



Athlete A Documentary Analysis: Breaking the Silence on Harassment and Abuse in Sports

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ABSTRACT

Listening to the voices of athletes is important for advancing safe sports and preventing harassment and abuse in sports. This study aims to listen to the voices of athletes of the United States of America (USA) Women's Artistic Gymnastics Team (WAG) against the sexual abuse and organizational neglect they have been exposed to for more than 30 years in order to understand the reasons that lead to abuse. In this context, "Athlete A: The truth behind USA Gymnastics", a Netflix documentary, was analyzed. Analysis was carried out by conducting Baltruschat's "Film Interpretation According to the Documentary Method" process in the Nvivo analysis program. Foucault's concept of biopolitics was utilized to understand the mechanism of power in gymnastics and how this mechanism intervenes in the female athlete's body (on the visible side). The process of proving these behaviors after the athletes broke their silence against organizational negligence and sexual abuse is discussed in the findings section. The case was examined in depth with quotes from the athletes' discourses on the confirmation of the crimes and the healing processes of the athletes after the revealed practices of organizational neglect and sexual abuse. In conclusion, the case of the USA WAG team demonstrates how a culture of silence and failed leadership can lead to complicity and perpetuate harassment and abuse in sports. In order to advance the safe sports, sports organizations need to develop safeguarding policies and procedures that take into account the voices of athletes.

Keywords

Gymnastics,
Organizational neglect,
Safe sport,
Safeguarding in sport

Article History

Received 09 August 2024
Revised 10 October 2024
Accepted 13 November 2024
Available Online 30 December 2024

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INTRODUCTION

On August 4, 2016, former gymnast Rachael Denhollander sent an email to The IndyStar, a local newspaper in Indiana, USA: "I recently read the IndyStar article 'Out of Balance'. My experience may not be relevant to your investigation, but I am sending an email to report an incident." (Alesia et al., 2017). In her email, Denhollander detailed how she was abused by Larry Nassar. On September 12, 2016, after Denhollander filed a criminal complaint and another athlete sued the United States Gymnastics Federation (USA Gymnastics), The IndyStar published the first story about Larry Nassar's mistreatment of athletes. In publishing the story, The IndyStar reporters included statements from Nassar, who said that the medical procedures he used on athletes were misunderstood and that he had done nothing wrong. On September 25, 2016, the IndyStar reported that sixteen more athletes had made allegations against Nassar (Smith & Pegoraro, 2020). On November 22, 2017, Nassar pleaded guilty to seven counts of sexual abuse as part of a plea deal (Udowitch, 2020). One hundred fifty-six women spoke on the stand during Nassar's eight-day sentencing hearing, which began on January 16, 2018. The USA Gymnastics board of directors was forced to resign under pressure from the Olympic committee, and on January 24, Nassar was sentenced to 60 years in federal prison (Axon & Armour, 2018). He also pleaded guilty to ten counts of first-degree sexual assault and was sentenced to 40 to 175 years in prison. Judge Rosemarie Aquilina told Nassar: "I have just signed your death warrant. As it is my honor and privilege to listen to survivors, it is my honor and privilege to punish you. Because you do not deserve to leave the prison again." (Meadows & Meadows III, 2020).

In this research, we want to spread the voices of women who were subjected to Larry Nassar's sexual harassment and abuse and who call themselves an army of survivors through a documentary film, *Athlete A* (Cohen & Shenk, 2020) explores the prevalence and complexity of sexual harassment and abuse in sport through the case of former USA WAG's doctor Larry Nassar. The documentary on the Nassar case is a work that provides us with the analysis we need to understand the risk factors for sexual harassment and abuse in sports, the power relations, and the negligence of sports organizations in perpetuating abuse. This documentary, literature, and case reports were evaluated together and analyzed using the documentary analysis method, which is explained in detail in the method section.

Significance of the Nassar Case

The Larry Nassar case has led to important developments not only in the US, where the incident took place but also in the entire sports ecosystem, especially in the world

gymnastics community. The case exposed the organizationalized failure of USA Gymnastics, which led to changes in sports policies; new policies were developed, linked to legislation, and procedures were established to safeguard athletes from harassment and abuse.

In the US, the legal definition of child abuse is determined on a state-by-state basis and under federal law. In the wake of the Nassar case, a federal law, the "Protecting Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017", was enacted in the US. This law includes an immediate mandatory reporting of any allegation of abuse against a minor amateur athlete to the U.S. Center for Safe Sport (Burke, 2021). USA Gymnastics' "Safe Sport Policy", published in 2019, references the Victims of Child Abuse Act (1990) and defines child abuse as physical or mental harm to a child, sexual abuse or sexual exploitation, or neglect of a child. Also, the "Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA)," named federal legislation, provides states with a legal basis for preventing child abuse and neglect (ACF, 2023). CAPTA defines sexual abuse as the use, enticement, or coercion of a child to engage in sexually explicit conduct or to produce a visual depiction of such conduct; or rape, prostitution, and other forms of sexual exploitation of children. According to the "Child Protection Law" of Michigan (1975), which is the basis for the Larry Nassar case, child abuse is the unintentional physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or maltreatment of a child by an adult (parent, teacher, responsible person, etc.) that causes harm to the health or welfare of the child.

As new laws and sports policies take shape, the international gymnastics community, including the International Gymnastics Federation (Fédération Internationale de Gymnastique, FIG), has initiated discussions on the risk factors of harassment and abuse specific to gymnastics. Also, "Finding Solutions for a Respectful Culture and Safe Training Environment" e-conference organized by the FIG in 2020 (FIG, 2020), national gymnastics federations presented their organizational work on the prevention of harassment and abuse. For example, The Royal Dutch Gymnastics Federation stated that in 2018, they relaxed the gymnastics leotard rules and allowed girls, especially those in their teenage years, to wear shorts. In 2020, the New Zealand Gymnastics Federation took a similar decision. They explained that this gender-sensitive decision aims to break gender stereotypes associated with female gymnasts, empower athletes, and ensure that sports media coverage focuses only on the performances of female athletes. Reflections of FIG's work can also be encountered in Turkey, the country where this article was written. In 2021, safeguarding trainings were organized for coaches with the initiative of a few members of the Technical and Education Board of the Turkish Gymnastics Federation. These trainings were an extension of the safe

gymnastics and positive sports culture movement that FIG initiated through the national federations of the Nassar case. The examples show that they have begun to bear fruit in many parts of the world.

One of the reasons why the Nassar case has become a global sensation is the size of the social media movement around the issue. It was not until 2017, when the #MeToo social media campaign went viral, that the public was adequately informed about survivors' reports about Nassar. #MeToo movement helped launch a thorough investigation into Nassar (Liao & Craig, 2023). Following the release of the Athlete A, the subject of this article, gymnasts from around the world shared their experiences of mistreatment on social media using the hashtag #GymnastAlliance. In these posts, athletes described incidents where they were silenced, disclosed experiences of mistreatment (such as body shaming, bullying, intimidation, racism, nutritional neglect, overtraining, health neglect, sexual harassment, and assault), called for change, and called for building a community of support (Kerr et al., 2019; Kerr et al., 2020). With a global reach similar to #BlackLivesMatter and the #MeToo movement, the #GymnastAlliance movement has been recognized as an important movement for challenging normalized codes of silence and acceptance of mistreatment (Willson et al., 2022).

The Nassar case is a case of organizational abuse that started with a single complaint of sexual harassment and has been going on systematically for many years. It is a case of organisational sexual abuse of hundreds of athletes, including gymnasts who are among the most important and Olympic athletes in the world. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) classifies sexual abuse as a relational threat to child athletes; however, it also recognizes it as an organisational threat, since in the case of Nassar there was medical mismanagement (Mountjoy, 2019). For this reason, researchers discuss an approach to understanding sexual abuse as an organizational phenomenon rather than an individual one (Way, 2023). In line with this approach, it is important to understand the culture of elite sport and the power of organisations within this culture in order to analyze sexual harassment and abuse cases correctly. In the next section, elite sports culture will be discussed in light of the literature on sexual harassment and abuse in elite sports.

Conceptual Framework in Elite Sport: Sexual Harassment and Abuse and Grooming

Sport is a social field with many actors and organisations, including governing bodies, sports clubs, athletes, coaches, medical staff, parents, sponsors and media, and fans (Milroy et al., 2022). Elite sport is a field dominated by a competitive culture for rewards, status attainment, and career advancement for athletes (Carter et al., 2022). However, the fact that an athlete competes in international competitions or is an Olympian also expands the network of

hierarchical relationships in which the athlete is embedded. For example, sports federation managers, club managers, sports physicians, or sports specialists are more involved in the athlete's performance development and daily life. The elite athlete lives more on social relationships than an amateur athlete in terms of the length of training, the need for competition-specific training, travel, nutrition, sleep patterns and control of mental health processes. For elite athletes, this network of relationships is conditioned to win at all costs, i.e. the goal of success and perfectionism (Wilinsky & McCabe, 2021). This elite sport framework brings different risk factors for elite athletes.

In the specific context of this research, elite athletes are known to be subjected to high rates of sexual harassment and abuse (Bjørnseth & Szabo, 2018; Vertommen et al., 2016). The examination of the prevalence and risk factors of sexual harassment in sports, which accelerated with the studies of Brackenridge and Fasting (2002), gained momentum with the Safe Sport approach, which entered the agenda of national and international sports organizations with the Larry Nassar case, and numerous scientific studies on sexual harassment in sport have been conducted in the last decade. The prevalence rates and risk factors measured in these studies vary according to the conceptual framework used in the study. This is because researchers may develop different definitional criteria when using concepts according to their own cultures and laws. However, when the recent literature on sexual abuse of children in sports is examined (Carter et al., 2022; Dodd et al., 2024; Hartill et al., 2021), it is seen that the definition developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) (2022) is mostly used: "Involving a child in a sexual activity that the child cannot fully comprehend, consent to, is not developmentally ready for, or violates the law or social acceptance of society."

"Sexual abuse", defined as child maltreatment in the new WHO training manual "Responding to Child Maltreatment: a clinical handbook for health professionals" (2022), refers to the forced or tricked involvement of children and adolescents in sexual behavior that they may not understand is wrong and may be afraid to tell someone. The guidelines define sexual abuse in three categories: non-contact sexual abuse (e.g. threat of sexual abuse, verbal sexual harassment, sexual solicitation, indecent exposure, pornographic exposure of a child); contact sexual abuse involving sexual intercourse (e.g., sexual assault or rape); and contact sexual abuse involving other than sexual intercourse (such as inappropriate touching, fondling and kissing; World Health Organization, 2022).

It is critical to evaluate sexual harassment and abuse in sports and accompanying forms of abuse within the socio-cultural context on a social and organizational basis (Brackenridge

& Rhind, 2014). When the phenomenon of abuse is considered in the context of the dynamic relationship between structure and agent, it is related to social and contextual values, social interactions, and social structures to a degree that cannot be explained by the abuser's behavior, personality, or psychosexual pathology. Because, as in every different social sphere, sexual abuse in sports often occurs through the manipulation of the athlete by an authority figure (International Olympic Committee, 2007). This manipulation can be considered part of the "sexual grooming" process.

The specific objectives of grooming include providing access to the child, gaining the child's compliance, and protecting the child's confidentiality to prevent disclosure. This process serves to reinforce the perpetrator's abusive behavior, as it can be used as a way to justify or deny their actions (Craven et al., 2006). Intentional behaviors to establish a friendly and emotional bond with the child are part of the grooming (Acar et al., 2018). Grooming is, therefore, a psychological game involving manipulative inputs (Bjørnseth & Szabo, 2018). Giving gifts to make the child feel special, acting as a confidant and providing support in negative situations, emotionally manipulating, normalizing sexually abusive behaviors, and ultimately desensitizing the child in the sense of security, but making the child feel "unique."

In order to understand the prevalence and behavioral patterns of sexual abuse in sport, it is necessary to build on the criteria included in the research. For example, in a study published in the US sports field, Carter et al. (2022) included only "contact behavior/action" patterns (e.g., kissing, oral sex, penetration, attempted sexual assault) in the sexual assault/abuse category and did not include verbal behaviors in the survey (e.g., exhibitionism, voyeurism). The results of the study show that 3.8% (n=18) of 473 elite athletes were sexually abused as children. It is observed that 61% of the sexual abuse was perpetrated by an adult authority figure (usually a coach) and 44% by a peer. It is also underlined that none of those athletes complained about it. Hartill et al. (2021), in their research on the prevalence of violence, harassment, and abuse in sports in six countries, defined the conceptual framework on the basis of the WHO and UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and defined sexual violence as "encouraging or coercing a child to engage in any illegal or psychologically harmful sexual activity". According to the data obtained from 10,302 adults, the researchers state that 35% of the participants were exposed to non-contact sexual violence, and 20% were exposed to contact sexual violence. One of the important findings of the study is that while the rate of exposure to different types of violence is 68% in recreational sports, this rate is 84% for athletes competing in international competitions. While another study showed that female athletes (21%) were exposed to sexual abuse more than male athletes (11%) during childhood

(Liao & Craig, 2023), there are also studies indicating that men (26%) experience sexual abuse at least once in sports more than women (14%; Hartill et al., 2021).

Cultural and Political Context of Elite Sport: Foucault's Biopolitics

Foucault's concept of biopolitics can guide us in understanding the culture of elite sports and its risk factors that can lead to harassment and abuse. Biopolitics is a concept developed in order to reveal the regulations that power implements in order to control the population it wants to intervene in, and today it has become one of the concepts that are the focus of research on women's bodies, gender, and power (Deveaux, 1994; Repo, 2015). In this article, the concept of biopolitics allows us to understand how the mechanism of power that regulates the female athlete body in gymnastics culture intervenes in this body.

Biopolitics is, in general, the sum of all actions that concern and regulate human life and the body (Koç, 2018). Since biopolitics is not oppressive and restrictive compared to the old disciplinary model of power, it meets the needs of the body while controlling it (Koç, 2018). Power can be empowering or oppressive, it can restrict people's freedoms or help them realize their potential (Foucault, 2019). In elite sport, this is done through the use of information and technology to enable the body to realize its capacity and push its limits to achieve its goal. Foucault's power is therefore not repressive negative power, it has a productive function; power has a productive function that uses strategic means (Foucault, 1996).

Biopolitics allows us to understand how people consent to the mechanisms that power uses to control individual lives. People accept the values and logic, the norms, of the power that controls their lives. According to Foucault, power produces knowledge and discourse in the field. The reproduction of this knowledge and its normalization into a norm in this process takes place through the actors in the field, in other words, through its embedding in every cell of social relations in the field. Power, which used to survive through laws, now lives through norms. This coercion is achieved through a supportive form of communication and a network of relationships, not through law and coercion as in previous forms of power. Society internalizes norms and spreads through relationships (Kalan, 2014). As a social organisation, the norms set forth by elite sport intervene in the athlete's their bodies and consequently their whole selves by functioning like the control mechanisms of power. In elite sport, and in gymnastics in particular, power is the authority to determine the norms and values of the field and to regulate the position of people in the field.

Foucault emphasizes that the body is not only a biological entity but also one of the means of production of political and social structure. In addition to being a space directly intervened by power relations, the body is also considered as a space that can be used

economically (Elekler, 2023). In his book "History of Sexuality" (2007), Foucault mentions biopower shaped through biopolitical mechanisms. Biopower is related to the fact that the body, which is at the center of population activities in capitalism, is an object of production by being controlled according to the economy (Foucault, 2012). We can say that all mechanisms for regulating and controlling the athlete's body in the sports ecosystem have been developed around the focus of making optimum use of the athlete.

Foucault's form of biopower does not exist through violent force, but through the desires it creates; this existence is a form of control over the individual. Instead of directly directing the actions of the individual, biopolitics aims to ensure that individuals in society shape their own bodies according to the desires of biopower, thus ensuring that individuals spontaneously turn to desired social behavior (Sejfula, 2023). Gymnasts' desire for bodies that are trained and disciplined to become Olympic athletes is central to their athletic identities. Thus, the aim is to create norms that will control individuals by binding them to certain identities and to make this a reality in their small community (Sawicki, 2020).

To understand power in gymnastics as an elite sport and how this power regulates the female athlete's body, it is necessary to consider the history of the field/power. The following section presents the power relations in USA Gymnastics in this context.

Eastern Bloc Gymnastics Defection to the USA

An important step in understanding the source of Larry Nassar's perpetuation of his systematic sexual abuse is to examine the training method and culture of USA Gymnastics. The turning point for USA Gymnastics began in the late 1960s when Marta and Bela Karolyi, practitioners of the gymnast training policy shaped in Romania and the Soviet Union, defected to the West, to the USA (Barker-Ruchti et al., 2020). The Karolyi, who brought this training method to the USA, planted the first seeds of the method with the Artistic Gymnastics School founded in Romania in 1969 (Petracovschi, 2022). Until the beginning of the Karolyi's method, it was customary to watch young female gymnasts with an average age of 28 compete in national and international arenas (Cervin, 2015), but with a radical change, girls as young as 5-6 years old started to be selected for gymnastics school (Petracovschi, 2022). In the 1970s, girls as young as 14-15 years old were competing at the Olympic level (Cervin, 2015). Kerr et al. (2019) termed this new gymnast phenotype "Fairy-style" and described it as a system in which short, underdeveloped, underweight and cute girls are considered suitable for gymnastics. According to the Fairy-style model, "The ideal gymnast looks sweet and lovely. Rebellious and disobedient behavior is not tolerated by anyone" (Kerr et al., 2019). Coaches

who achieved success and associated media fame due to the fairy-style had no difficulty getting authorities to accept its validity (Kerr et al., 2019).

The biggest influence on the acceptance of the style was the performance of the athlete Nadia Comaneci, coached by the Karolyis', in the 1976 Montreal Olympics in a performance called "Perfect Ten" (Kerr & Obel, 2015). After Karolyi's realized that their training model based on psychological and physical abuse to win work, they continued to increase this abuse (Petračovschi, 2022). The defection of Karolyi's system to the USA is also considered to have been the source of Nassar's systematic sexual abuse for years (Udowitch, 2020). In USA WAG, not only the systematic sexual abuse by one person (Larry Nassar) encountered, but also the training methods that were seen as essential for success (Wittman, 2020). The culture created by this history was evaluated with literature and as reflected on the silver screen in 2020. The following sections explain the purpose and methodology of the research in this context.

Purpose of the Research

In many studies on the Nassar case and in research on sexual harassment and abuse in sport in general, it is stated that the "culture of silence" and "obedience to power" created by the culture of elite sport prevents cases of abuse from coming to light. This is one of the reasons why Nassar's abuse of children was not exposed for so long and why so many children were abused. On the other hand, the effort of the women survivors to make their voices heard and the depth and power of this voice, which enabled the whole world to hear them, also affected us (the writers) from a very distant geography. McCradden and Cusimano (2019) argue that in order to prevent future abuse, we have a moral obligation to listen to the stories of survivors who have been ignored for so long in order to understand how we can make sports safe for every athlete. As the authors of this article, we take this moral obligation upon ourselves. As Nassar was sentenced to 175 years in prison, more than 300 women stood up and spoke out against him: "Little girls don't always stay little. They grow up, grow into strong women and come back to bring down your world," and we want to make this voice heard from a distant geography. For this reason, we politically prefer to use the names of the survivors as stated in the court records and the documentary. Just as Kyle Stephens, who was the first to tell her story, said in an interview with the BBC, "I believe that coming out and telling my whole story from beginning to end has given me strength" (BBC, 2018), we too believe that the stories of these women will give strength to all women as a basis for our political stance.

METHODS

Athlete A: The Truth Behind USA Gymnastics Documentary

The research data source is the movie "Athlete A: The Truth Behind USA Gymnastics". The genre of the film, released by Netflix in 2020, is documentary. Directed by Bonni Cohen and Jon Shenk, the film was shot in Indianapolis, Indiana, USA, and is 1 hour and 43 minutes long. The documentary examines the culture of gymnastics that continues to perpetuate the systematic sexual abuse of athletes on the US WAG team by doctor Larry Nassar. Police records describe the criminal complaint initiated by national team athlete Maggie Nichols, codenamed "Athlete A," and her parents, as well as the follow-up and investigation process that developed after newspaper articles on the subject appeared. The archives contain testimonies from female athletes, parents, experts, and reporters from the IndyStar newspaper. However, the documentary presents the case from different perspectives, such as archival footage of the national team training center and the Rio Olympics trials, as well as archival footage of the investigative process that took place in the police office in the city of Indianapolis. The documentary takes a chronological approach from the beginning of the case to its aftermath and presents Nassar's trial in detail by sharing the moments of the investigation and defense. The reason why we chose to analyze this documentary within the scope of the research is that it provides a detailed background on the Nassar case and conveys the case process to the audience using archival footage.

Documentary Analysis

In this research, we aimed to understand the social phenomena and human behaviors presented in depth. Since the documentary is a visual document, we preferred the qualitative analysis method (Patton, 2005).

We used the Nvivo software program to analyze the documentary. Nvivo is a software program developed to work with qualitative research data (documents, audio, video, etc.), which provides tools to analyze and report data by seeing them as a whole and is frequently used in social sciences (Borish et al., 2021; Estrada et al., 2017; Phillips & Lu, 2018). We conducted the analysis of the research using Baltruschat's (2010) "Film Interpretation According to the Documentary Method" process in the Nvivo program. Baltruschat developed the Film Interpretation process by utilizing the texts of the German Sociologist Ralf Bohnsack's (2009, 2014) "Documentary Method". The Documentary Method is explained as the study of documents, moving from the question of what cultural and social phenomena are to the question of how they are constructed (Bohnsack, 2009, 2014). "Film Interpretation According

to the Documentary Method" explains how this method can be adapted to the process of film analysis. The process of Film Interpretation explains how documentaries reflect the messages they want to convey to the audience and how the process of shaping social phenomena can be revealed (Baltruschat, 2010). In this research, using Baltruschat's Film Interpretation process, we aimed to understand how the culture of the US WAG is constructed to perpetuate systematic sexual abuse.

The process of Film Interpretation is explained in six stages. The first stage is the transcription of the movie. The transcription process is basically the coding of the image projected on the screen and the lines used in the movie. Here, only the image on the screen and the subtitles are verbalized without any interpretation. The second stage is to write explanations according to the progression of the movie. The flow of the movie is followed, and notes are taken about its progress. In the third stage, a structural outline of the film is made by evaluating the basic codes and the notes taken on the flow of the film. The draft forms the basis for the fourth stage, which is the interpretation of the film. The interpretation of the film is carried out by analyzing the outline and reflecting on the meanings. The fifth stage involves incorporating the title of the movie into the process. The sixth and final stage is to complete the interpretation by seeing the film as a whole. Baltruschat (2010) suggests that his six-stage explanation need not follow a fixed sequence, but rather, the process should be cycled as a "circle of interpretation". He argues that the transition between substances in the cycle should be continuous and that substances should be stages that feed each other. Based on these explanations, the documentary titled "Athlete A: The Truth Behind USA Gymnastics" was uploaded to the Nvivo program with Turkish subtitles to be analyzed by the researchers. We analyzed the documentary and Turkish subtitles simultaneously in the Nvivo program. In the analysis, we carried out the six stages of the Film Interpretation process as an "interpretation circle". The documentary, its visuals, and subtitles were evaluated and interpreted at the same time, and the findings of the process were thematized and reported. We tried to understand the social and organizational reality by establishing a relationship between all the elements used by the directors in the documentary (characters, locations, space-time relationship, etc.) and the concepts of sexual harassment and abuse. During the analysis, different principles were taken into consideration to ensure reliability (Noble & Smith, 2015). Two researchers conducted the process to ensure consistency in interpretation during the analysis. During the interpretation of the film analysis conducted with the Nvivo analysis program, triangulation was achieved by using literature sources and case reports. Additionally, screenshots from the relevant documentary broadcast on Netflix were used in the findings section of the study.

These screenshots were used only to support the findings within the "Fair Use Principle" scope and were kept in limited numbers. They were used for scientific purposes only and without any profit, in a way that would not violate the platform's copyrights.

RESULTS

We presented the findings in the same way as in the documentary, with the revelation of the Larry Nassar case and its aftermath. The documentary shows the case's first suspicions, the athletes' first complaints, and the subsequent investigation and follow-up process. We interpreted the findings to understand the culture of silence created in the US WAG and the process of perpetuating abusive behaviors caused by this culture.

Athlete A Breaking the Silence

The documentary begins with images of athletes training in a gymnastics hall. Figure 1 shows Athlete A practicing in the gym and being interviewed. The first person interviewed in the documentary is Athlete A, who talks about her love and passion for gymnastics. In the first figures, in which the parents of Athlete A are also included in the interview, the first expressions of the sadness the athletes and their parents felt about the details of the case that will be presented throughout the documentary are reflected on the screen.

Figure 1
Athlete A



It is known that within gymnastics culture, harsh training conditions are glorified to improve performance, and parents unquestioningly accept the methods of coaches who resort to abusive practices (Nite & Nauright, 2020; Willson et al., 2022). For example, in an interview with Jamie Dantzscher, one of the athletes said, "I started with 18 hours of training a week and worked my way up to 30, 35 hours. At that time... it was like I couldn't get enough. I was in a position to do everything they told me to do to get to the Olympics" is a reflection of this culture of acceptance.

The athletes' commitment to gymnastics and their Olympic dreams serve as a basis for them to do "anything" they are told to do. For athletes, meeting the expectations set by power,

in this context, the coaches, becomes their own "insatiable" desire. Athlete A's father described this system as "We had to do what they wanted us to do. They were the ones who selected the Olympic team. We were at their beck and call. They had the Olympics as leverage", explaining where he, as a parent, necessarily stood in the relationship between his child and the federation. Like athletes, parents also aim for the Olympics for their children, and this goal reinforces loyalty to other actors (coaches, federation managers, etc.) and concern about failure (Jacobs et al., 2018). This concern puts athletes and parents in the predicament of remaining silent. After all, it is known that silence does not prevent any abusive behavior and creates an environment for subsequent ones to continue (Wortley & Smallbone, 2006).

When the relevant statements about the dream of being an Olympic athlete, the most desired success in gymnastics culture, are re-read from Foucault's biopolitics approach, the control mechanism coaches and the federation create over athletes is seen. The "powerful" federation officials revealed in the statements transformed their position as decision-makers on athletes' careers into a control mechanism. This control mechanism is oppressive, but it has the role of helping athletes to achieve their goals. This helping role and repressive practices are intertwined to become the only channel through which athletes must engage in order to achieve their goals. In other words, power, which is not only about repression and punishment (Foucault, 2012), creates the desire of athletes and their parents to become Olympic athletes and controls this desire through norms and discourses in the field.

The transformation of the US WAG culture into an oppressive and abusive one accelerated in the 1980s with the appointment of coaches Bela and Martha Karolyi, who used their strict methods to train American Olympians (Hampel, 2018). The documentary presents the Karolyi Ranch, founded by the Karolyis' as a gymnastics center, as a center where oppressive knowledge was produced and applied through the testimonies of athletes and parents.

Figure 2
Karolyi Ranch and the Karolyi's



In Figure 2, on the left side, there is an overhead view of the Karolyi Ranch. Immediately afterward, the documentary shows photographs of Bela and Martha Karolyi. Athlete A's father, describing Karolyi Ranch in the documentary, said: "Families were not allowed to go to the ranch. We could hardly talk when we were there because there was no cell phone reception. It was a strict method so that they could gain strength for their sport and get better. We had to believe and trust in their system." It is understood that athletes and parents accept the norms of power in the field because of Olympic desires; they do not question these norms, even if they contain abusive practices, because they think that they have a productive function as a result.

It is known that while on the ranch, athletes do not have access to quality medical treatment and have to struggle with malnutrition; Davis (2021) explains that this is because athletes know that if they eat too much, they will be subjected to psychological abuse by their coaches that they are not performing well because of their weight. In the documentary, athlete Jamie Dantzscher says, "I had the flu, I threw up for five days straight. I think I lost about three kilograms because of the illness. I remember Beth (Karolyi) saying to me, 'You've lost three kilograms, now we have to find a way not to gain it back'," Jamie Dantzscher says, describing patterns of physical and psychological abuse that she was unaware of at a young age. These regulations mentioned in the documentary, such as restricting the athletes' nutrition, continuing to train and compete while injured, forbidding contact with their parents, and restricting communication with those outside the camp to make them forget that there is a world outside Karolyi Ranch are restrictive interventions that provide surveillance and control exerted by power to achieve the desired result by controlling the athlete's body and therefore her entire self athlete's body and therefore her entire self.

Another challenge that athletes have to deal with is the humiliation and sarcasm of coaches. The risk of making a mistake in the process of learning a new skill later than the rest of the team means for athletes to be insulted and humiliated in front of the whole team (Davis, 2021). The documentary reflects this through an interview with Geza Poszar, the choreographer with whom the Karolyis' defected to the US. Poszar reports that Karolyi's methods of training athletes included hitting, slapping, training to exhaustion, scolding, and so on, and since this was the "normal" of the time, the Karolyis' was not warned by anyone. He also emphasizes that when USA Gymnastics hired the Karolyis' as national team coaches, they knew their training methods and did not object because they wanted to win. It does not matter to USA Gymnastics which methods are used to achieve the desired goals. "America

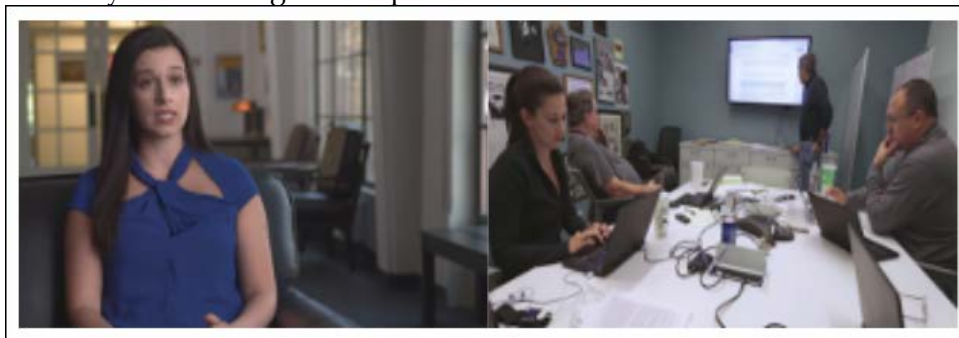
loves a winner," said one of the witnesses, former athlete Jennifer Sey, who also said, "When Bela and Martha came here, we copied their style and started practicing it in the US. We knew their system, but we also knew that they won all the time," indicating that the acceptance of coercive methods is related to the goal to be achieved. In order to achieve this goal, coaches' "successful" track record leads to the perpetuation of abusive practices.

Such a culture of gymnastics becomes the basis for an authority figure to continue the process of preparing the child for abuse. Especially in gymnastics, the frequency with which coaches use physical contact to help athletes acquire technical skills, ensure safety, or get support for the movement, combined with the fact that child athletes do not know what violations related to "body contact" are, normalizes body contact. Therefore, the national team doctor Nassar touching their bodies during the treatment process is a normal behavior for gymnasts (Udowitch, 2020). Athletes consent to the surrender of control over their bodies with the dream of achieving the created desire (to become an Olympian, a national team athlete). Desires and norms of consent reinforce the culture of silence.

In the documentary, the person who breaks the culture of silence is the athlete who goes by the code name Athlete A. With the support of the club coach and parents, the athlete's complaint led to the launch of the investigation and the exposure of the Nassar case. The documentary reveals that when Athlete A, who was aiming to compete in the Olympics, filed a sexual abuse complaint against Nassar, it was the beginning of a crisis for USA Gymnastics. The fact that another athlete's allegations against Nassar were published in The IndyStar newspaper at the same time as Athlete A's complaint and that former gymnast Rachael Denhollander saw this news and contacted the newspaper after she was sure that she had been sexually abused, are conveyed to the audience through the interviews of investigative reporters in the documentary. Each testimony of the witnesses deepens the questioning of the USA Gymnastics system, and the questioning threatens to undermine the federation's oversight mechanism.

Figure 3

The IndyStar Investigative Reporters



There is now a new case on the journalists' desk: The case of Dr. Larry Nassar. As seen in Figure 3, the documentary constantly reminds viewers of the pioneering role of The IndyStar investigative reporters in uncovering this case and, therefore, shows their workspace. Ultimately, journalists are the voice of athletes subjected to abuse; the documentary aims to bring this voice to the audience through witness accounts and archival work. First, with a tip-off followed by dozens of whistleblowing emails, journalists analyzed websites related to USA Gymnastics and Nassar on the basis of the tip-off files. The second stage is to investigate the validity of Nassar's actions, which he claims to be a method of treatment, in the medical literature. This phase is described in the documentary through interviews with investigative reporters. In analyzing the case, understanding Nassar's relationship with athletes and other actors in the field and examining his positional power based on his expert knowledge shape the investigative reporters' questions about the case. Nassar is a medical doctor who uses his profession and the norms of the field to perpetuate sexual abuse. In this context, the next theme focuses on Nassar through the visuals and witness statements presented in the documentary.

The Only Nice Adult: Larry Nassar

"He was nice, he was funny, he made them laugh... He secretly gave snacks, food, and that gave the children confidence. He was the opposite of the Karolyis'" (John Manley, Lawyer).

The statements in John Manley's interview show that the image of Nassar as trustworthy and nice has helped him maintain his status as a beloved doctor. Many athletes go to Nassar for treatment after injuries. Nassar is indispensable with his trusted image and expert knowledge for athletes who have Olympic dreams and want to keep their place on the national team. Nassar uses the athletes' dream of becoming an Olympic athlete and the "acceptance of pain" as a tool. In every context, the documentary shows that suffering is necessary to achieve dreams and that athletes accept this norm. As Olympic athlete Jamie Dantzscher says in the documentary, "I know I've competed and trained with a broken toe. I competed even though I hurt my back, but still, whenever I got injured, nobody believed me." As Jamie Dantzscher has shown, athletes are forced to fight despite injuries and are understood to have lost control over their bodies in an area where they know no one will believe in them. The loss of control over the body is apparent on the surface, but when examined more deeply in the background, it can be read that the athletes' self and subjectivity are being destroyed. The lack of adults (such as parents) around athletes who listen and try to

understand them when they are injured, ill or not feeling well also makes it easier for them to "trust" an authority due to their professional status.

In this culture, Nassar "listens" and "understands" the athletes. Working at Michigan State University, one of the most prestigious universities in the USA, while being a member of the US Olympic medical team at all four Olympics gives him great privilege, responsibility and power as a team doctor. Nassar's trustworthy image, which he has established over all the actors in USA Gymnastics, ensures that his treatment methods are not questioned for a long time and that there is no doubt about him. There are more than four hundred videos on Nassar's website where he shares the treatment methods he developed for gymnasts (Figure 4). "To justify his methodology, he has produced dozens of videos of himself performing various osteopathic procedures on little girls, as he calls them, to legitimize his methodology... His anatomical vocabulary is excellent, and it all seems legitimate," lawyer John Manly said in an interview, noting that Nassar had consulted different sources to support his method.

Figure 4

Videos of Nassar Teaching the Medical Treatment Method



The documentary reveals that Nassar perpetuated his sexually abusive behavior, which he concealed with his expert knowledge, by taking advantage of the organizational culture of abuse to which gymnasts were subjected. Nassar also knows that the gymnasts he treats idolize Olympic athletes and strive to be like them. When we look at the images of Nassar's office presented in Figure 5, we can see that he used to hang photographs of successful athletes he had treated on the wall. Kerri Strug, whose photograph is in the lower left corner of Figure 5, is commemorated in a part of the documentary for her performance at the 1996 Olympics. Strug's fight for her team's gold medal by competing in the competition despite injuring her ankle has placed her among the legendary gymnasts referred to as "warriors". The fact that Strug's photo is also in Nassar's office is effective in increasing the admiration for Nassar for the athletes who look up to her (Strug). In the documentary, the investigative reporters explain this behavior as Nassar's use of influence to increase the confidence of the child gymnasts in him.

Figure 5

Wall of Nassar's Examination Room at Karolyi Ranch



The documentary also frequently includes the athletes' reflections on their communication with Nassar during the camp and competition periods when they were part of the national team. For example, when Jamie Dantzscher says in her interview, "I hate to say it, but I would look forward to treatment because Larry... was the only nice adult", she is describing Nassar, who was the only adult who communicated with her in the gymnastics culture where she was isolated. Nassar strives to be seen as a "savior of girls," "accomplice," and "confidant," and this effort is part of the grooming (Bennett & O'Donohue, 2014; Salter, 1995). In the documentary, witness testimonies reveal Nassar's caring, trustworthy, and confiding nature, leaving chocolates under his pillow or food in his room as a surprise. One of the witnesses, lawyer John Manly, said in an interview, "Larry Nassar was the only bright light in the room," giving clues to how Nassar built trust with athletes for sexual abuse by creating a nice and gentle image. The relationship between the gymnasts and Nassar keeps them in the sport, and this is invaluable for USA Gymnastics, which needs the success and continuity of athletes (Way, 2023). His volunteer service, benevolence, and kind-heartedness are the qualities that made him a member of USA Gymnastics' national team for many years.

Nassar's non-coercive and supportive network of relationships with athletes is the source of his perpetuation of sexual abuse. The documentary tells the viewer that a great fear - the fear that no one will believe him, that he will not be understood, that his career will end, and that he risks being removed from the national team roster - covers up the testimonies of athlete witnesses and their interrogations of Nassar's sexualized physical contact. In this way, the documentary directors do not allow the viewer to ask the question, "Why didn't the athletes tell anyone?" but rather they try to make the viewer ask the question, "Why couldn't Larry Nassar be prevented?". In an environment where discomfort, anxiety, and pain are silenced, Nassar knows that his sexual abuse of athletes will also be silenced (Wellman et al., 2021). To abuse athletes, he built trust with every adult, manager, parent, and athlete, and

acted systematically and deliberately to build this trust. As the documentary highlights, the culture of silence, combined with USA Gymnastics' concern for organizational reputation, fueled Nassar's sexually abusive behavior for years. The answer to the question "Why couldn't it be prevented?" which we are encouraged to question as viewers, is sought in the next theme in the direction drawn by the documentary.

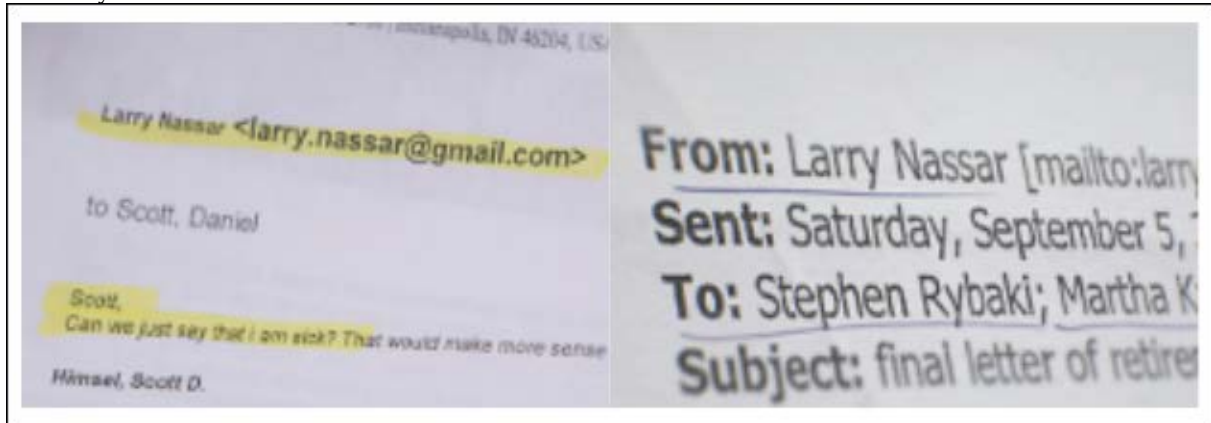
Organisational Cover-up: The Invisible Part of the Iceberg

The documentary reveals that it is not only Nassar who is guilty of sexual abuse but that USA Gymnastics is complicit in the crime and that organizational negligence is effective in its continuation. As Way (2023) points out in her study, while Nassar's position as a provider of treatment or having easy access to athletes is a risk factor, the main factor that should be focused on is the mismanagement of the organization that allows Nassar to continue his abuse, the ignoring and failure to prevent abuse under the goal of success. "Nassar was the tip of the iceberg," Shenk, one of the documentary directors, said in an interview with TIMES, drawing attention to organizational neglect (Gajanan, 2020). On the invisible side of the iceberg, USA Gymnastics' efforts to cover up sexual abuse and its numerous omissions are presented in the documentary. The documentary documents the email correspondence between the federation official and Nassar, thus revealing the tip of the iceberg for the viewer, who is informed that the federation decided not to allow Nassar to take part in the competitions due to growing suspicions, citing the excuse that he was ill. As presented in Figure 6, this correspondence is one of the main pieces of evidence of the federation's organisational cover-up.

Documentary Athlete A presents the email cover-up and the reprisals against athletes and their parents. Athlete A's father said, "As parents, we were seated at every competition. Camera crews were following us... When we went to the Olympic trials, our seats were not reserved. We didn't have microphones. There were no cameras following us. So... there was definitely something strange" is an example of organisational retaliation targeting the athlete and her parents after Athlete A's complaint. In the documentary, Athlete A recounts how USA Gymnastics president Steve Penny prevented her from appearing in a commercial with her national teammates and then denied her a spot on the 2016 Rio Olympics team, even though she had enough points. These practices can be interpreted as retaliation by USA Gymnastics and, when interpreted from a Foucauldian perspective, as punishment for athletes who do not conform to the norm.

Figure 6

USA Gymnastics Federation Official and Nassar's E-mails



Allegations suppressed by reprisals and reports of sexual abuse hidden in drawers only surfaced years later. It is known that the first police investigation was opened against Nassar in October 2004. During the police investigation, Nassar claimed that he had performed a valid medical procedure to treat the patient and provided the police with a presentation documenting this technique. The fact that the police believed Nassar and did not think that Nassar had committed a crime led the police to close the case (Gajanan, 2020). Earlier than that, in 1997, the gymnasts' complaint to Michigan State University was ignored by MSU, USA Gymnastics, and the US Olympic Committee, the same year Nassar was hired as a sports physician at MSU. Evidence is presented in the documentary that despite numerous warning signs and complaints against Nassar over three decades, MSU was slow to act on reports of the doctor's abuse of young girls and young women. In addition, the facilities where the athletes train are seen in the documentary as facilities where many cases of abuse were reported to USA Gymnastics and the Olympic Committee. The authorities to whom the reports were submitted ignored them, Nassar was not investigated, and all this evidentiary information did not come to light until years later, following the work of investigative reporters and prosecutors.

The evidence shows that USA Gymnastics made strategic moves to destroy complaints, potentially revealing statements and documents to avoid damaging its reputation. Steve Berta, the editor of *The IndyStar*, said, "The organization was run by a sports marketing expert (Steve Penny, Former USA Gymnastics President). That's what he cared about. It was marketing the brand." seen this statement shows that while USA Gymnastics' organizational priority was marketing and brand image, its priority was not the athletes. As Foucault states while explaining the concept of biopower, the federation sees the athlete's body as a means of production (Foucault, 1996). By controlling the means of production and turning it into an

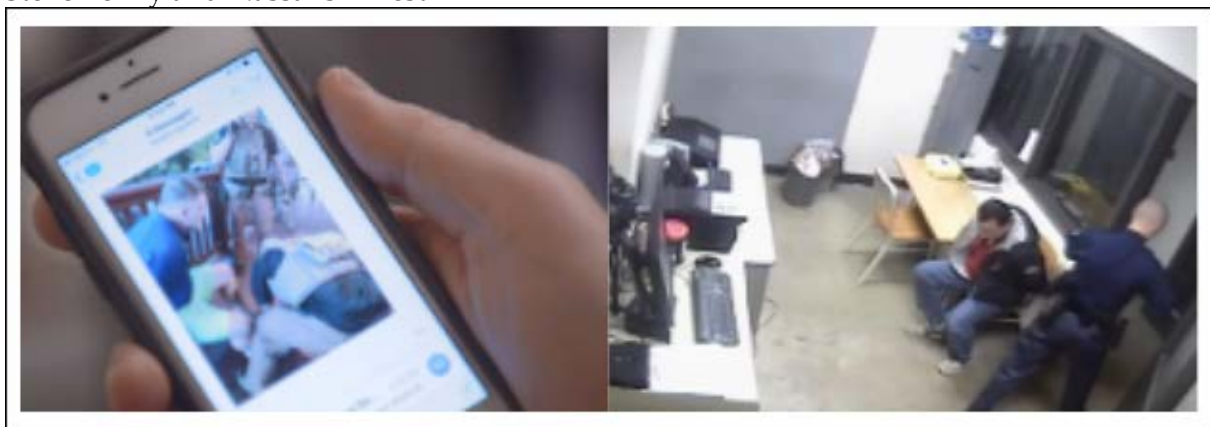
object of production, athletes for USA Gymnastics have become marketing products. Restrictions and cover-ups are in place for all risks that could damage the brand. Abusive organizational practices have suppressed athletes, put them under absolute control, caused them to recalibrate their expectations of what is normal and acceptable, and ultimately facilitated abuse. Foucault's discourse on the body as a tool that produces political and social structure gains meaning at this point. For Steve Penny, the body of gymnasts is the main source for the continuation of the political and social structure he has built as the president of the federation. The health and well-being of the athlete are not important within this structure. Penny, one of the representatives of biopower, continues biopolitics with these tools.

The documentary's chronological case study shows that it took many years for the culture of abuse to be recognized and stopped and that the main reason for this was a series of organizational mismanagement and negligence. The process of athletes speaking out after the abuse is exposed is presented as a healing process because human beings always need hope.

Sentences upheld and recovery process begins: "I can finally say I'm proud to be an Olympic Athlete"

The documentary emphasizes that the process of Nassar's legal investigation accelerated in the wake of mounting allegations and published newspaper reports. Interrogation records, surveillance footage, and police archives are all utilized to narrate this process, and ultimately the Nassar scandal culminates in the arrest and conviction of Nassar, Steve Penny, and other perpetrators of organizational negligence within USA Gymnastics (Figure 7).

Figure 7
Steve Penny and Nassar's Arrest



It is also important to note that the documentary states that "non-disclosure" agreements" were among the reasons why Nassar was able to sexually abuse athletes for decades without being caught. The investigative reporter said, "I learned that McKayla Maroney was forced to sign a non-disclosure agreement. I think they made other athletes who were Nassar's victims sign non-disclosure agreements. USA Gymnastics went to great lengths to cover it up and minimize the damage." It appears from his words that the confidentiality agreement included terms that did not allow Maroney to publicly disclose that Nassar had sexually assaulted her and that she could not disparage Nassar or USA Gymnastics. In 2016, after the crimes were revealed and Nassar was arrested, McKayla Maroney not only attended the hearings and testified during Nassar's trial but also filed a civil lawsuit against USA Gymnastics and won 1.25 million dollars in compensation (Akel, 2018).

The documentary also includes archival footage of Rachael Denhollander testifying face-to-face with Nassar at the first hearing. Beforehand, Rachael says, "I know that if the prosecution considers it, I will have to testify in court, in front of him, sharing the same memories, and I hate the idea. I hate it, but if I don't do it, it can continue. This idea feels worse," she testifies in court, looking Nassar in the face. Archival footage is then shared of many Olympic and national athletes attending the hearings and reading their written statements in front of Nassar (see Figure 8).

Figure 8
Athletes Testifying During the Trial



Jamie Dantzscher, one of the survivors, testified, "Larry, you saw the physical and emotional abuse that our coaches and the USA Gymnastics national team staff inflicted on us. You pretended to be on my side and called them 'monsters'... You knew I was weak... I'm here to tell you to your face that you can't fool anyone anymore," and the documentary now focuses on the athletes who broke their silence and looked Nassar in the eye and complained. One of the athletes, Rachael Denhollander, said of the other athletes' speeches, "It was always an incredibly powerful speech because it meant that they now felt safe, that they were no longer blaming themselves but their abusers" celebrating the fact that survivors had exposed years of

sexual abuse and that they had stopped "blaming" themselves. Speaking out, announcing to the world that the patterns of abuse they could not make sense of as children were abused, breaking down the walls of fear, and going to trial to protect the young athletes who will come after them are all part of healing and become survivors.

As an abused athlete, Jamie Dantzscher said, "Now that I can say that you no longer have power over me as an Olympic gymnast, I can finally say that I am proud to be an Olympic athlete," and that she is an athlete who has regained her freedom of speech and her identity as an athlete. For the athletes, the freedom to speak out, the end of repression, and the idea that they have protected future generations from Nassar and the dirty politics of USA Gymnastics is a source of pride for the reconstruction of their identity. It has been part of the healing process for the athletes to confront Nassar and to become young women who can now speak out with support from each other and their families. The final scenes of the documentary show Athlete A, whose true identity is revealed - Maggie Nichols - participating in competitions while enjoying the sport. Stating that she was happy in college sports, Maggie's athletic life, free from the dirty politics of USA Gymnastics, is conveyed to the audience with the statement, "Elite gymnastics wore me down, but I grew as a human being and a woman. I fell in love with this sport again." Maggie's mother then shared, "I think it was a big epiphany for her because she saw that she was treated well when she went there. Gymnastics is fun; the coaches are very good, the medical staff is very, very good. It's not like when she was on the elite team." These statements are proof that abuse in gymnastics is not normal and that happy athletes can build successful careers.

Athlete A - Maggie Nichols - who also bears the title of the documentary, is a powerful athlete who, by the end of the film, wants her name to be known to everyone and does not want it hidden on shelves in secret documents. Maggie Nichols, a survivor of sexual abuse, is one of the victors of the freedom to "speak out" that all survivors aim to achieve together.

DISCUSSION

The documentary Athlete A focuses on Larry Nassar's systematic sexual abuse of child athletes on the US WAG team and the organisational negligence that led to the abuse. Emphasizing Nassar's manipulation of athletes to prevent their sexual abuse from being exposed, the documentary reveals the process from the discovery of the case to Nassar's arrest through the testimonies of witnesses, actual footage, police and journalists' archives. In this context, the documentary depicts the dynamics of psychological, physical, and sexual abuse perpetrated on athletes by those who hold organisational power with the understanding of

"win at all costs" and the transformation of organisational (USA Gymnastics, FBI) negligence into complicity.

In this study, the findings we obtained as a result of the analysis of the Athlete A Documentary are based on the chronologically presented fiction of the documentary and include a) the abuse caused by power relations in the field of gymnastics and Athlete A's breaking the silence of abuse, b) Nassar's identity of authority in the grooming process, c) the organisational negligence and complicity of USA Gymnastics administrators, and finally d) The healing process for athletes that began with Nassar's trial became evident. Since the documentary presents the power dynamics in the world of gymnastics and their systematic control over athletes, we employed Foucault's concept of biopower. We thus had the opportunity to discuss from another geography how Nassar's biopower renders athletes vulnerable to abuse.

The documentary focuses on how an authority figure, who has control over the bodies of athletes as a physician, uses his positional authority by manipulating the administrators in his organisation and thus deepens the culture of silence. Olympic medal goals, as presented to spectators, seemingly control not only athletes' bodies but also their minds and dreams. Here, every move made with the goal of athletes' health or success becomes a risk factor for sexual abuse, and Nassar represents biopower through the power relations he establishes over athletes in the name of treatment. Therefore, the struggle of athletes who have been subjected to sexual abuse to make their voices heard in their organizations has also turned into a struggle for survival. At the same time, Cohen and Shenk, the directors of the documentary, managed to draw attention to the systemic abuse and neglect taking place in USA Gymnastics during the documentary-making process (Gajanan, 2020). Thus, representing failed leadership (Mountjoy, 2019), USA Gymnastics' (and the FBI's) failure to take athletes' complaints seriously, to conduct investigations, to prevent abusive behavior, and to pave the way for athletes to be subjected to sexual abuse appears as complicity.

CONCLUSION

There are lessons we can learn from the abuse case in USA Gymnastics in order to end harassment and abuse in sports and for athletes to participate in sports in safe environments. As sports scientists, we have a responsibility to consider survivors' voices and be part of building safe sports so that this dark history does not repeat itself (Mountjoy, 2019). The world of sport owes a debt to the survivors. This debt is too deep to be compensated by the US

Department of Justice's payment of \$138.7 million to the athletes for the FBI's failure to investigate, as announced on April 23, 2024 (Reuters, 2024).

The Nassar case has led to a shift in sports policy and the development of policies and procedures to safeguard athletes from harassment and abuse. However, it is evident that this whole process needs to be carried out before a case arises. Every sentence of the survivors should be a lesson for decision-makers and sports scientists. Just like the Olympic athlete Simone Biles said about USA Gymnastics in a newspaper interview, "We had one goal and we did everything they asked us to do, even if we didn't want to, and they couldn't do one damn thing. You had one job. You literally had one job and you couldn't protect us" (CNN, 2019): Sporting organizations should establish effective policies and procedures to prevent harassment and abuse and safeguard athletes from harassment and abuse.

Acknowledgements

The study has not been supported by any academic financial support organisation (TÜBİTAK, BAP, European Union, United Nations, etc.). The study has not been produced from a thesis, a paper presented at a congress/symposium/conference or a project. This study is an original work.

Authors' Contribution

All authors contributed to the conception and design of the study, data collection, data analysis and interpretation, drafting the article and/or its critical revision, and approved final version of the study.

Declaration of Conflict Interest

There is no conflict of interest between the author(s) of the study or the institution to which the author(s) are affiliated

Ethics Statement

As stated in Article 2 of the scope of Hacettepe University, Institute of Health Sciences, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Committee Directive, ethics committee approval is required for research conducted under the aforementioned conditions:

"All kinds of questionnaires, interview guides or questionnaires and scales applied face-to-face, online, telephone or computerised data collection activities with quantitative or qualitative research design in the field of social sciences and humanities at Hacettepe University or by Hacettepe University members, and non-medical observation, file or data source scanning or secondary data sources are within the scope of this directive."

We hereby declare that the article submitted to Pamukkale Journal of Sport Sciences is not within the scope of the relevant directive and ethics committee approval has not been obtained. Ethics committee approval is not required for this article.

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