

**Table 7.2** Summary of sociological perspectives: The family

	Functional	Conflict/Feminist	Interactionist
<b>Explanation of the family and its social problems</b>	<p>Functionalists examine how the family interacts with other social institutions.</p> <p>Functionalists believe that social problems emerge as the family struggles to adapt to a modern society.</p> <p>Functionalists also examine the manifest and latent functions of the family.</p>	<p>Problems emerge from conflict inherent in the family structure.</p> <p>Conflict can derive from economic or power inequalities between family members.</p> <p>From a feminist perspective, the family is a patriarchal system, where men dominate social and economic spheres.</p>	<p>An interactionist focuses on the social meaning and expectations of the “family.”</p> <p>Interactionists will also focus on how family members define their own families.</p>
<b>Questions asked about the family</b>	<p>What functions does the family serve?</p> <p>How is the family affected by other social institutions?</p> <p>How does the problem reflect changes between the family and other social institutions?</p>	<p>What is the basis of conflict within the family?</p> <p>How does conflict affect family members and their relationships?</p>	<p>How do we define the “family”?</p> <p>What social forces influence our definition of the family?</p> <p>What are the consequences of these definitions?</p>