



Social Judgment Theory

Muzafer Sherif, 1961

Three Latitudes

- o Three latitudes: Acceptance, rejection, and noncommitment.
- o Social judgment theory says that at the instant of perception, people compare messages to their present point of view.
- o Individuals' opinions are not adequately represented as points along a continuum because degrees of tolerance around their positions must also be considered.

Ego-Involvement

- Ego-involvement refers to the importance of an issue to an individual.
- The favored position anchors all other thoughts about the topic.
- High ego-involvement can be defined as membership in a group with a known stand.

Focus

- attention it draws to the importance of receiver involvement.

- o That attitude varies in direct relation to the level of ego-involvement. As involvement increases, the person's stand on the issue becomes more closely tied to his or her sense of self.
- o As self-interest and the potential threat or reward in the situation increases, the size of the latitude of rejection also increases.
- o The size of the latitude of noncommitment in this case decreases. In a crisis situation, the latitude of noncommitment virtually disappears, and the person either accepts or rejects any attitude toward the topic (O'Keefe, 1990).

Anchors

- o Social Judgment Theory says that a person responds to stimuli in relation to the context in which they are perceived.
- o An anchor is an important idea that influences how the person perceives other ideas related to the same subject.
- o When those other ideas appear to be more like the anchor than they actually are, the shift toward the anchor is called **assimilation**.
- o When the other ideas appear to be less like the anchor than they actually are, the shift away from the anchor is called **contrast** (O'Keefe, 1990).

Boomerang

- Negative attitude change, sometimes called the boomerang effect, is said to occur when a person changes away from a position advocated rather than toward it.