and how they manage those emotions. These questions also led to a detailed understanding about their experiences as an employed group fitness instructor and included questions regarding job conditions, pay scales and the physical act of teaching fitness. After these general themes were explored, I ended the interviews by asking instructors about their own reasons for teaching aerobics.

Data Analysis

The focus group meeting and interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim (Silverman 1998, p. 112). In my research, data collection and analysis were an iterative process (Mays & Pope, 1995, p. 110); meaning that theoretical insights from data analysis of the first interviews was brought forward in subsequent interviews; therefore, the data collection and analysis was a "back and forth" exercise in interpreting the data.

The process between the data collection and the analysis was thus concomitant; each informing the other along the way.

While mine was not a grounded theory research design I used the grounded theory technique of comparative coding in my analysis (Corbina & Strauss, 1990). During the data analysis, I reread, reviewed, and analyzed the transcripts individually. The first reading allowed me to relive the flow of the interview by immersing myself uninterrupted in the data. During this stage, I developed a general sense of the interview and began recalling and recording particular events that happened during the interview process. For example, if an informant laughed, paused, or notably changed their body language, or if someone else entered the room or a window was opened; events that were not necessarily included in the written transcript were added by red pen in the margins of the printed transcript. Referring to my field notes, taken directly after each interview, helped fill in any unclear transcription details or unaccounted for pauses in the audio. The second reading combined surface identification of themes written in the margins of the transcript with red pen. During the second reading, I also marked up and highlighted certain sections of the interviews and wrote notes of interest to myself in the margins of the transcript. Reflective notes were made on each transcript to develop a general meaning and to begin the early stages of the coding process. This included references to where informants said similar or opposing things, or what they said deepened my interpretation of the meaning.

I adopted a method of thematic content analysis drawn from several different approaches (see Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Lofland & Lofland, 1995; Maxwell, 1996; Patton, 1990; Strauss, 1987; Corbin & Corbin, 1990) consistent with Patton (1990, p. 381) who describes such analyses as “the process of identifying, coding, and categorizing the primary

patterns in the data." In particular, I systematically and thematically analyzed the data using the qualitative data analysis software NVivo 11 (Ryan & Bernard, 2003, p. 96). In coding my data in NVivo, I used all seven techniques for identifying themes as described by Ryan and Bernard (2003, pp. 89-94), including the detection of "repetitions" or repetitive words and phrases, as well as "indigenous typologies or categories," which in this case refer to the use of fitness work argot and jargon. For example, one of the group fitness instructors that took part in my research used what Ryan and Bernard (2003, p. 89) classify as an indigenous category when she described an instructor's body as "fit-ish" and used her own body as an example. I also looked for "metaphors and analogies" that describe informant experiences; the use of "transitions" in speech patterns such as pauses or change in tone; "comparisons of the similarities and differences" in informant interviews; and the use of "linguistic connectors" such as "metaphors, transitions, and connectors." Finally, I noted "missing data," that is, unstated meaning, was also noted and incorporated into my thematic analysis.

Using NVivo 11 also helped to further visualize the individual concepts that were emerging from my analysis of the interviews. I made efforts to identify salient concepts as initial codes were accepted, altered, or eliminated. In turn, these key concepts guided me in focused coding procedures (Charmaz, 2006). After my first coding pass using NVivo 11 on all 12 transcripts, I had created 55 concepts. At this stage the preliminary concepts were reviewed and further refined. All coded data extracts comprising each concept were re-read to ensure they formed a coherent homogenous pattern. At this stage I collapsed some of the concepts collapsed into each other when their overall meanings were closely related. For instance, the second coding pass combined the concepts "it's a job" and "I don't do it for

money" into the category of "it's a hobby" a category that explains what motivated fitness instructors to teach group fitness classes.

During the third stage, I further refined identified concepts to capture the essence of each theme. Each previously identified concept was re-read together with data extracts representing it while considering what each concept represented from the data. By considering this broader level of meaning, concepts were further collapsed into larger, overall categories. The third pass of the data further refined the concepts down from 15 to six and I created entirely new categories. The six new categories now included the performing body, the embodied role model, displays of sociability, gendered interactions, devotee work, and the emotional labour of fitness instruction (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

The final phase involved what Charmaz (2006, p. 63) describes as theoretical coding: "sophisticated level of coding that follows the codes you have selected during focused coding" and identifies "possible relationships between categories you have developed in your focused coding." During the final phase of analysis, the six new categories were further refined to include three: the embodied nature of emotional labour; emotional labour and sociability; and emotional labour of fitness instruction. As the early coding stages broke down earlier conceptual categories, this process brought the data back together again into a coherent account.

In this research I was interested in how group fitness instructors understand, experience, and negotiate emotional labour in their work. Information they provided me through the interviews and focus groups with was complemented by the data I collected via participant observation where I collected data on "the incidents, events, and happenings that denote their work" (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 8). My aim was to observe and record

all instances of emotional labour being performed in their jobs; so it was not just the instructors' behaviour or reactions themselves, but also the performance of the emotional labour and the situations and contexts to which they would arise that I was capturing in my interviews and observations (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, pp. 8-9). This is an analytic process that Corbin and Strauss (1990, p. 8-9) refer to as theoretical sampling.

Thematic analysis was utilized for the purpose of data analysis because, at the core of thematic analysis, is the identification of patterns and themes present in the data (Boyatzis, 1998), which are then subsequently coded and analyzed (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 81). In addition, Ryan and Bernard (2003, pp. 99) advocate the use of "metacoding," a technique to "examine the relationship among *a priori* themes to discover potentially new themes and overarching metathemes" to develop a conceptual explanatory model of how fitness instructors manage their emotions which I found very useful with my data set. These characteristics make it a useful and an appropriate approach for this study. The decision as to whether a theme was present was based on its meaning within and across the data set and what it contributes to answering and considering the research question. Since the concept of emotional labour particularly in group fitness instructors is still underdeveloped, attention was given to themes generated within the interviews that were able to contribute to a better overall understanding of emotional labour and the experiences that can impact it.

As discussed in Chapter Two, the use of sensitizing concepts has always been a part of Blumerian symbolic interactionist research where a key methodological proviso of Blumer (1969, p. 40) is that researchers engage in a process he called "inspection" that involves the selection of extant concepts of relevance to one's analysis (Blumer, 1969, pp.

43, 129). Sensitizing concepts involves incorporating concepts from other theoretical perspectives where the sensitizing concepts are used provisionally, rather than incorporated into a theoretical perspective in perpetuity. For example, concepts such as the active citizen as well as racism, sexism, ageism, fatphobia, and homophobia, among other concepts, proved useful in understanding the social world of group fitness instruction.

Validity

Good qualitative research always includes rigour as achieved through validity (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994), reliability (Kirk & Miller, 1986) and generalizability (Firestone, 1993; Williams, 2000). Validity, in qualitative research, refers to the integrity and application of the methods used and to what extent the findings accurately reflect the data (Long & Johnson, 2000, p. 31). This is referred to as construct or theoretic validity. According to Kirk and Miller (1986, p. 22), "construct or theoretic validity" occurs if the "theoretical paradigm rightly corresponds to observations." In my research I am interested in the management of emotions and the emotional labour engaged in by fitness instructors. Therefore, conducting one-on-one interviews and observing the actions and behaviours of instructors are both data collection methods appropriate to achieving theoretical validity.

As mentioned above, I used three sources for data collection to ensure rigour through "instrumental validity" (Kirk & Miller, 1986, p. 24). Instrumental validity is achieved using different data gathering techniques or using more than one method for obtaining data (Kirk & Miller, 1986, p. 24). My research used a variety of data sources including 12 interviews, one focus group meeting, and countless hours of participant observation over a sustained period of one year. Together, these collection methods

contributed to the validly of my analysis and interpretation of data (Ambert et al., 1995; Kirk & Miller, 1986; Mays & Pope, 1995; McCracken, 1988). Semi-structured interviews, the focus group, and participant observation were inter-linked in a triangulated strategy for rigour in which I observed areas of commonality and contrast across data types and within individual participant responses (Baxter & Eyles, 1997).

Two primary strategies were used to ensure the validity of my study. The first strategy was the use of reflexivity to create transparency about how I conducted the analysis and how I ensured that my interpretation of the findings were not shaped by my social identities, personal beliefs and values, and positionality in relation to the study (Altheide & Johnson, 1994; Creswell, 2014). The second strategy was to use detailed description in the presentation of the informant's account so the construction of themes is obvious from the interviews (Altheide & Johnson, 1994).

While conducting my field research, I kept a detailed set of field notes, one set on paper and one recorded digitally on my phone (Silverman, 1998, p. 111) and practiced reflexivity (discussed in more detail below) throughout the data collection and analysis, which increased not only the reliability of my data but also the validity (Mays & Pope, 1995, p. 110). The use of field notes further aided in ecological validity. Ecological validity refers to the ability to "capture the daily life conditions, opinions, values, attitudes, and knowledge base of those we study as expressed in their natural habitat" (Cicourel, 1982, p. 15). As my research focuses on social interactions, participant observation allowed me to watch and record what happened instead of solely relying on informant's reflective memories of them. As Silverman (1998, p. 105) argues, analyzing only "how people 'see things' ignores the importance of how people 'do things.'"

Reliability

Reliability within qualitative research is enhanced via systematic research procedures that are recorded in detail. Keeping a detailed journal and field notes throughout the research process, contributed to the "synchronic reliability" of my findings (Kirk & Miller, 1986, p. 42). Kirk and Miller (1986, p. 42) define synchronic reliability as the "similarity of observations within the same time period." In order to achieve synchronic reliability, the detailed records of how I collected, analyzed, and interpreted my data needs to be easily understood, followed and otherwise be clear to other researchers. That is not to say that they would have the same results; that would be impossible because social life is dynamic and ever changing. Rather, it means that they could follow the logic of my analysis using my detailed field notes and analytic memos and can clearly understand how I reached the conclusions I did (Kirk & Miller, 1986, p. 42; Silverman, 1998, p. 111). Therefore, I kept a detailed journal throughout the research process about my general research reflections, decision-making, data collection and analysis, and where theory and practice overlap. With access to my detailed methods of data collection and interpretation, other researchers can see how any theoretical concepts or constructs I developed from that data using those methods and that the methods and modes of analysis I used led logically and appropriately to those findings.

The use of computer software to code data enhanced the rigour of my research (Mays & Pope, 1995, p. 110). Computer software and other technologies can improve the reliability of analysis by preventing human error. However, computer software itself is only a tool, it doesn't prevent human error, rather it is a tool that the researcher can use to help avoid human error. As Silverman (1998, p. 112) aptly points out, "rubbish in, rubbish out"

(garbage in, garbage out). Therefore, if care is taken when inputting and analyzing data, the software helps to prevent human error by keeping track of the data analyzed. In addition, using computer software makes data easier and faster to sort, code, classify and retrieve.

Generalizability

In the attempt to "say something of something" (Geertz, 1979, p. 218) my findings are generalizable to theory rather than to a population as in "total" or "statistical" generalizations (Williams, 2000, p.215). My research aim is to examine fitness instructors' personal actions, experiences, and negotiations of emotional labour so that I may make generalizations about emotional labour in other social contexts. This can be done through what Williams (2000, p.215) refers to as "moderatum generalizations" or "generalizations about everyday life," meaning that from interpretive research I am able to connect personal reflections to the broader context of social life. This is possible to do because of "cultural consistency" (Williams, 2000, p. 220). Williams (2000, p. 220) defines "cultural consistency" as the order of social life that people live, the web of shared meaning and experience. By situating findings from qualitative research in the wider social context, moderatum generalizations, which are generalization to theory, can be achieved, stressing the importance that findings be situated within a wider social and cultural context in order to be generalizable (Williams, 2000, p. 220, see also Skeggs, 2004).

Context, in this instance, refers to grounding the data in the "historical, socio-cultural, and political contexts" that frame the research questions under study; as well as the biographical contexts of the informants who participated in the research (Silverman,

1998, p. 110).The informants in my study disclosed aspects of their individual biographies and life experiences within the fitness industry and what emerged were critical factors linked to their social identities that impacted and influenced their experiences of fitness teaching. For instance, one aspect of biographic context (see Chapter Three) that was relevant in my study is gender as the majority of group fitness instructors identify as women (Lloyd, 1996, p. 82). Another is social status given that group fitness is predominately a white, middle-class activity (Andreasson & Johansson, 2016).

Reflexivity

As an insider in this research, I was very aware that because of my close proximity to the data and my insider knowledge, I needed to acknowledge my *a priori* knowledge and distance myself from it so that I do not make assumptions on shared or similar experiences with my informants (Johnson et al., 2006, p. 113). Being aware of this from the onset helped me exercise reflexivity in data collection and analysis. Being reflexive refers to the on-going process through the research collection and analysis phase to ensure the knowledge that is being created can clearly be shown coming from the data itself (Pillow, 2003, p. 178).

Reflexivity is the ability of an individual to see themselves as objects by reading the responses of others to their own behaviours (Rosenberg, 1990, p. 10). Through reflexivity, individuals become self-aware and derive a sense of who they are from the standpoint of others. As a group fitness participant since 1994 and an instructor since 2005, I have "insider positionality" (Chavez, 2008, p. 475) and insider awareness (Douglas, 1970) which means that I have similarities, shared identities, and/or commonalities with

my research participants. Thus, with this insider knowledge of fitness instruction, I was able to seamlessly participate in on-the-job interaction with instructors, watch instructors perform "front-stage" (Goffman, 1959, p. 486) duties while teaching fitness classes, and maintain "back-stage" (Goffman, 1959, p. 488) conversations with other instructors and gym members. However, being an insider meant that I also needed to distance myself from my tacit knowledge (McCraken, 1986). According to Chavez (2008, p. 491), insider researchers need to hone their personal observational skills so that they are able to "differentiate what they *know* from what they *see*" (emphasis is original) and to distance themselves from their tacit knowledge. Practicing reflexivity, making sure to ask questions even when I think I know the answer to them, asking follow-up questions, and allowing for natural pauses in the conversation helped to ensure that I was not making assumptions about what informants did or the meanings they attribute to their social world.

Therefore, my own personal attributes are relevant to the research process (Emerson, 2001; Lofland & Lofland, 1995). I am a white, heterosexual, middle-class woman who has been a gym member for almost 25 years. I am comfortable participating in group fitness classes and I have been employed as a group fitness instructor for over 13 years. The gyms that I instruct at and participate in are largely made up of people who look like me and are in a similar economic class. The instructor informants are all about my age, white, and in a similar economic class meant we shared aspects of culture which helped us communicate and helped to engender trust. The majority of participants in group fitness classes are white women who appear older than me. Among my instructor colleagues, I am a respected instructor. At the same time, having a sense of shared belonging with the

participants in my study does help in cultivating my insider awareness, but also presents challenges in terms of distancing myself from my tacit knowledge.

Practicing reflexivity also includes being aware of power imbalances that may be present in the research process (Pillow, 2003, p. 178). In acknowledging my particular position and access to this line of work, reflexivity related to my social identity brings to the research my positions of privilege, insider awareness and ideological commitments related to this topic (Daly, 2007; Levy, 2015). While there were no class or status differences between me and the fitness instructors that took part in my research, I did become a holder of their personal information, something that gives me power. I addressed this through ethical protocols that ensured that whatever they told me would not be identifiable to them in my dissertation.

Finally, as an insider to this study, I am deeply connected to this community of individuals. The informants I recruited for this study are my colleagues and peers. I am also a group fitness instructor; given my personal interest and attachment to the fitness industry I anticipated having mixed emotions as I conducted my study. However, as Kleinman (1991, p. 184) advises, I recorded my own emotional reactions to the people I studied and instead of silencing my reactions, located them in my analysis and in my field notes. Thus, I recorded my thoughts, observations, and emotional reactions throughout the study in my field journal and any such relevant notes are included in my analysis. I am committed to capturing the experiences of fitness instructors as they negotiate the demands of emotional labour in their employment, my personal connection to the occupation will aid in this endeavour and not hamper it.

Ethical Protocols

In any research, but especially in social science research, there are ethical obligations that need to be fulfilled; participant's "rights, privacy, and welfare" need to be ensured (Berg, 2001, p. 39). My research followed the Tri-Council ethical protocols (TCPS2 2010) and is on file with the University of New Brunswick Research Ethics Board 2017-019. The University of New Brunswick Research Ethics Board approved my proposal in January 2017.

All study informants were over 18 years of age at the time of the research. They speak, read and understand English and were provided with both an explanatory information letter explaining the research and an informed consent form that was signed prior to each interview or focus group meeting (see Appendices C, D, E, and F). To ensure informants were able to make an informed consent about their participation in my research, copies of all relevant information about the research project was provided in writing. They were also given the opportunity to ask questions before the data collection stage commenced. After ensuring that the informants knew what the research participation entailed, each signed a consent form. As part of the consent letter, members of the focus group were asked to keep all information discussed in the focus group meetings confidential; however, it was impossible to guarantee that they adhered to that request. Informants were able to withdraw from the study at any time up until the publication of the final report from this research. No one involved with the project removed themselves.

Participants had access to my email address and telephone number as well as the contact information of my supervisor, Dr. Jacqueline Low, and while not directly involved in the study, Department of Sociology chair, Dr. Lucia Tramonte, and the Research Ethics

Board at the University of New Brunswick. All participants in the study were invited to the public defense of my project and can access the published dissertation via the Department of Sociology at the University of New Brunswick.

Confidentiality is of utmost importance. Informants were given pseudonyms and any personal attributes were excluded from any published work from this study in order to ensure confidentiality. In addition, the interviews and focus group meeting were recorded on a digital voice recorder and after interviews each voice file was transferred onto my password protected laptop. Precautions were taken in regard to keeping transcripts and especially consent forms private; I am the only person who has access to them. No identifiable information is contained in the final report. All transcripts and any other identifiable data were stored digitally on an encrypted USB flash drive, stored in a locked filing cabinet, in a locked office on the University of New Brunswick campus. Field notes and other hard (paper) copies of data were kept secure in a locked filing cabinet in a locked office on the campus of the University of New Brunswick. All data collected will be destroyed once all dissemination activities have been concluded for this research.

In this chapter I discussed the research design, methods of data collection and mode of analysis I used in this research, as well as how I enhanced the validity, reliability, and generalizability of my findings. The primary focus of my research was to explore the emotional lives of group fitness instructors and to better understand the impact their interactions have on their perception of work, relationships, and self. The first of three conceptual categories emergent from my analysis concerned informants' relationship with their bodies and the embodied nature of emotional labour and is presented in the following Chapter (see Chapter Five). Another conceptual category concerns the relationships

instructors have with other instructors and their class participants. These findings on emotional labour and sociability in group fitness instruction are provided in Chapter Six. The third analytic category is the emotional labour inherent in the work that instructors performed. This analysis of emotional labour in fitness instruction is provided in Chapter Seven.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE EMBODIED NATURE OF EMOTIONAL LABOUR

In this chapter I provide the findings from my research concerning the embodied nature of emotional labour within a group fitness context as experienced by group fitness instructors in the Maritime region of Canada. I begin by presenting the concepts that emerged from my analysis and conclude the chapter by discussing them in relation to extant concepts, relevant findings from the literature on group fitness instruction, and relevant aspects of sociocultural, political, biographical, and historical contexts.

Group fitness is physical exercises choreographed to music, led by an instructor, and presented to groups of individuals. The choreography makes use of all the large and small muscle groups and works with the music to create a group fitness class where instructors physically demonstrate the movements while explaining what is happening and why, in such a way that gym class members can follow along and mimic back the exercises, all while staying on the beat and timing of the music. Although the credentials necessary to becoming a group fitness instructor are minimal, it does require musicality, bodily coordination, and kinesthetic awareness, as well as the social expectations demand that one have a fit, agile, and able body (Kagan & Morse, 1988, p. 171; Shilling, 1991). All of which are embodied tasks that involve emotional labour on the part of fitness instructors and so too on the part of the group fitness instructors who participated in my research.

Discussion of the body in relation to group fitness instruction occurred often during the interviews and the focus group meeting. What emerged from my analysis of the embodied nature of emotional labour in these discussions was a conceptual category about

how these instructors have come to experience their bodies while instructing. The highest-level conceptual category is the performing body. It is made up of three categories: the embodied role model, looking the part, and the self-conscious body. Looking the part contains two concepts: the fit body and adorning the body. In turn, the self-conscious body is comprised of three concepts: the fat body, the maternal body, and the aging body (see Figure 1 below).

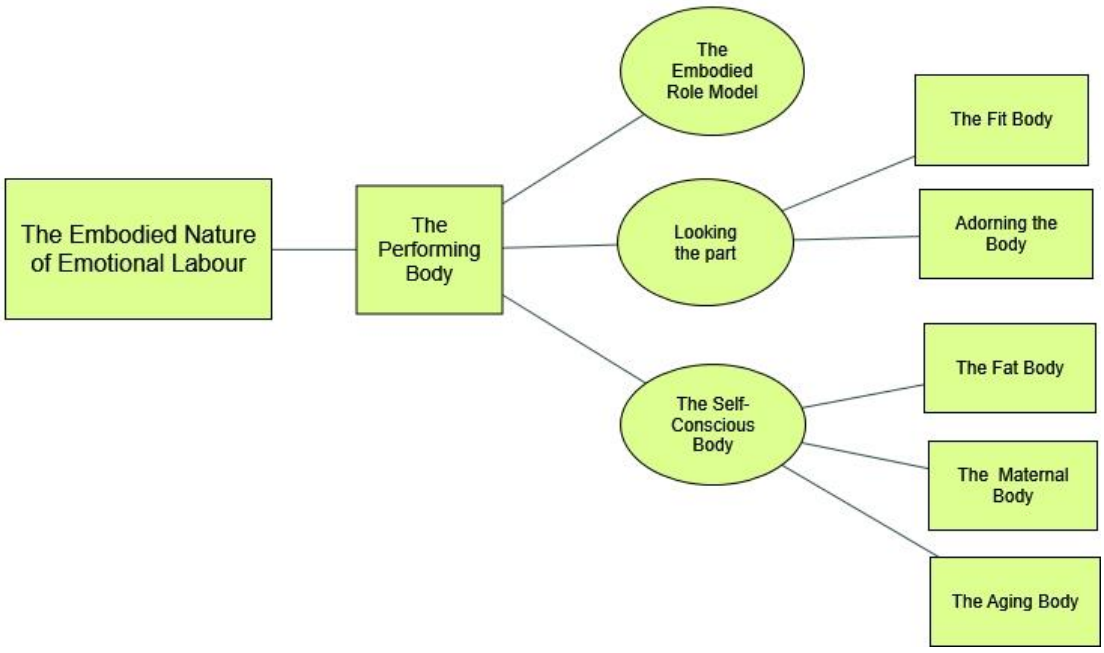

Figure 1. The Embodied Nature of Emotional Labour

The Performing Body

All of the group fitness instructors who participated in this research project taught on an elevated stage in front of their classes, thus enhancing the sense of giving a

performance. For instance, Erin told me that "because I'm on stage, it's a performance." June talked about becoming the person she was trying to portray and compared it to acting and something she was stimulated by. She said, "you become that person, it's almost like acting…. because you're different on stage, you get to tell people what to do, and yeah, I get a high from it for sure." Erin likewise told me "I've always kind of been a bit of a performer, I've always liked the spotlight and I think when I get on stage, I just turn into that performer." Sarah explained how she switches to that performer role once she is on the stage.

> And it's cool I mean; you've got to like presenting and being out there and putting yourself out there. It's fun, I love performing and that's kind of what it feels like, it's a performance. So, you know, you switch your attitude into the performer that you are when you're on stage. (Sarah)

All informants were adamant that the performing body that is needed in order to instruct fitness classes, is one that is fit, toned, and able. However, younger female instructors were reluctant to make reference to their own bodies unless I probed repeatedly about how they used their bodies in their classes. The answers they gave were made up of very broad statements and often involved the use of the universal 'you' rather than the personal 'I' when discussing their bodies at work. For instance, one younger instructor Sarah (age 26) said, "You do think about your body, obviously, but in a technical way. You think about how it moves; if the lines are sharp and clear." In contrast, two older informants did initiate discussions about how important their bodies were to their work. Erin (age 35) clearly described how essential a fit performing body was to do her job saying it is "Very important, super important… especially a few of the programs that I teach, I really couldn't

do them if I wasn't fit." And Dan (age 41) ranked the significance he put on his body numerically:

> It's like seven or eight out of ten. Your body is important. I would say that as long as you're satisfied with your ability to start and finish...as long as you're able to deliver your program to the best of your ability... as long as you're able to execute and members think; 'okay, that instructor is in the top 10 or 20% of the people in the room' in terms of their inshapeness. It's not about how you look, it's about how you deliver...but if you're in the bottom 50 or the bottom 25, you probably shouldn't be teaching. (Dan)

In particular, how the performing body moves is important to these informants. For Kylie, the bodily techniques that are a required aspect of her job and how she translates them through her bodily movements is what was important to her when teaching her classes.

> I think both, yeah, but mainly how it [her body] moves. It is about the technique, right? And in weightlifting class we break down every single move: where your elbows are, where your hands are, what position your fingers are in. And with dance class you do the same thing, but it's just a different way. (Kylie)

Similarly, Erin talked about how important physical awareness is to the performing body and her physical awareness while teaching came with preparation and practice.

> Definitely, I practice so much before I teach so that I'm not thinking about that [what she looks like on stage] so much. Physical awareness is definitely really important, but I try to clean all that up before. But this is where things come in like when you see yourself on video; 'oh that's what I look like.' So, I guess when I'm actually doing it, that stuff [how the body looks] doesn't get thought about as much, but I hope that the practice and time that I've put in shows when I'm teaching. (Erin)

Glen, who is under 30 years of age, initially dismissed the notion that his body was important in his line of work; but he conceded that it was when I asked specifically if he thought about his technique, his form, or about how his body looked when executing the movement patterns while teaching.

> I guess if I think about it [my body] Yeah, yeah, yeah, I do think about it, so just arm lines and things like that, for sure. I try to make sure that I'm demonstrating the correct moves for them [class members] in that sense. (Glen)

Erin and Corey described finding an alter ego or tapping into a part of their personality that they otherwise did not have in the course of their day jobs, as well as coping with emotions like feeling shy.

> I definitely have an alter ego, for sure. I do think that, like teaching, has brought me out of my shell, but I'm much more shy when I'm not teaching. I think when I'm teaching, I like to exude a lot more confidence than if you were to just like pass me in the streets, for sure. And each program I feel like I have a little bit of a different personality too, yoga I can be quite chill, and I think a lot of people are surprised by it, but when I dance there is an insane amount of confidence that I wouldn't think that is in me, but it is. And then when I teach, like step aerobics or cardio class, I get a little bit gritty, and I guess yell at people, it's fun. But I wouldn't do that all the time in real life. (Erin)

Corey equated his performing body with the presentation of a different persona when he's on stage.

> I feel I have to give a different persona of whether it's a little cocky, it's strong, it's kind of commanding versus offstage. I'm not that person. And so, teaching a class is hard for me. (Corey)

He went on to explain that he changes his outward presentation of self that is based on the different social situations he finds himself in.

> I have to be what I think I need to be on stage. Everyone's got a different idea of what their persona is going to be on stage. Right? And a lot of times people meet you at the grocery store or something and they expect you to be that way and you're not. (Corey)

In contrast, Susan talked about what happens when the performance does not go well and how, as an instructor, she missed the opportunity to be an embodied "rock star" for someone and she thought that she missed her chance to really excel in performing her class.

> And I think as aerobics instructors, we've all taught classes where we're not ready, and we didn't take the time the night before for whatever reason, the

> baby was up, like, something happened, you didn't prepare. So, you just sort of pull it out of your ass and then it's [the class] either great, which teaches you a horrible lesson, or it's terrible, which you almost want it to be. But if you're miserable while you're teaching, you can't be that rock star for somebody, because you're miserable, you're just thinking, like, 'what is next? How many songs left? I don't want to be here, this is awful.' (Susan)

Rachael likewise spoke about the pressures inherent in being a performing body and the role conflict that this created for her.

> Like I feel pressured to always be the boxing instructor, but I'm a 40-year-old mother of two. Those two things are very different. They're very, very different. So, I feel pressure as in like if I show too much of myself then it's going to be very uninteresting to members but yet why am I so invested in that? I guess because I want people to come to my class, I want my class full. But I'm just giving you a workout. Why do I even have to think about that? I don't know. It's weird. (Rachael)

The Embodied Role Model

Part of being a performing body is a particular role that many of the instructors who I interviewed understood themselves to be playing; that of being role models for the gym members who took their classes. For example, by demonstrating the movement patterns in the way that she does, Kylie, is able to "show strong technique and show like clean movement, … very visual cues, … try to go big with that stuff, everything's big, sharp, clean, finished, … just not sloppy" and in this way is able to be the "role model right?" for the people who take her class.

An important part of being an effective role model for these instructors was using their bodies to encourage and motivate participants in their classes. For instance, Diana said, "it's a job and we are there to motivate people to live a healthy life" and Glen told me that modelling bodily behaviour was key to being an embodied role model. He said that one of his personal mentors had told him he had to work harder so his members would

work hard “because somebody somewhere along the line mentioned if you’re doing it 100% participants [class members] are going to be doing it at 75%. So, the better I can be at showing it then the better they [class members] will be.” In much the same way, Dan explained how he had to model extreme effort, to motivate his class members to give just a fraction of what he is giving.

> Because when we’re giving 150%, they’re giving 70. If we don’t look the absolute best then they’re going to be less than that. So, we have to be role models for them to do their best and push them. (Dan)

Diana credits her ability to be fit and healthy, and thus her ability to motivate the gym members who take her classes, to her upbringing and the roles her parents modeled for her.

> Not that somebody who is a little bit heavier isn’t healthy, it’s just you want them to, especially in group fitness, you want them [the class members] to know that it works. We are, we’re motivators. Like you want them to get to their goal. So, we have to be healthy and like sort of emulate that too and radiate that. I’m just lucky I grew up with two active parents and that’s all, like I know and I feel better when I’m healthy and in shape. (Diana)

June told me that her class members mimic her movements and she disclosed that because of this, and because she no longer felt capable in using the weight bar in her lunges, she felt that she is somehow letting them down. June suffers from a knee injury and using weights on her bar during lunges is extremely difficult for her; so, she does not put any weight on her bar. However, she noticed that her members follow her lead and also did not put weight on the bar and therefore June felt she was not being an effective role model by not putting on big weights. In this way, she feels responsible for the actions of her members which plays on her emotions.

> I don’t use any weight for lunges, sometimes I’ll hold the plate and hold them down for lunges but I don’t use the bar at all which I feel...I feel like if I don’t there’s people in the class that are going to put it down just because I’m not using it. If I picked it up I know more members would use the bar, which makes

> me feel bad but I'm finding my knees won't handle it anymore, especially after the squat track. I mean you're the one, you're the one who's leading; so, I kind of feel bad about the lunges. Maybe I should just pick up a lighter bar or something, I don't know. I feel like more people would use a bar for lunges if I did. (June)

One instructor, Rachael, who is also a mother, saw herself as a different kind of role model to her members. Rather than being a physical representation of what her class members were trying to achieve, she instead wanted to give them permission to be in the fitness studio in the first place.

> To be honest with you, when you invest in somebody it's a powerful thing because some of them [class members] are not even invested in themselves. And when you teach them that it's okay … It's okay to be a mom and it's okay to leave your kids at home. It's okay to come to the gym. It's okay. It's okay to lift weights for an hour. But there's a lot of women out there who can't take that, who feel guilty for leaving their family for an hour. An hour! So, it's a big responsibility like to show people that it's ok to take time for themselves. (Rachael)

In turn, June saw herself as a role model for the people in her class because of her age as long as she maintained what she thought was an appropriate body weight.

> As an older, one of the older instructors; and a lot of the participants are older in my classes, and I feel that it's kind of important for them to see somebody that's older teaching as well. 'Hey if she can do it, I can do it' kind of thing, but I don't want to be 50 pounds overweight on stage trying to do it as an older person either. (June, age 56)

The instructors I spoke with felt that they had to always be the best, strongest, fittest person in the class, role modeling perfect technique with excellent form each and every time. The pressure they felt encouraged them to push themselves more, even as they continued to get fitter. According to Kylie, "the fitter you get, the harder you are on your own body." And getting 'fitter' is a significant part of looking the part of the performing body in group fitness instruction.

Looking the Part

Looking the part was an important means of coping with and managing the self-conscious body for several instructors. Corey put it this way, "I think you should look the part if you're going to teach" and Kylie said that the number of people who watch her every week made her feel it is her responsibility to "look the part."

> We're in front of a hundred people a week and they look to us for their inspiration or whatever it is. People might be looking for different things but for me if you want to be in a high cardio class, your cardio's got to be good and you got to be able to look the part. (Kylie)

The conceptual category of looking the part includes the concepts of the fit body and adorning the body.

The Fit Body

Group fitness instruction is an embodied practice that requires specialized training to acquire the bodily skills and abilities necessary to conduct a fitness class. Although the barriers to entry are low in that almost anyone who is interested in teaching aerobics can find a training course to take, one must still present the aptitude to perform the job. The core activity in group fitness is performing exercises to music; therefore, besides having an able body, the companies they work for require that they also possess a certain type of musicality in order to not only hear the beats and phrases of music but also to be able perform choreographed aerobic exercises to fit the music. Thus, for these informants, the most significant thing in terms of looking the part of group fitness instructor is that they have what they see as a 'fit' body. Specifically for Corey, "looking the part" of an instructor

means looking fit and that looking fit for Corey means not being what he sees as too fat or too skinny.

> I believe you should look fit, okay? I've always said that. I think you should look the part. There's a lot of us who don't, they don't look the part and they don't act the part, right, so it bothers me when people don't [look the part]. Right now I think I look the part, better than some of the others. I don't think I have a great body. I'm mediocre looking but I don't look fat, but I also don't look crazy skinny either, I feel that I look strong enough to do what I'm supposed to do and I think that's just a good thing, that's a plus. Right? (Corey)

Likewise, for Kylie, the perfect instructor body is one that is "fit." She disclosed that she had always been athletic and had a slim build growing up, but then moved in with her in-laws and began eating more and moving less which resulted in weight gain for her. At the time of the interview, she was determined to lose weight and return to a slimmer body and discussed the hard work this entailed.

> It [losing weight] takes so much time, so you can kind of empathize with everybody. It's hard and that's why I feel like I focus on the technique part more than the body. I work hard to look the way I look. I think in my own head I look fit enough to teach a fitness class. (Kylie)

She also used the term "fit-ish" to mean possessing a body that looks like it is physically active but does not need to be chiseled or toned.

Adorning the Body

The instructors I spoke with told me that they made efforts to look the part of a group fitness instructor through how they adorned their body. They did so through strategic choices about clothing they wear while they teach group fitness classes and how they did their hair and makeup styling. Thus, looking the part involved the clothing the instructors wore while performing their jobs. All instructors I interviewed talked openly about what they wore, how they chose what they wore and the role clothes played in their ability to

perform their jobs. Rachael said that she devotes a lot of time and attention to the way she dresses and avoids what she calls "being sloppy." This involves her emotions because being "put together" is something she said makes her a better instructor because of the way it makes her feel.

> If you look sloppy. Like I'll notice. Like I want to look put together, I want to look ready. Like that's the thing, performance ready. Yeah. I always think about it like I'm buying it [workout clothes] for myself, but it trickles onto everyone else. Yes, it [the clothes] sets me apart from people. Yes, people will comment on it [the clothes]. Do I think it [having nice workout clothes] makes me a better instructor? I would say yes, it does because of how it makes me feel. (Rachael)

In particular, these informants saw clothing as a way of making sure that others identified them as an instructor and not just an ordinary gym member. During one observation I did at one of the field sites, an instructor chatted to her instructor colleague about what they would both wear to coordinate their look the next evening for a class. Instructors are expected to role model a fit, tidy, attractive, and presentable image to their classes, and that presentation takes time, effort, and money. However, in order to establish their professionalism and expertise; it is also a required component of the job. For example, Rachael told me that she wanted everyone to know that she was the instructor when she walked into the studio, saying "clothes tell people who you are and what you're doing" and that this involves special not generic exercise clothing.

> And yeah, it identifies me as the head of the class for sure. And there's some things we [fitness instructors] wear that are risky or different so it's not like what normal people wear to the gym. So, some of its [exercise clothing] got lots of straps and some of its [exercise clothing] got lots of colours and you get lots of questions… So, it is different. Like if I were to go to Wal-Mart and buy just a generic outfit, I would feel less, even though I'm not, I would feel less professional. I would feel less, I feel so good when I have the right, the proper stuff on. And I feel really out of sorts if I don't. (Rachael)

She also told me that she always wants to look like an instructor even when she is not teaching. This means wearing her professional exercise clothing, what she called "her stuff."

> When I go to the gym now as a regular participant, I'll still go to the gym and look the part of the gym. Even though I'm not teaching, I still want to look better than everybody. I still want to have my stuff on. Yeah. I don't know what it is, but when I go to the gym I am noticed for the clothes. So, I can't, like to me there's no regular day at the gym anymore. I'm always on and people are always watching what I'm doing. (Rachael)

The fitness company these informants work for encourages specific forms of dress. Each pre-choreographed exercise program offered at this specific fitness club was given a program colour to help in its advertising, branding, and exclusivity of the exercise class. Instructors were encouraged to wear the appropriate program colour while teaching particular classes. For example, one of the male instructors that took part in the interviews told me "I think you [we] should wear the clothing and I kind of think that we should look a certain way" (Corey). Similarly, Rachael was quite clear that although what to wear was not explicitly outlined in her job description, it is something the company focuses on their branded clothing in instructor evaluations. In her words,

> Yeah. But they teach you that [how to dress for the job]. So, they teach you that. . . it's one of the questions on our evaluation form, 'did they dress in the essence of their program?' So, it is part. Like [the gym name] will tell you [that] you don't have to wear anything specific. It is not a requirement. You have to wear workout clothes obviously, but they're not going to force me to spend my money on that but it's part of our culture. Like it is ingrained in our culture. So, you do. You know you are supposed to even if it is not explicitly told to you. (Rachael)

The instructors I spoke with also said that how they dressed was influenced by how they thought others saw them and their notions of what made for professional instructor attire. Thus, Dan and Rachael saw their clothing as a type of uniform. In Rachael's words,

> It's like a uniform kind of. You know, like if you're a doctor you wear a white coat. If you're a mailman, you wear a uniform. Like it just identifies you as what you do. So, I don't think it's any different than that. (Rachael)

And Dan explained the choices he made in his clothing were a way of presenting himself as a professional.

> I think it does give you that mindset of 'I'm an instructor' when I'm wearing it, like you feel more professional at work when you're wearing a suit and tie, right? (Dan)

For instance, Erin talked about the need to wear "gym clothes" to feel confident in her performance and that she also used these clothes to emphasize the program she is teaching.

> Well, I definitely have different outfits for every program. I have a slight obsession with gym clothes, that's all I wear. It just depends on the program I guess, and I want something that's going to make me feel confident and in the essence of the program. (Erin)

Corey had similar sentiments about dressing in the "essence of the program" telling me that looking the part varies depending on the type of program being taught.

> I think if I'm in a cycling class I should look like a cyclist. I think you should look the part if you're going to teach it and you know, yeah, the trend of just wearing whatever the hell you want is not right. I'm thinking, that's not cycling attire. You should look like a cyclist. To me, look the part and act the part. Right? (Corey)

Moreover, Corey viewed his purchase of cycling shoes as necessary for the functional execution of his work. Thus, the clothing choices he makes are not just about his comfort in instructing but also part of the physical capital (Bourdieu, 1984; Shilling 1991) he believes essential to performing his job.

> So I've got every version of the cycling gear from when I started... I've got a whole slew of shirts and regular cycling shorts and I prefer to wear that. That's it. Keep breaking shoes but I got a $400.00 pair of shoes now and maybe I won't break them. (Corey)

In contrast, Dan, told me that clothing choices were not a priority for him, although he did concede there was an element of professional presentation required.

> I don't really fixate on making sure I have the latest and greatest [branded athletic] clothing or new shoes or anything like that... I'm more about the actual execution of the program than I am about what I look like when I'm up there, but I do understand there's a certain level of presentation and perception that's important to fill that role. (Dan)

Although Dan claimed during his interview that he did not, in his words, "fixate" on his clothing choices, it was clear that he was aware of and valued branded clothing. For instance, during participant observation I noted 33 out of 52 times when Dan was wearing branded clothing or his program colours while instructing his class.

Instructors also discussed how their clothing enhanced their ability to perform their jobs well and enabled class participants to see their bodily movements. Linda put it this way "they're form fitting because you want to be able to see my body. You've got to be able to see how I move." In contrast, Corey talked about the function or practically of his clothes. He described wearing padded bike shorts to protect himself from the bike seat and wearing a shirt with pockets, so he does not need to wear a cumbersome mic belt while he instructs.

> I still wear the spandex shorts and they're padded, they're awesome. And it's a tight shirt, I'll give it that but it's a cycling shirt. It's got a place to put stuff. There's pockets, so I don't need to wear my mic belt or anything. (Corey)

Similarly, Erin said she needed clothes that were not a hindrance to her in the execution of her work. In her words, "For yoga, I like my leggings and something tight so that when I'm moving and up and down, I'm not having something falling up showing my belly or falling in my face." She went on to talk about the function of her clothes and the possible distraction they might bring if she is not wearing the proper gear.

> If I'm going to be pulling at my clothes all the time, you don't have time to think about that when you're moving fast or slow. You don't want to be, like in yoga, you don't want to be pulling your shirt down all the time or pulling your pants up, I don't want them seeing my bum in short shorts. So yeah, yeah I definitely think function for sure. (Erin)

Rachael explained how she is more concerned about how she dresses when instructing compared to how she presents herself in her other paid work because when she is instructing, she is being seen by others.

> Getting dressed for me is the most exciting part and in my real life I don't care what I wear. So that's the weirdest part. I'll go to my regular job, and I will look like complete crap because like I'm not invested in looking good at my regular job. Like I work at a desk. Nobody sees me. I don't give a crap. (Rachael)

In particular, she made reference to having mirrors in the studio which forced her to give careful attention to what she wore.

> At one of the gyms, you don't have a choice because there is a mirror right behind you. You think, 'what's back there? Are you wearing a thong? Are you wearing full panties?' Like if you're wearing leggings are you going to put a thong on? Yes, you should because you'll see little lines otherwise. (Rachael)

Both June and Sarah were concerned with dressing modestly in a manner that did not show their cleavage or leave too much skin exposed while delivering their classes. Thus, Sarah purposely and strategically considers her attire for each type of class she teaches.

> It's something I think about every day when I go out there; what am I going to wear? What's it showing? In cycling class, you lean forward a lot, so are things falling out? Is my shirt riding up? Can you see my butt crack? In weightlifting classes, it would be the same thing, because with squats no one is standing behind you, but you're still, 'are my pants up too high, are they riding down too low? Is my shirt too low?' (Sarah)

Likewise, June said "I've thought about sometimes doing push-ups and you're facing them and how low is the shirt cut, that kind of thing, but that's all." These instructors maintained

they dressed for comfort in the gym and for the perceived comfort of the gym members who watched them.

> Okay. I have thought about that [what gym clothes to wear]. I do and maybe that's just because I'm a little self-conscious about that. I wouldn't wear my short, spandex shorts that I run in to teach yoga. I just want them [gym members] to be comfortable with me. They're looking at you so you want them to be as comfortable as they can be. I do usually just sort of wear a tank top and tights, but I wouldn't ever wear something like totally see through or meshy because yeah, again, I do want them to be comfortable with their practice in my class. (Diana)

Sarah also talked about the challenge of revealing clothing and about not wanting them to be a distraction during class which would interfere with looking the part.

> It is a problem, so I mean, yeah, in dance class I shake it and you can do that. In cycling class, I don't want people to be seeing cleavage the entire time, and if you're not in control, or if you're going really fast, no matter how controlled you are, things move, and I find myself adjusting how my clothes look, so that they're [class members] not focused on what's happening down my shirt. (Sarah)

In contrast, Linda said that she tends to dress more conservatively but that it was, for her, a personal preference.

> I cover up a lot. I wear t-shirts. Nobody else wears t-shirts. I've noticed that. Like I wear t-shirts and sometimes I wear a long sleeve. And I tend to be, I think I'm fairly conservative. I wear a lot of black tights. I do wear the coloured ones for the heck of it, you know, but …almost always a t-shirt. (Linda)

Finally, some informants made a point of wearing a variety of outfits for the benefit of those who take their classes. For instance, Erin told me that she tries "not to wear the same thing to every class so they [class members] don't get bored looking at me." Likewise, Rachael said,

> I don't know what it is, but when I go to the gym I am noticed for my clothes. Like I have become so matchy match and so [brand] crazy that it's a joke. Like people [class members] will joke about it now. It's become for me because people [class members] get to know me and then they realize they don't see me

> in the same stuff very often. So, people [class members] will talk about my clothes. (Rachael)

In contrast, Diana told me that she never noticed what her instructors wore when she participated in classes. She said, "you know, it's funny because I never thought like oh, that instructor wore that same shirt last week, but sometimes I wonder if members wonder that about me." Diana and Corey said that he "kind of wears the same stuff all the time." The time and thought that goes into the clothing choices of group fitness instructors in order to look the part of an instructor is further complimented by the hair and makeup styling that is part of the attire that they use to look the part.

In discussing looking the part, the fitness instructors I spoke with told me that how they style their hair and do their makeup is also integral to looking the part. For instance, one instructor, Erin, talked about how she uses make-up as part of her attire which helps her look the part.

> So, if I look good, I feel good, and if I feel good I feel like I work harder and I feel more confident, totally. It sounds silly to, like, put makeup on and do my hair and go sweat, but I'll definitely put on my regular makeup, yeah, because I want to feel good when I walk through the doors and turn the music on, I want that confidence. (Erin)

She also brought up the use of her hair as an important way of looking the part when she delivered her class. She described how she uses different hair styling techniques to enhance the visual display of her instruction and how her hair style varies depending on what type of fitness class she is teaching, some of which reflects racialized associations in the fashion. For instance, below Erin describes how they are trained to dress for "a kind of street look" that reflects the racist associations of the fashion industry (Ahmed, 2022).

> When I dance, I like to have my hair down, because hairography[4] is a big part of dancing. Hair whips and flips and it's part of the drama. But if I'm having a really bad hair day, like I don't always have the time to put into it so I'll throw on a hat and just put in a couple of pig tails or something. But again, in the essence of the program, like looking the part, so dancing is kind of a street look, and walking in with a bun for a hip-hop dance class, to me does not say hip-hop dancer. But like for step class, I would wear a bun or, same with yoga, just something more sleek and tied back, out of my face. For high cardio classes I really like my ponytail, because it's like bouncy and feels sporty and, but no, I don't like wearing my bun for high cardio class, or I'll wear like a French braid or something, something pulled out of my face, but I still have, it still has to look athletic. I want something that looks athletic. (Erin)

However, choosing the right hairstyle can be problematic. For instance, instructors who teach pre-choreographed material are sent their material in the form of DVDs performed by master trainers. These master trainers have outfits that match one another (and are available for purchase for non-master trainers) and have their hair and makeup done by a professional team of makeup artists and hairstylists. The finished product on the DVD is complete with lighting and different camera angles to really give the feeling of a large-scale rock concert performance. In my field notes (October 23, 2017, 4:45pm), I recorded one particular instance when a step aerobics instructor had styled her hair in exactly the same way as the master trainers in the instructional DVD video with full make-up, something that appears out of place in the everyday world of the gym where instructors and gym members don't wear full movie production make-up and hair.

Further, navigating the terrain of acceptable hair styles for instructors is problematic and, in some cases, involves racist associations. For instance, Rachael told me about a time when she actively arranged her hair in an effort to, in her words, "appear mean and tough."

[4] Hairography refers to the excessive use of hair flipping and hair styling techniques that make up for a lack of dancing ability and rhythm. Hairography adds to the performance and display of the dance.

She did so by styling her hair in cornrows in a fashion similar to that worn by former mixed martial artist and current WWE wrestler Ronda Rousey. The association between this hair style and toughness is reflective of the racist trope of the angry black woman that has a long colonial history and is thus deeply reflective of racialized thinking (Hamilton, 2016).

> Hair is just as much a part of my overall outfit as my clothes are. I remember for my audition for kickboxing, I went to the salon and got them to put my hair in corn rows. I wanted to look mean and tough plus whenever I leave the salon I always feel so confident. And I just wanted that confidence to shine through in my audition because I was anything but confident. But I just wanted it so bad, I would do anything. Even now, I will do my hair like the presenters in the videos during release week. Just to really get into the overall feeling of the class.

The Self-Conscious Body

In contrast to the neutral tone used by informants when they talked generally about their bodies, when they spoke about the technical skill they use in performing their work, almost all the fitness instructors experienced some form of the self-conscious body. The self-conscious body in this context is one that faces insecurities, increased scrutiny, and surveillance, as well as unwarranted and unwelcome comments from gym members. Instructors told me that the members of their classes watched them and their bodies constantly. According to Sarah "people are watching us, and I know they are, because people have said stuff to me about my body." It was not surprising then, that presenting movements to music on a stage and being in front of an audience did cause some feelings of insecurities for most instructors. For example, Erin said,

> I guess in reality, I'm a little bit more insecure than what I put off and I've heard that people think I have my shit together and I do not and I don't feel like I do at all, but I guess it's cool that people feel that way. (Erin)

Similarly, Rachael was very aware of how intently participants watched her body. She described it in embodied terms:

> I go so far as 'are my nipples in line?' I will touch them and make sure that they are in a straight line because it's stuff people will look at. People are staring at you for a full hour. They will look you up and down. They will see every nook, cranny, roll, uneven nipple, shit in your teeth. (Rachael)

She went on to talk about the difficulty of always being watched by members, that she could never be anonymous while at the gym and that being watched constrained her in terms of what she could wear at the gym.

> So yeah, there's no anonymity. I'm always Rachael, fitness instructor. I'm always on and people are always watching what I'm doing and what I am saying and who I am talking too… so, for example, I feel like I can't wear the pants that you can see my ass through because people will say 'I saw Rachael's ass. She didn't wear proper pants.' It's like I am no longer a normal person. (Rachael)

June was concerned about her physical form while executing the movements that make up the programs she teaches because of bodily differences she has.

> I'm always scared because one knee doesn't come out as far, and I'm always scared that it's not, that somebody's gonna pick up on it and my form's not gonna be perfect because I want my form perfect. (June)

Corey also experienced feelings of self-consciousness regarding the audience gaze and disclosed his concern about making a mistake in front of members. In his words,

> It's me, right? All the people watching you, looking at you, I'm always worried that I'm going to screw up. I mean I get up at 4:30 in the morning every morning to look at my choreography again even though I've done it two days in a row to make sure I'm going to get it right. Like I'll sit at work before the Monday night class, watch some videos because I'm just fearful that I'm going to screw it up real bad, freeze, or something and look like an idiot, so I'm always nervous about that. (Corey)

I asked the instructors if they ever watched themselves while teaching their classes. Bevan, a male fitness instructor told me about the time he took and the methods he used in seeing

his own body while instructing. Using the mirrors in the room to monitor his movements, Bevan stressed that he uses them to really see himself move and not out of vanity, but out of his desire for perfection in movement. In his words:

> Constantly. You want to make sure it's, like, sharp, it's, like, on point. And I find it very hard teaching at Ultimate Fitness 'cause you don't see yourself unless you're obviously looking directly this way [motions with arms to the side to indicate a 90 degree turn]. BeFit's a little bit easier, 'cause there's a lot more mirrors, and I really like it when I'm on the floor, 'cause you can see, like, three sides of you that have a mirror, which is awesome. 'Cause when I taking the class, when I'm not teaching, but when I'm taking it, I don't stop looking at myself the entire time. Not because I'm full of myself; it's because 'am I doing it right?' Because I never get to actually see. And like even when I was a member before teaching, I would always look at myself. (Bevan)

Corey was candid in telling me that wearing some gym clothes that he felt were too tight made him feel self-conscious.

> The core class has gone to some branded tank tops and the other stuff was very tight and really led to my self-consciousness stuff. There was really tight, tight short shorts and stuff and I was like [waving his hands in front of his body from left to right, in a no, no, no fashion to physically indicate that he did not like or approve of the short shorts clothing]. . . But anyway. Got through that. (Corey)

He told me that his feelings of being self-conscious means he doesn't like to see himself perform saying "I've seen what I look like on stage and I hate it but I mean, but I have a push class, right, so I'm just sweaty as hell and red faced and so, that's just what it is."

These informants used a variety of means of managing their self-conscious bodies. For example, Susan discussed how teaching with another instructor makes her feel more self-conscious in contrast to when she teaches a class with lots of equipment that she can "hide" behind.

> And sometimes when I team-teach with someone who might be better at certain moves than me, I tend to notice it, but when I'm here by myself, I don't think about it for one second, so it's weird. I think it has a lot to do with which class I'm teaching too. Like, if there's equipment to hide behind, like if there's a

> bench even though it's just a bench, I am not the only thing on the stage. So, I can point to the bench, I can talk about the bench, I can say, 'turn your bench.' Like I'll say bench a hundred times, because it's there with me. Or in weightlifting class, it's the ultimate distraction; I feel like no one even looks at me in weightlifting class, because there's so much going on. But in a high cardio class, that's my most vulnerable, because it's just you and your body and what it can do. (Susan)

In addition, Susan spoke about avoiding participating in or instructing classes that she does not consider herself to be "good at" so that she always looks competent at her job. She explained that her reason for avoiding such classes was because that meant gym members wouldn't see her and think she looked "stupid."

> I will only attend classes that I'm good at, because of that reason you couldn't pay me money to sit on a bike, you couldn't pay me money to do the fighting, the kick boxing, like no way, because I think I look stupid. And so, I don't want people to know that I might look stupid at something. (Susan)

Corey, one of the male instructors I interviewed told me that he manages his self-conscious body by doing his work in what some gym members called the "Man Corner." The "Man Corner" is a section of the studio floor at Ultimate Fitness where 2 to 4 male class members normally set up their benches and equipment for class. It is not a space reserved for men, but rather a spot on the studio floor where male gym members tend to gravitate towards. Male class members are rare in most group fitness classes and thus those men who do participate tend to stand out.

> Oh, absolutely. I still feel really self-conscious on stage. I don't like it when I can see myself in the mirror, right, like Man Corner was kind of like to get behind people so you didn't have to see myself perform and stuff like that. And I want to just work with that now with core class because form is key, form is critical, and I want to make sure I'm doing it right but, man I hate mirrors behind me, I hate when I've got to turn to the side and see myself. Everyone's a little self-conscious. (Corey)

In discussing the self-conscious body with the group fitness instructors who took part in my research, it was clear that there were specific bodies that made these informants particularly anxious. These included the fat body, the maternal body, and the aging body.

The Fat Body

A body that made instructors self-conscious was the fat body, reflecting the significant fatphobic nature of the group fitness space that is evident in how these instructors talked about their bodies and the bodies of others in this space (Sykes & McPhail 2008). When I asked informants about their bodies in relation to their work, the instructors told me that looking the part generally meant not looking fat, and instead presenting a fit and toned body (White, Young, & Gillet 1995). For example, Corey was adamant that instructors should look a certain way and had a critical view of those female instructors he felt did not fit the ideal he deemed important, making a contrast between "chunky" muscular bodies and those that have excess body fat or are "jiggly."

> Now there's some strong women out there who are chunky like Sarah; she's a friggin' powerhouse. She is a strong woman and I think she's a good role model but there's others that aren't, right, and I think they're kind of letting down the entire team a little bit. And like I said earlier, I think some of them, don't look the part, it's just embarrassing. They should look the part, you can be a different shape and still be strong. But you shouldn't be jiggly all over the place. (Corey)

He was particularly critical of female colleagues whose body size did not fit the workout clothing he saw as essential to an instructor's ability to look the part.

> I think you should wear the clothing and some of them are not wearing the clothing because they couldn't fit in those clothes and they talk about eating cheeseburgers and burgers and going off to Burger King and all that shit, and although some of the members might find it funny, I kind of think that we should look a certain way. (Corey)

Kylie also equated being an effective instructor with looking healthy which means not being, in her words, “ginormous.”

> I’ve gone travelling. I’ve gone to classes in other provinces and the instructors are like ginormous and I’m like, ‘how in God’s name are you supposed to motivate me if you’re doing this three times a week and that’s what you look like?’ I get that perception. It’s like, ‘what are you eating or drinking?’ most people have a goal and if you’re not healthy looking, I think that would deter me from going to your classes. (Kylie)

June also expressed how she felt this same pressure to display a certain body size as an instructor and did not always think she was in the proper physical state to be an instructor. She also told me she was very concerned about having what she thought of as a fat body when trying to do her job saying “I worry about a few extra pounds, I always do. I’ll worry about extra pounds ‘til the day I die, it’s just the way I am and most people are.” Diana also talked about the importance of how her body is seen and expectations that an instructor should not have a large body type.

> You want them [instructors] to be real, but at the same time you don’t want somebody teaching, somebody that’s 280 pounds. You know, if they’re not taking care of themselves how am I, like what kind of results is this class going to give. So technically there is a piece of that visualization that is at play a little bit. For me there was anyways, I guess. (Diana)

Kylie pointed out that achieving the fit instructor body was, for her, still a work in progress and a goal not yet attained. Yet, she also told me that being a good instructor went beyond just fitness of the body to include displaying a positive attitude about working toward this goal.

> I think it’s [having a fit and toned body] very important. I’m all about healthy and happy but you’ve got to have goals right? And I’m not saying that I have a great body. I’m saying that it’s apparent that I’m physically active. I don’t have chiselled abs or toned arms or anything, but I think that slowly I’m going to get there. We’re all going to get there but I think it’s important to have somebody [an instructor] who’s upbeat and fit-ish. (Kylie)

Similarly, Diana, said that "looking the part," even if not being "perfect," can still be inspiring to members and it is the changing body that provides this motivation. For Diana, the goal of the change in the body has to be towards a fitter version of themselves.

> I think it is, and how you move and how you, you have to look a certain way, because people are watching you, but I think also, if you aren't the perfect person, people get motivation from that. So hopefully your body changes so they [class members] continue to get motivation. (Diana)

In addition to their efforts to look the part of a group fitness instructor through adorning their bodies and presenting a fit body, a bodily change and bodily status that complicated looking the part for the women group fitness instructors I spoke with is pregnancy and being a mother.

The Maternal Body

The pregnant body and mothering bodies were topics of the self-conscious body initiated by some of the female instructors in relation to what it means to look the part of an instructor. One of the informants I interviewed was pregnant with her third child and five others were mothers. For instance, Susan, who was pregnant at the time of the interview spoke candidly about the impact her pregnant body had on not only her physicality but also the language she used to instruct her classes.

> So right now, I'm very pregnant but when I was just like mildly to mediumly pregnant, I was very aware that my body did not look like everybody else's body. And while I tried to portray that it didn't, like, it wasn't holding me back and I was still being very athletic and I was still moving. And members would come up and say, like, 'it's so great to have you moving' and blah-blah-blah; it didn't feel right, because I wasn't at my athletic peak. (Susan)

Susan was eager to demonstrate that she was still capable of performing her job, even though in her pregnant body she did not feel like her true athletic self.

> This is my third baby, and with all my other children, I was put out on sick leave a lot earlier than I was this time. So, I never got to experience like, that once you're down on the floor and when you can't really get back up in a way that is graceful, or athletic, like, it's still okay. It's still okay to be there and it's still okay for that to be considered working your hardest. (Susan)

Susan told me that throughout this pregnancy, she was able to motivate participants who may not be as fit or as athletic or could move like her. This was evident in the encouragement and coaching she used during her class.

> This pregnancy I used a lot of like, 'stop talking about what your body can't do and start celebrating what it can do!' and 'everyone can do something!'; 'we're all here for some reason!' (Susan)

Likewise, Sarah recalled teaching fitness until she gave birth and felt that was motivating for her members.

> And even while I was pregnant and I was lucky, so lucky; I taught up until the day before I had my baby. Like I went into labour less than twelve hours after I taught my last [cycling] class, and I think that motivates people, because they can see you doing it and they can see you actually working. (Sarah)

However, Sarah also experienced discomfort about being watched while she progressed through her pregnancy. Her tone while recalling this memory was one of unease, knowing that people were staring at her expanding abdomen. According to my interview notes, she laughed it off but with that awkward sense that it was uncomfortable for her to have people comment on her body in a judgmental fashion which, she felt, had no bearing on her ability to perform her job. In her words,

> And I think it's maybe just because I was pregnant, because people said 'oh, well, I was wondering, because I saw your belly getting bigger.' I'm like, well, good to know that's exactly what you're watching. (Sarah)

Associated with the pregnant body, is the mothering body. Of the eight female instructors I interviewed, six were mothers. Although I did not ask specifically about the impact of motherhood on their bodies, three instructors brought up aspects of how motherhood affected their bodies while teaching. Specifically, Sarah talked about dancing and teaching next to Erin, a much younger, childless instructor.

> I try not to think about it too much, especially right now struggling [with excess weight] after two babies, and dancing next to sexpot Erin. You just have to go with it, you know. My face is turning red, because I'm super self-conscious and you know, hard on myself about everything, how I look, how I dress. And I remember one time, ugh, I got so into a dance class once that my shirt got pulled up and it was, you know, a few months after I'd had a baby, so there was a lot of movement happening there, and you know people were watching it. (Sarah)

The physical changes that happen to post-partum bodies and the shifting of family priorities that often accompany motherhood came up with two fitness instructors. For instance, Susan, an instructor who was also a mother of three, said that the pressures of being a mother meant she had no time to care about what she wore to teach. In her words, "and then my clothes, I honestly am just picking whatever is clean at this point in my life. The fit, style is irrelevant." Another instructor, Diana, also talked about just embracing her postpartum body after having had her two children.

> I was a little self-conscious after my two babies, but it's just like … I don't know whether you get sort of the mom paunch or some of those scars and stuff. You just have to embrace it. And they can feel that. So, if like you're self-conscious about yourself or the way you look like they will be too. So, I just try not to worry about that [how her postpartum body looks] too much. (Diana)

Finally, June talked about feeling that she had not kept up with changes in the programs she teaches while she was on maternity leave, contributing to feelings of self-doubt, feelings that she was later able to overcome. In her words:

> When the timing of the burpees changed, I was out on mat leave and that gave me all the anxiety in the world, and I felt like I was starting again and that I was just like so terrible and not relevant, … I just had to remember that I had things to offer that [other instructors] didn't have…. And it's hard in those moments of vulnerability, where you think 'oh my gosh, like everyone can do this, and I can't get the timing on this burpee.' But I can't put my hands out in front of me and make them touch the floor at the same time, I can't. But then you can, because you figure it out and then away you go. (June)

The Aging Body

The aging body was also part of the self-conscious body that was discussed by the fitness instructors who participated in this research. In particular they expressed concerns about aging out of the job. They talked about their aging bodies and speculated about what their job performance might look like as they aged. For example, Sarah, who is 48, said,

> When I feel like the class really kicked my ass, it makes me wonder how many more years can I do it, do you know what I mean? Because I don't want to be the one on the stage either, that's like 'oh my God, oh my God, I can't do this anymore.' I don't want to be the one that doesn't look like she should be on stage. (Sarah)

Similarly, Corey, who is 47, discussed getting older and his realization that he is no longer the target audience for his classes.

> I'm getting older and you've seen the videos and the [trend in fitness] programming is going towards young fit people, right, and I'm not looking that part anymore. I'm just going to be looking like the old man who can pedal fast and is strong and maybe some people like that and maybe some people don't. (Corey)

Diana, who is 37, also struggled with thinking members were judging her, her body, and her abilities but found that as she aged she began to care less and less about what she thought members would think of her. She illustrates resistance to normative constructs of aging in accepting what and who she is.

> That was something that I was always nervous about [class members judging her aging body]. You know are they [class members] going to judge me, but I

> guess you just sort of find that confidence in yourself and not really worry too much about it. I don't worry a lot about it where, you know, other times maybe I would have and maybe that's as you get older, you kind of just don't care about that anymore as long as you're happy with yourself, as corny as that is, but it's kind of true. (Diana)

Aging was also top of mind for Linda who is 68. She teaches yoga classes and sees it as a method for holding off potential ailments that come with aging.

> I do think about it a lot [getting too old to perform her job]. I want to be able to demonstrate things correctly. I do yoga every day. I do it more … The longer I'm at it the more I do it. I do different yoga at home than I do in the gym. I do it because I love the feel of it. I do it for challenge. I go to weightlifting classes because I think it's important as an older woman if I want to be able to keep walking around to work some muscles so my bones stay. I had someone come up to me and say 'you're a walking target for osteoporosis' because I'm fair and long and that stuck with me. That was quite a few years ago. And so, I've always been focused on that because I don't want osteoporosis. I don't want to crumble. (Linda)

Likewise, while Glen admitted to having reservations about teaching as he aged; he also intended to continue teaching and attempt to defy the aging process. In his words "even when I hit 50 I'll be kicking their ass, that's my intent" (Glen). In contrast, Dan who is 28 discussed how his manner of dress had changed over the years from when he first began teaching in his early twenties, to now in his late twenties.

> So, when I was 22, 23 years old and just starting out, I was in the best shape of my life, I used to wear really tight clothing and people used to joke about it. I've gone away from those days now and I'm more into clothes that are comfortable. (Dan)

At age 56, June was one of the older instructors I interviewed. She believed that her time instructing was coming to an end because of her age. She told me that when she could no longer perform at a level she was happy with or stopped being what she considered a good role model because of her age, that she would quit.

> I would like to say to some of those people, 'yeah but now put your mother in this position, how easy would it be for her, that's what I'd like to say because that's what I am, the same age as your mother.' I will stop when I feel like I shouldn't be on stage anymore, either for injuries or just...I don't know, like if I feel like I can't do it at a level that I'm happy with; when I feel like I'm not being a good role model or something, do you know what I mean? And, I mean age wise. As long as I can still do it, I think I probably will teach. (June)

Rachael, who is 42, highlighted her frustration with instructors who, because of their age, she felt were no longer capable of performing their job the way she thought it ought to be done which caused her emotional distress. Rachael described feeling frustrated with her colleague's inability to perform to the standard that Rachael sets for herself.

> You know, but let's say you're getting older and your mind's going but you're not facing that fact and you're still pushing out this product [fitness classes] but you can't deliver it the way it's supposed to be delivered, that's what frustrates me. (Rachael)

> Why does that frustrate you? (Interviewer)

> It's what frustrates me because if somebody walks into a shit ass class, I'm never going to get them back. You [other instructors] caused that problem, not me. Meaning they [class participants] may not know I even exist, right? So, they go take a shitty boxing class. In their mind all boxing's shitty. That bothers me. I want everybody [all instructors] to be good because I want everybody [gym members] to stay [in the class]. (Rachael)

Discussion

In this chapter I presented my findings on the embodied nature of emotional labour in group exercise instruction from the experiences of my informants. The interrelated conceptual categories that emerged from my analysis included: the performing body which was made up of: the embodied role model, looking the part, and the self-conscious body. The informants in my research understood their bodies as essential instruments in the delivery of their classes. Thus, looking the part in the context of the group fitness class conceptualizes the ways in which instructors use, adorn, display, and transform their bodies in order to present an image to class participants.

The performing body was a major topic of discussion in all the interviews with the instructors I spoke with. They discussed the bodily techniques they needed to master to give a good performance with their bodies and also told me about the emotional impact of using their bodies to perform a group fitness class. For instance, while several instructors told me that bodily performance can be fun, some said they needed to develop a persona when teaching because in their everyday lives they are shy, and others, mainly the female instructors, told me of negative feelings they experienced when a bodily performance failed because they didn't have enough time to prepare because of role conflict in the form of competing work and childcare demands (Katz & Kahn, 1978). The men in my study said they felt like their performance failed when they did not perform well for their class members.

The performing body is one that is instrumental in delivering choreography where choreography refers to "all activities and events in which bodily movement appears as meaningful interactions and relations between various agents" (Parviainen, 2011, p. 531).

This was evident in their execution of the physical choreography of the exercises and through their physical appearance. Group fitness studios are spaces where the viewing of self, of others and by others is a cultural norm (Maconachie & Sappey, 2011, p. 5). Within these spaces the quest for a culturally desired body occurs, and it is within this context that the group fitness workers' physical body and their physical capital gains or loses its value as they age or gain weight (Bourdieu, 1984; Maconachie & Sappey, 2011, p. 5).

Achieving this "ideal" body or "looking the part" was a central part of the conversations I had with my informants. For these fitness instructors, being what they perceive as thin, fit, and performance ready was an important way to showcase their professionalism to their class members consistent with Greenleaf et al. (2006) and Markula's (1995) finding that for group fitness instructors, appearing thin and fit was essential to looking the part of a group fitness instructor. Thus, their embodied performance is a display of the physical capital required to succeed in their field of work (Bourdieu, 1984; Shilling 1991) because in service economies, an embodied performance is seen to be a key part in many occupations (Parviainen, 2014, p. 312). This is similar to Sanders (1989, pp. 74-75) who found that many of the tattoo artists he spoke with began learning their trade and completing tattoos on their own bodies first; creating show pieces as advertisements for their art and to attract clients. The instructors I interviewed also viewed their bodies as representative of the work they did and the types of workouts they taught. This level of attention and focus on the performance aspect of the class was exhibited through their bodies.

In addition, performing in the context of group fitness classes is a specific form of the presentation of self, where my informants used their bodies as sign vehicles to convey

information to their class participants (Goffman 1959) consistent with Goffman's (1959, p. 22) notion of performance which refers to the individual's effort to guide and control the impression that others receive of their bodily presence in a certain situation. The symbolic messages conveyed by bodies are crucial because people can not exist in the world without their bodies (Goffman, 1983). So much so that their bodies become meaning makers and message conveyers in the social world and by extension; their bodies become cultural products (Bourdieu, 1984). Goffman (1963, p. 33) used the term "body idiom" to refer to aspects of dress, movement, positions, and gestures which serve as a vehicle for social interaction and expression of the self. In this way gender, race, and age are aspects of their social identities they do via their presentation of self (Goffman, 1959; West & Zimmerman, 1987).

The clothing choices and the reasons behind clothing selection featured prominently in the interviews and focus group meeting and was a crucial component of looking the part of an instructor. In addition, looking the part differed between the men and women in my study. For example, the men in my study spoke about the need to be overprepared to deliver their class by getting up extra early before the class to study the choreography. In so doing, the male instructors felt prepared to deliver a technically sound class. This is consistent with the work of Berger (1972) who argued that "*men act and women appear"* (Berger, 1972, p. 47, italics in original). In further support of Berger (1972), the women instructors in my study did "appear." They talked about doing 'a clothes check' before they taught a class to ensure their pants were not revealing and their bodies looked appropriate for the class. The women spoke explicitly and poignantly about what

clothes they choose to teach in and why; whereas the men spoke in a more nuanced way about their clothing choices and often emphasized function over fashion.

The notion of looking the part of a fitness instructor is made up of two related sub-concepts: the fit body and adorning the body, both instances of what Goffman (1959) refers to as signs given. What these instructors meant by looking the part involved a very narrow definition in terms of their bodies that is tied to the neoliberal ideal body, a young, fit, and thin body (Fernández-Balboa & González-Calvo, 2018, p. 870). Likewise, the instructors who took part in my study felt obligated to make efforts to achieve and maintain the 'ideal body.' The 'ideal body' is one that mimics the good neoliberal subject, where one's body is not too old or too fat. June, an instructor in my study, talked about how she served as a role model for aging well because she was teaching fitness into her 50s, but was very aware that she could not be overweight and doing this job.

My findings here are consistent with Evans et al. (2005), who found that female college students who take fitness classes preferred instructors with thin and fit bodies. Similarly, the fit and thin body is a particular concern of the young female instructors who took part in my research which not only reflects the generalized other's expectations for their bodies (Mead, [1962] 1934) but also sexist, fatphobic, and ageist assumptions about women's bodies in postmodern Western aesthetic ideals (Bordo, 2003; Smith Maguire, 2008). This is what Bordo (2003) would call the "tyranny of slenderness." Further, Johnston (1996, p. 327) concludes that the "very presence of fatness in most group fitness gym spaces is constituted as abject;" meaning that fat bodies are seen as transgressions in the social order of the fitness gym. This was also reflected in the sexist and gendered talk about female instructors' bodies by instructors specifically when those female bodies did

not meet the thin and fit 'ideal.' Both female and male instructors told me that female instructors should always be involved in a "body project" (Shilling, 2012) and refrain from engaging in talk that was contrary to a fit body; specifically, any talk that involved unhealthy eating. The same standard was not applied to the male instructors.

The group fitness instructors I spoke with use of their bodies in trying to convey that they look the part of a fitness instructor which reflects what Shilling (2012, p. 5) refers to as a "body project"; that is, a body that is always under modification and where the bodywork that is associated with "body projects" refers to practices that are considered part of the individual's project of self-identity (Giddens, 1991). In the fitness class context, instructors engaged in bodywork including the ability to perform their professional roles through displays of physical capital (Bourdieu, 1984; Shilling, 2012) involving whole body expressions, movements, clothing, hair, and tone of voice. Thus, what instructors wore to their classes was a calculated decision where both function and style played an important role.

The group fitness instructors in my study were acutely aware of how important their bodies were in terms of looking the part of the group fitness instructor. To present a fit body means an effort to present a disciplined and controlled self in order to display the physical capital necessary to look the part of a group fitness instructor (Bourdieu, 1984). Given the value placed on the aesthetic of everyday life (Featherstone & Hepworth, 1991), the work that takes place in the fitness industry provides an example of the value of physical capital. Thus, the fitness gym becomes the principal space where "the quest for, and attainment of, physical capital takes place" (Frew & McGillivray, 2005, p. 162).

Also related to their physical capital is that these instructors purposefully chose clothing styles that accentuated their body lines so that participants could better see the movement patterns. I observed instructors dressing in matching outfits or holiday attire to further mark a special occasion all the while creating experiences for their members. In addition, informants talked about the pressure to wear industry branded clothing in looking the part of the fitness instructor. In this way neoliberal discourses of active citizenship, healthism, and active consumerism are reproduced and reinforced through the interaction between these instructors and the people who take their classes (Carter, 2015; Lupton, 1997, 1999; Pickard, 1998).

Along with the clothing they wore, the way they styled their hair also played a key role in their presentation of self during their classes and in making efforts to look the part in performing the embodied role of the group fitness instructor. Instructors gave examples when they fashioned their hair to compliment the intention of the workout. Erin talked about having a sporty bouncy hair style for cardio classes and that she opted for a slicked back style when teaching yoga class. This highlights Weitz's (2016, p. 320) conclusion that hair styles are "cultural artifacts" that incorporate both "cultural and personal preferences" in both public and personal ways. Weitz (2016, p. 325) argues that women are fully aware of the cultural expectations that accompany their hair styling techniques can "consciously seek power by accommodating those expectations, resisting them, or combining these two strategies."

However, how they adorn their bodies can be problematic. To illustrate, Rachael, a white woman who participated in my study, told me about the time she was auditioning to teach a kick boxing class and had her hair styled into cornrows by a professional hairdresser

because she thought that gave her a “tough” appearance suitable to an instructor of a sport like kick boxing. Typically associated with the hair of Black people, cornrows on Rachael reflects racist assumptions surrounding the trope of the “angry Black woman.” The normative policing of Black bodies generally, and Black women’s hair more specifically, is well established (Lenard & Balint, 2020, p. 350). The wearing of cornrows by non-Black women is problematic because of the context of unequal power dynamics, in which Black women are forced to conform to white models of physical presentation in order to be seen as successful and unthreatening in social life. The history of unequal power relations is relevant with the cornrows hair style worn by a white instructor because it amplifies the structural injustice to which Black people are subject to when white people select portions of Black culture to create a character and in this example of the “angry Black woman.” This same instructor later used the idiom “tribe” when referring to how their employer views and refers to her and other fitness colleagues. The historical meaning of the word “tribe”, when spoken in this way, references a settler-colonial history based on “domination and exploitation of natural resources and human labor on foreign lands” (McKay, Vinyeta, & Norgaard, 2020, p.2) both instances, the instructor was white, middle class, and female. Another informant used the term “street style” to refer to the workout clothing worn in dance-based group fitness instruction reflecting racialized thinking in the fitness industry (Walker, 2022, p. 9).

For the instructors in my study, being an embodied role model meant that they saw themselves as motivators of fitness for their class members through their positions as group fitness instructors. This is consistent with the findings of D’Abundo (2007) who found that aerobics instructors in the U.S. saw themselves as role models for the participants.

According to D'Abundo (2007, p. 29), aerobics instructors "seemed to be exhibiting agency" by providing encouragement, modifications, and practical applications for the exercise combinations performed in their classes. In being an embodied role model, the fitness instructors are expected to also have the capacity to produce inspiring embodied performances and energetic atmospheres that keep fitness members inspired to work on their own bodies and are intended to enable their participants to also obtain the same results in their own bodywork (Parviainen, 2014, p. 314).

A role model is an embodied role because among the norms and values role model pass on to neophytes, role models influence them through "embodying, representing, and dramatizing, so to speak, the goal toward which the neophyte is moving" (Rosen & Bates, 1967, p. 74). In interacting with their instructors as role models, group fitness participants listen to the verbal cues given by their instructors, they then "mirror" the instructor's bodily movements in the attempt to mimic what they see on stage (Parviainen, 2014, p. 318). Therefore, in a fitness class, the instructor's body becomes the focus of intense scrutiny and is the visual marker for participants. As part of their responsibilities as fitness role models, the instructors in my research study used their bodies and their physicality when performing the choregraphed routines and in demonstrating proper technique and physical awareness in their bodily movements. Their bodies were valued by the people who take their classes based on how well the instructor body performed.

In addition, as role models these group fitness instructors pass on values to the people who take their classes. For instance, Rachael sought to reassure the mothers who took her class that, despite social pressure to the contrary (Hays, 1996, p. 8), it was important to feel comfortable leaving their children at home while they took a fitness class.

In doing so, she disclosed her own sense of role conflict (Katz & Kahn, 1978) that she experiences in navigating the competing demands of being a mother as well as an instructor. Rachael expressed the need to be an embodied role model for her participants even thou there is great social pressure for women to invest in their children and not themselves (Hays, 1996, p. 8).

Another conceptual category that emerged from my analysis is the self-conscious body. This category is comprised of three concepts the fat body, the maternal body, and the aging body, related to signs given off the body (Goffman, 1959). The group fitness instructors who took part in this research told me that they felt self-conscious because they knew their bodies were being continually watched by the people who took their classes, other instructors, and other gym members. They felt self-conscious because they were subject to the disciplining gaze of others (Foucault, 1979). Their feelings of self-consciousness were also amplified when they themselves, or the social audience, in the form of the generalized other (Mead, 1962[1934]), thought that their bodies did not match the normative notions of what a fit body should look like; namely thin and toned. Thus, the fat body made them feel self-conscious. This is because in fitness discourse, the fat body is a stigmatized status (Goffman, 1973); a deviant body measured against the fit and healthy body (Mansfield, 2010; Smith Maguire, 2008).

Goffman's (1973) work on stigma is useful here in understanding that the fat body is a marginalized one in both the fitness world and in other parts of social life. While Goffman (1973) did not address fat bodies directly, he does provide a frame in which to consider that being fat in contemporary western societies leads to judgments of inadequacy, and undesirability. Being fat is viewed as both a "bodily and moral defect that is connected

to oversimplified and inaccurate stereotypical notions of fat people as lazy, unhealthy, or unhygienic" (Kwan & Graves, 2013, p. 117).

Another stigmatized body for my informants was the maternal body which provoked feelings of anxiety and insecurity among these group fitness instructors. Being a mother and possessing a maternal body was a salient aspect of the biographical contexts of some of the fitness instructors who took part in my research. The negative emotions that this provoked for these informants echoes Nash's (2011) findings on the exercise practices of pregnant Austrialian women. Nash (2011, p. 50) argues that "there is no time in a woman's life" even during pregnancy and throughout the postpartum period, "when she is free to be inactive; she must constantly engage in a high-level of physical activity to maintain an appropriately feminine body and to prove her self publicly as capable." Consistent with Nash (2011) my findings highlight the social expectations for female group fitness instructors to always maintain a fit performing body. Having an older body was also not considered to be "looking the part" of a fitness instructor according to my research participants.

The fit body is not only a thin and toned body, but also a youthful one (Jin & Harvey, 2020). One way this insecurity manifested was in how younger instructors expressed their anxieties about their aging bodies in contrast to the male and older female fitness instructors. Older female instructors were more comfortable talking about their aging bodies than were the younger women (Featherstone & Hepworth, 1991). This is consistent with Paulson and Willig (2003, p. 119) who found that older women tend to develop more positive use of language in their everyday talk about their bodies. Through the positive use of language, older women come to view their aging bodies as capable and "good" (Paulson

& Willig, 2003, p. 119). However, for most of the instructors involved in my study, the notion of getting old was anxiety provoking despite the affirming language they used to describe the capabilities of their bodies while performing their work. The instructors expressed that their bodies were something that they had to continuously work on to combat the impact of aging on their bodies. Their experience reflects an overly narrow neoliberal model of what it means to age well.

In order to be considered good neoliberal subjects, citizens are responsible for their own personal health; where through neoliberal discourses of healthy aging they are pressured to remain active participants in social life and active consumers even as they age (Gilleard & Higgs, 1998; Katz, 2000; Katz & Marshall, 2003; Lupton, 1999). The body work required by instructors to look the part is an aspect of how the body is experienced in industrialized Western societies, related to consumer culture and the neoliberal values (Ayo, 2012) that are part of risk society (Beck, 1992). Within risk society active citizens take the role of active consumers (Crawford, 1980; Lupton, 1999), individuals are increasingly held responsible for managing their own health risks and are encouraged to groom their own appearance through a range of health inspired practices (Gimlin, 2007; Wolkowitz, 2002, 2006). The experiences of the group fitness instructors clearly demonstrates how neoliberal (Lupton, 1999) messages surrounding health are internalized, supported, and then reproduced through the actions and interactions of bodies in a fitness studio.

The group fitness instructors I spoke with struggled with pressures from neoliberal discourses around aging and aging well (Katz, 2000, 2001; Gilleard & Higgs, 1998). Essentially, to age well was to be responsible for one's own health and continue to pursue

this ideal of healthy living and aging through the continued consumption of commercially available anti-aging products, strategies, and solutions (Gilleard & Higgs, 2010; Katz & Marshall, 2003). This shift in societal thinking is related to the neoliberal ideal that citizens need to remain viable and engaged consumers until the end of life, In some cases, this meant significant pressure to age well by exercising in the gym. This was acutely felt by the instructors in my study where they felt compelled to remain healthy through group fitness classes with the added pressure of encouraging others to join them in their classes. The neoliberal discourses surrounding health and aging rest on the premise that it is the individual's responsibility for their own positive health outcomes (Pickard, 1998, p. 227); and this was something that the instructors internalized and then projected out to their class participants. In conjunction with neoliberal health discourses is the active consumer whereby the individual is also expected to engage in "self-improvement" and "self-reflection" activities (Lupton, 1999, p. 289).

The group fitness instructors I spoke with talked about feeling self-conscious in their bodies, but also told me about using clothing and hair to exude confidence in their classes as a means of managing their self-conscious bodies while performing their jobs. In addition, these group fitness instructors used other techniques to manage their self-conscious bodies. For instance, in cases where they believed they would be stigmatized (Goffman, 1959) for their bodily presentation they would do things like prepare diligently for each class performance, hide behind equipment, and avoid situations where they thought they didn't look or would not be seen as to be at their best.

In this chapter I presented my analysis of the embodied nature of emotional labour. The group fitness instructors I spoke with talked about the importance of embodied

performance in their work; how they were embodied role models for those who took their classes; looking the part of a fitness instructor by wearing appropriate clothes, purposefully styling their hair, and displaying a fit body; in addition to how possessing a fat body, maternal body, or aging body made them feel self-conscious. Beyond the physical requirement of bodies for survival, symbolic interactionists have long recognized the importance of the socially created meanings of the body as an object and an image as well as a physiological entity (Becker, 1963; Blumer, 1969; Goffman, 1959, 1990). Together, these different ways to experience the body while at work help to further understand the ways in which emotional labour is corporeal. In the following chapter I present the findings from my research on emotional labour and sociability. I conceptualize how group fitness instructors experience emotional labour through displays of sociability. These findings make up four conceptual categories: negative interactions, gendered interactions, strategic friendliness, and emotionally burdensome.

CHAPTER SIX: EMOTIONAL LABOUR AND SOCIABILITY

In this chapter I present the findings from my research concerning how group fitness instructors manage the emotional labour of sociability (Simmel & Hughes, 1949). Within group fitness spaces, interactions occur between instructors, amongst gym members, and between instructors and gym members that include social events outside of the fitness gym. Managing these interactions is a multifaceted and time-consuming part of the job for many of the group fitness instructors and is one that involves management of their emotions. I conceptualize these displays of sociability through the major analytic categories of negative interactions, gendered interactions, strategic friendliness, and emotionally burdensome (see Figure 2).

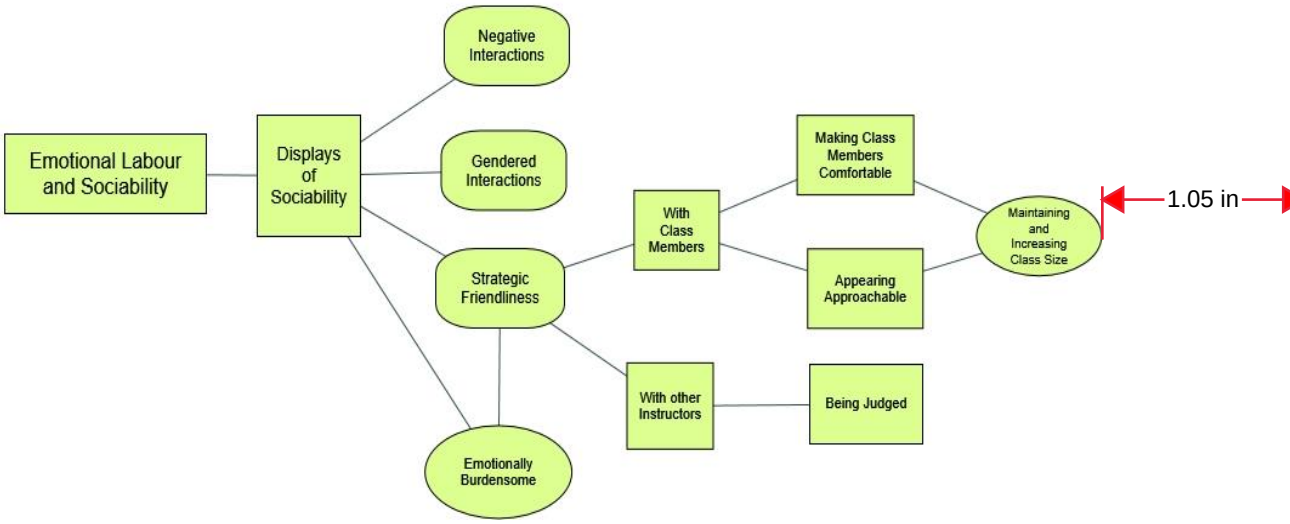

Figure 2 - Emotional Labour and Sociability

All the group fitness instructors involved in my study referred to their interactions with gym members as a relationship. For example, Erin discussed the sociable atmosphere of the group fitness studio and the relationships that form there.

> There are so many relationships that build there, whether it's between the members themselves or between the members and us or us and other instructors, it's a place where ... for a lot of people, it's a social outing. (Erin)

Relationships with members happen before, during, and after the scheduled class time. Linda told me how she arrives early to chat with members and that that allows her to become familiar with the people in the class and build relationships with them.

> Like I say, I am one of those instructors. I am always there 15 minutes before class, always. I'm just hanging around. So, you can come and people often don't know I'm the instructor until someone else tells them. But you know, I'm always there and you know, I love to chat with people before just to get a feel of who will be in the class. (Linda)

The fact that these instructors characterized their interactions with class members as relationships indicates that these exchanges are meaningful, or at least noteworthy events that occur while the instructors are working. As one instructor, Susan, put it this way:

> It's not just exercise class, it's a whole relationship. But I definitely think it's a common, it's a shared experience amongst instructors, unless you come across as cold, or strange in some way. So, it's nice, it's a unique relationship. (Susan)

She went on to explain how she found it hard to explain to her husband the importance of these relationships saying, "it's funny, because a lot of times, you know, my husband will say to me, 'well, it's just exercise class' and I can't even explain how that's so inaccurate." Likewise, Diana discussed how her relationships with members extend beyond the exercise portion of the class and that they [group fitness instructors] "play a much bigger role in their [gym members] life than we [group fitness instructors] think. Like its [group fitness

classes] something they do look forward to." A central part of the enactment of these relationships involves displays of sociability.

Displays of Sociability

Sociability (Simmel & Hughes, 1949) refers to the different forms of human association and social interaction, examples such as social events. The concept of sociability involves the ways in which people gather voluntarily outside of formal institutions (Simmel & Hughes, 1949). The conceptual category of 'displays of sociability' in my research is made up of two related concepts, negative interactions with some, and gendered interactions with others, including both gym members and other instructors. Being sociable with members was something that was important to many of the instructors I spoke with and particular instances of sociability for these instructors are developing relationships with and participating in social events outside of class time with gym members. The form of sociability required by these instructors' job involves skills learned through occupational socialization (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979) and they are skills that can be difficult to acquire, such as the ability to display selflessness. In Rachael's words:

> But when it's your job to be social and to include everyone and make everyone feel of equal importance and not just who you like to talk to, and you have to be mindful of that. Because connection is like a skill. Socializing [with class members] is a skill. You got to know what you can say, know what you can do, you got to know how other people feel good and you got to remember that it's not about you. A lot of people forget that. There'll be a lot of times that when I walk up to 20 people and there's only like three of them I'd really love to talk to and then there's some that are just like standing there and it's not fair that they don't get my attention. So, the social aspect of teaching is actually probably one of the hardest skills to learn because you're not successful [instructing classes] if you can't nail down the social aspect of it. (Rachael)

Thus, a fitness instructor is not "successful" if they cannot master the art of being sociable with the members of their class. And they cannot be truly sociable if they did not participate in social events with members outside of class times. For instance, Rachael described a time when a member asked her to have lunch after class.

> I've been invited to participant's homes. I've had suggestions that I host events to have participants come over to my house. I have had that girl ask me a couple weeks ago 'what am I doing for my Sunday workout?' I'm like 'I do weightlifting class.' So, she comes by and she's like 'Well, what are you going to do now?' Like 'I'm going to go home.' And she's like, 'Well, do you want to go get something to eat?' I'm like 'fine.' So, I go eat with her. (Rachael)

Rachael went on to tell me that she found navigating these relationships complex and that while she may have things in common with class members, she does not think of them as friends. She also pointed out that if a class does not go smoothly the nature of the relationship between her and class members changes.

> So very complex. 'Do I have things in common with them?' Yes. But when we do [a] weightlifting class, like, for example, Wednesday, something went wrong, and they turned on me and complained [to management]. So, you know, they're not my friends. (Rachael)

While Rachael was very uncomfortable about the whole idea of participating in social events with class members but felt pressured to do so because she was a newer instructor and felt more pressure to be sociable.

> I got invited to somebody's house and I remember thinking 'oh shit' because I'm new at teaching and I thought 'I've got to go.' It's not my thing, but I felt like they've opened their circle. If I don't take this, I at least have to go to the first one. Like I have to go. So, I went and I didn't drink. I put my gym clothes on and I went and I did the appropriate amount of socializing, but I had a class the next day. So as soon as stuff got weird, like you know, people drink too much, talk too much, so I said, 'I got to teach in the morning so I'm going to go but thanks so much.' And I got invited again. So, they're doing these things on a regular basis and I'm like tired. I don't want to go. Ever. (Rachael)

Linda also said that she doesn't like to be sociable with class members outside of class, however, she still does sometimes.

> So, when we closed down [the gym], some of the girls got together and we all went out for a drink, went to the [restaurant] and had, you know, supper and a drink but generally other than that, no, I do not go out with members. (Linda)

Corey, who teaches a cycling class, also said that he had gone out socially with members from his class but is selective in terms of which class members he is sociable with.

> Some members are better to talk to. I mean there's a few guys in the class that come up and talk to me quite a bit and like Lee. I go biking with him outside in the summer and some of his boys downtown. (Corey)

These types of sociability are seen as everyday occurrence by these instructors. And some instructors really enjoyed this aspect of their jobs. For instance, Diana valued time spent with class members outside of the gym and told me about times she went out socially with members from her classes.

> Like I've gone to just a couple things. Like one guy sells like smelly candle stuff. It's fun to see them outside of the gym. It is fun to connect to them like on a more personal level. (Diana)

For instance, Diana told me how in her words, being a group fitness instructor encouraged her to be "more social" something her maternal role and self-identification as an introverted personality made difficult for her.

> It's sort of my social life, the gym piece, because I have two kids. I work. You know, I'm an introvert a little bit so it's good for me. I don't know, just that connection with the members and the people that you meet. That's another piece. It sort of pushes me a little bit more, to be a bit more social. (Diana)

Corey also identified himself as an introvert and told me that it is a difficulty that he has to overcome in this line of work where there is the expectation that instructors are sociable with class members.

> It's hard for me. I'm an introvert at heart. My history was an introvert. My history, my upbringing was introverted. I'm an engineer. It's almost like prone towards that. So, in social settings I've always had issues. Always had to put in a lot of effort to be sociable, alcohol helps although I'm not doing that [drinking alcohol] at 4:30 in the morning. (Corey)

Three male instructors said they had been invited to social events by members but had always declined out of lack of interest or conflicting schedules. For instance, Bevan said that he loved the sociability that happened at the gym but because his class timeslot is at noon, class members always rushed in and out of class so opportunities to be sociable did not happen as much as he would have liked them to. In his words, "Yeah, and I love that part. And it kills me that like every Monday and Wednesday at lunchtime, I can never do that" (Bevan).

As important as these relationships are they are understood differently by group fitness instructors and the people who take their classes. Linda told me that although she was sociable with class members while at the gym, she wasn't purposefully looking to make friends with them and that the kind of relationships she formed with class members were not intimate and did not extend to outside of the gym. Linda was quite clear that although members may feel that they have a relationship with her, it was not necessarily the same type of relationship for her.

> I like to have a relationship as far as the class goes. I'm not looking to make friends ... And if I do make friends that's great but I'm not looking to make friends. Every now and then you find some people for some reason they all of a sudden think you're really good friends and they'll always come and chat and you know, I don't mind that, I like that. Usually, we're not [friends] other than in that room but that's okay…. Yeah, [class members] do believe we have a relationship and we do. I mean I have a relationship with certain people. I mean I look them in the eye. I have a relationship with them but does it go beyond the way they're doing that downward facing dog? Maybe not, you know. (Linda)

Likewise, Kylie and Susan told me that the relationships that they form with class members were the kind of friendships that only took place during class times. Kylie put it this way "there's a lot of people that I would say were my friends. Like they would think that they were my friends, but I never see them outside of the gym" and Susan said that her relationships with class members do not exist outside of the hour-long class she taught.

> When I'm in class, I care about those people, I care about our hour together, but I don't need everyone to know when I'm teaching next, and I don't need everyone to wonder, like, what's Susan teaching next? I don't need to post about it [on social media] every day or say what's going on in my life all the time, it is what it is, people can figure it out. (Susan)

However, and in contrast, Diana stated that while the relationships with members of her class only exist within the timeframe of the class, they are not superficial relationships. In her words "It lasts the span of an hour and then it's finished. It's an intense relationship but it only lasts an hour (Diana)." The emotion laden nature of these relationships sometimes leads to negative interactions with these group fitness instructors' class members.

Negative Interactions

As can happen in any social situation, there can be negative interactions within the fitness studio as well as when these group fitness instructors engage in displays of sociability with their class members. The instructors I spoke with described being placed in situations they felt ill prepared to deal with that had a negative impact on their emotions. For instance, Diana recounted some particularly harsh criticism she received from members after a class that had a lasting impact on her ability to teach and carry on with her week.

> It stays with you for a long time… Like, those comments that were said to me last week are going to subsequently control … what I did today. It controlled what I'll do on Wednesday. Like, it'll have certain control over me and how I teach my classes…. I'll tell myself, if I have a bad class and then I get in the car and I'm like 'oh, God, that was so bad.' (Diana)

Susan also recalled harsh criticism that "stuck with" her that she has received over her years of teaching and how members forget that being a group fitness instructor is a part-time job.

> But it definitely sticks with you. Like, I can recall ten things that people have said to me over the past fifteen years that never go away. It's my part-time job, yet I think sometimes members forget that it is a job, and they feel they have license to say all sorts of nasty things to you. (Susan)

The emotional toll of these negative encounters is clear. For instance, Diana disclosed how hard it was on her when class did not go well and when she felt like she did not meet gym member expectations.

> So, at the end of a class, if it's good then great we carry on, thank you very much. But when people are upset with you it just goes down the shitter and you sit in the car and I cried. Like, I cried. It's impossibly hard when people are mad at you and they didn't get what they expected from you. (Diana)

Susan explained that such criticism is so difficult to take because she is very passionate about her work at the gym and she invests a lot of herself in the work.

> When someone says something less than positive, it is really hard, because it is your part-time job and it is something that you are passionate about and you put a lot of personal time into [it] that you are not paid for. And so, when someone says something negative, it's hard. And I'm always at first so hurt and emotionally attached to this, because I've been doing this for so long and I feel like I invest a lot of myself into it. (Susan)

Some of these instructors told me they were challenged by not knowing how to handle difficult situations that they were not trained to deal with. Sarah put it this way "I had some very, very difficult encounters with members, I don't think I was taught how to

deal with that either from our manager." Similarly, Erin told me about confrontations with class members that she saw as outside the scope of her work. For example, she discussed a time when a beloved colleague was "let go" by the company, leaving her to deal with the angry members.

> Our yoga instructor got let go completely out of nowhere and I was put in the position to replace the class but was told by management to say nothing and avoid it. But you can't avoid it, because we are all human and because we have relationships with these people and the members wanted answers. Like, they knew she wasn't there anymore and they wanted to know why. So, somebody should've given them answers before I ever had to go in and fill in for her. So, there was some people that actually yelled at me, I knew it wasn't personal, but it was still really hard to deal with. Then how am I supposed to teach a class after that? (Erin)

Rachael described how maddening it is when members complain about her classes given the work she put into them. It is particularly difficult for her to try to balance two paid jobs and please class members.

> You know how you work so hard at something and then somebody says something negative and you're like 'fuck, what the fuck?' Like [class members] don't get the time that I invested in just delivering that hour. Like I wore headphones all day at my real job. I neglected something at my day job so I could learn an ab track for them that night. Like, I went in on my break and learned something new and then they complain about it. It's so maddening. But they don't know all that, they have no sweet clue the stuff I do, the hours and hours I put in, but this is all stuff I internalize. (Rachael)

Gendered Interactions

The positive and negative interactions that these informants experience in the relationships that are part of their displays of sociability with their group fitness class members are also gendered. The instructors that took part in my research teach group fitness classes mainly to women. Thus, most of their interactions are with women. Kylie

recounted repetitive conversations about what to include in her classes that she has with female members every spring.

> And so you know, I have like, the same conversation over and over again with all the women in my class every spring. And it's that, 'how can I target this area, how do I get this [pointing to stomach] smaller for summer' you know? Just once I'd like to skip a spring like this or have a man ask me that. Can you imagine having a guy ask about slimming down for summer? (Kylie)

Rachael talked about how she does not engage in social interactions with the men in her class because she believes that they do not like her and that the women in her class need her support more than the men do. Rachael described the struggle women, and not men, have in leaving the household, such as the domestic responsibilities and childcare tasks in order to get to the gym. Rachael feels that struggle for women needs to be supported and uses this to justify her investment in female class members and not male members.

> Typically men don't like me because I'm really in your face and … Like I don't interact with men. There was three men in my class this morning but that was like I was actually thinking in my head that was out of the ordinary and one of them was with his girlfriend and then the other ones are older or they're just comfortable with me, but I don't invest in men. Like my social relationship investment [is] 100 percent women because that's a struggle. Like men can get out of the house and go to the gym. Men can deal. They can. It's harder for women. (Rachael)

While there are some men who do attend these instructors' classes, men in class are the exception rather than the rule. Thus, given the feminized nature of the group fitness class, I was particularly interested in how the male instructors felt about being one of the few men who did group fitness and how they felt about sometimes being the only man in the room. The experiences from Corey, Bevan, and Dan all reflect homophobic assumptions. Two male instructors believed that this led class members to falsely assume that they are gay. For instance, Corey said:

> Well, right off the bat, you're an instructor; half of them think you're gay. Right? That happens… I don't think I give off a gay vibe. In fact, in the gay world, I'm not a looker, I'm kind of under the radar...I think they [LGBTQ+] have a gaydar knowing that I'm not gay. Right? So, I haven't really had any issues with that. I mean there's gay guys in class all the time. I don't care. (Corey)

Corey, who identifies as straight, attests that having gay men in his class has not impacted his class because he does not give off the "gay vibe." What Corey means by this is that he believes that because he does not give off a "gay vibe" he is not approached sexually by gay men who may be taking his class. Bevan, who also identifies as straight, believed that there exists a perception that all male instructors are gay and that this assumption has had an impact on the types of songs and exercise movements he teaches.

> Oh, I totally think about that [people thinking he's gay], like all the time. I think that plays into a part of, like, what songs I choose, but those songs are usually, in turn, the same songs that I wouldn't want to teach anyway, because I really don't like those moves. (Bevan)
>
> What kind of songs or moves do you like doing or what ones do you stay away from? (Interviewer)
>
> Well, you know the ones...The ones that sound harder… like songs with rock…a heavier metal feel. Those songs are just more powerful and the moves are stronger and less… I don't know, less fairy. (Bevan)

Bevan states that the songs that he naturally prefers are ones that are "less fairy" referring to a derogatory term for gay men. In playing music that he feels is more "powerful" he said he is trying to make sure no one thinks he is not straight. Corey and Dan's experiences here are reflective of what McCormack and Anderson (2014) call homohysteria. Similarly, in speculating about why fewer men take group fitness classes, Dan said that men could be intimidated by his classes because he believed, that some of the movements used in the class do not come naturally to men, a heteronormative assumption that is also related to

homophobia. Dan assumed that men would be uncomfortable with some movements that he says do not come naturally to men and gives the example of bouncy hip movements. This is an example of the pressure for men to only engage in physical activities that are based in the essentialist belief that men have a "natural drive for physical achievement and for mastery of the body itself" (Connell, 1995, p. 45 as quoted in Adams 2005, p. 66).

> For men, no question because the men don't get it, they just don't get it. They feel uncomfortable with some of the moves and I can appreciate that because I teach it and I said earlier there are certain songs and choreography and moves that I don't enjoy and it's not about homosexuality or being gay or anything like that, it's just there's certain ways that men move that make them feel uncomfortable and that's why I think they're intimidated by dance classes or anything like that because men naturally don't have that bouncy hip movement that a female can. (Dan)

I asked him what songs or choreography he did not enjoy teaching and he mentioned that he removed anything that involved hand movements or other types of movements that he believed might make straight men feel "ridiculous."

> Anything that involves a lot of hand movements, even punching forward; men feel ridiculous when they do it, even the way we do our jumping jacks, they're like 'oh well that's a weird way to move' but it's actually the most anatomically correct way to move and when they realise that they're like 'oh great, that starts to make sense.' (Dan)

Along with her language choices, Linda also talked about changing the class movements in ways she felt better catered to men by eliminating things she thought of as feminine.

> I had about five guys that came quite regularly and so I liked to do things, for example, the Tai Chi warm-up which is really 'dancey.' I would not use the dancing ones. I'd use the short ones that were, you know, that I could say things like 'this is really important because it's about proprioception, men.' You know, like make it so it's not dreamy and floaty. It's about proprioception, knowing where your body is in space. (Linda)

Linda also told me that the vocabulary she uses in her class changes when men are present.

> It's funny because I want them [men] to be there and I'm not, it's not that I'm trying to be flirty or anything with them but I do things, I change the language to try to appeal to them on the level of, as I said before, let's make this about proprioception, let's make this … You throw some kinesiology kind of terms in there to try to capture their interest because I mean I know the way my husband is. But I think it's really important for them [men] to be there. (Linda)

While the male instructors I spoke with were aware that there were more women than men in the group fitness classes that they teach, some told me that they didn't treat male and female class members differently or take note of the gendered make up of their classes. When I asked Bevan about the gender makeup of his class, he said that while he noticed that there were more women than men in his classes, to him they are all "fitness levels" rather than genders.

> It's never crossed my mind. Like, I don't think it's important [the gender make-up of the class]…. I don't think of them as like it's obvious, like, there's usually only like maybe two guys and there's like twelve girls. But I've never thought of them as that. It's just participants and they have different, like, fitness levels. I've never thought of guy/girl, 'cause there's girls that could do more than guys in there and vice versa with certain moves. I'm there for the participants. I never thought of that [the gender make-up of the class]. (Bevan)

Likewise, Glen, another male instructor told me that the gender difference in the makeup of his group fitness class did not change the way he teaches.

> I don't know, I don't notice any difference, I don't push people any differently. And I'm not just saying that to sound like I'm all for equality. I mean I don't really notice it. Obviously, I do notice if a guy comes in [laughs] because it is such a difference. But I don't change the way I teach. (Glen)

Similarly, Corey told me that his presentation of self in group fitness class did not change when teaching the women in his class.

> I had some woman come to me after class and … it was so funny [laughs], a woman in the change room, said 'if I wanted to get yelled at by a man, I'd stay home.' Right? But I don't really yell, I encourage but you turn up the dial. You don't have to fucking do it. Do it, turn it or don't do it. I'm not yelling at you, I'm suggesting, right? (Corey)

A final aspect of gendered interactions concerns the case of two male instructors who saw the group fitness class as a place to meet women and to assert their heteronormativity. For instance, Dan told me that it could be a useful way to meet women once they knew he was straight.

> I wouldn't say that it was a negative thing to be a group fitness instructor as a male once they find out that you're straight because there is a persona and there is a stereotype that you have to get over in the beginning because they're like 'oh I'm not sure if that guy is straight or not' and I've dealt with that, but after they found out that if you're straight it does work to your advantage to meet girls, to be a fitness instructor is just something to talk about and something to invite them to and stuff like that. (Dan)

Corey also said that teaching fitness classes was something some male instructors thought would increase their chances of meeting women. But this was something he said that himself would never do, although he did admit to "flirting" and was concerned about flirting that turned to what he called "stalking."

> And I think you could take advantage of that. Right? If you're like single and stuff you could take advantage of that. I didn't. I guess I've seen others that have and I'm sure there's others who do in other clubs in other places and stuff like that. And I can get flirty back. Like you know, joking. I mean even Rachael's mom loves me. Right? I joke with her all the time. 'You're looking fantastic today.' There's a little blushing. You do that too. There are key members who just follow you around town, which can get a little stalky too, right? (Corey)

Strategic Friendliness

Part of the display of sociability that these group fitness instructors engage in is strategic friendliness. These instructors use acts of strategic friendliness with class members in efforts to achieve three goals that I conceptualize as making class members

comfortable, appearing approachable, and maintaining class size. Strategic friendliness with other instructors includes the concept of being judged. Finally, both forms of strategic friendliness are experienced as emotionally burdensome by the group fitness instructors who took part in this research.

Strategic Friendliness with Class Members

The instructors who took part in my research use instances of strategic friendliness to meet a variety of goals. First and foremost, they wanted to make class members comfortable and appear approachable. In turn, making the people who take their class feel comfortable and being seen as approachable, combined with other acts of strategic friendliness, were strategies they used in their efforts to achieve the goal of increasing and maintaining the size of the classes that they teach.

Making Class Members Comfortable Making class members comfortable involves a variety of acts of strategic friendliness including fostering a sense of belonging, displaying selflessness, presenting a positive attitude, inviting music requests, and giving gifts. Many of the people who took part in this research saw making class members comfortable as an important part of being a good group fitness instructor. For example, Erin said coming early to welcome class members and making them comfortable is an important aspect of her job which also makes her feel comfortable before her class. In her words:

> Because I feel like, especially when you're meeting the new members, that's a really good chance to get them drawn in and make them feel comfortable before they start the class, as opposed to coming in, you know, like a chicken with their head cut off. You want to come in and just feel comfortable and chat with them [members] first and let them know who you are and what they're about to get into. And, yeah, I think that's, well, just as important if not more

> important than staying after. Because you don't always catch them on their way out. I'm always early for my other classes, I usually get those few minutes there, I usually sit in the window and get to talk to them before we get in the room. (Erin)

For many of the group fitness instructors I spoke with, making class members comfortable involved creating a space for members where they could feel like they belonged. For instance, Erin talked about the passion members have for group fitness classes and how she is so heavily invested in making class a place where they feel they belong.

> I think that we like help them [gym members] become addicts. It's in the music, it's the environment, it's the fun while working out, it's feeling included and feeling a place where you belong, comfortable. It's what we create, absolutely. (Erin)

Another aspect of strategic friendliness employed by these instructors in order to make class members feel comfortable is displaying selflessness. Susan disclosed how she believed instructors should transcend common human emotions and physical limitations in order to make class members feel comfortable.

> When an instructor gets up there and is like, 'hey guys, like, what a busy day. Anybody else have like one of those days today?' And then it just, for me, the whole class falls flat. Or like, 'oh, you guys, I've got this thing with my shoulder, but I'm going to try my best.' Honestly, you have to be a god damn super-hero to these people. You get up there, go, sell it. No-one should know your shoulder hurts. (Susan)

This extended to more extreme displays of selflessness for some instructors. For instance, Susan felt guilty when she needed to cancel a class due to weather.

> Especially when you have to cancel. So, let's say it's snowing and you have to cancel your class. I nearly get diarrhea and I'm thinking, like, 'what am I going to do? I know Debbie's going to be there, she'll walk through an ice storm to get there. I need to get there.' And then my husband will say 'it's just exercise class, they'll live.' And I think, 'no, they won't.' They want it when they want it, because we have conditioned them to think that now is the time to do it. And we've like created the beast, but you've got to feed that beast. Like they're not

> going to follow you or think you're awesome if you're just not going to show up because it's freezing rain. (Susan)

In addition to displaying selflessness, as part of strategic friendliness these instructors said they had to present a good attitude. For instance, presenting a good attitude was so important to Diana that she said she would cancel her class if she wasn't feeling up to it.

> I find that if you go in with a bad attitude, it's hard to turn it around, until you can get into sort of like stage mode, or whatever. But I always try and fix it before I get there, and honestly, if I can't fix it, I've stepped out at the last minute. I don't want to give anyone an experience that's lesser than they're used to. I mean, sometimes it just happens, but I would never, I don't want to knowingly do that. (Diana)

A few of the instructors I spoke with talked about catering their playlists to members as a tactic of strategic friendliness that made class members feel comfortable by making members happy. For example, Susan said that playing the music members requested would make them happy.

> I usually try and remember who comes to my class and what they like to hear and what they like to do. And with step class having two different formats, right now it has a sporty format and a dance format, trying to keep track of what I did last week, because people are very good at keeping track of it. So, just trying to remember to please everyone in the group. (Susan)

She went on to relate that she wanted "to please other people" and for the "members to be happy" and that she made these efforts to make everyone happy at the expense of her own free personal time.

> My favourite thing is a request, because it just, you know it's going to make someone happy, because sometimes you'll work on a playlist and then you get there and they're like, oh, I hate this song. Okay, super-awesome, so glad I looked at my notes for this and like wasted my own personal time. But when you know you're making someone happy, it's a good feeling. (Susan)

Finally, for some instructors, part of strategic friendliness aimed at making group fitness class members comfortable was giving small gifts. For example, Rachael described

the time she bought a t-shirt for a member and how that simple act made the woman and other class members happy.

> There's a woman with a heart condition that comes every time to socialize, and she loves bunnies. So, she has a bunny, and she talks about her bunny and so I just make a thing about it. Like her bunny's name is Finnegan. I know all this shit. She can't have children. She pushes her bunny around in a cart. I have seen her pushing her bunny in a cart. I pull over to look at the bunny. It's like in a baby carriage. People think she has a baby and its bunny. And when I was buying Reebok clothes, they had a Reebok bunny shirt. I bought the shirt and brought it to boxing class. I gave the shirt as a gift and that affected everyone in the class. I spent 20 bucks on this woman who's highly invested in this exercise class and this group of people know she has a bunny. So, everybody in the class feels good about it and it makes everyone happy, just by doing that one simple thing.

Appearing Approachable An important part of strategic friendliness with class members for the instructors in my study was to appear approachable and appearing approachable for these informants involved being seen as a real person or a human being, making small talk with class members, and engendering trust, all of which involved emotional labour on the part of these instructors. For example, Diana told me:

> I think that I'm approachable and I think people will come talk to me. And you know, even if I can't remember their name, you know them, you've heard them talk about their injury, so you check in with them, and they feel close enough that they'll tell you stuff like that. (Diana)

Likewise, for Sarah, appearing approachable meant being seen as a "real person" by their group fitness class members. She said, "I'm not saying people idolise me, but you know, when they come up and talk to me, I try to be that real person, so that they can just talk to me." Similarly, for Diana being approachable meant being seen as a "human being" which involved remembering names and making small talk, things she said she was not very good at.

> I am not very good at it [talking with members]. I know I have to do it more. So, I try to go five minutes before class and like talk to these people so they know that I'm just human too. I like to talk to some of the people. I want them to know that like we're just normal Joe people. I'm not good at names. So, I do try to learn names. (Diana)

June also said that speaking to group fitness members before and after class was important even if she did not have anything particular to say. The emotional toll of strategic friendliness is evident in her words below.

> I think I'm scared … they're going to get bored. I don't know, maybe I shouldn't be. Yeah, but I don't feel I have a, like I'm not funny either, I don't make everybody laugh, I mean once in a while obviously so I always wonder what people [gym members] think about me. I try not to be hard on myself, but I'm just...yeah I'm just, you always worry about how people [gym members] perceive you and like I said I'm not funny. Like they definitely don't come to my class for the personality. (June)

Finally, for these informants, being seen as approachable means being seen as trustworthy which they do in part by "connecting" with group fitness class members. For instance, Bevan told me about the importance of coming to class early to greet new people and to welcome them in, believing this approach would create trust between him and the people who take his class.

> So, like, when I see a brand new [gym] member come in, I want them to feel like they can open up to me, because I want to know why did you come here? Like, before we even start class, why are you here? What did you hear about it? Was there something that deterred you? Is there something that brought you in? Or like, what's your life story? What's your goal? (Bevan)

Bevan went on to describe how before and after his classes members would talk to him, even about personal things, because they trust him.

> It's 'cause they trust you. Which is weird. They don't need to. But they do … Like, they're just telling somebody, and you have the role of, you're an instructor, 'I trust you, I'm going to tell you.' I think it kind of comes with like that job. (Bevan)

Group fitness instructors were purposeful in the ways they crafted their image for their gym classes and in the ways they wanted their members to view them. Rachael recounted how a small act of gift giving for one member impacted how the other class members saw her.

> That little thing of just buying her [a member] a bunny shirt, like it filtered into how other people saw me. 'Like oh my God, you're so nice!' 'You did that for her for no reason.' She wore it like every time. It's rewarding to do that kind of stuff because I don't do that kind of stuff normally. (Rachael)

Increasing & Maintaining Class Size Access to the teaching platform during desirable timeslots was the goal for many of the group fitness instructors I spoke with. In addition, the more members an instructor has in a class is viewed as a marker of a skilled and successful instructor by other instructors and management (Sappey & Maconachie, 2012). Thus, the number of members in their classes fosters both a sense of pride but is also a job requirement for the group fitness instructors who participated in my research. Instructors would remind their members, either in person or through social media, where that particular instructor would be teaching over the coming week so as to encourage the members to come back to class and to bring their friends; all in an effort to boost class participation numbers. Instructors do such things because low class numbers could result in their fitness class being cancelled by gym management. If classes are not bringing in enough revenue through gym memberships, those classes risk being terminated.

During my participant observation, I had a conversation with one instructor Kylie, about the number of people they needed to have in a class in order to teach the class. She told me that persistent low numbers meant a class would likely be cancelled.

> I need one plus person. I will teach the class to one person if I have to. Obviously, that is not ideal but if someone is going to make the effort to come in bad weather or whatever it is, I'll go teach them. In order for a class to not be cancelled or taken off the schedule, it has to have 10. Any less than 10 people over a course of 6 weeks means that class will likely be cancelled and replaced with something else. (Kylie, recorded in Field Notes – 12/11/2017)

Thus, these instructors feel pressure to maintain a solid base of regular class attendees to ensure that they keep their class numbers high enough to avoid cancellation. For instance, Rachael felt pressure to "be nice" so members continued coming to her class.

> I feel pressure to be nice to everybody. I feel pressure to give everybody what they want because I want them to keep coming because the second you say something wrong to somebody, the second you're not what they want you to be they have no problems telling everybody else and they have no problems not coming anymore. (Rachael)

In response to the pressure felt to please members, instructors engage in acts of strategic friendliness in efforts to increase the size of the classes that they teach. Most instructors want to teach to a full audience in the group fitness studio. In order to secure the classes and desired time slots, the tactics of appearing approachable and making class members comfortable both contribute to maintaining and increasing their class size. In addition, they used other strategies to ensure an adequate class size. For some, it was engaging in social events with class members; for others it meant catering to music requests or class members' tastes; singling out a key member for a special event or to give a gift; and for still others, it meant driving members to class. Whichever the specific strategy was, the aim was to develop a method of establishing connections with members to ensure that they keep coming back to class.

For example, Sarah pointed out that being approachable is important because, as she put it, members pick classes based on who the instructor is and not just for the workout

program alone. Thus, the people who take their classes "do seek out the instructors that they like and stay away from the instructors that they don't like" (Sarah). For instance, June wondered why people come to her classes, hoping that it was because they like her not only because of the workout that she provides.

> Is it just the timeslot? That's why they're there or is it for me? That's what I wonder about Saturday morning, like they're just coming for a workout and they don't really care who's there? Or do any of them come just because they like me? [laughs] It runs through your mind. And that makes me wonder, well do they even like me? I mean you want them to like you. Let's face it we do, we're human. (June)

And being approachable includes making class members comfortable as gym members gravitate to those instructors who participate genuinely in the sociable aspects of class, such as "chatting with people after class" (Sarah). And making class members comfortable also includes catering to their musical and other tastes. Susan put it this way:

> I want the members to want to come; I want them to think, 'I wonder what song she's going to play, like is she going to play my favourite track ten, Like I asked her about last week? Is she going to do it?' (Susan)

Erin also selects the songs for her class playlist and to make her members comfortable and intends this to demonstrate her commitment to members.

> Being super conscious about what I'm picking for playlists, are people going to like the songs? Do I have a good balance? Have I done them too much? Have I not done them enough? Do I have too much of something? You know, what kind of people are in the class? Is it going to make them stick around? Will they like it enough to come back? (Erin)

Sarah also listens to her class members' musical and other requests and tries to cater to their likes. In Sarah's words:

> There's a few people that will tell you what they liked in the class. Morgan [one of my class members] is very vocal, he doesn't like the weird noises, or newer

> music, so he tells me that, so if he says: 'I'm going to be there next week', I'll say: 'okay, well, I'll pick something that I know you like.' (Sarah)

In addition, to catering to musical tastes, strategies to make class members comfortable included catering to other member tastes. For instance, Rachael talked about the methods she employed when trying to motivate a member to come back to her class.

> Like I'll do the weirdest stuff. Like people will mention something really small to me. Like 'I like pink freezies.' This honest to God happened to me the other day. This girl's like, 'I like pink freezies.' I'm like 'I like white freezies'...So that's how I got into that conversation. Freezies is a common thing, right? So. she's like, 'I love pink freezies' and I'm like, 'I hate them. I have like 20,000 pink freezies in my freezer.' This is her first class with me. And I'm like 'okay, Tuesday. You come back Tuesday, I'll bring you two pink freezies' and she's like 'okay.' So, the time comes and of course people feel accountable because I've done something [for] them and she messages me, 'I don't think I'm going to come.' And I take a picture of the freezies. I'm like 'no, we made a deal, I'll see you there.' She was there. She's not going to forget it. She still comes to class. She thought it was hilarious.

In their efforts to maintain and increase class size by making class members comfortable, some members even provided transportation to fitness class for some class members. Susan told me about the lengths some female instructors go through for the members who take their class.

> And I mean, you'll hear of instructors driving members to classes. Like Sarah [the instructor] drives Nell [class member] to class every Friday night, … picks her up at work, like they don't work in the same building. She drives over, picks her up at work, takes her to the gym with her and then drives her home. (Susan)

I asked Susan if she thought that was a common thing that instructors do for the people in their classes. She replied:

> I don't know if that happens everywhere, but definitely in a small town like this, like I used to drive Jillian [class member] to the gym every Sunday, just because I found out she lived by me and she didn't have a second car, she was taking a cab to come to class. And Deanna [a class member] used to drive in from [another town], which is over an hour away. Like, we just have some

> really unique people that want to be at the gym, so we bring them. (Susan)

Displays of sociability like engaging in social events with class members is another tactic used by these instructors in their efforts to maintain and increase class size. For example, June told me about inviting a member to her gym's staff holiday party. While she said it was "fun" and it made the class member feel good; it also was a strategy that she used to make sure that member kept coming to her fitness class. According to June,

> One of them I took to the Christmas party with me. You could take somebody for free so why not take your favourite member? It was fun. It makes them feel good that you asked them. Then they keep coming to your class [laughs]. (June)

For several of the group fitness instructors that I spoke with, engaging in such social events puts pressure on them and takes an emotional toll. For example, Erin told me about the need to set boundaries in managing the relationships she has with class members but that she often does not because she thinks this would keep them from coming back to her class. She said that "for sure" class members have invited her to social events and although she did not want to participate in social events with members outside of class, she worried that declining invitations would mean members would stop coming to her class. In her words:

> I don't want to seem like I'm being rude, because then eventually they'll stop coming to my classes I feel like. And I feel like some members really actually just expect so much more than us just being their instructor. And it is, that's what builds those relationships and people coming back, but I just have to set boundaries for myself and I don't. (Erin)

Erin went on to discuss the pressure she felt from class members who expected more from the relationship with her than she did.

> I have to block it out sometimes and I just have to say, you know what, like if this person doesn't want to come to my class, because I can't listen to their life problems today, or I won't go out for margaritas with them, that's just what it

> will have to be. Because I don't have, I just don't have the room in my life for all of it and I don't want it in my life. (Erin)

And "all of it" can involve many tasks outside of preparing and teaching a fitness class. For example, Rachael told me about the importance of talking to all the members in her class; to keep them coming back.

> I do feel like if I don't answer everybody's question and I don't respond to everybody's email, if I don't respond to your text message, then you're not going to like me as much and you'll find someone else's class to go to or you'll find something else to do on Tuesday night. (Rachael)

Similarly, Erin said that she had to make sure she was "constantly" engaged in "keeping in contact with those people at the gym to make sure they're coming again" In her words: "'see you Friday!' And again, just coming prepared and knowing my class and make those people want to come back day after day" (Erin).

Strategic Friendliness with Other Instructors

Relationships also form between instructors within the same gyms. Often instructors need each other to cover classes when they are sick or to co-teach a class together; also known as team teaching. So positive relationships are strategically important to maintain between instructors. Group fitness instructors can also be competitors with each other as well as being colleagues. Thus, a significant aspect of the relationships they have with their colleagues is the feeling of "being judged" by fellow instructors and results in instructors engaging in strategic friendliness.

Being Judged A special kind of negative interaction these group fitness instructors experience is being judged by their colleagues. June saw being judged as something inherent in being an aerobics instructor. In her words: "There are some that, you know,

even though we're trying not to be judgmental, we are we're judgmental as people that's just the way it is" (June). These instructors spoke about their relationships with other instructors and the impact those relationships had on their emotions as well as their own teaching style. Diana talked about having other instructors in her class judge her which made her feel unsure of herself.

> If there are other instructors, however, in my class those nerves come back and I don't know if we do feel like we're being a little bit more judged because as instructors, like they know what to expect or maybe what you should be. So, I think those judgments sort of can creep in and you can become nervous again, but just generally it's not too bad. (Diana)

Erin elaborated on how competitive and intense she perceived her working environment to be when other instructors are in her class and how their presence adds to her sense of being judged.

> Because it's the most judgmental place that I've ever been, that room is, there's nothing more judgmental than that room. And I think it's because group fitness instructors have very intense personalities. I think we all are there for us and at the end of the day we all just want to be the best. And I think in our own little bubble, we're all in this competitive little bubble that we want to be the best and it's just there's so much personality, it's so intense. (Erin)

In turn, Rachael told me about her perceptions of being judged when other instructors took her class and how she becomes anxious about how well she embodies the company rules in performing her class.

> If there's instructors in my class, I get wary of doing everything right because you know they're judging you. They are 100 percent judging you. 'Are they better than me?' 'Are they doing it better than me?' 'Are they doing what they're supposed to do?' So, you have to play by the rules when other instructors show up in your class. (Rachael)

The Emotional Burden of Sociability

A negative consequence of the practice of strategic friendliness with class members and other instructors is that it can become emotionally burdensome for these group fitness instructors. For instance, Rachael explained how her classes and the relationships within them amount to more than just working out together. She emphasized how much she contributes to these relationships and the emotional toll they take on her.

> I give them a lot of myself. Like I give a lot. I will tell you anything. I will do anything. I'll work hard. I'll work hard to the point I don't care what I look like, it doesn't matter. Like you'll see everything I've got. It's a vulnerable place to be. So, it's a lot more complicated than just working out. (Rachael)

Likewise, Erin told me how much emotional labour she engages in in preparing for and teaching group fitness classes.

> It is, we put a lot in, we pour our heart and soul in for sometimes not getting a lot back, but we do it, because we love it and it's not always about what you get back. People [gym members] are passionate about group fitness I think, because of what we deliver. (Erin)

An emotional toll is taken when group fitness instructors, like Rachael, feel pressured to be sociable with class members. Rachael disclosed that she felt bad about when she declined participating in social events outside of class.

> So, they'll go to step class and then they organize something for their Friday night. Well, I teach early in the morning on Saturday so I have an out where I'm like 'you guys, really appreciate it, but I can't focus on what I got to do the next day if I go.' They did like an Escape room, right? And so, they do all this and they took the pictures and posted them [on social media] and the other two instructors that were invited went and part of it was like 'yeah, maybe I should have gone,' but, I don't do that with my regular friends. Like I don't go out with my real friends. If I'm going to go out, I should do it with them [my real friends]. It's weird, but there is a lot of pressure. I feel bad when I don't take them [class members] up on it [invitations to go out socially]. (Rachael)

Erin warned of the dangers of being friendly with members who then require more attention and time than she thought was reasonable saying "but then there's some [members] that they'll give you everything in the five minutes that you walk into the door, you'll hear it all." Likewise, Susan said she found that class members who shared too much personal information were emotionally burdensome.

> So those people often start off as my favourite members because they're often very enthusiastic and complementary and excited to be there. And they'll be your people on Facebook saying, you know, that was a great class, and so you think, 'oh, I love that person.' And then all of a sudden, they've become a burden to your life, because they're telling you all about their thyroid disease, and then their plantar fasciitis, and what do you think they should do about like the mole on their neck. And I just want to be like, 'I don't know what to do about the mole on your neck, respectfully, and I also don't have my sneakers on yet, or my water bottle filled up, and I'm here like, twenty minutes before class, just to talk to you and coach you through your life.' (Susan)

The emotional burden for Susan arises when the causal social conversations with members begin to take over her own emotional well-being. Initially Susan was happy to help her members as she got to know them but later found it burdensome. She said:

> It tends to become a friendship with these people that you see week after week after week, and you get to know their family situation, you get to know what's going on in their personal life. And it's great, because then you can cater to their needs, like if they're going through a breakup and you play all breakup songs, and like, give it. But when it tends to become you are then not just their aerobics instructor, but the therapist too, and the doctor and the nurse and what do I do about this rash on my back, it just becomes a little bit cumbersome. (Susan)

What is "cumbersome" for Susan is that she finds these interactions with her group fitness class members to be emotionally burdensome.

> But yeah, it is, it's definitely an emotional burden. Or when people are going through hard times because someone is always going through a hard time; like, for a lot of people, life is really hard and there's always something to bring someone down. But it's neat that they do feel comfortable telling you about it,

> like their fitness instructor, like not their friend, not their mother, not their sister-in-law, like their fitness instructor. (Susan)

Although Susan was quick to point out how she valued being someone's confidant even though it is not something she is professionally trained in and something she manages by distancing herself from class members.

> I think it's a real privilege that that is what they want me for, but that is not something I'm trained in. So, I feel like if those types of people start out as my favourite and then quickly turn into people that I try and distance myself with a little bit. Like I stay in the relationship with them, but I do tend to feel exhausted by them. (Susan)

Similarly, Kylie told me how she tries to avoid fitness class member who share "too much" as she cannot carry their emotional load in addition to her own. In her words:

> It's strange, because I always like it when people share some of themselves with you, but then there comes that dangerous day where they start sharing too much of themselves with you, and then you are carrying their burdens as well as your own. (Kylie)

But like Susan above, Kylie feels conflicted as she also thinks there is something positive about these encounters, which she tries to see as a compliment.

> But I just really think it's a huge, it's a huge compliment, and to take a step back and remember that. Because I think when you're in it, you're kind of thinking like, 'oh my land, can you leave me alone for five seconds, okay?' (Kylie)

Particular class members Rachael finds burdensome are those who do not understand that in addition to being a fitness instructor, she is also a full-time mother.

> Like they want to be you and I get that, but they're not looking at who you really are. It's not my whole life. It's not me. It's kind of me but it's not me. It's weird. Who they think you are is the persona of who you really are in real life, they forget that. I'm folding laundry. I'm cleaning up puke. I'm bathing children. Like I'm living a real life. I don't tell them any of that unless I have to remind them like 'I don't have time because …' Like last night they [the member] texted me, 'What are you up to?' 'Like putting my kid to bed and

> listening to the 19 tracks I'm going to teach tomorrow [said in a sarcastic tone].' (Rachael)

Erin also finds those members who expect her to be more to them than just an instructor difficult to handle. Erin calls them "energy leaches," meaning those members who are emotionally draining.

> Yeah, some I have found that like, it's all or nothing. You listen and you take their [the member's] stress and they want to give it to you all, and that is when they want to go out for margaritas or like have you over or get offended when they're not invited to a gathering that I am hosting or, so it's literally all or nothing...So yeah, I guess navigating through those people can be a little bit tricky. I just use my best judgment and try to steer clear of people that I can tell are going be big energy leaches, I do my best. (Erin)

Corey differentiated between those members who he characterizes as asking for "legitimate advice" and those members who tell him their personal history. For Corey, "legitimate advice" relates to health and fitness questions or direct questions about the class he teaches. Class members who delve into personal stories with him are members he has no time for.

> Every so often there's some weird person who wants to tell you their entire history of their work and their injuries and stuff and you sit there, and you just listen and you say 'yeah, great.' But if they're asking legitimate advice, I have no problem giving lots of time to that. (Corey)

Finally, the emotional impact of negative interactions can manifest on the bodies of these group fitness instructors. For example, Erin described encounters with one member she found particularly difficult to deal with who always complained about the volume of the music used in her group fitness class. Erin disclosed that she felt "attacked" and that the stress of interacting with this member caused bodily reactions.

> Yeah, I used to have one lady that really, really touched on that a lot, and I think it was actually personally just attacking me, because I've seen her in other people's classes that would very, very obviously have music louder than me,

but she would always complain about mine. To the point that I couldn't even like hear the beat, and she'd say it was too loud, so it was more of a personal attack. She actually like gave me a rash one time; I was so stressed out over her. (Erin)

Really? She gave you a physical reaction? (Interviewer)

Yes, because I was so stressed. I had to get a cream to get rid of it. (Erin)

Discussion

Group fitness instructors are expected to be welcoming ambassadors for gym members, while also creating positive experiences for those people who take their classes (Vogel, 2018, p. 38). Thus sociability (Simmel & Hughes, 1949) characterizes the interactions that occur within group fitness spaces. According to Simmel and Hughes (1949, p. 255; see also Simmel, 1895; Simmel 1912), sociability involves the "play-form of association." That is, "social interaction and human association" occurs where individuals interact for the mutual enjoyment of each other's company (Simmel & Hughes, 1949, p. 255). These instructors use their physical capital (Bourdieu, 1984; Shilling, 1994) in the performance of their jobs while simultaneously creating fitness experiences by engaging in varying displays of sociability with their class members.

One of the things that is characteristic of the sociability between these group fitness instructors and the people who take their classes is trust (Eayrs, 1993; Soulliere, 1997). Finding trustworthy front-line service workers (Eayrs, 1993; Soulliere, 1997) to engage with in the bodywork individuals must undertake within contemporary risk society (Beck, 1992) is part of how group fitness members self-manage risks to their health (Lupton, 1999; Pickard, 1998). Therefore, making efforts to be sociable, including being approachable and making class members comfortable, is part of how the group fitness instructors that

participated in my research strive to demonstrate their trustworthiness. In addition to being seen by their class members as trustworthy, these group fitness instructors engaged in activities purposefully designed to make themselves be seen as nice or likable and therefore can be conceptualized as signs given in their presentation of self (Goffman, 1959). While most enjoyed at least some of the sociability they engaged in with class members, many of the instructors I spoke with found the pressure to be sociable outside of working hours to be emotionally burdensome. Also taking an emotional toll on these instructors was having to participate in what Harness et al. (2021) calls surface friendships. This occurs when group fitness class members assume friendships with their instructors, where the instructors themselves do not necessarily feel there is a friendship relationship.

The instructors in my study display sociability through the interactions they have with their class members that involve everything from talking with members before and after class to participating in social events with them outside of fitness class. Two instructors even recounted how they regularly provided transportation for individuals to attend their classes. These are all tactics of sociability these instructors learned via occupational socialization (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). While some informants enjoyed this aspect of their job, others recounted times when encounters with fitness class members were negative, both inside and outside of the gym class. For some informants the emotions caused by the stress they feel from these negative encounters is embodied (Fruend, 1990) as in the classes of one informant who told me about the rash she developed on her body in response a class member who complained aggressively to her symbolizes how emotions are literally inscribed on the body. More of the women than men instructors talked about how they felt about the negative feedback from members. Sometimes members would

complain about instructors' classes, their music selection, or other unkind comments said to instructors. This is reflective of normative gender roles consistent with the binary model of gender (Bornstein, 1994; Hird, 2002).

Also consistent with the binary model of gender, fitness instruction is a gendered occupation that takes place within a heteronormative (English, 2020) and feminized space (Dworkin, 2003; Haravon-Collins, 2002) where the majority of instructors are women and where, in general, class members are female with fewer males participating in group fitness classes (Parviainen, 2014, p. 320). The male instructors tend to teach more normatively masculine fitness classes like boxing, biking, or combat style workouts (Gill, Henwood, & McLean, 2005). Thus, the displays of sociability these group fitness instructors engage in involve interactions with others that are also gendered.

Interactions between gym class members and the instructors in my study reflect normative constructs of gender. For instance, one male instructor, Dan, asserted that men's bodies do not move in certain ways that he understood as normatively feminine and that men do not like doing certain types of hand or body movements that they fear could be labelled homosexual. Dan's assumptions regarding the way men's bodies move are consistent with the work of Adam's (2005) where she synthesis the relationship between dance and men's bodies. Adam's (2005, p. 84) concludes that dance, and arguably also aerobics in this case, is thought to be quite "effeminate" especially in the West, and "to be effeminate is one of the biggest transgressions a man can make." Similarly, Dan also made efforts to manage the impressions he gave to his classes by avoiding doing certain dance movements because he believed they would be signs given off his body that he is homosexual (Goffman, 1959, 1967). Again, this hyper awareness of supposed feminine

movements echoes the work of Adams (2005 p. 64) and the fixation on male bodies performing only "manly" activities; all reflective of the binary model of gender, heteronormativity, and homophobia.

In addition, another male instructor expressed anxiety about class members thinking that he was homosexual because he teaches group fitness classes. This is something that he assumed was a widespread belief in society and an example of how individuals engage with the generalized other (Mead, 1962[1934]) when they make assumptions about what 'people' in society might think of them. Both of these instances of gendered interactions are a form of homohysteria (McCormack & Anderson, 2014) that reflects the heteronormativity (English, 2020) and homophobia (O'Donohue & Caselles, 1993) that characterizes group fitness classes. In addition, a female instructor described the way she changes her language using science based instructional cues from the discipline of kinesiology when men entered her class, on the sexist assumption that men like, understand, and relate to science more so than women do (Glick et al., 2000; Kuchynka et al., 2018).

Also reflecting normative masculinity, heteronormativity, and sexism in these gendered interactions, two male instructors talked about the fitness gym as a place to meet women and one of them admitted to having used his job as a way to find women to date. This is similar to the findings of Parviainen (2014, p. 320) who found that male instructors more openly "flirted" with female gym members while "receiving greater applause and admiration from female customers than their female colleagues received." All of which demonstrates that there are distinct gender differences in the relationships, and the

acceptance of sexist and homophobic normative gendered behaviour that occur within the fitness studio.

In addition to being gendered, displays of sociability for the group fitness instructors I spoke with also included acts of strategic friendliness. Group fitness instructors are actively engaged in relationship building with the members who come to their classes. In this way, instructors feel as they are providing good service to their class members. However, the relationships between fitness instructors and their clients or colleagues are made up of a series of carefully calculated interactions some of which can be conceptualized as "strategic friendliness" (Pierce, 1999, p. 72). The informants in my study practiced strategic friendliness when they engaged in goal-oriented action such as arriving early to class to strike up conversations with members; when they create playlists to suit their members' musical tastes or play a class member's favourite song; in driving members to and from the gym; in participating in social events outside of the gym with class members; in staying after class to help members learn the movements that go with fitness programs; and generally in being extremely personable to everyone in their class; regardless of how they may personally feel about a member. Pierce (1995, p. 72) considers the use of strategic friendliness as a "form of emotional manipulation of another person for a strategic end…in order to create a particular impression." In the instances of strategic friendship practiced by the instructors I spoke with, I saw no evidence of malicious emotional manipulation, rather, what I did see in many cases was purposeful action intended to achieve a goal.

Further to the goal they had regarding class members, the group fitness instructors I spoke with discussed how they had to manage the occupational hierarchy within the

fitness studio and maintain a presentation of friendly relationships with other instructors in front of gym members, even if they did not like each other.

Toward more than any other end, these instructors used strategic friendliness with the goal of maintaining and increasing class size which reflects Parviainen's (2014, p. 320) finding that fitness gyms were apt to recruit and hire female instructors who "exude enthusiasm that resonates with customers." All the instructors I interviewed began teaching at the same hourly rate. Each year they incremental receive a dollar per hour raise. Therefore, the longer an instructor has been employed by that gym, the more per hour they make regardless of skill level or ability. Because compensation is based on time in, the only way to separate oneself from other instructors is through personality, skill, class time slot, or, and of particular relevance here, class size.

Thus, the popular instructors who effectively engage in strategic friendliness for members have class attendance numbers that far exceed those who fail to craft an image of being approachable and personable and try to make the members feel good about attending classes. These instructors gave examples of the intimate conversations that happened before and after classes, and the times they would drive members to classes. The pressure to be sociable and maintaining class size is something new instructors felt more keenly than those who had been working in group fitness instruction longer. The use of "strategic friendliness" in this way also helps to further establish the instructor as an expert service worker, one who occupies an in between status of employment; one who is not a traditional front line service worker but has also not yet achieved professional status and, of particular relevance to my findings, uses "knowledgeable, customized, interactive labour" throughout the course of their work (George, 2008, p.115).

All displays of sociability, whether they be negative interactions, gendered interactions, or acts of strategic friendliness, can be experienced as emotionally burdensome by the instructors who took part in my research. These emotional burdens also come from the assumptions of friendship made by the people who take their classes and the associated feelings of guilt these instructors feel when they do not want to be sociable before and after class; when they decline to engage in social events with class members; or when they worry that they haven't done enough to make themselves be seen as a popular instructor. All of which reflects Simmel's (1950 [1908]) notion of the stranger, one who has a general connection with others. In this case the general tie is participation in group fitness. And the character of the relationship that is forged with the stranger is one of surface friendships (Harness et al. 2021). Emotional burdens also result when they are expected to be a sounding board and a therapist for these class members something common to other forms of front-line service work (Page et al., 2021) and characteristic of the stranger who "often receives the most surprising revelations and confidences, at times reminiscent of a confessional, about matters which are kept carefully hidden from everybody with whom one is close" (Simmel 1950 [1908], p.145).

The emotional burden they carry is also evident in their recognition that they can not bear their class members emotional loads as well as their own. In addition, it comes from their feeling of being judged by other instructor and, finally, the burden comes from a failure of the process of occupational socialization (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979) to prepare these instructors for the negative encounters they will likely have with their group fitness class members.

In this chapter I discussed my analysis of how the group fitness instructors that took part in my research experience emotional labour and sociability. This included the negative and gendered interactions they have and how they practice strategic friendliness with class members and other instructors, as well as the emotional burden all of this entails. These emotional burdens come from negative interactions with angry class members, as noted above, but it also comes from class members not recognizing or valuing how much they give of themselves or how much they sacrifice in other part of their lives in order to teach their group fitness classes. Therefore, in the following chapter I present the findings of how these instructors manage the emotional labour of being a group fitness instructor.

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE EMOTIONAL LABOUR OF FITNESS INSTRUCTION

In this chapter I focus on how fitness instructors experience emotional labour while fulfilling the roles and responsibilities of being a group fitness instructor. While the previous two chapters contained my analysis of the emotional impact of the embodied nature of emotional labour and the emotional burdens associated with the emotional labour of sociability, in this chapter I present my findings related to the emotional labour involved in doing the official work of fitness instruction.

I begin this chapter with discussion around the conceptual category of company mandated emotional labour which includes analysis of the pressure to create fitness experiences and the subsequent emotions that come with either embracing the company mandated rules for fitness experiences or making efforts to resist it by making the fitness class experience their own. I follow this with a discussion of devotee work, a conceptual category containing analysis where I argue that fitness instruction is conceptualized by participants as a hobby rather than a job. The final conceptual category is burden and sacrifice which includes conceptualization of these instructors' experience of the triple and quadruple burdens of the paid work of fitness instruction, the unpaid work they do in preparation for teaching their group fitness classes, and unpaid work in the home, as well as the gendered nature of how they respond to these burdens (see Figure 3 below).

At its core, the concept of emotional labour refers to the pressure to evoke or suppress emotions while at work (Hochschild, 1983). In the case of the experiences of the group fitness instructors that participated in my research there is no explicit management

direction on how to feel while teaching, but there is an acutely felt pressure to create fitness experiences for members. And there are certainly company mandated rules on the use of emotions in their work a group fitness instructor.

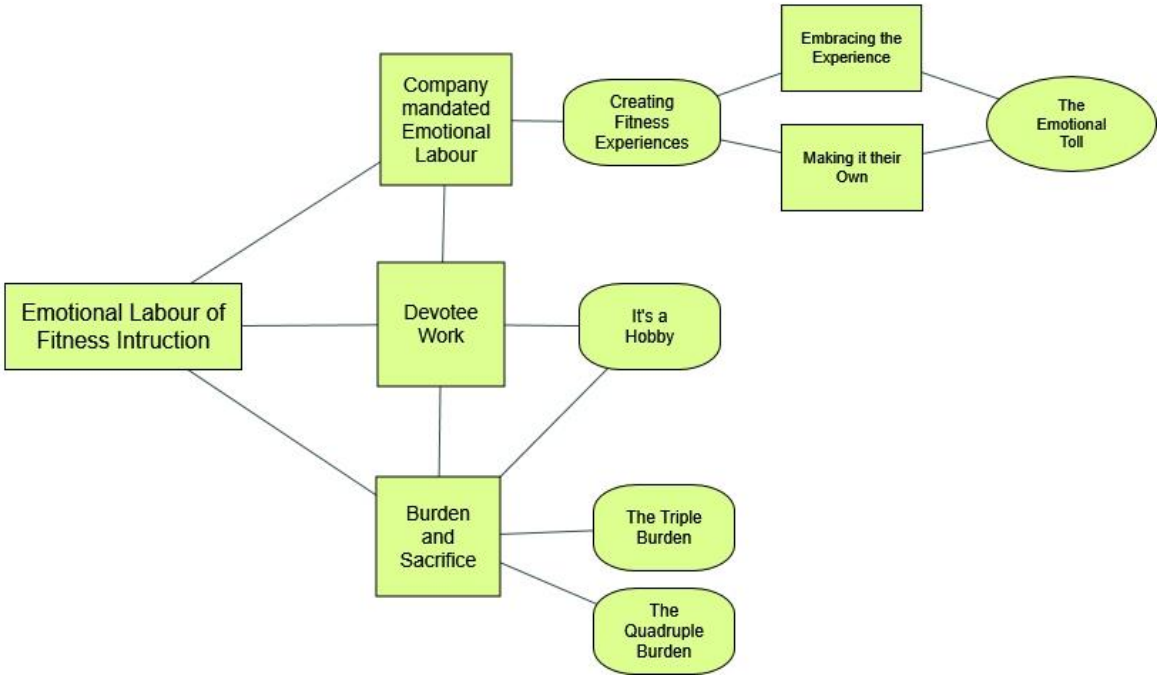

Figure 3. Emotional Labour of Fitness Instruction

Company Mandated Emotional Labour

In this section I present my findings related to the conceptual category of company mandated emotional labour which includes how these instructors' emotions are implicated in creating a fitness experience and how they use their emotions while teaching their classes. In turn, it includes concepts that signify how they embrace the material provided by the company. The group fitness instructors told me that the company they work for

mandates the content and style of the fitness classes they teach through written and unwritten rules that extend to how these instructors present their bodies and interact with the people who take their classes. In Rachael's words:

> The company rules.... The rules, the rules. There [are] rules of teaching class, there [are] rules on how to teach class, rules of what you can say, what you can do, what you should wear, how you should look. Some rules are written out for us and others we just know from being around it. (Rachael)

Rachael also pointed out the group culture, in her words, the cult, that the fitness company aims to promote and the rules it contains. She spoke explicitly about having to conform to her gym's standard for their instructors, including how to interact with members, how to eat, train, and sleep. She also recounted how the company she works for uses the word tribe to speak about their workers in a collective sense.

> When they talk to us as instructors, they refer to us as a tribe, right? You could compare [the gym company] to a cult. If we were all there, physically there it would absolutely have those same characteristics because they tell you how to sleep, how to eat, how to work out, how to act, how to have a happy attitude, how to connect. We have videos on how to connect with people, what to say to people, how to feel, how to feel when this happens. Like they will give you directions on every single thing in your life including how to eat and when to eat and yeah. Like as a rationale human being, it's advice that's given to you. It's not like it's a dictatorship but they do tell you if you want to be our standard of excellence, you need to do what we tell you to do. (Rachael)

The use of the word tribe in this context is problematic as it should not be used by white businesses as it reflects colonialism and racialized thinking (Elitrier, 2019; McKay et al., 2002). This issue and the issue of racism in the world of group fitness is discussed in more detail in the discussion section of this chapter and in the discussion section of Chapter Five – The Embodied Nature of group Fitness, and in Chapter Two, Contextualizing Group Fitness.

Finally, Susan told me about pressure from the gym management to always please members no matter what, one of the rules that have been "beaten into" them as group fitness instructors engaged in company mandated emotional labour.

> I do think that a sort of pack mentality, or just even the opinion of others because we are trying to please them [gym members], and when you're not pleasing them, it feels wrong. And I think maybe that's been beaten into us a little bit by the company we work for, because we always talk about members first, and if there's a member who needs this, well, then we give them that twenty times over. So maybe that's part of it. (Susan)

Thus, among the managerial rules they must follow and the standards they must meet, a core aspect of the corporate culture of group fitness are the fitness experiences these instructors are mandated to create and provide to the people who take their classes.

Creating Experiences

An overarching rule of the corporate culture within their fitness facilities is that group fitness instructors are required to create experiences for the gym members who came to their classes. The instructors explained that the expectation from management was to make their classes more than just an exercise class, and instead by using materials provided by their employers, make it an 'experience' for members. The group fitness instructors that took part in this research talked with me about the range of emotions they felt before, during, or after teaching their classes. They said that they understood the implicit and explicit company mandated requirement for emotional expression in creating fitness experiences for their class members. To demonstrate, these instructors, used their emotions to teach in order to make their classes more dynamic. For example, Erin told me that

because she feels “passionate” about group fitness, her emotions are necessarily engaged when she teaches her classes.

> But exercising and then teaching exercise to people and the movement to music, the presentation, the performance, the connections, like it’s all a part of it and there’s a lot of emotion put into that too, when you are so passionate about something. (Erin)

Sarah also used her emotions to teach and, in her case, she said that she used anger to bring out the best in teaching cycling. In addition, she used teaching cycling classes as a means of managing the negative emotions she was experiencing because she has been fired from her job. In her words:

> I use it to my advantage. So, in cycling class, being a little bit angry is a good thing. I taught the day I got let go from one of my jobs. They had to lay off people because there wasn’t enough work, and I went in and taught cycling and it was the biggest stress relief. (Sarah)

Using their emotions in this way is something two of the male instructors I spoke with were less comfortable with. For instance, Corey wanted to be different from other instructors who he characterized as being “dramatic” in teaching their classes.

> Quite frankly the cycling people piss me off. They just have stupid things they say. They’re all like, ‘oh we’re into the feel of it.’ It’s just too dramatic for me. I mean Ben has made it dramatic and Amanda has made it dramatic, and they all want to be like Ben and I do not want to be like Ben, but I can push a big class and I don’t have to talk about the journey and all that other shit and I don’t need to do that. So, my style is different. Every style is different. But I’d rather be a little different. (Corey)

Corey does want to differentiate himself from the other cycling instructors whom he thinks are dramatic because they bring in the visual aspect of the ride by describing it as a journey, whereas Corey, in his words, wants to push a big class. By calling the other instructors dramatic, he is using coded language for appearing or acting gay. And Bevan disclosed how he doesn’t always like the company mandated choreography that he is supposed to be

delivering but that he still brings out the emotions required even if they were not authentic to him. In his words,

> I don't know if they [class members] can tell that I really don't like the move or the song, but a lot of the times, I really don't. But if you have to teach it, you gotta go for it, so I'll pretend that I love it. (Bevan)

In addition to requiring that they use their emotions, creating experiences also means presenting different versions of themselves for these group fitness instructors. For instance, the instructors that I spoke with teach on an elevated stage facing their members. Most talked about how the experience of being up on a stage in front of people often helped their performance or their ability to present an instructor identity. As Bevan put it, "you're an instructor when you're on that stage." Bevan also described how being on stage aids him in being more dynamic in the presentation of his instructor identity while he creates experiences.

> I feel like I'm more important onstage. Like, I need to have a certain representation of myself, so I'm that person. Like, when I'm teaching a high cardio class, I'm that person. When I'm participating in a high cardio class, I'm another person. If I'm out for a walk, I'm a different person. I feel like onstage, I'm totally different. I'm more energetic. I pretend that I care more. I try to. (Bevan)

Further, Sarah told me it is necessary to switch instructor identities depending on the different types of classes she instructs and the different experiences she is creating. She put it this way,

> I guess that's where, you know, teaching multiple programs is an advantage, because right away, I already have to switch on different personalities to go teach my class, depending on what it is. (Sarah)

And Susan found the ability to lose herself in the company provided choreography allowing her to ignore negative emotions and assume her instructor identity; in her words, become

her “stage me.” In this way, Susan embraces the experience she is mandated to provide as a group fitness instructor.

> But I find the minute class starts, I can sort of get rid of it [a negative mood], and honestly, I think it’s because of the pre-choreographed style of the class. That if it were my choreography and my music, I might get lost with my thoughts and with the whole thing. But with it being bigger than me, I think I can quickly turn on, like, stage me, and just go for it. (Susan)

Moreover, some of these instructors are aware that the experiences that they are providing in their group fitness classes are a branded product that they are selling on behalf of the fitness companies that they work for. According to Rachael,

> They sell their product to us which is a small audience. So, they [the fitness company] have this small group of immaculately fit, amazing people that they have to literally trickle their stuff down to us who in turn trickles it down to everybody else [gym members]. They [the fitness company] realize that okay, what they eat is going to affect the way they look and how much they sleep is going to affect the way they teach and what about those people that really aren’t good at socializing? Like I mean it, they will literally give you skills on everything in life. (Rachael)

None-the-less, most of the instructors that took part in my research were quite happy to embrace the group fitness experience mandate of the fitness companies they work for.

Embracing the Experience

The instructors I spoke with told me that the companies they work for require that they teach pre-choreographed materials. This means that the instructors are supplied with the music, the movements and choreography, and what to say to class members including safety and body positioning cues, as well as motivational cues. Instructors are given the essentials for teaching a fitness class and creating experiences, then are paid to deliver those materials. Most of the instructors I interviewed were comfortable with this

arrangement and had little desire to, as Erin put it, “freestyle,” meaning creating their own group fitness routines set to music. Erin when on to say,

> I couldn’t imagine it any other way. I think that I learn best that way, I don’t think I could ever do freestyle…. I love pre-choreographed stuff, like I said, I like that I don’t have to think about it, they’re giving it to me and telling me what to do, what to say or what you can say and then add your own personality to it. It just makes it easy, it’s simple, you’ve just got to learn it. (Erin)

Dan agreed with Erin and told me that because he already had a career that dominates his time he “enjoys” that he is given material as this means he doesn’t have to create it himself.

> I actually enjoy that it’s already done for me because I have … my real-life big boy job, so I’m a big believer in teaching my program and leaving, that’s kind of how I roll, so I would never want to create my own moves or anything like that, I like that it’s given to me and I like that I can stick to a script, so I actually enjoy that element of it. (Dan)

Sarah told me that she is not “creative”, so she appreciates and is reassured that she is given material to create experiences. She said that they help her do everything “right” and that she couldn’t imagine teaching any other way.

> It’s the only way I’d do it. I am not creative; I am an engineer, so I’m, these are the rules, this is how it works. I can’t come up with new things to say, so when they actually had it in the notes that said, say this here, I was actually a little bit more comfortable, because I didn’t have to think too much, and I could focus on the moves, making sure I was doing the moves right, making sure the participants were doing the moves right. (Sarah)

Similarly, Diana said that she like having the choreography and videos as she is able to learn new ways to craft the experiences she is presenting as part of group fitness instruction.

> It is nice when you receive the choreography or the videos to get new words to say or terms to better help the participants, to connect to the pose, to the rhythm, to the fluidity of it all. So, I find the videos, I always have the sound on the first few times that I do it to pick up what the instructors are saying because you know, we’re constantly learning. I like to learn and we’re never perfect. So, I do, I like the choreography stuff. (Diana)

Similar to the experiences of Sarah, Erin, and Diana above, Susan accepted the choreographed materials and enjoyed that aspect of her work providing group fitness experiences. She told me that she found "freedom" in the restrictions of the company mandated pre-choreographed material.

> I honestly find more freedom in it, because I don't have to think of the moves, and I don't have to pick the music, and I don't have to speed it up to a certain amount of beats per minute, so I can really be myself within the program, rather than trying to build the entire thing up, which has been like a huge relief. (Susan)

Finally, Rachael told me that anyone could be a fitness instructor because the company she worked for gave them everything they needed to teach their classes but pointed out that the amount of time one wanted to invest in it would be dependent on how "good" one wanted to be at instructing. In her words,

> Like anybody could be a fitness instructor. Like anybody can physically do this job. They give you everything you need to know, to teach a class. Anybody can do that. It's how good you want to be that determines like how much of your life you're going to invest in it. (Rachael)

Thus, these instructors do not entirely passively consume the company provided material, they use to create fitness experiences, instead they make efforts to make these company branded fitness experiences their own.

Making It Their Own

While many of the instructors I spoke with liked having company provided material to help them in creating group fitness experiences, there were some instructors who felt restricted by it and found ways to resist what they experience as corporate control of how they perform fitness instruction. They do so by making efforts to make their fitness class experiences their own. Several of the instructors I spoke with described their own personal

methods of resisting the choreography given including Linda who said, “if I’m teaching a class, I teach it the way I want to teach it” and Diana who said “you can still use your words. You can still be you.” Likewise, Glen told me about how he makes the group fitness class his own by putting himself into how he delivers the experience.

> Even though we are given choreography it’s still you that’s presenting it and it’s you that puts your personality into it and it’s your time and it’s your words and it’s your everything, even though it’s not your material. (Glen)

Linda also makes her fitness class her own by not following company prescribed wording. Instead, she changes it to fit what she thinks will be meaningful for different fitness class members.

> And you don’t have to follow them word for word. You can say things like it’s ‘proprioception’ instead of ‘floaty,’ you know? You do your own scripting for the most part. You have to say certain things but after you’ve taught it for a while you know it ‘brace your abs, tuck your chin in’ and all those things are all the same, right? (Linda)

Similarly, Corey said that he resists the cues provided to him by the fitness company he works for because they make him feel “constrained” and instead asserts his individuality in using his own language and “style” to make the class his own.

> So, I have my own different cues. I very rarely follow their cueing. I do my own stuff. I use it as a guide, but I do my own stuff and I try to layer it because I don’t want to feel constrained to say exactly what they say. Never do. (Corey)

Even those who do also embrace the group fitness materials provided by the companies they work for, they, like Erin, use their own “creativity” to make the fitness experience their own.

> I like to think I’m creative in certain ways and I can build on to what somebody has given me to work with, just like in my other job, I’m a hairstylist. Somebody gives me an idea, I can work with that, which I feel the same way about the pre-choreographed music is given, it’s all laid out, and then here add your personality to it. I love it. I can’t imagine it any other way. (Erin)

Despite the modification that some instructors make to the packaged program their fitness companies provide them with, Rachael expressed clearly how there is "no escaping" the corporate mandated rules of creating fitness experiences and described how easily she got caught up in the messaging from management on how to be successful in her classes.

> It's a complete lifestyle adjustment if you want it to be and see, this is the thing. Like the gym sets you up on how you should act all the time and who you should be all the time. So, the people that create our workouts, they tell us what you should eat, what you should wear, what your belief system should be. Like they tell you what a healthy lifestyle looks like in its entirety, and they feed us this through Facebook, through our educational videos. There's no escaping it. (Rachael)

As a group fitness instructor, Rachael knew that the company was doing this because she is "selling their product" by providing fitness experiences based on company materials in her group fitness classes. Rachael recognized the capitalist intent behind the advice and guidance she is given from her management team but said that she does not feel forced to apply any of it. Yet, she opts to abide by what is given to her because she says that it "works;" and that she gets "caught up in it."

> How much you take from it is completely up to you, but if you follow what they want you to do, I can't say it doesn't work. I can't say that they're full of shit, they're not … They know what they're talking about. They know what they're doing, and they give you everything, every single thing down to their own food pyramid, down to their own cleanse, 21-day diet. Everything is there, like every single thing. So, it's fascinating to me. It's like the motherland...They're like 'head office' [used hands in air quote gesture]. And you get caught up in it because you want to be that you want to be them. Like if you're really invested in the gym you want to be exactly like them. So, you do it. You do everything they suggest. (Rachael)

And getting "caught up" in delivering the company mandated and branded group fitness experiences takes an emotional toll on the group fitness instructors that took part in my research.

The Emotional Toll of Group Fitness Instruction The "lifestyle adjustments" (Rachael) required by company mandated fitness experiences and the rules concerning how they may present themselves as fitness instructors, rules that they feel are "beaten" (Susan) into them do not come without a cost. Some instructors told me it felt as if there is no escape from the emotional toll it has on them. For instance, Linda disclosed how following company rules to be sociable with class members before and after class was not something she was able to do as the pressure to create fitness experiences for her class members leaves her emotionally drained, in her words, "done."

> I give absolutely everything on that stage, absolutely everything I have. So, like you asked, 'do you talk to people after class?' chances are I don't. I don't. I don't seek people out after a class. People can come to me, but after a class I'm pretty well done. (Linda)

The emotional toll of providing group fitness experiences ultimately led to some group fitness instructors feeling as if they were not appreciated by the companies they work for. Sarah explained that her company sends out an annual survey to gauge the commitment and contentment of the employees. Questions include employee length of service, employee fulfillment with their current job, and employee's satisfaction rating of their company, among other job satisfaction questions. Sarah elaborated this way,

> I think my relationship is pretty good with them [class members] … You know, I just filled out that employee survey, I don't feel like I'm valued by my employer. I feel like I'm valued by the participants in my class, and that's what really matters.

In addition, the female instructors I interviewed were more expressive than male instructors in describing the emotional impact company mandate instruction has had on them. Including telling me how badly they feel when they thought their classes had not gone well.

For example, Rachael used the term “spectrum of emotions” to describe her experience of instructing her group fitness classes.

> So, there’s a spectrum of emotions depending on the way your class goes, 100 percent. It’s a very real emotional thing that you go through almost every time. You could teach a class and feel so good and you can teach a class and feel like that you shouldn’t be teaching anymore. Usually there is no middle ground, its one end of the spectrum to the other. (Rachael)

In turn, Diana blames herself for delivery of a class that she experienced as not very good even if she knew no one else thought so.

> So, I’ll remember. Nobody else is thinking about, you know, that you fucked up. You’re thinking about it all night, all the next day. It’s there. You don’t forget. You’re punishing yourself. (Diana)

These group fitness instructors are expert service workers as, according to George (2008, p. 115), they are those who work in the service industry, and who also possess specialized knowledge and skills that “often involves the performance of knowledgeable, customized interactive labour” and who physically display their abilities and competencies while on the teaching stage and who use their emotions to create fitness experiences for the people who take their classes. They use strategic friendliness (Pierce, 1995) in their interactions with both fellow instructors and class members by appearing approachable and making members comfortable in order to navigate the social interactions that occur within the fitness studio while trying to further establish their rightful place in the class of expert service workers. This is important, because of the passion they feel for teaching fitness, how much of themselves they put into providing fitness experiences, and the emotional labour that this requires, the work of group fitness instruction can be conceptualized as a form of devotee work (Stebbins, 2017).

Devotee Work

Devotee work is a job that is remunerated and allows the individual to have "a strong, positive attachment to a form of self-enhancing work" (Stebbins, 2017, p. 156). And the instructors that I spoke with told me over and over how much they enjoy teaching group fitness. For instance, Sarah said, "I love performing" and Erin said, "we do it because we love it." Moreover, the instructors (Dan, Erin, and Susan) that took part in my study said that it was something they have a "passion" for it and that they dedicate a large portion of their daily lives to their work as group fitness instructors. As Rachael explained, being a fitness instructor changed her whole life and she compared this devotee work to adopting a religion.

> You got to make sure that this is something you're willing to really like to devote yourself to. It's like a religion, it really is because it's not like … I can't go teach boxing and then eat whatever the fuck I want for five days and then go teach boxing again. I mean I could, but that's not what it's about. Like it's not about the one hour. It'll change your whole life. (Rachael)

What Rachael meant by "religion" is that she sees the level of total dedication and subservience to an imposed routine required to be a fitness instructor engaged in devotee work as similar to that of being a cult member or a follower of Scientology.

> I tell people, 'you must love what you do.' Love it or you'll just do it half ass. You might like what you do and do it half ass, but if you want to be good, if you want to be the best, if you want to be like the image, they [the company] has created for you, you want to like sleep with it, live with it, eat with it, you live it. This is you. This is now your everything. You become … It's like being a Scientologist. Fucking live it. Like you've got to be in the cult. Like do it. That's how it is. And we all do it because we drank the Kool-Aid. (Rachael)

Others likened their passion for their devotee work to being addicted to drugs. For example, Linda said that to be a group fitness instructor one has to have an addiction.

> My husband always says, 'you know, you could be shooting heroin but you don't, you go to the gym.' Yeah, I don't shoot heroin. Yeah, you got to do something. You've got to have an addiction. May as well be going to the gym as opposed to shooting heroin sort of thing, you know. (Linda)

Glen also compared his passion for his work to an addiction in telling me about how instructing made his life better.

> It [teaching fitness classes] makes my life so much better. So, I don't want to give it up but sometimes I'll stop and be like 'ah, like okay, is this normal?' Like I will ask myself 'is there something wrong.' Like I'm so into it. Is that wrong? But you got to be into something. You've got to do something. So, I'm not smoking and drinking. I'm not snorting lines of crack. I'm not a sex addict. So, I've kind of reconciled myself that it's okay to be me, and I'm going to keep going. (Glen)

And Erin told me that being devoted to group fitness and being "passionate" about it means doing things to make your classes better even if not "obligated" by the fitness companies they work for.

> Yeah, because that's not all stuff that we're obligated to do or that we have to do, it's what we want do, because we want our classes to be better. Like we are passionate, we put that in. It's not something that the gym is making us do. They want us there 15 minutes before, 15 minutes after, know your stuff. And like they're not going to fire us if we are not always teaching a perfect class, so from there it's what you want to put in I guess. (Erin)

Among the many personal reasons that they love the devotee work of group fitness instruction they do include the fact that they "enjoy" it (Dan), they find it "fun" (Diana and Sarah), they like making the people who take their classes "happy" (Rachael and Susan), motivating class members to reach their health and fitness goals and using their fitness instruction to stay "healthy" and "in shape" themselves (Diana). In addition, some told me of how they are able to carve out a sense of identity from their devotee work. For instance, Kylie said that she had discovered fitness instruction as that "one thing" that she was good at which made her feel special.

> That's why I love it, because … I didn't think I'd ever be good at anything. Like, I'm a very mediocre person. Like, I'm average at everything. I'm average... there's nothing special, right? So, everybody wants to find that one thing that's special about them. So, I feel like that about it. (Kylie)

Despite the devotion to their work and the passion they put into their group fitness instruction, in addition to the fact that, technically, they are expert service workers (George, 2008) who are paid for the fitness experiences they provide, these instructors saw their work as a hobby.

It's a Hobby

Although some instructors may volunteer to teach group fitness classes, all the instructors I spoke with are paid for their instructional time. However, some, like Diana, understood her instructor pay as a "bonus" because it was devotee work for her. In her words, "It is a bonus that we get paid, but I love to do it. I don't love my other job like I love being an instructor and that's the honest truth." Several other instructors referred to it explicitly as a hobby. For example, Sarah characterized her group fitness work as a hobby because she did not rely on the money paid to her to live on. In her words, "I'm lucky, because I do this as fun, as a hobby type of thing, so this isn't my only source of income, so I never have really done it for pay." Linda does not see her work as a group fitness instructor as a 'job' and acknowledge that it does not meet the requirements of paid employment, therefore she calls it a hobby. She put it this way, "to me, this is my hobby. I just say it's my subsidized hobby." (Linda)

> It's not a job for me, again. So, it's not a job, it's gravy. That's how I look at it. It's just gravy. And like I say, other people are trying to make a living at it. I don't know how in god's name you could make a living as a yoga instructor anyways and I don't know, I mean you'd have to work your ass off to make a living at it. (Linda)

Albeit, for some, it is a hobby that they put a great deal of physical and emotional energy into as Erin explained,

> The gym is my thing. I just always think of it as my adult sport, that's how I look at it, it's like my pastime, my hobby, my everything that I put anything into, like when people talk about watching TV or reading books, I'm like I don't do that. When I watch TV, it's a video of these people doing fitness and when I'm reading, it's choreography. (Erin)

Glen also did not see his group fitness instruction as a job and instead viewed it as his personal workout time saying "no, no, it's my workout, it's something I enjoy doing. So, it's just like a hobby." Dan also said it is his hobby and when class is finished so is his commitment to it.

> Like I said at the beginning, this is more of a hobby. Like I'm passionate about it and when I do it, I put my all into it, when I'm done, I'm done. So that 60 minutes I'm the instructor, I go in, I do my thing, I leave but it doesn't define me, you know, so for me I don't want anyone to ever question my commitment to it because when I'm there I'm committed to it, but I also know how to turn it off. (Dan)

Diana had to remind herself that it is a job as in some ways she did not consider it one.

> And it's funny because there's a part of me that really doesn't, it doesn't enter my mind right away that it's another job that I do because I just do it to, like, stay in shape and I do it to be healthy and it's just like a part of my lifestyle and maybe that's why it doesn't occur to me that it is a job. It's like a hobby I guess … it's something I do for fun. (Diana)

Similarly, June told me that although being a fitness instructor is technically a job, it was only a "part-time" one because it is so poorly paid.

> I guess it is a part-time job. I do, I keep it [the pay] separate in a separate account, like a separate bank and everything from everything else we have...but it's my play money, I use it to pay for my yoga training and things like that. Not for actual bills. (June)

Other women instructors also used the money they earn from group fitness instruction to buy the workout clothing they like and the fitness training they take. For example, Linda uses it to pay for yoga training and athletic wear.

> I get some, I get a little bit of money which is not really that much … But that money has been paying for my yoga training and it'd be really hard justifying to my husband thousands of dollars a year spent on yoga training. And it really justifies my [athletic clothing brand] obsession. (Linda)

And Kylie also told me that she uses the money she is paid as a group fitness instructor to pay for ongoing fitness trainings and athletic clothing; a practice she said "just feeds [her] addiction to buy workout clothes." Rachael also described a similar compulsion to buy new workout clothing.

> But it is about me. That is a selfish thing because in reality why I would spend more than what I make doing what I'm doing. It makes no sense. It's not logical. Like I have enough clothes right now that I shouldn't for the next ten years buy any. Will I? Yes! Yes! I will. (Rachael)

While they are devoted to their work as group fitness instructors, some described how their devotion was undervalued by the people who take their classes. For instance, Susan told me that her devotion to her work as a group fitness instructor was such that she never regretted the time she spent prepping her classes. That is until members complained about a class.

> So, you miss your whole evening, which at the time, I find I never mind, but if the next day, someone's like, 'oh, are we doing this one again?' Like 'no, the song's just playing and we're all moving to it, but no, we're not doing it' [said sarcastically]. It just drives me crazy. So, I find it's only ever in regret that I feel that way towards the playlist or the whole workout. (Susan)

Finally, some of the instructors that took part in this research said that their devotion to teaching group fitness is such that they would do this work for free. For example, Erin told me that in order to "know her stuff" she had to spend countless hours learning and

practicing her classes, however, she said "I guess I just do it and don't think about it. Like I'd probably teach and do everything and not get paid" (Erin). Likewise, Rachael also told me that she is so devoted that she would likely teach group fitness for free. However, she did point out that working without getting paid is not a positive thing.

> It's weird that like if you told me I had to do this for nothing I'd still do it. Like if you told me that instructing is just voluntary, I would actually volunteer to do it. Like the pay part's actually like a bonus. But I think that most of us would actually probably still do it. Which is horrible. (Rachael)

And Kylie pointed out that while for some, group fitness pay is "just like spare money" she quickly added "that for some people it's not." Thus, while these instructors love being group fitness instructors, are gratified by what they see as the positive influence they can have on their class members lives, and some would even do this work without being paid, the devotee work they carry out comes with emotional burden and self-sacrifice.

Burden and Sacrifice

Although the instructors I interviewed did have passion for their fitness instructing work, they also told me about the amount of physical and emotional labour required of group fitness instruction, often using the words "sacrifice, regret," and "burden" to explain the pressures of performing their work. For instance, these instructors told me that they have to sacrifice time to be a fitness instructor. Linda commented that she "invests a lot of time in it personally" and Bevan described how he never seems to not be working. He put it this way:

> The only music that I ever listen to, like, in my life now is that music [music for his classes], like, ever. I don't know the last time I heard a normal song. Playing in my car is that music, right? Like, it actually takes over. And I enjoy

> the music, so that helps, but at the same time, you're actually working nonstop. I am never not working now. You hear those songs in your sleep. (Bevan)

Kylie also told me about the sacrifices involved in being a fitness instructor engaged in devotee work, telling me she always seems to be working on her classes and that she does not know how to shut her brain down.

> There's a lot of sacrifice and like you think about it all the time and you got to prepare for it all the time and it's … Like there's honest to God, Thursday is like my day of rest and I'm like I don't even know, like my brain doesn't know how to be like we're not on that train today. We're going to sit down. (Kylie)

Similarly, Susan said, "it takes up all my other 'life' time." She explained that while the time she takes to prepare for her class is a reflection of herself as a professional, it is a sacrifice as it comes at the cost of time away from her family or taking time to rest herself.

> I think it definitely reflects on you as a person and that you take that time. And the time for me now, is time away from my family, so it's often after I put my kids to bed, but it's still that time where I need to sit and reconnect with my husband, or just disconnect from everything, just like sit and chill with my eyes closed for five seconds. But then you remember, oh my gosh, I have to teach; well, am I just going to do what I did last week? No, I'm not going to just do what I did last week, like let's go do this. I'm a professional, so then you start doing it and all of a sudden, it's an hour, hour and a half later, it's nine thirty, which is like, approximately thirty minutes past my bedtime. And I've got to go learn what I am going to teach tomorrow. (Susan)

Rachael also described how her work as a group fitness instructor invaded every part of her life and pointed out that it did so in ways that her full-time paid work did not.

> But it's like a weird job because you're still an employee but yet … Like I don't bring my day job home, like home with me. Like I literally walk in the door and it's over, but the gym job follows me everywhere. Everywhere. It's in every single aspect of my life now. I can't get away from it [laughing]. (Rachael)

In addition to the sacrifices of time they make and the weight of emotional and physical labour they put into being group fitness instructors, a significant burden for the

instructors who took part in my research is the burden of both underpaid and unpaid work. That the work they do is underpaid was clear to some of the group fitness instructors I spoke with. For instance, Bevan told me that he is underpaid for all the work he does. In his words, "So, they're saying I'm going to give you 14 dollars to work for 45 minutes, so that's a pretty good deal, but there's way more than 45 minutes' worth of work going into that 45-minute class" (Bevan). Likewise, in tallying up all of the job requirements in relation to his rate of pay, Corey concluded that "the pay itself, for what you do and what you're required to do, is borderline minimum wage" and Linda told me "I'm giving of myself more than I'm paid to give." In turn, Dan described how he feels management pressure to engage in underpaid work that he says he resists.

> If I was ever told that I'm not doing enough, then that compensation comment I mentioned earlier would come into question because if you have a different expectation of me to be better than I am at what I do, then you should be compensating me for it, so I put in the amount of effort that correlates with the amount of compensation. (Dan)

More often, however, the group fitness instructors I spoke with described unpaid work that they do. Despite their devotion to their group fitness work, most of the group fitness instructors I spoke with did think they should be paid for the preparation they do in providing fitness experiences for the companies they work for, work that is described by these instructors as work required by their jobs that is unpaid. For instance, Sarah said that the work she does isn't adequately remunerated as it is above and beyond what she is paid per class. In her words, "I think you should get paid to do it. I think they should consider more of the time that we put in outside of just the one hour that we teach" (Sarah). June said, "we do teach for free; we do lots of things for free," Thus, in addition to the burden of being under paid and unpaid the instructors that took part in my research experienced a

triple burden and quadruple burden as a result of the roles they play as group fitness instructors, full-time employees elsewhere, as well as parents and spouses.

The Triple Burden

Building on the concept of the double burden (Beagan et al. 2008, p. 656); which refers to unpaid labour inside the home in addition to paid work outside the home, I use the term triple burden to refer to the work that fitness instructors must do on their own time in order to perform their jobs. This triple burden involves their paid full-time day job, the unpaid domestic duties they are responsible for inside the home, as well as the time required to be able to prepare for and perform their group fitness classes. This is work many do with no expectation of pay or provision of extra resources. For example, the instructors I interviewed are only paid for the time spent delivering the class, with no additional pay for prep time, travel time, or time spent socializing with members, all unwritten requirements of the job. For instance, Rachael said, "I'm paid, you know, for the hour, not for all of that goes along with it" and another instructor, Bevan, used the analogy of the entertainment industry in explaining what he saw as being only partially paid for one's work.

> So that's like telling somebody that is a movie actor or actress and saying, 'I'm going to pay you for the time that you're actually going to be in the movie. But you're learning your lines, you're practicing, you're in all these rehearsals, and you're actually not going to get paid for that.' (Bevan)

Similarly, when speaking with Erin, she told me about the amount of additional time she spends after teaching group fitness classes, time she is not financially compensated for. When I asked her, "do you stay after class and help people through the moves?" Erin replied,

> Way too much, way too much. I don't think I leave, when I teach a dance class, I never leave before 9:00pm, and I finish teaching at 8:15pm, I'm there for at least 45 minutes after every dance class. It's ridiculous really the amount of time I am at the gym and not paid for it. (Erin)

Likewise, Sarah described the triple burden she is under as group fitness instructor.

> Dance class, I need to do it before I go teach it, I can't just listen to the music and remember it. So, you know, every Monday night, I am trying to make supper and listening to the music and doing the moves as well as making supper. Luckily cycle class is fairly easy to learn in the car, but it is, it's all the preparation that you have to think about. So, it's not the hour that you're teaching, it's a lot of prep time. (Sarah)

The Quadruple Burden

In addition to the group fitness instructors who carry a triple burden, some of the instructors that took part in my research hold full-time paid work outside of the home in addition to their work as group fitness instructors are coping with a quadruple burden of unpaid work in the home, paid full-time work outside of the home, paid part-time fitness instructor work, and unpaid fitness instructor work. To illustrate, Rachael told me about how the multiple roles she plays leave "no time for anything else." In her words,

> I still am a good parent. I'm sure people judge me thinking that I'm not, but like I have the neat and tidy circle of the gym, home, work, gym, home, but there's nothing else. So, I take it really seriously because it's taking up a huge chunk of my life. There is no time for anything else. (Rachael)

She went on to explain the sheer volume of unpaid work and time required to perform her job. She said,

> Yeah, the fact that you have to memorize everything, a whole hour. Like it's the work. It's the volume of the work. Like I spend more hours, even though I work full-time, I will spend more time thinking and doing this fitness job than my day job, which blows your mind, right? So that's the biggest mind fuck of the whole thing. The gym pays you for an hour. One hour. They'll pay you for the time that you are doing the class but outside of that the volume of work you

> put into it is really up to you and how good you want to be. None of that is paid. (Rachael)

How the people who took part in my research respond to the triple and quadruple burdens they carry as group fitness instructors is gendered. The instructors who identified as women would tell me that they shouldn't have to assume the burden of unpaid work but "still do it" (Rachael) anyway. For example, Sarah said having to do unpaid work "crosses [a] boundary" but that she still does it.

> Yeah, but it crosses the boundary into like, 'what is my job here?', you know, or like the times where people will leave their equipment and leave the room. I don't mind cleaning it up and I will do it, but I'm not sure that's why I was hired. Right, and then the emails [from management] that tell you to clean those weights up. (Sarah)

In contrast, the instructors who identified as male that I spoke with expressed more resistance to the expectation of the unpaid work, including emotional labour, of group fitness class instruction. For instance, Dan told me "I put in enough time to make sure that my cardio is good and that my program is executed to the best of my ability and not a minute more." Corey was much more explicit in resisting the group fitness company's expectation that he do other gym work, such as recruitment, in addition to fitness instruction, that he is not compensated for.

> They expect us to get on social media and be involved in their [class members] lives and I mean to me it's the same thing as saying we want you to be on social media so you can recruit participants. We want you there ahead of time. To me that's the same thing as telling me that I have to walk around the gym and clean up the floor. Fuck you. That's someone else's job and getting people in the door is someone else's job … I don't think it's my job to get class members, especially because there's other people at the gym who are paid to fucking recruit and I'm not getting paid. If I refer someone, do I get a cheque, no, but they do. So, if I referred someone, I'm doing some else's job and of course the gym wants you to do that on the side. They want you to promote. They want you to go on social media. Likewise, they want you to keep people engaged because it's making them money. But in my opinion, I'm doing exactly what I

> should be doing. Why are you asking me to do all these other things? Cause they sure as hell aren't paying me, compensating me accordingly to do this other shit. (Corey)

Discussion

In this chapter I presented my analysis of the experiences of the emotional labour of group fitness instruction. My analysis includes the conceptual categories of company mandated emotional labour as well as those related to how some of the group fitness instructors I spoke with create branded fitness experiences that they none-the-less engage in efforts to make their own. This chapter also included how the instructors fall into the devotee work category and experience the work they do as a hobby, not a job; and finally, concludes with the emotional toll of all of these items including the burden and sacrifice of being a group fitness instructor.

The group fitness instructors I spoke with described the company mandated emotional labour as well as the range of emotions they experienced while performing their work. Through this emotional labour they can take on an instructor identity, something they value, however, the company mandated emotional labour is framed by a normative framework that they experience as written and unwritten rules that are drummed into them about what to wear, how to interact with their class members, how to embody a group fitness instructor role, and how to provide group fitness experiences (Parviainen, 2011). This normative framework is part of the corporate culture of fitness companies, and they learn these rules through occupational socialization (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). They described how emotionally exhausting this emotional labour is, consistent with the expectations for emotional labour among other expert service workers (George, 2008) like hairstylists, aestheticians, and other body workers, and consistent with neoliberal work

practices that oppress workers (Elias, Gill, & Scharff, 2017). Neoliberal work practices within fitness instruction consists of the considerable time and energy invested into the production of a fit and healthy body. In this way, the instructors embody the neoliberal imperative to undertake a project of the self in which they become personally responsible for committing to behaviours requiring both physical and mental labour (Nash, 2018, p. 17). Also problematic about the corporate culture surrounding the fitness companies the instructors work for, is when the company's management refers to their instructor workforce collectively as a tribe, a term that should not be used in this context (Lowe, 2001; Lindridge et al, 2019) given its increasing association (Elitrier, 2019;) with colonialism (McKay et al., 2020) and racism (Song, 2014).

My analysis shows that the instructors experience emotional labour as something necessary for creating the company mandated group fitness experiences for the people who take their classes. Creating experiences is embodied, they use their words, bodies, clothing, and hair via the instructional branded materials provided by their employers to create impactful emotional experiences for their members. Some resisted these branded materials in their instruction by making the fitness experiences their own by changing the words they use and infusing their personality and identities into these experiences. Ironically, even those instructors who were resistant to the branded instructional materials still provided branded service through what Avery & Crain (2007, p10) conceptualize as the empowerment approach which

> confers control over the work process by transforming the worker into one whose personal characteristics, appearance, and values match the image that the company is seeking to project and market, and then allowing the worker to make his or her own judgments in interactions with customers (Avery & Crain, 2007, p 10).

This is to say, many of the instructors who feel they are resisting the corporate brand are still performing branded aerobics classes and most likely are employed by their gyms because they already possess the traits and characteristics that complement the gym's corporate brand. Thus, even in their resistance, they are still conforming in a way that is profitable for the gym.

Moreover, the group fitness experiences they provide are full of neoliberal health messages that they not only deliver to their class members in the work that they do in motivating them to meet health and fitness goals, but also apply to themselves by embodying what the company sells as healthy lifestyles. The instructors in my research described their work in fitness as a type of self-improvement work, as a chance to work on themselves as well as to motivate and inspire others to do the same. When they are teaching it is also their workout, providing them with an opportunity to work on their own bodies as a project (Shilling, 2012, p. 5). Thus, they are also part of the product that they are selling on behalf of the fitness companies they work for. In this way, neoliberal discourses (Ayo, 2012) of active citizenship (Pickard, 1998), healthism (Carter, 2015), and active consumerism (Lupton, 1997) are reproduced and reinforced through the interaction between these instructors and the people who take their classes.

The use of emotions and the emotional toll in providing group fitness experiences tends to be gendered. Male instructors are less likely to want to use their emotions in their teaching or to talk explicitly about the emotions they experience as part of their work as group fitness instructors than those who identify as female. Instead, the men speak more of pushing a class rather than performing a class. This illustrates what Bridges (2014, p.

59-60) classifies as hybrid masculinity. Hybrid masculinities are the product of picking and choosing certain traits or characteristics from subordinate or marginalized masculinities and sometimes femininities (Demetriou, 2001). In the example here, the men in my study engage in a predominately feminized activity and teach to mainly women participants; however, where they differ or how they choose to separate themselves from the feminine is through their control and use of emotions; a stereotypical masculine trait. Thus, a key aspect of the biographical context of these instructors is that their gendered propensity to use and talk about their feelings is consistent with gender norms associated with the binary model of gender (Boyle, 2005; Gill et al., 2005; Hird 2002).

In addition, instructors dress their bodies in clothing and hairstyling choices to reflect the essence of the class they are teaching and the mood they are trying to convey to class members. They present varying identities depending on the particular fitness class they teach, they are passionate in how they instruct group fitness classes, and they engage in sociability (Simmel & Hughes, 1949) aimed at recruitment and retention of gym members on behalf of the fitness companies they work for.

They also make efforts to create group fitness experiences by doing things like selecting their own music playlists set to pre-existing choreography and through their intense dedication and unpaid time to their work as group fitness instructors. These efforts demonstrate occupational devotion making the work that these instructors do a form of devotee work (Stebbins, 2017). Here, their efforts reflect one of the facets of devotee occupations, in that they provide workers with an outlet for individual creativity. Stebbins (2017, p. 156) states that "devotee work" is paid work that is rewarding for individuals and is work for which they have "a strong, positive attachment to as a form of self-enhancing

work." Such was the attachment that these instructors had for their work that some instructors likened it to a religion or cult.

The instructors I interviewed for this research described working for their fitness companies as being similar to belonging to a cult where the company would tell them how and what to eat; how to engage and interact with gym members; and how to strengthen their bodies to properly teach their classes; all while telling the instructors that they belonged to a tribe. Other instructors within this research described the passion and devotion to their work as a religion. Some instructors commented on how it changed their lives, how it had made them a better person, and how they couldn't imagine their lives without fitness instruction being part of it.

And the instructors in my study were passionate about their work, recounting stories of times they sacrificed time with family, rescheduled medical appointments, missed work functions, or would drive hours just to teach a class. They told me about the actual time they invested and engaged in group fitness instruction activities that they were devoted to. Time spent in front of a mirror perfecting their form and technique; time needed to practice their routines, trying to get them perfect; and the repetition need to master the techniques and physical form required to execute some advanced exercise movements, reflecting that in order for the worker to engage in devotee work, they must have a strong, positive attachment to that work (Stebbins, 2017).

Part of the emotional toll of company mandated labour and devotee work is that some of the instructors that I spoke to told me they did not feel valued by the fitness companies they work for but instead felt valued by their group fitness class members.

Therefore, in addition to being devotee work, group fitness instruction is a form of occularcentric labour (Sappey & Maconachie, 2012), where the "trade-off of standard conditions of employment … [were] the more intrinsic psycho-social rewards gained through the exposure of their physical capital to the adoration of their gazing clients" (Sappey & Maconachie, 2012, p. 506). However, this requires that group fitness instructors navigate a middle ground, balancing between the demands of their employers who pay them and those of their class members who experience their services (Smith Maguire, 2001, p. 386).

A reason that they feel unvalued by their employers is that their emotional labour goes unnoticed and, importantly, unpaid, or underpaid. According to Stebbins (2017), devotee work allows the worker to solely, or at least mainly, focus on the core activities in the job. However, while the core activity of group fitness work for these instructors is to teach choreography set to music to class members, there is a host of unpaid labour, including time spent making, cultivating, and maintaining relationships with their members that is performed in order to maintain their class sizes. This is work conceptualized as shadow work[5] by Lambert (2015, p. 1) who defines it as "all the unpaid tasks we do on behalf of the businesses and organisations" we work for, such as the work teachers and

[5] Lambert (2015) adapted Illich's (1981) concept of shadow work that Illich used to conceptualize all forms of unpaid work including unpaid domestic work, consistent with what is more commonly understood as the double burden (Beagan et al., 2008). In contrast, Lambert (2015) uses the concept to only refer to work required to complete employment responsibilities that are not compensated for.

professors routinely do in order to carry out their professional duties that they are not compensated for.

The instructors in my study spoke about the amount of time they put into their job that they were not financially compensated for but put in anyway because of their devotion to the work or their members, some even saying they would teach group fitness for free. And all of the instructors had also, at one time or another, taught for free when team teaching with another instructor. Not only does that demonstrate their willingness to teach without remuneration, but also shows how the line between what is a hobby and what is work becomes blurred for the fitness workers in my study.

The work that the instructors do is paid work and is experienced by them as devotee work and occularcentric labour. However, because they enjoy it, because they experience it as fun, and because it is not full-time work that does not pay enough to live on, they did not consider it employment, but rather they thought of it as a hobby. However, whether a hobby or a job, the emotional labour they invest in the group fitness work they do is achieved through sacrifice and experienced as a burden.

My analysis revealed that these instructors experienced both triple and quadruple burdens in their roles as group fitness instructor. Building on the concept of the double burden (Beagan et al. 2008) borrowed from feminist theory, where people (predominantly women) bear the burden of both paid labour outside the home and the majority of unpaid labour inside the home, a triple burden is experienced when these instructors work inside the home, are paid part-time fitness instructors outside the home, and must engage in a great deal of underpaid or unpaid labour in order to create company mandated fitness experiences. A quadruple burden is where instructors who also work full-time outside the

home in addition to the domestic work they do inside the home, also carry out the unpaid labour that being a group fitness instructor requires. Their experience of these triple and quadruple burdens necessarily involves significant role conflict (Katz & Kahn, 1978) as they juggle the competing demands of work, home, devotee worker, and group fitness instructor.

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION

In this chapter I summarize and contextualize the findings of my analysis of how group fitness workers manage the emotions they experience in interacting with the people who take their classes and with other fitness instructors. I used a qualitative research design that included participant observation, a focus group meeting, and face-to-face, in depth, semi-structured interviews with group fitness instructors as means of data collection. I used thematic analysis as the mode of analysis to answer the research question: How do group fitness instructors experience emotional labour in the context of a group fitness class? Two related research questions were also addressed: How do group fitness instructors negotiate the normative expectations of this context? And how do group fitness instructors experience their emotions while they navigate the occupational space of the fitness gym?

In addressing the research questions, I developed a conceptual explanation of the social processes involved in their experience of embodied labour, how the emotional labour they engage in impacts on sociability as they interact with the people who take their classes and other fitness instructors within the social world of the fitness gym, and, finally, how they experience emotional labour more generally. The emotional labour of fitness instructors is made up of three inter-related conceptual categories including the embodied nature of emotional labour, emotional labour and sociability, and the emotional labour of fitness instruction (see Figure 4 below).

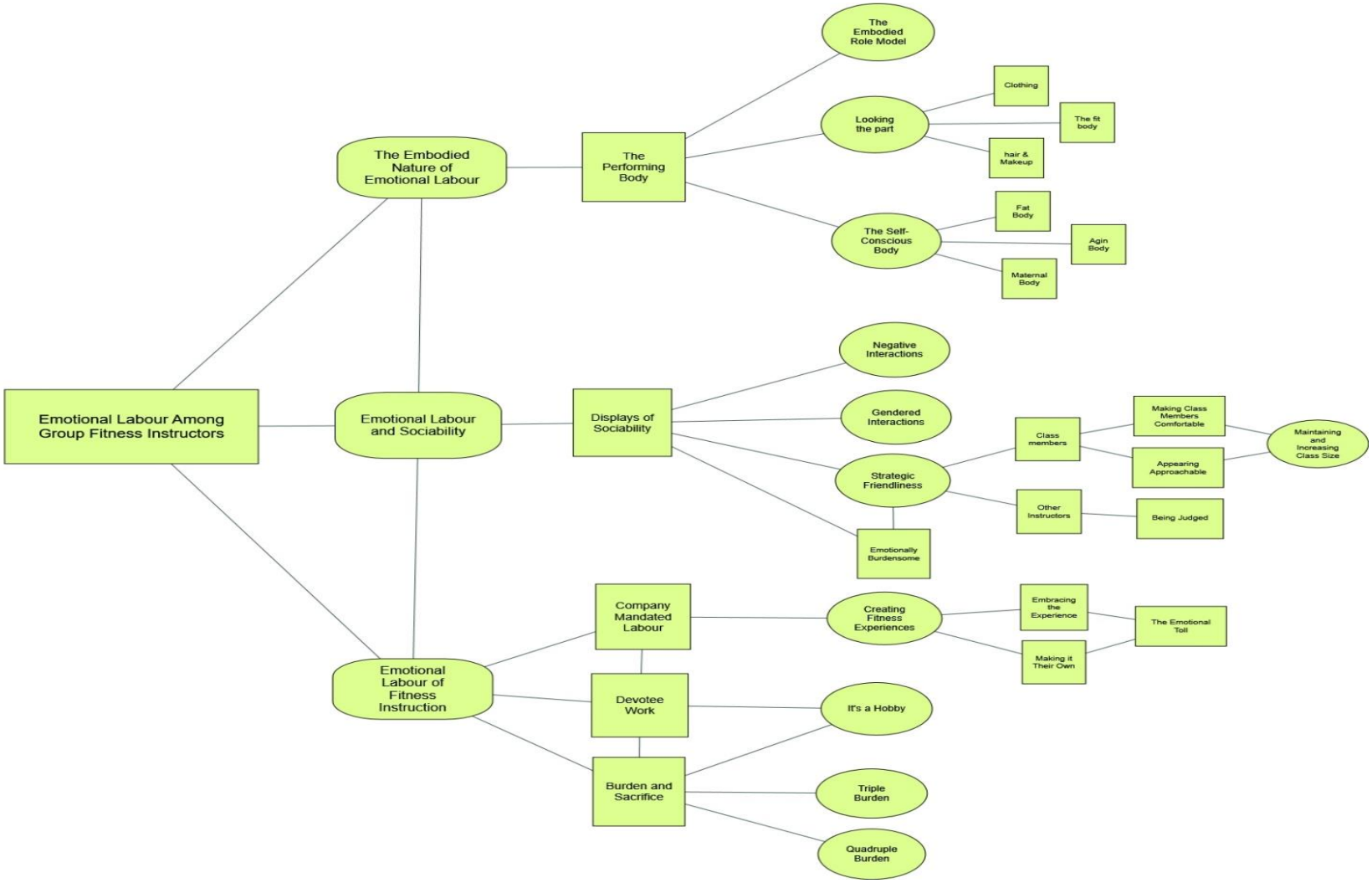

Figure 4 – Emotional Labour Among Group Fitness Instructor

The category of the embodied nature of emotional labour includes the concept of the performing body which explains how the fitness instructors become embodied role models and understand group fitness as a performance that they achieve through looking the part but that also creates a self-conscious body in the process. They present their bodies specifically through adorning their bodies through the display of their hair and clothes in teaching group fitness, but most of all through presentation of what they call a fit body. This conceptual category also includes the analysis of the self-conscious body which I use to conceptualize how these fitness instructors experience and try to manage the fat body, the maternal body, and the aging body. Finally, the embodied nature of emotional labour also explains how these group fitness instructors act as embodied role models for the people who take their classes. And how, in addition to teaching fitness techniques, these instructors, as embodied role models, make efforts to motivate their class members to take up what they understand as healthy life practices, including healthy aging. All of which has a significant impact on their emotions.

The second conceptual category, emotional labour and sociability explains how these group fitness instructors, through displays of sociability experience positive and negative interactions with class members and other instructors that are almost always gendered. It also enables conceptualization of how these instructors engage in strategic friendliness (Pierce, 1995) with their group fitness class members with the intent of accomplishing a variety of goals, including appearing approachable, making class members comfortable, as well as maintaining and increasing their class sizes. And through strategic friendliness with their instructor colleagues, they do things like team teach but also manage competition between themselves and other group fitness instructors, as well

as the emotional toll of practicing strategic friendliness.

The final conceptual category that emerged through my analysis, is the emotional labour of fitness instruction. The data analyzed in this category conceptualize how these group fitness instructors create company mandated fitness experiences through the use of company provided materials that some resist through making the experiences their own in modifying these materials, all of which involves their emotions. Also, part of this conceptual category is the devotee work these expert service workers engage in because of the passion they have for what is often underpaid, and often unacknowledged work that requires that they make significant sacrifices of time and emotional energy. This leads instructors to face not only a triple burden but a quadruple burden when undertaking this work.

Contextualizing Group Fitness Instruction

The experiences of the group fitness instructors that participated in my research take place within particular historical, political, socio-cultural, and biographical contexts. The historical context that frames the experiences of the group fitness instructors that took part in my research saw the proliferation of group fitness classes stemming from the health promotion movement which began in Canada in the 1920s and from 1970 to present saw the dramatic increase in fitness gyms, private fitness clubs, franchised chains, international fitness magazines, professional trainers, and fitness instructors (Stern, 2011). From the 1990s gyms designed only for bodybuilding remain but there are many more retail commercial gyms that cater to the diversity of fitness needs or a wider range of people which changed the understanding the gym “from a sub-cultural passion to a mass leisure

activity" (Sassatelli, 2010, p. 17).

In addition, within this historical context, group exercise instructors began asserting themselves as expert service workers in the "post-industrial labor market" (George, 2008, p. 109) who practice devotee work (Stebbins, 2017). These workers find value in a new form of work called occularcentric labour, where the reward for work is not primarily tied to any amount of monetary compensation, rather it is the external validation from their class members that acts as the prime motivator in their work (Sappey & Maconachie, 2012). The external validation offered through occularcentric is how group fitness instructors navigate the occupational space and come to accept the demands of emotional labour in their work that are part and parcel of this historical context.

These new forms of work reflect the political discourse of neoliberalism (Ayo, 2012) that emerged from this historical context. Thus, the political context experienced by the instructors I spoke with is one in which they, as expert service workers are engaged in devotee work (Stebbins, 2017) that is a manifestation of the neoliberal (Ayo, 2012) exploitation of workers that occurs through the imposition of under paid and unpaid work. It also occurs through their embodied fitness instruction where they themselves become the product to be sold within the neoliberal (Ayo, 2012) and capitalist economy that is part of this political context (Crawford, 2006).

A key policy initiative within this political context is the Lalonde (1974) report, the influential Canadian health promotion policy document that reflected the health promotion movement in Canada that began in the early 1900s and found its contemporary renewal in the 1970s. In addition to a shift from a curative to a preventative approach to health promotion, the policy doctrine of the Lalonde report resonates with the risk society (Beck,

1992) that is characteristic of the socio-cultural context of my research in that both emphasize a personal responsibility for health. Therefore, important findings from my analysis that are related to this socio-cultural context include how, through their embodied performances of group fitness instruction, through the fitness experiences these instructors provide to class members, and through their anxieties over their aging, maternal and fat bodies, they deliver neoliberal discourses of active citizenship, healthism, and active consumerism, as well as the requirement to age well that characterize the contemporary culture of risk society (Boas & Gans-Morse 2009; Carter, 2015; Lupton, 1997, 1999; Pickard, 1998; Turner, 1990). They also resonate with the health discourses used as marketing tools by the health and fitness industry (Smith Maguire, 2008). The non-profit organization ParticipACTION (2022) is the socio-cultural manifestation of Canadian health promotion government policy in television, radio and now online public service announcements aimed at motivating Canadians to engage in fitness activities. In addition to neoliberal discourses, racism, sexism, ageism, fatphobia, and homophobia also permeate the socio-cultural context of group fitness instruction.

Finally, key aspects of the biographical context that are related to my research include gender, age, whiteness, maternal status, and the maternal body, as well as the fit and fat bodies. To illustrate, the fitness gyms that these instructors work in are heteronormative spaces that are characterized by sexism, ageism, racism, fatphobia, and homophobia. The experiences of the group fitness instructors who took part in my research demonstrate how the embodied fitness instruction, gendered preferences in fitness routines (Dworkin, 2001, 2003), and the informal gender segregation of the fitness gym play a role of in the maintenance of gender norms associated with the binary model of gender

(Dworkin, 2003; Dworkin & Wachs, 2009; Hird, 2002). Thus, they contribute to the scrutiny of women's physicality and the mandate for achieving the ideal female body (Lloyd, 1996; Maguire & Mansfield, 1998). Their anxieties over their changed bodies after having children or gaining weight and feeling of guilt over taking time for themselves to engage in fitness classes make the maternal body a key aspect of the biographical context of the group fitness instructors that took part in my research. In addition, the worries these instructors expressed about aging out of their jobs and the ageism that is part of the fitness gym culture these instructors participate in reflects the neoliberal pressure to age well that is an individual, not institutional responsibility (Allain & Marshall, 2017; Shimoni, 2018). Issues of racism and homophobia are also part of the social world of the fitness gym given that the companies refer to them using the term tribe and how the hairstyle of cornrows was associated with toughness both of which reflect racism (Song, 2014).

In conclusion, the experiences of the group fitness instructors that took part in my research show that the recursive relationship between the individual and society is mutually reinforcing. For instance, the concept of the active citizen (Turner 1990), is central to the discourses of neoliberalism that developed in the West in the 1990s (Boas & Gans-Morse, 2009; Turner, 1990). Within this historical frame the active citizen is one who embodies neoliberal discourses of health that transfer responsibility for health and wellbeing to the individual. This takes place within a risk society (Beck, 1992) where the individual manages risks, including risks to health (Pickard, 1998). In this way they are not only active citizens they are also active consumers (Lupton, 1997) who, following neoliberal political discourses engage in "self-improvement" activities, such as fitness classes, that are consistent with the objectives of government institutions intent on "developing and

maximizing the potential of its population" (Lupton, 1999, p. 289).

Along with these socio-cultural and political discourses, a host of new occupations related to health including "wellness experts, self-help gurus, nutritionists, life coaches" and group fitness instructors joined the workforce and became part of the neoliberal mechanisms of "healthy living" (Carter, 2015, p. 375). This makes group fitness classes a social location where group fitness instructors, who embody discourses of healthy living that the people who take their classes internalize. The group fitness instructors who I spoke with told me of how their employers dictated how they should dress, what diets to follow, and the values concerning health and fitness they should adopt.

These dictates are delivered to them directly through company policy documents; company social media platforms and other forms of digital media; and also, more informally, in the interaction between group fitness instructors and their managers. One informant described the informal delivery of these dictates as trickling down to them. What trickles down from the structural level of government institutions are socio-cultural and political discourses of neoliberalism containing the discourses of healthy lifestyles and self responsibility that they then embody. In this way they become a commodity to be sold by the fitness companies that employ them.

Therefore, the experiences of the group fitness instructors I talked with show how neoliberal discourses of active citizenship, healthy living, and life-long patterns of consumption are maintained through the interactions between individuals and the "team performance" of the group fitness class (Goffman, 1959, 1963, 1967). These individuals' efforts to achieve the goals of health and fitness are also reflective of a moral imperative that involves the management of emotional burdens and that are in reality emotional labour

because these burdens are inherent in the organization of their work as group fitness instructors (Hochschild, 1983, 1990). For instance, these instructors discussed the emotional burden of having to engage in displays of sociability in interaction with gym members as a means of maintaining and increasing class size.

These emotional burdens are experienced differently by the male and female instructors that took part in this research. They take a heavier toll on women instructors, and it is a weight that increases as they age (Hausenblas & Martin, 2000). These instructors discussed the moralistic tone of the messages of healthy aging that they had to live up to as they worried about being able to continue to look the part of the fitness instructor as they got older (Carter, 2015,375). That they engage in this emotional labour and monitor themselves for the point at which their bodies age out of being a good fitness role model serves to contribute to the reification of normative constructs of the young and fit female body (Greenleaf et al. 2006). Moreover, their experiences are shaped by two aspects of their biographic context, age and gender within a socio-cultural context where ageism and sexism are enacted (McHugh, 2003; Sumerau & Grollman, 2018).

In the end, the emotional labour they carry out as part of their expert service work (George, 2008) as group fitness instructors ensures the continuation of these cultural and political discourses which in turn reinforces the cultural and political institutions they come from. It is also how, in using the cornrow hairstyle and the language of 'street look' and 'tribe' to describe the clothes they wear and the organization of their work in group fitness, both things they learn from the local culture of the fitness gym, that racists tropes are also perpetuated. This makes the group fitness class a social space that Jocobs & Merolla (2017, p.68) call a "proximate social structure," in other words, the lowest level of social structure

that "produces [and reproduces the] social relations," including relations marked by racism, sexism, fatphobia, homophobia, and ageism, that make up society. Finally, their experiences show how analysis of the emotional labour of group fitness instructors demonstrates how the symbolic interactionist perspective allows for the analysis of how the actions of individuals within historical, political, socio-cultural, and biographical contexts give rise to social structure. These findings are important because they show how group fitness instructors and the emotional labour, they experience is not only burdensome but also exploitative as they are products of neoliberal work structures that also perpetuate sexism, racism, ageism, fatphobia, and homophobia in society.

Suggestions for Future Research

During the course of my research, questions arose that remain unanswered by my analysis as presented in this dissertation and would benefit from further investigation. Research that identifies how expectations around emotions and emotional expression are built into formal job requirements, informal expectations, and other aspects of work organization in other expert service work and body industries (e.g., personal training, physiotherapy, tattooing, etc.) as well as group fitness instruction would be invaluable.

Moreover, an avenue of future research suggested by my findings is the investigation of a range of workplace processes and dynamics, including the reproduction of power, authority, and class inequality in lower paid service work. Because my current study did not specifically address these processes or dynamics, there is ample evidence to suggest this in an under researched area that would benefit from further attention, specifically in the fitness industry (Nash, 2018). And more inquiry into bodywork in the

fitness industry could potentially open new areas of study to include additional research on body positivity, the popular social media movement sprung out of the 1960s fat acceptance work, that aims at fostering acceptance and appreciation of bodies of all shapes, sizes, and appearance (Cohen et al., 2019), body neutrality, which refers to acknowledging the functions of the body more so than the appearance of the body (Perry et al., 2019) and increased representation of all types of bodies in the social world of group fitness.

In addition to being gendered and ageist, sexist, and heterosexist, the world of the fitness gym is also a space of whiteness (Alcoff, 2006; Carter et al, 2021), therefore, research into how to reform the social world of fitness instruction would require addressing the debates concerning whether or not racism, sexism, and ageism can be eliminated from the fitness gym or if fitness spaces have to be reimagined outside of the neoliberal, corporate world.

Group fitness work as expert service work is work that is precarious in nature, highly feminized, and often does not include the presence of a labour union, allowing for the potential exploitation of workers (Maconachie & Sappey, 2011). Thus, a potential avenue for future research involves the work provided by expert service workers and the (changing) role of the union in this line of work where the reward does not appear to be tied to remuneration. And finally, more inquiry into the relationships between instructors and gym management in the fitness industry could potentially open new areas of study.

AFTERWORD

Group exercise is a leisure activity that influences the way some people live their everyday lives (Dworkin & Wachs, 2009; Engelsrud, 2009). This has been true for me even before embarking on this PhD process. I still remember taking my very first step aerobics class when I was 15 years old. In fact, I think I still have that gym membership tucked away in a memory box somewhere. The local YMCA in my hometown had an aerobics instructor who dressed only in neon coloured Lycra and big slouch socks and I thought she was magical; the way she danced around the step, up and down, across the top, and behind the back. I wanted to move like her. She was mesmerizing. There were ten of us in the 430pm Monday, Wednesday, Friday class and by far I was the youngest one; all the other women were probably the age I am now. How I loved that class. Little did I know that participating in that class would change my life trajectory.

Fast forward a few years later and it was time to pick out the university I would attend for my undergraduate degree. Much to my parents' chagrin, I selected the school that had the better group fitness class schedule. A few years later I was working my first professional job and again I was back at the YMCA participating in group fitness classes, just in a new city. There was an excellent step aerobics class offered at eight am Saturday mornings and I remember setting my alarm to be there with enough time to secure my spot for it was a busy class. I would take the class and then immediately drive home and return to bed. A few years later I find myself back in university in still another town and in a group fitness class when the instructor approached me to suggest that I enroll in the aerobic teacher training. That woman changed my life and is still a close friend today.

My first fitness teaching job was at a university Monday, Wednesday, and Fridays at 7am when I was still a student. I remember having to ride my bike to the university gym in the dark and sometimes teach two or three people, then ride my bike home and be ready for 830am lectures. Another move, another town, another gym but now a car that I drove to teach those early morning classes. Group fitness classes have always been a part of my physical life; I never imagined it would play such a critical role in my academic life.

Early renditions of this research project began to surface in July 2013. I recall sitting in my car on a particularly beautiful summer evening ready to teach my 545pm class and wondering why I was there when I could have been on a patio somewhere enjoying the summer season. Instead, I was in this artificial box of a building, about to move around with about 35 other people and the absurdity of that just sat with me for a while. By this time, I had been participating in group fitness classes for 19 years and teaching for eight years. Along the way I had noticed differences in personalities in certain gyms and classes, the way instructors interacted with each other or with members, the way members interacted with one another, where class members choose to stand in the room, what people wore to the gym, the way people moved, and trends in group fitness classes, etc. On that July evening, I just could not stop thinking about all the unusual things that occurred at one particular gym that I had never experienced before and wondered if there was more to the social dynamics I had witnessed.

At one gym I noticed the almost larger than life status some instructors had with members. Members would rave about certain instructors and follow them around from class to class and gym location to gym location. Particularly with evening classes there was a dedicated following for some instructors. A few hours after class had finished and

presumably people had a chance to go home, shower and eat; social media, specifically Facebook, would flare up with social commentary about that class. And not just a few people, but 20 to 30 people commenting. The social media posts consisted of members praising the instructor for a great class and an amazing workout. Then other members would jump on the thread and add their opinion of class, which was always so positive. Eventually instructors would comment on the thread in the humblest of tones and praise each member for their hard work, dedication to the class, and their inspiration to others.

This same routine played out night after night after night. I had never witnessed this before and found it so interesting. Most curious to me, as an instructor, was the amount of personal time instructors devoted to commenting on members' posts about the class. Sometimes these threads could last for hours into the evening; with some instructors responding to every class member's post. And because I worked with and knew many of these instructors personally, I was aware that there were some members that instructors did not like. Despite this, when instructors would respond to these particular gym members, they did so with exuberant, friendly, cheerful posts. But because of my personal relationship with these instructors, I knew some of the comments were not genuine and that got me thinking about the emotional effort instructors were putting into their after-hours, unpaid time with members. And thus, my PhD research project was born.

Now having completed my research and devoted critical time and thought to the complexities and curiosities of the social world of group fitness instructions, I better understand my own relationship with fitness class members and my work as an instructor. It has also made me very hesitant to perform any shadow work (Lambert, 2015) social media marketing on behalf of the fitness gyms I work for. I now protect my personal time

and do not engage in social media posting after class has ended; although I continue to engage in conversations and interactions with members before and after class, but not nearly as long as I once did. I do feel as though my lack of participation and presence in the social media world is reducing the number of class members I get to class. I do think my lack of sociability is hurting my class participation numbers, yet I am still willing to risk alienating class members to protect myself from the triple and quadruple burden of teaching.

Teaching fitness classes has always been an escape for me, much like my informant's, teaching fitness was a hobby I was paid to do. However, now after years of critical analysis, I see the fitness studio as a smaller, but clear representation of the greater social world in which we live where sport and fitness culture not only mirrors society but also contributes to the maintenance of it including its more toxic elements of sexism, racism, ageism, fatphobia, and homophobia. And that has changed everything for me.

APPENDIX A

Focus Group Questions

Instructor Qualities/Expectations

- What are some of the qualities (or personal attributes) a group fitness instructor should have?
    - What are the most important? What are less important?
    - What makes a great instructor stand out?
    - What separates a good from a great instructor?
    - What sets an instructor apart when others teach the same class?

Participant Expectations

- What expectations do you think participants have for their instructors?
    - Do you think things like body image, fitness level, clothing, music choice matter?
    - Is choreography important? Why or why not?

Balancing Expectations

- What makes a "bad" class for you? What do you do when you have taught a "bad" class?
    - How do you respond when members (or other instructors) say something critical about your class?
    - How do you feel when your manager or other instructors are taking your class?

Professionalism/Unspoken Job Pressures

- What do you do when you don't feel like teaching?
    - How do you get through a class you don't want to teach?
- How do you draw or retain or get more people into your class?
- How important is having a full class of participants for instructors?
    - Are the best instructors always able to fill classes?
    - How important is social media to attracting people to class?
    - Does anyone chat with members before and after class?

APPENDIX B

Interview Schedule

The following questions represent issues and topic areas I was interested in addressing through this research and were asked if discussion of these topic areas was not part of the research participants' account of their experiences. As is normal for semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions, specific follow-up questions, prompts and probes were used and varied across interviews, depending on interviewee responses. Not all questions were relevant for every interviewee. General questions were used to begin each interviews and these probes were used to explore specific participant experiences.

General introduction
Tell me a little about yourself and how you came to be a fitness instructor, and how long you have been doing it.

Relationship to job

- What are you favourite kinds of classes to teach?
    - Prompt - Why?
- What are/is your least favourite?
    - Prompt - Why?
- Tell me a bit about how you prepare for class
    - Prompt - Do you think about what you are wearing? Do you think about what members will be there? Do you think about how to perform the moves, the music? Do you think about what you are going to say? Do you think about how your body looks when you do the choreography?
- When you are teaching a class are all emotions you display genuine at that moment or do you, at times, have to "talk yourself into feeling" them?
    - Prompt - Do you rely on any tricks to bring more energy or feeling to the class?
- Do you monitor yourself when you are in the gym getting ready to teach a class/ before your class?

Relationship to members

- How important are the members in shaping your experience when you teaching classes?
    - Prompt 0 Do they impact the class and your teaching style?
- Have you ever had an encounter or exchange with a difficult or challenging member? Can you tell me a bit about it?

    - Prompt - What did you do? What did you tell yourself? How do you handle the situation? Did you tell anyone about it?
    - Prompt - Did your training provide resources/knowledge for you to handle these kinds of members?
- Have you ever had members tell you anything personal that is not related to the class you taught?
    - Prompt - How do you handle those kinds of members? Or those kinds of situations?
    - Prompt - Have members ever invited you anywhere social outside of the club – tell me about that
- Have you ever experienced a time when you went above and beyond for your members –something that was outside of your instructing job?
- Has a member ever confided in you about something personal?
- Have you ever felt a need/necessity to detach yourself from your own emotions/feelings when teaching your class (with members, other colleagues, etc)?
- Do you ever try to feel emotions or feel a certain way when teaching your classes or socializing with members? Is one easier to achieve?
- Do you think you need to feel a certain way in order to be a good instructor?
    - Prompt - How do you accomplish it?
    - Prompt - Is it a difficult task to accomplish?
- Can you describe a time when deep/intense emotions you felt when you were with a member or teaching a class?
- How do you manage any contradiction between what you were feeling and how you express your emotions?
- Have you ever had the impression that you need to behave in a certain way with members or when teaching your classes? That you need to have a certain persona or project a certain image? Where did that belief come from?
    - Do you feel like you have a “fitness” image?
- Are there any aspects of the work that you dislike/find difficult or that you disagree with?
- Is there anything else you want to tell me about your experiences teaching group fitness classes?

APPENDIX C

Focus Group Information Letter

My name is Lisa Thomson and I am a PhD. candidate in the Department of Sociology at the University of New Brunswick.

The focus group for which you are being asked to participate in is part of my doctoral research about emotional labour in group fitness environments. The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of the ways group fitness instructors negotiate emotional labour in their work.

Your participation in this study will consist of a focus group with 5-9 other fitness instructors and will last approximately two hours. You will be asked four questions about your experience and role as a group fitness instructor. Your participation is completely voluntary. You are not required to answer the questions. You may pass on any question that makes you feel uncomfortable. At any time you may inform me that you would like to stop your participation in the focus group and your participation in the study. There is no penalty for withdrawing from participation. If you withdraw from the focus group, all information pertaining to you will be destroyed.

The focus group will be audio recorded; however, your name will not be recorded on the tape. Your name and identifying information will not be associated with any part of the written report of the research. To the best of my ability as the researcher, all of your information and focus group responses will be kept confidential. All members of the focus group have been asked to keep all information confidential; however, while I myself will keep your information confidential I cannot guarantee that other members of the focus group will do so. I will not share your individual responses with anyone other than my research supervisor.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the project, please contact me by phone at (506) 476-7930 or by email at lisa.thomson@unb.ca. You may also contact my supervisor Dr. Jacqueline Low (506) 458-7439 or jlow@unb.ca or the Department of Sociology Chair Dr. Lucia Tramonte (506) 458-7257 or lucia@unb.ca or the Research Ethics Board at the University of New Brunswick at ors@unb.ca or (506) 453-4674.

APPENDIX D

Focus Group Consent Form

I have read the information presented in the information letter about the study being conducted by Lisa Thomson, PhD candidate in the Department of Sociology at the University of New Brunswick.

I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and any additional details I wanted. I am aware that the focus group will be audio recorded to ensure an accurate recording of all responses. If I choose not to be audio recorded, I cannot participate in the study.

I understand that I will be given a pseudonym and any personal attributes will be excluded in any published work from the study in order to ensure confidentiality. All transcripts and any other identifiable data will be stored digitally on an encrypted USB flash drive, stored in a locked filing cabinet, in a locked office on the University of New Brunswick campus. All data collected will be destroyed once all dissemination activities have been concluded for this research.

I am aware that the members of the focus group will be asked to keep all information discussed in the focus group meetings confidential; however, I also understand that it is impossible for the researcher, Lisa Thomson, to guarantee that they will do so.

I am also aware that excerpts from the focus group may be included in the thesis and/or publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous. I am aware that there are no foreseeable risks associated with my participation in this study. I understand that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher. If I do choose to withdraw, all research materials pertaining to me will be destroyed.

I understand that I may contact Lisa Thomson's supervisor Dr. Jacqueline Low, jlow@unb.ca, (506) 458-7439; the Chair of the Department of Sociology, Dr. Lucia Tramonte lucia@unb.ca, (506) 458-7257; or the Research Ethics Board at the University of New Brunswick, ors@unb.ca, (506) 453-4674 should I have any questions or concerns. This project is on file with the University of New Brunswick research Board under file number 2017-019.

Participant Name: _____ (Please print)

Participant Signature: _____

Date:

APPENDIX E

Interview Information Letter

My name is Lisa Thomson and I am a PhD. candidate in the Department of Sociology at the University of New Brunswick.

The interview for which you are being asked to participate in is part of a research study that is examining emotional labour in group fitness environments. The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of the ways group fitness instructors negotiate emotional labour in their work.

Your participation in this study will consist of a one-on-one interview with me and will last approximately one hour. You will be asked questions about your life, your experiences, and role as a group fitness instructor. Your participation is completely voluntary. You are not required to answer the questions. You may pass on any question that makes you feel uncomfortable. At any time you may notify me that you would like to stop your participation in the interview and your participation in the study. There is no penalty for discontinuing participation. If you do choose to end your participation, all information pertaining to you will be destroyed and will not be used in the study.

The interview will be audio recorded. Your name and identifying information will not be associated with any part of the written report of the research. All of your information and interview responses will be kept confidential and destroyed upon completion of this project. As the lead researcher, I will not share your individual responses with anyone other than my research supervisor.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the project, please contact me at (506) 476-7930 or lisa.thomson@unb.ca or my supervisor Dr. Jacqueline Low (506) 458-7439 or jlow@unb.ca or the Department of Sociology Chair Dr. Lucia Tramonte (506) 458-7257 or lucia@unb.ca or the Research Ethics Board at the University of New Brunswick at ors@unb.ca, or (506) 453-4674.

APPENDIX F

Interview Consent Form

I have read the information presented in the information letter about the study being conducted by Lisa Thomson, PhD candidate in the Department of Sociology at the University of New Brunswick.

I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and any additional details I wanted.

I am aware that my interview will be audio recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses. If I choose not to be audio recorded, I cannot participate in this study.

I understand that I will be given a pseudonym and any personal attributes will be excluded in any published work from the study in order to ensure confidentiality. All transcripts and any other identifiable data will be stored digitally on an encrypted USB flash drive, stored in a locked filing cabinet, in a locked office on the University of New Brunswick campus. All data collected will be destroyed once all dissemination activities have been concluded for this research.

I am also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in the thesis and/or publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous.

I understand that there are no foreseeable risks to participating in this study.

I understand that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher. If I do choose to withdraw, all research materials pertaining to me will be destroyed.

I understand that I may contact Lisa Thomson's supervisor Dr. Jacqueline Low, jlow@unb.ca, (506) 458 7439; the Chair of the Department of Sociology, Dr. Lucia Tramonte lucia@unb.ca, (506) 458-7257; or the Research Ethics Board at the University of New Brunswick, ors@unb.ca, (506) 453-4674 should I have any questions or concerns This project is on file with the University of New Brunswick research Board under file number 2017-019.

Participant Name: _____ (Please print)

Participant Signature: _____

Date: _____

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Curriculum Vitae

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Education

May 2024 — **PhD. Sociology**
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April 2011 — **Masters of Public Administration**
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April 2006 — **Honours Bachelor of Commerce**
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Major in Human Resource Management
Minor in Women's Studies
Lakehead University – Thunder Bay, ON

Peer Review Publications

Bombak, A., **Thomson, L**., Chinho, N., O'Keefe, K., & Burk, C. (2024). Bright-siding stigma: older adults' experiences at a higher weight in Atlantic Canada. *Health. (forthcoming)*

Bombak, A., Turner, L., **Thomson, L**., O'Keefe, K., Chinho, N., Burk, C., & Akhter, S. (2024). "You're just too much:" Higher-weight sexual and gender minorities' experiences of stigma in Atlantic Canada. *Journal of Critical Dietetics. (forthcoming)*

Thomson, L., Keshavarz, M., Sénéchal, M., & Bouchard, D. R. (2023). Online exercise program for men living with obesity: Experiences, barriers, and enablers. *Contemporary Clinical Trials Communications*, 36, 101226.

Bombak, A., Robinson, E., Hughes, K., Riediger, N., & **Thomson, L**. (2022). "Mommy-see, mommy-do": perceptions of intergenerational "obesity" transmission among lower-income, higher-weight, rural midwestern American women. *Food and Foodways*, 30(3), 185-207.

Low, J. and **Thomson, L.** (2021) "Symbolic Interactionism and the Myth of Astructural Bias: A textual defense and illustrative advice." *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 46(2), 97-119.

Book Reviews

Thomson, Lisa. (2016). Review of the book *Negotiating Identity: Symbolic Interactionist Approaches to Social Identity,* by Susie Scott. Canadian Journal of Sociology, Volume 41(3) 433-436.

Conference Presentations

Thomson L., (2022, October) *Conduct, Culture, and Cohesion: Belonging as socialization in early career Canadian Armed Forces members.* Paper presentation at the Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society Conference, Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario.

Bombak AE, Turner A, **Thomson L**, Chinho N, Burke C, and Sheehan J. (2020, June) *Intersections of Weight Stigma in New Brunswick Marginalized Communities.* Paper accepted for presentation at the International Weight Stigma Conference, Auckland, New Zealand. (online)

Bombak AE, **Thomson L**, Turner A, Chinho N, Burk C, and Sheehan J. (2020, April) *Intersectional Weight Stigma and Coping Mechanisms Among Marginalized Groups in New Brunswick.* Paper accepted for presentation at the Canadian Public Health Association Public Health 2020, Winnipeg, MB. (online)

Thomson, L. (2019, November). *They last an hour: Relationships in Group Fitness Classes.* Presentation at the Faculty of Sociology Brown Bag Speaker Series, Fredericton, NB.

Thomson, L. (2019, May). *I Spend More Time Picking Out My Workout Outfit: Bodies as Sign Vehicles.* Paper presentation at the Qualitative Analyses Conference, Fredericton, NB.

Thomson, L. (2015, July). *Crunching Identities: Group Fitness as a Place for Identity Construction.* Paper presentation at the Sixth International Sport and Society Conference, Toronto, Ontario.

Thomson, L. (2015, April). *Deadlifting in Place: A Gendered Understanding of Group Fitness Spaces* Paper presentation at the University of New Brunswick Graduate Research Conference, Fredericton, New Brunswick.

Thomson, L. (2015, March). *Squatting for Results: Autoethnographic data in group fitness.* Presentation at the Faculty of Sociology Brown Bag Speaker Series, Fredericton, NB.

Awards and Scholarships

2020 New Brunswick Innovation Foundation Award ($3000)
2019 New Brunswick Innovation Foundation Award ($3000)
2017 New Brunswick Innovation Foundation Award ($3000)
2016 Peter McGahan Graduate Scholarship in Sociology ($2000)
2015 International Sport and Society Conference Graduate Scholar Award ($300)
2014 Faculty of Arts Graduate Assistantship Award ($4500)
2013 Department of Sociology Entrance Award ($2000)