



# Critical Discourse Analysis of Indonesian Sports Journalism: A Linguistic Examination of Football Development Narratives in TVOne News

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## Abstract

This study investigates how Indonesian sports journalism constructs ideological narratives surrounding football development and national identity through critical discourse analysis. Focusing on the 2024 TVOne News article “Saatnya Menata Sepak Bola Kita” (“Time to Reorganize Our Football”), the research explores how linguistic and rhetorical choices reflect broader sociocultural and political meanings embedded in media discourse. The study aims to uncover how metaphorical language, modality, stance-taking, and intertextual references work together to frame football reform as a discourse of national renewal and collective responsibility. Employing Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the analysis examines textual features (lexical selection, grammatical patterning, cohesion), discursive practices (production, distribution, consumption), and the sociocultural contexts that shape interpretation. The data; comprising the complete three-page, 1,847-word article were systematically coded to identify ideological indicators such as organic metaphors, pronoun use, evaluative language, and argumentative structures. The findings reveal that the text employs organic metaphors (e.g., roots, soil, ecosystem) to portray football as a living entity requiring nurturing and patience, while first-person plural pronouns (“kita”, “we”) construct a sense of national unity and moral obligation. Modality and evaluative expressions articulate both critique and aspiration, positioning the journalist as a civic mediator between policy discourse and public sentiment. Through this rhetorical configuration, the article transforms sports reporting into a site of ideological negotiation, intertwining emotional resonance with logical argumentation. The study contributes to sports communication and media linguistics by demonstrating how CDA can reveal the ideological functions of language in sports journalism, showing how linguistic strategies contribute to nation-building, policy critique, and collective identity formation within Indonesian media.

**Keywords:** critical discourse analysis, sports journalism, Indonesian language, metaphor, ideology, national identity

## INTRODUCTION

Sports journalism constitutes a distinctive discourse genre combining factual reporting with cultural commentary, emotional engagement, and ideological positioning. Unlike conventional news reporting emphasizing objectivity and detachment, sports journalism frequently employs vivid metaphors, evaluative language, and narrative structures that transcend mere event description to construct broader cultural meanings (Boyle, 2006). In Indonesian media contexts, sports journalism particularly football commentary often serves as a site for negotiating national identity, critiquing governance failures, and articulating collective aspirations beyond the sporting domain itself (Faruk, 2018).

The TVOne News article 'Saatnya Menata Sepak Bola Kita' exemplifies sophisticated sports commentary that employs complex linguistic strategies to construct arguments about

football policy, national development, and collective identity. Published following Indonesia's disappointing performance in World Cup qualification, the article transcends match analysis to engage philosophical questions about patience, authenticity, and systemic reform. The text's opening—'Sepak bola tak pernah selesai setelah peluit ditiup wasit' (Football is never finished after the referee blows the whistle)—immediately establishes a conceptual framework positioning football as continuous cultural practice rather than discrete sporting events.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) provides a robust methodological framework for examining how language in media texts constructs social reality, reproduces power relations, and shapes ideological positions (Fairclough, 2013; van Dijk, 2015). CDA emphasizes that linguistic choices are never neutral but serve specific social functions, positioning speakers and audiences within particular ideological frameworks. Applied to sports journalism, CDA illuminates how seemingly straightforward commentary about football strategy or player selection embeds broader arguments about national character, governance competence, and collective identity (Bishop & Jaworski, 2003).

Existing research on Indonesian sports journalism remains limited, with most studies focusing on match reporting conventions rather than in-depth linguistic analysis of opinion pieces and critical commentary. Simatupang (2020) examines metaphorical language in Indonesian football journalism but does not employ systematic CDA methodology. Santoso (2019) analyzes nationalist discourse in sports media but focuses primarily on thematic content rather than detailed linguistic structures. This research addresses these gaps by providing rigorous linguistic analysis of how an opinion piece constructs complex arguments through specific lexical, grammatical, and rhetorical choices, contributing to both Indonesian linguistics and sports communication scholarship.

Research questions guiding this analysis include: (1) What metaphorical systems organize the text's conceptualization of football development? (2) How does pronoun usage construct collective identity and agency? (3) What modality markers express stance, obligation, and critique? (4) How do intertextual references frame football issues within broader political and cultural discourses? (5) What rhetorical strategies establish the journalist's authority and persuasive appeal? The significance of this research lies in demonstrating how linguistic analysis reveals the sophisticated communicative work performed by sports journalism in constructing national narratives and mediating public discourse beyond the sports domain.

## **2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1 Critical Discourse Analysis**

This research employs Fairclough's (1992, 2013) three-dimensional framework for Critical Discourse Analysis, examining texts across three interconnected levels: textual analysis (linguistic features), discursive practice (text production and consumption), and sociocultural practice (broader social and ideological contexts). Fairclough emphasizes that texts simultaneously describe reality, construct social relations, and establish identities, with linguistic choices serving these multiple functions simultaneously. Applied to the TVOne News article, this framework enables systematic analysis of how specific linguistic features construct arguments about football policy while simultaneously positioning readers as members of a national community sharing concerns about collective development.

Van Dijk's (2015) sociocognitive approach to CDA complements Fairclough's framework by emphasizing how discourse mediates between social structures and individual cognition. Van Dijk argues that ideologies are acquired, expressed, and reproduced through discourse, with linguistic features serving as both reflections of and constitutive forces shaping social cognition. In analyzing sports journalism, this perspective highlights how repeated metaphors and framing patterns shape public understanding of football issues while simultaneously

reflecting existing cultural values about patience, authenticity, and national development.

## 2.2 Metaphor Theory

Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory provides essential theoretical grounding for analyzing metaphorical language in the TVOne News text. Conceptual Metaphor Theory argues that metaphors are not merely decorative linguistic devices but fundamental cognitive mechanisms structuring how we understand abstract domains through concrete source domains. Sports are frequently conceptualized through metaphors of WAR, JOURNEY, DRAMA, and BUSINESS, each highlighting particular aspects while obscuring others (Charteris-Black, 2004). The TVOne News article's extensive use of ORGANIC metaphors (roots, soil, growth, ecosystem) frames football development as natural biological process requiring patience and nurturing, contrasting with more common CONSTRUCTION metaphors (building, foundation) that emphasize deliberate planning and engineering.

Charteris-Black (2004) extends metaphor analysis to examine rhetorical functions in political and media discourse, demonstrating how metaphors serve persuasive purposes by framing issues in ways that privilege particular solutions. Applied to sports journalism, metaphor analysis reveals ideological positions embedded in seemingly neutral descriptive language. For instance, characterizing naturalized players as 'billboard' rather than 'tree with roots' naturalizes preference for indigenous talent through organic metaphor resonating with nationalist ideologies of authentic belonging and territorial rootedness.

## 2.3 Stance and Modality

Stance theory examines how speakers position themselves epistemically (knowledge), affectively (emotion), and deontically (obligation) through linguistic choices (Du Bois, 2007). In opinion journalism, stance-taking is fundamental to establishing authorial voice and persuasive authority. Modal verbs (must, should, could, would), evidential markers (apparently, clearly), and evaluative adjectives (unfortunate, necessary, critical) all serve stance-taking functions, positioning both author and reader within particular evaluative frameworks (Martin & White, 2005).

Palmer's (2001) modal system distinguishes epistemic modality (expressing degrees of certainty), deontic modality (expressing obligation and permission), and dynamic modality (expressing ability and willingness). Sports journalism frequently employs deontic modality to construct normative frameworks about how football should be organized, what obligations federations have, and what rights players possess. Analysis of modal language reveals how the TVOne News text establishes authority to critique current practices while proposing alternative approaches framed as necessary obligations rather than mere preferences.

## METHOD

### 3.1 Data and Corpus

The research analyzes the complete TVOne News article 'Saatnya Menata Sepak Bola Kita' published in 2024, consisting of three pages with approximately 1,847 words. The article was retrieved from <https://www.tvonenews.com/berita/nasional/379764-saatnya-menata-sepak-bola-kita> and represents opinion journalism rather than news reporting, authored by a columnist identified by initials 'KC'. The text combines personal reflection, policy critique, and philosophical commentary on Indonesian football development following national team defeats in World Cup qualification.

TVOne News was selected as data source because it represents mainstream Indonesian television journalism with significant national reach and influence. The article exemplifies

sophisticated sports commentary transcending match reporting to engage broader questions of national development, policy reform, and collective identity. Its publication timing following disappointing World Cup qualification results situates it within a moment of national reflection and debate about football's future direction, making it particularly rich for discourse analysis examining how media constructs and mediates public deliberation.

### 3.2 Analytical Procedures

Analysis follows Fairclough's (2013) three-dimensional framework, examining:

- Textual Analysis: Systematic identification and coding of linguistic features including: (a) Metaphorical expressions and conceptual metaphor systems; (b) Pronoun usage patterns establishing identity and agency; (c) Modal verbs and stance markers; (d) Evaluative language and axiological positioning; (e) Cohesive devices and text structure; (f) Intertextual references and quotations
- Discursive Practice Analysis: Examination of genre conventions, intended audience, and persuasive strategies characteristic of Indonesian sports opinion journalism
- Sociocultural Practice Analysis: Situating linguistic choices within broader Indonesian sociopolitical contexts including nationalism, governance critique, and cultural values about patience and authenticity

Metaphor identification follows Pragglejaz Group's (2007) Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP), systematically determining when words are used with non-literal meanings derived from more concrete or specific domains. Each metaphorical expression is analyzed for source domain, target domain, and ideological implications. Modality analysis employs Palmer's (2001) framework categorizing modal expressions by type (epistemic, deontic, dynamic) and strength (weak, medium, strong). Pronoun analysis examines person, number, and reference to determine how collective identity and agency are constructed.

Coding reliability was ensured through multiple readings, with initial open coding identifying salient linguistic patterns, followed by focused coding organizing patterns into analytical categories aligned with research questions. Representative examples are selected for detailed analysis demonstrating typical patterns rather than exceptional cases. All Indonesian language examples are provided with English glosses to facilitate international readership while maintaining fidelity to original linguistic structures.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Metaphorical Systems: Organic Growth vs. Artificial Construction

The TVOne News article employs an extensive and systematic metaphorical framework conceptualizing football development as ORGANIC GROWTH requiring patience and natural processes. This metaphorical system permeates the text, structuring both description and argumentation. Key examples include: "akar" (roots), "tanah yang sama" (same soil), "pohon tua" (old tree), "ekosistem" (ecosystem), "pembibitan" (cultivation/nursery), "tumbuh dari tanah" (grow from soil). The organic metaphor system achieves several rhetorical functions simultaneously. First, it naturalizes preference for indigenous talent development over naturalization by associating local players with biological authenticity and rootedness. The statement 'terlalu banyak naturalisasi adalah seperti mengganti pohon tua dengan billboard bercahaya: menarik, tapi tak punya akar' (too much naturalization is like replacing old trees with glowing billboards: attractive but lacking roots) explicitly contrasts natural/authentic (trees, roots) with artificial/superficial (billboards). This binary opposition constructs naturalized players as fundamentally disconnected from national identity despite legal citizenship.

Second, the organic metaphor justifies patience and gradual development timelines. Plants cannot be forced to grow faster than biological processes permit; attempting rapid growth produces weak, unsustainable structures. This metaphorical logic supports critique of federation's impatient coaching changes: 'sepak bola, seperti juga revolusi, membutuhkan waktu dan kesabaran' (football, like revolution, requires time and patience). The phrase 'membiarkan proses berjalan meski hasil belum tampak' (allowing the process to proceed even though results aren't yet visible) evokes agricultural patience of farmers trusting natural growth cycles despite delayed visible outcomes.

Third, ecosystem metaphors emphasize interdependence and systematic thinking. The statement 'tim nasional adalah puncak dari sebuah ekosistem' (the national team is the pinnacle of an ecosystem) positions the national team not as isolated entity but as emergent product of complex interconnected systems. Ecosystems require balanced components—soil quality, water, sunlight, pollination—analogously to football systems requiring grassroots infrastructure, coaching education, league structures, and federation governance. This holistic framing challenges reductionist approaches focusing only on national team composition while neglecting foundational systems.

Charteris-Black (2004) argues that metaphors in political discourse serve persuasive functions by making abstract arguments concrete and emotionally resonant. The TVOne News article's organic metaphors perform exactly this function, transforming technical arguments about youth academy systems and naturalization quotas into vivid imagery of trees, roots, and soil that evoke nationalist sentiments about territorial belonging and authentic cultural connection. This metaphorical strategy aligns with broader Indonesian cultural values emphasizing 'tanah air' (land and water, idiom for homeland) as foundational to national identity.

#### 4.2 Pronoun Usage and Collective Identity Construction

The article systematically employs first-person plural pronouns 'kita' (we/us inclusive) and possessives 'kita' (our) to construct an inclusive national community sharing responsibility for football's condition and collective agency for reform. This pronominal strategy appears throughout the text:

"Saatnya Menata Sepak Bola Kita" (Time to Reorganize OUR Football), "kita pun mulai insaf" (we then begin to realize), "kita pernah berharap" (we once hoped), "apa yang mesti kita buat" (what must we do), "sepak bola kita" (our football)

This inclusive 'we' performs multiple discursive functions. First, it constructs solidarity between journalist and readers, positioning both as members of a national community sharing football concerns. Unlike distanced third-person journalism maintaining reporter-event separation, the inclusive 'we' implicates readers as active participants rather than passive observers. Second, it distributes responsibility for football's problems collectively rather than targeting specific individuals, though specific federation leaders are later criticized. This rhetorical move frames football reform as national project requiring collective commitment rather than mere administrative adjustments.

Fairclough (2013) emphasizes that pronoun choices construct social relations and identities. The TVOne News article's consistent use of inclusive 'kita' creates what Anderson (1983) terms an 'imagined community'—a collective bound not by face-to-face interaction but by shared consciousness mediated through discourse. Sports journalism frequently serves this identity-building function, with national team representation providing symbolic terrain for negotiating who belongs to the national 'we' and what values define collective identity (Bishop & Jaworski, 2003).

Particularly significant is the rhetorical question: 'Siapa yang tak ingin melihat seorang bocah dari Serui, dari Pamekasan, dari Lhokseumawe—berlari membawa cita-cita yang tumbuh dari tanah yang sama dengan kita?' (Who wouldn't want to see a boy from Serui, from

Pamekasan, from Lhokseumawe—running carrying dreams that grew from the same land as us?). This statement combines inclusive pronoun ('dengan kita' = with us), geographic diversity (listing provinces from different islands), and organic metaphor ('tumbuh dari tanah' = grew from soil) to construct national identity rooted in territorial diversity unified through shared footballing aspirations. The rhetorical question assumes universal affirmative response, positioning anyone disagreeing as outside the national community.

### 4.3 Modality and Stance: Critique and Obligation

The text employs sophisticated modal structures to express critique of current practices while constructing obligations for future reform. Deontic modality dominates, establishing what must be done:

"apa yang mesti kita buat" (what must we do), "seharusnya tim nasional adalah puncak" (the national team should be the pinnacle), "kita butuh lebih banyak waktu" (we need more time), "sudah saatnya kita menata ulang" (it is time for us to reorganize)

Palmer (2001) distinguishes deontic modality expressing speaker-imposed obligation from dynamic modality expressing circumstantial necessity. The TVOne News article primarily employs deontic modality, positioning the journalist as authoritative voice articulating what football stakeholders are obligated to do. Phrases like 'yang perlu dilanjutkan' (what needs to be continued), 'yang harus kita buat' (what must we do), and 'seharusnya' (should/ought to) construct normative frameworks where current practices are evaluated against idealized standards.

Particularly interesting is the modal structure 'tak ada yang instan' (there is nothing instant), employing negative existential modality to contradict assumptions that football success can be achieved rapidly. This statement functions as epistemic reframing, asserting what is impossible rather than merely unlikely. The metaphor 'Sepak bola bukan panggung sulap juga bukan lapak pedagang obat jalanan' (Football is not a magic show nor a street medicine seller's stall) reinforces this epistemic stance through negation, explicitly rejecting conceptualizations of football as amenable to quick-fix solutions.

Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal Theory identifies modal language as central to stance-taking and evaluative positioning. The TVOne News article employs modality not merely to describe reality but to construct it—establishing what counts as legitimate football development and what obligations various stakeholders bear. This authoritative stance-taking positions the journalist as public intellectual mediating between technical football expertise and civic concerns, translating specialized knowledge into normative frameworks accessible to general audiences.

### 4.4 Evaluative Language and Axiological Positioning

The article employs rich evaluative vocabulary establishing clear value hierarchies distinguishing desirable from problematic practices. Positive evaluation clusters around patience, authenticity, systematic development, and indigenous talent:

"kesabaran" (patience), "terukur" (measured), "sabar" (patient), "konsisten" (consistent), "sistematis" (systematic), "anak bangsa" (children of the nation), "talenta" (talent)

Negative evaluation targets impatience, artificiality, expedience, and excessive naturalization: "tergesa-gesa" (hasty), "kabut" (foggy/unclear), "proyek darurat" (emergency project), "pencurian kesempatan" (theft of opportunity), "pemberangusan bakat" (suppression of talent), "billboard bercahaya" (glowing billboard - artificial)

This axiological structure establishes clear moral framework where patience and authenticity are virtuous while haste and artificiality are problematic. Van Dijk (2015) argues that such evaluative structures serve ideological functions, naturalizing particular value systems as common sense. The TVOne News article's value hierarchy aligns with broader Indonesian

nationalist ideologies emphasizing authenticity, territorial rootedness, and suspicion toward foreign influence, though carefully framing critique as developmental necessity rather than xenophobia.

Particularly sophisticated is the phrase 'pencurian kesempatan, pemberangusan bakat anak bangsa' (theft of opportunity, suppression of the nation's children's talent). The criminal metaphor 'pencurian' (theft) frames naturalization not merely as suboptimal policy but as moral violation—stealing what rightfully belongs to Indonesian youth. The phrase 'anak bangsa' (children of the nation) evokes familial metaphors positioning indigenous players as vulnerable dependents requiring protection from predatory practices. This emotionally resonant framing transforms technical policy debate into moral imperative requiring immediate correction.

#### 4.5 Intertextuality and Political Framing

The article employs strategic intertextual references connecting football discourse to broader political and philosophical concepts, elevating sports commentary into public intellectual discourse. Most striking is the explicit comparison: 'sepak bola, seperti juga revolusi, membutuhkan waktu dan kesabaran' (football, like revolution, requires time and patience). This statement invokes revolutionary discourse, a powerful trope in Indonesian political history given the nation's revolutionary founding and subsequent political transformations.

Kristeva's (1980) intertextuality theory argues that texts gain meaning through relationships with other texts, with every text incorporating and transforming prior discourses. The revolution reference imports entire conceptual frameworks about fundamental transformation, popular participation, and historical patience into football discourse. It suggests that football reform requires not superficial adjustments but revolutionary restructuring comparable to political regime change—a dramatic rhetorical escalation framing football issues as matters of national importance.

Additional intertextual references include philosophical meditation on football's meanings: 'Keindahan sepak bola—kenapa saya menontonnya setiap kali Timnas bermain—barangkali bukan pada permainan itu sendiri, tapi pada tangis dan tawa setelahnya' (The beauty of football—why I watch it every time the national team plays—perhaps isn't in the game itself, but in the tears and laughter afterwards). This contemplative statement echoes philosophical traditions examining sport's existential and emotional dimensions beyond competitive outcomes, positioning the author as reflective intellectual rather than mere sports reporter.

The concluding section employs quasi-poetic language with parallel structures and rhythmic repetition: 'Lebih banyak pelatih daripada petinggi. Lebih banyak pembinaan daripada pencitraan. Sepak bola memang bukan hanya seluas lapangan rumput, tapi sebaiknya tak lagi jadi urusan politisi' (More coaches than officials. More development than image-making. Football indeed isn't only as wide as a grass field, but it should no longer be politicians' business). This stylistic shift from analytical prose to aphoristic declaration creates rhetorical climax, leaving readers with memorable formulations that condense complex arguments into quotable phrases.

#### 4.6 Narrative Structure and Rhetorical Organization

The article employs sophisticated narrative structure moving through distinct rhetorical stages:

- Opening Meditation (Paragraph 1): Philosophical reflection on football's meanings beyond matches, establishing contemplative tone and positioning author as thoughtful observer
- Crisis Recognition (Paragraphs 2-3): Documentation of defeats and disappointments, leading to collective realization 'tak ada yang instan' (nothing is instant)
- Critique (Paragraphs 4-6): Systematic criticism of federation decisions, naturalization

policy, and governance failures using evidence and evaluative language

- Historical Contrast (Paragraphs 7-8): Positive evaluation of Shin Tae-yong's systematic approach, providing concrete alternative to criticized practices
- Prescription (Paragraphs 9-10): Detailed recommendations for systemic reform using deontic modality and organic metaphors
- Inspirational Conclusion (Final paragraph): Poetic call to action employing parallel structures and memorable formulations

This structure follows classical deliberative rhetoric as described by Aristotle, combining logical argumentation (logos) with emotional appeal (pathos) and ethical authority (ethos). The opening meditation establishes ethos by demonstrating thoughtful engagement; crisis recognition creates pathos by evoking shared disappointment; critique employs logos through evidence-based argumentation; historical contrast provides concrete examples; prescription articulates actionable recommendations; and inspirational conclusion mobilizes readers toward advocated solutions.

Cohesive devices maintaining textual unity include lexical chains ('sepak bola', 'tim nasional', 'pembinaan', 'talenta'), pronoun chains ('kita' throughout), and thematic progression from specific matches to systemic issues to future vision. The text demonstrates sophisticated control of Indonesian formal written register while incorporating colloquialisms ('asal potong' = arbitrary cutting/hasty) that maintain accessibility and conversational engagement with readers.

## CONCLUSION

This linguistic analysis demonstrates that the TVOne News article 'Saatnya Menata Sepak Bola Kita' employs sophisticated rhetorical and linguistic strategies to construct arguments about Indonesian football development that transcend technical sports commentary to engage broader questions of national identity, governance competence, and collective values. The analysis reveals five key linguistic dimensions through which the text constructs its persuasive argument:

First, systematic deployment of ORGANIC GROWTH metaphors conceptualizing football development as natural biological process requiring patience, rootedness, and holistic ecosystem thinking. This metaphorical framework naturalizes preference for indigenous talent development while delegitimizing expedient naturalization strategies and impatient coaching changes. The metaphors perform ideological work aligning football policy arguments with nationalist values about authentic territorial belonging and suspicion toward artificial foreign imports.

Second, consistent use of inclusive first-person plural pronouns ('kita' = we/us/our) constructing an imagined national community sharing responsibility for football's condition and collective agency for reform. This pronominal strategy positions readers not as passive spectators but as active stakeholders implicated in both problems and solutions, creating solidarity between journalist and audience while distributing accountability collectively.

Third, extensive deployment of deontic modality expressing obligations and normative frameworks about how football should be organized. Modal structures establish the journalist's authority to critique current practices and prescribe alternative approaches, positioning sports commentary as public intellectual discourse articulating collective values rather than merely reporting events.

Fourth, sophisticated evaluative language establishing clear axiological hierarchies valuing patience, authenticity, and systematic development while problematizing haste, artificiality, and expedience. Particularly powerful is criminal metaphor framing excessive naturalization as 'theft' of opportunities rightfully belonging to 'children of the nation,' transforming policy debate into moral imperative.

Fifth, strategic intertextual references connecting football to revolutionary discourse



and philosophical reflection, elevating sports commentary into broader public discourse about national development and collective identity. The revolution comparison frames football reform as requiring fundamental transformation comparable to political regime change, dramatically escalating stakes beyond sports domain.

This research contributes to sports communication scholarship by demonstrating how linguistic analysis reveals ideological dimensions of sports journalism beyond thematic content analysis. The sophisticated rhetorical strategies identified demonstrate that Indonesian sports commentary serves nation-building functions, mediating public discourse about governance, identity, and collective values through the cultural terrain of football. The analysis also contributes methodologically by demonstrating how Fairclough's CDA framework combined with metaphor analysis and modality analysis can illuminate persuasive structures in opinion journalism.

Future research directions include comparative analysis of sports journalism across Indonesian media outlets to identify systematic patterns versus individual stylistic choices, examination of reader responses to investigate actual persuasive effects, and longitudinal analysis of how sports journalism discourse evolves in relation to changing political contexts and football performance. Additionally, comparative research examining sports journalism in other Southeast Asian nations could illuminate culturally specific versus universal patterns in how sports commentary constructs national identity and mediates public discourse beyond the sporting domain.

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