

Feb. 5, 2004

Study Questions

Read: Skolnick and Skolnick: Introduction. Skolnick 1-14
Giddens: The Global Revolution in Family and Personal Life. Skolnick 17-22
Coontz: Introduction; and Getting Past the Sound Bites: How History and Sociology Can Help Today's Families. 1-32

1. What are the main changes that have been occurring in American families since the 1950s?
2. List some of the changes in social and sexual rules connected to the family.
3. List some of the changes in attitudes relating to the family—what Skolnick calls the “psychological revolution.”
4. Do you feel that the single parent family, whether it results from divorce or unmarried motherhood, is the single biggest problem facing the country, because it is the root cause of poverty, crime, drugs, school failure, youth violence? Be prepared to discuss.
5. What criticism does Skolnick mount of the US media?
6. Give examples of family-related issues that have been presented in “food fight” (highly polarized) terms in the media.
7. Skolnick discusses certain women in the Victorian era (19th century) who challenged the prevailing notions of femininity. Who were they?
8. Skolnick speaks of a “triple revolution” occurring in our postindustrial world. Describe.
9. What are the effects of the new economy on marriage and the family?
10. What have been the demographic transformations of the 20th century?
11. According to Skolnick, what psychocultural changes have happened to the family (e.g., changes in how people think, feel, what they expect)?

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21A.230J / WGS.456J The Contemporary American Family
Spring 2004

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