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**MAPPING INTERACTIONS ON SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS ABOUT WOMEN SPORT JOURNALISTS: IS THERE STILL A GLASS CEILING?****MAPEAMENTO DAS INTERAÇÕES EM POSTAGENS DE MULHERES JORNALISTAS ESPORTIVAS NAS MÍDIAS SOCIAIS: AINDA EXISTE UM TETO DE VIDRO?**

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**ABSTRACT**

This article aimed to identify the content of interactions about female sports journalists on social media. Using a qualitative, descriptive-exploratory approach, the study analyzed the public's social response to posts by female sports journalists during the broadcasts of the first round of the 2025 FIFA Club World Cup. After collecting 55 posts that resulted in 6,015 comments, the comments were analyzed and categorized into five categories created to systematize the content of the messages, using the Nvivo software (Version 11.4.3). The analysis of the absolute percentage of posts revealed that 96.5% originated from institutional profiles, while only 3.5% came from personal profiles. In addition to the quantitative predominance, distinctions were identified regarding the discursive nature of the content: in institutional profiles, negative posts prevailed (30%), whereas in personal profiles, a predominance of positive comments was observed (51%). Overall, the highest incidence of comments occurred on institutional profiles, where the content was predominantly negative/hostile, which is related to the "online disinhibition effect." The study concluded that the content of the messages carried symbolic violence against women, demonstrating that even when occupying spaces previously denied to them, women have not yet achieved equality within sports journalism. This study, therefore, helps build debates about the participation of women in sports journalism and football.

**Keywords:** Sports; Physical Education; Gender; Social Media.

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**RESUMO**

Esse artigo teve como objetivo identificar o teor das interações manifestadas sobre as jornalistas esportivas nas mídias sociais. Por meio de uma abordagem qualitativa de caráter descritivo exploratório, o estudo fez uma análise referente a resposta social do público em publicações de mulheres jornalistas esportivas nas transmissões da primeira rodada da Copa do Mundo de Clubes de 2025. Com a coleta de 55 postagens que resultaram em 6015 comentários, foi feita análise e sistematização dos comentários em cinco categorias criadas a fim de sistematizar o teor das mensagens, por meio do software Nvivo (Versão 11.4.3). A análise do percentual absoluto das postagens revelou que 96,5% foram originadas em perfis institucionais, enquanto apenas 3,5% provinham de perfis pessoais. Além da predominância quantitativa, identificaram-se distinções quanto à natureza discursiva do conteúdo: nos perfis institucionais, prevaleceram postagens de caráter negativo (30%), ao passo que, nos perfis pessoais, observou-se uma predominância de comentários positivos (51%). Num panorama geral, a maior incidência de comentários se deu em perfis institucionais, onde o teor dos comentários era majoritariamente negativo/hostil, se relacionando com o "efeito de desinibição online". Concluiu-se que o teor das mensagens carregava consigo uma violência simbólica contra a mulher, o que demonstra que mesmo ao permear espaços que antes lhe foram negados, ainda não se atingiu uma equidade de gênero dentro do jornalismo esportivo. Este estudo, portanto, auxilia na construção de debates sobre a participação de mulheres no jornalismo esportivo e no futebol.

**Palavras-chave:** Esporte; Educação Física; Gênero; Mídias Sociais.

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**Introdução**

“Eu vou cantar, eu vou cantar / Me deixem cantar até o fim” ( I will sing, I will sing / Let me sing until the end; our translation). With these verses, Elza Soares — one of the greatest voices of Brazilian music and a symbol of resistance — echoes the silenced cry of countless women who, throughout history, have sought legitimacy in traditionally masculine spaces, among them sport. Sport manifests gender disparities, coming from a predominantly masculine past, where women were seen as intruders, "the other gender", incapable of participating in all sporting manifestations<sup>1</sup>. Beyond the field, the tracks, stages and gymnasiums, gender disparity in sport manifests itself in leadership, teaching, management, refereeing, as well as in

journalism<sup>2-4</sup>, where sport is not only not starred by women, but its history is also not told by them.

The song of resistance of Elza Soares resonates with even more force, especially when observing the trajectory of women who frequently challenge predominantly masculine structures, such as sports journalism<sup>5,6</sup>. According to the Brazilian Association of Investigative Journalism<sup>7</sup>, despite the general balanced distribution within journalism, areas such as Technology, Sport and Education show resistance to female participation, also evidencing, through data, violence such as verbal aggression, public humiliation, threats and sexual violence, corroborating with the traces left by a history exclusive of women

Female narrators and commentators try to exercise their profession guided by the ethical codes attributed to journalism, but face a culture marked by exclusions, judgments and violence that manifest themselves from the denial of their voices to explicit attacks on digital platforms. The importance of digital platforms for increasing the interaction between the public and journalistic information is notable, bringing to communication vehicles a certain collaboration in the elaboration of agendas and content production<sup>8</sup>, making current sports journalism a collaborative journalism. However, the excess of freedom of expression arising from the media brings to light a toxic environment mainly for female journalists who work in the sports environment. Oliveira<sup>9</sup> brings up that there is a male dominance in several aspects, which makes it "true" that spaces such as sports journalism are destined for men and that this camouflaged domination is often revealed through gender violence exercised by harassment, humiliations and, the most evident through the media, verbal aggressions.

In this context, it is fundamental to reflect on the existing structural obstacles and that, even in the face of qualification and competence, limit the professional advancement of women who choose to pursue sports journalism, whether in narration, in comments or just on the field. In scenarios such as the *Club World Cup*, considered the biggest tournament for football clubs, in which the title of "best team in the world" is disputed<sup>10,11</sup> the incidence of women in narration and commentator positions is even scarcer. The continuous need to prove legitimacy in an environment that continues to resist female presence as the protagonist corroborates with previous studies<sup>2</sup> according to which female journalists may be being blocked by invisible obstacles, the so-called "glass ceiling", or, in a scenario in which this would have already been replaced by a more complex and sinuous space, facing a true labyrinth of exclusions, resistances and permanence strategies.

Based on this, this study aimed to identify the content of the interactions manifested about female sports journalists working in the *2025 FIFA Club World Cup* on social media.

## Methods

### *Characterization of the study and sample*

This study adopted a qualitative approach, of a descriptive-exploratory nature, with the objective of providing informative subsidies through the investigation of the relationships established between the spectating public of football matches and their reactions to games narrated and/or commented by women<sup>12</sup>. 6,015 comments published in 55 posts on the Instagram platform were analysed, covering both the social media of the journalists themselves (personal profiles) and the institutional profiles linked to the vehicles responsible for the transmission of the *2025 Club World Cup*.

### *Procedures*

Initially, the identification of the female journalists scheduled for the coverage of each of the matches of the 2025 Club World Cup was carried out, considering the different channels responsible for the television and online transmission of the event. Next, the channels that had

the participation of at least one female journalist, acting in the roles of commentator or narrator, were mapped. In total, four channels holding the broadcasting rights were identified: two with online broadcasting and two belonging to the same broadcaster — one broadcast on open TV and another on a closed channel. Among these, only three counted on the presence of female professionals. From this mapping, it was possible to delimit the games to be observed on each channel. After a period of 24 hours after the end of each match, the procedures for collecting comments published in posts related to the respective games began, both on the personal profiles of the journalists and on the institutional profiles of the transmission channels. The posts referring to the matches played in the group stage of the competition, which started on June 14 (2025) and ended on the 26th of the same month, were analysed.

The choice to use social media as a source of analysis was based on its wide popularity and accessibility among the Brazilian population. Data released by *DataReportal*, in January 2025, indicate that 67.8% of the country's population has an active account on social media platforms, with 55.8% of the audience composed of women and 44.2% of men. Specifically, the Instagram platform was chosen due to its expressive relevance in the national scenario: as reported by the newspaper *Estadão* in 2024, it is the main media used as an information source in Brazil. Additionally, data released by Meta — the company responsible for creating and managing the platform — indicate that, at the beginning of 2025, Instagram had approximately 141 million users in the country. In addition to the high adoption rate, easy access to publications and their respective comments stand out as selection criteria, as well as the realization that different age groups use the platform to follow content related to sporting events and news.

The profiles selected for analysis in this study were defined based on a comprehensive search in the rosters of sports journalism professionals linked to Grupo Globo, CazéTV and DAZN, media outlets holding the broadcasting rights for the Club World Cup, held between the months of June and July 2025, in the United States. Personal profiles, on the Instagram platform, of female journalists who acted as commentators or narrators in the broadcasts of the matches were included in the sample, as well as the institutional profiles of the respective media that covered the games live with the participation of these professionals.

It was found that, among the media responsible for broadcasting the championship, Grupo Globo is the only broadcaster whose origin is not linked to the digital environment, being the result of a process of adaptation and consolidation of traditional journalism in the context of digital media. It also stands out for being the only among the broadcasters to have two female narrators in its game coverage roster. In addition to these narrators, the broadcaster also incorporated three female commentators who participated in the broadcasts of the first round of the tournament. In contrast, the other channels (both originating in the digital medium) showed significantly lower participation of female journalists: CazéTV had only one commentator throughout the broadcasts, while the DAZN channel did not include any female journalist in its coverage team for the event.

In the professionals' profiles, all publications related to the match in which each one participated were included for analysis purposes. In the case of the institutional profiles of the broadcasting media, only publications in video format made available on the platform's grid were considered, specifically the *Reels* — short videos that present selected excerpts from the broadcasts — in which the journalists appear acting as narrators or commentators.

Three stages of checking publications were carried out on all selected profiles. The first occurred at the start time of each match, with the objective of identifying the last post made before its start. The second stage consisted of monitoring the publications during and immediately after the end of the game, respecting a maximum interval of 15 minutes, in order to register all posts made in that period. Finally, the third check was performed 24 hours after

the end of the match, an interval considered adequate to enable user interaction through comments, which were extracted and organized for analysis purposes in the present study.

For the extraction of comments, all selected posts were previously cataloged and organized based on the corresponding game, the profile in which they were published, and the professionals who were performing. Data export was carried out by fully copying the comments available in each publication, including those designated as "hidden" by the platform. Only comments in text format were considered for analysis purposes. After extraction, the data were inserted into a text document, with a view to the subsequent stage of treatment and systematization for analysis.

### *Sistematization and data analysis*

The data were organized and systematized using NVivo software (version 11.4.3), based on previously defined analytical categories (Table 1). The prior definition of these analytical criteria contributed to a more precise qualification of the collected data, allowing, in a later stage, the realization of a discussion based on the specific theoretical framework adopted in the study.

**Table 1** - Comment Category Descriptions

Categories	Description	Example
<b>Positive</b>	<b>Praise/Adulation</b>	Extremely positive C1: "Great commentator, love you" C2: "With this narration, the goal became even more beautiful."
	<b>Approval/ Recognition</b>	Moderately positive C1: "Good professionals" C2: "Nice narration improved a lot"
<b>Negative</b>	<b>Criticism</b>	Moderately negative / Veiled prejudice C1: " What's worse, the narration or the game? " C2: "Horrible narration... put it on MUTE, or switch to CazeTv. "
	<b>Personal Attack</b>	Extremely negative / Gender prejudice C1: " Globo puts this woman to narrate, the "crew" runs to Cazé TV " C2: " How awful this woman narrating, you can't watch the game like this, 'aff'."
<b>Others</b>	<b>Related</b>	Not related to journalists, but related to the game C1: " Who won this game?" C2: " In that case, 3-1 for River "
	<b>Not Related</b>	Unrelated to journalists or the game

**Note:** C1- comment example 1; C2 - comment example 2.

**Source:** The authors.

The data were catalogued regarding their source "Personal profile of the narrator / Institutional profile" and regarding their content "Positive and Negative" which were subsequently categorized, according to table 1. The extracted comments were taken from 56 publications, 7 being in the personal profiles of the journalists and 49 publications from the institutional profiles.

Upon completion of the comment classification stage, from the Nvivo Software word clouds were created, one for each type of profile, highlighting the 25 words with the highest recurrence in the comments. To identify these words, those with a minimum of 4 characters were filtered, those with spelling proximity were also counted, only the comments categorized as "others" were not included in the cloud graphics, so as not to distort the analysis.

The absolute values obtained from the data of personal and institutional profiles, as well as the total amount per category were analysed in the Excel software (Microsoft, 2025). These were counted to observe the distribution by source of the data and were presented in nominal values and percentages.

## Results

Publications were identified in the profiles of Grupo Globo, specifically in Globo Esporte and SporTV, while in the other analysed institutional profiles no related publications were found. Furthermore, the publications in institutional profiles only counted on the participation of narrators, with no publications with the participation of commentators.

From the posts identified in the personal and institutional profiles, 6015 comments were catalogued, 212 being in personal profiles and 5803 in institutional profiles. Regarding the category of these comments, a characteristic differentiation is observed regarding the direction of positive and negative comments in both profiles. Proportionally, comments with a negative character predominated in the institutions' profiles, corresponding to 30% of the total comments while in the narrators' profiles they represented only 3%.

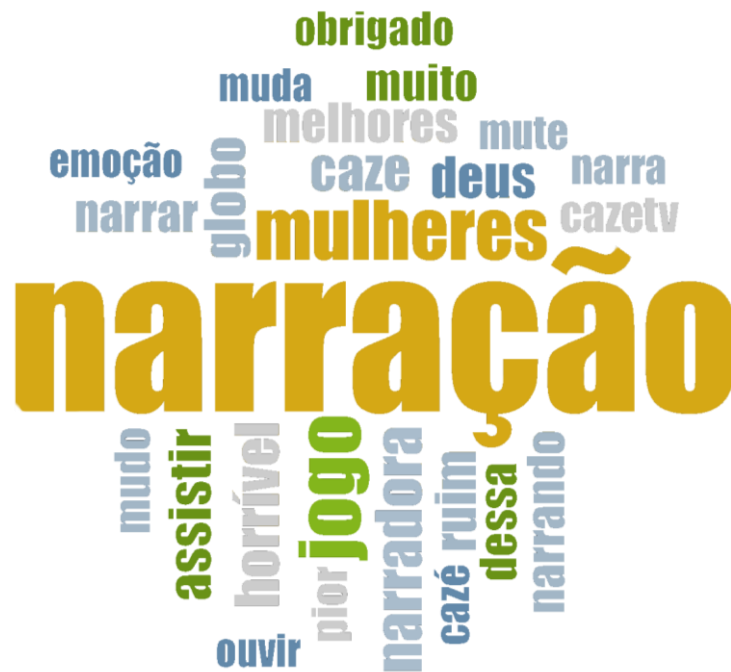
On the other hand, comments with positive content - tones of praise, adulation, approval and recognition - represented 51% of the comments in personal profiles, while in institutional profiles this same category reached only 1%. The comments classified as "others" in both profiles were not used for analysis, since they have no relation to the scope of this research, however they were counted for general description of the analysis.

**Table 1** - Description by categories of the amount of comments

	Categories	Personal Profile	%	Institutional Profile	%
Positive	Praise/ Adulation	64	30%	24	0%
	Approval/ Recognition	45	21%	72	1%
Negative	Personal Attack	2	1%	408	7%
	Criticism	4	2%	1318	23%
Others	Unrelated	0	0%	908	16%
	Related	97	46%	3073	53%
Total		212	100%	5803	100%

**Source:** The authors.

In order to observe which words were predominant in the comments and their content, word clouds were built. Initially (Figure 1), analysing the comments of the institutional profiles, it was possible to identify the predominance of negative comments (51%)



**Figure 1-** Word cloud of the institutional profile.

**Source:** the authors.

It is possible to observe the words "narration", "women", "globo", "cazeTV" - in reference to the transmission channels -, "horrible", "bad", "mute" among others, which may suggest a certain resistance of the public in relation to the narrators, indicating that narration is not necessarily the main factor for the "criticism". In relation to positive comments, a tendency of responses in a defensive tone of the narrators was observed, supporting the performance and criticizing the negative comments. The personal profiles, in contrast, presented mostly positive comments, related to the narration characteristics of the journalists, while the content of the negative comments, were directed to the performance of the narrator in reference to the game to which the publication was destined (Figure 2).



**Figura 2** - Personal profile word cloud.  
**Source:** the authors.

In order to exemplify and enable a broad understanding, Table 3 presents comments extracted from both profiles (personal and institutional) divided according to the "Type of Comment".

**Tabela 2** - Comments in Institutional and Personal profile

Profile	Type of Comment	Example
Personal	Praise/ Adulation	C1: "Wonderful!! I'm a huge fan. What beautiful work you do, Ana! An inspiration."
	Approval/ Recognition	C2: "I wish you commented on absolutely every game; I never get tired of it."
	Personal Attack	C1: "Have you thought about becoming a commentator instead of a narrator? It's constructive criticism; I believe you would fit better."
	Criticism	C2: "I wish you all the success in the world from the bottom of my heart but give up narrating so you aren't so humiliated. You have good diction, but unfortunately, you don't narrate well; you have a 'caged' voice for narrating."
Institutional	Praise/ Adulation	C1: "No problem with Renata's narration. Clear voice, right timing, and no intonation errors."
	Approval/ Recognition	C2: "With this narration, the goal became even more beautiful."
	Personal Attack	C1: "Horrible narration, who can stand watching a game with narration like that?"
	Criticism	C2: "I have to watch this on mute. Impossible to listen to this woman's narration."

**Note:** C1- comment example 1; C2 - comment example 2.

**Source:** The authors.

From the distinct analysis by type of profile, institutional or personal, it was possible to observe discrepancies regarding the way in which the public manifests itself through comments. The predominance of negative and offensive content in institutional profiles, in contrast to the positive present in comments published in personal profiles may indicate, on the one hand, greater protection or moderation in the spaces controlled by the journalists themselves and, on the other, a rejection that, although directed at the performances, seems to be interconnected to gender issues, going beyond the professional aspect.

Positive comments are concentrated in personal profiles, being largely aimed at the physical characteristics of the journalists, the quality of the narration, or simply the performance of the journalists. In institutional profiles, comments were identified in support of the presence and performance of the narrators in football games, frequently in response to negative and offensive manifestations in the publications. This dynamic evidence not only a difference in the content of the publications in each type of profile, but also the way in which positive and negative comments are expressed differently in both.

## Discussion

The results presented by the research revealed the existence of two distinct online ecosystems for the journalists present in the broadcast of the *2025 Club World Cup*. The analysis shows that the public's reception regarding the professionals' changes according to the environment in which they manifest themselves, obtaining greater support in their personal profiles and facing greater hostility in institutional profiles. This clear division suggests that the simple presence of women in prominent positions in the sports media does not guarantee their acceptance, since, in practice, they still face battles for legitimacy<sup>13</sup>.

The concentration of negative comments on institutional profiles in contrast to personal profiles leads us to question: what motivates the public to use the broadcaster's space as an attack channel? The answer seems to transcend the sphere of criticism of the narration work, manifesting socially attributed values<sup>14</sup>. The scenario of women being present in sports expands to areas beyond the female athlete, and the disparities associated with gender, in addition to manifesting themselves in practice<sup>1</sup>, manifest themselves in management<sup>15</sup>, refereeing<sup>4</sup> and sports journalism<sup>9</sup>. In sports journalism, there is a breach of expectation when the female voice is present in a social field, such as football and its journalism, historically male<sup>16</sup>.

In this context, the manifested hostility can, indeed, be interpreted as an act of symbolic violence, going beyond the right to freedom of expression and, in some cases, may even be considered as hate speech<sup>17</sup>. And the institutional profile, with its wide reach, becomes the ideal place for this type of rejection, which is often enhanced by the "online disinhibition effect"<sup>18</sup> and the lack of a controlled space.

The disinhibition effect, explained by Suler<sup>18</sup>, has as key components dissociation and minimization of authority, which may explain the movement of a collective that perceives the institutional profile as an official channel for registering their personal dissatisfactions<sup>9</sup> based on freedom of expression. The directing of messages occurs from the impersonality of the abstract entity – "Globo", "cazêTV" – removing the barriers of a "standard complaint" and making them performative, seeking not only to express an opinion, but also to influence other spectators to exert a possible pressure by publicly contesting editorial and personnel decisions.

The division of categories allows for a deeper analysis of intentionality, where words like "horrible", "bad" and "mute" are characterized as an attack on the performance, and not on the journalist herself, even if loaded with gender ideals. In contrast, in the category of "personal attack", comments with greater aggressiveness were recorded, strongly associated with social standards linked to women, such as motherhood, domestic chores and personal annulment in relation to the husband. Violence towards "being a woman" in sports journalism is observed in

other contexts, as evidenced by the Abraji research, where, within journalism as a whole, attacks towards female journalists are 44.6% motivated by gender, these being composed in 75.9% of attacks on moral reputation, using aspects such as appearance, sexuality and other gender stereotypes.

This dynamic makes it necessary to discuss the responsibility of the media institution as the manager of its digital platforms, a fact also pointed out by Stocker and Dalmaso<sup>20</sup>, who approach the recurrence of hostile comments as an unfolding of publications made by news media on these platforms. Since the digital environment is devoid of formal rules and protections against hate speech due to the lack of consensus regarding what actually extrapolates freedom of expression determined by law<sup>17</sup>, by adopting a permissive or even non-existent moderation policy, the broadcaster risks conferring legitimacy on these manifestations and having its inaction interpreted as institutional abandonment, with the digital space being an extension of the journalists' work environment.

In summary, corroborating the data found by this study, Pacheco & Silva<sup>21</sup> bring interviews conducted with female sports journalists that complement the observed dynamic and transcend the debate on narration quality, exposing a complex battle for the reconfiguration of sports journalism<sup>13</sup>. While organizations seek to promote diversity, they face on their own digital media a resistance that challenges this advance<sup>22</sup>.

Such findings evidence that, in the universe of female journalists, the existence of a glass ceiling cannot be observed. By bringing previously established metaphors for the social barriers faced by women, "glass ceiling", "labyrinth" and "sticky floor"<sup>2,23,24</sup>, the scenario of female sports journalists would fit better between the sticky floor and the labyrinth. The glass ceiling manifests itself as the fundamental impediment to women occupying positions, which is contrary to the participation of female narrators, creating a gap filled by the other concepts.

The low incidence of games narrated by women can be explained by the labyrinth, where there is a select group of women capable of reaching the position, while the rest are lost when permeating a complex scenario of exclusions. The comments on the narration, on the other hand, transform into obstacles scattered on a sticky floor, making the path traced by these and future female journalists more complex, time-consuming and painful.

It is important, however, to recognize that there is a limitation in the study by basing itself on the analysis of written comments from only one social media platform that allows journalists to limit comments on their personal profiles, not allowing for a breadth of information in this dimension. Future research may benefit from qualitative approaches, which seek to understand more deeply the resistance of spectators regarding the insertion of women and the impact that mass rejection has on journalists and the possible influence on editorial and personnel decisions in the transmission of football games.

## Conclusions

“Eu vou cantar, eu vou cantar / Me deixem cantar até o fim” ( I will sing, I will sing / Let me sing until the end; our translation)”. The emblematic statement by Elza Soares resonates as a powerful metaphor for women's struggle for legitimacy in historically male spaces, such as sports journalism. Just as Elza claimed the right to voice and permanence, the journalists analysed in this study also assert themselves amid structures that insist on silencing them. The results revealed the existence of two "online ecosystems": the personal profiles of the journalists and the institutional profiles of the transmission media. The reception of the public in relation to the professionals' changes depending on the environment in which they manifest themselves, obtaining greater support on their personal profiles and facing greater hostility on institutional profiles.

It was possible to deconstruct the idea of a glass ceiling, evidencing the presence, even if minimal, of women in sports journalism. The phenomenon of female narrators and commentators is exposed to a more complex scenario, using the concepts of the labyrinth and the sticky floor to exemplify the barriers imposed on this group that, even established in a space, faces difficulties, restrictions, invisibilities and generalized violence from the public.

The research demonstrated that the presence of women in prominent positions in sports journalism still faces resistance. In institutional profiles, most of the comments were negative and hostile, while in personal profiles, there was a predominance of positive comments. The analysis concluded that, although women are occupying spaces that were previously denied to them, symbolic violence still manifests itself in the comments, demonstrating that equity in sports journalism has not yet been achieved.

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**Editor:** Eliane Regina Crestani Tortola.

Recebido em 29/09/2025.

Revisado em 15/12/2025.

Aceito em 19/01/2026.

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