Chapter 1

Family Counts

Family counts. That is, a family counts for its members and for its inextricable ties to other institutions. It counts for society at large because it represents a major conduit through which cultural knowledge flows from one generation to the next and beyond, and because it is a means by which necessary goods are distributed to members of society. Family and society are so interwoven that arguably, without family, we would have no society. Virtually all socialization theories see familial influence as pivotal from childhood to adulthood. Inequality also has deep roots within family. Scholars representing diverse theoretical leanings agree that family confers advantages and disadvantages that are difficult to erase (Becker 1980; Bourdieu and Passeron 1977; Coleman 1988; Featherman and Hauser 1978). In addition, family is the group that people often turn to in moments of triumph and moments of failure. An abundant literature dating back at least to the sociologist Émile Durkheim (1897/1977) contends that family is a primary institution into which people feel socially integrated and that this connectedness is consequential for the well-being of family members and the well-being of society.

Although we should be careful not to valorize family reflexively, we cannot deny the major role that family plays in fulfilling objectives that range from sheer survival to personal well-being—or the failure to do so. The appreciation of family as a societal cornerstone is one reason why the academic and public debate over "family decline" or "family change" is so spirited and controversial. The numerous realms in which it matters make the study of family a genuinely interdisciplinary arena. Scholars who study it come from the arts and humanities, public health, psychology, anthropology, political science, economics, communication, sociology, evolutionary sciences, and beyond. The scholarship across disciplines on the impact of family underscores its relevance in virtually every corner of social life. In other words, family counts.

There is another way in which "family" counts: what we collectively

define and accept as family has far-reaching implications. The boundaries that we—and others—make between family and nonfamily play both subtle and not-so-subtle roles in our daily lives. Imagine, for example, a recently married couple who plan to host their first Thanksgiving dinner, only to be told by their parents that they will not attend this dinner because the married couple is "not yet a family"—a signal that they consider children a requirement to become a family, and perhaps less than subtle hint that they expect grandchildren. Or consider a gay male couple who have lived together for fifteen years and who find themselves unsure about how to complete the question "number of family members traveling with you" on a customs declaration form while traveling abroad. Or imagine a lesbian who has requested a bereavement fare from an airline to attend the funeral for her partner's mother being told that it is unclear whether she qualifies as a "family member." Or picture an empty-nest married heterosexual couple who are contemplating a move from their large house in a "single-family residential zone" to a smaller condominium because they no longer need so much room, let alone a "family room."

These scenarios—some based on our own experiences—are far from unique. References to family and various implied or explicit definitions of family are ubiquitous in our everyday lives—from signs for "family" restrooms in public buildings (typically portraying a stick-figure family of a man, a woman, and one or more children) to brochures describing "family" care or benefits at universities and other workplaces (some prominently displaying a prototypical father-mother-child family and others offering a more varied visual representation of family). These depictions often embody and perpetuate what some scholars refer to as heteronormative conceptions of "the family" that privilege marriage, the presence of children, gendered roles, and especially heterosexual relationships (Berkowitz 2009; Bernstein and Reimann 2001b). This representation of the Standard North American Family (SNAF)—as characterized by the Canadian sociologist Dorothy Smith (1993)—serves as a yardstick against which other living arrangements are measured and consequently are seen as "lesser" families, or not as family at all.

Messages about family are heard in various venues. We hear of "family hour" on television; "family day," "family vacations," and "family night" at restaurants; "family visitation hours" at hospitals; "family-friendly" governmental policies; "pro-family" advocacy groups; and "family values." These messages give preference not only to family but also to particular definitions of family that include certain living arrangements—often those constituting the SNAF—and exclude others, even if those in the excluded categories see themselves as family. We

also hear of initiatives to "build strong families" as a means to slow down the rate of "family decline" or "family dissolution"; family in this context takes on a circumscribed operationalization. And we hear of emotionally charged debates regarding the extension of various rights and obligations to same-sex couples, with each side of the dispute attempting to take ownership of the word "family"—one promoting a traditionally bounded definition and the other side advocating a more all-encompassing definition that challenges a narrow, hegemonic vision of family. In other words, "family"—what we define as family—counts.

Both families themselves and our definitions of "family" count, but we do not know enough about what Americans count as family. Although scholars have amassed abundant and persuasive evidence of the relevance of family in virtually every aspect of individuals' lives and written extensively on Americans' views regarding an array of family-related topics (for example, the work-family imbalance, the division of labor in the home, and prescribed gender expectations in families), they mostly have bypassed public definitions of family. Social scientists have not, however, avoided defining families themselves. To be sure, at least since the early 1900s family scholars have debated among themselves over the meaning of family; however, these debates have relied primarily on academicians' own definitions of family—which we briefly discuss later in this chapter—and not on those of laypeople. Some scholars have written about the ways in which people think about or define their own families; much of this scholarship explores the experiences of marginalized groups (for example, African Americans' inclusion of extended or fictive kin as part of their family, or the efforts of same-sex couples to construct and reaffirm their identity as family) (Carrington 1995; Hill 1999; Sullivan 2001; Weston 1991). But missing from the literature, with the exception of some insightful but limited college student surveys (Ford et al. 1996; see also Weigel 2008), are analyses of the parameters that Americans set in defining other people's families.[1]

The distinction between what people define as their own family and what they define as family in general is not minor. Understanding how people broadly define family and why they do so matters a great deal. Subjective assessments of family have meaning and consequences, not only for individual interactions with others but also for potential social change. Public opinion certainly is not the only factor that drives social and policy change. But recent ballot initiatives regarding gay marriage, adoption, and foster care accentuate the importance of public views and definitions. These votes confirm that policies are not created exclusively in a top-down fashion, and they point to the danger of underestimating the power of popular opinion. In Arkansas, for example, a

strong majority (57 percent) voted in 2008 in favor of a statute that prohibits a minor from being adopted or placed in a foster home "if the individual seeking to adopt or to serve as a foster parent is cohabiting with a sexual partner outside of a marriage which is valid under the constitution and laws of this state."[2] The law did not explicitly differentiate between same-sex and heterosexual cohabiting couples, but commentators often characterized it as a "gay adoption ban" in which the restrictions on all unmarried couples—instead of only same-sex couples—were added so that the law would survive court scrutiny (DeMillo 2008; Miller 2008). In the same year, in a tightly contested referendum, Californians voted in favor of Proposition 8, which amended the state constitution to restrict marriage to opposite-sex couples. Superseding a 2008 California Supreme Court decision that permitted same-sex marriage (*In re Marriage Cases*), Proposition 8 prevented the extension of the rights and benefits of marriage to gay and lesbian couples; its supporters and opponents anticipate that legal appeals regarding this proposition may ultimately reach the United States Supreme Court. In the following year, voters in Maine decided to repeal one of the very few state laws in the United States that allowed same-sex marriage. The referenda in Arkansas, California, and Maine—along with others in multiple states especially in the past decade—underscore the centrality of public opinion in delineating the boundaries of family. These votes also speak to the pivotal role that issues surrounding same-sex couples assume in contemporary debates about the definitions of family.

Given the slim margin of victories in California and Maine and the possibility that the boundaries the public makes between family and nonfamily are porous and fluid, understanding Americans' definitions of family is critical. And identifying the factors that could alter these definitions should be fundamental for both advocates and opponents of more expansive definitions of family.

This book reports on results from the Constructing the Family Surveys of 2003 and 2006, in which 712 and 815 Americans (including nationally representative subsamples and a smaller subsample of Indiana residents), respectively, were interviewed about their stances regarding same-sex couples, cohabiting couples, gay marriage, gay adoption, the extension of certain marital/family rights to gay and cohabiting couples, and, most importantly, what counts as family. These interviews also covered a variety of other family-related topics, including some that have mostly been ignored by social scientists—among them, public views regarding the relative influence of biological and social factors on children's development, whether boys (or girls) in single-parent households are better off living with their fathers or mothers, and whether women should assume their husband's last name upon mar-

riage. In addition, these interviews solicited sociodemographic information and items regarding religious ideology that enable us to explore quantitatively the distribution of responses, identify social cleavages in the responses, and examine how these responses link to other ideological standpoints. The inclusion of open-ended questions (for example, respondents were asked why they believed that certain living arrangements do or do not count as a family) also offers a unique glimpse into how people explain their views regarding family, how they discuss their beliefs regarding gender and sexuality, and how these positions are intertwined.[3] These are, to our knowledge, the first sociological surveys of this scope that explicitly tap into Americans' definitions of family and the rationale behind their definitions.

Given the contemporary debates, the impetus for both this book and the Constructing the Family Surveys is simple. Few would deny that the public and academic discourse regarding the meaning of family has become more intense in the past few years. The language typically used to describe "family" (or "the family"), often based on assumptions about traditional family roles and composition, increasingly has been contested in academic scholarship (for example, in studies of divorce, cohabitation, gay and lesbian couples, and single parenthood) and in the public sphere. Some lament what they see as the weakening, or destruction, of "the family." But others—often relying on theoretical and empirical developments in sexuality and family studies that also engage issues of class, race, gender, and sexuality—celebrate the mounting diversity of family forms and the challenge they present to hegemonic family ideals. Changes in the visibility of these "new" families and reactions to these changes purportedly were pivotal in recent elections in the aforementioned referenda regarding adoption and foster care among cohabiting gay and heterosexual couples in Arkansas and gay marriage in California, as well as in similar ballot initiatives throughout the United States. It is not a stretch to predict that conflict over who counts as family will continue and perhaps become even more acrimonious. The general question of what defines a family—and in particular, whether same-sex couples should be counted in or counted out of the definition—is at the forefront of what some refer to as a cultural divide, or even an escalating culture war, in the United States.

Yet we do not know how Americans define family or how they distinguish between family and nonfamily. The overriding objective of this book, then, is to explore people's definitions of family—not who they consider to be their own family, but who they believe fits under the abstract umbrella of "family." More specifically, our goals are to explore the degree of consensus or disagreement over the definition of family—and in particular, to determine whether same-sex couples are

counted in or counted out of this definition; consider how Americans talk about the definition of family; identify the extent to which these definitions vary along sociodemographic lines, including age or cohort, gender, education, race, and religion; examine how these definitions are linked to beliefs regarding the etiology of children's behavior and traits, in particular the causes of sexual preference; and assess how these definitions are intertwined with gender ideology—more specifically, with views about parenting and marital name change practices.

In meeting these goals, we seek not only to understand how people are making sense of—and in some cases struggling with—changes in living arrangements in the United States, but also to make admittedly cautious predictions regarding the future. For example, to what extent and in what direction do the social cleavages in attitudes regarding the meaning of family forebode changes in these attitudes? Which types of frames or arguments are most resonant and potentially most influential in directing people toward a more inclusive (or more exclusive) definition of family that accommodates (or leaves out) same-sex households? How likely is it that Americans will reassess their definitions of family? A collateral goal of this book is to encourage a reassessment of assumptions that continue to be held by a number of sociologists and other social scientists—for example, the view that family and marriage are intrinsically sexist and harmful institutions or the apparent assumption that all genetic explanations are inherently conservative or reactionary.

We now turn to an examination of the theories, actors, and frames shaping the debate over family and its definition. We first briefly summarize various family scholars' treatments of the term "family" and then introduce recent theoretical and empirical developments, most notably by sexuality scholars, that present formidable challenges to prevailing assumptions regarding family.

Academic Accounts: Social Scientific Definitions of Family

Across the social sciences, definitions of family are quite easy to come by, but they can be difficult to reconcile. Family is the focal point of much scholarly activity—so much so that we cannot do justice to this vast body of scholarship here. Rather than offering a lengthy review, we highlight key examples of the varied scholarly definitions used in research and of the often competing and quarrelsome nature of these definitions. Two strands of scholarship inform this approach: first, literature that deliberates over the meaning and definition of family, com-

ing mostly from family scholars, and second, writings, often from sexuality and gender scholars, that are more recent and use a more critical lens to explore how family and views regarding family reflect and perpetuate what these scholars describe as heteronormative, gendered, and racialized ideology.

Family Scholars: Defining Family and Debating Family Diversity

Even in the early part of the twentieth century, scholars provided markedly different versions of what a family is and where its boundaries lie. The sociologist Ernest Burgess (1926, 3) conceptualized family not as a particular structural entity but instead as a "unity of interacting personalities":

> By a unity of interacting personalities is meant a living, changing, growing thing. . . . The actual unity of family life has its existence not in any legal conception, nor in any formal contract, but in the interaction of its members. For the family does not depend for its survival on the harmonious relations of its members, nor does it necessarily disintegrate as a result of conflicts between its members. The family lives as long as interaction is taking place and dies only when it ceases.

Others elaborated on this interactionist approach to family (Waller 1938), although most social scientists relied on more structural definitions that restricted "the family" to certain living arrangements. Along these lines, the anthropologist George Murdock (1949, 1) specified several conditions for a group to qualify as a family, which he defined as "a social group characterized by common residence, economic cooperation and reproduction. It includes adults of both sexes, at least two of whom maintain a socially approved relationship, and one or more children, own or adopted, of the sexually cohabitating adults." Murdock's definition relies to a great extent on the functions that family performs, and it explicitly or implicitly permits adoption, polygamy, and extended families. Sexually cohabitating adults, however, cannot be the same sex to meet the criteria for this particular definition. Indeed, many social-scientific definitions of family have relied on structural parameters similar to those provided by Murdock, though more restrictive in some cases and less restrictive in others. The communication studies scholars Ascan Koerner and Mary Ann Fitzpatrick (2004) note that structural definitions of family have been highly visible—and arguably dominant—in the academic community, thus privileging the presence

of particular "family members" and ignoring or downplaying the roles or economic, instrumental, or socioemotional functions that families serve. Consequently, groups that do not meet these structural prerequisites for family status are seen as defective families, as invalid families, or simply as not families at all—even if their members meet the needs that families are expected to fulfill (Bernstein and Reimann 2001b).

Some scholars call for a move away from definitions that rely on either structure or function. One perspective that has been gaining momentum is a social constructionist approach, as exemplified by the following comments by the sociologists James Holstein and Jaber Gubrium (1999, 5):

> Traditional approaches typically assume that *the* [emphasis in original] family . . . exist[s] as part of everyday reality in some objective condition. . . . Research typically attempts to describe and explain what goes on in and around the family unit. . . . The constructionist approach, in contrast, considers family to be an idea of configuration of meanings, thus problematizing the experiential reality.

Other social scientists also challenge the idea of a monolithic standard for defining family (Aldous 1999; Settles 1999), some taking this challenge so far that they recommend expunging the term "family" (or at least "the family") from academic discourse (Bernardes 1999).

Some social scientists agree that reaching a resolution regarding the meaning of family may be a futile effort but nevertheless offer definitions that may be palatable to at least a large segment of the scholarly community. For example, although the Swedish sociologist Jan Trost (1988, 301) has written that "there is no possibility of defining the family," he still proposes a fairly inclusive structural-based definition that recognizes any living arrangement that includes at minimum a parent-child unit or a spousal or cohabitational unit.[4]

We concur with Trost's position, as do others, that a working definition of family would be useful but is tricky to reach agreement over. Without a shared operational definition of family, it is difficult to arbitrate among key debates regarding family.[5] For example, those scholars who lament "the decline of the family" often equate family decline with societal decline and are alarmed about future prospects for this country, as well as for other countries—most notably Western European ones—in which family putatively is on the decline (Glenn 1993; Glenn et al. 2002; Popenoe 1993; Waite and Gallagher 2000). But how do we know whether or not family is in decline if scholars cannot agree what is family and if we do not know what the public defines as family?

Those who bemoan family decline seem to rely on a more restrictive definition of family (for example, defining it as a nuclear family with a father, a mother, and children) than do those who see not family decline per se but rather a diversification of family forms. The former group includes "pro-marriage scholars" who chide other social scientists for their sanguine attitudes about family changes and what these changes may promote. Instead, their views to some degree harken back to the depiction by the sociologist Talcott Parsons (1954, 1955) of "the American family" as a happily married husband, wife, and multiple children. They express concern regarding family definitions that use a kitchen-sink approach or that include a laundry list of various living arrangements. Although this group might contend that it acknowledges that other forms of living arrangements count as family, their usage of terms or phrases like "family decline," "family dissolution," "family breakdown," "intact family," "broken family," "unbroken family," "the family in crisis," and "death of the family" often conflates "family" or "the family" with a particular and preferred family form.[6]

In contrast, another group of scholars—a group that currently appears to comprise the plurality of social scientists—sees family in terms that are more consistent with a broader operationalization of family (Coleman and Ganong 2004; Coontz 1992; Demo, Allen, and Fine 2000).[7] Members of this group challenge the idea that the alternative to "traditional family" is "no family." Instead, they favor a far-reaching vision that is consonant with the proliferation of scholarship that explores—and finds great strengths and resiliency among—"atypical," "alternative," "transgressive," and "postmodern" family forms (Cheng and Powell 2005; Rosenfeld 2007, forthcoming; Stacey 1996; Stacey and Biblarz 2001). Although this group may not fully agree over which living arrangements count as family—or even whether reaching agreement is a worthy endeavor—its members do agree that scholars should move away from provincial notions of "the family." As a result, postsecondary family sociology and family studies textbooks and readers typically eschew the use of "the family" in their titles and instead refer to "families," often in tandem with "diversity" (for example, *Diversity in Families*; *Marriage and Families: Intimacy, Diversity, and Strengths*; and *Marriages and Families: Diversity and Change*).

Responsiveness to a more inclusive conceptualization of family also precipitated the change in the title of the flagship journal of the National Council of Family Relations from *Journal of Marriage and* the *Family* (emphasis ours) to *Journal of Marriage and Family*. That said, it is telling that in this journal marriage is paired with family, just as love often is paired with marriage ("love and marriage"), thus perpetuating—un-

intentionally or not—the idea that marriage is (or should be) a precondition for family just as love is (or should be) a precondition for marriage.

"Diversity defenders"—as described by the sociologist Andrew Cherlin (2003)—have enjoyed great success in expanding the scope of the scholarship that currently is subsumed under the topic "family." This shift suggests some real progress in the efforts among many members of the academy to relax the definition of family. Still, some academicians wonder how much progress actually has transpired. They note how difficult it is for scholars—even those who resolutely believe that boundaries between families are and should be porous and dynamic—to fully and consistently escape from a narrow definition of family in their writings (Allen 2000; Cheal 1991; Seltzer 2000).

This difficulty is exemplified by the treatment of same-sex couples in family scholarship. More than a decade ago, the human development and family studies scholars Katherine Allen and David Demo (1995) lamented the virtual invisibility of gay men and lesbians in family research. They viewed the study of same-sex-couple families as a "new frontier" that few scholars had yet traveled and that would add much needed vitality to the field. Family scholars' failure to study same-sex couples may have been due to various factors—among them, inertia, compliance with scholarly norms and definitions commonly featured in family research, or the sheer difficulty of obtaining strong data on this topic (especially quantitative data, the modal form of data in family scholarship).

Much has changed since Allen and Demo's entreaties to expand family studies. Given the growing number of family studies on gay couples and gay parenting, the term "new frontier" arguably is no longer operative (for two comprehensive reviews, see Berkowitz 2009 and Goldberg 2009). Indeed, some of these studies have received a great deal of public attention. For example, the sociologists Judith Stacey and Tim Biblarz (2001; Biblarz and Stacey 2010) have used insights from both family and gender theories to question commonly held assumptions regarding the influence of same-sex parents on their children—an issue that many believe is central to Americans' ambivalence toward or devaluation of same-sex families. Similarly, the sociologist Michael Rosenfeld (2007) has explored the commonality of the experiences of gay couples and interracial couples—a topic that had previously received a great deal of speculation but little empirical evidence. Nevertheless, even those who applaud the increasing visibility of same-sex families in family scholarship express concern over the continued marginalization of same-sex families in empirical analyses, as well as the methodological limitations typical of these studies (Patterson 2000).

Others point to theoretical opportunities missed—in particular, theories of race, gender, and sexuality (Berkowitz 2009).

Sexuality and Gender Scholars: Exploring Chosen Families

Family scholars have mostly lagged behind their counterparts who focus on gender and sexuality in recognizing and studying gay and lesbian households. At least by the early 1990s, sexuality and gender scholars had embraced the idea that same-sex couples, as well as other coresidential (and non-coresidential) groups, count as family. The anthropologist Kath Weston (1991), for example, asks the question: "Is 'straight' to 'gay' as 'family' is to 'no family'?" Her answer is no. Instead, Weston's ethnographic account of "families we choose" examines how families are formed in multiple configurations in the gay community. She describes how gay men and lesbians navigate their lives with chosen families (some made up of gay romantic partners, some made up of friends) alongside their lives with unchosen families (that is, their parents, siblings, and other "blood" relatives). She also discusses how these chosen families challenge long-held heteronormative views of family that privilege marriage, biological parenthood, gender-specific roles, and heterosexuality. These four factors are irrelevant (or at least less relevant) to members of the "new" family forms and instead are supplanted in importance by what families do: provide material support, create emotional ties, and give a sense of connectedness. The mainstream public may show some willingness to appreciate these familial functions, as suggested by the popularity of television shows such as *The Golden Girls*, *Friends*, and *Will and Grace*, all of which underscored the connectedness of their characters, who, regardless of kinship tie, considered themselves family. Nevertheless, Weston does not discount the high level of public resistance to gay families—resistance that occurs in part because gay families purportedly threaten the hegemonic, heterosexual family form and undermine societally prescribed, traditional norms regarding gender and sexuality.

Other sexuality and gender scholars have echoed Weston's comments and explored the experiences of self-described gay and lesbian families, the strategies they adopt to construct meaning so that they are seen as "family," their views regarding efforts to legitimize same-sex relations, and their interactions with their relatives and the community at large—more broadly, the struggles they face (see, for example, various chapters covering these issues in Bernstein and Reimann 2001a). The sociologists Mary Bernstein and Renate Reimann (2001b), among others, emphasize the subversive power that gay and lesbian families

wield in that they challenge predominant conceptions of gender and sexuality. Bernstein and Reimann also call attention to the heterogeneity of these families, which comprise racial minorities, nonromantic couples, gay male couples with children, and lesbian couples without children, among others; these authors note that such families contribute to a critical reassessment of familial norms and, more broadly, the meaning of family.

Incongruously missing from this scholarship is the public's definition of family. Of course, sexuality scholars have explored attitudes toward homosexuality—often conceptualized as homophobia, heterosexism, homonegativism, and sexual prejudice, among others (Herek 1990, 2000; Hudson and Ricketts 1980; Weinberg 1972)—and they have identified the correlates and antecedents of these attitudes, among them, gender, age, education, region, urban residence, and religiosity (Anderson and Fetner 2008; Britton 1990; Herek 1988, 2000; Kurdek 1988; LaMar and Kite 1998; Loftus 2001). Social scientists also have documented how views regarding homosexuality are interconnected with gender attitudes, homosociality (the preference to associate with members of the same sex and, by extension, the privileging of father-son and mother-daughter relationships), and contact with gay men and lesbians (Britton 1990; Herek and Capitanio 1996). Others—for example, the sociologist Arlene Stein (2001)—have conducted rich ethnographies to explore the battle lines drawn between advocates and opponents of gay rights and the meanings that both sides give to questions of sexuality. Still others—among them the sociologist Kathleen Hull (2006)—have used various sources (such as the letters to the editor that appear in newspapers) to infer public views regarding same-sex marriage and whether these views mesh with the arguments promoted by gay rights or "pro-family" elites.

It is indeed remarkable how much and how broadly scholarship on this topic has emerged in a fairly short period of time. The insights from these studies represent a huge and welcome increment in the understanding of same-sex couples and of public attitudes. As will be seen in subsequent chapters in this book, these insights greatly inform our project. Yet, despite all of the information that can be gleaned from these studies, none of them address what we contend is a fundamental question: *which living arrangements are counted by mainstream Americans as family and which are counted out?* Just as sexuality scholars have noted the centrality of appreciating how same-sex couples—and other "transgressive" living arrangements—navigate or attempt to take ownership of the concept of "family," we contend that it is as important, if not even more so, to understand what Americans define as family, why

they hold these particular definitions, and how their views of family intersect with their background, life experiences, and social attitudes.

The Structure of the Book

In chapter 2, we examine responses to a series of closed-ended questions about what constitutes a family. More specifically, we presented the interviewees with descriptions of eleven living arrangements—some that included same-sex couples—and asked them whether they personally thought that these arrangements count as family. The description of the patterns begins simply with presentations of the specific distributions of responses (the percentage of respondents who believed that each living arrangement is a family). We then use a variety of techniques to determine how responses and respondents are clustered. Among these techniques are a mechanical identification of each response combination, a narrowing of the combinations to ten, and finally, latent class models, which allow us to identify three ideal types of clustered responses. We also assess the degree of change in these responses in a fairly short but critical period of time—between 2003 and 2006. We conclude this chapter by showing that belonging to one of these three types—which we label "exclusionists," "moderates," and "inclusionists"—is implicated in views regarding the extension of various rights (such as marriage and adoption) to same-sex couples.

In chapter 3, we complement the discussion from the previous chapter with an examination of how Americans describe "what determines whether a living arrangement is a family." We explore the common themes as well as points of departure within and among the exclusionists, moderates, and inclusionists in our sample. We consider the different frames used in their definitions—including whether they emphasized the structure or functions of family; whether they privileged cultural scripts, functional tasks or roles, emotional or affective ties, and the presence of children; and whether they employed institutional themes such as legal recognition and religious beliefs. In addition, we point to seeming inconsistencies—or what may be alternatively described as ambivalences, complexities, or nuances—in the responses and to variations in how unwavering or how tentative individuals were in their views and, in turn, how susceptible they were to future changes in their positions regarding family definitions, especially their position on whether same-sex couples are to be counted in these definitions.

We examine how Americans' social location shapes their definition of what is and what is not family in chapter 4. We highlight differences

(or similarities) by age and cohort, education, race, family background, contact with gays and lesbians, gender, region, urban residence, and religion. The chapter concludes by identifying parallels between contemporary resistance to same-sex couples and earlier views regarding interracial marriage and by extrapolating from these patterns to predict changes in Americans' definitions of family in the future.

As noted earlier in this chapter, scholarship that invokes the concept of heteronormativity posits that views regarding gender and sexuality are inextricably enmeshed in views regarding same-sex couples and family. In the next three chapters, we explore this proposition by considering how Americans' attitudes regarding other aspects of gender, sexuality, and socialization are implicated in the boundaries they make between family and nonfamily. Americans' beliefs regarding the causes of sexual preference are the focus of chapter 5, which covers two debates: the "nature-nurture" debate, that is, the extent to which human behavior is a function of biological ("nature") or of social ("nurture") factors; and the science-religion debate—the extent to which scientific and religious explanations are diametric or compatible. After briefly describing the ongoing academic and public dialogue regarding the etiology of human behavior and traits, we report on responses to a set of questions that asked Americans to identify the most important factor in the development of these behaviors and traits—most notably, sexual preference. We then explore whether knowing individuals' responses gives us greater analytical leverage in understanding, or even predicting, their definitions of family. The chapter closes with a discussion of the ramifications of key findings for sociological assumptions regarding the politics of explanations that invoke "science" or "God's will."

Gender ideology and views of parenthood form the crux of chapter 6. We report on Americans' closed- and open-ended responses regarding child custody—in particular, whether in single-parent households a boy is better off living with his mother or father and whether a girl is better off living with her mother or father. Americans' explanations for their preferences open a window on their views about gender, homosociality, "appropriate" parenting, and, in turn, whether same-sex couples count as family.

We consider gender ideology from a different lens in chapter 7. Specifically, we delve into Americans' stances regarding a topic that has been virtually ignored by gender and family scholars: women's and men's last-name change upon marriage. At first glance, the question of marital name change may seem to have little to do with the overall topic of this book (definitions of family). Closer inspection, however, suggests otherwise. We examine the extent to which views regarding