

Table 3.3

Summary of sociological perspectives: Inequalities based on race and ethnicity

	Functionalist	Conflict/ Feminist	Interactionist
Explanations of racial and ethnic inequality	<p>Assimilation into a dominant culture preserves the stability of society.</p> <p>Ethnic pluralism may also achieve stability.</p>	<p>Inequality is systematically maintained by those trying to preserve their advantaged positions.</p> <p>Class divisions overlap with racial and ethnic divisions.</p> <p>Feminist scholars advocate a theoretical perspective that simultaneously considers the intersection of race, class, and gender.</p>	<p>Race is a social construct.</p> <p>Racial and ethnic categories are also linked with positions of privilege or marginalization.</p>
Questions asked about racial and ethnic inequality	<p>How can minority groups be assimilated into mainstream society?</p> <p>Can cultural and structural pluralism be maintained?</p>	<p>What powerful interest groups determine racial and ethnic inequalities?</p> <p>How are these structures maintained?</p>	<p>How do we learn about race and ethnicity?</p> <p>How are some groups more privileged than others?</p> <p>How do our perceptions and beliefs perpetuate racial and ethnic inequalities?</p>