

International clients flock to U.S. for surrogacy services

While babies through surrogacy have become increasingly common in the United States, with celebrities like Elton John, Sarah Jessica Parker and Jimmy Fallon openly discussing how they started a family, the situation is quite different in Portugal — as it is in most of the world where the hiring of a woman to carry a child is forbidden. And as Paulo and João have discovered, even bringing home a baby born abroad through surrogacy can be complicated.

In an era of globalization, the market for children crosses national borders; witness the longtime flow of Americans who have gone overseas to adopt babies from South Korea, China, Russia and Guatemala.

Other than the United States, only a few countries — among them India, Thailand, Ukraine and Mexico — allow paid surrogacy. As a result, there is an increasing flow in the opposite direction, with the United States drawing affluent couples from Europe, Asia and Australia. Indeed, many large surrogacy agencies in the United States say international clients — gay, straight, married or single — provide the bulk of their business.

The traffic highlights a divide between the United States and much of the world over fundamental questions about what constitutes a family, who is considered a legal parent, who is eligible for citizenship and whether paid childbirth is a service or exploitation.

Read the full, original story: [Coming to U.S. for baby, and womb to carry it](#)