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by

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**Representation, Globalization, and Community: National Identity in  
Australian Olympic Divers**

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**Representation, Globalization, and Community: National Identity in  
Australian Olympic Divers**

**by**

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## **Dedication**

To my coaches, be that athletic or academic.

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## **Abstract**

### **Representation, Globalization, and Community: National Identity in Australian Olympic Divers**

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As has been explained extensively within literature on Australian sport, it is evident that sport has affected the shared identity of Australians. In turn, the assumption must be made that the participants of sport themselves, especially at the pinnacle of national representation, play a significant role as symbols of Benedict Anderson's 'imagined community'. Consequently, this study examines the question of how do Australian representative athletes identify within the broader community of which they represent? To examine the impact of globalization on national identity this work, using Wodak's model of discursive analysis in conjunction with conducted oral histories, examines differences in notions of identity between two groups of Australian Olympians in the sport of diving. (1) Those who competed prior to and (2) those who competed following the early 1980s formation of the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS). This time serves as an ample turning point in that Australian sporting policy adapted to mirror those of foreign systems and as such serves as a vehicle to examine the impact of globalization on national identity.

This research concludes that there is little observable difference in notions of national identity between the two groups. This however is not indicative of a lack of change due to globalization, but rather due to these athletes identifying far more with their direct communities than their broader national community. This is to say that there is no change in connection with the Australian community between groups, because there is limited connection in the first place. The conclusions drawn and methods utilized offer a launching pad for further investigation into globalization and identity within sport.



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## Introduction

On September 26, 1983, a twelve-meter boat named *Australia II* crossed an invisible line forty-one seconds ahead of a boat named *Liberty*. Those forty-one seconds ensured that for the first time in 132 years an American yacht did not win the America's Cup. The next morning Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke, wearing a white blazer splattered in blue with "Australia" written on every inch proclaimed that, "any boss who sacks anyone for not turning up today is a bum."<sup>1</sup> A crew of fifteen men captained by Melbourne born John Bertrand had done what no other team had done since well before Australia was even a nation-state. The win just off the coast of Rhode Island was a defining moment in Australian sporting history and in the history of a young nation finding their feet in a post-colonial, Cold War era. However, the win was far more than a historic moment, it was a turning point in the growth and development of what we know as Australian national identity, an identity which is today closely tied with sporting success. Shortly after the win United States President Ronald Reagan said of the *Australia II* team, "you have shown us the stuff of which Australians are made ... you represent the kind of tenacity with which Americans and Australians can identify."<sup>2</sup> As Reagan mentions the crew did not in themselves create a set of ideals which represent a people, but rather

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<sup>1</sup> Natsumi Penberthy, "Looking Back: The 1983 America's Cup Win," *Australian Geographic*, 2013, <https://www.australiangeographic.com.au/topics/history-culture/2013/09/looking-back-the-1983-americas-cup-win/>.

<sup>2</sup> Ronald Reagan, *President Reagan's Toast to Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser of Australia on June 30, 1981*, 1981, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hqb6j4871Mc>.

embodied those ideas in their own pursuits. These ideals were grounded in a shared history of a nation and a people finding their own footing through two World Wars and an economic depression in the nation's adolescence. This identity was developed further through immigration and assimilation, acceptance and the sharing of cultures. What made the 1983 victory unique and important was the connection and representation of these ideals through sport. As another United States President said, "sports has had this power to bring us together even when the country's divided. Sports has changed attitudes and culture in ways that seem subtle but ultimately made us think differently about ourselves and who we were."<sup>3</sup> For Australia, sport was, and still is, the vessel in which national identity was solidified. There is no better representation of this solidification than the country wide celebration following the winning of the 1983 America's Cup as expressed by the late Bob Hawke.

This win in 1983 served as a key signifier of Australian success, and further signified an era in Australian sporting history of increased change through globalization. With the well recorded disappointment of the 1976 Australian Olympic Team in Montreal, and the subsequent creation of the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) in 1981 as a response, the era in the history of Australian sport is characterized by an influx of foreign ideas and overseas immigration. 1984 saw the official introduction of diving, the sport of focus for this investigation, into the AIS system. As such, it is suitable to view the early 1980s as a

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<sup>3</sup> Barack Obama, *Chicago Cubs White House Ceremony with President Obama*, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JpFyY9i06bM>.

key turning point in Australian sport especially as it relates to globalization. Hence, it is more than acceptable to view globalization in Australian sport in two distinct categories, the decades prior to 1984, and those that came after.

Popular culture would lead us to believe that in the decades follow the America's Cup victory, Australian athletes successfully went to work on building upon the foundation which the 1983 crew cemented. Moments like swimming legend Kieren Perkins winning the 1500 freestyle in Atlanta from an outside lane, indigenous athlete Cathy Freeman taking gold on the track at her home games after lighting the cauldron at the opening ceremony, and the iconic scene as Steven Bradbury claimed Australia's first-ever Winter Olympic gold medal against all odds in Salt Lake City. It is argued that athletes and many others helped define a clear Australian identity through sport, an identity of humility yet laughable cockiness and somehow always maintaining the position as the loveable underdog.

While much time and work has gone into examining the impact of sport on wider communities, be that economically, culturally, or socially, there is little discussion in regard to the identity with which our sporting heroes connect. There is however frequent conversation surrounding the actions of these individuals often with the backdrop of their proximity to their nationality. We see this often where Australian representatives across all sporting codes are quickly labeled as either 'Australian' or 'unAustralian' due to their behavior. Nevertheless, this discourse does not ask the athlete themselves for whom they identify with. For the purpose of this investigation, we must accept the suitable assumption that Olympians, especially Australian Olympians serve as key symbols of national identity.

This is to say that these athletes represent the national interest and as such represent Australian values. Further it must be assumed that due to this, their individual identity is closely representative of the broader national identity.

This topic has personal levity for me. My past life was centered around, and perhaps defined by, my participation as an Australian representative in the sport of diving. As with many elite athletes in Australia, especially in Olympic sports, I was quickly funneled into a national pathway system soon after my tenth birthday. Throughout my career I had a number of significant milestones each of which were grounded in representation for my home country, from my first competition wearing green and gold to my last at a home Commonwealth Games. Throughout my career importance placed upon the privilege of representing Australia to the best of my ability. On a day after my competition at the 2018 Commonwealth Games on the Gold Coast, the Australian team had assembled at Surfers Paradise, the epicenter of the city, to have a formal thank you event. At the event people I had never met, and surely didn't know my name, were stopping me and my teammates for photos and Autographs for the sole reason that we were athletes on the Australian team. It was during this series of interactions that I personally understood the power that sports had to connect people who have never met. Or rather to build an "imagined community" as described by renowned political scientist Benedict Anderson within a single national body. Yet with the comradery between strangers, there was a clear lack of genuine relationship between our team and those who supported us, the general public. For all the conversation surrounding the importance of putting on the Australian tracksuit and representing your

country, I felt little personal association with the people I was supposedly representing. Hence, I began to question why my position as a representative was important at all. Whether or not my feelings matched those of other Australian athletes, and whether that has always been the case.

In short, this investigation seeks to examine the connection with which Australian sports people feel with the greater Australian population, and how this notion has changed with globalization. In other words, what do Australian sports people view as their national identity, and how does their personal identity fit into this mold. This question requires analysis due to the heavy investment, both financially and culturally, which with the Australian people contribute to their sports people, to determine in what ways this investment is reciprocated. This research will focus on athletes from the sport of diving as participants and representative of Australian elite sports people.

## Literature Review

To date, the literature examining Australian elite springboard and platform divers is extremely limited and as such, provides ample opportunity for research. The extent of the work thus far can be grouped into three main categories, all of which have little to naught to do with social theories of identity.

The first group of studies examines the technical and skill-based components of the sport from developmental practices to elite performance. Led by United States Olympic coaches Jeffrey Huber,<sup>4</sup> Ronald O'Brien,<sup>5</sup> and Hobie Billingsley,<sup>6</sup> the literature regarding correct diving technique, and skill progression is well understood within the elite diving community. Coaching courses within Australia have used these texts as a basis for their curriculum. To date, the technical research with a key focus on elite competitive Australian divers has been conducted by Biomechanist Sian Barris. Unsurprisingly, the work of Barris is rooted in diving kinetics and covers such topics as implications of failed approaches,<sup>7</sup> examinations of learning design,<sup>8</sup> and effects of dry-land training on aquatic results.<sup>9</sup> This stream of work, although the most closely examined area of research in the sport, lacks

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<sup>4</sup> Jeffrey J. Huber, *Springboard and Platform Diving* (Champaign: Human Kinetics Publishers, 2015).

<sup>5</sup> Ronald F. O'Brien, *Springboard and Platform Diving* (Champaign: Human Kinetics, 2003).

<sup>6</sup> Hobie Billingsley, *Competitive Diving: The Complete Guide for Coaches, Divers, Judges* (La Mesa: Trius Publishing, 2018).

<sup>7</sup> Sian Barris, Damian Farrow, and Keith Davids, "Do the Kinematics of a Baulked Take-off in Springboard Diving Differ from Those of a Completed Dive," *Journal of Sports Sciences* 31, no. 3 (2013): 305–13.

<sup>8</sup> Sian Barris, Keith Davids, and Damian Farrow, "Representative Learning Design in Springboard Diving: Is Dry-Land Training Representative of a Pool Dive?," *European Journal of Sport Science* 13, no. 6 (2013): 638–45.

<sup>9</sup> Sian Barris, "An Examination of Learning Design in Elite Springboard Diving" (phd, Queensland University of Technology, 2013), <https://eprints.qut.edu.au/63807/>.



significant investigation by further academics. This lack of work is noticeable specifically with internationally competitive athletes for example Olympic divers.

The second area of research informally discusses the history of recreational and competitive diving in Australia. This area of writing is predominantly narrative and leaves plenty in the way of formal research opportunities regarding the social implications of the sport, on not only those who partake, but the broader Australian public. Literature regarding this history, and the history of competitive diving, will be examined further in this chapter.

In the final area of investigation, pedagogy, there has only been a single formally published study in the last several decades. This work addresses Australian diving directly, through its analysis of learning environments of Chinese born migrant coaches.<sup>10</sup> The recency of this work highlights the growing interest in the sport within Western academia. The study will be discussed in this chapter.

Across these categories of study into Australian diving, there is a clear omission of research concerning any forms of sociology let alone identity and its relationship with the Australian psyche. In short Barris explains, “there has been hardly any research in diving at all - let alone specifically Australia.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Yi-Che Tao, Steven B. Rynne, and Clifford J. Mallett, “Blending and Becoming: Migrant Chinese High-Performance Coaches’ Learning Journey in Australia,” *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy* 24, no. 6 (November 2, 2019): 582–97.

<sup>11</sup> Sian Barris, e-mail message to the author, October 10, 2019.

With a complete lack of literature on either the shared identity of Australian divers, or their individual understanding of self as it relates to the broader national community, an emphasis must be placed on previous work involving parallel concepts. These concepts, as highlighted in the remainder of this chapter, include understanding the role and formation of the nation-state, the implication of national identity and changes to these concepts in the twenty-first century, Australian specific identity, the effects of this identity both by and on sport, and finally the history of diving in Australia.

### **The Nation-State**

Prior to examining constructs of national identity, it is critical to understand the role and development of the nation-state. The term ‘nation-state’ is used in this situation, rather than the term ‘nation’, to imply modern ties with countries rather than with other tangible identifiers such as ethnicity or religion. Perhaps a more salient term would be ‘nation-state identity’, however for ease of reading, and to stay concurrent with general understanding, the term ‘national identity’ is appropriate. We see this simplification of the term with phrases such as “The United Nations” and “International cooperation,” even when the reference is to that of a nation-state rather than a nation.<sup>12</sup> Anthony D. Smith makes note of this linguistic challenge in highlighting the a need for a political community, or state, for there to be the presence of national identity. Smith argues that even if a nation of people,

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<sup>12</sup> Andreas Wimmer, *Waves of War: Nationalism, State Formation, and Ethnic Exclusion in the Modern World* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), 2.

be that religious, cultural, or of another form, exists, there must be political actor for the arrival of a national identity. Smith cites the example of ancient Greek communities who although tied through other factors such as culture, language, and religion, did not share a national identity due to the lack of cohesive political unit or state. Smith writes, “what we mean by ‘national’ identity involves some sense of political community, however tenuous.”<sup>13</sup> This concept provides the groundwork for examining the importance of a nation-state in regard to national identity.

On the nation-state, there is significant contention in both the creation and configuration of the form, and the time in which these entities exist within broader history. On the latter point, Eric Zuelow outlines three main schools of thought amongst authors. Nationalists claim that the nation-state is in itself timeless in that human kind has always, and will always, create nations. This understanding follows the opinion/theory that the need of creating of nations is as inherently human as eating or breathing. Perennialists argue that nations take diverse forms throughout history regardless of whether the institution is necessary or not. This school of thought promotes the idea that nations have been present in some shape or form for as long as humans have lived together in societies. Finally, modernists view the nation as a recent construction in the broad scope of human history, a result of advancement and growth. This school flows from the understanding that the nation

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<sup>13</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1991), 9.

is a western construct which has developed through top down ideology and a need for communities to be “modern.”<sup>14</sup>

There is an abundance of literature regarding the formation of a nation state from both contemporary and traditional scholars. The bulk of this work focuses on historical qualitative research. Four of the major figures in modern academic debate surround nationalism, Gellner, Anderson, Breuilly, and Hobsbawm, each contribute to this narrative understanding in a meaningful way.<sup>15</sup>

Ernest Gellner argues that both the nation and the state may exist unilaterally with one another, and neither are inherently necessary for human kind, yet pushes the claim that both are destined for each other. In doing so, Gellner writes “The state has certainly emerged without the help of the nation. Some nations have certainly emerged without the blessings of their own state.”<sup>16</sup> Gellner answers the question of ‘what came first, the nation or the state?’ In arguing that for both to be destined for each other, they must first exist as separate entities, and as such neither be created before the other in any meaningful way. According to Gellner, the nation-state is a modern phenomenon which as a result of industrialization was able to form. Only after industrialization were collective cultures able to form under a pre-existing political state, and at times, states were able to be founded by newly formed nations of people who shared a single culture. These movements were

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<sup>14</sup> Eric Zuelow, “The Nationalism Project,” last modified December 2, 2009, <http://www.nationalismproject.org/index.htm>.

<sup>15</sup> Mike Cronin and David Mayall, eds., *Sporting Nationalisms: Identity, Ethnicity, Immigration and Assimilation* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 1998).

<sup>16</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 6.

facilitated by changes in economic, linguistic, and educational patterns. Unlike other writers, Gellner provides a definition of the nation-state in simple terms which has since served as a building block for future scholars. He writes, “primarily a principle which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent.”<sup>17</sup>

Benedict Anderson in his seminal work, *Imagined Communities*, argues that the nation-state, although realistically bound in time and space, is an invented construction. He proposed that the nation does not represent a traditional community in that the people within it do not personally know the members of their own community. Without this tangible connection, the relationship is ‘imagined’. Anderson does not argue that the nation-state is imagined, but simply the community and the culture that underlines said nation-state is imagined. Anderson, like Gellner, agrees that the nation-state is uniquely modern in that only since the industrial revolution, with the notable invention of the printing press, were nation-states able to form. These technological advancements, according to Anderson, not only allowed for these imagined communities to be formed but were a necessity.<sup>18</sup>

John Breuilly outlines a different rise to the nation-state in his work *Nationalism and the State*. Breuilly argues that it is not the shared understanding of community which forms modern countries, as suggested by Anderson and Gellner, but rather a fundamental pursuit of human rights. Breuilly writes, “the leaders of the independence movement did

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<sup>17</sup> Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 1.

<sup>18</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso Editions, 1983).

not refer to a culture identity to justify their claims. They demanded equality.”<sup>19</sup> Breuilly argues that the regions in which nation-states were formed just so happen to be the places in which human rights were pushed for, nothing more. Further, Breuilly proposes that although nation-states are created in a top-down fashion, they must be examined from all perspectives to include ordinary people. As such, the nation-state is not just the government nor the boundary which is drawn, but the people who make up the country.

Eric Hobsbawm, unlike Gellner, fails to offer a direct definition of the nation-state in part due to his understanding that they have the ability to change dramatically. Yet, he argues like Anderson, Breuilly, and Gellner that the nation-state is a modern phenomenon, the result of technological advancements. He writes, “Nations exist not only as functions of a particular kind of territorial state... but also in the context of a particular stage of technological and economic development.”<sup>20</sup> Hobsbawm sites that the building blocks of a shared culture within a nation, such as language, cannot exist without centralized schooling and mass media.

The previous four authors offer theoretical and historical voices to the conversation around the nation-state yet, as highlighted by Andreas Wimmer, offer little in the form of quantitative facts or research. Wimmer in his own work addresses this omission by underlying the inherent issue in undertaking such research. Wimmer writes, “Not only must we content ourselves with proxy variables that measure the hypothesized processes

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<sup>19</sup> John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 6.

<sup>20</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 10.

imperfectly, we also cannot address the rich arguments offered by past scholarship in an as nuanced way as one would wish.”<sup>21</sup> From his empirical analysis, Wimmer concludes that the nation-state is formed when nationalists take advantage of a powershift to overthrow a previous state or established regime. Such an argument implies that a nation must in fact exist prior to the state, and it is this nation, and nationalism, which forms the new country.

Of all pre-twentieth century literature on the nation-state, perhaps the most influential comes from French historian Ernest Renan in the form of his 1882 Sorbonne lecture *What is a Nation?* In opening, Renan states, “A nation is a soul, a spiritual principle.”<sup>22</sup> As the opening line suggests, Renan goes on to argue that a nation, and a nation-state, is but the collective whole of its people. A whole that includes not only the people themselves, but their shared history and perceived future, even how ‘imagined’ this may be according to Anderson. Renan continues, “A nation is therefore a large-scale solidarity, constituted by the feeling of the sacrifices that one has made in the past and of those that one is prepared to make in the future.”<sup>23</sup> Although Renan’s view may be somewhat dated, his understanding highlights the importance of a shared connection between a people, their past, and their future. In his view, this is what makes a nation and in turn a nation-state.

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<sup>21</sup> Andreas Wimmer and Yuval Feinstein, “The Rise of the Nation-State across the World, 1816 to 2001,” *American Sociological Review* 75, no. 5 (2010): 764–90.

<sup>22</sup> Ernest Renan, “What Is a Nation?,” in *Becoming National: A Reader*, ed. Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 52.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

## National Identity and Globalization

Like the work of Renan, popular culture today suggests that a country is fundamentally built by the sense of shared identity by its people, an identity built through a shared history which involves both suffering and glory. For example, Nikole Hannah-Jones of the New York Times Magazine and host of the widely popular podcast *1691* argues that the United States were founded through the shared pain of African slaves. She states, “they had been forged in trauma. They had been made black by those who believed themselves to be white.”<sup>24</sup> In doing so, Hannah-Jones does not uphold the ideals of the United States, but rather suggests that the nation was built through a common history. This argument importantly separates nationalism and national identity, one concept that actively promotes the principles of a country, and the other which simply ties the people to their nation-state. National identity unlike nationalism need not perceive a bias nor a goal for national promotion, but rather, a simply association of one’s own identity with that of the collective whole of the nation-state.

Smith, whose writing has long informed the academic conversation surrounding nationalism, notes this essential split in his 1991 work *National Identity*. Smith argues, “for analytical purposes it is necessary to distinguish the ideological movement of nationalism from the wider phenomenon of national identity.”<sup>25</sup> As such, Smith underlies the importance of studying both concepts independently, yet bearing in mind the other at

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<sup>24</sup> Nikole Hannah-Jones, “Episode 1: The Fight for a True Democracy,” *1619*, podcast audio, August 23, 2019. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/23/podcasts/1619-slavery-anniversary.html?>

<sup>25</sup> Smith, *National Identity*, vii.



all times. Smith goes on to note the influence of Western notions of national identity in being highly prominent across the globe, such that it has become the standard for understanding identity and offers five fundamental features of national identity, “1. An historical territory, or homeland, 2. Common myths and historical memories, 3. A common, mass public culture, 4. Common legal rights and duties for all members, 5. A common economy with territorial mobility for members.”<sup>26</sup> Smith implies that these factors constitute the spirit of a nation-state. He concludes that these factors, however flexible they may be, will continue to be a force for the foreseeable future in that national identity will continue to be visibly present. He notes that a rise in shared culture both within smaller communities, and the global society, will not affect the impact of national identities. Smith expands on this by noting that individuals may hold multiple identities which may overlap and at times contradict one another yet, are still nevertheless evident as entities. “There is nothing to prevent individuals from identifying with Flanders, Belgium and Europe simultaneously, and displaying each allegiance in the appropriate context.”<sup>27</sup>

Smith’s 1995 work *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era* explores this topic in greater detail. In short, Smith argues that the foundations of nations, and as such national identity, lies with historical ties as explored in *National Identity*. In the former work, Smith notes that the world is “becoming smaller,”<sup>28</sup> as such that communities are becoming increasingly connected through global media and shared communication. Yet, this

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 175.

<sup>28</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era* (Oxford: John Wiley & Sons, 1995), 1.

closeness of proximity with others, only heightens one's identity with their own national community. It is in this same argument that Smith examines the continued rise in number of nation-state members of the United Nations, such as the fragmentation of the Soviet Union at the end of the Cold War and foundation of new states in Africa and Asia.

Anderson's concept of imagined communities is highly prevalent when addressing globalization and national identity. Similar to Smith's five factors, Anderson argues that national identity lies in the "cultural roots,"<sup>29</sup> of the nation-state. According to Anderson, it is these cultural roots that inform great sacrifices by people of the modern country as in the case of global conflicts seen in the first half of the twentieth century. An important note for Anderson is that these cultural roots, and in turn imagined community, is inherently exclusive of others and creates an 'us' and a 'them'. Furthermore, the dream for a greater collective future as described by Breuilly, are only for members of their community, not those of others.

Manfred B. Steger, contradicts Smith's claim that national identity will continue to be prevalent in the face of increased globalization. Steger, using Anderson's imagined communities, argues that if a community can be imagined within a single nation-state, then it can also be imagined within a global community. Steger pushes the narrative that in the twenty-first century there is a heightened global consciousness throughout the world. This claim is backed with evidence such as the amplified global togetherness as expressed through international sporting events such as the 2014 World Cup. Steger highlights that

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<sup>29</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 7.

although national identity still provides individuals an important sense of belonging to a wider community, “it would be a mistake to close one’s eyes to the weakening of the national imaginary, as it has been historically constituted in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.”<sup>30</sup> In doing so, Steger offers the term “global imaginary,”<sup>31</sup> to describe this modern phenomenon. According to Steger, as one increases their global consciousness, they must at the same time, limit their own sense of national identity. This contradicts Smith’s argument of multiple identities as explained with Flanders, Belgium, and Europe.

Regardless of multiple viewpoints on the nature of national identity in the twenty-first century, contemporary literature supports the claim that national identity is inherently powerful. Wimmer explains that although nationalisms receive an increasingly bad reputation, is often tied with ethnic supremacy, there is a clear positive aspect to the concept. Wimmer writes “national identities can encourage solidarity with fellow citizens and lead individuals to sacrifice personal gain for the common good.”<sup>32</sup> Wimmer explains that individuals with strong national ties are more likely to pay taxes and disregard ethnic identifiers in pursuing a better life for the broader community. In doing so, Wimmer argues that policy makers ought to push for the fostering of national identity and in turn, a shared national destiny.

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<sup>30</sup> Manfred B. Steger, *Globalization: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 11-12.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>32</sup> Andreas Wimmer, “National Identity and Political Power,” *Foreign Affairs*, April 16, 2018, <http://www.columbia.edu/~aw2951/FA2.pdf>.

Modern quantitative studies, led by the Pew Research Center, indicate that there is no one size fits all when it comes to national identity, in that each country not only has its own unique identity, but importantly each country characterizes identity differently. Literature suggests that each country assigns different importance to key factors such as language, religion, and country of origin. For example, people from Japan place a strong emphasis on the importance of being born in Japan, whereas in Australia, only a slim portion of the population views birth country as a significant identifier of nationality.<sup>33</sup> This understanding builds from Smith's five fundamental features, yet places emphasis on the shifting nature of each factor between nation-states. Such an understanding serves as a key reminder to study each nation and their nation-identity individually.

### **Sport and Identity**

The study of sport, and its intersection with society and politics, is an increasingly growing field. The existence of several major journals, including the *Sociology of Sport Journal*, *Sport in Society: Cultures, Commerce, Media, Politics*, and the *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, show this abundance of work, and highlights the increasing interest in the discipline. On concepts of nationalism, the importance of the nation-state, and national identity as it related to sport, there is also no shortage of literature. However, most of this work focuses on historical narratives and as such draws assumptions from the past to

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<sup>33</sup> Bruce Stokes, "Views of National Identity by Country," Pew Research Center, February 1, 2017, <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2017/02/01/views-of-national-identity-by-country/>.

inform modern and future developments. The remainder of this section will draw from the body of work on sport and national identity.

Amongst the experts commentating on nationalism and sports, Hobsbawm offers insight into the role that sport plays into the development and reflection of shared national identity. In his 1990 work, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780*, Hobsbawm suggests that international sport for a nation-state is foremost a “primary expression of their imagined communities.”<sup>34</sup> He highlights the importance of sport in the development of communities in the immediate aftermath of the First World War. Sport at this time, with growing interest in emerging global sporting events such as the Olympic Games, the Football World Cup and the Tour de France, offered new nations the chance to assert dominance on the world stage. A dominance that would not otherwise be accessible through traditional means such as military conflict or economic pressure. Hobsbawm draws a direct line between the national struggle as suggested by Renan to the athletic struggle of sportspeople to overcome one’s opponent on the playing field. Finally, Hobsbawm notes the ease in which the people of a nation-state as a whole identify with young sports people due to shared goals and dreams at one point or another in their lives. These sports people become symbols of the nation themselves much like historical or even mystical national figures. In short, “the imagined community of millions seems more real as a team of eleven named people.”<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780*, 143.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 143.

Highly referenced author Alan Bairner has laid much of the contemporary groundwork in assessing the relationship between sport and national identity. Although his seminal work, *Sport, Nationalism, and Globalization: European and North American Perspectives*, draws from exclusively Western examples, it nevertheless provides important insight into the field due to the overarching influence of on western sport on the global community. Bairner writes, “sport is clearly linked to the construction and reproduction of the national identities of many people.”<sup>36</sup> Further, Bairner builds off Steger’s concept of the diminishing strength of national identity in an increasingly globalized world, by including the effect of and by sport. Bairner however, concludes that, although impacted, the link between sport and national identity remains highly relevant and powerful in the twenty-first century. In such, “there is no implicit suggestion that the process described as globalization has successfully eradicated either completely or in part the central role of nationality in the contemporary world.”<sup>37</sup> This in part, according to Bairner, is in itself a reaction to globalization in that people seek to associate with their community rather than that of a greater human-kind. As an editor of the *Routledge Handbook of Sport and Politics*, Bairner, along with John Kelly and Jung Woo Lee, show the contention between writers in understanding the extent to which sport promotes unity within a nation-state. In this handbook, as in many other contemporary works, the analogy of ‘sport being war without shooting’ as described by George Orwell is used to express the

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<sup>36</sup> Alan Bairner, *Sport, Nationalism, and Globalization: European and North American Perspectives* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2001), 1.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 7.

power of sport as it relates to nationalism. On the other hand, the authors reference British Lawmaker Jim Sillars who referred to sport as nothing more than ‘ninety-minute patriotism.’ Nevertheless, “it is undeniable that expressions of solidarity for players and teams that represent one’s nation are closely linked to cultural nationalism.”<sup>38</sup> As can be seen by Bairner, the topic of national identity and sport can be highly complex and contentious, this is heightened with the introduction and discussion of globalization.

Ample literature notes the significance of major international sporting events as they relate to national identity. Alan Tomlinson and Christopher Young’s *National Identity and Global Sports Events* dives into the importance of several events beginning in 1934 with the Italian hosted FIFA World Cup and concluding with the 2002 edition of the same event as hosted by Korea and Japan. This work raises the understanding that at events such as Football World Cups and Olympic Games, due to global media attention, notions of national identity are further intensified than during normal times or even regular international sporting events. Tomlinson and Young puts this down to the fact that these events serve as a “platform for national pride and prestige.”<sup>39</sup> The authors also highlight the contradiction in much of the philosophical backbone of these events in that they attempt to promote global unity and cooperation. As promoted by the father of the modern Olympic movement, Pierre du Coubertin, the Olympic Games are intended to serve as a “force for

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<sup>38</sup> Alan Bairner, John Kelly, and Jung Woo Lee, eds., *Routledge Handbook of Sport and Politics* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), 127.

<sup>39</sup> Alan Tomlinson and Christopher Young, eds., *National Identity and Global Sports Events* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2006), 1.

international harmony and universal peace.”<sup>40</sup> Yet, Tomlinson and Young note that such an event requires heightened notions of national identity and nationalism in that the nature of the event itself requires nation-states to be pitted against one another. In doing so, global sporting events are somewhat of an oxymoron in that they seek contradictory goals in that nationalism in its most fundamental form is inherently opposed to global unity.

Mike Cronin and David Mayall, like Hobsbawm and Bairner, highlight the special role that sport can play in the development and growth of national identity. In using the example of golfer Tiger Woods, they note the power of national identity to trump other categorial identifiers when viewed through the lens of sport in that Woods identifies primarily as an American rather than using an ethnic label as often pushed on him by contemporary commentators. As such, policy makers may harness this power in sport to generate greater cohesion between people of different nations within a single state. Cronin and Mayall write, “sport is a vehicle, in many different ways, for the construction of individual, group and national identities.”<sup>41</sup> The authors go further to reference the ways in which sport can do this such as, the championing or demonization of athletes to create an ‘us v. them’ mentality, the act of playing sport as a catalyst for assimilation, or as the expression of character as it relates to national identity on the playing field.

As part of their 2004 book *Sport and National Identity in the Post-War World*, Adrian Smith and Dilwyn Porter argue that, due to the global atmosphere in the second

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>41</sup> Cronin and Mayall, eds., *Sporting Nationalisms*, 1.



half of the twenty-first century, sport was able to play an important role in the expression of national identity. In part, the authors link this to the fragmentation of large European empires and in turn the birth of new nation-states and with them local consciousness. Yet, Smith and Porter reference the growing multi-national cooperation, mass migration, and global media presence during this time and as a result, an increased expression of borderless human-kind solidarity. Furthermore, the argument that sport perhaps is more powerful in telling us what we are not, in that it inherently pits you against another, rather than telling us who we are, is proposed. Nevertheless, this notion allows us to inform our own identity in contrast with another. With that being said, with the emergence of “alternative leisure opportunities,”<sup>42</sup> and increased cosmopolitanism, the power of an individual sport, such as rugby union in Wales, to express a singular national identity is diminishes. Further, Smith and Porter argue that the power of sport, as a symbol of expression, does not have the same strength as it did in the immediate post-colonial era in which a young, independent nation has the chance to take down its former colonizer on a level playing field. Nonetheless, Smith and Porter fall back on Hobsbawm’s claim that sport allows a greater community to be expressed in a single team or athlete, and as such, can be highly powerful in the act of nation building even in today’s climate.

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<sup>42</sup> Dilwyn Porter and Adrian Smith, *Sport and National Identity in the Post-War World* (London: Routledge, 2004), 3.

## **Australian Identity**

There is a mass of literature on the topic of Australian identity. This work examines the wide array of sub-categories within the subject from understanding the early constructs of identity, to changes with an increasingly cosmopolitan society. As with similar research on social constructs of identity and the nation-state as mentioned in previous sections, there is limited empirical work on the matter. Nevertheless, popular literature examined in an academic setting, along with an examination of federal policy, allow for an understanding of the shifting nature of national identity in Australia. As such, a chronological approach to addressing the components of, and changes to, Australian national identity is best suited.

As with many forms of Western national-identity, commentators suggest Australian identity is grounded in foundational myths. Many of these historical narratives stem from the foundation of Australia as a British colony. This is not to disregard indigenous Australians, nor to diminish the important history of precolonial Australia, but rather to understand the early aspect for specifically Western nation-state building as it relates to the modern country. Bruce Tranter and Jed Donoghue, through their empirical research, address the question of which figures of this historical myth, inform the Australian psyche with the highest regard. As the authors note, their 2018 book fits within the greater field of literature focused on the quantitative measure of key components of Australian identity. The work adds to Anderson's notion of the imagined community in that the authors ask the question of which historical groups have most influenced what it means to be 'Australian'. Yet, the authors highlight that unlike other Western nation-states, Australia struggles to

find these figures in part due to its short history and lack of recognition of indigenous peoples. In concluding, Tranter and Donoghue write, “Contemporary Australians distinguish certain individuals as important in terms of national identity, due either to their practical contribution to international politics, medicine and science or else to their historical association with certain national values.”<sup>43</sup> The authors go further to note that contrary to popular culture, convicts and bushrangers do little to influence modern Australian identity, but rather more recent groups including ANZACS, post-World War Two immigrants, and sporting heroes influence the zeitgeist. With that being said, the authors note that common lines can be drawn between each of these groups in that they share a common disdain for those in positions of power, and an undeniable elevation of the underdog.

Although Donoghue and Tranter conclude that colonial figures do little to influence contemporary identity, numerous academics reinforce the viewpoint that Australia’s colonial past, and as an extension the historical connection with Great Britain, play an important role in the creation of modern Australian identity. Richard White, who in his work argues that the investigation of a national identity says more about the people in search of said identity, than the identity itself, is one such writer who addresses this. White argues, “we will never arrive at a ‘real’ Australia. From the attempt of others to get there, we can learn much about the travelers and journey itself, but nothing about the destination.

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<sup>43</sup> Jed Donoghue and Bruce Tranter, *Exploring Australian National Identity: Heroes, Memory and Politics* (Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing, 2018), 148.

There is none.”<sup>44</sup> Nevertheless, White explains how a British colonial past has constantly informed those who attempt to promote or even create a singular identity. This close attachment is widely seen across popular culture such as movies and television, shared culture in humor and traditions, and even as it relates to this investigation, in the playing of similar sport. This relationship extends structurally in that both countries share a single head of state. White explains, “the question of Australian identity has usually been seen as a tug-of-war between Australianness and Britishness, between the impulse to be distinctively Australian and the lingering sense of a British heritage.”<sup>45</sup> Finally White notes that in the early twenty-first century, in the immediate aftermath of Australian federation, other concepts of identity remained more prominent than the connection to Britain. Of these factors, race and religion in whiteness and Protestantism respectively were highly important to the people of the infant nation.

A wealth of literature agrees that the two components, namely heritage and race were major factors in the early formation of an Australian identity, so much so that in line with foundational myths, they play a significant role in the contemporary nation-state. The widely studied White Australia Policy, which was formally federally implemented in 1901 with the Immigration Restriction Act and gradually dismantled in the mid twentieth century, is both a result of, and reinforcement on, this component of national character. Historian Jatinder Mann’s recent work notes that the earliest forms of Australian identity

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<sup>44</sup> Richard White, *Inventing Australia* (Sydney: George Allen & Unwin Australia, 1981), x.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

rested solely on its relationship with its colonial past and race. Mann writes, “along with Britishness at the core of Australian national identity was a sense of whiteness.”<sup>46</sup> Mann argues, in contradiction to several historians, that Australian identity shifted little from this traditional understanding as a result of international conflicts in World War I and World War II, but rather as a result of policy changes which aimed to increase multiculturalism and assimilation. In doing so, Mann rejects the premise that Australia turned to the United States in search of an ally and subsequently adopted contemporary American values of multiculturalism (however convoluted these may be), but rather focused internally on its own self. These reflective policies helped to foster a greater sense of inclusion in a post-White Australia Policy country with increased immigration from Asian peoples. As Mann writes, “there was a continued emphasis on national cohesion, though, in the new policy of multiculturalism”<sup>47</sup> This policy refuted the previous national identity, as encouraged through top down governance of a single racial identification. Yet, this policy, although designed to incorporate a cosmopolitan populace in a single state, in reality does very little for the individual understanding of what it means to be Australian.

In keeping with Renan’s understanding of “the nation” and its need for a shared sacrifice, an analysis of literature regarding Australian military history is necessary. Stephen Alomes and Catherine Jones 1991 book, *Australian Nationalism: A Documentary History*, although clearly outdated when addressing notions of identity in the twenty-first

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<sup>46</sup> Jatinder Mann, *The Search for a New National Identity: The Rise of Multiculturalism in Canada and Australia* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc., 2016), 118.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 192.

century, provides great insight into the role of Australia's history with conflict. Of nation building conflict, Alomes and Jones highlight the significance of World War I and specifically the Gallipoli campaign. The authors write, "perhaps no event more influenced the character and development of Australian nationalism than the Great War."<sup>48</sup> It is argued that much of the significance of this event as it relates to nation building, is in part due to the creation of the ANZAC myth. This new shared history not only influenced the psychological qualities of the Australian identity such as courage and youthfulness, but also physical qualities in that of a youthful male figure. Alomes and Jones argue that this image came to the forefront of Australian imagery solely from the work of early war correspondence. Such an understanding of nation building through shared media runs in step with Anderson's concept of the importance of a mass press for the development and growth of an imagined community.

Finally, one would be remiss to ignore the impact that sport has had on Australia and its people not only culturally or in the daily lives of Australians, but as an important identifier of what it means to be Australian. As outlined in the previous section, it is understood that sport plays a sometimes-inadvertent role in the creation of imagined communities. As is expressed in many forms of literature, both academic and popular by several writers over the past century, this role is heightened in the case of Australia. As G.T. Caldwell explained, "Whether Australia is a first-rate sporting nation is not as

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<sup>48</sup> Stephen Alomes and Catherine Jones, *Australian Nationalism: A Documentary History* (North Ryde: Collins Angus & Robertson Publishers, 1991), 163.

important as recognizing that many Australians believe that it is. It seems clear that success in international; sport has helped Australians develop a sense of national identity.”<sup>49</sup> The literature regarding this special relationship will be explored in further detail in the next section.

## **Sport and Australia**

As has been discussed at length in both academic and popular literature, sport is very much a part of the Australian way of life and an extension of its identity. As such, any examination of Australian identity needs to include, if not focus on, sport.

Much of the literature regarding Australian sport centers on practical policy initiatives, bureaucratic structure, and forms of governance. In this area of study, work is quickly outdated as the landscape consistently shifts. Nevertheless, dated work such as Peter J. Farmer and Steve Arnadaun’s chapter within the 1996 handbook *National Sports Policies* can give important insight into thoughts of then contemporary scholars. As such, these texts prove invaluable to sports historians in understanding the development of a national identity over time. Of literature, the 2004 *Australian Sport: Better by Design?* functions as a seminal text in the understanding of Australian sporting policy. This work, like many others, highlight ways in which sport in Australia has been built from the influence of many external systems including Anglophonic, Asian, and Eastern European frameworks. The authors place emphasis on the poor performance of Australian athletes at

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<sup>49</sup> G. T. Caldwell, “Sport and Australian Culture: A Note,” *Politics* 7, no. 2 (November 1, 1972): 180–84.

1976 Montreal Olympic Games, where the team failed to capture a single gold medal, and subsequent decision to increase public spending on sport. This decision came with public support in which “A 1976 opinion poll found that 70 per cent of Australians believed that government should be giving more aid to sport.”<sup>50</sup> This funding provided the construction of a national sporting institute (The Australian Institute of Sport) based on successful sporting systems at the time of China and East Germany. This increase in government spending came as a result of the power of sport to serve as a “symbol of national development.”<sup>51</sup> The authors also note the increasing interest in sport from the Australian populace through the twentieth century as sporting policy shifted. The argument is presented that it is the policy making decisions themselves which have increased Australian attention to sport, and as such a key component of the identity of Australians.

In reading on Australian culture and sport, especially as how it relates to historical implications, there is an abundance of literature. Much of the work in this regard draws from single sports including soccer, surfing, Australian rules football, cricket, and rugby. As has been discussed, Australia is commonly considered a sporting nation, Richard Cashman in the highly influential *Paradise of Sport* examines the foundation and development of this concept. Due to the relative youth of Australia as compared to many other Western nation-states, Cashman argues that, “Sport does not merely reflect other social and political processes: it is an active and powerful agent in forming social and

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<sup>50</sup> Bob Stewart et al., *Australian Sport: Better by Design? The Evolution of Australian Sport Policy* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004), 53.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.



cultural values.”<sup>52</sup> Unlike scholars who focus on the creation of policy as a turning point in Australian sport, Cashman signifies the mid nineteenth century as a key focal point in culture building. This in part comes as an outcome of prosperity as a result of the South East Australian gold rush and subsequent collaboration of foreign cultures from across the globe. This mesh of cultures resulted in a uniquely Australian persona in the “character of play, the behavior of players and spectators, language, architecture and club identity.”<sup>53</sup> Further, Cashman notes that even with cultural assimilation, such a culture was built by and for white males of English heritage at the expense of both women and minority groups. Nevertheless, sport plays an important role in the lives of all Australian. As such, Cashman urges that sport should be used to increase reconciliation in the future to help build a singular culture representative of a cosmopolitan Australian society through critical evaluation of current sporting policies and systems.

On the specific case of Australian national identity and sport, there is no better example of top to bottom complete work than that in Tony Ward’s *Sport in Australian National Identity: Kicking Goals*. Ward offers not only an historical account of Australian sport, but as an extension examines its impact on culture and development of communal identity. Ward takes measures to ensure the narrative of Australian sporting success on the international stage comes to the forefront of his writing. Perhaps most notably from Ward is the view that sport in Australia, as it relates to national identity, is consistently changing

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<sup>52</sup> Richard I. Cashman, *Paradise of Sport: The Rise of Organised Sport in Australia* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1995), vii.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 205.

and challenged. “There have often been differences between people and groups in their preferred images of Australia.”<sup>54</sup> In line with Cashman, Ward highlights the second half of the nineteenth century as a period of heightened influence of sport within the Australian psyche. Although these foundations are prior to federation, Ward argues that such an identity has molded over time and has represented different groups of people within the nation.

As outlined, there is an abundance of work on the effect that sport has on the development and perception of a shared identity in Australia, even if there is no consensus on what this identity is or even the components of said identity. However, there is a severe lack of literature to address the role that national identity plays in the perception of Australian athletes themselves. Perhaps more simply explained, there is plenty of work on the effects of athletes on the nation, but little on the effect of the nation on its athletes. This omission is furthered by an absence of study on the changing nature of identity over time as a result of external trends such as globalization.

### **Diving in Australia**

As a sport with low participation rates, and generally little public interest in Western nation-states and including Australia, diving has received little attention from both popular and academic English-speaking writers. The extent of formal writing on the sport in Australia comprises three key categories, those that examine physiology, those that study

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<sup>54</sup> Tony Ward, *Sport in Australian National Identity: Kicking Goals* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 4.

history, and those that focus on pedagogy. Of the latter, there has been only one such investigation of Australian divers in the last several decades.

Tao, Rynne, and Mallett's 2019 work on Chinese born-Australian employed diving coaches provides the only previous sociological research regarding Australian diving. The authors focus on the role of foreign coaches as they work in Australia with Australian athletes. Conclusions from the authors note that foreign non-English native speaking coaches struggle both linguistically and culturally in the early stages of working within an unfamiliar alien environment. Such conclusions can be easily asserted as an initial clash of cultures. The authors write, "Using multiple approaches, the understanding we came to was that CHPCs [Chinese High Performance Coaches] engaged in effortful and personally challenging learning journeys to reconcile their prior Chinese experiences with their working career in NSO [National Sporting Organizations]." <sup>55</sup> Although the work does little in drawing conclusions to the effect that these coaches have on their athletes, or further to the extent that the presence of these coaches have on the Australian psyche as a whole, it nevertheless opens the door for further investigation of Australian divers. As it relates to this investigation, considerable thought has been placed on the role of globalization and a contemporary clash of cultures in recent history by the researches and as such, provides a clear gateway into the importance of study in the field. More specifically, the work notes the prevalence of international influence on Australian sport and specifically diving. With

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<sup>55</sup>Tao, Rynne, and Mallett, "Blending and Becoming," 582–97.

a clear understanding of this phenomenon, the work serves as a vital pillar in formulating methodology and approaching analysis of further research on diving in Australia.

As for work dedicated to the historical study of diving within Australia, Ashley Wilson's aptly named 2014 book, *The History of Australian Diving*, serves as the seminal text. Through his close connection with the sport for well over three decades including eighteen years in the Diving Australia Board (eight of which as Chairman), primary knowledge and personal anecdotes, Wilson is clearly well versed in the understanding of Australian diving history. The text functions more as a comprehensive record of policy shifts and individuals who played a hand in the formation and molding of the modern sport specifically as it relates to its national governing organization, than that of a traditional academic history. Nevertheless, due to his position as an organizational insider, Wilson is uniquely suited to provide key insights into major shifts within the history of the sport. Due to the encyclopedic nature of the text, Wilson highlights major signposts in the sport such as Olympic Games, the introduction of new policy including adoption of synchronized diving, and like Tao, Rynne, and Mallett, events of social significance such as the immigration and influence of Chinese coaches since the creation of the Australian Institute of Sport. As described by Wilson, "This document is merely a snapshot of Australian Diving history. It notes major milestones in relation to divers, coaches, administrators and points of interest pertaining to the sport."<sup>56</sup> Although limited in scope, the book will

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<sup>56</sup> Ashley Wilson, *The History of Australian Diving* (Tuggerah: E-Bisprint Pty Ltd, 2014), 5.

nevertheless serve as a key text for all researches focused on Australian diving for not only preliminary understanding, but as an index throughout the course of study.

In summary, the research on Australian diving, and lack thereof, highlight two significant points. Firstly, that there is a rich history in Australian diving that lapses heavily into broader social and political changes not only within Australian sport, but within the Australian population as a whole. And secondly, perhaps most importantly, there is a severe lack of necessary work which either draws from this mentioned history or contributes towards it.

## Method

As has been explored, especially as is the case with Australia, sport has a unique ability to inform the development of a unified identity within a nation-state. With this in mind, the assumption must be made and accepted that the participants of elite international sport, national representative athletes themselves, embody the characteristics of such an identity. In other words, ‘the athlete’ as symbol of communal identity must themselves embody the same identity, or at the very least, feel a strong connection to the identity in question. With that being said the question must be asked, ‘how strongly, and in what ways, do elite athletes themselves identify with the country which they represent?’ With the question proposed, it is necessary to further explore the conceptual framework needed to undertake such an investigation. As described by Sharon Ravitch and Matthew Riggan, “a conceptual framework is an argument about why the topic one wishes to study matters, yet the means proposed to study are appropriate and rigorous.”<sup>57</sup> As can be seen through the introduction and literature review of this thesis, it is abundantly clear that this topic matters, and that there has been limited formal work on the topic itself. As such, the remainder of this section will explain in detail the latter component of the conceptual framework, and the methods imposed to accurately execute said framework. In doing so, this section will outline the theoretical approach, data collection, participant selection, and finally data analysis.

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<sup>57</sup> Sharon Ravitch and Matthew Riggan, *Reason & Rigor*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2017), 5.

## Theoretical Approach

As with all study, including those in humanities, there is an abundance of approaches and framework which can be implemented when addressing a proposed question. However, there are overarching theoretical approaches which should govern any investigation regardless of topic or focus. As aptly explained by Katie Moon and Deborah Blackman in their 2014 article *A guide to Understanding Social Science Research for Natural Scientists*, much of this approach is grounded in philosophical principles. Although often snubbed by modern casual readers, the authors explain “philosophy provides both the natural and social sciences with the general principles of theoretical thinking with a method of cognition and perspective, and with self-awareness, all of which are used to obtain knowledge of reality.”<sup>58</sup> Although written for a journal dedicated to the study of conservation biology, Moon and Blackman clearly spell out the components of this so-called philosophy. The authors note the three key factors which constitute this overarching philosophy; ontology, epistemology, and theoretical perspective. To provide transparency, and to further develop objectives of this thesis, each of these components and their specific focus need be addressed further.

Ontology in its most basic form seeks to address the understanding of what exists in our own world; or in other words, ‘what is.’ Due to the nature of this branch, researchers are required to categorize what they know to be, and what they do not. In doing so, this

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<sup>58</sup> Katie Moon and Deborah Blackman, “A Guide to Understanding Social Science Research for Natural Scientists,” *Conservation Biology* 28, no. 5 (February 26, 2014): 1167–77.

branch functions as a dichotomy. On one hand, realism argues that there is a single known and universally accepted truth, for example the sky is undoubtedly blue. On the other, relativism concludes that truth is increasingly subjective, for example the shade of blue in the sky through the lenses of different people in different places. This investigation follows the understanding of relativists for several reasons. Firstly, the study of identity is highly individualized especially in the case of oral history and as such, needs be interpreted on an individual basis prior to collaboration within and between groups. Secondly, the nature of shared identity as the cornerstone of this thesis may, and has in the past, changes significantly over time and in doing so erases any clear understanding of past notions. Finally, due to the emphasis on highly subjective measures such as values and beliefs, no single ‘truth’ of what is and what is not, would be appropriate in addressing such research.

Epistemology examines the modes of thinking and knowledge which surround our understanding of our world. Where an otologist may ask ‘what color is the sky?’ An epistemologist may ask, ‘how do we know what color the sky is?’ The key component here resides in the questioning of our own comprehension and understanding. As is the case with ontology, epistemology functions on a dichotomy. On one side of the spectrum lie objectivists and on the other subjectivists, with constructionists resting between the two poles. For the purpose of studying national identity, an objective approach would imply that the meaning of national identity would rely upon the deep understanding of the nation-state. However, a subjective approach would focus far more on the implied perceptions as they relate to one’s own identity and its connection to the broader community in that of the



nation-state, in other words, how people define the national identity, not the nation-state itself. As national identity is clearly not easily defined as outlined in the previous chapter especially with the case of Australia, it must be proposed that an objectivist's standpoint would prove at the very least troublesome in the investigation of the identity of individual athletes. With that being noted, a subjectivist approach serves necessary in not only understanding one's own identity, but further in understanding how it is related to the greater community as a whole.

From a theoretical perspective, as has already been outlined, the primary goal of this work is to understand the notions of self for elite national representatives. To achieve this goal, as will be explained further in this chapter, conversations will be undertaken in which Olympic athletes recount key events and experiences in their lives. These topics, along with linguistic analysis, will serve as the cornerstone for study. Such an undertaking fits comfortably into the traditional perspective of interpretivism and more specifically hermeneutics. Interpretivism draws from the concept that reality can be interpreted in many different ways by many different people. The effects of cultural change and historical setting play a major role in these differences. By the same token, hermeneutics requires deep scholarly reading or listening to understand hidden interpretations by the writer or narrator. As identity may be subconsciously constructed through decades of lived experience, a hermeneutic approach is necessary to thoroughly interpret notions of self.

With the approach to this thesis being grounded in relativism, subjectivism and hermeneutics, analysis of data will search for hidden meaning, with the perspective of

believing and understanding that each meaning may vary from person to person and that there may be more than one 'true' meaning.

## **Data Collection**

As explained, an interpretant and more specifically a hermeneutic theoretical approach provides the most effective framework to evaluate notions of identity due to the highly hidden undertones of the form. With that in mind, it is necessary for participants, and necessary to the accurate collection of data, that participants are provided an unbridged opportunity to tell their stories. As Dan McAdams explains in his seminal work *The Stories We Live By*, "Stories told at days end create a shared history, linking people in time and event as actors, tellers, and the audience. The unfolding drama of life is revealed more by the telling than by the actual events told."<sup>59</sup> Such an understanding of the power of stories, told by those who have actively lived them, further explains that it needs be the source themselves who provide 'data' for study and not second-hand reports such as those in television broadcasts or newspaper articles. Although these stories will be highly individualized, and both subjective and relative to the individual, the collaboration and comparison of these stories will help paint a picture of broader social trends. In support of this concept McAdam writes, "Our personal myths provide our own lives with a sense of unity and purpose. But our own lives connect to other lives, our myths, to other myths."<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Dan McAdams, *The Stories We Live By: Personal Myths and the Making of the Self* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1993), 28.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 113.

The myth in question here does not align with the idea of the myth as a fabricated tale, but rather the constructed ‘truth’ by the source. Due to the highly personal nature of identity, it is evident that this truth will in fact serve as the primary foundation of notions of self.

As noted, participants for data collection need open opportunity to express the foundational stories which they used to develop their individual sense of identity. As such, the appropriate medium for the collection or rather telling of these stories’ rests solely in the form of oral histories. Although other forms of data collection have been used in the cases of past researches when addressing questions of identity, such as surveys and brief interview, including simple “I am’ prompts, it proves fitting due to the theoretical approach in this examination that participants feel free to talk with limited restrictions. Further, as will be discussed in the analysis of data, little depth can be examined with methods grounded in short response. As Valerie Janesick explains in the introduction to the popular guidebook for oral history, *Oral History for the Qualitative Researcher*, “The power of oral history lies in the power of storytelling. Whether an oral history project embraces and describes the story of one person’s life or a collection of individual stories told together, the power resides in the meaning made of the storytelling and what we learn from the stories.”<sup>61</sup> Therefore it is evident that the only appropriate, and adept, method for data collection in this regard is the undertaking of several oral histories with the individuals who lived these histories themselves.

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<sup>61</sup> Valerie J. Janesick, *Oral History for the Qualitative Researcher: Choreographing the Story* (New York: Guilford Publications, 2010), 1.

Although oral histories are in their very nature highly fluid and open to change within any given interview, some level of formalized structure and predetermined framework are necessary for comprehensive execution. For the most part the previously referenced work by Janesick has served as the major guidepost for the execution of data collection in this investigation. Janesick offers a roadmap for researchers conducting oral histories from grand theories on the method, to specific questions that can be utilized by any and all undertaking work. Although far too broad to cover all the methods suggested by Janesick, several notable concepts and principles require attention. Firstly, transparency between the researcher and the subject regarding the exact scope and general focus of the research will ensure that both a professional and open environment without the unnecessary need for confusion. On this Janesick writes, “Oral historians, like all qualitative researchers, need to describe and explain their purpose, their theoretical frames for the study, their methods, and their approaches to analysis and interpretation.”<sup>62</sup> Secondly, Janesick highlights the importance of adequate preparation in not only the construction of a preliminary question structure, but also in the preparation of practical equipment, which in this instance includes both recording equipment and equipment required for the facilitation of the interview itself. As the interviews in this investigation were conducted with both parties in separate countries, the latter point proves critical to ensure proper recording. Finally, “some interviewing rules of thumb from the interviewer’s point of view,” provide highly useful to keep in mind prior to and during all interviews. These

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 15.

points such as being aware of time, embracing silence, and remaining open to further contact, were in constant use throughout the project.

## **Participant Selection**

This study focuses on the experience of Australian Olympic Divers. In highlighting the effects of globalization on notions of identity in these athletes, the sample is split into two groups. Using the 1981 creation of the Australian Institute of Sport (and 1984 inclusion of diving) as a key turning point in Australian sport, the two groups will be separated into those who competed at an Olympic Games within the decade prior to 1981 (Group A, 1972, 1976, 1980), and those who competed at the most recent Olympic Games (Group B, 2016). This point in time serves as a measure as it relates to the globalization of policy as explained by Stewart et al, with the inclusion of global sporting system, foreign coaches, and international perspectives within the preexisting Australian sporting environment.<sup>63</sup> Of significant importance is that all participants are in their adult years and as such have already developed strong notions of their own personal narrative. As McAdams notes, “the kind of ideological setting we establish in adolescence – its structure and its content – will probably stay with us through our adult years, with, in most cases, but minor changes and variations.”<sup>64</sup> As such, although Group A participants will be clearly of a different age and

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<sup>63</sup> Stewart et al., *Australian Sport*.

<sup>64</sup> McAdams, *The Stories We Live By*, 90.

generation, their identity will have changed little in the past four decades, and as such are comparable to Group B.

The potential participant population for Australian Olympic divers for both groups are extremely small, Group A had eight potential participants and Group B had nine potential participants. Three Olympians were selected from each group for participation, representing a significant portion of the overall population. Participants for oral histories were selected by taking into consideration a number of factors including representation of both genders equally, accessibility, continued connection with the sport, and a diverse representation of both primary training center and childhood home towns. Those selected are listed in Table 1, along with the Olympic Games in which they represented Australia.

<b>Group</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Olympic Games (Australian Representation)</b>
Group A (Pre-AIS)	Stephen Foley	Montreal 1976, Moscow 1980, Los Angeles 1984
	Ken Grove	Munich 1972
	Elizabeth Jack	Montreal 1976
Group B (Post-AIS)	James Connor	London 2012, Rio 2016
	Anabelle Smith	London 2012, Rio 2016
	Maddison Keeney	Rio 2016

Table 1: Oral History Participants

Each of the participants bring their own experiences and viewpoints however collectivity they represent two distinct eras of Australian diving. Further information regarding each of these Olympians individually will be discussed in greater detail in the later chapters of this thesis.

## Data Analysis

With both interpretivism and hermeneutic study as the foothold for this research, it follows that a simple, surface analysis of the conducted oral histories will not serve as adequate study. Although a simple reading will give insight into historical accounts, further scrutiny must be placed on the spoken word itself. Lynn Abrams in her work *Oral History Theory*, explains how oral histories are uniquely positioned to examine deeper topics than perhaps simple interview methods. Abrams writes, “In the process of eliciting and analyzing the material, one is confronted by the oral history interview as an event of communication which demands that we find ways of comprehending not just what is said, but also how it is said, why it is said and what it means.”<sup>65</sup> In short, the oral histories on face value themselves do little to tell us about the participants, and that rather they can yield far more subjective truth if studied effectively.

In analyzing the conducted oral histories, the work by Ruth Wodak, Rudolf De Cillia, and Martin Reisigl in 1999 provide a suitable framework. The research published both in academic journal (*The Discursive Construction of National Identities*), and as a book (*The Discursive Construction of National Identity*) draws from the experience of Austrian nationals, yet as described by the authors, can be used in addressing people from any and all nation-states. Although the research pulls from sources such as political speeches and semi-propagandist posters, the backbone resides in qualitative interviews, much like the work conducted here. The authors outline five basic assumptions in the

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<sup>65</sup> Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 1.

investigation of national identities, all of which are accepted. First that national identities are themselves “mental constructs”<sup>66</sup> as described and explained by Anderson with his notion of the imagined community. Second, that national identities through discourse are “produced, reproduced, transformed and destructed,”<sup>67</sup> in that national identities only come to fruition through such conversation. Third, national identity in practice can function as somewhat of habit as people rely of stereotypical assumptions in their representation of both ‘in’ and ‘out’ groups. Fourth, construction of national identity runs closely in hand with construction of difference and the creation of an ‘other’ in that of an outsider group. Fifth, and perhaps most simply, there is not a single national identity, and that national identities themselves are neither stable nor unchanging.

In the process of analyzing national identities through speech or writing, Wodak et al. note three areas of focus which in themselves have contributing parts. Contents/topics outline the clear subjects of speech such as political history, common culture, or the notion of a collective past and future. Strategies note the ways in which the speaker or writer attempts to express their views on shared identity, including constructive, perpetuation, justification, and transformation strategies. Finally, linguistic means and forms of realization which draw from the ways in which participants express their views on inclusiveness and exclusiveness with specific linguistic choices including the often-unconscious use of ‘us’, ‘we’, and ‘them’ in their speech. Although not discussed in rigid

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<sup>66</sup> Rudolf De Cillia, Martin Reisigl, and Ruth Wodak, “The Discursive Construction of National Identities,” *Discourse & Society* 10, no. 2 (January 1, 1999): 153.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 153.



sections as outlined, these three focuses have been implemented in the analysis of the conducted oral histories to varying degrees, to understand the notions of national identity in Australian Olympic divers.

## **Results**

As this investigation focuses on the individual's notion of identity, and how it relates to the broader identity of the nation in which they represent, the responses from participants through their oral histories are both extremely personal to the participant and individualized to their own experiences or subjective truth. It follows that although the information gathered and analyzed may be interpreted against and with each other, it may be problematic to generalize to the wider community be that Australian Olympic divers, Australian Olympians, or Olympians from all nations as a whole. With that in mind, the following chapter will be divided by individual participant. These sub-sections will note key responses and lines of narrative which will be addressed further in the discussion of this thesis. As many of the participants have competed at the same events, or at least similar events during their career, many of these anecdotes are similar yet still require individual attention due to the aforementioned inherent personal nature. Prior to examining key findings, a brief competitive history of each participant is presented, which highlights connections to not only diving, but participation in major events as an Australian representative.

### **Stephen Foley**

Few people have had a greater impact in shaping diving in Australia across the past four decades than Stephen Foley, both as an athlete and later as a coach and administrator. Foley was a competitor at the 1976 Montreal, 1980 Moscow, and 1984 Los Angeles

Olympic Games, demonstrating almost a decade of elite competitive history. Since retirement from competition, Foley has worked in a number of key roles which have influenced the diving landscape across the globe, and is currently functioning as the General Manager, High Performance and Technical Pathways for Diving Australia. Prior to his current role, Foley served as National Performance Director for both British Diving and USA Diving, having ushered in a new era of success for both nations. Further, Foley has worked in a number of broadcast roles for major international sporting events, and popular television shows. Foley came to the sport in the late 1960s having grown up in Melbourne after participating in more traditional Australian youth sports such as swimming and football. Nevertheless, Foley insists that ‘whatever sports I did, I wanted to do well. I loved competing, I thrived on it. It wasn’t about winning, it was just about performing,’ which he contributes to his early success in the sport along with the “lure of representing my country.” It is notable that Foley had spent considerable time training abroad, especially in the United States in preparation for the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games.

Having competed at the 1976, 1980, and 1984 Olympic Games, Foley provides significant insight into the immediate pre-AIS period as an athlete and having turned to coaching after his retirement in 1984, is adept in recounting the foundation of the Institute including the significant role he played. As is commonly accepted, the Australian ‘failure’ to capture any gold medals at the 1976 Olympic Games, served as the primary catalyst for the creation of the Institute. Foley from his own experience is able to recount this commonly accepted truth:

Montreal was one of the first Olympics where Australia failed to win a gold medal and so on the media and the public and everything else, it copped a lot of crap, you know ‘what’s going wrong?’ ‘Why aren’t Australia winning?’ Etcetera, etcetera. I think the Prime Minister at the time, was Malcolm Fraser and he came over to Montreal and he was in the village. Quite a few of us got to have lunch and a meeting with him and he sort of said ‘What do you think is going wrong? Why aren’t you winning medals or gold?’ and I can’t remember who is was, I’ve got a feeling I think it was a swimmer, he pretty much said “cause your bloody government doesn’t give us any funding.’ And so out of, what I call, the team failure if you like of the Montreal Olympics, or perceived failure, the Australian Institute of Sport idea was born.

Further, Foley jokes that it was his lackluster performance which led to changes in the Australian sporting landscape, “I like to say that my failure helped Australia to turn into a success.” What is evident in this anecdote, and many more that Foley provided, is that both a lack of government funding and political influence played an important role in the psyche of Australian sports people in the immediate pre-AIS era. On political influence there is an emphasis placed on the 1980 Western boycott of the Moscow Games in which according to Foley the Australian government strongly deterred its athletes from attending the event:

They tried to, and they did, turn the public against us. So, where we had a big fanfare to go to Montreal there is no such thing. You had to sneak out of the country because they sort of made out that anyone going to the Olympics is a traitor. So, it was an awful feeling at the time, that my god look I just want to dive, whether Steve Foley goes to Moscow or not is not going to change Soviet Union pulling out of Afghanistan. They are not going to go ‘ah Foley is not coming so everyone out of Afghanistan.’ So, I wasn’t going to change it, a lot of athletes felt the same.

As can be seen in Foley’s oral history, much of his career as an athlete was influenced by political input, both at home and abroad. Centered around the 1980 Boycott, it is implied that there was a clear tension, if not a clash, between Australian Olympians and the wider

Australian population as a whole. This division is increasingly clear in a conversation between Foley and the then Minister for Sport, Bob Ellicott, in which Foley recounts, “he said ‘Stephen if you do decide to go to the Olympics we will not give you any funding,’ and I said, ‘what the fuck are you on about, you haven’t given me any funding in the past,’ I hung up the phone.” Due to this rift Foley notes that he “didn’t feel as much an Australian representative,” at the 1980 Olympic Games, “even though they called Steve Foley ‘Australian’ when he dived.”

On his connection to Australia, and especially as a representative, Foley notes that, “It was an honor” in making his first national team in 1974, placing emphasis on the importance of wearing a green and gold tracksuit, even if it were store bought by the athletes and their families themselves. Rather than highlighting the notion of representing the Australian people, he underlines that making such a national team, be that for a Commonwealth or Olympic Games, was significant to him as it placed him in an exclusive group or club. Foley states on making his first Olympic team in 1976, “That’s when I felt really proud to be an Aussie because I thought ‘wow I really am a select few,’ you know when you look at it.” However, Foley notes his connection to the broader community through ‘herograms’ from Australian sporting fans to Olympic representatives and cheering for Australian Olympic athletes from other sports at the Games. According to Foley, these ideas of connection were heightened at the 1984 Los Angeles Games due to the broader cultural landscape:

It was just a great time also to be an Aussie. In 1983 before LA, Australia won the Mariners Cup, the first yacht ever to beat USA at Newport RI and win the

America's Cup. Men at Work had launched "Down Under" and "Who Can It Be Now". Crocodile Dundee movie came out. So suddenly Australia is all over American TV and, you know, not many people knew much about Australia or Australians back then. So, it was a fantastic time to be honest, to be an Aussie and to be in America, and especially being in the Olympics.

It is evident that for Foley his connection with Australian identity as an athlete is twofold. Firstly, he takes extreme pride in representing his country due to the fact that such representation at an elite level is highly exclusive and in doing such, places him in a small club per say. Secondly, due to the time of Foley's Olympic competitions, the location and political standing at the time of the Games plays an important role in the connection between Foley as an athlete and the Australian people he represents either for the solidification or the dissolution of the relationship.

A final factor that need be explored in the oral history of Foley is the importance of his local community. This idea in contrast to Anderson's "imagined community" draws from the community in which an individual has a direct and personal connection with. This close community may include people such as one's parents, classmates or local familiar store clerks. Foley through his narrative highlights that during the 1976 Games, this notion of close community was significant in his experience. In reflecting on the Montreal opening ceremony Foley makes note of this phenomenon:

Out of all that noise I swear I hears someone go 'hey Foley up here' and I look up to my right and there is this couple with an Australian flag and it's an ex-diver from Melbourne who used to dive. So, in these sixty to seventy thousand crowd of people I can see these two people waving and yelling at me, which is quite phenomenal.

Foley further comments specifically on this connection with his direct community when speaking on the excitement of his childhood friend and next-door neighbor when he was announced to the 1976 Team. Foley recalls, “looking back especially my next-door neighbor, growing up who was one of my best mates, I think when I got named in the 1976 team he was more excited than I was.” Although for Foley there is an undoubtable connection to the broader national community, there is nevertheless an important bond with his direct community, even against the backdrop of a global sporting event, and in representing the nation-state as a whole.

### **Ken Grove**

Ken Grove offers atypical information as an Australian diver in that, like only a handful of other Olympians, Grove represented both Australia and Austria in the same sport at separate Olympic Games. Grove participated in his first Games as an Australian representative in Munich in 1972, prior to gaining Austrian citizenship and representing his new country in Moscow in 1980. Grove found his way into the sport, having shifted from swimming in the mid 1960s, and joining legendary Australian diving coach Jack Barnett in Sydney. After his retirement from competitive Olympic diving, Grove continued to live in Austria and became a prominent member of the high diving community both as a competitor and later as a judge, coach, and organizer. Grove now stays connected with the sport through his participation as a judge at the popular Red Bull Cliff Diving World Series, and as an advocate for the inclusion of the discipline in future Olympic games.

Contrary to what could be conventional opinion, Grove maintained his connection with Australia, and his identity as an Australian even after representing a separate country and have lived abroad for well over four decades. On making his first Olympic Team, and only one as an Australian representative, Grove combines both his achievement as an individual and pride in country as the main sources of importance. Further, it was the culmination of years of success and progression that heightened the significance of selection to in the event:

It meant everything to me. I was very proud to represent Australia... I grew up in Australia, for me at the time Australia was just the number one. Just the fact to win a state championship to go on to get further I can go to the Olympic Games. Just thinking I could represent my country at the Olympic Games gave me such pride.

From this, it is necessary to note the close relationship Grove felt not with the greater Australian community as a whole, but rather with the highly exclusive Australian Olympic Team. It was through this link that Grove felt his closest connection in a singular unified unit. Grove recounts of returning home from the 1972 Olympic Games, and in reflection of the Munich Massacre, “we came back that year we had a few times where we were interviewed from broadcasters in Australia and yea we told about our adventures and what had happened, and how we felt and out our achievements.” This extract highlights Grove’s use of the collective pronoun “we” in that his chosen community included other Olympic athletes at the time, with the exclusion of the wider Australian population including in this case broadcasters. It is necessary to note that potentially this connection is born out of



solidarity, the result of experiencing such a historical event, rather than the simple inclusion in an 'in group' in that of the 1972 Australian Olympic Team.

In his oral history, and through newspaper clippings provided after, it becomes abundantly clear that Grove switched his representative nationality due to the singular reason of a lack of funding in Australian sport. This lack of funding can be seen through the oral histories of not only Grove but also as previously examined Foley, and to be explored with Jack. This notion is a defining hallmark of the pre-AIS Australian sporting landscape. Grove recounts, "I decided I would take on the Austrian citizenship, so I could compete internationally and get all the medical treatment I needed for injured and stuff like that and that wasn't being done in Australia." Grove asserts that there was no animosity with the Australia as a whole, nor the people associate with Australian diving at the time, instead that the latter are still some of his closest friends to date. Rather, the disagreement lay with the systemic and governmental priorities and lack of investment in sport at the time. On speaking of the reaction to his switch from his former Australian teammates, Grove highlights that there was no resentment due to the move:

We are all best mates still. So, nothing happening, good mates, no problem. It was also fun being Austrian, my wife and her parents were Austrians, they were sort of proud of the fact that I am diving now for Austria. So yea I just changed my life, absolutely not because I disliked Australia because I loved Australia still it was just I used the opportunity to help me in my sport.

Many well documented moves in representation such as the one outlined by Grove were met with harsh opposition during this period in which individual athletes were labeled as traitors or defectors, however little to no antipathy met Grove in the switch. It is probable

that this in part came from the motivations of the move, in that there was no ideological nor political statement associated with the switch, and as such, Grove maintained his personal ties with his birth country.

Throughout his oral history, Grove made the important distinction of noting his local residential location at several points throughout his life. This centered around his upbringing in both his personal life and in sport, around the Sydney suburb of Manly. The connection not only comes from his experience there in his youth, but further from the recognition he has received in retrospect from the community. Such recognition has been exemplified by a plaque as part of the Pathway of Olympians, along the popular Manly foreshore. Grove is recognized as one of only two Olympians from the sport of diving on the Pathway, along with 1924 Olympic Champion, and the countries first Olympic Gold Medalist in the sport, Richard ‘Dick’ Eve:

You know the Manly wharf? Where the ferries leave. At the Manly wharf they have the Olympic Walk of Olympians or something like that. And they have all the Manly Olympians since 1900 to 2019 or something. And I’m proud that they’ve got me there, competing for two Olympics then. Of course, it was for Austria the second one, but they say Ken Grove two Olympic Games... I’m really, I’m really proud of that. That made me even prouder to be an Australian... Yea. I’m connected more than that now. Since they have this plaque of me, I feel like that’s my home.

The importance of local community, for Grove, is further heightened when noting his direct community, especially those involved with diving in Australia. This connection helps in turn to influence his own identity as an Australian. Grove states, “All the time, even when I was Austrian, I still feel connected to Australia. All the friends from the past are still in

Australia, from diving. If you ask any, Eric Brooker or you ask Steve Foley, they will tell you I am typical Australian still.” Although Grove had switched his representative nationality during his career as an athlete, and had represented another nation at an Olympic Games, it is both the recognition of his original community, and that of his direct connection with Australians, that play a prominent role in his continued identity as an Australian representative, rather than the representation of the nation in question itself.

### **Elizabeth Jack**

Although an often-hidden figure, Elizabeth Jack’s influence on Australia diving, and the broader Australian sporting community cannot be understated. Jack, who grew up in Tasmania, came to the sport like many other participants at the time through swimming. Due to a lack of facility opportunities in her home state, Jack moved to Canada to continue her diving where she would go on to qualify for her only Olympic Games as an Australian representative in Montreal. In making the Olympic team in 1976, Jack was the youngest ever athlete selected to compete for Australia in diving at seventeen-years-old. Following her retirement from competition as an athlete, the result of prolonged injuries, Jack moved to coaching while maintaining her Canadian residency and producing 1984 Olympic Gold Medalist Sylvie Bernier of Canada. At the same Games, Jack coached Australian Olympian, and fellow Tasmanian native, Julie Kent. In 1990, Jack returned to her home state as the director of the newly formed Tasmania Institute of Sport and has since functioned as director of Sport and Recreation Tasmania. In sport specific roles, Jack

served as Competition Manager for the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games, and more recently was appointed to the Diving Australia Board of Directors. With her background in grassroots sports and having spent considerable time overseas and in management roles, Jack offers unique insights on notions of national identity in Australian divers.

With much of her life dedicated to pursuits within or around sports, it would come as no surprise that much of Jack's identity is closely tied with her relationship with sport. These early foundations and motivations can be rooted in both the community within and around sport and the competitive opportunity such activity provided. On the social component of diving, Jack found that the sport differed from swimming which functioned far more as a solitary activity.

I think it was the social aspects of diving and you know, at later on, because I was still swimming I swam god knows how many years I swam for but probably, you know, close to ten years as well as diving, and you know, I'd go to the pool in the morning I'd get in swim, I do my swimming training, I'd get out I'd go and dive if I come back in the afternoon, and I do it all again. And I found for me absolutely dead bloody boring, staring at a black line on the bottom of the pool. Whereas diving was a bit more social.

As for the competitive side of the sport, these early motivations played the role as catalyst to further her diving career. Jack explains, "I guess, I've always been achievement focused and it was it's something that yes, you go into a competition and you compete against others but, you can there's always something you can better yourself in diving." It was these factors, that led Jack to spend considerable time away from her home country, to in turn one day represent said country at an Olympic Games.

In recounting her Olympic experience, at the 1976 Montreal Games, Jack offers a perspective of athletes training in a foreign country prior to the event. As noted, Jack had moved to Canada on receiving an invite from a Canadian national coach at the time. The move also allowed improved training consistency, which Jack was unable to find in her home state of Tasmania in part due to a lack of funding and facilities. This somewhat changed the traditional Olympic experience according to Jack as she did not travel with the greater Australian team to Montreal, nor receive her Australian Olympic uniform in advance of her departure. Jack in her oral history recounts, “Honestly, it was a bit weird for me because I was living in Montreal. So, I didn't even fly across with the rest of the team. You know, they all they all flew in on a charter flight. I actually just got driven to the village and rocked up after the team had arrived.” It is important in this extract to note that Jack uses the pronoun of “they” when referring to the Australian Team which she was a member of. It was however coming into close contact with well-known athletes from across the world that played a lasting role in Jack’s memory of the Olympic games. Jack explains that it was communal areas such as the dining hall at the Olympic village that allowed these interactions to take place.

Across from me was Olga Korburt and some of the Russian gymnasts. And I just remember thinking, wow, I'm with all these really well-known Olympic athletes, how did I get here or sitting across from Alexi, Alexi the Olympic weightlifter the gold medalist. So, you know you rubbing shoulders with people that were just names on a piece of paper up until then or someone that you might see on the TV or read about in the newspaper.”

This notion of being around other great athletes of their time, is not dissimilar to the idea Foley proposed regarding the importance of joining a select few in an Olympic team. In that, it is the association with other Olympians that reinforced the understanding of achievement within Jack's own sport. However, unlike for Foley, this 'in group' per say is not the Australian Olympic Team, but rather the greater group of Olympians from all nation-states as a whole.

Although Jack clearly highlights her connection to Australia, and more specifically her home state, as a major signifier of identity, it is not to be understated the presence of her direct community throughout her oral history. This becomes especially important during her experience with the Olympic Games both as an athlete and later as a coach. In the former situation, Jack recalls the Montreal Opening Ceremony, "Walking into the stadium. It's just it was a really proud moment. I mean to be standing with all those athletes and wearing my Olympic uniform and seeing all the crowds, knowing my parents were there somewhere." As can be seen, it was not only her pride in country, nor only the induction into an exclusive club that made the moment of extreme importance, but also the opportunity that the situation gave her to feel further connected with her family, in other words her direct community. Further in a previously mentioned experience as coach with the Canadian Olympic Team in 1984, Jack relied heavily on the importance of personal connections to recount the narrative.

I loved when I was in the village, someone I still to this day, don't know who did it but somebody, Telstra, they might have been called Telecom back then, I can't remember but they were sponsoring the Olympic team and someone from the Australian team had left an envelope in my cubby holder in the village with some

free passes for me to call back to Australia. And that meant as much to me as anything because they recognize that I was Australian, and it made me feel part of it all. Coaching the divers, I coached Sylvie Bernier who won the gold medal in LA and seeing her stand on the podium and hearing a Canadian anthem play instead of an Australian one gave me just as much pride to think that I'd helped her achieve her goals. As it would have had it been an Australia.

This story highlights the significance of Jack's direct community in two ways. Firstly, though the lens of her family back home in Australia, who through her nationally became easily accessible, however it was not the 'Australianness' of her identity that made the moment important but rather the people who it involved. Secondly, the notion that it was not the nationality of the athlete she coached that was important to her success as a coach, but rather the individual connection with the athlete that she herself had. Both instances of where Jack's direct community play a far greater role than that of the imagined community of her home country.

### **James Connor**

Of Australian male divers, James Connor has arguably played perhaps the most pivotal role in the development of team culture in the past decade. Since beginning diving in Melbourne, Connor has been a staple on Australian diving teams, having competed at the 2012 and 2016 Olympic Games and 2010 and 2018 Commonwealth Games, as well as the 2011, 2015, and 2017 World Championships. Following graduation from high school Connor moved to the United States in 2014 to continue his education and train at Indiana University, with United States Olympic Coach Drew Johansen. Connor in his oral history

notes how his early involvement in sport revolved around Australian rules football, the source of many of his young sporting heroes. Connor is now training in Melbourne towards his third Olympic team, having graduated from Indiana University in 2019.

Connor, from the offset of his oral history, made clear notes to his own conscious understanding of identity and how it has directly shaped himself as an individual. Much of this identity is tied to his position as an athlete and more specifically his attachment to being a high level Australian representative. Connor explains in the opening response, “My name is, as you said, James Connor. I'm an Olympic diver for the country of Australia. I suppose I've been on the national team in Australia for nearing ten years now assuming this year goes well I suppose.” It is important to note that Connor specifically ties himself to his sport rather than Australian sport as a whole, in that he is not only an Olympian, but an Australian Olympic diver. This notion helps solidify Connor's own expression of self, and at the same time yet distances himself from those with similar high-level sporting achievements. This separation is increasingly evident in recounting his experience from childhood of not playing traditional Australian sports due to the fact that he was devoting much of his time to his pursuits in diving. Connor recounts that this separation made it somewhat hard to connect with peers:

I wasn't playing cricket where in the summer of that first semester in year seven when a lot of people meet, all of my friends that I knew at the time, were meeting other people in different classes in the same year level. And that sort of stuff, from a certain standpoint, it's always been a huge part of my identity.



Due to this separation Connors identity was closely associated with his 'us' group being that of Australian divers rather than the collective Australian whole. Never the less, throughout his oral history it is evident that Connor takes great pride in his association with being Australian and specifically from his home state of Victoria.

Much like those representatives from prior to 1984, Connor noted that much of the significance of competing at the Olympic Games resides in the athlete joining somewhat of an exclusive club. This notion for Connor in his own experience is evidently twofold. Firstly, Connor places emphasis on connecting to the broader Australian Team at major multi-sport events specifically the Olympic Games. This connection is highlighted by the use of uniform and subsequent creation of a single unified body. On making the 2010 Commonwealth Games team, the first major multi-sport team for Connor, he recounts, "I had this huge smile as I was unpacking all these things that I knew I would never ever wear. And some of the things that are still in plastic, but it was the novelty of kind of achieving, I suppose. It was really sort of exciting to me." It is not only the objects themselves, but the concept that the uniform signifies acceptance to a group of high achievers that hold weight. Connor highlights this when talking on the 2012 Olympic Games, and the team blazer which he received, "It was kind of indicative of a time in the sense of the fact that that blazer was what everyone was wearing." Secondly Connor notes that the Olympic Games themselves serves as a second level of exclusivity, beyond that of team representation. These notions mirror that of Foley and Jack on talking about mixing

with highly regarded athletes from all nations. Connor goes further to mention that many of these athletes served as key role models to him in his youth:

It's almost as if you're walking amongst the giants. A lot of those athletes are not only specifically in diving, but in just throughout the other sports as well. They're athletes that we are aware of as kids. Whether it's the tennis or whether it's the rugby world cup or it's the football world cup, soccer world cup, whatever it might be."

In short as Connor notes, the Olympic Games is, "a realm that's reserved for, or competitions reserved for the best." And as such, the competitors at an Olympic Games are connected through their shared excellence. An excellence that breeds exclusivity.

Throughout his oral history, Connor made extensive reference towards his direct community, specifically his family, and the role that they have played in his development as an athlete and individual. Much of his career is grounded in his connection with people who have personally impacted his experiences. Connor notes that this community in his opinion has made sacrifices much in the same way that individual athletes do to help him achieve his athletic goals. In doing so, Connor states that he feels a responsibility to achieve at a high level not only for himself, but those who he personally knows. Connor explains, "I think I have always been sort of acutely aware how the pursuit of my goals was affecting other people. And I think that probably always ... and it was never put on me or expressed specifically to me, but it was just something I was aware of, kind of ... I want to repay that favor." Further, Connor emphasizes that not only his goals but his own accomplishments in sport, be that success on the world stage or simply competing on the world stage, were closely tied with those who in his direct community. It is suggested that much of this

understanding of shared success stems from his own upbringing in watching sports people excel through television and in popular media. Connor recounts that the 2010 Commonwealth Games were important to him as an individual in that the event gave his direct community back home a concrete and real connection with the Games in Delhi:

I think giving my friends and family someone as a personal, I suppose, connection to these events that we as Australians growing up idolized people and lived for and sit in front of the TV for two weeks at a time when they're on. To give them a personal sort of affiliation with that experience, was probably what, to me, was the most exciting and the most kind of gratifying I suppose of all that.

This apparent selfless notion is key to Connor's development and identity as well as the singular key motivator to his athletic endeavors. It is important to note however, that although Connor describes himself as an "Olympic diver for the country of Australia," it appears that he personally is far more tied to his representation of those he personally knows, rather than the greater Australian community.

As with the case of all Group B athletes in this investigation, Connor competed at a home major multi-sport event in the form of the 2018 Commonwealth Games held on Australia's Gold Coast. Such an event proved valuable in discussing in Connor's oral history and provided ample insight into his notions of shared identity. Further, on an individual level, Connor describes the event as being a high point of his time as an athlete. Connor states, "the Commonwealth Games was by far my, I would say that was probably the highlight of my career." On the event as a whole, Connor in line with his rhetoric regarding his direct community places an emphasis on the importance of having loved ones at the event itself, rather than traveling abroad:

I competed in bigger events and competed better in events that I cared about. But the Commonwealth games in a home country was far and away the most special experience of my diving career. It was because of the fact that for the first time in my career I was competing at a major event that didn't have friends and family, sat around the TV in blankets at some antisocial hour of the morning to watch my diving or to watch the highlights of my diving or whatever sort of was shown on TV. I wasn't removed from them. I was able to look them up into the stands and I just saw my family, my entire family sitting in the stands together.

When questioned whether a home Games was important for this to take place, Connor noted that a home games allowed such an opportunity to occur and that it would not have been possible in an external environment. Although Connor places emphasis on family and friends at the event, he also notes the realization of strangers supporting him simply due to the fact that he was an Australian representative competing in Australia. Connor recounts, “Never before have we stood up on a platform or a springboard or anything and had a crowd filled that cares about you as just by the country... that is displayed by your name on the scoreboard when you stand on the board.” On what characterizes Australians, specifically Australian sports people and why they receive moral support from the broader national community, Connor states, “the resilience of an underdog... the fact that we’re punching above our weight.”

### **Anabelle Smith**

Since the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney Australian divers have maintained a record of claiming a medal at every subsequent Olympic Games. Most recently this record was maintained in Rio with a bronze medal performance by Anabelle Smith, and

synchronized partner Maddison Keeney in the Women's three-meter Synchronized event. Much of Smith's career mirrors that of Connor in that she too was a member of the 2012 and 2016 Olympic Teams and has been a staple of Australian teams including the 2010, 2014, and 2018 Commonwealth Games, and the 2011, 2013, 2017, and 2019 World Championships. Smith, like Connor, also tried her hand at many sports in her youth namely athletics, having grown up in Melbourne.

Throughout her oral history, Smith makes constant mention to other sports people who had influenced and motivated her not only throughout her career in diving, but as a child growing up in Australia. Smith puts much of this early influence down to the experience of growing up while Australia was hosting the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney. It was this event that according to Smith, formed much of her foundational goals of one day becoming an Australian Olympian herself. Smith explains that in 2012 this goal had come to fruition in which she made her first Olympic team as a competitor at the London Games. Smith recounts, "It really had been my dream since pretty much seeing Cathy Freeman competing at the 2000 Olympics and win gold for Australia... it was just everything that I had worked for." Further Smith highlights that she later had the chance to meet and have conversations with Freeman once she herself had begun competing for Australia on the international stage, a sign of joining the previously mentioned exclusive club. For Smith it is evident that due to her early motivations, especially the influence of Sydney 2000, was not grounded in wanting to be like an Australian Olympian, but she herself to become the Olympian. That is to say, not be *like* an icon, but herself be an icon

of Australian identity. Smith makes direct reference to the exclusivity of becoming an Olympian:

Thinking about it now, calling myself an Olympian and an Australian Olympian is a very small exclusive club of people who can say they have represented our country at the Olympic Games. It's just something that shows your dedication and your sacrifices from your family.

Smith's reference to family, and especially the sacrifices of family, are highly in tune with Connor's notions of giving back to his direct community. It can be seen that both athletes view their position as an Olympian as a prize for hard work and dedication not only from the athlete themselves, but also their loved ones. In doing so, it is not just about the induction into an exclusive group, but also the result of the induction on their direct communities.

As with popular literature, Smith makes extensive reference to Australia as a sporting nation and as an extension Australians as sports engrossed people. Smith puts the roots of this association between the country and sport to athletic opportunities available to Australians, historical and cultural traditions, and a communal understanding of the dedication of athletes:

I think it's just like Australians are known for that kind of stuff. Sport in Australia is one of the most important things to follow, or one of the things to get behind, so even just the landscape in Australia. People have opportunities to play sport in Australia and access to sport in Australia. So when an event like the Olympic Games comes around, the country gets behind Australian teams and that also has a flow on effect to the Australian team that is competing. Everyone just gets behind each other, we are all there for one purpose and also realize the privilege that we have of being there and you know, how fortunate we all are, everyone knows how hard we've worked so you just want to get behind your mates.

According to Smith these cultural roots play a significant role in character formation of Australian national teams, especially Olympic Teams. Smith explains when drawing from her experience on the London 2012 Olympic Team, “the comradery around the Australian team was really really special and I think it stands out compared to other countries who don’t have that same thing.” On identifying what it is that makes Australian sporting culture special in comparison to other nation-states, Smith notes that Australians and Australian sports people specifically are renowned for their sportsmanship. Smith explains, “Just being good sportsmen, having good sportsmanship, being a leader, being a good role model, being a hard worker and just I guess having that dedication.”

Although Smith highlighted the ways in which the broader national community impacted not only her career, but culture of Australian Olympic Teams which she was a part of, she nevertheless places emphasis on the importance of her direct community in her career as an athlete. Even when referencing returning home having won a bronze medal at the 2016 Olympic Games, Smith’s narrative centers on reuniting with her direct community. Smith recounts, “When we landed back in Sydney we were taken into one of the big hangers and all your family and friends are invited to these hangers and there is media waiting and there is breakfast and so many cool things happening once you step off that plane.” Further Smith mirrors Connor’s experience of a home Commonwealth Games in that it gave her the opportunity to connect with her family through her sport, whereas with competitions abroad this was not possible:

The 2018 Commonwealth Games on the Gold Coast which was a home Games and had all my extended family to be able to come watch and support me having

watched through television screens for so many years being able to come and watch me in real life which was awesome.

It is important to note that this direct community for both Connor and Smith extends beyond just parents and siblings but further into extended family and close friends. Smith expands, “to be able to stand up and wave at my parents and my family in the stands, just being able to share that special moment was something that will always be a part of my greatest diving memories.” Smith again highlights the notion of sharing in that her career and her achievements were not solely for herself, but rather for those who have also made sacrifices to see her achieve.

### **Maddison Keeney**

Although there is limited public interest in the sport of diving in Australia, Maddison Keeney is perhaps the most publicly documented Australian diver of the last decade. This in part is due to not only her historic success including claiming the title of World Champion in both 2017 and 2019, and a previously mentioned Olympic medal in 2016, but also her widely publicized struggles in competition during the mid 2010s. Like a number of current Diving Australia National Squad members, Keeney was born outside of Australia hailing from Auckland, New Zealand. Keeney now trains in Brisbane with coach Adrian Hinchliffe, having spent much of her developmental years in Perth.

Keeney spent considerable time during her oral history talking about her performance as a diver from a technical standpoint, in that her dives, results, or comparison



with other athletes. This is of note in that when focusing on her position as an Australian representative at international competitions, Keeney draws from her experience directly related to the competition itself, rather than the fact that she is a representative. In short it is evident that Keeney connects far more with her identity as an Olympic diver than that of her identity as an Australian Olympian, a subtle yet important distinction. Even when recounting the time she made her first Australian national team as a competitor at the 2010 FINA World Junior Diving Championships, much of her narrative is grounded in how the experiences served as a stepping stone in her personal diving career as an athlete:

Yeah, I remember I was so excited. It's not that I didn't have any sort of any clue of what was going on but, you know, kind of, you know, I've been successful at nationals and my coaches has always encouraged me and given me a lot of support and confidence in, in doing well, but I never really had much confidence in competing and with my skill I guess, but, you know, the first time you put on the green and gold uniform you can't really forget it, even for just, you know, just a junior comp even though it's not just a junior competition, but, you know, it's an important developmental time.

Keeney puts this competitive attitude down to her mentality that diving and especially competing serves far more as a job than as a privilege. Keeney explains, "I think for a lot of people to be able to say, you know, 'I compete for Australia' you know, like, now it's kind of my job. But for a lot of, you know, younger athletes and athletes coming through that like, the biggest moment of their lives." Keeney highlights that her experience may differ from others, especially those in the early stages of their development as an athlete, or those who have had limited experience on the world stage as a national representative.

Although Keeney focused throughout her oral history on athletic performance rather than national representation, she did make considerable note to the importance of being a part of Australian teams, be that just a diving team or a multi-sport team. As her first major multi-sport event, the 2014 Commonwealth Games held in Glasgow, Keeney ties her connection with not only the Australian team, but also her close friends within the diving team:

I was in Glasgow with some of my best friends and we were walking out and taking pictures and there's confetti coming down and I just had this great internal happiness, you can't stop smiling. Just that sort of feeling, 'holy shit this is real', there are so many people screaming, you know, it's a huge overwhelming happiness of 'holy shit I'm here', not 'holy shit,' 'holy moley, I'm here.'

As can be seen even in recounting her experience as part of the Australian team at the Games, Keeney connects back to her understanding of performance in sport, in her realization of making it to that point in her career. Keeney mimics these notions when speaking on her experience as part of the Australian Olympic team in 2016. Keeney explains, "it really is humbling to see these other people being around me in Australia that are really successful and are really at the peak of their sport. That is pretty inspiring." Further, Keeney echoes other participants in this investigation in highlighting the importance of her direct community as a central force in her career, and as key figures in her personal narrative. When prompted for the moment in which she felt most connected to her Australian nationality, Keeney responded with an anecdote centered around having fun with her friends:

Yeah, this is going to sound strange there was one moment where I was just loving, just loving it. 2012 Junior World Championships, I can't remember if it was the closing ceremony sort of thing, but I think at the end they had some songs on and stuff like that. I think it was one of those Vanessa Amorosi songs, it might have been "absolutely everybody", or something similar, but I just remember they were playing that song and everyone was there, we were all singing, we flung our arms around each other and it was just such a uniting moment.

As is evident, Keeney in reflection on her career as an athlete draws from two key components. Her performance as an athlete, and the connection with people within her direct community.

On what characteristics embody Australian values or identity, Keeney offered yet another set of values based upon collective unity regardless of national heritage. Keeney notes, "Supporting each other and everyone just being there for each other. For me it is the whole comradery, I don't really know how to better explain. No matter where you were from, or what you are doing, people are supporting you." In Keeney's experience this is best exemplified by a number of foreign coaches who she has had in her career, both at home in Perth and at her current training center Brisbane:

It's not that they couldn't care about who they were coaching for, but they just have so much passion, they're so supportive of their country, to them, Australia is their country no matter where they originally were from. Just like me, I wasn't born in Australia, but I am Australian, so I know they are Australian as well.

Keeney offers insight into the ways in which a foreign-born Australian athlete connects with their community. This insight proves useful in study of contemporary Australian sports team, especially diving teams, due to increased multiculturalism in recent decades. From her individual experience it is clear that although she embraces her view on what it

means to be Australian, and takes note of how it influences those around her, she connects far more with those she personally knows.

## **Discussion**

The conducted oral histories with Australian Olympians in the sport of diving both prior to and after the inclusion of diving into the Australian Institute of Sport yielded significant insight into viewpoints of Australian sporting representatives as it relates to their notions of shared identity with their nation-state. These insights, which have been explored at length in the previous chapter, can be analyzed and condensed into five key findings. (1) Across all participates in the oral histories there is an understanding that by making an Australian Olympic Team, the athlete themselves is inducted into an exclusive club which yields importance for the individual and their direct community. (2) Direct communities play a far more important role in the understanding of identity and motivation for Australian Divers than the broader national community. (3) There is little consensus between participates on the specific values or components that contribute towards a greater Australian national identity. (4) Australian Olympic divers who participated in the oral histories refer to the collective 'we' as other athletes, be that divers on the same team or athletes from other sports within a multi-sport Australian team, rather than Australians as a whole. And (5) There is little change in understanding of identify between those who competed for Australia prior to 1984 and those who competed at the most recent Olympic Games. Each of these five conclusions will be discussed in detail in this chapter.

## **Exclusivity**

In discussing the importance of becoming an Australian representative at the pinnacle of their sport, the participating Olympians far and above identified the inclusion into an exclusive group as the seminal factor of importance. This is to imply that it is not the act of representation that serves as significant, but rather the position as a representative. Foley noted that in being selected as part of the 1976 Olympic team he became a part of “a select few” who could call themselves Australian Olympians. Grove, who perhaps showed the strongest connection with his Australian identity, highlights how inclusion into this exclusive group can bring about “pride”. Furthermore, Jack explains that it is not only about becoming an Australian Olympian, but simply an Olympian which expands this club and, in some cases, heightens the prestige of the group itself. Jack references Olga Korburt, one of the greatest gymnasts of all time, in that both her and Korburt were members of the same group due to their positions as Olympians. Connor describing the Olympic Games as a realm reserved for “the best”, further expands on Jack’s notion of excellence. An emphasis must be placed on Connor’s use of the word “reserved” which advances the concept of exclusivity. Smith directly addresses how an Australian Olympic team serves as an elite group in which she describes it as a, “small exclusive club of people”, and through this gives importance to induction over representation. Due to Smith’s clarity, her language in addressing this notion is suitable for further analysis. Although Keeney did not directly address her position within a select group, she did highlight the ways in which that group helped influence her career and outlook on identity. Through the six oral histories conducted, there is clear evidence that Australian Olympic

divers attach notions of achievement with the inclusion in a select elite group. These notions could have developed in part due to the Australian Government's focus on sports policy and funding of elite sport to achieve broad national objectives as explained by Farmer and Arnadaun<sup>68</sup> and more recently Stewart<sup>69</sup>. In that due to nature of sports policy and direction in Australia the status of Australian athletes in society is amplified and as such, many aspire to be included with such a group. This achievement is heightened with participation in an Olympic Games and with such, becoming a member of an Australian Olympic Team. It is vital to acknowledge that this inclusion connects the individual with other athletes and in turn helps to inform their own identity as an athlete. As previously mentioned, the response from the Olympians suggest that it is this induction that makes representation meaningful, not just the representation itself.

### **Direct Community**

As has been explored at length through the results, the participants in this project exhibited strong connections with the people they have actual relationships with, or rather as has been described, their direct community. This community differs from Anderson's notion of the imagined community in that people within this community have clearly observed interactions with the participant over a period of time. Between the two groups there seems to be a greater emphasis on the connection with this direct community for those

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<sup>68</sup> Lisa Stachura, Laurence Hilmond Chalip, and Arthur T. Johnson, *National Sports Policies: An International Handbook* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1996).

<sup>69</sup> Stewart et al., *Australian Sport*.

who competed at the most recent Olympic Games. However, it is important to note that much of this connection as described through their narratives are centered around their experience with a recent home Commonwealth Games. Nevertheless, there is evidence across all participants of this strong connection, far stronger than their connection with their national community. As little formal work has been conducted on how Australian athletes identify within their communities, it is difficult to compare this component of study with preexisting research. Both Foley and Jack tie the importance of the 1976 Opening Ceremony in Montreal to having people they personally knew in the stands. For Foley this was former divers from his hometown of Melbourne, in the case of Jack, her parents. Both ways in which at a global event, as national representatives, it was a connection with their direct community that proved most memorable in their narratives. As for the more recent group of Olympian participants, each recount the ways in which a home event allowed their friends and family members to be a part of their diving experience as an Australian competitor. These athletes put down having their direct community at the event as the single most important factor in making the event both special and memorable. Further, Connor due to this factor, notes that this event was the highlight of his career. It cannot be overstated the importance of these athlete's direct community on the construct of identity that these athletes exhibit. Even in moments of great significance, the influence of this community comes to the forefront of discourse.



## Australian Values

Literature outlines a number of key values which help influence constructs of modern Australian national identity. Although much of this work draws from similar historical figures and events which influence these values, there is a mixed account of what these values truly are. For example, Alomes and Jones in referencing the foundational ANZAC legacy, note youthfulness and courage as significant.<sup>70</sup> Whereas Mann highlights cosmopolitanism as a cornerstone of Australian identity due to policy objectives in the second half of the twentieth Century.<sup>71</sup> Further White argues that Protestantism and Britishness serve as major contributors to early notions of identity due to a colonial heritage.<sup>72</sup> Much in the same way, there is little consensus between participants in this investigation on the facts that contribute towards the shared national identity. As the group of younger participants voiced their views on these factors more predominantly in their oral histories, they will be used for primary examination in this regard. Smith directly highlighted Australia as a sporting nation in that sport plays a vital component to the lives of Australian people and in turn helps influence their values. Furthermore, Smith acknowledges sportsmanship as highly important to Australian teams, and as an extension Australians. From Keeney's viewpoint, both comradeship and unity regardless of national origin serve as major components of shared national values. Connor, as is the case with many researchers, concludes that the status as an underdog is a key feature in that

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<sup>70</sup> Alomes and Jones, *Australian Nationalism*.

<sup>71</sup> Mann, *The Search for a New National Identity*.

<sup>72</sup> White, *Inventing Australia*.

Australians more often than not outperform their expectations, at least in the eyes of popular writers. Both the lack of consciences on collective Australia values, and the values themselves as expressed by the participants in this research, are in line with the broader body of work on Australian identity.

### **Collective ‘We’**

As this study draws from oral histories and is centered around discursive analysis, it would be remiss not to address the language used by participants. Further, this analysis is focused on the constructs of self-identity within groups of varying importance and size to the individual. As such, an emphasis is placed on studying the ways in which Olympians from both groups use collective pronouns. The participants used collective pronouns in their oral histories, such as “we” and “us”, to refer to themselves and a group of other athletes, be that within a diving team, or multi-sport team at a major event such as the Olympic Games. This notion is perhaps most pertinent in the recounting of Smith’s personal narrative throughout her oral history. Smith in explaining Australian values as a whole refers to the broader community as “Australians” whereas she refers to the Australian team at an Olympic Games as “we”. This signifies the ways in which Smith connects far more with athletes than the broader Australian public and as such this informs her identity. Smith further uses “we” to describe an Australian Olympic team upon returning home from the Rio Games, where in this situation Smith identifies the ‘other’ group as members of the media. In a similar tone Grove recounts returning home after the

1972 Munich Olympic Games. In referencing the coverage of the Munich Massacre, Grove refers to athletes who were a part of the team as “we” and the other group identified as “broadcasters”, even when both groups shared a single nationality. Furthermore, Conner, Jack, Foley, and Keeney all refer to “we” as either Australian divers, Australian diving teams, or multi-sport Australian teams. It is also of significance that none of the participants regularly referred to themselves within the Australian community as “we”. It is important to note however, that although these athletes identify more closely with their position as athletes, this does not mean that they do not identify with any other groups, namely their previously mentioned direct community nor with their nationality. This is in line with Anthony Smith’s understanding of multiple identities which may coexist simultaneously.<sup>73</sup>

### **Effect of Globalization**

As the basis of this investigation was to address the question of the impact of globalization on notions of national identity, it would be remiss not to consider the topic of change. To track this impact of globalization on the ways in which athletes connect with the Australian community and in turn their own national identity, the 1984 inclusion of diving into the Australian Institute of Sport is used as a major turning point in Australian sporting history. This moment aptly captures an increasingly globalized country in that the creation brought with it coaches, ideas, and systems from across the globe. Cashman postmarks the end of the nineteenth century as a crucial time for Australian identity

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<sup>73</sup> Smith, *National Identity*.

formation as it relates to sport. This is in no small part a result of the influx in migration, the direct consequent of the South Eastern Australian Gold Rush.<sup>74</sup> This would suggest that a second wave of migration and increase in cosmopolitanism, one which effects the sporting community directly, would see a further shift in understanding of shared national identity. This globalization is increasingly evident as is the case with diving in the late 1980s and into the 1990s with the targeted employment of Chinese coaches into the Australian diving community. This account of Chinese influence, and subsequent athletic success of Australian divers in the 2000s, is well documented by Wilson.<sup>75</sup> This is further supported by Tao, Rynne, and Mallett with their work on Chinese coaches, and cultural assimilation.<sup>76</sup> As has been explored throughout this discussion, the participants of these oral histories had little tangible connection with their Australian community. This is not to say that it does not exist, but rather to highlight that through discursive means, this connection was neither consciously nor subconsciously expressed to a frequent by the athletes. Instead, conversations regarding identity centered around their definite ‘in group’ of both other elite athletes, especially Olympians, and their direct community, with an emphasis on family members. Further, this disconnect is displayed by a clear lack of consensus on the components of Australian values. In short, although globalization has clearly occurred, and has had impacts on Australian diving, there has been little to no impact on understandings of national identity. The results from this investigation would

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<sup>74</sup> Cashman, *Paradise of Sport*.

<sup>75</sup> Wilson, *The History of Australian Diving*.

<sup>76</sup> Tao, Rynne, and Mallett, “Blending and Becoming”.

suggest that this is fundamentally due to the lack of understanding in the first place. Simply, there is no change, because change cannot occur to something that was not, and is still not expressed in the identity of the participants through discursive means.

If then we are to return to our initial assumption that Australian Olympians are symbols of national identity, and as such embody the values of Australians as a whole, this investigation can be used to understand what Australian identity is by drawing from the identity of these athletes. As such, this study asserts Australians connect closely with their direct communities, they care strongly about and strive for their inclusion into exclusive groups, and connect strongly with their identity as sportspeople.

## **Conclusion**

There is little observable difference in notions of national identity between Australian Olympic Divers who represented Australia at an Olympic Games prior to the foundation of the Australian Institute of Sport and in the most recent decade who participated in the conducted oral histories. This however is not indicative of a lack of change due to globalization, but rather due to these athletes identifying far more with their direct communities than their broader national community. This is to say that there is no change in connection with the broader Australian community between groups, because there is limited connection in the first place.

As has been expressed through popular culture and academic literature, Australians have a strong affinity with their sports and as an extension their sports people. This affinity extends beyond a simple admiration to a strong connection in which they feel a personal relationship even when no tangible personal relationship exists. From this study, it is evident that the Australian Olympic divers who participated do not infer this same relationship towards the broader national community. Further, it is apparent that this is not a new phenomenon in that it has been the case for at least the past four decades. However, there is some evidence that a connection may exist at some points in time, such as a home major multi-sport event.

If we are to accept the assumption that Australian elite athletes are symbols of Australian shared national identity, their viewpoints on both what it means to be Australian, and their personal characteristics can be interpreted as fundamentally Australian. This is to

say Australian elite athletes are the epitome of being Australian and as such their values uniquely embody 'Australianness'. As the participants from this study fit this mold, they offer insight towards this notion. Although the participants cannot speak for the greater Australian Olympian population, it is clear that there is limited consensus on the shared values clearly expressed. This conclusion adds to Richards White's argument that in truth there is no real Australian national identity at all, even with increased investigation to uncover such an identity. However, through discourse it is evident that these athletes valued their direct community, personal achievement, and recognition of hard work. As such, these values can be viewed as contributing to an Australian identity.

This study has a number of limitations. Although these participants represent a significant proportion of the population of Australian Olympic divers, due to the nature of oral histories, and the inability to infer evidence of the greater population, these results are not generalizable. A collection and subsequent analysis of the oral histories from the population as a whole would provide further insight and provide useful for drawing concrete conclusions from Australian Olympic divers. Further, it would be beneficial to expand this study to incorporate athletes from all Olympic disciplines to broaden understanding of Australian identity in all Olympic athletes, using the time periods presented in this investigation.

The results found in this investigation provide both new and significant insight into concepts of national identity in Australian Olympic athletes, the limited impact of

globalization on these concepts, and highly prioritized Australian values. Further research should be conducted extending this study and the framework utilized.



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