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Mapping embodiment across the nexus of gender, tourism, and entrepreneurship

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ABSTRACT

Informed by critical perspectives on embodiment, our article demonstrates how gendered assumptions reproduce and sustain particular bodies. We investigate how bodies are constructed across academic and policy literatures within entrepreneurship and tourism domains. To do so, we conducted a reflexive thematic analysis of relevant entrepreneurship, tourism, and gender scholarship and mapped thematic embodied tensions. These five thematic tensions - visible vs invisible, active vs passive, desired vs problematic, labouring vs redundant, and insider vs outsider bodies - then guided our analysis of tourism and entrepreneurship policy within Wales. Our findings highlight implications of the limited exploration of embodiment in both academic and policy literatures. Moreover, we emphasise the risk that - separately and relationally - current perspectives are epistemically recursive through the reinforcement of idealised bodily subjects.

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Introduction

We offer a reflexive thematic analysis of academic scholarship and government policy to develop critical insight into how gendered knowledge is sustained in tourism and entrepreneurship. Responding to calls to synthesise understandings, we extend debates through an analysis of gendering across these two distinct but interrelated domains (Figueroa-Domecq et al., 2020). We evidence how gendered assumptions about those engaging in entrepreneurship and tourism activities reproduce gendered understandings of productive bodies. We suggest bodies are recursively constructed across scholarship and government policy, highlighting how narrow conceptions of diverse bodies are sustained rather than challenged (Small, 2022; Tucker, 2022). Consequently, we contribute to existing scholarship analysing the role of gender in unequal tourism practices (Eger et al., 2022; Small, 2022), and extend the work of Eger et al. (2022) by integrating entrepreneurship to examine complex inter-relationships between gender and tourism sustainability (Figueroa-Domecq et al., 2020).

Building on the embodied turn in social sciences (Shilling, 2017) and tourism in particular (Pritchard et al., 2007), we view embodiment as conceptualising the body as a site of action and interaction, encompassing relations with our own and other bodies (Everingham & Motta,

2022). Thus, embodiment pertains to all aspects of our bodily beings in place and action; what goes in and out of them, on and around them; and emphasises thinking with, about and through the body as “dynamic interplays” (Everingham et al., 2021, p. 78). Our contribution centres on attending to these aspects of embodiment to investigate how normative understandings of gendered bodies are recursively constructed and sustained across both academic and policy literatures.

We propose a need to reflect on how conceptualisations of bodies play out across discussions of gender, tourism, and entrepreneurship scholarship and how these are subsequently reflected and reinforced in policy. We contribute to these debates by offering a reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021) of both academic literature and tourism and entrepreneurship policies; enabling us to analyse how bodies are constructed across both realms. We focus on Wales as a valuable case study of practice because of its pronounced connection to tourism and enterprise. Wales is designated a place of “innovative adventure” (Welsh Government, 2020, p. 4), offering “outstanding natural landscapes” and “epic adventure” (p. 7) particularly in post-industrial and agricultural settings. This challenging context is further reflected in Welsh Government’s concern to develop sustainable entrepreneurial activity, which has consistently been below the UK average with particularly low participation rate for women. Thus, policy focuses on “encouraging, supporting and increasing the number of women entrepreneurs” (Welsh Government, 2019, p. 3).

We begin with a summary of relevant embodiment theories, then engage a reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021) across the entrepreneurship, tourism, and gender literatures between 2015 and 2021, analysing a total of 445 papers. Framed by the Welsh policy context, we focused on adventure tourism at the outset, however, for completeness and to enable conceptual synthesis, our review of bodies covered an extensive range of tourism and entrepreneurship journals. From this review, we mapped five embodied thematic tensions: visible vs invisible, active vs passive, desired vs problematic, labouring vs redundant, and insider vs outsider bodies. We expand on these tensions, and their conceptual and empirical implications as we unpack the literature.

Subsequently, we apply these embodied thematic tensions in further analysis of Welsh tourism and entrepreneurship policies. This is critical as policies represent an ideological articulation of prevailing normative socio-economic values (Ahl & Marlow, 2021) and shape stakeholder understandings of sustainable, gendered, and embodied identities. The development and mapping of our embodied thematic tensions offers insight into how implicit and explicit gendering shapes and positions bodies across tourism and entrepreneurship. While these practical implications are empirically situated in the Welsh context, the value of this approach is more widely applicable across, for example, other post-industrial contexts. Furthermore, our work highlights the recursive interplay between academic and policy contexts, enabling us to contribute to current debates that challenge the sustainability of gendered social norms.

Theorising embodiment

Our work draws on rich scholarship on the sociology of the body (Leder, 1990; Shilling, 2017; Ussher, 1997) in which embodiment is invoked through the examination of the body as a site of action and interaction. While a full review of embodiment across the social sciences is beyond the scope of this paper, it is essential to note we understand embodiment as more than the biological body made of cells and external to the mind, rather notions of embodiment reflect the fleshy, feeling body (Pritchard et al., 2007). Consequently, we draw on a rich tradition of post-structural perspectives of embodiment (Butler, 1993). Here, embodiment encompasses our relationship with our own and other bodies, focusing on tensions arising from conforming or resisting bodily expectations (Ingram, 2022). These understandings of embodiment particularly reject approaches that separate meaning from a lived world (Csordas, 1999). Antipathy is directed at Cartesian dichotomies of mind/body and challenges related binaries like culture/nature

(Pritchard et al., 2007). The body—simultaneously thinking, feeling, and acting—provides a solution to dichotomous thinking: a site for totalities of experiences to be understood (Buda et al., 2014). Central themes include the roles of nondiscursive knowledge and bodily action in forming people as subjects (Shilling, 2017).

Feminist thinking contributes significantly to these debates (Butler, 1993; Ussher, 1997), while critical work moves beyond binary thinking by exploring the generative potential of feminist new materialisms (Barad, 2007) and affect (Gregg & Seigworth, 2010) to challenge binaries like subject/object and discourse/matter. For example, beauty and the feminine body are often framed as separate entities where beauty norms work to constrain, objectify, or empower the feminine subject (Ingram, 2022). Ingram (2022) rejects postfeminist meritocratic views (Gill, 2017), showing that beauty discourse shapes how bodies are understood and experienced as female. This crucially highlights how power relations (and discursive practices) produce the female body. This contradicts postfeminist suggestions that the goals of feminism have been achieved (Gill, 2017), and is therefore a point of critique for scholars (like ourselves) who reject this premiss. Within critical scholarship, bodies become sites of resistance (Butler, 1993) while new material feminists highlight bodies, dressed and ornamented, manipulating objects in diverse settings (Ingold, 2012). Material culture here is of direct theoretical importance, active in the constitution of subjectivities and how we come to understand our own and others' bodies (Ingold, 2012).

In summary our understandings of embodiment draw on feminist post-structural thought (Butler, 1993; Gill, 2017) suggesting bodies are cultural constructions. We recognise this as a rich and complex area of scholarship, and a comprehensive overview is beyond this paper's scope. However, we next focus on considerations of embodiment within tourism and entrepreneurship literatures to further illuminate how gendered bodies are recursively constructed within and across these contexts.

Embodiment in tourism and entrepreneurship

Within entrepreneurship and tourism literatures, embodiment has been mercurial in its theoretical application, yet bodies are central to both (Smith, 2014; Author, 2020). Entrepreneurial journeys entail exploration and risk-taking in pursuit of success (Doran et al., 2020). Similarly, adventure tourists experience extreme and unpredictable environments (Hanna et al., 2019). Adventure tourism and entrepreneurship converge in assumptions of hypermasculinity, rendering non-conforming individuals engaging in such activities invisible (Doran et al., 2020; Miller & Hall, 2019). Broadly, there remains limited understanding of embodiment across both adventure tourism workers and entrepreneurial ventures (Palmer & Andrews, 2019), particularly where assumed bodies do not fit hypothesised norms (Mavin & Grandy, 2016) or where entrepreneurial and adventure bodily ideals are held in tension (Rattan, 2018). However, across tourism more broadly there has been greater consideration of diverse bodies, including gendered female bodies and body pedagogics of sporting and adventuring cultures (Palmer & Andrews, 2019; Pritchard et al., 2007).

Similarly, critical entrepreneurship scholars highlight entrepreneurial success is gendered, emphasising the "rugged individualist" (Smith, 2014, p. 478), reinforcing assumptions that women will never meet masculine ideals (Ahl & Marlow, 2021). Furthermore, studies critiquing a neoliberal postfeminist repositioning of the entrepreneurial-self have highlighted the problematic view that 'success' might be secured if women commit to achieving a particular feminine embodiment (Pritchard et al., 2019). Relatedly discussions of embodiment increasingly emerge in critical tourism studies (Everingham et al., 2021; Pritchard et al., 2007) as scholars investigate embodied practices—which are often framed as empowering for women—as unsustainable (Eger et al., 2022; Small, 2022). We note that decolonial feminists highlight the gendered, raced, and classed nature of embodied knowledge, drawing attention to how

particular bodies become colonised and sustained as othered (Dashper et al., 2022; Ong et al., 2022).

Theorisations of affect have also been used to overcome the mind/body binary. It is well understood that emotions mediate tourism encounters (Buda et al., 2014; Picard, 2012; Tucker, 2022). However, as Everingham and Motta (2022) highlight, too often affect is theorised as coming from either within or outside bodies. They argue that critical intimacy is required, identifying a need for greater affective attunement to betweenness, inter-relationality, and inter-subjectivity in all stages of research. Moreover, theorisations of bodies are shaped by both presence and absence (Leder, 1990). Our own bodies, for example, are rarely the thematic object of experience, despite calls for them to be so (Csordas, 1999). Notwithstanding the contribution of these scholars, beyond perception and motility, bodies are reassumed, reproduced, and understudied. Accompanying this are gendered norms and expectations that are continually held in tension with practices that are positioned to resist them (Small, 2022). Thus, bodies are ubiquitous, remain anonymous, recursive, often problematic, and constructions are sustained rather than critically challenged (Everingham & Motta, 2022). Having set up our basis in these theorisations of embodiment we set out our method below.

Method

Our method involved two stages of reflective thematic analysis (Table 1). In stage one we conducted an analysis of how bodies are constructed across an extensive range of entrepreneurship, tourism, and gender journals. Thematic findings were then developed into five embodied thematic tensions. In stage two we used this to empirically map Welsh tourism and entrepreneurship policies. This two-stage approach afforded deeper insight into how assumed, normative bodies are recursively constructed between and within academic and policy literatures.

Below we further detail on how both stages of this process were conducted before presenting our findings.

Stage 1: Identifying embodied tensions across literature

Our approach was informed through considering various applications of thematic analysis (Souza-Neto et al., 2022) and debates on the value of literature reviews in challenging established assumptions (Kraus et al., 2022). We adopted a qualitative approach, combining a comprehensive selection of papers with a thematic analysis of their content. High quality reviews provide detailed explanation of paper identification, selection and analysis (Kraus et al., 2022) and thus our approach is set out in detail below.

Table 1. Method overview.

Stage 1: Identifying Embodied Thematic Tensions Across Academic literature	
Literature search and selection	Sample selection in two steps resulted in 445 articles across internationally recognised tourism, entrepreneurship, and gender journals from 2015 to 2021.
Analysis of academic literature	Reflexive thematic analysis sample resulted in five embodied thematic tensions.
Stage 2: Mapping Embodied Tensions Across Policy	
Policy search and selection	A broad sweep approach of Welsh Government policy from 2015 to 2021, resulted in a policy sample of 15 documents.
Analysis of Welsh policy documents	Identified embodied thematic tensions guided the thematic analysis to map prevalence and recurrence of gendered body assumptions across policy sample.

Table 2. Number of articles reviewed by step and discipline.

Review Step	Tourism	Entrepreneurship	Gender	Total
1	606	282	51	937
2	248	164	33	445

Academic literature search and selection

We began with a comprehensive two-step review of entrepreneurship, tourism, and gender literatures (see [Table 2](#)).

Step one involved setting initial search parameters. To maximise review breadth, we included journals with a tourism, entrepreneurship, and gender focus (based on the Association of Business Schools listing, 2021 rankings of two and above) (see [Table 3](#)) and a timescale of 2015 to 2021. Two search processes were then applied: first, in-journal search engines and then, Scopus. As in-journal search engines offered advanced usability and access to online first publications, these were the primary search tool with all search combinations subsequently replicated in Scopus to cross-check results. We used six search-terms (tourism, adventure, body, embodiment, entrepreneurship, and gender) across article titles, abstracts, and keywords. This resulted in 937 articles being identified ([Table 2](#)).

In step two, these 937 references were exported and reviewed. The abstract, introduction, and conclusion of each article were read to appraise relevance, each author reviewed 234 articles. Consequently, 492 articles were excluded due to insufficient relevance. For example, articles using ‘body’ in reference to a ‘body of literature’, or ‘body of knowledge’ were rejected. Exclusions were reviewed and agreed by all authors; 445 articles were taken forward, summarised by search-term and journal in [Table 3](#). Whilst the timescale and the selected journals limit the scope of this work (excluding alternate journals, other outputs, and earlier publications), this provides a substantive sample for our more detailed analysis in stage two.

Reflexive thematic analysis of academic literature

The 445 papers were randomly divided between the authors who followed agreed reflexive thematic analysis procedures (Braun & Clarke, 2021). This was selected to reflect the values of our qualitative approach, centring researcher subjectivity, recursive coding processes, and the importance of deep reflection on and engagement with data. As all researchers were involved in the analytic process, our approach was collaborative and reflexive, to develop a richer, more nuanced reading, rather than seeking a consensus on meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2021). We, therefore, acknowledge our role in knowledge production. We readily engaged in reflexive discussions about our own bodies and the assumptions being identified in the articles under review. As stated by Braun and Clarke (2021) quality reflexive thematic analysis is not about following procedures correctly (or ‘accurate’ and ‘reliable’ coding), but about the researcher’s thoughtful engagement with their data and reflexive engagement with the analytic process.

Our initial analysis converged in our view that across the full sample of 445 papers, theoretical discussions of bodies and embodiment were limited. In contrast, some papers offered well developed discussions of bodies, but often varying conceptualisations and empirical application. To interrogate this further, bodily assumptions were collated and themes were constructed to highlight the converging observations of each author. We identified five embodied thematic tensions: the visible vs. invisible body; the active vs. passive body; desired vs. problematic body; labouring vs. redundant body; insider vs. outsider body (see [Table 5](#)). These thematic tensions provided an analytic compass to guide our analysis of Welsh tourism and entrepreneurship policy as detailed below.

Table 3. Papers included by journal and search-term.

	Tourism	Adventure	Body	Embod-iment	Entrepre-neurship	Gender	Total
Tourism Journals							
Annals of Tourism Research	–	12	17	6	13	23	71
Journal of Travel Research	–	3	1	3	0	3	10
Tourism Management	–	6	9	2	12	20	49
Journal of Sustainable Tourism	–	5	1	2	9	5	22
Current Issues in Tourism	–	4	2	3	3	3	15
International Journal of Tourism Research	–	2	0	0	2	4	8
Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research	–	1	0	0	1	1	3
Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing	–	1	1	1	0	2	5
Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism	–	6	2	0	3	1	12
Tourism Geographies	–	3	1	3	1	2	10
Tourism Analysis	–	1	0	0	0	2	3
Tourism Economics	–	0	0	0	0	0	1
Tourism Management Perspectives	–	3	3	0	3	3	12
Tourism Planning and Development	–	2	0	1	2	1	6
Tourism Recreation Research	–	4	1	1	2	1	9
Tourist Studies	–	3	3	5	0	1	12
Entrepreneurship Journals							
Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice	0	0	0	0	–	11	11
Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal	0	0	0	0	–	0	0
Journal of Business Venturing	0	0	2	0	–	13	15
Entrepreneurship & Regional Development	0	0	2	0	–	15	17
Family Business Review	0	0	0	0	–	2	2
International Small Business Journal	1	0	0	0	–	14	15
International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour and Research	1	0	0	0	–	19	20
Journal of Small Business Management	0	0	0	0	–	12	12
Small Business Economic	1	0	0	0	–	20	21
Entrepreneurship Research Journal	1	1	0	1	–	3	6
International Journal of Entrepreneurship & Innovation	2	1	2	0	–	2	7
Journal of Social Entrepreneurship	0	0	0	0	–	2	2
Venture Capital	0	0	0	0	–	2	2
Intl Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business	0	0	0	0	–	12	12
Journal of Business Venturing Insights	0	0	1	0	–	6	7
Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development	0	0	1	0	–	5	6
Journal of Family Business Strategy	0	0	1	0	–	4	5
International Review of Entrepreneurship	0	0	0	0	–	4	4
Gender Journals							
Gender, Work & Organization	1	5	12	4	7	–	29
Gender & Society	0	0	2	0	0	–	2
International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship	2	0	0	0	0	–	2
TOTAL	9	63	64	32	59	218	445

Table 4. Policy sample.

Policy Focus T – Tourism E – Entrep	Year	Type	Title/Description
T	2013	Policy directive	The Welsh Government Strategy for Tourism 2013–2020 Partnership for Growth
T	2013	Action plan	Strategy for Tourism 2013–2020: Framework Action Plan Year 2
T	2016	Strategic review	Partnership for Growth: Interim Review of 2016 Priorities
T	2019	Strategic review	Ten Questions: Let's Shape the Future
T	2020	Policy directive	Welcome to Wales: Priorities for the Visitor Economy 2020–2025
T	2016	Guidance	2016: Wales' Year of Adventure: Make it your business to benefit from adventure travel. Here's a step-by-step guide
T	2020	Policy directive	Visit Wales: Year of the Outdoors 2020
T	2020	Guidance	Open. Welcome to Wales: Priorities for the Visitor Economy 2020–2025
E	2019	Policy directive	Supporting Entrepreneurial Women in Wales: Good Practice Guide
E	2019	Action plan	Supporting Entrepreneurial Women in Wales: Two Year Action Plan
E	2017	Action plan	Prosperity for All: Economic Action Plan
E	2014	Policy directive	Innovation Wales
E	2018	Policy directive	Tech Valleys
E	2017	Policy statement	Tech Valleys: Vision
E	2020	Policy statement	Employability Plan

Stage 2: Mapping embodied tensions across policy

To understand how and if these identified embodied tensions were reflected in policy, the first and second authors conducted a reflexive thematic analysis of relevant policy using the five thematic tensions identified in the first stage of our method (Table 5).

Policy literature search and selection

We first conducted a “broad sweep” (Ahl & Marlow, 2021, p. 48), searching Welsh Government documents using three key terms: ‘entrepreneurship’, ‘tourism’, and ‘adventure’. No time filters were applied, as the purpose of our analysis was not to chart policy development. However, only policy documents from 2015 were available online. Due to COVID-19 at the time of our search, documents published after March 2020 were excluded. Our search returned 18 documents, including policy directives, policy statements, advisory initiatives, action plans, strategic reviews, and guidance documents. Each document was assessed by all authors for relevance, resulting in a sample of 15 documents (469 pages) for analysis (Table 4).

Reflexive thematic analysis of policy

To guide our analysis, we applied the embodied thematic tensions developed in stage one. These five tensions (see Table 5) formed summaries of shared meaning through which the policy documents were interpreted. After the initial analysis by the first and second author, all authors met to discuss the findings. As with stage one, our approach was collaborative and reflexive, requiring continual movement back and forth between academic and policy findings (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

Findings

We offer our findings in two parts. First, we set out the five embodied thematic tensions developed through our reflexive thematic analysis of the literature (Table 5). We draw on examples

Table 5. Embodied thematic tensions.

Embodied Thematic Tensions	Explanation
The visible vs. invisible body	Bodies are invisible, assumed and taken for granted. Particular bodies (Western, white, masculinised, and feminised) are privileged; acting as a mirror from which other bodies are made more or less visible. Gendered and racial bodies do not control their own visibility and are instead invisible in relation to normative and assumed bodies.
The desired vs. problematic body	Desired bodies meet gendered and racial expectations and are not challenged. This includes bodies that are appropriate to language spoken, aesthetically idealised and authentic. Problematic bodies are positioned as disadvantaged and in deficit. Bodily differences (often aesthetic) are highlighted as in need of transformation or subversion.
The active vs. passive body	Bodies are positioned as affective and able, agency is assumed and expected. The body is active in its capacity to feel, process, and express experience. Active bodies seek opportunities to engage with the world. Passive bodies miss out, are not engaged across spaces, and do not feel the full experience.
The labouring vs. redundant body	The body is a site to be worked on and for, constantly goal orientated. To achieve this, women need to be more agentic (like men), but this must be ‘worked for’. Redundancy is not assumed or linked to progress or accomplishment. Success is active and working harder is positioned as the route to overcome bodily difference and to be accepted.
The insider vs. outsider body	Spaces and constructs are both explicitly and implicitly gendered and are assumed to be experienced differently. Gender is a clear marker of insider/outsider status and difficult to overcome. Insider status across different spaces may only be assumed once particular bodily practices have been accomplished.

from our review to critically discuss each tension in turn. We then explicate our analysis of Welsh entrepreneurship and tourism policies.

Embodied tensions in academic literature

Here we examine our five embodied thematic tensions (Table 5) across the 445 articles within our sample, drawing attention to exemplars within our discussion of these tensions.

Visible vs. invisible bodies

Our analysis highlighted a limited exploration or theorisation of bodies, finding modes of difference were sustained through an invisibility outside of critical work. Across entrepreneurship literature, many articles appeared to reproduce gender as a binary identity, in particular to highlight that women struggled to secure venture capital (Kašperová & Kitching, 2014). While research has made significant progress in making facets of entrepreneurial identities visible (Jones et al., 2019), entrepreneurs’ bodies remain invisible or taken for granted. Echoing Kašperová and Kitching (2014), we found studies under-theorise the body and its influence on identity, with the effect of treating entrepreneurs analytically as disembodied. This may well be due to the reliance placed on gendered tropes such as the ‘mumpreneur’ (Nadin et al., 2020).

Critical perspectives highlight the impact of gendered narratives, suggesting they work to individualise differences (gender, race, sexuality, disability) so that they are no longer considered as wider societal problems and give the illusion of progress (Gill, 2017; Swail & Marlow, 2018). Within entrepreneurship, there is well-established literature recognising the entrepreneur as an idealised Western, white, heterosexual, able-bodied man (Marlow & Martinez Dy, 2018; Swail & Marlow, 2018; Tlaiss & McAdam, 2021). Scholars, for instance, typically assume that entrepreneurs are able-bodied as opposed to those who identify as differently abled. Studies of entrepreneuring using the lens of embodiment were rare (Meliou & Edwards, 2018).

Across both tourism and gender literatures, discussions of embodiment appeared more commonplace, and a variety of perspectives emerged. Within these ‘the body’ is a complexly constructed subject (Palmer & Andrews, 2019). However, consideration of embodiment remains

theoretically light, with complexities acknowledged rather than explored (Palmer & Andrews, 2019). Several articles discussed links between mental health, sustainability, and adventure tourism to better understand the connection between nature and adventure-tourists, however, gender was not always scrutinised despite the focus on embodiment.

Making bodies visible allowed for interesting investigation, because tourism is a particular type of social context in which bodies engage with, and through culturally determined social rules and conducts (Lee, 2017; Reddy-Best & Olson, 2020; Rickly & Vidon, 2017). Broadly, gender tended to remain as a categorical difference with an assumption that bodies were not a source of gendered knowledge. Echoing Nelson and Constantinidis (2017), we found authors often conflate the terms “gender” and “sex”.

In contrast, some work exemplified the benefit of considering gendered bodies (in a fully embodied sense) (Bibil, 2018; Reddy-Best & Olson, 2020). In several studies, visual methods were used to make gendered bodies visible to analytic scrutiny (Santafe-Troncoso & Loring, 2021; Vanolo & Cattani, 2017). Researchers more readily challenge assumed norms and culturally bound expectations (Small, 2017). The process of making bodies visible also reveals them as a site where assumed norms are resisted, and at times, reconstituted.

Desired vs. problematic bodies

Across the three literatures—unless critically scrutinised—a particular body was sustained and often valued over others. There were similarities in tourism and entrepreneurship literatures as to what this desired body might be (Western, white, able, heterosexual, male), and how this reflects all othered bodies as different. Othered bodies must then undertake aesthetic labour to construct a more desirable entrepreneurial body (Pritchard et al., 2019). Conversely, problematic bodies resist or are unable to conform to the assumed desired body. An exemplar was Reddy-Best and Olson’s (2020) discussion of travelling trans bodies, examining appearance-related practices used to negotiate gender identities across different cultural spaces. The complex relationship between bodies, and their centrality to the expression of gender identity, forces us, the reader, to confront the realities of individuals whose bodies do not meet gender norms.

Other scholars applied indigenous epistemologies to make ‘problematic bodies’ visible. Lee (2017) demonstrates how black women’s bodies are objects of desire, highlighting tourism’s “colonising structure” (p. 98), further noting how her own black, female body, becomes a “notion of difference and a site of resistance” (p. 96). In making her own body visible, it also becomes problematic, whereby agency must be worked for, not assumed. Small’s (2017) gendered analysis of beach bodies highlights how the young, slim, white, tanned, able-bodied woman is constructed as an ideal; impacting how women organise their bodies and tourism practices. Echoing this, Rydzik et al. (2021) find no shift in the representation of normative bodies in wedding tourism brochures.

Critical feminist literatures highlight how women entrepreneurs are positioned as needing more acceptable, masculinised ways of being (Marlow & Martinez Dy, 2018; Swail & Marlow, 2018). Intersectional studies examining gender with age (Stirzaker & Sitko, 2019), sexuality (Rumens & Ozturk, 2019), and disability (Hikuta et al., 2019; Williams & Patterson, 2019) demonstrate how entrepreneurship narratives problematise these ‘anomalous bodies’. Moreover, entrepreneurship (Rouse et al., 2021) and adventure tourism (Diaz-Carrion et al., 2020) examine how maternal and pregnant bodies are constructed as problematic within these contexts.

While earlier feminist scholarship focused on the objectification of women, claiming that the interiorised gaze is a male gaze that should be resisted (Lee, 2017), postfeminists argue that today’s women have choices. From this perspective, the desired body is no longer an object of male desire, but a symbol of female empowerment and freedom. However, Marlow and Martinez Dy (2018), Small (2017), and Williams and Patterson (2019) critique this view, arguing that within neoliberal contexts, bodies are sites to be self-regulated and commodified. Implicit

within these agentic narratives is a tension between the need to actively transform oneself, versus narratives that posit more passive forms of self-regulation to achieve empowerment and emancipation. We explore this further below.

Active vs. passive bodies

Except for critical feminist literatures, across our review, bodies were regarded as active, agentic containers of feeling and seekers of opportunity. Affectively attuned bodies are positioned as able to connect with their surroundings, and thus accomplish desired goals (Griggio, 2015; Weller et al., 2021). Particularly within adventure tourism literature, we found the active body was valued (Hanna et al., 2019; Moore, 2019). Such experiences were implicitly assumed as fully embodied as without full bodily immersion the adventure is lost. Even discussion of 'slow adventures' (Farkić et al., 2020; Varley & Semple, 2015) assumes a need for a fully present body to achieve a eudaimonic experience.

The regulated body reoccurred across wider tourism and entrepreneur literatures. Different bodily experiences, at the phenomenological level, have been studied, but also problematised and gendered (Frazer & Waitt, 2016). Entrepreneurship studies often positioned women as needing awareness of, and actively utilise, their femininities (Lewis et al., 2022). Much work reproduces assumptions of women's embodied deficits compared to men, identifying gendered behaviours without fully unpacking these. In tension with this was that gendered bodies were also constructed as passive.

Women were discussed as active through a need to address their lack of entrepreneurial prowess. Women's entrepreneurial bodies were often assumed to be all-feeling and thus, in constant need of regulation. However, men's bodies remained largely passive, presumed as all-knowing vessels already legitimised as entrepreneurial. The need for women to 'work on themselves' to achieve entrepreneurial legitimacy (Swail & Marlow, 2018) was an evident tension that we unpack in the following section. In contrast, within tourism, the passivity of women's bodies was made visible through overt (Frost et al., 2022) and more subversive (Maruyama & Woosnam, 2021) forms of discrimination. This scholarship elucidates how bodies are both encountered and shaped within patriarchal structures that work to sustain gendered assumptions of bodily agency.

Labouring vs. redundant bodies

When the body and bodily practices are linked to labouring for success and growth, we identified a specific type of legitimised body being reproduced. Neoliberal agendas position entrepreneurship as a powerful totem (Ahl & Marlow, 2021; Lewis et al., 2022). Similarly, tourism has not escaped neoliberal ideals constructing responsible and ever-improving subjects. For example, both adventure tourism and entrepreneurial practices are individualised; investing in experiences to improve and control the self, whilst taking personal responsibility to sustain the environment around you, whether it be economically or socially (Moore, 2019). In this, sustainability is not simply extended to the environment but embedded within neoliberal ideals that govern how we organise ourselves and our bodies (Small, 2022).

We found limited recognition of how stigmatized bodies are constructed as unentrepreneurial or as non-tourists. Narratives of agency—hard work—negotiate stigma associated with problematic identities, aiming for a coherent self-identity congruent with a legitimate entrepreneurial identity (Pritchard et al., 2019). Bodies become performative, a site of entrepreneurial and touristic legitimacy and identity negotiation. Although hard work is critical to an entrepreneur or tourist's (particularly an adventure tourist's) achievement, work becomes racialised, gendered, ableist, ageist, and homophobic.

Much has been written about these stigmatised bodies and work under the guise of identity work (Hytti et al., 2017). In tourism, such work is assumed by the guide/employee (Swan &

Flowers, 2018), while across both literatures it has been conceptually explored as different embodied labouring, including aesthetic (Pritchard et al., 2019); emotional (Mathisen, 2019); oppressive (Weller et al., 2021); and bodily focused (Mavin & Grandy, 2016). For example, Swan and Flowers (2018) demonstrate how food tour guides in Sydney, Australia, perform acceptable, 'happy' multiculturalism despite evidence of structural racism. The authors show how guides' bodies become sites where these inequalities become bounded and individualised. We found this provides a means to unpack how inequalities are both relationally situated and remain unchallenged through the labouring bodies of those who seek to embody entrepreneurial or tourist ideals.

Outsider vs. insider bodies

Our final thematic tension offers a reflexive perspective, suggesting entrepreneurship and tourism constructs are both explicitly and implicitly gendered. This assumption forms an epistemic tension that leads research to foreground gender (and indeed other intersecting categories) as a point of difference that demands empirical investigation.

In doing so, bodies and bodily practices are often generalised, gender remains dichotomous and somewhat binary. Binaries were not found exclusively in relation to gender and colonialist logic ascribed to non-western bodies. Moreover, we note examples of decolonial research that expose problematic binaries between western and non-western bodies (Bandyopadhyay & Patil, 2017; Wijesinghe et al., 2020). Within entrepreneurship, such differences are further emphasised across different spaces, including popular media (Wheadon & Duval-Couetil, 2019) and places, like family businesses (Hytti et al., 2017). Experiences are examined through a gendered lens; thus, women are already positioned as outsiders. Assumptions about women entrepreneurs needing to assume masculine identities were reproduced rather than critically examined.

Within tourism, insider/outsider status was often emphasised in spaces and places that are assumed to be experienced differently (Kimbu et al., 2021; Thomas & Mura, 2019). Gao et al. (2020) reveal these tensions through studying Chinese females hitchhiking, positioning this as dangerous and/or sexually transgressive. Within similar nuanced empirical analysis, researchers acknowledge and reflect on gendered assumptions in the form of competing subject positions. In doing so, tourism activities are theorised as discursive practices that are positioned as agentic yet closely governed by gendered regimes (Bandyopadhyay & Patil, 2017; Thomas & Mura, 2019). We found gender used as a clear marker of insider/outsider status that seems challenging for researchers to overcome except for those who reflexively engaged with their own gendered experiences.

Mapping embodied tensions in policy

The five embodied tensions identified from our review of academic literature provided an analytic compass to guide our reflexive analysis of Welsh tourism and entrepreneurship policy documents. In what follows we explore how embodied thematic tensions identified in academic scholarship are recursively constructed across policy documents.

Visible vs. invisible bodies

Across policy, bodies were seldom discussed and were notable in their absence. *The Strategy for Tourism 2013-2020: Framework Action Plan* (2015) includes a single section on 'People' (pp. 25–27), mostly dedicated to "improving skill levels" and emphasising "increase[ing] the number of customer facing staff". Similarly, the related *Welsh Government Strategy for Tourism 2013-2020* opens with:

We can work with agility; *we can* form close partnerships and *we can* measure how well we are delivering our priorities. Tourism is well placed to benefit from these competitive advantages and to focus resources where they will drive successful outcomes for the economy... (p. 4).

There are no bodies beyond staff being upskilled, and declarations of what *we can* as *resources* do. Here, there is an assumed ubiquitous body, and the tourism working body is positioned as an able, malleable economic subject. The *Partnership for Growth: Interim Review of 2016* document (pp. 21–23) reinforces narratives of people development without unpacking who is being developed, reinforcing invisibility of complex working bodies.

While bodies were sometimes visible in images, these served to reproduce norms and ideals, particularly in relation to gender. Relatedly, *The Welcome to Wales: Priorities for the Visitor Economy 2020–2025* document—declares it's a plan “about people” (p. 38), but there is limited visibility of bodily differences (e.g., age, race, ability) across text or images; rather a growth imperative is prioritised:

Growing tourism for the good of Wales means economic growth that delivers benefits for people and places including environmental sustainability, social and cultural enrichment and health benefits (p. 36).

This growth appears to be disembodied, yet tourism is offered as ensuring our bodies are healthier, connected, and can thus perform sustainable behaviours.

Entrepreneurship policy documents reflected discussions of skill and people development. The *Prosperity for All Economic Action Plan* (2019, p. 7) identifying “equip skills”, while *Innovation Wales* (2014) highlights that bodies must be “technologically competent” (p. 22). The competent and skilled body is reinforced as the norm.

In shifting from working bodies, the *Visit Wales: Year of the Outdoors 2020 Guide*, draws awareness to difference, stating:

The Welsh outdoors is a place that everyone can enjoy, regardless of each person's abilities. The outdoors can provide its own challenges around access, but with a bit of thought and careful consideration your business can help everybody—and all bodies—to enjoy our beautiful land (p. 22).

Recognition of “everyone can enjoy”, “your business can help everybody” and the use of “all bodies” demonstrates how raising awareness of *all* bodies, simultaneously conceals their differences. Indeed, Welsh tourism is practiced by and through bodies, illuminating a need to further assess the bodily assumptions linked to these spaces. In both tourism and entrepreneurship policies, directives are provided for certain bodies to be commodified to meet broader economic ends.

Desired vs. problematic bodies

By highlighting limited discussions of bodily difference across policy, we note that the desired body is ubiquitous, and therefore can be easily managed and sustained. Within *Welcome to Wales: Priorities for the Visitor Economy 2020–2025* document, age and disability are implied as a ‘barrier’ and lack of mobility is assigned to aging bodies: “accessibility is a growing issue. As we—and our visitors—get older, more and more of us will face challenges in relation to access” (p. 38). Through statements like these, particular bodies are valued and desired, while others are deemed problematic; as we saw in the construction of the ideal tourist in the academic literature (Small, 2017).

Moreover, the ideal ‘skilled’ body was consistently reproduced across both tourism and entrepreneurship policy, indicating that the available bodies are not fit for purpose. Indeed, repeated calls for ‘more’ skilled people, and the delivery of training suggests desirable bodies must be shaped. Skills deficits were especially evident in gender-specific policies. For example, *Supporting Entrepreneurial Women in Wales: Good Practice Guide* (2019, p. 6) states that:

...there is a need to mainstream a gender sensitive approach...to consider, include and reflect the specific characteristics, needs and challenges of female entrepreneurs (both existing and would-be) and women's businesses.

Women are assumed as inherently different to men entrepreneurs. Specific needs are apparent in 'practical tips': "some women may take longer to think about taking on investment" (p. 11) and require "inspiring female role models as speakers (at events)" (p. 17).

While well-meaning, this implies, as Ahl and Marlow's (2021) analysis UK and Swedish policy also found, that women need more: more support, training, and consideration to be regarded as entrepreneurial. Confidence, for example, was frequently cited as something women needed to 'gain' to be successful (Ahl & Marlow, 2021, p. 14). Within the context of entrepreneurship, this rather bluntly positions men as more desirable and women problematic.

Active vs. passive bodies

As we found in our literature analysis, across these policies, the body was constantly positioned as able and affective; as an active capacity to feel, process, and express experience. *Welcome to Wales: Priorities for the Visitor Economy 2020–2025* opens with the Minister declaring they personally "spend many weekends trail-running in the mountains" (p. 3). Thus, the active body is interpreted as fully able, unbounded, and engaged with outdoor adventure. This too was evident in *Visit Wales 2020* launch of "Wales's Year of Outdoors". Although accessibility was a strategic imperative, there is an implicit assumption that to experience Wales, bodies must be 'active' and ideally, able: "the outdoors can provide its own challenges around access" (p. 22).

Entrepreneurship policy specifically references 'agile' and 'nimble' workers (*Tech Valley's Vision*, 2017, p. 4). In *Prosperity for All: Economic Action Plan* (2019) the construction of economic subjects is particularly pronounced, and reinforces that bodies are in some form of deficit: 'build', 'enable', 'equip', 'deliver', 'promote', and 'support'. However, we found just two discussions linked to gender, age, disability, and ethnicity (pp. 30–32). Despite this, it declares that:

People in Wales are a central focus of the interventions throughout this Plan. Whether in work or out of work, this Plan is about supporting our people to lead secure, healthy and rewarding lives. We support business not as an end in itself, but because of the wider benefits that productive, competitive and growing businesses bring to the people of Wales (p. 19).

Thus, we could conclude from this policy, that an active body is an economically productive body. We found these assumptions were reflective of entrepreneurship scholarship: through enterprise growth, bodies become less passive and are shaped into becoming healthy, competitive, and productive individuals.

Labouring vs. redundant bodies

Entrepreneurship and tourism policy reflects assumptions that entrepreneurs are able-bodied. *The Tech Valleys: Vision* (2017) suggests that "skills development will underpin all activity" (p. 3) and "work must be underpinned by nimble, agile behaviours" (p. 4). Much of what is suggested involves the body or bodily practices linked to forms of labour. *Innovation Wales* (2014) suggests that "skills likely to be vital to all, such as the ability to pitch and present ideas, should be practised" (p. 22) and a need for the "encouragement of high-performance working practices" (p. 23). These points are again suggestive of an idealised body that is fit to perform. Similarly, in *Supporting Entrepreneurial Women in Wales: Action Plan* (2019) women are tasked with "overcoming barriers, being role models, and developing entrepreneurial mind-sets" (p. 19). Despite the focus on women, there is an explicit lack of embodied discussion of entrepreneurial experiences beyond gender.

Notions of embodiment were present in *Wales' Year of Adventure: Make it your business to benefit from adventure travel* (2016). Adventure tourism is defined as an embodied experience and:

...stimulating personal journeys of discovery, experiences based on cultural heritage and adventures of the mind as well as the body (p. 4).

While suggestive of an immersive experience, closer reading reveals that adventure can take place in a mind that is separate from the body. Furthermore, we noted how adventure tourism experiences were prescribed:

Our advantages as an 'adventure capital' are founded on an exceptional natural environment and distinctive cultural and artistic heritage, resources that lead to all kinds of personal adventures, challenging and creative, physical and spiritual (p. 17).

Ultimately this accounts for more laboured forms of adventure tourism not captured in our academic literature review and also highlights adventure taking place across a multiplicity of spaces. Although, these spaces must be ones which our bodies can engage in affectively, and physically, for adventures to be fully experienced. However, there was no explicit discussion of gender, or recognition that different bodies may or may not be able to engage with the 'adventure capital' in the ways prescribed.

Outsider vs. insider bodies

Across these policies the assumed Western, white, able, male, heterosexual body was used as the ideal standard of an entrepreneur, as an adventure tourist and as a tourist: the insider. We identified two modes through which particular bodies became outsiders.

First, in tourism policies, place was suggested as inherent to identity of the 'people of Wales', the success of the tourism experiences and 'epic adventures'. For example, in *Welcome to Wales: Visitor Priorities 2020-2025* document:

Welsh people are important to our tourism economy too, and promoting tourism within Wales creates confidence, cohesion and opportunities at grass-roots level. The people of Wales are also the best advocates for our own country (p. 13).

There was no distilling what or who the people of Wales are, with more of a focus given to categorising types of tourists (p. 14). Additionally, an embodied sense of 'Welshness' was identified. In the *Partnership for Growth: Interim Review of 2016 Priorities* they note:

'Sense of Place' is at the heart of the new Wales brand. It is built on an approach that is inherently Welsh and internationally outstanding (p. 2).

Here there is a suggestion that unless you identify as, or feel, Welsh, you will forever be a tourist, an outsider. This does not account for the complex and multifaceted layers of intersecting identities across the country. Second, outsider status is evident in policies addressing women's entrepreneurship. Documents such as *Supporting Entrepreneurial Wales: Two-year Action Plan*, (2019) reproduce assumptions found in scholarship that position women as in deficit to men entrepreneurs. These sustain a narrative that women entrepreneurs are outsiders in a Western, neoliberal context, where the confident masculine body is privileged. Having presented our analysis of both literature and policy, we now turn to discuss these and set out our contribution.

Discussion

To explore how gendered knowledge is sustained in tourism and entrepreneurship, we analysed how bodies are recursively constructed across academic and policy literatures. We provided a reflexive thematic analysis of 445 papers across a six-year period (2015–21), developing a map of five embodied thematic tensions. These thematic tensions were then applied to analyse Welsh

tourism and entrepreneurship policies. Findings evidence how constructions of bodies form a recursive loop in which bodies are presented as ubiquitous, divorced from the diverse lived experiences of those who engage with tourism and entrepreneurship.

We acknowledge the centrality of bodies to tourism and entrepreneurial experiences and recognise that these constructions are fundamental to discussions of tourism sustainability (Small, 2022). Indeed, feminist scholars argue to realise tourism's sustainable goals, gender equality must be tackled (Small, 2022). Thus, we focused on how bodily constructions sustain problematic gender binaries (Eger et al., 2022). We contribute to an emerging literature by evidencing how predominantly Western informed, masculinised epistemologies continue to shape how gendered bodies are recursively constructed not just within scholarship, but also in policy (Dashper et al., 2022; Figueroa-Domecq et al., 2022). We suggest embodiment offers a useful conceptual nexus across tourism and entrepreneurship (Everingham & Motta, 2022), but found much research reinforced problematic identity binaries. These limited understandings play a crucial role in the sustaining of gendered knowledge across both tourism and entrepreneurship (Everingham et al., 2021; Everingham & Motta, 2022). Therefore, we propose four interrelating contributions.

Firstly, we highlight how our two-stage reflexive thematic analysis identified how bodies are broadly constructed as ubiquitous and highly gendered. In particular, our policy review revealed the extent to which bodies remain assumed and invisible. We suggest this bodily invisibility is a recursive mechanism through which gendered norms are sustained (Eger et al., 2022; Small, 2022). We find the invisibility of difference leads to assumptions foregrounding other tensions: that all bodies are universal in their capacity to be agentic, active, and able (Williams & Patterson, 2019). Bodies become fixed entities that can be trained, controlled, and regulated to enable policies to achieve their outcomes. Moreover, we found little sex/gender distinction and thus assumed bodies are passive (Ahl & Marlow, 2021; Small, 2017). Intersecting identity categories—that we recognise do not exist in isolation but as a complex interplay of differences—were broadly invisible (Eger et al., 2022). Tourism policies contained some notions of embodiment but lacked discussion of differences, apart from associating different-abilities and age, positioning these bodies as problematic. Exemplars of visibility identified from reviewing academic literature (Lee, 2017; Reddy-Best & Olson, 2020; Rickly & Vidon, 2017) were not reflected in such policies. We note the significance of visual research in making bodies and different bodies more visible. As such we call for future research to not only unpack gendered norms in relation to women, but also encourage greater visual attention be paid to men and other categories of gender (Nadin et al., 2020; Rydzik et al., 2021).

Secondly, we extend research seeking to better connect tourism and entrepreneurship scholarship. Through integrating our analysis of gendering across both tourism and entrepreneurship realms we recognise a convergence in critical scholarship and its relationship to sustainability (Figueroa-Domecq et al., 2022). Such convergences also extend to government strategy, with tourist policies frequently making use of entrepreneurial constructs and assumptions, and vice versa. For example, tourism policy was complicit in constructing entrepreneurship as an able-bodied and skilled practice. This echoes academic reproduction of gendered binaries that assume women are entrepreneurially disadvantaged when compared to men (Hmieleski & Sheppard, 2019). These assumptions across academic literature and policy begin to form recursive loops that remain rarely challenged. Our findings reinforce and contribute to research emphasising the impact of neoliberalism on all aspects of our lives (Ahl & Marlow, 2021). Applying our embodied thematic tensions reveals how policy and academic literature mutually constitute a neoliberal subject that is both gendered and idealised across tourism and entrepreneurship. To become the ideal entrepreneurial/tourist subject, hard work is needed (Rickly & Vidon, 2017), especially if your body is stigmatised (Lee, 2017) or does not conform to gendered norms (Reddy-Best & Olson, 2020). These struggles have become individualised and therefore hidden, as noted by critical entrepreneurship scholars (Marlow & Martinez Dy, 2018;

Nadin et al., 2020). Similarly, tourism has not escaped neoliberal ideals that seek to construct responsible and ever-improving subjects and these connections could be further explored in future work (Ahl & Marlow, 2021; Small, 2022).

Thirdly, our mapping of embodiment across contemporary gender, tourism, and entrepreneurship literatures builds upon previous reviews recognising the under theorisation of embodiment in both tourism (Palmer & Andrews, 2019) and entrepreneurship (Kašperová & Kitching, 2014). Extending this further, we offer a reflexive engagement to highlight how theorisations shape how bodies come to be understood as gendered. We note the challenge of affective attunement to the inter-relationality of embodiment to overcome some of the problematic dichotomies that reoccur even in critical work (Everingham et al., 2021). We note Swan and Flowers's (2018) work as an excellent example of attending to critical conceptions of embodiment illustrating how inequalities remain unchallenged, with colonised logics individualised and bounded. Inequality here is embodied, it is relational in that inequalities were affectually experienced, but such affects are situated and continually repressed by the environment within which tourism practices take place. Future research can further this critical work, we suggest a need to examine how bodies are constructed beyond the focus of gender to map how normative assumptions of other intersecting identities (i.e., race, sexuality) are reproduced.

Finally, we found the development of our embodied thematic tensions allowed for greater levels of analytic movement to explore the totality of embodiment—the in-betweenness and inter-relationality—that is challenging to capture without resorting to binary conceptions (Everingham et al., 2021; Leder, 1990). Methodologically, we found engagement with reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021) enabled us to challenge our own assumptions of (our own) gendered bodies and the development of our thematic tensions was an important step in pushing ourselves beyond binaries. Thus, we offer our reflexive thematic mapping process as a starting point for future work to examine other literatures and contexts of relevance.

Conclusion

Using our identified embodied thematic tensions to map the nexus between gender, tourism, and entrepreneurship, we demonstrate how tourism and entrepreneurial literatures construct and sustain gendered bodily norms. In doing so, we find bodily assumptions are reproduced in government documents and embodied differences become ever less visible (Eger et al., 2022; Small, 2022). It is through the invisibility of difference that we find the assumed and gendered body remains sustained and unchallenged. This is despite an ever-emerging literature that seeks to challenge Western-framed assumptions to elucidated other modes of bodily difference (Eger et al., 2022; Tucker, 2022).

The evidence for our arguments is drawn from our reflexive interpretation of academic literatures and policy initiatives. Inevitably, we will not have captured everything, and our focus is deliberately narrow. Consequently, there is potential to extend our work across multiple sources and contexts. We have also focused on one developed economy, so our understandings are geographically and contextually sensitive. Evaluating and applying these embodied thematic tensions across a diverse range of developing contexts would be insightful. We also acknowledge that we all identify as women, thus we experience and understand bodies in the world (including our own) as women. While this impacts our interpretation and may favour particular arguments, the documents used in this study are widely available so can be subject to alternative analyses.

The application of our thematic tensions was a valuable guide in this study, attuning our focus on bodies to interrogate assumptions being presented to us. Therefore, we would encourage further interpretations and critiques of these embodied tensions to generate reflective debate and critical discussions on the epistemic recursivity between theory, policy, and lived experiences of tourism and entrepreneurship. We welcome studies that seek to apply and extend

understandings of these tensions across multiple contexts and data. We fully recognise that these tensions do not reflect the wealth of bodies, identities, and embodied experiences that exist beyond those identified in our research. Therefore, while we encourage its use, we also caution that it is applied as a starting point through which binary understandings of bodies may be critically explored.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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