1. Social categorization divides people by classes, gender, race and various other ways. Therefore, this diversity leads to prejudice – which is an unfortunate aspect of these uncontrolled aspects of people. Fortunately, there are strategies to mitigate these prejudice attitudes as shown by Devine et al. (2012), in which they developed an intervention to help reduce prejudicial attitudes by introducing them to a 12-week intervention aimed at being personally aware of prejudice attitudes. However, there are social psychological theories that help to understand these processes.

One of these processes is evolutionary in nature. According to Neuburg & Schaller (2016) the evolutionary aspect to prejudices is related mostly to threat perceived by individuals. This evolutionary theory helps to explain how human ancestors acted in the past and how the out groups were viewed as a threat. This may be an implicit reason why prejudices may exist. According to this theory social categorization was derived by how contextual cues (for example, an individuals race) ware part of a context of information leading to threat detection and it has lead to the prejudicial feelings that are felt by individuals today. Another way, from an evolutionary standpoint that individuals socially categorize people is by appearance of health (Schaller & Park, 2011). According to this theory, this reaction was beneficial and has lead to the understanding that hose who look different than ourselves may be sick, thus a prejudicial reaction may incur.

Next, another theory that leads to social categorization, and influences prejudices is the components of social and psychological essentialism. The theory is explained by Rangel & Keller (2011) in which they developed a scale to measure an individual’s belief in social determinism (BSD) as a component of prejudice beliefs. These groups that had high essentialist perceptions of their group also had high perceived belief in homogeneity. This is an indication that individuals that had high essentialism, saw themselves much more similar and attached to their group than those that had lower essentialism. Therefore, these individuals with higher essentialism were more likely to view the groups as much different. According to Yzerbyt et al. (1997), these individuals with higher essentialism are more able to rationalize social inequities. Additionally, this high essentialist way of thinking is part of entire belief system that justifies the prejudice towards other groups unlike themselves.

1. I’d like to start this interview by talking about the psychological linkage between social rejection and aggression. The fact of the matter is that having positive relationships within someone’s life helps to contribute to better physical health, mental health, and is linked to lower aggression through acceptance (DeWall, 2010). Furthermore, social impact theory (Latane, 1981) will tell us a similar thing, that, as more individuals reject someone, the more they are likely to act aggressively towards others - whether they know them or not, bystanders are at just as much at-risk. It should be noted, that the more individuals that are added to the rejection group, the less impact each person will have, but if it’s an entire school… the aggression this person is going to feel towards the whole school is going to be a lot regardless. So, one of the social psychological reasons that could have contributed to this is solely that this shooter has felt rejection from peers, teachers, and/or any other person at the school. Again, as DeWall (2010) points out, the shooter did not have to know the people he or she was shooting at - the aggressive effect spills over to any and all bystanders.

Next, I’d like to explain how priming and situational cues may have contributed to the horrific event. There are three social cues that can lead to aggressive behavior that may have enacted at the mass shooting we have seen today. Coming from Engelhardt & Bartholow (2013), we can say that, alcohol, exposure to weapons, and violent media may have contributed to this aggressive behavior.

There are clear linkages to alcohol and aggression from the literature and the individual does not even need to be drunk for the link to exist. This aggressive behavior can be seen even when individuals are not currently consuming alcoholic substances or drunk (Engelhardt & Bartholow, 2013). Next, exposure to weapons. Past research has shown that even the presence of a weapon helps to increase aggressive tendencies. For example. Berkowitz & LePage (1967) found that in the presence of a gun, badminton racquet, or nothing, near an individual is the most likely to send more shocks that will hurt someone when the gun is present than if nothing or a badminton racquet is present. Last of these social cues that have a relation to violence: Violent media. Of all the violent media types, video games seem to have some of the highest linkages to aggression. Bartholow (2013) explains past studies in which opponent that were playing non-violent video games were more likely show aggressive behaviors. Interestingly, there is a false assumption that video game exposure is a good way to “vent” the aggression – however, the evidence is much weaker for those claims (Geen & Quanty, 1977).

Finally, the idea for low-status compensation and the search for honor may have a role in this horrible mass shooting (Henry, 2009). In short, this theory helps to explain why individuals respond with aggression when they are insulted, or their honor is threatened. This theory infers that the aggression and mass-shooting may have been done through self-protection strategies, as the shooter felt disrespect to their honor. Therefore, this was an attempt to bring the status back up (Henry, 2009). According to Henry (2009) there is a relationship between cultures that have higher herding status and acts of violence. Therefore, if this individual came from a culture that has ties to these types of communities (cultures with a history of herding) it is possible that this was a possible contributor to his or her violent behavior. Please note, that these studies were performed on the aggregate level and therefore, it is hard to generalize it to the individual level of likelihood of murder, but it is a correlative aspect that should be considered during this sad event.

1. Interdependence theories are derived from the fact that relationships have rewarding aspects to them and contributes to why relationships form and continue - despite the costs that may be associated with them. One such aspect of the interdependence theories is equity theory. Equity theory is built by 4 propositions:
   1. 1.) Both partners in a relationship strive to maximize pleasure and minimize any pain that comes with it
   2. 2.) Society will pressure people to be equitable and punish those that are not
   3. 3.) People feel comfortable when they are getting what they feel they deserve
   4. 4.) If someone feels they are being treated inequitable, they will devise techniques in order to reduce the inequity and get back to an equitable feeling. (Hartfield & Rapson, 2012)

Although propositions 2 & 3 seems to be devised more in a societal standpoint, it really can be related to those in relationships as well. For proposition 2, if one partner feels they are lower on the equity totem pole, it is more likely they can discredit the other individual for their accomplishments. For proposition 3, it seems obvious, but a relationship between two people has better chances of retaining itself it both partners feel they are getting what they deserve.

So, how would this work in another context? As can be seen from the 4 propositions, it already is generalized to society and other aspects. This theory works well beyond intimate relationships. I think one of the best places to see the theory in action is in the work place. Starting with Principle 1: with the workplace and the worker being the ones in the relationship, the worker will likely strive to maximize the enjoyment felt in their work. This includes working in an efficient manner and choosing a career that is worthwhile. Next, proposition 2: If an individual is not doing their part in the workplace, it is likely that other workers are likely to notice; leading to complaints, a possible outcast and other unwanted social consequences from the inequity. For principle 3: If an employee finds they are getting payed less money than that of an individual in the same position, discomfort will exist. The feeling of inequity has led to a need to be equal with the others in the organization. Finally, proposition 4: Similar to an intimate relationship, an individual in the workplace seeks to find that equity again, this can be found in the form of finding another job or demanding more payment goes to them, or even vacation days.

1. System 1 & 2 both define the cognitive process in which people make decisions. According to Inzlicht and Kang (2010), a system 1 process is a quick and associative process in which one makes a quick decision; System 2 is one in which one purposely makes the decision through controlled processes. As can be seen, system 2 requires a higher cognitive system than system 1. Therefore, it is likely to take more cognitive effort and resources in order to comprise and elicit. The interest of this in relation to health behaviors and intergroup relations is that we are likely to find individuals unable to utilize their system 2 processes if their resources are depleted in some way. Think of how this plays out in an individual that is constantly affected in a negative way. This has the ability to hurt the cognitive resources required to make system 2 type processing. Therefore, as proposed and tested in Inzlicht & Kang (2010) race can be seen as a contributor to prejudice and thus will deplete the resources necessary to perform the system 2 processes.

The predictions about how the two interact is that the system 2 processes guide the system 1 processes when possible. The system 2 processes help to make rational processes in an individual, where as in the absence of power or time, the system 1 process will take control of the system 2 process. These two processes are constantly interacting with each other to help guide decisions. Ideally, the system 2 process will be displayed more often. Thinking of how these two systems are measured gets relatively tricky. Inzlicht & Kang (2010) proposed qualitative methods to correctly measure this by seeing how minority race individuals react to threat, in which case the cognitive processes are to take effect. They measured the effects through neural activity and the ever-famous Stroop test, a test of cognitive performance showing congruent and non-congruent conditions. Therefore, it is measured through cognitive efforts in other tasks and neural activities. We find that these prejudices influence the system 2 processes by lower performance on cognitive tests.

Lastly, I think the Inzlicht study did a relatively good job at measuring both system 1 and system 2 processes. They used validated test measures of cognitive performance and even used neural activity to find the associations with individuals indicating feelings of prejudice and high stress. However, in this event, I would most certainly take a more quantitative approach to some of these racial and prejudice measures associated with the cognitive processes. Overall, though displaying the difference between system 1 and system 2 processes can be tough, but because they have clear operational definitions, it is likely there are other ways to measure them.

1. During the midterm I quoted Festinger (1954) by saying, ““There exists in the human organism, a drive to evaluate his opinions and his abilities.” Do I still think this is true? Of course. However, my explanation of this has changed. It seems like there are many processes that we do not even think to evaluate. The processes that happen are sometimes so deeply engrained in an individual that they simply cannot even make the drive to evaluate themselves because they are unaware. For example, *Automaticity*, as Chen & Bargh (1997) point out, an individual can have a stereotypical thought and not even be aware that they even partook in a stereotypical thought. I bring this up because it shows that being a social being is a bit more automatic than I originally thought.

Additionally, on the midterm I wrote that being a social being implies having a constant “comparison with other individuals”. This hasn’t changed, and humans remain to be social beings that do this. However, now there is a bit more to being social than comparing yourself to others. social beings are creatures that are influenced by systems that were created through evolutionary processes. We are the product of our ancestors and have primal instincts that are impacting us in the word – sometimes appropriately, sometimes not. For example, before I would have mentioned that I can 100% relieve myself from any prejudicial arousal, however, that may not be the case according to work from Neuburg & Schaller (2016) because individuals are, in some ways, modified to perceive threat as those that are different from us.

However, I want to be clear, just because being a social being implies an automated process that makes an individual be affected by those around them, this does not mean we are doomed to have the thoughts of our ancestors. As an *intelligent* social being, we have the ability to have a higher-level thought process as shown in work by Inzlicht & Kang (2010). Just by making ourselves aware of our own prejudice, we can help to mitigate these automatic social processes, whether it be a prejudice to the comparison of ourselves to others.

References

Berkowitz, L., & LePage, A. (1967). Weapons as aggression-eliciting stimuli. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 7,

202–207.

Berkowitz, L., & LePage, A. (1967). Weapons as aggression-eliciting stimuli. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 7,

202–207.

Berkowitz, L., & LePage, A. (1967). Weapons as aggression-eliciting stimuli. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 7, 202–207.

Devine, P. G., Forscher, P. S., Austin, A. J., & Cox, W. L. (2012). Long-term reduction in implicit race bias: A prejudice habit-breaking intervention. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 48*(6), 1267-1278. doi:10.1016/j.jesp.2012.06.003

Englehardt, C. R., & Bartholow, B. D. (2013). Effects of situational cues on aggressive behavior. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass, 7,* 762-774.

Festinger, L. (1957). An introduction to the theory of dissonance. In. L. Festinger’s *A theory of cognitive dissonance* (pp. 1 – 30). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Geen, R. G., & Quanty, M. B. (1977). The catharsis of aggression: An evaluation of a hypothesis. (In L. Berkowitz (Ed.),Advances in experimental social psychology (Vol. 10, pp. 1 –37). New York: Academic. Press.

Hatfield, E. & Rapson, R. L. (2012). Equity theory in close relationships. In P. A. M. Van Lange, A. W. Kruglanski, & E. T. Higgins (Eds.), *Handbook of theories of Social Psychology* (Vol. 2, pp. 200-217). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Henry, P. J. (2009). Low-status compensation: A theory for understanding the role of status in cultures of honor. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 97,* 451-466.

Inzlicht, M., & Kang, S. K. (2010). Stereotype threat spillover: How coping with threats to social identity affects aggression, eating, decision making, and attention. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 99*(3), 467-481. doi:10.1037/a0018951

Latane´, B (1981). The psychology of social impact. *American Psychologist, 36,* 343-356

Neuberg, S. L., & Schaller, M. (2016). An evolutionary threat-management approach to prejudices. *Current Opinion in Psychology, 7*, 1-5.

Rangle, U., & Keller, J. (2011). Essentialism goes social: Belief in social determinism as a component of psychological essentialism. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 100,* 1056-1078.

Schaller, M., & Park, J. H. (2011). The behavioral immune system (and why it matters). *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *20*(2), 99-103.

Yzerbyt, V., Rocher, S., & Schadron, G. (1997). Stereotypes as explanations: A subjective essentialistic view of group perception. In R. Spears, P. J. Oakes, N. Ellemers, & S. A. Haslam (Eds.), The social psychology of stereotyping and group life (pp. 20 –50). Malden, MA: Blackwell.