

Table 5.1**Summary of sociological perspectives: Inequalities based on sexual orientation**

	Functionalist	Conflict/Feminist	Interactionist
Explanations of sexual orientation and inequality	<p>The heterosexual family is the way in which society identifies legitimate kinship and familial obligations.</p> <p>Society defines all other forms of sexuality and families that do not fit this ideal image as problematic in society.</p>	<p>Inequality is based on one's sexual orientation. Heterosexuality is privileged in our society.</p> <p>Debate about same-sex marriage is bound to the feminist critique about the oppressive nature of marriage.</p>	<p>Sexual orientation is a social construct—time bound and culturally specific.</p> <p>The development of a gay identity also depends on the support and reactions of others.</p>
Questions asked about sexual orientation and inequality	<p>How do our social structures endorse the heterosexual family?</p> <p>Is it possible to change the structures, to allow inclusiveness of other family forms and other sexual orientations?</p>	<p>In what ways do our social structures maintain heterosexism?</p> <p>What other forms of oppression exist for the LGBT community?</p> <p>Will same-sex marriage challenge the gendered definitions of marriage?</p>	<p>Who or what shapes our definitions of sexual orientation?</p> <p>How are LGBT individuals affected by inaccurate stereotypes or labels?</p> <p>How can negative stereotypes or labels be changed?</p> <p>What social support is necessary for someone to develop a positive gay identity?</p>