



"THE TANTRUM OF THE 15": SOCIAL MEDIA AND WOMEN'S FOOTBALL THROUGH THE DOCUMENTARY *#SEACABÓ: DIARY OF THE CHAMPIONS*

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ABSTRACT

The non-consensual kiss between the former president of the RFEF, Luis Rubiales, and footballer Jennifer Hermoso during the 2023 World Cup sparked the #SeAcabó movement on social media. This event ultimately exposed the influence peddling and sexist practices concealed within women's sport, with their impact reverberating across national and international media. Drawing on cultural and gender studies, this article examines the documentary #SeAcabó: Diary of the Champions (Joanna Pardos, 2024) to explore the obstacles and prejudices women face in the professionalisation of football.

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1. Introduction

Even though the Spanish Women's National Football Team emerged as champions of the 2023 World Cup, their achievement was overshadowed by the controversial behaviour of Luis Rubiales, then president of the Royal Spanish Football Federation (RFEF). Within the first few minutes of the victory celebration, he engaged in inappropriate gestures, such as grabbing his genitals while exclaiming "With two balls!" from the stands, where he was seated alongside Queen Letizia and Infanta Sofia. Shortly afterwards, during the medal ceremony, Rubiales kissed midfielder and forward Jennifer Hermoso on the lips amidst the players' euphoria, an event that garnered a 71.1% audience share (RTVE Press, 2023). The international recognition of the victors was relegated to the background, not only due to varying interpretations of his conduct but also because it brought to light the players' complaints regarding the abuse of authority and discrimination perpetrated by the former president. This moment is one of the central events featured in the documentary *#SeAcabó: Diary of the Champions* (*#Its over: Diary of Champions*) (2024), directed and written by Joanna Pardos. Transformed into a space for dialogue and reflection, it gives a voice to the main instigators of the #SeAcabó movement on the social media platforms X (formerly Twitter) and Instagram, as well as to other national and international footballers who witnessed events that were distorted under pressure exerted on the athletes.

In the Statutes of the Royal Spanish Football Federation (RFEF) (Royal Spanish Football Federation, 2022), last revised in 2022, Article 41 merely states that incidents related to sexual abuse will be monitored and controlled, and measures will be proposed to prevent such behaviour, without delving into further detail or addressing abuse of authority. Likewise, the RFEF has a protocol in place that outlines preventive actions, particularly focused on underage male and female footballers, but it lacks specific provisions for adult women. Given the events that transpired, the RFEF's approach to such cases is striking, as it is the president who must appoint a Protection Delegate and an Advisory Committee to assess alleged instances of harassment.

Ultimately, it is worth noting point 5 of Article 4 of Law 29/2022, of 30 December, on Sport, which designates the Superior Sports Council as the sanctioning body against "[...] any action that may be considered discrimination, abuse, or sexual harassment and/or harassment based on sex or authority", classifying such acts as very serious offences. Furthermore, Article 124 of the same law later refers to this body again as responsible for training sports personnel and technical management to prevent such incidents. In light of this situation of vulnerability and neglect, the efforts of organisations such as the Association for Women in Professional Sport (AMDP) and the Professional Footballers' Association (FutPro) stand out. Notably, on 27 January 2025, FutPro, as a union, signed a new collective agreement for Spanish women's football, which includes, among other innovations, psychological support in cases of harassment, an independent investigative commission separate from the club, and a reduction in resolution and processing times (FutPro Marketing, 2025).

This article stems from an analysis of the documentary *#SeAcabó: Diary of the Champions* (Joanna Pardos, 2024), a production distributed by the digital platform Netflix, to examine the representation and narrative treatment of the impact of social media following the injustices experienced in professional women's football. Thus, drawing on cultural studies and a gender perspective, it seeks to investigate the obstacles and prejudices accompanying the professionalisation of women in football through an interpretative approach and qualitative methodology, using the representation of the #SeAcabó case as the object of study.

1.1. Objectives

The primary objective of this study is to analyse the representation of obstacles and prejudices in the professionalisation of Spanish women footballers, as disseminated through social media and captured in the documentary *#SeAcabó: Diary of the Champions*. Thus, it aims to explore its narrative treatment from a gender perspective to provide insight into the current state of women's football in Spain. To achieve this, it is essential to understand both the social and media contexts, given that this is a case that has garnered attention at both local and international levels. Based on the stated objectives, several research questions have been formulated to guide this investigation:

P1: What has been the impact of the #SeAcabó movement on social media?

P2: How are the players of the Spanish Women's National Football Team portrayed in the documentary *#SeAcabó: Diary of the Champions*?

2. Manosphere and Women Footballers

The underrepresentation and stereotyping of women in professional sport, as identified by studies such as those conducted by Mujika-Alberdi et al. (2021), Adá-Lameiras and Rodríguez-Castro (2022), and Junguitu-Angulo and Osuna-Acedo (2024), remain among the primary challenges facing sport in general. Indeed, the media produce content that serves as "[...] an ideological device that represents, evaluates, and legitimises a specific view of the female gender, both in professional football and in society" (Díaz-Bajo Rodríguez et al., 2024, p. 42), thereby contributing to the shaping of public opinion. Research by Mujika-Alberdi et al. (2021) highlights the difficulties in constructing a social imaginary "[...] regarding the interplay between sports practice and women" (p. 279), given the stark disparity in visibility between male and female athletes.

In fact, a survey conducted by the Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas (CIS. The Sociological Research Centre) in 2023 included various questions about women's football following the Spanish National Team's victory at the World Cup held a few months earlier. Notably, the results revealed that the surveyed sample overwhelmingly highlighted the visibility of men's football in the media, with 90.5%, compared to a more balanced perception of its female counterpart: 67% emphasised the "better behaviour of fans", 62.4% noted "fewer insults from supporters", 59.8% cited a "better atmosphere in the stands", and 55.7% pointed to "greater sportsmanship among players" and "fewer feigned fouls by players" (CIS, 2023).

This is compounded by the existence of a manosphere that manifests and expands virtually through platforms such as social media and forums (Jane, 2017; Nagle, 2017), with its misogynistic ideas becoming increasingly polarised since the *#MeToo* phenomenon. Its discourses revolve around myths such as women's inferiority or the endorsement of a patriarchal social order (Lacalle, 2023), projecting male victimhood in response to the loss of traditional patriarchal dominance (Alonso-González, 2021; García-Mingo et al., 2022). Its verbal violence and harassment tactics (Benassini-Félix, 2022) aim to delegitimise feminism and its achievements, particularly in traditionally male-dominated domains. This is evident in women's sport, where issues of quality and infantilisation are leveraged to undermine female participation (Monroy Trujillo, 2024) in a field regarded as masculine and one to which "[...] women have not only lacked easy access but have also faced limited participation due to stereotypes and socially assigned gender roles" (Sauleda Martínez et al., 2021, p. 83). Thus, there emerges "[...] a perceived need to combat the misandry of women in general and feminism in particular [...]" (Lacalle, 2023, p. 43). Consequently, women are required to do more "[...] to prove they possess the capabilities and skills sufficient to participate in sport and achieve their professional goals" (Sauleda Martínez et al., 2021, p. 83).

Building on this, Johanssen (2022) underscores the contradictions and inconsistencies in the radicalisation of the manosphere, which relies on a tension between reality and a fantasy rooted not only in myths but also in the popular framing of "men vs. women". In this way, feminism is positioned as a threat to male identity and is projected through a "desire to desire" (sexual, social, political) with which the manosphere identifies, unites, and self-validates as a countercultural community. Accordingly, studies such as Alonso-González's (2021) reveal attitudes ranging "[...] from disillusionment and resentment to an aspiration to transform themselves into a sort of pseudo-alpha males, with a limited and partial understanding of what that entails" (p. 516). Thus, the manosphere perpetuates dichotomies within the sporting imaginary, fostering the notion that "[...] men's football equates to myth and heroism, where emotions and competition are far more polarised, while women's football translates into activism, sisterhood, and, ultimately, 'all for one'" (Cuenca Orellana et al., 2024, p. 322), a narrative further reinforced by the media.

3. The #SeAcabó Phenomenon: Social Media and the Media

On 25 August 2023, midfielder Alexia Putellas wrote on her X profile: “This is unacceptable. It’s over. With you, teammate @Jennihermoso”, thereby launching a campaign that became popularly known as the #SeAcabó movement. The message, which has garnered over six thousand comments of varying nature and 198,000 likes, unified the demonstrations across the social network as a form of community. Following Putellas’s post, other teammates such as goalkeeper Cata Coll, former captain Virginia Torrecilla, and ex-goalkeeper Sandra Paños, among others, published statements offering their public support for Hermoso. Moreover, these declarations transcended Spanish borders through the words of international footballers like Ana-Maria Crnogorčević of the Swiss national team and extended to other sports disciplines, as exemplified by Eli Pinedo, a former basketball player.

This movement has been compared to the activism of #MeToo (coined by Tarana Burke in 2006) via social media in 2017, as well as other more local phenomena tied to specific cases of aggression and gender-based violence, such as #NiUnaMás and its complementary #NiUnaMenos, #YoSiTeCreo, #Cuéntalo, #AgarrameLaMano, #NoNosCuidanNosViolan, and #MasMujeres, among others. Indeed, Raschke (1994) explains that a movement “[...] is a mobilising collective actor that, through a degree of continuity and based on high symbolic integration and minimal role specification, pursues a goal aimed at effecting, preventing, or reversing fundamental social changes” (p. 124). These movements are activated when the institutional response falls short of expectations, sparking activism against power structures and beyond the control of the institutions themselves (Castells, 2015). Ultimately, though they may appear as isolated incidents, they all form part of the broader evolution of feminist communication (Bernal Triviño, 2019). Consequently, these digital platforms have become not only a space to give voice to women who find no place in traditional media but also a tool for political and social mobilisation that fosters awareness, educational communication around social values, and, above all, collective identity.

Within women’s football, it is worth noting that “despite prior warnings from players about unequal treatment, the media dismissed their testimonies, even questioning their complaints and unjustly labelling them as ‘capricious’” (Sáinz de Baranda, 2024, p. 28). Furthermore, journalists like Danae Boronat, who reported these allegations, faced media censorship and even lost their jobs under the pretext of not adhering to editorial lines (González Rodríguez, 2022), following repeated threats (Lara, 2022). In this instance, the media contributed to prejudging the athletes, as exemplified by Merinero’s critique of Pardos’s documentary, which primarily blamed the footballers, branding them “traitors.” However, studies such as López-Carrión and Sanahuja-Peris (2024) reveal that the bulk of media coverage focused on Luis Rubiales and his refusal to resign rather than the broader circumstances. Although the athletes were not the primary focus of the reports, research like that of Adá-Lameiras et al. (2024) underscores the significance of this movement, which marked a turning point in the evolution of feminism in Spain, even though its communicative and expansive space was less the media and more social networks.

In contrast to the stance of traditional media, social networks served as a refuge for debate. Though they offer limited space for well-established propositions and deeply developed, complex arguments (De Miguel, 2015), users of these platforms capitalise on existing discourses to express their own positions (Khoja-Moolji, 2015). Authors like Pipyrou (2018) note that, beyond the sense of community generated, there emerges a perception of justice that can sometimes substitute for genuine judicial processes or even heighten public pressure. Thus, social networks stand as a valuable channel for the feminist movement in raising social awareness and denouncing injustices.

4. Methodology

The present research adopts an interpretative approach and a qualitative methodology (Valles, 1997) from a gender perspective, with the primary aim of analysing the documentary #SeAcabó: *Diary of the Champions* (Joanna Pardos, 2024). This work is grounded in interviews, as a methodological tool, with the players of the Spanish Women’s National Football Team who were called up for the 2023 Women’s World Cup. Thus, Jennifer Hermoso, Alexia Putellas, Irene Paredes, and Aitana Bonmatí, among others, narrate the events and injustices that took place beforehand, culminating in the phenomenon that emerged on social media, #SeAcabó, which paved the way for the controversial and widely publicised Rubiales case.

Building on this, the methodological design employed to conduct a textual analysis is based on the proposal by Amanda D. Lotz (2001), who argues that an audiovisual product can be considered feminist if it promotes relationships that empower women, offers a pluralistic view of gender and sexuality, depicts feminist strategies in response to oppression, and portrays women's challenges from the perspective of their capacity for overcoming them. Delving deeper into Lotz's proposal, she suggests three main techniques for assessing the inclusion of feminist content: 1) analysing the representation of female characters, 2) examining narrative strategies related to feminist themes, and 3) identifying feminism as a central theme.

5. Analysis and Results

5.1. Players Representation

The opening minutes of *#SeAcabó: Diary of the Champions* introduce the key players who were embroiled in the injustices that led to the Rubiales case. Through moments of pre-recorded interview footage and an interspersed collage of images from the 2023 Women's World Cup victory, the documentary frames the rewards of the immense effort and sacrifice made by the current world champions. Following this introduction, Paredes, Putellas, and Hermoso gather in the latter's apartment to share their experiences throughout the documentary, with a camera that assumes the role of a silent witness. Hermoso's home contrasts with the sterile, empty, grey, and gloomy setting of the interviews, where artificial, focused lighting aims to place full emphasis on the players seated before the camera. Thus, from a private, intimate, and safe space, the work explores how the events of 2023 transcended the public sphere to mark a turning point in the lives of three women who demonstrate sisterhood. Laughter and strong camaraderie between friends unfold, but the narrative pauses to return to the past, to the initial point when the first tensions arose between the players, head coach Jorge Vilda, and president Luis Rubiales, extending beyond 2023.

Drawing from a chronology of events, new testimonies are included from other footballers who were called up to play at the time, such as goalkeepers Lola Gallardo and Sandra Paños, later joined by defenders Olga Carmona, Ivana Andrés, and Laia Codina, as well as midfielder Teresa Abelleira. Their voices shed light on the reality of women's football since the 2022 European tournament, giving value not only to the thoughts and feelings of the national team players but also to the progressive exhaustion and psychological toll the entire process took from those early stages.

The documentary captures the players' explanations regarding the need for a strategic change, yet, faced with the RFEF's refusal, the first rift within the team emerges. This led 15 of the summoned players to refuse to play for the national team, citing mental health concerns, and they were replaced by a younger squad. In this regard, Laia Codina expresses her willingness to step up, but also the psychological impact this had on her relationship with teammates who had already been branded "the 15 brats" by the media. From that moment, the new team narrates how winning became a battle waged by Vilda and Rubiales to tarnish the reputation of the withdrawn players. Codina's tears and trembling voice reveal the difficulty of the decision as she states, "I never wanted to hurt my friends, my teammates", while also highlighting a strategic move by Rubiales to divide them. Shortly after, in an attempt at reconciliation between the players and Rubiales—who agreed to review Vilda's work to improve strategy—Putellas explains that half of the withdrawn players decided to return to the pitch, hoping to see their goals and the RFEF's promises fulfilled. However, following the defeat against Japan in the World Cup and the deplorable training and accommodation conditions in Australia, the players recount their persistence in voicing complaints to Rubiales again, who perceived this step forward as a personal offence and a direct attack on Vilda. Consequently, the RFEF president chose to leak a private conversation with Paredes to the media, implying she was subject to blackmail and threats from the players.

At this juncture, the documentary distinguishes between those who confronted the issue, adopting a more frontal position before the camera, and those who tried to sidestep it—either because they were new to the team, unwilling to miss a potentially once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, or reluctant to speak openly about the controversy—whose positioning is more lateral or even in profile. The initial tensions narrated also enable the camera to draw closer with close-ups, allowing the audience to observe gestures of disapproval, such as the furrowed brows of Bonmatí or Paredes. Furthermore, the work

establishes a clear division across three levels of prominence. At the pinnacle are Hermoso, Putellas, and Paredes in the private sphere; in a secondary role, the rest of the national team players in the sterile interview setting; and a third level emerges to complement the experiences through the participation of former captain and midfielder Vero Boquete, FutPro president Amanda Gutiérrez, and sports journalists Andrea Peláez (COPE) and Alejandro Requeijo (*El Confidencial*), who speak from their workplaces.

Hermoso's conclusions, shared with her teammates, underscore key ideas about equality of conditions between male and female footballers: "[...] a precedent has been set, and there are so many women who have felt immense strength because the phrase 'what we've done all our lives' no longer happens as it always has. That's why many people are so furious". Thus, the documentary profiles these three players as the primary advocates for activism in women's football. Moreover, it invites the player to reflect on her behaviour in the days following Rubiales' controversial kiss: "Why did I do that? Because many situations that countless women have endured will no longer happen".

5.2. Documentary Narrative Strategies

The documentary constructs its main narrative from the experiences and emotions arising from the players' constant struggle. Nevertheless, the roles of Amanda Gutiérrez, president of the FutPro union, and Verónica Boquete, former captain of the national team and current guest commentator for women's football matches, prove decisive. The primary objective of director Joanna Pardos is to offer the audience an explanation of what has transpired in women's football over recent years, forming yet another chapter in the pursuit of the sport's professionalisation. The triangle formed by the team, Vilda, and Rubiales has been widely covered by the media which, until the resignation of the former RFEF president, demonstrated they were being influenced by lobbying. This gains greater impact when, at the outset, an extradiegetic musical piece plays while messages such as "tantrum of 15 brats" from media outlets are interspersed with Putellas' voice exclaiming, "as a footballer, I don't recall days like these", or Hermoso asserting, "many people don't know the real story of everything that happened," serving as the starting point for the chronology.

Notably, the work does not confine itself to the days of controversy but begins with the antecedents of the initial confrontations. This allows the audience to understand the early signs that triggered and justified the famous hashtag #SeAcabó. Avoiding excessive complexity, the documentary is organised chronologically and, aside from the initial collage, maintains a linear sequence of events. This narrative structure underscores the premise conveyed through the testimonies of Hermoso, Putellas, and Paredes: despite the players' effort, dedication, sacrifice, training, and perseverance, neither the RFEF nor the coach showed respect for their work, even going so far as to publicly undervalue and belittle them when they demanded their rights as individuals, women, and football professionals. The players express a sense of indifference from the RFEF and those in positions of power. Indeed, Paredes notes, "we felt unprotected, at least I did, with everything that was happening". Their accounts reveal how their protest for equal working conditions and a competent coach was a necessary step in their journey.

The use of archival footage, alongside clippings and excerpts of media coverage regarding the Rubiales case and the controversy surrounding the 15 players, provides an example of the *manosphere* imaginary perpetuated by the media. Through these resources, it becomes evident how these outlets questioned the players' discomfort, physical and mental exhaustion, insomnia, or emotions -such as anguish and anxiety- about being summoned against their will and having to compete in a World Cup without adequate preparation. Contributions from journalists like Alejandro Requeijo and Andrea Peláez counter the dominant media stance captured in the documentary, reinforcing the players' testimonies about Rubiales' various challenges and drawing parallels with the situation of their male counterparts. Both highlight the RFEF president's closeness with various male footballers, painting a starkly different profile—one who not only offered to defend their rights but also mediated deals to secure them greater benefits. From such examples, Bonmatí concludes, "[...] the federation had women's football because they had to. They didn't invest in us or care about us". Olga Carmona adds that it was unusual to have access to Rubiales, noting that during the Australia '23 World Cup, "[...] it was a novelty for us to have the president there every day. It's normal for the boys, but not so much for the girls".

In this way, the narrative conveys the pressures and distortions employed by the RFEF to not only defend its president but also rehabilitate his personal image post-controversy. In this regard, Codina confesses, "when we arrived in Ibiza, we realised that what was supposed to be a party and a celebration would turn into a nightmare", amid phone calls to Hermoso, with her testimony accompanied by

paparazzi images from inside a boat. The players' parties and dancing enabled media narratives to reinforce Rubiales' initial message regarding the misinterpretation of the kiss, Hermoso's apparent lack of repercussions, and the pressure exerted via social media by what he called "false feminists". This reveals the control over Hermoso by both the RFEF and the media, with her confessing to her teammates the persistent attempts by both to hold her accountable for what happened. It is at this point that the player becomes emotional, expressing how she felt overwhelmed until reaching a breaking point in her mental health.

The documentary also focuses on third parties who contributed to Rubiales' staunch defence due to pressure from public opinion via social media. On one hand, the RFEF turned to Integrity Officer Miguel García Caba and sporting director Albert Luque, who tried to persuade her to publicly state that the kiss stemmed from a moment of euphoria, following the line Rubiales had taken with the media. On the other hand, the narrative pauses to provide explanations about Vilda's origins and, ultimately, his role within the national team. With no sporting experience on his CV, the documentary notes the connection between his father and Rubiales, as well as his ability to "self-renew" his contract whenever necessary. Once again, Boquete reveals the coach's irregularities, whose aim was to maintain control over the players both on and off the pitch, even in their own rooms, to prevent them from gathering and sharing opinions.

Despite these issues, the athletes above all emphasise the importance of perseverance, hard work, unity, and assertive communication, which only became practicable following the impact on social media. Consequently, the documentary concludes by articulating a discourse akin to a "moral lesson," aiming to end with a hopeful and positive message that offers the audience an image of a learning process in the face of adversity. This does not obscure a clear awareness of how one of the national team's greatest achievements—the women's World Cup victory—has been overshadowed. Overall, there is a prevailing sense that they have lost recognition as professionals and world champions.

5.3. The Question of Feminism as a Theme

Feminism and the demand for equal conditions and treatment permeate the entire narrative, which exalts values such as respect, constant support, friendship and sisterhood among the players. Likewise, emphasis is placed on restoring the recognition the footballers have earned. Consequently, ideas like the one expressed by Putellas gain significance: "[...] we are living what so many players had fought for and were trying to achieve, and the system [...] wouldn't let them. Many of those players were in their living rooms [...] shedding burdens [...]. It moves me, honestly". She later adds, referring to the teammates with whom she shared the 2023 Women's World Cup, "[...] I'll never forget it, also because of that, because of them". This friendship is also evident in the unity of the entire team despite attempts to divide them. For instance, Abelleira highlights that, when the controversy erupted, the more experienced players sought to shield the younger ones like her, a testimony complemented by Boquete, who reveals it marked the start of a struggle: "[...] you have to hold firm. Now, no one can get up from the table and say, 'that's it, I'm fine'. No. You have to endure." This message is echoed by other seasoned players like Lola Gallardo: "[...] we have to stand together. This time, yes, to help her [referring to Hermoso], to protect her, and to ensure these things don't happen again". This resolve culminates in Putellas' description of the social media impact of *#SeAcabó*, which she initiated: "the system couldn't go on like that. It had exploded, and there's no turning back." In this sense, the players' experiences have heightened their awareness of passing down values and constructive messages to future generations, a central idea captured by the documentary. On this note, Ivana Andrés comments, "[...] we must give girls around the world female role models they can see themselves in—women who inspire them, excite them, and enable them to keep going and not give up".

Similarly, the treatment of motherhood and homosexuality stands out, as seen in the case of Paredes, who, through archival footage, appears alongside her partner and their shared son, or Ivana Andrés, who travelled to the World Cup with her partner and daughter. Both issues resurface in the World Cup victory footage, showing celebrations between the players and their families, alongside other social themes such as homophobia, the infantilisation of the players, or the misogyny displayed by the first coach, Ignacio Quereda, towards them all. Putellas states that when she joined the team in 2015, it hadn't secured a victory since 1988, while she recalls Quereda's infantilising attitude in the media, labelling the players "girls". Gallardo reinforces this, exclaiming, "[...] he treated us like his little daughters, grabbing

us by the cheeks.” Meanwhile, Paños and Boquete address the homophobia and misogyny, noting Quereda’s crude and sexist remarks.

Although social media is portrayed as a space to galvanise activism, it is also presented antagonistically as a refuge for the manosphere. This is exemplified by the hate attacks directed not only at the 15 players after they expressed their refusal to be called up, but particularly at Bonmatí, who was branded “feminazi and coup plotter”—terms emphasised in the documentary. Amid this, Paredes’ stance shines through; during the press conference following the match against Sweden in the World Cup, she declares, “we’ve grown up thinking this wasn’t our place”, an idea she justifies in the footage by stating, “we’re always asking for things that seem not to belong to us. I want that feeling to end. I don’t want girls to grow up thinking they’re playing something that isn’t theirs”. She also confesses they never demanded Vilda’s dismissal, as that wasn’t the team’s decision, but rather sought better guidance, more technical support, and, ultimately, direction in training and matches, since, according to Paredes, “[...] he had no solutions”.

The mistreatment and inequality in women’s football are evident in scenes like the plane journeys 24 hours before a match, resulting in inadequate preparation exacerbated by jet lag. Once again, Paredes reveals that among the demands made to Rubiales was the chance to rest after a flight, with the primary aim of improving performance before a competition: “[...] not doing a 5-hour bus ride before the match, not having our own changing room, not being able to use the gym because it was for the boys, even if they weren’t there...” For her part, Gallardo couldn’t understand why they weren’t taken seriously when “we have the best players in the world, but we need someone to guide us”. In the pursuit of visibility and the defence of athletes’ rights, journalist Andrea Peláez notes that Vilda often rewarded players who supported him, as in the case of Ivana Andrés, who was named captain despite her own admission that Putellas, Paredes, and Hermoso were the undisputed leaders behind the scenes.

To bolster the feminist stance offered by the documentary, the participation of FutPro president Amanda Gutiérrez proves essential—not only for bearing witness to the challenges in professionalising women’s football but also for her personal experiences, as she was barely allowed to speak privately with Hermoso. She also confesses, “[...] the entire institution is thinking about him. No one in that institution is thinking about Jenni”. Alongside her, representing the institution, Ana Muñoz Merino, Vice President for Integrity Affairs at the RFEF, concludes that the Rubiales case marked a turning point in women’s football: “when so many people say, ‘it was nothing, what happened’, well, look at what it sparked”.

6. Conclusions

The *#SeAcabó* phenomenon exposed the role of the media in addressing injustices, opting to victimise Rubiales in response to alleged threats from women they labelled as capricious. His paternalistic, infantilising, censorious, and misogynistic attitude represents a fresh exercise in ethical shortcomings, which has only resulted in consequences for journalists like Danae Boronat, yet has elicited no reflection or self-criticism on his part. Undoubtedly, acknowledging the violence inflicted upon women is a crucial step towards promoting the necessary changes, not only in the social sphere but also politically. As a universal issue, the documentary demonstrates that social media has become a platform for denunciation, offering a refuge of understanding and support for victims when sufficient guarantees to protect citizens’ rights and freedoms are not assured. Much like other social movements such as *#MeToo*, the phenomenon surrounding *#SeAcabó* once again proved that social media can awaken collective consciousness, foster community around social causes, and extend activism networks beyond the local level.

Social media also compelled other athletes, both men and women, to take a public stance on this case. For instance, the Spanish men’s national team held a press conference not only to express their support but also to highlight the recognition earned by the world champion women’s team. Likewise, it forced institutions to articulate the need not only for an apology from Rubiales but also for disciplinary sanctions and even his removal. Both the government president, Pedro Sánchez, and other political leaders, including the opposition party, maintained a unanimous position on the matter.

Considering the existing legislative framework, the documentary also reveals that the RFEF’s willingness to address sexual harassment cases depended on the initiative of its president—at that time, Rubiales—who was responsible for appointing a Protection Delegate and an Advisory Committee to assess the situation, thereby preventing an evaluation that would ensure objectivity and neutrality.

Moreover, the influence peddling and protection Rubiales afforded his inner circle undermined an effort that, without the social pressure exerted through social media, would have led to the silencing of Hermoso and/or many other players. Nevertheless, on 1 September 2023, the Administrative Sports Court opened a disciplinary case against Rubiales for two serious—but not “very serious”—offences, concluding there was no abuse of authority but banning him for three years due to obscene gestures in the stands and the non-consensual kiss to Hermoso. Four days later, Vilda was replaced by the new coach Montse Tomé and went on to manage the Moroccan Women’s National Team; on 10 September, Rubiales resigned.

The production by Joanna Pardos aligns with other titles on women’s football, such as the documentary miniseries *A Real Dream* (HBO: 2020-2022), directed by Ana Pastor. This trend underscores the importance of female creators shedding light on issues from their own perspective, offering a critical and committed view of sport in terms of equality. However, it should be noted that this format often includes numerous talking heads whose explanations and justifications highlight the expectation placed on women to rationalise their decisions—a demand driven by the manosphere. Consequently, such documentaries and platforms like social media emerge as essential for creating more equitable environments in women’s sport.

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