

Table 4.2 Summary of sociological perspectives: Inequalities based on gender

	Functionalist	Conflict/Feminist	Interactionist
Explanations of gender inequality	<p>Gender inequality is a functional necessity.</p> <p>A gendered division of labor and gender roles is needed to ensure the stability of society.</p>	<p>Women will remain in their subordinate position as long as men maintain their social, economic, and cultural advantage.</p> <p>Conflict theorists identify how women's subordinate position is linked to their relationship to the means of production.</p> <p>Feminist theorists refer to gender as a process, a system of social practices that creates and maintains gender distinctions and inequalities.</p>	<p>Social values and meanings are expressed in our language. Our language reflects the privileged position granted to men.</p>
Questions asked about gender inequality	<p>What societal values are supported by our (traditional) gender roles?</p> <p>Can gender roles be changed without jeopardizing the stability of society?</p>	<p>How is gender inequality created and maintained?</p> <p>How can gender inequality structures and practices be altered? Can they be eliminated?</p>	<p>How does our use of language identify the privileged position of men in society?</p> <p>Can language be changed to reflect gender equality?</p>