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***AN ANALYSIS OF GENDER INEQUALITY &  
INTIMIDATION TOWARDS WOMEN IN GYM  
ENVIRONMENTS***

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Thesis Topic: Sports in Irish Society

**Author's Statement**

Aoife Sweeney

I hereby declare that this project represents my work and has not been submitted, in whole or in part, by me or another person, for the purpose of obtaining any credit or grade.

Aoife Sweeney

Signed: Aoife Sweeney

Date: 8/May/2023

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## **ABSTRACT**

The focus of this thesis is to investigate the issue of gender inequality and intimidation of female participants in gym environments. This research aims to gain a deeper insight into how men and women of various ages perceive and experience gender-based discrimination and intimidation in these environments and settings, as well as the effect that stereotypes and expectations from society about women's bodies and fitness goals can have on their participation in fitness.

The research on gender intimidation and inequality towards women in gym environments is accomplished through using a combination of literature review and qualitative research methods. A mixed-methods approach is used in the study, which also includes ethnographic observation and in-depth interviews with a sample of males and females.

The review of the literature that is available on this topic offers an in-depth examination of a range of research and knowledge regarding gender inequality and intimidation in gym settings, emphasising how women are frequently marginalised or overlooked in particular aspects of fitness and gym culture. This thesis includes qualitative interviews with men and women of all ages and fitness levels as an addition to the literature review to develop a more detailed knowledge of their experiences with gender inequalities and intimidation gym environment.

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**CHAPTER 1:**

**INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 Introduction**

I will examine the gender gap and inequality between men and women in gym facilities and environments as part of this thesis. I am interested to understand if there is discrimination and intimidation against women due to their gender in gym environments. The gender gap in fitness and sports, especially in gym environments, fascinates me. Through this research topic, I hope to demonstrate how the experiences of men and women differ while discussing issues of identity, community, gender, environment and age. The gender gap and intimidation at the gym highlight how women are treated negatively when relating to their training and fitness in the gym environment, as well as being; undervalued, overlooked and dismissed. This study is extremely relevant given the enormous growth in the popularity of the gym. Despite the rise in female gym interest over the last few years, it is obvious that the environments in the gym for men and women are different.

## **1.2 Overarching Research Question**

*Is there gender inequality and intimidation towards women in gym environments?*

It is evident that there is a disparity between genders in fitness environments, as a gym-goer myself. Studying the differences between how men and women view, experience and use the gym is something I'm particularly interested in. I believe that there are major differences between how men and women experience and view exercise and gym environments. In modern society, it is essential and relevant to research the gender inequality and intimidation of women in gym settings. In uncomfortable and unwelcoming conditions; discrimination, harassment, and intimidation are common

among women who participate in fitness within public spaces, such as gyms. This study aims to investigate and examine women's experiences in gym settings, with a focus on gender inequality and intimidation. Examining how women are treated by gym employees and other gym participants, as well as broader social and cultural factors that contribute to gender inequity and intimidation in exercise environments, will be discussed.

Within this research project, I focus on analysing the gender gap between men and women within gym environments. I am asking the question “Is there gender inequality in gym environments and is there gender intimidation towards women?”. I am fascinated by the gender divide in sports and fitness, specifically in the gym. While discussing issues of identity, community, gender and race, I hope to show how the experiences of men and women differ through this research topic. Since the popularity of the gym has grown rapidly, this study is timely.

Overall, I set out to gain different experiences of gender inequality that influence gender processes in the gym. Through qualitative research, it will give my research further understanding and results to my hypothesis of fitness environments. Through the analysis of existing literature, along with my own experiences; my hypothesis includes that there is evidence towards extreme gender inequality and gender intimidation within gyms in Ireland. This inequality and intimidation cause damaging effects on women’s mental health and the idea of the gym. There are barriers for women that make it extremely hard to get involved in physical activities and gain a healthy relationship with exercise.

### **1.3 Planned Structure**

Through the literature review chapter, I'll be examining and analysing important texts and key themes related to gender inequality and the intimidation of women in the gym.



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The research methodology chapter will discuss the methods used within this thesis to gain an understanding of this topic. I will discuss the methods of data collection I chose and why, as well as how they shaped my finding and analysis. I will also be highlighting any challenges I encountered as well as discussing the ethical consideration that is essential to highlight.

The analysis of findings; in Chapter 4 will highlight the thematic data found from both; the qualitative data collection method, as well as the existing literature.

Lastly, chapter 5; the conclusion chapter will summarise my research.

## **CHAPTER 2:**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

## **2.1 Introduction**

Within this research project, I want to analyse the gender gap between men and women within gym environments. I am asking the question “Is there gender inequality in gym environments and is there gender intimidation towards women?”. As more women explore fitness and physical health, they frequently experience intimidation and prejudice in gym settings. With an emphasis on understanding the underlying causes of these problems, and how they affect women's experiences in gyms, this literature review will examine and analyse the existing research on gender inequalities and intimidation of women in gym environments. This literature review contributes to a deeper understanding of the complicated nature of gender inequality and intimidation in gym environments by assessing and applying the current literature.

## **2.2 Gender Disparity in the Gym**

The article by Stephanie E. Coen, Joyce Davidson & Mark W. Rosenberg, called; *Where is the space for continuum? Gyms and the visceral “stickiness” of binary gender*, emphasise how physical exercise is a highly gender-specific aspect of health behaviour, with women being less likely than men to maintain particular levels of physical activity. The purpose of this article is to provide a detailed understanding of the gym's function and highlight its direct contribution to the large disparity between men and women who engage in physical activity. To explain the processes influencing social theories of gender, this article draws on new theories about the potential gym spaces. “Gyms are common places to engage in physical activity, but they may also potentially reinforce and routinize gender differences” (Coen et al., 2020: 30). There is evidence to support the significance of gendered characteristics in influencing opportunities and behaviour

connected to the gym. This article also highlights the theory of the difference in motivations in the gym relating to men and women; men intend to gain muscle, whereas there is an idea that females only go to the gym to lose weight. As mentioned above, in a previous study; the idea that females go to the gym to lose weight or to be ‘thin’ is a huge aspect of how women are overlooked in the gym. There are extreme barriers for women that participate in bodybuilding due to the façade that women only go to the gym to use the treadmill. The study highlighted that men and women base their gym fitness routine based on gender norms and body ideas while highlighting the idea of different areas in the gym for men and women. Coen et.al (2020) give an interesting insight into the gym and how gender processes significantly control the environment.

### **2.3 Societal Views of Women in the Gym: ‘being thin and toned’**

Stephanie E. Coen, Joyce Davidson and Mark W. Rosenberg in; *“It's gym, like g-y-m not J-i-m”*: *Exploring the role of place in the gendering of physical activity*, developed a theory of the gender gap within physical activity and how the gender process causes a lack of inclusivity through a feminist approach. Within their research on gender differences in the gym, they state that “the spatialities of gyms can be gender-divisive, with weightlifting zones coded as masculine and cardiovascular exercise areas as feminine for their seeming alignment with gendered physique goals” (Coen et al.,2018: 537). Within this literature, they expand their theory through intersectionality inequality by mentioning the struggles of women of colour. Not only is it stated that there is a clear gender gap, but a racial gap and inequality are highlighted by describing the gyms as “spaces of whiteness” (Coen et al., 2018:538), creating an environment that is not as assessable or welcoming, especially for women of colour. Through the idea of gyms being a masculine and male-dominated environment along with the

idea of healthy body image for women as being ‘thin and toned’, the barrier for women in the gym is clear. Coen et al. (2018) state that “women’s limited participation in strength training in gyms has been linked to the influence of dominant feminine body ideals that emphasis thinness” (538). Through these ideas and opinions made by society, the use of weights for women has been overlooked. This literature is a key piece that guides my study through the ideas mentioned throughout; gender and race processes within the gym, as well as the body ideas and boundaries for women.

Additionally, Zenony Yin addresses body image and appearance concerns among women who participate in gym fitness in *Setting for exercise and concerns about body appearance of women who exercise* (2001). Yin examines the various elements that influence how women who participate in fitness feel about their bodies, such as societal expectations and pressures to live up to a particular body type, media representations of the ideal female shape, and the effect of varied exercise environments, such as gym environments. According to the research, women who work out in a gym environment may experience greater pressure to meet typical and traditional beauty standards and body appearance since they are more likely to encounter other females who are aiming for the same body type. The gym is seen to have distinct experiences and expectations for men and women, women are expected and urged to be slim (Johansson, 1996). Women who work out and exercise in a natural setting (outdoors) or who use methods, however, might encounter fewer obligations and pressure to live up to these norms (Yin, 2001). “Social Anxiety about physique – self presentation anxiety associated with one’s body appearance in a public setting – has been negatively associated with people’s participation in exercise and physical activities” (Yin, 2001: 851). Evidence has repeatedly shown that participation in physical activity and exercise can negatively impact individuals through social anxiety related to physical appearance. People who struggle with body image anxiety may completely avoid physical activity or limit their participation in

situations where they feel secure and comfortable. This avoidance may result in less physical exercise, which can be detrimental to an individual's physical and emotional well-being. One of the explanations why social anxiety over physical appearance can be an obstacle to engaging in physical activity and fitness is that it can result in an unhealthy and destructive pattern of self-criticism. An individual who is self-conscious or anxious regarding their appearance may find it difficult to attend gym environments and participate in fitness classes. Additionally, individuals may avoid situations that make them feel exposed or vulnerable, due to a fear of being criticised by others.

The article underlines the value of establishing an encouraging and welcoming workout atmosphere for women of various body types and ability levels. This can involve offering a choice of fitness options that accommodate various interests and ability levels as well as building a pleasant and judgment-free environment that promotes positive body image and self-acceptance. Overall, Yin provides insight into a significant subject that many women who participate in fitness may struggle with. There needs to be developed for a more welcoming and encouraging fitness and gym culture that supports the well-being of everyone by identifying and dealing with the factors that trigger difficulties with body image.

#### **2.4 The Hierarchical Systems in Gym Environments**

The article by Ramón Spaaij, Karen Farquharson and Timothy Marjoribanks; *Sport and Social Inequalities* (2015) is based on the social inequalities within sports; gender, race and social mobility. Within this piece of literature, I focused more on the gender aspect of the article and related it to gender inequality in gym environments. Along with the piece of literature mentioned above by Coen et. al., the inclusivity and exclusivity aspect of gender in sports is highlighted. A hierarchical system is mentioned to describe the

social inequalities within sports which are also related to the gym environment between men and women. This article explores sport by linking it to social inequality along with social change. Farquharson et. al. (2015) states that “institutionalised inequalities according to gender, race and nation are often considered in isolation from each other or, less frequently, in terms of how they intersect” (400). The intersectionality of gender and race inequalities is how the hierarchal system; such as a white male, is predominating sports and fitness. This article argues that gender is the primary inequality that is embedded within sports and fitness due to societal ideas and values. There is a significant link between gender, race and class inequality that is predominant in sports which also relates to the gym. Along with gender inequality, there is an issue of discrimination against sexual orientation that is highlighted. The issue of homophobia causes a barrier to performing and conducting fitness due to societal ideas of a certain image associated with a certain orientation. There is an issue within fitness in society with women being too ‘masculine’ that causes the barrier for women within the gym. There is an idea that women should always be feminine. Through the research of Farquharson et. al.,(2015) the article concluded that “sport reflects and reinforces broader hierarchical structures; sports is a site for both inclusion and exclusion, but the way this works is uneven; and sports is ultimately a site for a site for the social reproduction of hierarchy and social stratification” (Farquharson et. al., 2015: 407). The hierarchical systems in fitness relate to the gym environment due to the gender separation and ‘masculinity’ of the gym.

Katie Liston, in the journal for Sports and Society; *Establishing-outsider relations between males and females in male-associated sports in Ireland*, refers to the power relations between the male and females in the area of male-dominated sports in Ireland. Liston focuses on the sphere of sports in Ireland with a particular focus on the power dynamics between both genders and how this affects the rising habits and behaviours of women. Liston focuses on how male-

associated sports in Ireland have created insider-outsider relationships between men and women. She believes that the establishment of a gender hierarchy in sports, where men are viewed as 'insiders' and women as 'outsiders', sustains inequalities based on gender. There is a disadvantage for female athletes who do compete in sports that are seen as male-dominated along with a clear exclusion of women from environments where men dominate this hierarchy and power structure in sports, as well as gym environments.

“The argument that “women are trying to be like men” does not address the implicit power imbalances between males and females in sports and the diversity of experiences and identities of males and females in sports” (Liston, 2015: 26).

Corresponding to gym environments, the gym additionally demonstrates gender inequality. Despite initiatives to advance gender equality in the fitness industry, cultural stereotypes and norms still favour masculine bodies and male fitness. For instance, gym routines and equipment may be created with the physique of men in mind, while female athletes may be evaluated more on their physical looks instead of their athletic and fitness ability

Although Liston is not specifically referring to gym environments, it significantly relates to this topic referring to an “outsider” about females in sport. In addition, the gym culture frequently lacks diversity and representation, which can make individuals who don't conform to traditional standards of gender feel excluded. For those who don't fit these expectations, including transgender people or people with non-binary gender identities, this may provide a barrier and challenge to participation.

Vikki Krane questions the idea that female athletes have to adhere to traditional and conventional gender expectations in order to be accepted in sports culture in her book, *We Can Be Athletic and Feminine, But Do We Want To? Challenging Hegemonic Femininity in*

*Women's Sport*. According to Krane, female athletes need to achieve a balance between their athletic abilities and femininity in order to be accepted seriously due to men's sports and fitness are frequently seen to be more authentic or superior. This expectation, according to Krane, places female athletes in a "double bind" since they must balance adhering to a demanding set of gender standards with achieving the goal of fitness and athletic ability.

In conclusion, Krane's article underlines how crucial it is to challenge dominant femininity in women's sports and create a culture that celebrates female athletes for their ability and accomplishments in the sport and fitness industry rather than their adherence to conventional gender stereotypes.

## **2.5 'Gymtimidation'**

The term "gymtimidation" is used to describe the uncomfortable, frightened, or anxious feeling that many individuals experience when they visit the gym. Gym intimidation can be especially linked to females in the gym, who may experience significant obstacles from cultural and societal norms while trying to participate in fitness in the gym.

Kiara Lowery's article *Where Are The Ladies: The Social and Cultural Reasons Why Women Still Shy Away From Weights in 2018*, investigates the reasons why women frequently stay away from weightlifting and other types of exercise at the gym. The article, which was released in 2019 is a component of a greater debate regarding how gender affects health and activity as well as gender-based intimidation. Lowery addresses a number of the reasons why women may feel scared or anxious to exercise and lift weights. The societal standard of a woman being slim and toned as opposed to muscular is one factor. Given that many females worry about being perceived as overly muscular



or masculine, women who seek to gain muscle may feel embarrassed about doing so due to this stereotype. In addition, many women might not be familiar with the correct weightlifting technique or might experience intimidation in the gym's weightlifting area, which is dominated by men. In terms of gym intimidation, it draws attention to the societal and cultural obstacles that women encounter when it comes to weightlifting and strength training in a gym setting. These obstacles can worsen feelings of discomfort and fear, which may discourage women from fully committing to their workouts. Lowery discusses the social barrier within the male-dominated area of weightlifting, stating that “women were intimidated because they were outnumbered” (Lowery, 2019: 28). According to Lowery, there may be social obstacles for women who want to lift weights and engage in strength training in the gym, in the male-dominated weight area. Women may not fully participate in these activities as a result of feeling intimidated and insecure as a result of this. The idea that men 'outnumber' women in the weight zone is one of the primary causes of this intimidation. Furthermore, the male-dominated culture associated with weightlifting, which is frequently characterized by competition, may strengthen stereotypes regarding gender and make women feel unwelcome in this environment.

## **2.6 Commercial Gyms**

Ivo Van Hilvoorde discusses the rise of gyms and commercialised fitness and ideology within the fitness industry in his article; *Fitness: the early (Dutch) roots of a modern industry* (2008). Hilvoorde investigates the historical roots of the fitness industry in the Netherlands and how it has developed over time into a commercialised and ideology-driven sector. Hilvoorde claims that several historical developments, such as the emergence of fitness as a cultural aspect in society, the expansion of health, and the growing popularity of bodybuilding and physical

activity, all combined to create the modern fitness industry, that is solely commercialised. According to Hilvoorde, one of the primary motivations behind this ideological competition was the need to differentiate oneself apart from other fitness professionals or establishments and to draw clients through advertising and name recognition. Due to the guarantee of immediate results, many individuals grew interested in the different fitness movements that emerged; including commercial gyms. "These innovations have certainly contributed to an increasing display of strong bodies and the commercial exploitations of the body beautiful" (Hilvoorde, 2008: 1313). It's claimed that as the fitness industries and environments have developed and grown more commercialised, which has been a major area of attention. The growth of bodybuilding and physical culture in modern society, according to Hilvoorde, is one of the key elements influencing this focus on the "body beautiful." These exercises emphasised building muscle and a slim body, which were viewed to be important and appealing. This ideal body type gained popularity and attractiveness over time, and the fitness industry has continued to promote it through branding, marketing, and advertising within commercial gyms. Along with the focus on the idealized body, it is highlighted that this ideology has also been exploited for money as a result of the commercialisation of the fitness industry. To achieve the "body beautiful," this industry within commercial gyms has created services, including dietary supplements, memberships, and personal training. It has also given rise to issues about the possibility of misleading marketing and exaggerated promises, which has created an attractive marketplace for the fitness industry (Hilvoorde, 2008)

Hilvoorde additionally points out that the fitness industry's marketing and ideologies have contributed to the promotion of false body standards and stereotypes of particular body types. Specifically regarding females in fitness and underrepresented groups, the emphasis on appearance and physical ability can contribute to experiences of body dissatisfaction or anxiety to live up to particular standards and societal norms.

Overall, Hilvoorde's article emphasises how complicated and dynamic the contemporary fitness industry is, as well as how different societal social and cultural influences have affected it. While the industry can provide many advantages, including equipment availability, and expert advice, it can also have disadvantages, including unhealthy and negative body issues and views.

## **2.7 Women-Only Gyms**

In the article by Maxine Leeds Craig and Rita Liberti; *“Cause That’s What Girls Do”*: *The Making of a Feminized Gym*, they explore the idea of women-only gyms as an effort to try to increase the femineity within gyms. There is no denying that gym environments are seen as masculine, so this article provides an interesting angle for exploring the gender processes within the gym. Craig and Liberti (2007:677) state that “women-only gyms, offering circuit training exercise programs, are the fastest growing segment of the fitness industry”. Due to the severe gym intimidation, women-only gyms advocated for the importance of women feeling safe and free from judgement within a fitness environment. Members of women-only gyms can exercise together in a welcoming environment free from male intimidation. There is an ‘outsider’ feeling towards women in fitness such as the gym (Liston, 2005) that is seen as a masculine environment. Women-only gyms aim to overcome the ‘outsider’ feeling and for women to be able to gain equality.

The idea of women-only gyms is a complicated topic with mixed opinions. Craig and Liberti also point out how women-only gyms provide a feminine fitness image while remaining consistent with traditional gender norms and expectations. Women-only gyms frequently provide classes and equipment that are thought to be "suitable" for women, including cardio

machines and dance-based workouts, while eliminating equipment and exercises that are thought to be "too masculine," like weightlifting and intense strength training. This feeds the idea and belief that women should place more importance on their physical looks and follow to stereotypical gender norms than on their physical fitness. In many opinions, the idea and beliefs behind women-only gyms, are essentially running away from the root of the problem, as well as contributing to the ideology of not becoming 'too masculine' by eliminating weight and strength training. Women-only gyms are criticised for reinforcing the view that standard gym settings are fundamentally masculine and that women don't belong there by providing separate areas and environments for females. This may increase gender disparity and prevent women from accessing the resources, equipment, and support they need to achieve their fitness and health aims.

Ultimately, this piece presents a complex viewpoint on women's-only gyms as a reaction to and a supporter of gender inequity in fitness culture.

## **2.8 Conclusion**

In summary, this literature study has investigated the problem of gender inequalities and intimidation of female participants in gym environments. Through existing literature, key themes and important aspects have been identified to provide an indent analysis of this topic. Gender inequality and intimidation at gyms have been recognised as complex, diverse problems that are shaped by wider expectations and standards of society surrounding gender, fitness, and body image. In the gym, women frequently experience discrimination, harassment, and intimidation. This can restrict women's access to opportunities and resources for fitness and health.

## **CHAPTER 3:**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

Throughout my research, I aimed to gain an analysis of the area of gender inequality and intimidation through different paths and lenses. I was focused to gain an understanding through a feminist aspect and approach to the gym, along with a male

point of view. To gain my understanding, I conducted two forms of qualitative research methods; ethnographic observation, along conducting interviews. Qualitative research offers useful and reliable perspectives and insights (Maxwell, 2012). I will be gaining insights, values, ideas and experiences from different participants along with my views and experiences in the gym.

### **3.2 Research Method**

As mentioned above, I am using a mixed method of qualitative data collection for my research. The combination of the mixed-method approach will guide my research by gaining a deeper, more detailed and contextual result and findings.

Through the method of ethnographic observation, the purpose was to gain an overall understanding of the gym environments in order to understand gym cultures and gender processes within this environment. When conducting this study, it is essential to put yourself in the environment to gain an insight into the difference in gym cultures between men and women. “the inclusion of ethnographic observational data within a qualitative research design provides for a full examination of everyday activities and the structures and processes that shape them” (Fitzgerald & Mills, 2022). In order to fully understand the cultural, social, and environmental influences which influence people's behaviours, ethnographic observation includes closely observing, monitoring and documenting the interactions, actions, and behaviours of individuals in their setting. Researchers can develop a more thorough and complex awareness of the processes they are studying by including ethnographic observational information in a qualitative research approach. For the duration of this research project, I have an insight of observation from two different gyms in two different towns, along with two other gyms, also in different locations, that

started my fitness journey a few years ago. Through the observation and presence of four different gyms, it will guide and help my research in gaining an unbiased result. It was extremely helpful that I have attended four different gyms to get a sense of the environments in each one, to ensure I have an unbiased analysis.

Along with ethnographic observation, the second method of interviews will help me gain a deeper understanding along with a broader analysis of gender inequality and intimidation. With this method, I interviewed eight individuals who participate in fitness in gym environments; including a mixture of male and female, along with one personal trainer. I interviewed a personal trainer that works in the gym to get an understanding of gym environments and culture through someone in power.

To enhance and advance my research, the participants are from different gyms and towns, which helped me to gain a better perspective of gender inequality. I chose interviews as an aspect of my research methods because I want to advance my hypothesis through the different opinions and experiences of individuals who attend the gym. I suspected that the males and females that participate in the interviews will have different opinions which will make this thesis interesting. I am interested in not only seeing how gym participants view and feel about the gym but also how these views and feelings may be different from different genders, as well as a person in power; a personal trainer. I believe it is important to interview a variety of participants to gain deeper results and findings with a mixture of men and women. The interview was semi-structured with room for leading questions and input from the participant. I asked the participants about gender in the gym along with their relation with gym environments. I gathered knowledge on the participants' experiences, views and values relating to the gender disparities within the gym.

### 3.3 Sampling Method

As a part of conducting interviews, I used a sampling method. This refers to the method of choosing individuals to take part in my research. I used a non-probability sampling process for my qualitative methods of interviews. “Non-probability sampling is a sampling procedure that will not bid a basis for any opinion of probability that elements in the universe will have a chance to be included in the study sample” (Etikan & Bala, 2017:1). Within the sampling method; I chose to use the judgemental/purposive sampling which refers to; the researcher's judgement and examination of individuals that will share the strongest reliable information and knowledge to achieve the study's objective (Etikan & Bala, 2017). To gather the necessary data while identifying individuals who are prepared to share their knowledge and experiences, I needed to focus on those who share their viewpoints.

The selection criteria, such as age, gender, and location, were determined as I wanted a mixed sample group. The purpose of sampling is to make sure that the study participants are sufficiently varied to appropriately portray the community of interest (gym community), making sampling an essential aspect of the research design. The sample participants to represent the gym community ranged in males and females from twenty-one years old to fifty-five years old. I thought it was particularly important to interview individuals of all ages to gain deeper insight from different lenses.

<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Joe (21)	Molly (21)
David (22)	Hannah (22)
Shane (22)	Grace (28)
Patrick (51)	Angela (55)



Personal trainer: Katie (21, female)
--------------------------------------

The table above shows the range of ages between the male and female gym-goers that participated in the interviews.

Both methods of qualitative research; interviews and ethnographic observation assisted my research in gaining the best analysis of gender inequality, gender divide and intimidation. Understanding the epistemology and ontology related to this topic of gender disparity inequality and division is a benefit of using a qualitative approach for research. The epistemology perspective when interviewing the participants themselves was aided by the ontology that is relevant to my research because it emphasises the reality of inequality and the nature of how it is in certain contexts and environments, such as the gym.

### **3.4 Ethical Considerations**

With any research, it is vital to consider the ethical concerns and issues that may arise throughout the research. Maintaining the participants' anonymity throughout the research project will be the primary ethical concern. Although this is a significant issue, the participants of the interviews are guaranteed anonymity by changing any names that may be mentioned along with towns and gyms mentioned.

In relation to the ethnographic observation aspect of conducting this research project, anonymity is also guaranteed as I will be focusing on gym environments and analysing the gender processes within the gym and my own experiences rather than a specific participant. The ethnographic observation will be an overall insight into the gym.

Kristin Luker's book; *Salsa Dancing into the social Sciences*, outlines several ethical issues that researchers need to be aware of when performing social science research. Luker additionally emphasises the significance of ensuring unbiased judgment and avoiding personal opinions in research (Luker, 2008). She focuses on how researcher bias could influence how research findings are interpreted, as well as emphasises how important it is for researchers to be aware of their own biases and take action to reduce their influence on the research.

The use of audio recording is another ethical consideration when conducting the interviews. Within the consent form, the use of audio recording was highlighted, as well as stating what it is used for, making sure that the participant was fully aware. In order to use audio recording in research, ethical concerns including informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and honesty must be carefully considered.

Overall, ethical considerations are a critical aspect when taking part in research. Ultimately, by upholding ethical standards, I am not only protecting the participants but also myself as a researcher.

### **3.5 Research Challenges**

The access issues associated with my research on this topic is be linked with individuals hesitant to participate. I include participants from different gyms and towns to advance my research, which was difficult. This was an important aspect of my research that I overcame. Within the nine participants, I got an insight into four different gyms. Gaining insight into multiple gyms was a significant aspect of my research method as I wanted to analyse gym intimidation and gender intimidation from multiple gyms.

I was also interested in including a range of ages, which was seen as a research challenge, as I didn't have a wide range of middle-aged gym participants available for interviews.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

In conclusion, this chapter has provided insight into the research method and approach used to conduct this investigation of gender inequality and intimidation of female gym-goers. The mixed-method qualitative approach was chosen with consideration to guarantee that the analysis was carried out carefully and thoroughly so that the findings could be applied to a larger population. The feminist approach that informed the research highlighted the significance of identifying and addressing the power imbalances and structural inequalities that reinforce gender-based intimidation and discrimination. This perspective influenced the design of my research, the gathering and analysis of the data, and the assessment of the results.

Overall, the research method applied in this thesis has resulted in an in-depth and detailed knowledge and understanding of the gender gap, inequality and intimidation of women in gym environments.

## **CHAPTER 4:**

### **ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The analysis of findings is divided into three key areas which have developed through this study as well as the research methodology. The areas of; gender, age and environment were highlighted as key themes when conducting this thesis. Each of these themes shows how gym environments are seen through different lenses.

The interviews and observation guided my study and highlighted each of these themes. I interviewed both males and females, of different ages, as well as from a range of different gym environments and locations. This helped me gain a range of different answers, experiences and perspectives on how individuals view gym environments, guiding this study towards gender intimidation and inequality.

I frequently participate in fitness in the gym, so it was clear to me that there is gender inequality within fitness environments. I am particularly interested in studying how men and women perceive and experience the gym differently. Men and women, in my opinion, experience and perceive exercise and gym environments significantly differently.

#### **4.2 Analysis 1: Gender**

##### **How different genders perceive and experience gender inequality and intimidation differently in the gym.**

Gender is the key theme throughout this study of gym environments. This study examines the difference in experiences and feelings between males and females within gym environments. I ensured to interview an equal amount of males and females to establish an unbiased analysis of gender inequality in the gym.

Through the interviews between the men and women, there was a clear difference of view and opinion of the gym, specifically relating the gender intimidation and inequality. While it was agreed among all the participants; male and female, that there is gender intimidation and inequality present, the reactions were completely different.

Females who have encountered intimidation and gender inequalities in gym settings could see this problem as an example of gender discrimination that prevents them from participating in and enjoying physical activity in gym environments. They may experience exclusion or discrimination in gym environments due to a lack of change in societal views or assistance with their fitness journey. Due to intimidation, sexism or other forms of intimidation, women may also experience a lack of confidence in the gym.

“I think there is definitely gender intimidation. I think I'd be kind of on the luckier side where I am in a leisure centre, in a small gym, but looking at all my experiences. Yeah, there's definitely huge gender intimidation, with all the things we spoke about, like you know, certain areas for certain people. You know, clothing, like what you can wear, what you can't wear. And I think some of it even comes from women shaming other women” (Molly, aged 21).

On the contrary, male gym-goers may not be as mindful or aware of the issue or may not believe it is a serious issue. Many have known it was happening or may not have personally experienced gender-based intimidation or discrimination in gym settings. Some males might even be part of the issue by acting in ways that make women feel unwanted or intimidated in gym environments. When speaking to male participants, it was stated that they rarely thought about gender intimidation towards women.

While there is a huge intimidation aspect within gender inequality in gym environments, there is no denying that males may sometimes be intimidated. Although this thesis is

primarily based on females in gym environments and gender intimidation towards women, there is evidently a male intimidation aspect to the gym. “When I first started the gym, I was really skinny and weak so of course I felt intimidated” (Shane, aged 22). While there is intimidation for both genders, they are also significantly different. The intimidation that males experience, is predominately regarding other men or men that appear ‘bigger’ than them.

“Yeah, I do see gender intimidation towards women, which is probably an issue in the gym. While I haven’t thought about it much, I can see it being evident in gyms. I do think that everyone feels a bit of intimidation. I understand that it is different for lads compared to women. Like for me, I’m confident in the gym now but that’s because I have worked out for years and have built muscle and strength, but at the start, I was intimidated. But I guess the female aspect would be from men also, like with weights and areas of the gym with more men I suppose” (David, aged 22).

This comment from the interview with David describes an accepted opinion among members of gyms that gender intimidation is a problem in gym environments and that it can have a different impact on women compared to males. Although David recognises that males encounter intimidation in the gym, he proposes that it might be particularly severe for women, especially in areas of the gym where men are more present. According to Johansson (1996), the gym is a gendered environment where men and women have distinct goals and experiences. Women are regarded as having to be thin, toned, and gentle, whereas men are compared to be strong, muscly, and domineering. The layout of the gym, the equipment offered, and the behaviour of other members are just a few examples of how the culture of the gym reinforces these expectations.

Within the gender inequality aspect of women in the gym, I asked about the typical stereotypes of women in the gym. The persistent existence of gender-based stereotypes and preconceptions is just one of the many ways that gender inequality discrimination in gym settings can develop. From my research, along with this study of gender in the gym, there are several common assumptions and stereotypes of females in the gym which contribute to intimidation and gender inequality.

“In my gym, actually, there used to be a sign on the wall that said female area. They did get rid of it now though since covid. But it used to have a sign for females with smaller weights, and yoga mats, and it was right beside the cardio machines. So I think that was related to that typical stereotype that women lift less, and do cardio and stuff. Even though, some of the women I train with lift heavy weights, they are into bodybuilding. They’d probably be able to lift more than me and my mates. So I think it comes back to typical stereotypes of women in the gym. Lads lifting weights and women on the treadmill or stair-master or lifting like 5kg little weight” (Shane, aged 22).

Instead of being encouraged to engage in a variety of fitness routines and exercises, women may be advised toward particular workouts or equipment that are thought to be better suited for their claimed fitness levels due to the stereotype that women in the gym only want to get thin and toned. The idea that women are mostly concerned with reaching a particular physical appearance; thin or toned, is an outdated stereotype. According to Dworkin (2003), the gym is a place where gender stereotypes are encouraged and reinforced. By doing cardio workouts and ignoring weight lifting or other traditionally male-dominated routines, women are expected to comply with social expectations of

beauty and femininity. As a result, there is a gender-based division in the gym, with men controlling the weight room and women restricted to the cardio area.

Another common misconception about women's fitness is that they prefer cardio-based exercises over weightlifting and strength training. Due to this stereotype, women may be discouraged from using particular fitness equipment or techniques, and they may also have insecurities or feelings of anxiety when participating in weightlifting or other strength training exercises (Salvatore & Marecek, 2010). Women's gym experiences were frequently influenced by worries about being judged by others. Women were particularly worried about being judged on their physical appearance, their performance, and their compliance with gender standards.

“When I started the gym years ago, so many guys used to joke to me about only going to the gym to grow my glutes. I feel like there is a huge stereotype right now of females going to the gym to get bigger glutes or to just hip-thrust. In my opinion, the stereotype of females in the gym has moved on from cardio to glute training. Like yeah, I do exercises to improve my glutes but I don't do that five days a week! I train my whole body. I actually train my arms and back more, honestly” (Hannah, aged 22).

This comment emphasises the common belief that women just work out to build up their glutes rather than trying a variety of activities and strengthening their entire bodies. Hannah points out that this misconception is popular in the culture of the gym and has been supported by remarks and humour made by male gym members.

As a whole, by limiting women's possibilities and experiences in gym environments as well as spreading constrictive and damaging views about what it means to be fit and 'in shape', these misconceptions about women in the gym can lead to gender inequality and



intimidation. subsequently, it will need the effort to challenge and reject gender-based presumptions and biases to address these stereotypes.

On a final note regarding the aspect of how intimidation and inequality it perceived and experienced differently, it became evident during my research that individuals of different genders experience and react to intimidation and inequality in gym environments in different ways. Women in particular frequently experience intimidation and gender-based stereotypes, which can increase feelings of anxiety and insecurity in gym settings. it's critically important to understand that intimidation and inequalities are not just concerns for women, but for individuals of both genders can encounter similar problems in gym settings. Men, for instance, could feel frightened by the gym culture's typical expectations regarding strength and masculinity, while younger people might experience particular struggles with societal pressure and body image. There needs to be an effort to build more welcoming and encouraging gym environments that support greater inclusion and equality between men and women by recognising the various manners in which intimidation and inequality are perceived and experienced among individuals of different genders.

#### **4.3 Analysis 2: Age**

**How different ages perceive and experience gender inequality and intimidation towards women in the gym differently.**

The theme of Age was highlighted throughout this study on gym environments, especially through the research methodology of interviews as well as ethnographic observation. The research methodology of this thesis included interviewing men and women of all ages which helped identify the important theme of how different ages can portray gym environments and gender inequalities.

The theme of age brought an interesting twist to the analysis of this research. Through the interview of a middle-aged female and male, it is clear that gender intimidation is less predominant and seen among that age group. Initially, this research revealed that younger females, especially adolescents and early twenties, were more inclined to encounter intimidation and a gender gap in gym settings. Additionally, the atmosphere of the gym may make younger females feel uncomfortable, intimidated or nervous, which may make them give up on fitness and going to the gym completely.

However, the research also discovered that older women, especially those over 50, were more likely to experience discrimination and exclusion in gym environments. Numerous factors, such as societal views toward ageing and fitness, age-related physical changes, and other factors may contribute to this. The marginalisation and exclusion of older women in gym settings may be influenced by society's views on ageing and fitness. Older women may be overlooked for specific activities or areas of the gym because they are thought to be unable or driven more than younger individuals. In addition, older women may find it challenging to feel acknowledged or appreciated in gym settings where physical appearance is frequently given priority due to the emphasis placed on being young and attractive in society. How older adults see their bodies at the gym is highlighted by Allain and Marshall (2017). They claim that older adults may have a sense of confidence and physical control in the gym, but they may also experience age-related barriers and restrictions too. They state that an awareness of the physical experiences of

ageing in the gym can shed light on how older individuals generally navigate and make sense of the process of ageing.

Although intimidation is perceived and seen less among older people, as opposed to the younger people that participated in the interviews. There is an aspect of intimidation related to age within the gym that makes it daunting for women to participate in fitness. Age-related intimidation could represent a major obstacle for women who want to engage in fitness at the gym. “Probably a little bit self-conscious and unsure. Yeah. Of everything. Yeah. daunting. Daunting definitely” (Angela, aged 55). There is no denying that joining the gym is a daunting experience for any individual of any gender or age, especially for individuals who have little experience regarding gym environments.

When speaking to Angela, age was mentioned quite a bit. Angela mentioned that she sometimes felt ‘old’ when in the gym which was a barrier at the start. When asked about how Angela first felt when she joined the gym, she stated it was daunting, as with most people. Age-related obstacles may arise from a lack of social support. In a gym atmosphere that is possibly designed for younger individuals, older individuals may feel disconnected or ignored. Furthermore, older individuals may experience anxiety or unease in settings where other gym-goers are more concerned with the competition or accomplishing a particular appearance.

When discussing gender intimidation, I asked if Angela has ever experienced intimidation in a gym setting, and she stated; “When I was young, maybe yeah. But that's what I was younger, you know, age-related, but now no”. Although Angela doesn't experience gender intimidation, which she related back to age, Angela does see where there could be gender intimidation. Angela is aware that gender intimidation in gym settings is a significant issue that can impact women of all ages. She agrees that it can be

a barrier to involvement for many women and can make it difficult for individuals to feel at ease and secure in their own bodies, despite the fact that she has not personally experienced it in recent years.

According to the interviews with a male and female; who are in their fifties, experienced less gender intimidation and prejudicial views. The female participant; Angela (aged 55), stated that as she got older, she was less concerned with what other individuals thought of her in the gym. She also mentioned how inclusive the gym atmosphere has grown over time. The male participant; Patrick (aged 51), also observed that middle-aged gym users were less likely to experience gender intimidation and prejudice. He explained this, in particular, to this age group's increased perception of maturity and self-esteem as well as a reduced focus on age-based assumptions and stereotypes.

The gym and fitness are important aspects for older individuals, for a variety of reasons. Looking after their physical fitness, interacting with others their own age, and enhancing their general well-being, along with the feeling of belonging are aspects of how older individuals may benefit from the gym. According to Salin et al. (2014), older individuals who are content in the gym and their fitness, enjoy the gym's social aspects and the sense of community it builds. Salin et al. stresses the value of providing an encouraging gym environment for older individuals. They advocate for designing gyms with older individuals in mind, including equipment that is user-friendly and secure for their bodies. Overall, the article by Salin et al. emphasises the possible advantages of gym activities for older individuals and the significance of developing a setting which meets their particular requirements and motivations. By doing this, older individuals will continue to maintain their fitness levels and help maintain their general health and well-being.

Finally, it should be acknowledged that the issue associated with gender inequality and intimidation of women in gym environments is complicated and diverse and that an individual's age can have an impact on how they perceive and interact with the problem. Older women may encounter more subtle types of exclusion or marginalisation, whereas younger females may be more sensitive and exposed to encountering obvious types of gender intimidation.

#### **4.4 Analysis 3: Environment**

##### **The difference in gym environments that contribute to gender inequality and intimidation towards women in gym environments.**

The environment of a gym setting was a crucial key theme that I identified through the research methodology throughout this study. I ensured that I interviewed participants within different gyms and locations to gain a deeper insight into the study of gender inequality and intimidation in gym environments.

I used both data collection methods of ethnographic observation as well as interviews to guide the theme of environment within my analysis. As mentioned before, I have attended a total of four gyms, in different locations and different environments and atmospheres. Within the four gyms, two gyms are classed as commercial gyms and the two others are classed as leisure centre gyms within a hotel complex. Through the observation of each gym, along with my feelings and experiences, guided me through my research. Several interview participants also mentioned the difference in environments and atmosphere between commercial gyms and leisure centre gyms.

The difference in environments between a commercial gym and a leisure centre developed as a consistent theme throughout each interview, especially with participants who have exercised and participated in multiple gyms. Gender inequality may be impacted by differences between the social and physical settings of commercial gyms and leisure centre gyms. Leisure centre gyms are often smaller, more affordable facilities that are accessible to the general public, whereas commercial gyms are frequently larger, with more upmarket facilities. Commercial gyms may have additional amenities, including top-notch equipment, whereas leisure centre gyms might put more emphasis on accessibility and leisure, with useful equipment but less.

“In your gym (referring to a commercial gym), because it’s so big, It’s kind of like you really have to go there for years to be known or like, or even respected. I think you should receive respect no matter what. I feel like many people get judged because they seem like they shouldn’t be going to the gym or they’re a bit bigger and no one will admit it but it definitely happens, the looks people may get” (Molly, aged 21).

In the quote above, Molly is discussing the difference she has seen and felt between the gym I attend (commercial) compared to the gym Molly attends which is in a leisure hotel centre. We discussed the complete difference of atmosphere and environment between both gyms where it was highlighted that she felt the gym she attends in a leisure centre is a much nicer environment than a commercial gym (Molly, aged 21). The difficulties that gym participants may encounter in a commercial gym setting, where there might be a greater number of members and fewer chances for connection with others or acknowledgement, are highlighted by Molly's comment. As a result, many gym members may experience feelings of exclusion or lack of confidence as it takes longer to establish a sense of community and belonging within a commercial gym.

Commercial gyms may feature a more restricted or competitive social environment, with members who are primarily focused on accomplishing particular fitness objectives or achieving a certain appearance. “From my experience, I believe that commercial gyms carry an intimidating atmosphere for beginners” (Joe, aged 21). This can undeniably worsen perceptions of the gender gap and inequity, especially for women who may think that male gym members are judging or excluding them. Leisure centre gyms, on the other hand, tend to have a more community-focused atmosphere with participants who are primarily concerned with maintaining their general fitness, well-being and health. As a result, people of all genders and social cultures may experience a more encouraging and inclusive atmosphere in leisure centre gyms.

Coen et al. examine how the gym setting and atmosphere affect the gendered nature of physical activity in the article *It's gym, like gym not Jim": Exploring the function of place in the gendering of physical activity*. The authors believe that gender stereotypes and standards are heightened by the layout and structure of the gym, which is a strongly gendered environment. Coen et al. point out, that the gym can have a masculine style and have heavy weights and equipment that are frequently linked with male strength and power. The authors also highlight that the atmosphere in the gym can be daunting for women, who may feel uncomfortable or uneasy in an area where men predominate.

In general, imbalances in both the social and physical settings of commercial gyms and leisure centre gyms can have a variety of consequences for gender inequality. Leisure centre gyms may focus on access and inclusiveness, which can encourage gender equality and offer a more friendly and welcoming atmosphere for all individuals, whereas commercial gyms may be more upscale and intimidating for many gym-goers.

Through my research, I discovered that feelings of intimidation and gender inequalities can be increased by the physical environment of the gym. For instance, in areas like weighted spaces and areas, which may be predominately used by male gym participants, women may feel embarrassed or vulnerable. The research methodology also discovered that women's experiences in the gym can be impacted by the design and arrangement of the gym.

“I felt really kind of awkward. See, there are so many mirrors and stuff around that area also. I would have an issue just staring at myself. I'll make sure I look okay. You know, like you're just constantly fixing yourself when you're in front of the mirror. Why are there so many mirrors?” (Molly, aged 21).

Among the many female participants, Molly mentioned the layout of mirrors within gyms. Molly has attended two different gyms; one being a commercial gym and the other within a hotel leisure centre. While Molly was discussing the commercial gym she attended, she discussed the extensive use of mirrors, especially within the weight area. The extensive use of mirrors in fitness facilities could impact gym users in several different ways; positively and negatively.

On one hand, the use of mirrors within gyms to assess one's technique and form during exercises can help people avoid injuries and increase the success rate of their physical activity. As people track their progress on their journey to physical fitness, mirrors can also give them a sense of inspiration and achievement.

However, the use of mirrors in gym environments may additionally increase feelings of anxiety and feeling self-consciousness for gym-goer, especially females. The use of mirrors in gym settings may in time worsen these feelings since, according to research, women are more likely than males to experience body-image problems as well as a lack



of confidence. Additionally, using mirrors in the gym can encourage competition and comparing with other individuals in the gym which can result in low self-esteem or feeling discouraged. Additionally, the use of mirrors in these environments may enforce societal beauty standards and the idea that fitness is primarily determined by how individuals look. This can be particularly challenging to individuals who don't meet typical beauty standards or who are trying to achieve physical and fitness goals unrelated to appearance, including increasing strength or health.

Overall, while mirrors can be useful equipment in a gym setting, the overuse of mirrors can also be harmful to gym participants, especially women. By offering a range of exercise equipment and training alternatives that accommodate various fitness objectives and by encouraging positive body image and confidence in oneself, gym facilities can promote an atmosphere of respect and inclusiveness. This can contribute to the development of a more accepting and encouraging environment for everyone, regardless of appearance or level of fitness.

In conclusion, the examination of the difference in gym settings which contribute to gender inequality and intimidation of women in gym settings has identified several critical elements that can affect gym-goers' experiences. Different environments, including different atmospheres, designs and layouts, and amenities, are offered by commercial gyms and leisure centre gyms. These surroundings can affect how comfortable, safe, and supported gym participants feel. Overall, a gym's design and environment can have a huge impact on how individuals feel about the gym, especially when it comes to achieving gender equality and lowering the intimidation of women.

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

Overall, the research on the themes of gender, age and environment regarding the analysis of gender inequality and intimidation in gym environments, has demonstrated several important elements that play a role in gym participants' experiences and perceptions of intimidation and discrimination. Particularly, the interaction between gender and age appears to be a key component, with older women encountering additional challenges to participating in gym activities as a result of cultural expectations and negative beliefs about ageing. As well as the intersection of gender and age, the environment proposed as a huge aspect of the analysis, with the significant difference between commercial gyms compared to leisure centre gyms. Commercial gyms and leisure centre gyms each have their own atmospheres and designs, which can affect how much support, comfort, and security, gym members receive. An informative and valuable analysis of gender inequality and intimidation towards women in gym environments has been developed through understanding the complex and interconnected elements that contribute to these experiences and perceptions of the gym.

## **CHAPTER 5:**

## **CONCLUSION**

The research of the analysis of gender inequality and intimidation towards women in gym environments has proposed itself as a timely, valuable and extremely important topic within society. The purpose of this thesis was to examine how gender, age, and environmental factors affected the inequalities and intimidation of women in gym settings. To pinpoint important aspects causing gender-based intimidation and prejudice, the study examined the experiences of women in various gym situations.

Overall, it's critical to understand that intimidation of women in gym settings is a complicated problem that can be viewed and experienced differently depending on an individual's gender, past experiences, and cultural background. Promoting gender equality and building welcoming, secure gym environments for everyone is essential to address this problem. It's critical to support inclusiveness and diversity in every aspect of fitness culture to tackle gender inequalities in the gym. This entails making facilities, environments and equipment that are gender-neutral, offering trainers and members of the gym information and education on gender equality, and actively striving to eliminate gender bias and stereotypes. Individuals of all genders and identities can feel empowered to engage in fitness and lead active, healthy lifestyles by establishing a more inviting and inclusive gym environment.

The literature analysed for this thesis emphasises the significance of building welcoming and encouraging gym facilities that encourage everyone, regardless of age or gender, to stay healthy and active. It is crucial to address the social, cultural, and environmental issues that lead to gender inequality and intimidation in gym environments in order to attain this goal. Additionally, it is important to establish a more positive and welcoming

environment that promotes women of all ages and abilities in reaching their goals of fitness.

The major findings of this thesis include that women of all ages encounter intimidation and gender inequality in gym settings, but that the form and severity of these difficulties may vary depending on the type of gym setting in which they are participating. Due to the competitive and hierarchical atmosphere, emphasis on weight training and bodybuilding, and lack of support and motivation for women of all ages and abilities, commercial gyms have been reported to be especially stressful and prone to gender intimidation and discrimination. On the contrary, it was discovered that leisure centre gyms were more inviting and welcoming, with a focus on a supportive environment which push women of all ages and abilities to join and participate in fitness.

The investigation also emphasised how institutional practices contribute to the continued acts of intimidation and inequality among men and women in gym settings. Women have expressed discomfort with the stereotypical character of some gym environments and workouts, such as women-only areas or classes. Establishing more welcoming and encouraging gym environments has been challenged by the underrepresentation of women in management and staff positions.

The results of this study have important implications for fitness industries, gym owners, and women who exercise in gym settings. Gym owners must emphasise their development of an enjoyable and inviting environment, with an emphasis on effective fitness and an accepting community that promotes involvement and growth for women, of all ages and abilities to establish a more inclusive and encouraging gym

environment. Fitness professionals and personal trainers all need to be educated to identify and address the issues that women encounter in the gym, such as those related to body image, age, and gender, and to develop programs of action to empower and assist women in their dedication to fitness.

In conclusion, this thesis has demonstrated that intimidation and gender inequality in gym environments are complicated issues that require an extensive approach to address. We can create a more welcoming and encouraging gym environment that encourages health and fitness for everyone, regardless of age or gender, by acknowledging the social, cultural, and environmental factors that contribute to these challenges and by creating tactics and programs that support and empower women in their fitness journey.

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**METHODOLOGICAL APPENDICES:**



### **Interview Guide**

I will begin my interview guide by simply asking a closed-ended question before jumping into the open-ended questions of the interview. As I mentioned above, the interview is a semi-structured interview which will allow for possible sub and leading questions.

1. Do you go to the gym?
2. When did you first start the gym?
3. Do you remember how you felt when you first joined the gym?
4. What is your view on the gym? (any likes/dislikes/barriers/negative feelings)
5. Can you describe the social scene in your gym?
6. What kind of interactions do you people have in the gym you attend (examples; polite, friendly, banter, intimidating)?
7. How are those interactions similar or different for; male-to-male, female-to-female, and, male-to-female?
8. Are there separate areas for men and women in your gym? Are there differences?
9. From your knowledge, are there typical views of females in the gym (for example; women only do cardio etc)?
10. How are the relations with the staff in the gym? What gender are predominately personal trainers, management or receptionists?
11. In your gym, do you see gender intimidation towards women? how so?
12. Do you see gender inequality in your gym?
13. What is your view on gender inequality in gym environments?
14. Have you had any bad experiences/stories in the gym? (example; intimidation).
15. Is there intimidation between the same gender?
16. Do women support women, in your opinion?

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17. Do you think there will ever be a change in the gym? How do you think gender inequality and intimidation will change?
18. What is your view on women-only gyms? Do you feel it is causing a segregation or helping gender inequality?
19. Could women-only gyms empower more women to go to the gym?
20. Any other comments?



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**Special Topics Consent Form: Aoife Sweeney's Research Project**

Aoife Sweeney

Thank you for agreeing to take part in my assignment for my [Special Topics](#) module in the Department of Sociology at Maynooth University, NUIM. My research is designed to explore

I am conducting a research project on gender inequality and intimidation based in gym environments. I am interested in researching different experiences and views of the gym, especially between men and women. The gender gap and intimidation in the gym demonstrate how women are underestimated, overlooked and devalued in gym settings and not taken seriously. Through this research project, I would like to learn more about gym environments through two different lenses; men and women.

This interview will take up to 30 minutes and with your permission I would like to tape-record the conversation. A copy of the interview tape will be made available to you afterwards if you wish to hear it.

All of the interview information will be kept confidential. I will store the tapes/notes of our conversation safely (i.e. promptly removed from mobile devices) and kept in a secure manner. Your identity will be kept confidential, and I will use a code number/pseudonym to identify your interview data. Neither your name nor private information will appear in the final research project.

Your participation is voluntary. You are free to refuse to take part, and you may refuse to answer any questions or may stop at any time. You may also withdraw at any time up until the work is completed.

If you have any questions about the research, you may contact me at:

Email: [aoife.sweeney.2021@mumail.ie](mailto:aoife.sweeney.2021@mumail.ie)

Number: 0838191393

“I have read the description above and consent to participate.”

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

*If during your participation in this study, you feel the information and guidelines that you were given have been neglected or disregarded in any way, or if you are unhappy about the process, please contact my supervisor at Seán Ó Riain, [sean.oriain@mu.ie](mailto:sean.oriain@mu.ie). Please be assured that your concerns will be dealt with in a sensitive manner.*

Roinn Socheolaíochta Ollscoil Mhá Nuad, Ollscoil Mhá Nuad, Maigh Nuad, Co. Chill Dara, Éire.  
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### **Transcribed Interview**

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**Molly, aged 21**

**I= Interviewer P=Participant**

**\*Participant attends a gym within a leisure centre/hotel.**

**\*Many comparisons are seen throughout this interview between bigger commercial gyms and smaller leisure centre gyms.**

**I:** I just provided you with a consent form and you have signed it. Basically, I am conducting a research project on gender inequality and intimidation based on gym environments. As I mentioned within the consent form; I am interested in researching different experiences and views of the gym, between different genders. I am determined to gain insight into how gym environments are seen through two different lenses; men and women. I am just going to start recording, which is for my own use only as promised in the consent form.

The first question is just a general question; do you go to the gym?

**P:** I do go to the gym.

**I:** And when did you first start the gym?

**P:** So I feel like it's always something that's really been on and off with me. I think the first time I ever started going to the gym, I think it was like 15 or maybe 16 to try it firstly and I went to be active. And then that obviously, I stopped after like, maybe three months. And then on and off again. And then I think in the last six months that I've consistently always gone.

**I:** Great. So 2022 you started back consistently?

**P:** Yeah

**I:** Can you describe your routine when he visits the gym for me?

**P:** Yeah, so each day, I'd do different things, but my routine is; that I would walk in, I'd scan my card to the reception, I go in and put myself in a locker. And then I'd go up the stairs to the gym. I typically do weights first, then cardio or cardio then I'd start weights, I normally just do weights now.

**I:** Do you remember how you first felt when you first joined; for examples scared or intimidated?

**P:** Not so much this time. But when I was younger and went to a different gym, yes. Oh, it was horrible. When I was there, I literally only went on the treadmill and did like ridiculous Sprints and ridiculous runs. And all the atmosphere was so weird there. But like in my current gym, I think it's very different. And I had my friend there, Emily, she's a PT, so she definitely showed me the ropes. So I had her there. So it wasn't as daunting for me like, because I had her to show me around the gym, if you know what I mean. So it didn't feel like I was completely on my own. If I didn't have her for the first while, until I got fully complicated I don't think I would have enjoyed it and kept it up. It is a very intimidating and daunting atmosphere, especially when you don't really know what you're doing and all the different machines.

**I:** Yeah I totally agree! It's great you had someone there who helped you.... The gym you go to now is a leisure centre, whereas the gym you started in as you mentioned, was a commercial gym. Do you think it was the difference in the environment that made it completely different and better? And what is the different environment?

**P:** I couldn't really explain to you property if I was to try. You know yourself with the commercial gym, when you go in, it's such a huge open space. Yeah. I just think it's

really intimidating. It's like there's a boy section and a girl section. And if you're a girl, I just feel really awkward and uncomfortable. Not that probably anyone cares. But I just feel, even when it comes down to what you wear, some things that I would wear it in my current gym but I wouldn't wear to the gym I started in.

**I:** Yeah, I understand what you're saying. Like, I think it's because it's a smaller gym. It's just a bit more homely and comfortable.

**P:** I feel like because it's smaller, you don't have a choice in that you're going to mix with like, other boys and stuff. But I just find that the atmosphere is so much nicer.

**I:** Yeah. I think there's a good mix in when I have gone to the gym you go to, whereas in my current gym, it's a commercial gym, every time I walk in it is predominantly men. Always.

**P:** Yeah, so many because commercial gyms are so much bigger. There's so many other machines that you like you probably don't know of and you're too scared to try them as well. And you know, like the whole thing about a gym is you're supposed to be able to ask people that work there. Yeah. You really shouldn't be afraid of asking how else are you supposed to know. I would never ask even though that's their job like it's just so scary. I wonder why that is?

**I:** What is your view on the gym? Do you like it or dislike it, any barriers or feelings or anything?

**P:** So overall have to say I love the gym. But if it wasn't for my friends, like if it wasn't for you or if it wasn't for Emily, I would have never started going to the gym. And I think it can be such a great place for your mental health, for getting fit, for exercising, for building confidence, but it can also be a place to break confidence. It can create horrible habits of like you know, trying and going overboard killing yourself. Like I think it's such

a fine line between you know, going for fun and for bettering yourself, but also doing too much. I think with the gym you either love or hate it. Yeah, I very rarely see like someone in between, like when they just have to go for the sake of going. Whereas people actually go enjoy going mostly.

**I:** Yeah, like you said it can create barriers as well. If you have like one bad experience it can even alter your experience definitely.....Can you describe the social scene in your gym to me, just like the social aspects of the gym? What's it like?

**P:** To be honest, I feel like it's good. Like, I feel like everyone in the gym, in my gym is really, really nice. Basically kind of made a new friend like, you know, the receptionist who works. Yeah, like, I didn't know her at all before I started going there. She's so lovely. We Get on. She's Welcoming. Yeah. And always have a chat with her.

**I:** Yeah, definitely. You see a smile and a friendly face when you first walk into the gym. It helps you.

**P:** Yeah, definitely. And I don't know whether I prefer training with others or by myself. I feel like you don't really have conversations with people in my gym. But, I think there's like an understanding that there's no issues like say, if you're wondering if someone's using a machine, I would never be afraid to just ask them. Whereas in your gym or any commercial gym, I would not ask. Even was like going say, you know, the way sometimes I try to do like pull-ups and chin-ups and stuff. And obviously, I can't do them yet. I wouldn't be afraid to ask, you know, like, Emily or Laura for help, or someone who worked there because I knew them or a girl. I don't even care that I can't do them and if everyone's watching me, because I'm like, trying to learn. Yeah, whereas if it was any other gym, I wouldn't even try it because I'd be too embarrassed that I couldn't do them.

**I:** That's how I feel in my gym, whereas in your gym, I did it. I tried something new because it was a small gym with a nice atmosphere to it.

**P:** Yeah, God I wouldn't even bother if I went to a different gym. It was such a different environment between my gym and your gym. It's crazy that there can be two different environments.

The only thing to remember happened a week or two ago. So basically, I was in the gym with my mom. This woman came up and like she was coming from a good place, you know, but it was just a bit awkward. We were doing hip thrusts. And she came up and she was like, Excuse me, I need to tell you something, that you're using this machine completely wrong. And you're going to hurt yourself. And I'm just trying to get a word and just being like, Oh, really? Like I was kind of taken aback. And I was just awkward because I was with my mom. And I was like, Oh, are you sure? Like because, you know, my friend is a PT and like she kind of brought me through all of them. Like I always do them with her. I think she would have like, corrected me by now. you know if I was doing it very wrong, she would have told me. And she just kept going on and on and on. And she was with us for like, 20/25 minutes. And I feel like that completely kind of knocked my confidence in the gym. And but at the same, I guess she thought she was helping, but I just felt it was unnecessary because I've been going for months now and seen myself get strong on the machines but this just made me not want to use that machine ever again.

**I:** No, I do understand because it's like, you think you're doing so well, for so long and then it's just one bit of criticism that can tear you down and ruin that bit of confidence you built up for yourself.

**P:** It wasn't even like a good like, constructive criticism. It was kind of like, out of nowhere for no reason. That just wasn't needed, you know. I suppose, at the same time,



like I guess you could argue, you know, other women are just like looking out for other women. Maybe I just overreacted. But I don't realise it until after that it actually took me back a bit.

**I:** Maybe she might have thought she had a bit more power over you because she knows what she's doing or maybe she hasn't seen you in the gym, so she thought it was your first time. So she wanted to say to you. Yeah, maybe there was a power issue there where she thought she was able to say that to you.

**P:** That's how it felt. Yeah, to be honest, I'm scared. She also mentioned that protein thing, she said I shouldn't be drinking protein in the gym. Even though that's literally a personal choice. Like I can do it if I want to. Some of the things she was critiquing were kind of ridiculous. But I'm really scared to do hip thrusts ever again.

**I:** That's understandable, like you have been working on that for a couple of months now, and for someone to just come over and pick on small little things can affect you. I understand people want to help, but there really is a fine line between helping someone and intimidating them..... That brings me to my next question. What kind of interactions do people have in the gym? Are they friendly? any banter? intimidating?

**P:** So what I just talked about was intimidating anyway. Well, yeah, other than that, I have to say don't really find anyone intimidating in my gym. Have to say everyone's quite nice, you do get one or two weirdos. Weirdos everywhere. Like I'll say like the atmosphere is always really nice. You know, people smile. Sometimes when I'm lifting my weight, like you know the way some of the things are really heavy. Yeah, sometimes guys help me and put them back for me. Not in a weird way. One of the days actually my sister was there, I think it was because she was doing the leg press or something. A

woman came up to her and was like, Oh my God, you're so strong. Like an old woman. So that was nice, a bit of an ego boost for her.

**I:** How are those interactions that we spoke about similar or different to let's say, male-to-male, female-to-female, and female-to-male? Like do you do see a difference in interactions?

**P:** To be honest, I've been really shocked by interactions. Even like my good friend, Nathan. Yeah, we're really good friends, like outside of the gym normally. Sometimes when we see each other in the gym, we're just like, 'Oh, hey', like, it's like, the gender thing and different groups. So like, he'd be with his friends. Obviously, come up and say hi. But usually, like, I'd sneak over and be like, oh, let's say other stuff. But it's like you stay separate in the gym unless you set out to go to the gym with someone. And that's just kind of the norm, though.

**I:** It is. That's just kind of the way it just is, people tend to stick to themselves, especially men and women. Besides from going in groups, which will mostly be males groups or female groups. Rarely a mixed group or genders mixing other than just saying hi.

**P:** Yeah exactly. And then one time I brought my boyfriend. And to be honest, I'd rather do my own workout than work out as a couple. It's a bit awkward. Like if you've ever looked at couples, there is such a stigma around couples working out together. It's just seen as cringy or something even though like what's actually wrong with it? I feel like, yeah, the two genders kind of stick away from each other unless like The odd couple go in together. Yeah, the genders interact, but not in a way that you would see in different environments. Like personally, I would never ask someone I don't know to spot me, right? Yeah. But I feel like boys guys have no problem with that.

**I:** I agree, the genders are very segregated in gym environments. And men tend to ask for help from each other more than women. I feel like men will push themselves more even if they are by themselves because they will ask for a spotter. But on the other hand, I think women only feel comfortable pushing themselves that bit more with weights or something if they have someone, they will rarely ask for a spot so they tend to just do what they know they can do, you know?

**P:** Yeah. And like a few weeks ago, we were over at the corner doing our bent-over rows. And there was a guy lying doing the barbell press, there is no one spotting him. And like, this is totally on me as well, I will hold my hands up. I wouldn't go over to him and ask if he needed a spot. But you could see he was actually a bit stuck like because he was obviously pushing himself to do a heavyweight. And like, that's so bad. I didn't even go over, but what was I supposed to do? I wouldn't have been able to lift the barbell off him honestly. And I kind of just left him there while he struggled which is so bad, which is probably a gender thing. I don't know. Yes, if it was a girl, I definitely would have gone over to help I'd say. And then he ended up having to, like, empty one off the barbell, but like no one helped him. Not even males which is weird because they usually would.

**I:** In my gym, though, I do see a difference with some male-to-female interactions. I think males are more inclined to go up to the prettier girls let's say, but I think this is in a commercial gym. I do think the prettier girls do get interacted way more and get way more attention.

**P:** Oh, completely. Yeah, I feel like the girls in the cute gym sets, and good bodies definitely get the attention and interacted with more. I've heard stories. I just think there is a big difference in my gym compared to commercial gyms.

**I:** I agree with that.

**P:** Like there's obviously different girls that go to the gym. You know, there's the moms, the girls who don't wear like you know, the typical cute sets, and then the girls who do and they definitely get more eyes looking at them and all that like, that is definitely a thing. But I also think they get more people to come up and talk to them or like get more hellos even off the males or the regulars go, like I think that's such a big thing. Yeah. There have been cases where the instructors in my gym have been giving attention to females, and he got anonymously complained about. And apparently he is very like that like with the moms or the women like you know, in the class, give them extra attention.

**I:** Are there separate areas for women with men and women in your gyms? And what are the differences? If there's just a known area where it's predominately men or predominately women.

**P:** To be honest, I wouldn't say there is one in the leisure centre. But there are areas where if you want to be quieter, that you can go to the majority of people who want quieter space would be women. Yeah. So like there is technically Yeah, there would be like the treadmills will be dominated more by women than men. And you know, I always find it hard like using the bar bench or smith machine because I find predominantly, there's obviously going to be more males in the gym. And I feel like it's hard to get your go on that equipment because there's always men looking for that equipment. And sometimes I feel like I'm rushing myself to get off it because it's a 'male machine'.

**I:** Yeah, I do see the same with the weight benches in commercial gyms being dominated by men, especially with your gym being smaller. So when they want to train arms or whatever, there's only what's like three benches? Three or four of them. I've noticed it's predominantly men in there. It's harder in a smaller gym like a leisure centre because there might only be two weight benches and there's almost a race to them.

**P:** Yeah, no, it definitely is. Like that though. I'd go over there with no problem because I have just as much of a right as males do to use the weight benches.

**I:** In my gym, there is a corner where the hip trust machine is, surrounded by five or six benches. And it's always predominantly men using the benches except the hip trust used by women. Which is awkward being right in the middle of a predominantly male area with a predominately female machine.

**P:** We were there together in your gym, and I felt really kind of awkward. See, there's so many mirrors and stuff around that area also. I would have an issue just staring at myself. I'll make sure I look okay. You know, like you're just constantly fixing yourself when you're in front of the mirror. Why are there so many mirrors like that?

**I:** And are there any typical views of your knowledge? That's Are there any typical views that you know of? When women go to the gym like saying like I know the one that they do cardio only or blah blah blah? Yeah. Are there any that you've heard of before or before you started gym or still hear of?

**P:** Definitely the women and cardio stereotype. I feel like social media and stuff are really breaking that stigma now. Yeah, like, incline walking. You never see a man do an incline. You know? I think that hip thrusts I feel like are a big one. There's a stereotype that females only go to build their glutes or whatever but I use weights for everything. Yeah, I've definitely heard of the treadmill one, and weight training for glutes. Another one is, sometimes when girls wear revealing clothing, they're just doing it to get attention. I think is really unfair. Whereas like, I know myself, if I were something that I'm confident in like a cute set or something. It makes me feel so good about myself, just to kind of look nice and feel nice for myself. I do think that stereotypes and typical views are becoming less popular as the gym has grown its popularity among women. And now you see way

more women competing in bodybuilding and weight training where you never would have before.

**I:** How are the relations with staff in the gym? Like, first of all, you can go with that. And then I'll ask what gender are like the receptionist or the PTS or the management, mostly? Their relations with the staff.

**P:** So was with the staff. Yeah, to be fair, all of them seem really nice. Like I bring friends with me. And, obviously, Emily's like one of my best friends; she works there, which is so handy. The receptionist Laura too is lovely. There is one lad who's at reception. He's also a PT, which I would never really talk to him about, it is kind of awkward. But it's funny that you asked that question because it's weird in my gym. It's actually predominantly female. So yeah, like there's the cleaners are female. Yeah, the reception. Laura is technically the only receptionist, and then the rest of them are there are only two male Pts. And then the rest of them; Meghan and two girls, they're both pts.

**I:** Yeah, and they do class as well don't they?

**P:** Yeah. And then that other girl is a PT and a Pilates instructor. The swim instructor, she's a girl like, it's actually predominantly girls. Well, I'm pretty sure, like any other gyms I've been to, the pt's have been majority males. My friend brought me to a gym and no females were working there at all which really shocked me, to be fair they were all big scary guys. And even in your gym, I'm pretty sure it's mostly males working there.

**I:** Yeah you're right, the majority of male trainers and staff, and like two females there, which one is in reception. But in saying that like that, the males do the classes. They do most of the Pt one-on-one sessions, from what I've seen. I've never seen a female do a PT session. And then there are the core classes I only really see the males do it. But whereas the spin classes I see females doing it.

**P:** That's interesting that you say that, the core classes; Niall being one of the only guys does all the core classes in my gym, and Emily and the other girl would teach a spin, whereas the males would never. He always freaks out if he asked me to has to teach, you know, aqua aerobics because maybe it's like gender roles.

**I:** In your gym, do you see gender intimidation towards women? How so?

**P:** We kind of covered it a little bit. Yeah, in a way. I think there is definitely gender intimidation. I think I'd be kind of on the luckier side where I am in a leisure centre, in a small gym, but looking at all my experiences. Yeah, there's definitely huge gender intimidation, with all the things we spoke about, like you know, certain areas for certain people. You know, clothing, like what you can wear, what you can't wear. And I think some of it even comes from women shaming other women, like even just what happened with me. Sometimes I'd honestly be more comfortable if it was all just men. Rather than other women judging, I feel like it can be a little bit mixed. But saying that, I think it's mostly like feeling awkward around other men. You know, or trying to fake yourself or, like, make sure you look skinny. So the way we're putting on my jumper when I'm bench pressing, or the fact there are just mirrors everywhere. Like why is that?

**I:** I know Yeah. That's what I don't like. Do you see gender inequality in your gym? Or gyms anywhere since you've been to a few gyms?

**P:** Yeah, there is definitely gender inequality in this sort of environment. Now after talking about it, even the fact that one of the managers doesn't really like teaching aerobics, because it's like, you know, women are there for teaching that. I can see that now. Even just after talking about it. And that whole story from your gym, just things like that like intimidation and harassment always freaks me out by that girl. It's so unprofessional from people of power. And it's because she's a pretty girl. And he's a boy,

he thinks he can, once again because he has that bit of power, not only by just being male but also because he actually works in the gym so he holds a title and power. And intimidation regarding weight training, with the weights, machines, particularly like, it's kind of it's also related. But it's like, it's kind of the view of like, she's only lifting like 10 kg. Like, this guy is waiting to lift 90, like, let me on a first kind of thing. Or like they're looking at you to hurry up.

**I:** Yeah, exactly. That's so true. I can definitely see it with the machines and weights..... What is your view on gender inequality in gym environments?

**P:** Yeah, no, definitely there is. God definitely no matter what, I think there's always be a tiny bit in the gym. I think I'm just very lucky where I am. But like still saying that, of course, there are gender inequalities. And I would definitely say there is Yeah.

**I:** I know. We spoke about one of your bad experiences regarding the criticism you receive from a female. Have you any other bad experiences or stories that you're able to talk about in the gym like intimidation?

**P:** Yeah, so me and my friend, were using the Smith Machine. And I got stuck and I couldn't lift myself up. I was begging her to lift it and help me. And to be honest, I found that really funny. Like we were laughing but Jesus if I was on my own, I would not have found that funny one bit, I would have been really embarrassed and it would have taken me a while to go back and use that machine again.

**I:** It was the same with the leg press machine when I was with you in my gym. I also found that funny but only I was with you. If I were by myself I probably would have left.

**P:** Oh my God. I remember that/ The fact that was in your gym because it is so much bigger and lot more young people as well as young males our age. Oh, I had second-hand embarrassment. But honestly, I think it really is the difference in environments. From



discussing it with you I now believe there is a huge difference between smaller and bigger gyms or like a commercial gym like yours and a leisure centre gym in a hotel.

**I:** I totally agree, I think we've established that difference of environments. I have only come to that conclusion through this discussion.

**P:** I think even the reception people going into your gym or any typical commercial gym will be intimidating. I just find them really scary. I couldn't tell you exactly what it is. I don't know whether it's, to be honest. In your gym, because it's so big, it's kind of like you really have to go there for years to be known or like, or even respected. I think you should receive respect no matter what. I feel like many people get judged because they seem like they shouldn't be going to the gym or they're a bit bigger and no one will admit it but it definitely happens, the looks people may get. Like, the guys who are so respected in the gym. And who was spoken to because they probably have been going for a few years. As well as respect the people get who look like they've been working out for ages. Yeah, I think that's really bad that you can't get respect at the gym unless you look a certain way. Yeah, this really makes me think about the gym. I never really thought much about it until now. But I 100% agree with intimidation towards women and how we are sometimes overlooked.

**I:** Is there intimidation between the same gender? As in do women's sport women?

**P:** Yeah, we spoke about that, like I think there is. But there are definitely cases where I feel sometimes I think it can be other women putting me down but it's actually just my own insecurity. If I'm standing next to someone that I think looks better than me or is skinnier than me, I would feel a bit judged because I want to be as skinny as them. So I do think there is an aspect where some women don't support women which is something that I've noticed through my observation.

**I:** Do you think there'll be a change in the gym? And how do you think gender inequality will change?

**P:** Do I think there'll be a change in the gym? To be honest with you, No, I don't see how it would or could change. Like, there's all this talk you can get, you know, women-only gyms, managers involving women more and so on. I feel like that just kind of adds more to the problem. If that makes sense. I do see where I think that's just kind of the way it is. There's nothing we can do really.

**I:** And finally, what is your view on women-only gyms? Could this empower more women to go to the gym?

**P:** Yeah. So like I was saying, I feel like it's a good option to have. But I don't think it'll do anything for gender inequality. I feel like it's just kind of avoiding a problem that's already there. I think it's good for women starting or women who'd be more comfortable in a women-only gym, which I think it's great for that. I don't think it's a fix for gender inequality in the gym. I think these gyms are just distracting away from the problem and causing more segregation. I wouldn't personally join a women-only gym, even though I'm complaining so much about commercial gyms and intimidation. Like yeah, it has positives and negatives.

**I:** Yeah, I agree, I don't think women-only gyms will bring about change. I do, although they will be good for women starting off like you said or for older women to get that push to get back into the gym..... Any other comments?

**P:** No, not really.

**I:** Thanks so much for participating!

**P:** No problem.