Introduction

This book is perhaps best introduced through the story of Bara and Nickel. In the 2011 HBO documentary "When Strangers Click," director Robert Kenner acquaints us with Bara Jonson, a Swede, who looks to be in his fifties. We meet Bara after he has lost his business in the United States and moved to Tärnö, a remote island in the southeast of Sweden, where he now lives with his elderly mother. Becoming bored in this extremely peaceful and secluded place, Bara finds himself visiting the website Second Life, creating an avatar, and setting up a virtual bar. The documentary shows Bara standing in his kitchen, playing the guitar and singing his original songs while plugged into the computer, so his avatar performs live in the virtual bar in front of other avatars.

His performing avatar becomes popular and is soon visited by a gorgeous female avatar who tells Bara that, although his singing is great, his avatar needs a makeover. One thing leads to another, and the two avatars fall in love and get married in the virtual world – in a wedding for which Bara and Nickel, the woman behind the female avatar, pay $500 in real money.

One day, the owner of an independent record company from New York, who also got to know Bara through Second Life, invites him to the United States to record his songs. Bara accepts the invitation and takes the opportunity to initiate a nonvirtual meeting with Nickel, who lives in a small city in Missouri. After recovering from the shock of seeing how they look in real life, and maybe because of it, Bara and Nickel get drunk, have intercourse, and a very real baby is born as a result, whom they name Christopher. However, since Bara and Nickel are not married according to the law, and as Christopher will be eligible to petition for a visa for his father only when he turns 21,[1] Bara cannot obtain a residency permit in

[1] For US family-based visa regulations, see "Family of U.S. Citizens," US Citizenship and Immigration Services, www.uscis.gov/family/family-us-citizens. All websites in this book were last visited on August 19, 2016. See also discussion on familial citizenship in Chapter 5.

the United States and reluctantly returns to Sweden. As Nickel says: "The countries don't make it easy for you to actually live with someone for a while, to see if you want to get married." Bara claims, "We are still family even though we are just in separate places." Indeed, the film ends with us watching Nickel watching her computer, in which the couple's avatars are sitting in a virtual living room, watching a virtual screen onto which pictures of Nickel and baby Christopher, taken in reality, are projected.[2]

Watching the film, one starts to wonder: Are Bara, Nickel, and Christopher a transnational family, or is Nickel a single mother like so many others? Can people have a significant familial life in virtual dimensions, or should the term *family* be reserved only for physical familial relations? Are we heading for a future in which people will establish and maintain families without ever meeting each other, through communication and fertility technologies? Do sperm and ova exportation and international surrogacy prove that this future is already here?

Indeed, the story of Bara and Nickel is an interesting example of the impact of globalization on familial biographies and on our understanding of what a family is. In this case, cross-border movement of communication and people allowed two people separated by a significant geographical distance to establish what at least they perceived as a family. In other, much more common, cases, globalization brings together people through immigration, studies abroad, and tourism, and some of these interactions lead to the creation of cross-border families. Globalization also separates families, especially as labor migration becomes an opportunity and a necessity for both men and women, who are also spouses, parents, children, or siblings. Moreover, the movement of ideas, through a variety of means such as the media and international law, changes what people know and think about familial possibilities, and eventually how they choose to live their own vision of a family.

Hence, *family* as an adjective – that is, referring to "sets of practices which deal in some way with ideas of parenthood, kinship and marriage and the expectations and obligations which are associated with these practices"[3] – cannot be understood in our era detached from globalization. *Familiality* (my term for how such practices are lived and experienced, which I use throughout this book) is opened up by globalization

[2] For details on the documentary, see the HBO website: www.hbo.com/documentaries/when-strangers-click. For an interview with the avatars of Bara and the director, see *HBO "When Strangers Click" with Documentary Maker Robert Kenner and Bara Jonson on Tonight Live*, available at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=mMxbnwlZhjI.

[3] David H. J. Morgan, *Family Connections* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), at 11.

and exposed to new options, liberties, and flexibilities, as well as challenged by it and faced with new complexities and confusions.

Though families are shaped by globalization in many profound ways and are, at the same time, contributing to the ever-changing meaning of globalization, surprisingly, very little attention has been given to families in the rich literature on globalization. As I write these lines, I have several books on my desk that have *globalization* in their titles and that strive to offer a wide perspective on the phenomenon. I find it almost inconceivable that not even one out of the eleven works that contain a subject index has *family* as a category, particularly as they include a reader[4] and a handbook,[5] which hold about 500 pages each, and a book entitled *Globalization and Everyday Life*.[6] Moreover, although there are growing numbers of studies that look into specific case studies in which families are affected by globalization, especially within immigration studies,[7] the links between the social institution of the family and globalization are also theoretically underdeveloped within family studies. One goal of the present book is to contribute to the exploration of this "*terra incognita*," as it has been called by the prominent sociologists Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim;[8] in so doing, it adds to the first signs of the much-needed theoretical attention to the current interrelations between globalization and families.[9]

Although Bara and Nickel's story is about the new, globalized, cross-border movement – which enables us all to even blur the boundary between fiction and reality in novel, exciting, and puzzling ways[10] – it is also about the ongoing existence of borders. Not only the geo-political and

[4] Frank J. Lechner & John Boli (Eds.), *The Globalization Reader*, 4th edn. (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012).

[5] Jonathan Michie (Ed.), *The Handbook of Globalization*, 2nd edn. (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 2011).

[6] Ray Larry, *Globalization and Everyday Life* (London: Routledge, 2007).

[7] For example, Deborah Bryceson & Ulla Vuorela (Eds.), *The Transnational Family: New Frontiers and Global Networks* (Oxford: Berg, 2002); Jennifer Cole & Deborah Durham (Eds.), *Generations and Globalization (*Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007); May Friedman & Silvia Schultermandl (Eds.), *Growing Up Transnational: Identity and Kinship in a Global Era* (University of Toronto Press, 2011).

[8] Ulrich Beck & Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim, *Distant Love* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014), at 7.

[9] Bahira Sherif Trask, *Globalization and Families Accelerated Systemic Social Change* (New York: Springer, 2010); Harry Goulbourne, Tracy Reynolds, John Solomon, & Elisabetta Zontint, *Transnational Families, Ethnicities, Identities and Social Capital* (London: Routledge, 2010); Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, *Distant Love*.

[10] Tom Boellstorff, *Coming of Age in Second Life: An Anthropologist Explores the Virtually Human* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).

legal borders, of the kind that prevent a Swedish man from living with an American woman and their baby for a 'relationship test period,' but also the national economic borders that force and allow Bara to move back to his homeland, a generous welfare state, and a gender border that makes the choice of preferring the mother–child dyad over the father–child dyad an unspoken one, entirely taken for granted. Hence, the answers to questions regarding who can cross borders, who wants to cross borders, and who must cross borders, are part of the global movement itself. In that sense, we cannot understand globalization without understanding the current national, social, economic, legal, and other kinds of borders that interrelate with it. Indeed, as this book will argue, we cannot understand families today without contextualizing them within *bordered globalization* – the conceptual framework I develop in Chapter 1 of this book, which includes a typology of the antagonistic, cooperative, and complex interrelations between globalization and borders.

One reason for the ongoing centrality of borders in the familial context is that there is no global moral and normative consensus on what a family is and how family members should be treated by one another, by the country of their nationality, and by other countries. While Bara and Nickel are both from a western secular background, one can only imagine the challenges that could have been added to the already complex story if, for example, Bara had found out that behind the female avatar he married virtually lived a gay man who could not even take the risk of creating a homosexual avatar, let alone experiencing nonvirtual intimate relations with another man, in fear of social and legal retaliation in his country. Or what if Nickel had discovered that behind the avatar she loved hid a man who was already married to three wives, which was perfectly acceptable according to his religion and the law of his country of residency? Although these scenarios sound almost ludicrous, they are entirely possible in an era in which globalization and borders are in constant interplay, bringing together different national, religious, cultural, and legal perceptions of the family, and thus creating familial opportunities and challenges for people all over the world.

As hinted earlier, the law acts as a family-shaping border in itself, as it reinforces cultural borders between the allowed and the forbidden in familial terms, as well as reflects the ongoing global, national, and parochial controversies about what a family is and what the rights and obligations of family members are vis-à-vis each other and the state. Indeed, as will be explained in detail in Chapter 2, the law – national, international, and subnational – on the books and in action – will be

applied in this book as the central analytical perspective from which to explore the interrelations between globalization and borders in the familial context.

Before briefly justifying the choice of the legal prism here, allow me to offer another way of contextualizing the relevance and importance of analyzing the interrelations between globalization, borders, and families, while mentioning the themes on which the chapters in this book focus. I wish to point to what I detect as a *new familial dictionary*, which has evolved in recent years and which demonstrates the many ways families shape, and are shaped by, bordered globalization. This dictionary includes entirely new terms as well as new additional definitions attached to existing terms used until recently only in the local or national context. Tracing these terms and definitions, and assembling them together here, illuminate the argument at the heart of this book – that contemporary family structures, practices, and displays[11] are affected, with increasing intensity and in many significant ways, by bordered globalization.

One group of terms in this emerging new dictionary is related to spousal relations and how these are established and maintained. *Split household, living apart together,* and *long-distance relationship* are three terms describing a situation in which a couple, married or not, have an intimate, more or less exclusive, relationship, while each lives in a different place.[12] Although these terms can describe spouses who live in separate dwellings within the same country, due to globalization these terms are also relevant to more and more people who, like Bara and Nickel, sustain such spousal relations while living in different countries. *Split household* also refers now to situations in which the spouses used to live together but are currently separated due to immigration.[13] *Mobile intimacy*[14] captures such couples' ability to stay intimate, through technological means, while living apart.

The terms *cross-border marriage, multinational marriage, mixed-marriage, cross-cultural marriage, interfaith marriage,* and *interracial*

[11] Janet Finch, "Displaying Families," *Sociology*, 41(1) (2007), 65–81.

[12] Irene Levin, "Living Apart Together: A New Family Form," *Current Sociology*, 52(2) (2004), 223–40.

[13] Cindy C. Fun & San Mingjie, "Migration and Split Households: A Comparison of Sole, Couple, and Family Migrants in Beijing, China," *Environment and Planning*, 43 (2011), 2164–85.

[14] Gerard C. Raiti, "Mobile Intimacy: Theories on the Economics of Emotion with Examples from Asia," *Journal of Media and Culture*, 10(1) (2007), available at: http://journal.media-culture.org.au/0703/02-raiti.php.

marriage all refer to the growing number of cases in which people marry outside their group of origin.[15] This phenomenon can be explained first and foremost by the physical and virtual exposure to different nationalities, religions, and races that is the outcome of globalization, as well as by growing tolerance for exogamy rising from the globally spreading Western perception of the family as aimed at fulfilling individual, rather than collective, needs and wishes. This cross-border spousal mixing is part of what Beck and Beck-Gernsheim call the "normalization of diversity,"[16] and, as will be elaborated in Chapters 2 and 3, can also be seen as part of what they describe as the global normal chaos of love, in which people from different places and cultures must negotiate the meaning of their familial relations with no agreed-upon familial social scripts.[17]

Intimate citizenship is another term I would add to the evolving dictionary's spousal section. As developed by Plummer,[18] the notion of intimate citizenship is a broad conceptual framework drawing attention to the interplay between individual intimate choices, such as marriage and procreation, and public debates and constraints, such as those surrounding same-sex marriage and surrogacy. Although this term can relate to many conflicts and dilemmas arising from bordered globalization, I will narrow it here so it echoes the formal term *spouse visa,* and will attribute it a very pragmatic, yet controversial, meaning regarding whether a country should grant citizenship to an outsider because that person is the spouse of one of that country's citizens. As we shall see in Chapter 5, which centers on what I term *familial citizenship*, the answer to this and other questions related to family-based naturalization reveal many examples of national authorities endeavoring to impose ever-more effective borders between insiders and outsiders. For example, *sham marriage, fraudulent marriage, fictive marriage,* and *marriage of convenience* are all terms used by the authorities to try to differentiate between marriages based on love and those used merely

[15] Daphna Hacker, "From the Moabite Ruth to Norly the Filipino: Intermarriage and Conversion in the Jewish Nation State" in Hanna Herzog & Ann Braude (Eds.), *Gendering Religion and Politics: Untangling Modernities* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 101–24.

[16] Ulrich Beck & Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim, "Families in a Runaway World" in Jacqueline Scott, Judith Treas, & Martin Richards (Eds.), *The Blackwell Companion to the Sociology of Families* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), pp. 499–514, at 505.

[17] Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, *Distant Love*.

[18] Ken Plummer, *Intimate Citizenship, Private Decision and Public Dialogue* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003).

as an immigration license, as if it were possible to separate authentic spousal feelings from material and other interests.[19]

Two additional terms, which can be found in the group of spousal-related terms, are *mail-order brides*[20] and *leftover women*.[21] These terms remind us that mixed marriages are not gender-neutral since, in most cases, it is the woman who leaves her country of origin to live with the man in his country.[22] Among other reasons for this gendered tendency is that, in some countries where women have gained some degrees of freedom and independence, men are seeking women from less developed countries, whom they perceive as more traditionally-minded women. Hence, the industry surrounding mail-order brides is much more significant than that of *mail-order grooms*, and there are also *leftover women* – those in the more developed country who are left single, among other reasons, because of this male preference for foreign brides. In some countries, such as Singapore, Korea, and Taiwan, this phenomenon is very significant. In Singapore, about 35 percent of marriages are of local men with women from less developed Asian countries, leaving many local women unmarried. In the case of Taiwan, in 2004 some 22 percent of marriages were between Taiwanese men and foreign women. By 2008 this had declined to around 10 percent due to government-strengthened immigration policy aimed at discouraging the importation of brides.[23] Notwithstanding, in the poorer countries from which the brides emigrate, such as Vietnam, there are *leftover men*, who either import brides from even poorer countries or remain single.[24]

[19] See also Viviana A. Zelizer, *The Purchase of Intimacy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

[20] Yu Kojima, "In the Business of Cultural Reproduction: Theoretical Implications of the Mail-Order Bride Phenomenon," *Women's Studies International Forum*, 24(2) (2001), 199–210.

[21] Xin Meng, "In the 'New China' Educated, Unmarried 'Leftover Women' are Still Stigmatized," Xpat Nation (April 18, 2016), available at: http://xpatnation.com/in-the-new-china-educated-unmarried-leftover-women-are-still-stigmatized/.

[22] Catherine Dauvergne, "Globalization Fragmentation: New Pressures on Women Caught in the Immigration Law-Citizenship Law Dichotomy" in Seyla Benhabib & Judith Resnik (Eds.), *Migration and Mobilities: Citizenship, Borders and Gender* (New York University Press, 2009), pp. 333–54.

[23] Daiji Kawaguchi & Lee Soohyung, "Cross Border Marriages and Female Immigration," Harvard Business School, Working Paper No. 12–082 (2012), available at: www.hbs.edu/faculty/Publication%20Files/12–082.pdf.

[24] Danièle Bélanger & Tran Giang Linh, "The Impact of Transnational Migration on Gender and Marriage in Sending Communities of Vietnam," *Current Sociology*, 59(1) (2011), 59–77.

Finally, in the spousal-related group of terms, I would suggest importing *portability*, used mainly in social security law,[25] to family law and family-related legal documents. *Portable spousal agreement* and *portable divorce agreement* can be useful terms that point to the need to draft such legal documents in a way that will secure their meaning and enforceability in different countries. As will be demonstrated in Chapter 3, which centers on the theme of coordinating expectations, the relevance of prenuptial agreements is relatively obvious for cases in which the spouses are from different countries, have different expectations of the marriage, and are connected to competing legal systems. However, the questions surrounding prenups' desirability and portability, as well as the portability of other familial legal agreements and documents, such as last testaments, become relevant to all couples in an era in which one cannot be sure that both parties will live in the same country all their lives. *Divorce tourism* is another relevant term that relates to forum shopping on the part of ex-spouses in an attempt to secure the jurisdiction most favorable to them.[26] For example, according to *The Times*, London is a global capital for divorce tourism, with marriage break-ups involving foreign nationals accounting for a sixth of all divorce cases put before the courts.[27] Apparently, ex-wives, and their lawyers, are aware of the English courts' reputation as being more generous than others toward the domestic partner when it comes to splitting the matrimonial property.[28]

Another group of terms in the new familial dictionary relates to the different cross-border ways of bringing a child into the world. The terms *fertility tourism, procreative tourism, infertility exile, reproduction emigration,* and *cross-border reproduction care* all refer to the same phenomenon in which people in one country travel to another to buy gametes (mostly ova) or pregnancy-related services (surrogacy or delivery).[29] People can also stay put, and import gametes (ova and sperm) from another country.[30] For the first time in human history, a child can be born from sperm

[25] For example, see "General Rules of Portability," Australian Government website, available at: http://guides.dss.gov.au/guide-social-security-law/7/1/2/10.

[26] Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, *Distant Love,* at 180.

[27] Frances Gibb, "'Divorce Tourists' Take Over the Court," *The Times* (April 10, 2012), available at: www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/law/article3379227.ece.

[28] Cecilia Rodriguez, "Divorce Tourism: London Is Still the Top Destination," *Forbes* (August 23, 2013), available at: www.forbes.com/sites/ceciliarodriguez/2013/08/22/divorce-tourism-london-is-still-the-top-destination/.

[29] Richard F. Storrow, "The Pluralism Problem in Cross-Border Reproductive Care," *Human Reproduction*, 25(12) (2010), 2939–43.

[30] Marcia C. Inhorn, "Rethinking Reproductive 'Tourism' as Reproductive 'Exile'," *Fertility & Sterility*, 94 (3) (2009), 904–6; Eric Blyth, "Fertility Patients' Experiences of Cross-Border

produced in one country and an ovum retrieved in another country, which are then transplanted as an embryo into a woman from a third country, who gives birth in a fourth country, to a baby designated to be handed over to intended parents from a fifth. However, as the different terms demonstrate, this new option is not normative-neutral.

Chapter 4 frames abortion as another cross-border reproduction service, and discusses it together with inter- and multinational surrogacy. I will argue that the ability to purchase reproduction services abroad, and the disagreement about the moral acceptability of abortion and surrogacy, lead to what I call *familial globordered hypocrisy* – a situation in which one country enacts restrictive family-related legislation while assuming this will not lead to active external or internal opposition since that country's citizens can satisfy their familial needs in another country where there is different and more enabling legislation. In this case, globalization and borders are in symbiotic relations, as a nation-state can preserve its *nomos* thanks to the global supply of reproduction services, while the global reproduction industry profits from national restrictive policies.

The final group of terms in the new familial dictionary relates to parent–child relations. *Left-behind child* is a term referring to cases in which one or both of the parents emigrate, leaving the child to be raised by the remaining parent or grandparents or other family members. There are millions of left-behind children around the world, living in countries with a markedly high incidence of emigration such as the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Moldova, and Mexico. Millions more, especially in China, are left behind because of their parents' need to emigrate afar within their own country, a phenomenon also reinforced by global capitalism and its impact on agriculture and urbanization.[31] *Transnational motherhood* is the mirror term of *left-behind child* as well as another example of the parentally gendered border that leads to greater emphasis being placed on the mother–child dyad,[32] though the gender-neutral term *transnational families* is increasingly in use, describing families that are split

Reproductive Care," *Fertility & Sterility*, 94(1) (2010), e11–e15, available at: www.fertstert.org/article/S0015-0282(10)00106-8/fulltext.

[31] See "Migration, Displacement and Children Left Behind," The International Center for Migration, Health and Development (August 12, 2013), available at: http://icmhd.wordpress.com/2013/08/12/migration-displacement-and-children-left-behind-clbs/.

[32] Sarah K. van Walsum, "Transnational Mothering, National Immigration Policy, and European Law: The Experience of the Netherlands" in Seyla Benhabib & Judith Resnik (Eds.), *Migration and Mobilities, Citizenship, Borders and Gender* (New York University Press, 2009), pp. 228–51.

between two countries or more.[33] Additional related terms are *teleparenting* and *mobile-phone mum,* which captures the technology-assisted attempts of transnational parents to keep in touch with their left-behind children on a regular basis.[34] Chapter 6 will look at remittances, sent by parents working abroad to their left-behind children, and place this phenomenon, together with child labor and international adoption, in the broader context of the question of who should be obliged to secure children's economic needs in our era.

Parachute kid is another term in the lexical parent–child group, developed to capture the phenomenon of children sent to live in a new country, alone or with a distant family member or a paid caregiver, while the parents stay in the country of origin. If the child is accompanied by one of the parents and siblings while the breadwinner parent stays behind in the country of origin, he or she is termed a *satellite kid,* and the absent breadwinner is referred-to as an *astronaut parent,* left detached to provide for the rest of the family.[35] In both cases, the children's change of location is usually aimed at securing good schooling and higher education for them. For example, during the 1990s it was estimated that about 40,000 unaccompanied Taiwanese minors aged 8–18 were studying in the United States.[36] Although in most cases the family's assumption is that the child will return to the homeland, in others the expectation is that the child will remain in the host country and, possibly, will be joined at some point by his or her parents and other adults.[37] Two further terms, used to derogate parents who try to secure citizenship of another country by a short-term move, are *anchor baby* and *birth tourism*.[38] These terms relate to cases in which expectant parents deliberately time the baby's delivery and choose its location to coincide with a country that grants citizenship on the basis of geographic place of birth, such as the United States.

[33] For example, Laura Meria (Ed.), *Transnational Families, Migration and the Circulation of Care: Understanding Mobility and Absence in Family Life* (New York: Routledge, 2014).

[34] Burghardt et al., in Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, Distant Love, at 112; Ernesto Castañeda and Lesley Buck, "Remittances, Transnational Parenting, and the Children Left Behind: Economic and Psychological Implications," *The Latin Americanist*, 55(4) (2011), 85–110, at 91.

[35] Yuying Tsong & Yuli Liu, "Parachute Kids and Astronaut Families" in Nita Tewari & Alvin N. Alvarez (Eds.), *Asian American Psychology: Current Perspectives* (Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 2008), pp. 365–79.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid.

[38] See Wikipedia entry, *Birth Tourism*, available at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Birth_tourism (as of August 14, 2016).