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Bodies as bearers of value: The transmission of jock culture via the ‘Twelve  
Commandments’.

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## Abstract

This paper explores a number of insights generated from a three-year ethnographic study of one university setting in England in which a 'jock culture' is seen to dominate a student campus. Drawing on core concepts from Pierre Bourdieu's sociology of culture we illustrate the unique function of the body in sustaining jock culture through the hierarchical ordering of bodies in institutional space. First, the development of this culture over time and the key dispositions that come to embody it are outlined. Next, we identify and illustrate the enactment of what we call the 'Twelve Commandments'. These operate as a series of structured and structuring practices to condition the bodies of group members by appropriating an idealized and internalized jock habitus that is not gender neutral. Rather, it can be seen as a practical and symbolic manifestation of a dominant, heterosexual, masculine orientation to the world. We suggest that in spite of seemingly significant processes of accommodation over the years the 'illusio' of this jock culture remains substantially intact and maintained through a combination of the following: (a) symbolic violence and (b) a systematic embodied complicity on the part of many of the actors who have something to gain by avoiding active subordination to, and exclusion from, the dominant group.

**Keywords:** jock culture, bodies, habitus, physical capital, gender, masculinity, identity.

## Introduction

In recent years, the term 'jock culture' has been closely associated with the production and maintenance of hegemonic forms of heterosexual masculinity via a range of social practices and ideological formations that, according to McDonald and Kirk (1999), celebrate "mesomorphy, anti-intellectualism, sexism, homophobia, competitiveness and binge drinking" (p. 2) These characteristics have been identified in a number of studies that have focused on 'jock' culture within the domain of higher education to reveal the gendered dynamics of identity construction. For example, in a North American context, Dewar (1990) focused on how gender identities were understood and negotiated within a Physical Education (PE) university programme in relation to the jock label by four different groups of students: super jocks, women jocks, ordinary jocks, and non-jocks. She suggested that this label has a gender of its own, "for some it is a symbol and celebration of heterosexual masculinity; for others it means being a good athlete and being highly skilled in human movement" (p. 81).

In a British context, Skelton (1993) reflects upon his own experiences of training to become a teacher of PE at a specialist college in England. These experiences suggest that the rituals and practices of the informal culture of the institution Skelton attended, rather than the formal culture, served to legitimate, reproduce and celebrate specific forms of masculinity within the student body.

Getting drunk, fooling around, showing your naked body in public, displaying toughness, heterosexual conquest, respecting hierarchy and ridiculing weakness are all part, therefore, of the process of appropriating a particular version of a male PE teacher, which is defined by the officiants or initiated PE students. The appropriate version or type is underpinned by a masculinity which emphasises pride, physical prowess, competition and aggression (Skelton, 1993, p. 296)

The behaviours and attitudes described by Skelton (1993) are also evident in Flintoff's (1993, 1994) ethnographic study of gender power relationships in two British Initial Teacher Education institutions that specialized in PE. While Flintoff notes that both institutions were involved in producing a range of masculinities and femininities, they were also complicit in the process by which particular ones became valued over others and subsequently hegemonic. With regard to the male identity

work or the 'doing' of masculinity in both institutions she observed two main strategies. These were overt demonstrations of physical prowess and competitiveness, and heterosexual displays. Both strategies relied heavily on the process of 'othering' that operates via the construction of negative reference groups such as women and gay men. The effects were described by Flintoff (1994) as follows:

The rules of the 'male club' ... operated to ensure that men responded competitively and aggressively – not just in their involvement in 'male' activities, but also in their interactions and relationships with each other - and worked continually to preserve a heterosexual identity, through homophobic and sexist displays. (Flintoff, 1994, p. 100)

In a similar vein, an Australian ethnographic study by K.L. Brown (1998, 2005) focused on the informal culture in one physical education teacher education (PETE) programme to provide insights into the negotiation, social positioning and identity construction process which occurs on entry to such programmes. She reveals how an 'inner sanctum' of male students, a revered group, were instrumental in establishing a set of rules, values, behavioural patterns, and practices that maintained hegemonic masculinities within the programme. Within the context of this PETE programme it was socially prestigious to be considered 'one of the boys' and this kind of recognition brought with it social acceptance, position and power. Of course, not all males aspired to be part of the 'inner sanctum' but for those who did, participation in a range of overtly hegemonic behaviours (rites of passage) enabled access to the 'in crowd' and an increase in status within the hierarchical social structure evident in this particular PETE programme.

Brown's (1998, 2005) study proposes that the world of PETE is an *identity playground* where students play around with, or construct identities in relation to the rules operating within their social world. However, the freedoms to 'play' with identities are differentially distributed. Thus, Brown talks of an *identity playground hierarchy* that includes an IN-Group, and OUT-Group, and a group known as the Outcasts. She reveals the gendered nature of the interactions and hierarchical ordering occurring within the student social world of PETE at this university and how this operates through a range of social practices that are framed by dominant or hegemonic forms of masculinity. Importantly, Brown draws attention to the ways in which the rituals, rules and behaviours within the social structure of PETE are repeated with

each new intake so that the jock culture and its associated identities are reproduced and replicated over time by different generations of students. According to Brown (2005) there may be no original gender identity performances in PETE, just imitations and copies of copies as proposed by Butler (1993). That is, students perform in a  
70 certain way in order to be like those who came before them. These performances modify identities, reshape the body and allow the students to use behaviours that are ‘twice behaved’ (Denzin, 2003) in that they feel original to the novitiate but are an imitation of others who have gone before. Such performances are both framed by and introduce students to the rules of membership to jock culture. As Brown (2005) states:

75 Identities are being constructed and used in a social environment where particular rules are evident. These rules appear to be set by a small, but dominant group who subscribes to practices and behaviours clearly associated with hegemonic notions of what it means to be male in an environment such as physical education. The norms and behaviours of this  
80 group influence the nature of the social interactions of students in PETE and play a significant role in shaping the students’ perceptions of what are appropriate and accepted Phys Ed identities. These attitudes and ‘unspoken’ rules appear to be subscribed to and accepted by a significant proportion of both male and female PETE students; whether by choice, or social survival,  
85 is an issue of debate. (K.L. Brown, 2005, pp. 123-124)

Against, the backdrop provided by studies such as those described above, in this paper, we seek to generate further insights into the complex dynamics of identity construction within jock culture and how this culture reproduces itself over time. We do so by drawing upon data from a three-year ethnographic study of one university  
90 setting in England.

### Methodology

Greenfields (a pseudonym) is one of two campuses that make up university in  
95 England. This campus has a large undergraduate student intake studying for a Bachelor of Science degree in Sport Sciences. Approximately 25 percent of these students then opt to study for a Post Graduate Certificate in Physical Education that is offered on the same campus. Collectively, the majority of male and female students

enrolled on each of these courses are known as ‘jocks’ both by themselves and the  
100 other students on this campus. To generate insights into the ‘way of life’ of this  
identifiable group of students as part of a larger study that focused on athletic identity,  
injury and sporting culture, the primary investigator (Elizabeth Partington) undertook  
an ethnographic study of Greenfields between 1997-2000. According to Cresswell  
(1998) ethnography is a description and interpretation of a cultural or social group or  
105 system.

The researcher examines the group’s observable and learned patterns of behaviour,  
customs, and ways of life ... As a process, ethnography involves prolonged  
observation of the group, typically through participant observation in which the  
110 researcher is immersed in the day-to-day lives of the people or through one-on-one  
interviews with members of the group. The researcher studies the meanings of  
behaviour, language, and interactions of the culture-sharing group. (Cresswell,  
1998, p. 58).

115 In a similar fashion Atkinson et al. (2001) note that, in order to develop a portrait  
and establish the ‘cultural rules’ of a group, the ethnographic tradition is characterized  
by a commitment to the “first hand experience and exploration of a particular social or  
cultural setting on the basis of (though not exclusively by) participant observation  
(according to circumstance and the analytical purpose of the study)” (p. 4). They  
120 acknowledge that during field work the ethnographer can draw on a diverse repertoire  
of research techniques such as, “analysing spoken discourse and narratives, collecting  
and interpreting visual materials (including photography, film and video) collecting  
oral history and life history material and so on” (p. 5).

During the study of Greenfields the primary investigator adopted various positions  
125 on a participant observer continuum that ranged from complete observer to complete  
participant. During the first year of fieldwork the emphasis was on observing and  
making field notes of what happened in the public spaces at Greenfields, such as, the  
student common room and bar, the sports hall, the gymnasium. A range of sporting  
events ranging from British University Sports Association (BUSA) matches to inter-  
130 mural matches were also observed. Over time, the researcher’s roles shifted more  
towards the participant end of the continuum. For example, in the second year of the  
study the primary investigator joined the University Ladies’ Football Team. This

allowed her to take part in team trials, participate in BUSA competitions and local league matches, and to attend team 'socials' and Athletic Union dinners. Similarly, in the third year of the study the primary investigator joined the University Badminton Team. In both these situations the role of overt participant observer was chosen. Thus, the status of the primary investigator as a postgraduate student interested in the dynamics of sporting cultures was made known to the members of both teams who agreed that she could join them and make field notes as long as they remained anonymous in any publication that followed.

Over time, as the primary investigator became more immersed in the culture of Greenfields and issues began to emerge in relation to how it operated, purposeful sampling was employed to select 30 students for formal interview. These interviews took place at a location chosen by the student. The primary investigator explained the nature of the study, outlined the interview procedure, dealt with ethical issues (e.g. anonymity), and answered any questions. The contents of an informed consent form were then explained and completed. This included giving permission for the interview to be tape-recorded. In a similar fashion a number of 'key informants' were interviewed. These are knowledgeable individuals able to provide useful insights into aspects of the culture, facilitate access to various sites within it, help make contacts, and guide the researcher to where certain kinds of data might be gathered.

Finally, throughout the study documentary sources were used as a data source to complement the participant observation and interviews. For example, university archives were accessed in order to gain insights into the historical development of Greenfields. Likewise, the weekly student magazine was also an important source of information in terms of what sporting events were reported and how they were reported.

The data generated from these different sources was subjected to various forms of analysis. These included, content, thematic, and structural analyses (Cresswell, 1998; Sparkes, 2005). Throughout this process, The role of Andrew Sparkes and David Brown was to act as 'critical friends' and provide a theoretical sounding board to encourage reflection upon, and exploration of, alternative explanations and interpretations as they emerged in relation to the data (also see Sparkes & Partington, 2003).

The analysis of the data suggested that a number of rules operated within the jock culture at Greenfields. During interview, one of the students referred to them as



‘commandments’ that governed behaviour and needed to be learned if one was to become a ‘successful’ jock. Accordingly, in what follows we utilize this insider term to focus on the ‘12 Commandments’ that framed the social practices of the jock culture at Greenfields and appeared to be a key link in the transmission and reproduction of values and behaviours across generations. Prior to this, however, we begin by considering the analytic lenses that shaped our interpretation of the data. Next, a brief history of Greenfields is provided in order to illustrate how hegemonic masculinity was embedded in its foundations. Recent developments are then outlined. These include the introduction of female students and the introduction of a new degree that had the potential to challenge the jock culture at this institution. The lack of change and the continued reproduction of the central features of this jock culture are then focused on by considering in detail how the 12 Commandments are embodied in the lives of the students involved.

#### 180 The analytic lens: Bourdieu’s sociology of culture

We have found the notions of *habitus* and *physical capital* as developed by Pierre Bourdieu to be useful in understanding the dynamics of jock culture at Greenfields. For Bourdieu (1990), *habitus* is defined as “systems of durable, transposable dispositions” (p. 53). These shape how people respond appropriately, and often unconsciously, to the situations in which they find themselves. The *habitus* is thus revealed by and constructed through the embodied ritual practices of everydayness that are learned over time and, as such, it has a history that links the flesh of individual actors into systems of social norms, understandings and patterns of behaviour. Different forms of embodiment are likely to predispose people to behave in particular ways as the body becomes a site of social memory and the social gets written into the corporeal. Importantly, as Edwards and Imrie (2003) point out, given that the practices associated with the *habitus* may be learned, they are difficult to change and may be passed on through generations. *Habitus* also has a social value with regard to the physical capital. As Shilling (1993) comments:

The production of physical capital refers to the development of bodies in ways that which are recognized as possessing value in social fields, while the conversion of physical capital refers to the translation of bodily

participation in work, leisure and other fields into different forms of capital.

200 Physical capital is most usually converted into economic capital (money, goods and services), cultural capital (for example, education) and social capital (social networks which enable reciprocal calls to be made on the goods and services of its members). (Shilling, 1993, pp. 127-128)

205 According to Gorely, Holroyd and Kirk (2003), Bourdieu's concept of capital is useful as a means of identifying the resources available to individuals that determine their motility within particular fields such as physical activities. For them, this concept is important because it foregrounds the importance of an embodied exchange value in different contexts. That is, physical capital exists within systems of exchange and so is a resource that empowers some while disempowering others within  
210 situations characterized by structured inequality. Elsewhere, Light and Kirk (2000) drew upon notions of habitus to make sense of the construction of hegemonic masculine through the playing of high school rugby in Australian schools. This perspective is also developed by David Brown (2005) who uses Bourdieu's (1986, p. 101) work on relations and his notion of “{(habitus) (capital)} + field + practice” in  
215 order to make sense of the PETE process as a gendered cultural economy. This economy feeds on a practical supply and demand relationship between the gendered habitus of the incoming student teachers and the gendered demands of the field of physical education.

For us, during his life, Bourdieu's views on the materiality of the body, the forms  
220 of investment made in it, and how its physical shape and its presentation through ways of talking, dressing, moving, bodily deportment, and general demeanour, as highly skilled and socially differentiated practical accomplishments, are particularly useful given our focus on a culture that has the physical performance of the body as its core feature. In a similar fashion, his notion of habitus as a socially constituted system of  
225 cognitive and motivating structures that is located within the body and affects every aspect of human embodiment along with the ways that people treat their bodies, is also useful in examining a culture based on bodily performance. In such a culture, Bourdieu's conception of the body as a bearer of value in specific social locations that leads to the acquisition of status, distinction, and the reproduction of existing social  
230 structures, is brought into sharp relief. This is particularly so, given that the particular scheme of dispositions that constitutes the habitus only has a conversion, or physical

capital value in relation to a particular field. According to Edwards and Imrie (2003) “bodily dispositions, which are inculcated in people, are not in themselves determined by the habitus, but by their interrelation with social fields ... These social fields  
235 ascribe values to certain social practices and forms of embodiment” (p. 243). Therefore, Bourdieu’s concept of field is also a useful analytic lens for looking at the cultural dynamics of jock culture.

#### The emergence of jock culture at Greenfields as ‘embodied’ history

240 One way of making sense of jock culture at Greenfields is to consider its production and transmission as taking place through the body and more specifically through the construction and legitimation of the habitus. In his later writing on gender, Bourdieu (1990) holds that, “The habitus - embodied history, internalized as a second nature and so forgotten as - history - is the active present of the whole past of which it  
245 is a product” (p. 56). Such a view helps us to appreciate how jock culture at Greenfields developed through and out of legitimised male bodily performances and their accompanying dispositions. Archive material reveals that Greenfields was established as a Diocesan training college for masters and opened its doors in 1840 to seven male students. As student numbers grew concerns to meet their recreational  
250 needs led to various sports being introduced. For example, cricket began in 1852, and rugby union football in 1860. Over the years, the sporting reputation of Greenfields grew, and their notable successes were reported in the college magazine. By the early 1900s, the college had gained a reputation for training male physical education teachers.

255 Despite the interruptions caused by two World Wars, the importance of sports performance continued to dominate life at Greenfields. Indeed, in 1947, the Head of the PE Department decided that the way to develop an even stronger reputation in this subject was via sporting prowess and, in particular, through success in rugby union football. Accordingly, high-level performers were recruited to the college. The annual  
260 report of the local Diocesan Board of Education in 1950 reported a number of sporting successes that included three members of the rugby club gaining international trials and five playing for their county teams.

The impressive record in sport performance coincided with the foundation of a supplementary three-year course in PE that began in 1950, and had an intake of 24  
265 male students. This period also signalled the growing dominance of rugby union within the college. Indeed, in interview, Harry, a member of the Greenfields 1958 1<sup>st</sup> XV, a former international, and lecturer at the college for forty years noted:

Greenfields have been playing rugby since it opened but because of the drive of the Principal soon after the War, it just became a hot bed for rugby.  
270 He was nuts on rugby. He was a rugby referee. He would go to Wales to recruit players. The joke was that if you had three and a half ‘O’ levels and a Welsh cap, you could get into Greenfields. In fact, my own entrance to Greenfields was very much centred around rugby football. (Harry)

Harry also provides insights into the culture during that period. For example,  
275 entering in 1958 at the age of eighteen as part of the first intake that came straight from school following the abolition of National Service [a compulsory two-year period in the British armed forces], he found himself in a minority among a group dominated by those who had ‘done time’ in the services. For him, it was “culture shock” to come into an atmosphere characterized by “macho, drunken, beer swilling,  
280 womanizing people ... The whole thing was just topflight sport ... In some ways, they trained the behaviour of the following 18 year olds.” He also recalls an initiation ritual when he made his debut for the Greenfields 1<sup>st</sup> XV in 1958. This involved his having to stand on a table in a pub after the game and sing a song;

So, I stood up on this table, and it’s not just the rugby club there, you’ve got  
285 all the locals there, men and women. I started to sing ‘Amazing Grace’. Well, I was soaked in beer. They just threw their pints over me – get down and get out of it! And I knew I had to sing the dirtiest song I knew. So I just had this very embarrassing situation of standing on the table. Now, I didn’t have to do it. I could have just walked off the table, but I’d have to say I  
290 wasn’t strong enough, lacked will power, or maybe I thought ‘OK. I’ll be one of the boys’. (Harry)

Such initiations and rituals became common features of the life at Greenfields as, during the 1960s and 70s their reputation grew nationally in a range of sports.

Accordingly, PE was deemed to be at the core of the culture. As Harry remembers,  
295 “The culture has always been PE, even though we did do everything else.”

This brief review of the early history of Greenfields suggests that physical capital,  
quite literally in the form of the performing male body, was the key criterion for  
selection and entrance to this institution. Having this form of capital was also an  
important means of gaining status within the informal culture. The gendered habitus  
300 of students in this era appears to maintain links to those of the current day Greenfields  
students through a range of social practices that will be illustrated later in this paper.

#### Recent developments: Accommodation, complicity and resistance

305 In 1963, as part of a wider liberalization of educational policies in England and  
Wales a major upheaval took place at Greenfields when the college began to go co-  
educational with the arrival of four schoolmistresses on the supplementary one-term  
course in primary mathematics. The all-male student body and many of the male  
lecturers feared that the traditional values of this elite institution would be usurped  
310 and that sporting standards of the men would drop due to a decrease in their numbers  
which would ‘dilute’ the physical capital available among that group. In 1967 the  
following poem entitled ‘The Rape of Greenfields’, appeared in the college magazine.

In various talk th’ instructive hours they pass’d.  
315 Who had the ball, or made the touch down last.  
With beer and smoke the common room was full.

A masculine retreat impregnable.

But now the spicy jokes must hang, half told.

As female figures, heeding not the cold,

320 Fling wide the casement. Men not tales are blue;

And chatter rings the peaceful college through.

What pow'r has caused the Principal to sway

And let the weaker sex come into stay?

No king, nor [staff name], can curb their merry mirth;

325 No English student gets his money's worth.

'Restore All Saints' men cry, and all around

'Restore our peace' the vaulted roofs abound.

330 Significantly, PE was the last course to go co-educational in this institution with women joining in 1980. Not surprisingly, this shift was more related to the need to comply with new government legislation regarding sex discrimination and equal opportunities than any desire of the jock culture for social change.

335 The move to co-educational status took place two years after another cultural upheaval occurred at the college when, in 1978, Greenfields merged with the university based at a different campus in the city and began to offer a 4 year Bachelor of Education Degree (BEd) as well as a 3 year Certificate in Education for PE students. The university campus, became known as 'main site' and was defined by Greenfield's staff and students alike within an 'us' and 'them' mentality that remains  
340 intact today.

Following the merger, the visibility of the PE students in the university sporting teams, coupled with the 'us and them' mentality that existed, meant that the dominance of the male PE culture on the Greenfields campus was powerfully reinforced through everyday practices and the occupation of significant social spaces.  
345 Within this, senior PE students were seen as occupying the apex of a sporting social hierarchy. As Geena, a final year BEd student in 1998 commented:

PE dominated the TV area completely [in the student common room]. They are very intimidating for other people. Most of us are aware that it is intimidating for other students if you're not PE. It is the very athletic, the very loud, sometimes a bit laddish. The big lads, the ones that are quite loud, quite outgoing, the ones with a lot of personality, and a lot of oomph. They're there, PE lads, about eight of them. Big, huge, over six foot! (Geena)

The symbolic and socio-spatial domination of the Greenfields campus by PE students studying for the degree of BEd received a challenge in the mid 1990s when the PE Department opted to phase out this degree and replace it with a three year Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Sport Sciences. Since then, many students have taken the latter with the possibility of applying for a 4<sup>th</sup> year to study for a Post Graduate Certificate in Education specializing in PE.

At the time this study took place years (1997-2000) the students studying for the BSc in Sports Science outnumbered their BEd and PGCE counterparts. In this sense, there was the potential for cultural change to take place. However, this does not appear to have happened. Indeed, what is interesting to note is the way in which Sport Science students, and particularly some female Sport Science students, have over time been accommodated 'benevolently' within the patriarchal and heterosexual structures of the jock culture in ways that have left its core underlying dispositional value structures intact. This might be interpreted as evidence of their complicit investiture into the *illusio* of the significance of jock culture to life at Greenfields. This idea of *illusio* is useful here because as Bourdieu (1998) clarifies it can be seen as games which matter to you. Moreover these games "are important and interesting because they have imposed and introduced to your mind, in your body... a form called the feel for the game" (p. 77).

In this regard, we can see the *illusio* in the following comment by Geena in the final year of her BEd as she looks back on those transitional years, "The first year of sport scientists were not what we considered Greenies. That's now changed a bit and the current first years are more what we considered Greenies. So that's better, we're happier with that, the traditions are being kept on." Likewise, the following notes from the primary investigator's research diary in October 2000 of a conversation between two students are illuminating:

380 Isabel (doing a teaching degree at Greenfields) and Chris (a 3<sup>rd</sup> year sport  
scientist at Greenfields) had been talking about badminton. Isabel mentioned  
that Sally, another member of the badminton team, was a ‘Greeny’ (she is  
undertaking a teaching degree at Greenfields). Chris stated that as a teacher,  
Sally is judged as only a ‘half-breed’. Only sport scientists are ‘pure’  
385 Greenies. Isabel was furious because teachers have been at Greenfields since  
1838 while sport scientists have only been on the campus since 1995.

As we shall identify, one of the key aspects that sustained the jock culture illu-  
sion through this transition was the powerful structured and structuring practices enshrined  
in the 12 Commandments that are the generative manifestation of the habitus of these  
390 senior members of the jock culture, in short, the living history of Greenfields.

#### The 12 Commandments as structured and structuring practices

Jock culture at Greenfields appears to be primarily an embodied cultural history  
395 whose principle channel of transmission is through the schemes of dispositions that  
are embedded in a legitimate jock habitus and passed on to the next generation. The  
main mode of this transmission or ‘conditioning’ is through the logic of social practice  
which, as Bourdieu (1990) consistently maintained, is based around “the system of  
structured, structuring dispositions, the habitus, which is constituted in practice and is  
400 always oriented towards practical functions” (p. 52). The 12 Commandments that  
were identified at Greenfields via observations of student behaviour and discussions  
with them would appear to typify such structured and structuring practical logic in  
operation.

405 [Insert Figure 1 about here]

These ‘commandments’ represent a clearly articulated scheme of dispositions in  
action and provide a template that facilitates the transfer of habitus between  
generations. Moreover, these practices can be seen as ‘structured’ because rather than  
410 being external and written on a tablet in the form of their Christian referent, they are  
contained within the practical cultural logics of the embodied dispositions  
demonstrated by the *established* members of this culture (both the insiders and to a



lesser extent outsiders who also have 'feel for the game' but are sidelined by it). Secondly, these dispositional logics give rise to a generative grammar of 'active possibilities' for those who have acquired them. As Parker (2000) notes in relation to Bourdieu's theory:

The reference to the concept of 'becoming' is crucial because it focuses attention on practice as relating moments of time and levels of history. What is cut at the cutting edge is the future. Through practice we 'become'; there is no standing still, we have to get on with it! Practice takes time. It relates past, present and future to bring some future into being. (Parker, 2000, p. 44)

While these commandments operate implicitly on a daily basis, they are made conspicuous during specific moments, such as, the Fresher's Week when newly arrived first year students are introduced to life at Greenfields in the week before the academic term starts. Here, they are expected to join sports clubs and undergo a range of practical initiation rituals that introduce the commandments to the next generation. Attention will now be given to some of these commandments as they highlight the dynamics of this culture in action, and also they signal how the present Greenfields jock culture remains connected to the past via the physical bodies of the 'legitimate' jock students who inhabit the dominant positions in this institutional space at any given moment in time.

#### Commandment 1: Play high-level University (BUSA) sport

Playing sports remains the defining feature of jocks and jock culture on the Greenfields campus. As James, a Sport Sciences student comments<sup>1</sup>, "Greenfields is very sports dominated. It's a sports dominated campus, and there's a very sporty culture, team culture, jock culture here." Status and respect is afforded to those who play for university teams that participate in the British Universities Sports Association (BUSA) national competition. As Julie commented, "You relate people to what sport they play. It's the first thing people say about anybody". In this regard, as James notes regarding the first year, "It's a crunch year. It's very important and a lot of people that don't make it in their first year, and then try and have another stab at it, it just doesn't seem to work for them". Many arrive at Greenfields as successful performers in

445 school and are able to exchange their physical capital for cultural capital and thereby  
make legitimate claims to a sporting identity within this location. However, the  
quantity and quality of the physical capital these students possess is often insufficient  
when compared to that held by the other newcomers and the existing jocks at  
Greenfields. In this competitive, elite environment, where athletic performativity is a  
450 core disposition, the exchange value of their physical capital often becomes  
problematic. As Nicole describes:

People that are at the top at their normal school will come down here and  
they'll be in the fourth team. Everybody is elite here. That's why Saints is so  
different because you've got the crème de la crème of people really.

455 (Nicole)

#### Commandment 2: Choose your sport wisely

The practical logic of Commandment 2, however, signals that prestige and status  
are differentiated according to particular sports and that students must choose these  
wisely if they are to convert their physical capital. That is, certain sports provide  
460 greater status and recognition than others. The core of these is male team sports and  
within this the sport of rugby union. For Bourdieu (1993) this sport inculcates  
dispositions such as the "exaltation of 'manliness' and the 'cult' of the 'team spirit' ...  
not to mention the aristocratic ideal of 'fair play'" (p. 126). Unsurprisingly, this  
practice is heavily gendered and would appear to display the legacy of the masculine  
465 habitus developed and celebrated in the early years of Greenfields that acts to  
naturalise the notion of difference and legitimates the devaluing of women.  
Accordingly, female bodies and their associated performances carry significantly less  
physical capital conversion value. For example, in the following statement, James is  
talking about the status of *male* rugby players. Female rugby players do not enjoy the  
470 same high profile as their male counterparts.

Rugby is traditionally a more high profile sport within this university. If you're an average first team hockey player, you're an average first team rugby guy; I'd say the rugby player is probably better known around campus than the hockey player is. Rugby players are just definitely, definitely more high profile. (James)

The specific high profile sports at Greenfields identified by the students themselves are rugby, football and hockey for men, and hockey and netball for women. This status hierarchy is evident in the way in which sport is covered by the student magazine. In keeping with predominance of media attention and reporting on male sports in the wider society (see for example, Hargreaves 1994; Duncan and Hasbrook 2002), the majority of reports in the sports section of the magazine focus on the performance of the men's BUSA teams. For example, the November 1999 edition contains features on BUSA matches played the previous week. These are the men's football second team, men's rugby first team, men's football third team, men's hockey first team, men's hockey third team, and men's badminton second team. Women's sport is only mentioned in the BUSA 'round up', which simply lists the results for each team. That is, these sports do not warrant detailed reporting. This is despite the fact that the women's basketball team, and all three women's hockey teams recorded impressive victories. Indeed, over a season the women's teams are often more successful in BUSA than the men's teams but receive considerably less publicity and coverage. This issue has not gone unnoticed by some of the female students.

The student magazine covers rugby, football or men's hockey. They don't seem to cover women's sports. It might have to do with the fact that the AU (Athletic Union) chair is male. That sounds like me being sexist but in all the years that I've been here we've only had one woman AU chair. The magazine committee do the sports page, and they don't know anything about the sports teams. They think rugby, football and men's hockey. Women's sports come underneath. We've written really good reports and handed them in, and they haven't been printed. It puts you off putting anything in again. (Kathryn)

Kathryn's response is typical and in many ways shows the antipathy that contributes to a culture of complicity that allows the symbolic domination by maleness to remain unchallenged across generations.

Commandment 3: Only exceptional Freshers make the first team

505 The large number of talented performers available at All Saints to choose from means that the greatest respect and recognition go to those who play first team sport. As Luke commented, “People do respect you a lot more if you get in to the first team, anything below the first team; people don’t take much notice.” Normally, it is third-year and second-year students who make up the first teams.

510 As Commandment 3 suggests, only exceptional Freshers (Year 1 students) will achieve this distinction indicating an elitist disposition as a core part of the jock habitus. Those who do convert their physical capital into social capital (e.g. breaking into the first team of valued sports) also instantly convert their physical capital into cultural capital in terms of the respect and recognition they then receive within the  
515 jock culture. This practical logic operates in the same way (if to differential degrees) with both male and female performers as Becky’s comment indicates:

You arrive at the university as a little fresher, and no one knows who you are. But I could play hockey. I was one of three Freshers in the first team, which instantly  
520 gave me status amongst all the other years because I was a member of a first team squad. I was somebody that everyone knew someone that everybody wanted to know because I was good in their eyes and that made me acceptable. (Becky)

Commandments: (4) Be committed to the social life, (5) Excessive alcohol consumption and associated behaviour are obligatory, (6) Respect the hierarchy, (7) Stay established.

525

Of course, not all jocks will make it into the first teams. Here, the historical practices of Commandments 4, 5, 6 and 7 interact to shape other dispositions of the habitus of those who are not in the elite bracket. For example, jocks, and particularly those who do not play first team sport, are expected to be committed to the social life  
530 of their clubs. James describes two ways of getting and staying established:

You get your quality rugby players, the scholarship lads, and people who play to a high standard who are respected by the whole rugby club because they can play rugby. Then you get people who aren’t such good rugby players but are big social drinkers, just really up for it. Who are respected  
535 because their commitment to the rugby club is fantastic, they’re always

there, always drinking, doing outrageous things. You have to make a name for yourself in one of those two groups. If you're a good enough player then that works. It doesn't matter if you're not the social animal, they respect you for the way you play, and that's all right. But, if you're not quite there if you're not a valuable member of the team for your playing ability you might be a valuable member of the team for your social ability. (James)

This 'social ability' also relates to the practice of Commandment 5 that involves excessive alcohol consumption (very often to the point of vomiting and sometimes to the state of physical collapse) and behaviours associated with drinking forfeit games, such as, stripping naked in the student bar. While such practices are clearly connected with male sporting culture more generally (Collins and Vamplew, 2002), its specific localized and ritualized form is a powerful transmission mechanism from the history of Greenfields, a point recognized by many of the students. For example, Becky notes, "The whole mentality of the beer swilling PE students. That's how Greenfields got its name, it's a PE college, and the stories are all of the PE lads in the bar." These mythologized stories usually revolve around a range of overtly heterosexist and hegemonic behaviours. These include acts of vulgarity and the demeaning of women and 'lesser' males who fail to conform to the jock stereotype that is actively transmitted through the approximated re-enactments instigated by those both already conditioned and authorized to pass on these rituals to the next generation. The following comments regarding their initiations into sports clubs during Freshers week, echo the alcohol fuelled initiation rituals described elsewhere by L. Brown (1998, 2005) and Skelton (1993) in which students learn about and submit themselves to the cultural norms of the groups in a fully embodied manner.

We had a social with the hockey boys, and I had to kneel down and eat half a chilli, like eat a chilli with sort of this bloke kneeling down opposite me, and then snog him. (Victoria)

I found myself in the situation in the college bar after a game. We were all doing our fresher introductions, and I was up on the table, trousers round my ankles, and they were all doing their big funnel bolting beer things. (Joshua)

Becoming the focus of such ritual practices that begin to condition the habitus does not necessarily mean that the person being initiated agrees with what is taking place.

In such situations, role conflict can often occur. While, the tendency is for the  
570 individuals to ‘impression manage’ and defer to the group hierarchy (Commandment  
6) with a view to eliciting validating responses from them to facilitate acceptance and  
begin the process of capital transfer, over time, however, the nature of these practices  
becomes increasingly difficult to sustain unless they become engrained in the habitus  
of the practitioner. Significantly, the gatekeepers of the jock culture in this institution  
575 have the necessary *schemes of perception* to recognize the next generation of likely  
successors - those who show a particular dispositional penchant for submission to the  
*illusio* of jock culture and, equally important – those who do not.

There is this group hierarchy in Saints. There is this respect your third years, and  
580 there is that respect. If they tell you to do something, you do it. To fit in to say I’m  
happy doing that. Whereas if you say “No,” it’s like being chippy or she’s not up  
for a good laugh. There’s been quite a few times when I’ve done things where I’m  
not happy in that situation, I don’t want to do it but I’ve done it anyway. You do it  
to fit in, to be like everyone else in that group. (Julia)

585 Commandment 8: Look like a jock

Part of this ‘fitting in’ or unquestioning deferral to the group is also in evidence  
with the adherence shown to the practice of Commandment 8 that requires jocks to  
wear appropriate attire. They are expected to adopt the implicit dress code among the  
sport scientists, which differentiates them from other student groups, or non-jocks that  
590 inhabit the campus. This is a clear mark of distinction and further signals the body as  
a bearer of a particular value.

The majority of the sport scientists will wear joggers, tracky bottoms, tracky tops  
and trainers. Whereas the other teachers or the art students and things like that,  
595 they will tend to wear more what we would consider going out gear, they’ll wear  
those to lectures. (Katie)

A further sign of identification with and commitment to the culture is the wearing  
of team drinking shirts or playing shirts. These are designed to mark out the wearer as  
600 a member of a particular club or squad and to highlight their allegiance to this specific  
group.

Commandments: (9) Attend socials regularly, (10) Attend post-match drinking sessions

605 Specific attire is often worn at the regular social evenings organized by clubs that members have to attend (Commandment 9), and at the post match drinking sessions, group practices which also require regular attendance (Commandment 10). For example, due to the emphasis placed on BUSA competition, attendance at the Wednesday night BUSA social in the college bar is seen as mandatory, especially for Freshers:

610 It does have an effect, like someone says to you “Where were you? Why weren’t you out?” It’s the fact that you’re there, you’ve shown your face; you’ve made an effort. That it’s not, just “I’ll turn up and play in the matches but I don’t want to be involved in anything else.” (Kathryn)

Commandment 11: Credit for time served

615 Attendance at such functions is not so heavily policed for all jocks because they have already been successful in converting their physical capital into other forms of capital. For example, third-year students who have established a place in the hierarchy, have served their time, demonstrated their habitus, proved their allegiance, and are given credit for this. Because the cultural transmission is assumed and demonstrated, they can miss the occasional social, and can limit their alcohol consumption should they wish to. These people are in dispositional possession of the male dominated cultural history of Greenfields, both in terms of the actual practices and the underpinning logics of their subcultural purpose. Therefore, we might discern between those who have the capital to transmit history through practice, and those  
620 who are the key target of this transmission, in this case, the next generation, the Fresher, as Mark illustrates:

630 In your first year, you get all the initiations; you get stitched after every game. Then, once you’ve done all that you’re sort of all right, you don’t need to do it again, you’re just there and people think ‘Right, well, he’s a rugby player’. (Mark)

### Commandment 12: Gain positions of power

Finally, achieving high status positions within the jock culture also allows similar freedoms because to achieve such a position presumes that the practice of the Commandments has been adhered to consistently and vigorously over time. Becoming  
635 a club captain, for example, is one of the highest honours in the jock culture at Greenfields. The holder of this position is endowed with a great deal of social capital that brings with it practical power and authority. For example, given their influence on team selection they can enable or deny access to a core aspect of the culture:

To get to that stage you have to have established yourself from the first year  
640 onwards. Being the club captain you don't have to be the best rugby player. You don't even have to be a first team player. As long as you've established yourself as a committed rugby club member you can go for the club captain and get in on the running side of things. But, you can't do that without showing your commitment to the club in the first two years. (James)

In contrast, some high status roles within the jock culture, demand continual  
645 displays of commitment and practical adherence to specific commandments. For example, the social secretary of a club does not have to display high playing ability, but must display commitment to the social domain and adhere to practising the Commandments 4,5,6,7,8, and 9 that involve respectively being committed to the  
650 social life, consuming excessive amounts of alcohol consumption and engaging in associated behaviours, respecting the hierarchy, staying established, looking like a jock, and attending socials on a regular basis.

You have to drink, and be able to drink to do it. To be social sec you do  
655 have to have a reputation of 'I don't mind drinking and quite enjoy it' ... At the end of the day, you're making people drink, and if you can't drink yourself, it's a bit hypercritical isn't it. If someone says to you 'Bolt your pint', and you go 'Oh well I can't', people will say 'Well why are you telling me to?' You're giving out these orders, and you've got to be able to  
660 do them yourself to tell other people to do it. (Kathryn)

This situation illustrates the sporting field being sustained through what D. Brown (2005) elsewhere has referred to as a gendered cultural economy of physical capital



where habitus at Greenfields is sought, offered, exchanged and the jock way of life and its core values perpetuated. Furthermore, as Parker (2000) notes, “equipped with a habitus -the concrete, embodied, interest-laden disposition which flows from being formed in a position, individuals become historical actors” (p. 44). As such, this transmission process has potential consequences for the actors in terms of how they position themselves or are positioned by others within the dynamics of the subculture.

#### Potential consequences of transmission

We have suggested that an adherence to the 12 Commandments plays an important role in the transmission of key dispositions and an idealized jock habitus from one generation of students to the next. This said, it needs to be recognized that, due to influences from outside this culture combined with the generative potential of the habitus, jock culture can be seen to evolve over time. A good example of this is the way in which the core jock culture at Greenfields has moved from a fraternity structure that excluded females to one that now accommodates certain sporting females who hold values consistent with the jock habitus. Nevertheless, if the core of the culture surrounds 'jocks' with the dominant masculine forms of embodiment of certain men, and the complicit forms of embodiment expressed by 'jock' females who have also come to grasp the *illusio* or 'feel for the game', then it also has the consequence of positioning others in social space and time in relation to itself. This process operates via acts of embodied self-definition through forms of social distinction and through its self-interest in maintaining this position, of domination. Bourdieu (1986) explains the embodied significance of this positioning as follows:

Bodily hexis, a basic dimension of the sense of social orientation, is a practical way of experiencing and expressing one's own sense of social value. One's relationship to the social world and to one's proper place in it is never more clearly expressed than in the space and time one feels entitled to take from others; more precisely, in the space one claims with one's body in physical space, through bearing and gestures that are self assured or reserved, expansive or constricted ('presence' or 'insignificance') and with one's speech in time, through the interaction time one appropriates and the

self assured or aggressive, careless or unconscious way one appropriates it.

695 (p. 474)

Data from our study suggests that the bodies of the 'dominant' jocks and the embodied social orientations they express as a group has consequences for the social orientation of the bodies of other people at Greenfields, and the types of social spaces assigned to them according to the physical capital they are judged to possess by the dominant group. In this way, we see the particular physical capital embodied in the jock habitus as a mark of *distinction* in social space that according to Bourdieu's (1998) definition would be defined as, 'to exist within a social space, to occupy a point or to be an individual within a social space, is to differ, to be different.' (p. 9) The spaces that these 'other(ed)' bodies occupy interweave to construct the field of struggle that is evident on the Greenfield campus.

The bodies identified were as follows. The jocks are as described in this paper. The 'sport scholars' are students who have university scholarships based on their ability to play sport at the elite level. They are provided with free accommodation, sponsorship money and access to top-level coaches. The 'also-rans' are the (relatively few) sport science students who do not have the sufficient physical capital to challenge for a place on one of the university teams, a significant failure in the eyes of the core culture. The 'anti-jocks' are sport science students who adopt a more critical stance towards jock culture and the practice of its commandments. These students have the ability to compete on the BUSA teams and to choose their sports wisely (Commandments 1 and 2). However, they choose to break some of the other commandments and have an antagonistic stance towards them.

In contrast, the 'wanna-bees' are students who are not studying for a degree in sport science or a PGCE in PE but have sufficient physical capital to play in university teams. They tend to identify themselves as athletes and are be willing to adhere to the commandments of jock culture. The 'broken jocks' are sport science students who did have the necessary physical capital to play high-level university sport but are no longer able to do so due to a career-ending injury. Finally, the 'non-jocks' are students who are not studying sport sciences or PE and do not play in university sports teams. They have no desire to become members of the jock culture and tend to view it with a certain level of disdain. This group is an important reference group for jocks in terms of defining themselves against 'others'. Although not

exhaustive, as new groups may be formed by developments outside of the field at any time, these groups are relatively sedimented at Greenfields and warrant further consideration in terms of social spaces they tend to occupy in *relation* to one another [2].

### Reflections

In this paper, we have sought to illustrate the dynamics of jock culture as we have observed it operating on one university campus. In essence, using a number Bourdieu's theoretical constructs, we have endeavoured to develop some ethnographic insights into two aspects of those dynamics. First, we traced and identified moments in the early development of what might be considered to be a dominant masculine 'jock' habitus that contains (amongst other things) the core dispositions of competitiveness, deferral to hierarchy, 'team' spirit, ('traditional') games playing, and a sporting conception of the cult of manliness that has at its core the valuing of a powerful, elite, performing, heterosexual, athletic (male) body. Secondly, we have illustrated moments in the process of transmission of this dominant male 'jock' habitus that draws on a series of 'structured and structuring practices' in the form of the '12 Commandments' as a means to pass on this form of corporeality, from the most senior group members to the most junior, the Freshers. These Commandments remain a key cultural artefact that helps prescribe and interpret the transfer of particular bodily values that shape the ways in which physical capital is conceptualized and expressed over time.

While it is beyond the scope of this paper to explore the issue in detail, these insights seem to illuminate the significance of an embodied dimension in the connections that exists between a patriarchal *accommodation of the Other* and gender *complicity* at one level, as opposed to acts of symbolic violence and cultural *resistance* to change at another level. We will now briefly comment on these connections.

Jock culture at Greenfields highlights Bourdieu's conception of the body as a bearer of value that provides differential access to various resources. Here, as in the past and despite the recent changes that have taken place at Greenfields, the most highly valued form of physical capital remains that associated with heterosexual male bodies performing at a high level in traditionally masculinized sports. Therefore, as

Gorely *et al.* (2003) note, the exchange value of physical capital in sports related contexts is heavily gendered with women having less opportunity to covert their physical capital to other forms of capital. Of course, this is not to suggest that some women jocks at Greenfields are unable to transfer their physical capital to social capital in the form of, for example, interacting with the male jocks on more equal terms, feeling more confident and assertive, or more generally experiencing easier interactions within this culture (see Deem and Gilroy, 1998; Dworkin, 2003). However, our data suggest that the physical capital of female jocks has ultimately less value than that of their male counterparts and this has implications for their ability to covert it to other forms of capital. In short, their female bodies are bearers of differential value and this contributes to the structured inequalities they experience. In many ways, female jocks occupy a *liminal* space in relation to the dominant culture as they are positioned between the dominant and the dominated groups. This space may be complicit, but it is perhaps safer from the symbolic violence they might otherwise encounter, and therefore offers quite a practical logical course of action (Bourdieu, 2001).

Furthermore, as our findings indicate, the physical capital of many male students is also devalued or marginalized, for example, if they are ‘broken jocks’ or ‘also-rans’. In combination, this devaluing of certain bodies within the social framework of the 12 Commandments operates as a form of symbolic violence. For Bourdieu (1998) this is a “body knowledge that entices the dominated to contribute to their own domination by tacitly accepting, outside of any rational decision or decree of the will, the limits assigned to them” (p. 128). This kind of violence, he suggests, is invisible, rarely recognized, and is not so much undergone as chosen. As Jenkins (1992) notes, symbolic violence is the “imposition of systems of symbolism and meaning upon groups or classes in such a way that they experience them as legitimate” (p. 251). Thus, the taken-for-grantedness of the differential value given to physical capital as enacted within the system of meanings framed by the 12 Commandments illustrates the complicity of many of those within jock culture regarding their own oppression and that of others, even though they often do recognize how this takes place, This perhaps because, they do indeed appear to have stakes in the game and buy into the *illusio* that is jock culture.

The apparent resilience to change of this jock culture is due, in part, to its flexibility with regard to how physical capital is exchanged for other kinds of capital.

795 Thus, even though students may lack the sporting ability to play for university first  
teams they can use their bodies to good effect in other arenas associated with this  
culture to gain acceptance. For example, consuming an excessive amount of alcohol  
and engaging in associated behaviours (Commandment 5) is as much an embodied  
performance as playing a sport and the physical capital involved in the former can  
800 also be exchanged for social capital. Equally, not all jocks need to adhere to all of the  
Commandments all of the time, and accommodations are made. Via these  
accommodations, the core habitus that informs jock culture at Greenfields remains  
relatively intact and available to be passed on to the next generation of students  
through the very bodies that their sporting practices have constructed and conditioned  
805 over time. As Demetriou (2001) reminds us “hybridization in the realm of  
representation and in concrete, everyday gender practices makes the hegemonic bloc  
appear less oppressive and more egalitarian” (pp. 354-355). However, he qualifies this  
by pointing out that what has really happened is that heterogeneity in many of its  
forms 'is able to render the patriarchal dividend invisible and legitimate patriarchal  
810 domination' (p. 355). Without seeking to over reduce the complexity of the situation  
we describe there is a sense that this may be a fairly accurate summary of what is  
happening at Greenfields.

### Notes

815 1. Unless otherwise stated the quotes are from students studying for a BSc in Sport  
Sciences. All names are pseudonyms.

2. Due to limitations of space we are unable to provide empirical data on these  
bodies but will do so in a future publication. Also see Partington (2003).

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Figure 1: The 12 Commandments of Jock Culture

1. Play high-level university (BUSA) sport
  2. Choose your sport wisely
  - 915 3. Only exceptional Freshers make the first team
  4. Be committed to the social life
  5. Excessive alcohol consumption and associated behaviours are obligatory
  6. Respect the hierarchy
  7. Stay established
  - 920 8. Look like a jock
  9. Attend socials regularly
  10. Attend post-match drinking sessions
  11. Credit for time served
  12. Gain positions of power
- 925

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