

The theoretical approach that suggests stereotypes lead to prejudice, which then leads to discrimination is based on several scientific and academic theories. Key among these are:

**Social Cognition Theory:** This theory examines how people process, store, and apply information about others and social situations. Stereotypes are viewed as cognitive shortcuts that simplify social reality. According to this theory, stereotypes (cognitive component) can lead to prejudice (affective component), which in turn may manifest as discrimination (behavioral component).

**Stereotype Content Model (SCM):** Developed by [Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, and Xu in 2002](#), this model suggests that stereotypes are based on two core dimensions: warmth and competence. Depending on how groups are perceived along these dimensions, different emotions (e.g., pity, envy, disgust) are elicited, which can lead to different forms of prejudice and discrimination.

**Social Identity Theory:** Proposed by [Tajfel and Turner in the 1970s](#), this theory suggests that individuals strive to improve their self-image by enhancing their self-esteem, based on personal identity and group membership. This theory explains how in-group (us) versus out-group (them) distinctions lead to prejudice and discrimination, as individuals favor their in-group over out-groups to boost their self-esteem.

**System Justification Theory:** This theory, proposed by [Jost and Banaji in 1994](#), suggests that people have a need to view the social, economic, and political systems they live in as fair, legitimate, and just. This need leads to the endorsement of stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination that justify and maintain the status quo.

**Prejudice as an Attitude:** Prejudice [is often studied](#) as an attitude that includes cognitive (stereotypes), affective (feelings), and behavioral (discriminatory actions) components. This approach suggests that changing one component can influence the others, thereby providing a pathway to reduce prejudice and discrimination.

**Contact Hypothesis:** Proposed by [Allport in 1954](#), this hypothesis suggests that under certain conditions, direct contact between members of different groups can reduce prejudice. This theory has implications for understanding how intergroup interactions can potentially decrease stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination.

**Implicit Bias Theory:** [This approach focuses](#) on the unconscious biases people hold against other groups. These biases can influence behavior independently of a person's conscious beliefs, potentially leading to discriminatory behaviors even in the absence of overt prejudice.