Although the public assumes that women married to male professional athletes support their husbands, it is not entirely aware of what their support requires. Findings from longitudinal research offer insight into players’ wives’ collective interpretations of spousal support and the meanings attached to what they describe as “teamwork.” This notion extends Papanek’s concept of the two-person career by examining the basis and cost of the wives’ perceived teamwork. According to an agreed work-family arrangement, couples share expectations about a wife’s ability to accommodate changes in the marriage or family caused by her husband’s occupation. A wife vicariously identifies with his career achievements through an internalized “we” partnership, believing that her efforts sustain the marriage and enable or advance his career. A married player depends on his wife because her efforts allow him to concentrate on his career with minimal domestic responsibilities. Although the wife believes she is part of a team, in reality it is an unequal arrangement from which she does not always benefit. Her efforts may hold their marriage together during his career, but they may no longer be required after he retires and, if this is the case, the marriage will likely be troubled or dissolved.

This paper focuses on how football wives from the Canadian Football League negotiate their husbands’ celebrity status by examining how these women manage their presentation of the football wife identity in public, including their online activities. Drawing on participant observations and in-depth interviews with football wives, I illustrate the rules of conduct football wives learn in presenting the identity of ‘good’ football wife and the consequences these women face for breaking these rules. I discuss the personal costs garnered from possessing a football wife identity due to their husband’s celebrity status and the difficulties these women face in interacting with the media, fans and groupies. As will be demonstrated, many football wives are silenced in expressing self through their attempt to not draw any negative attention on their husband and/or his team. I conclude by arguing the norm of self-silencing tends to be generally accepted by these women as they learn to suppress their individuality and follow the rules of the game.

Globalization is a process which involves multiple moving flows of people, places, and information (Ritzer, 2010). These flows enable some to move in multiple directions within our social sphere and connect with various people and cultures on a micro-level. One of the many phenomena attributed to globalization is its influence on the more fluid and flexible ways people migrate and move throughout the world (Terret, 2008). This presentation will explore the various relationships that exist within the WNBA transnational sport labor migrant experience including: Experiences with teammates (domestic and international), experiences with Americans living abroad, and experiences with domestic partnerships. Ten WNBA sport labor migrants were interviewed about their experiences with maintaining and building relationships while playing basketball domestically and internationally. I will discuss the role of being a basketball spouse, and how these women transnational sport labor migrants try to balance work and life domestically and internationally.
In this paper, we examined the complexity of figure skaters’ familial relationships both at home and at the skating rink. Narrative inquiry gave us insight into athletes’ family-related stories increasing our understanding of their subjective and complex worlds (Smith, 2010). We explored seven former figure skaters’ reflections at both personal and social levels (sociality), over time (temporality), and as their participation in high performance sport changed (place; Connelly & Clandinin, 2000). While participants spoke extensively of parental support, they also often spoke of strained/distant relationships with fathers and siblings as well as guilt associated with their participation in the sport (e.g. taking mom away from the family / not achieving potential). While limited time at home sometimes contributed to strained relationships with their family at home, it often resulted in the creation of a ‘skating family’ or a ‘second family’. However, strong relationships with coaches and friends at the skating rink, built on common goals and passion, shifted in negative ways for some athletes when they retired from the sport or went through coaching changes. Participants highlighted tensions surrounding both families as they moved throughout training and retirement.