

Chapter 5

Social Change and Modernization: A Comprehensive Sociological Analysis

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Abstract

Social change and modernization are intertwined process shaping societies worldwide. This paper examines the complex relationships between social change, modernization, and their impacts on individuals, communities and institutions. We explore how modernization drives social change through technological advancements, economic shifts and cultural transformations, influencing social structures, values and power dynamics. The discussion highlights the tension between tradition and modernity, the role of agency and structure, and the need for inclusive and equitable modernization processes. By understanding these dynamics, we can better navigate the challenges and opportunities of social change in the modern era. Driven by innovation, globalization and economic development, this process shifts societal focus toward industrialization, scientific reasoning and individualism. The study of contemporary social changes in the Indian society cannot be dissociated from the initial social conditions of the society. Its historical roots provide a base for its evaluation. These historical forces and the social and political conditions generated by them define the shape of these social change processes. These are organically related to the model that India adopted for social change. Social change performs different functions in Indian society. The social change can be seen in diverse fields. On the other hand, social movements to have greatly changed our ideas and concept over various social matters. As a consequence of the change, the new organizations are transplanting the old, new groups and new trends are emerging. Social change in India has always been a matter of deep concern to most educated Indians, whether they be political leaders, social reformers or academic or non-academic.

Max Weber contributed to this understanding of social change by acknowledging that just as conflict can change, most social changes originate from ideas.

Four characteristics of this process are

1. Social change happens all the time.
2. Social change is sometimes intentional but unplanned
3. Social change is controversial and
4. Some changes matter more than others.

Some common examples of social change include the rise of women’s education, the shift from joint family to nuclear family, digital communication, and increasing urban lifestyles. Social change is universal and inevitable because no society remains completely static. Social change

and modernization are not merely phenomena but ongoing, dynamic process. In the current era, the focus has shifted from simple industrial growth to the management of artificial intelligence and global migration. The success of a modernizing society is no longer measured solely by its gross domestic product, but by its ability to foster inclusive growth and protect human rights. Understanding these processes is essential for educators, policymakers, and citizens as they navigate the complexities of a world that is permanently in the making. The study adopts a descriptive and analytical approach based on secondary sources. It highlights the positive and negative consequences of modernization and emphasizes the need for balanced and inclusive development. Technology should be used effectively.

Keyword: Social change, Modernization, Technology, Society.

Introduction:

Change is the law of nature and life. Change is also inherent in human society. Human society is ever a state of flux. It is dynamic in nature. When rapid changes take place in human society, people too want to change and also acquire the social structure. This process may be rapid in some societies and slow in the case of others. Social change is a continuous process, which may be very slow or rapid. Social change implies changes in the social structure and functions of the various units from society. It includes modifications in social techniques, relationships, behavior patterns folkways. Modernization is a process of socio-cultural transformation. It is a thorough going process of change involving values, norms, institutions and structures. The term modernization refers to a model of a progressive transition from a tradition to a modern society. Modernization is a multi-dimensional process in the sense it brings change in almost all the aspects of human life. It is not only an economic process which brings material growth in the society. Along with material changes it alters political, cultural and social patterns of life. In countries like India, social change and modernization have created a unique blend of traditional and modern values.

Objectives of the study:

1. To understand the concept and nature of social change
2. Examine the interplay between social change and modernization de
3. Identify factors influencing social change
4. To evaluate the impact of modernization on society
5. To explore the relevance of social change in the Indian context

Concept of Social change:

Social change is the change in society. Society is the web of relationships. Social change can be observed in every society. Social change means that the large numbers of persons are engaging in activities that differ from which they or their immediate (forefathers)engaged in some time before.

Social change refers to significant alterations in the structure and functioning of society. It includes changes in social institutions (Family, Education, Religion), Cultural patterns (beliefs, values, norms) Social relationships and role. Population shifts, such as aging or migration, impact society. Women’s reservation in politics drives representation and empowerment. The digital revolution transforms communication, economy and governance. Social change is continuous and inevitable influenced by both internal and external factors. Social change is ongoing process, shaping societies and individual. Understanding its drives, types and impacts help us navigate the complexities of a rapidly changing world.

Features of Social Change

1. **Universality:** Change is universal law, an eternal law and invariable law of nature. Social changes are necessary and inevitable. Social changes take place in all societies of the world.
2. **Continuous Process:** Social change is a continuous process. It does not take place at one point of the time only. It takes place all the time at all the places.
3. **Varies from society to society:** Social change is relative in time and according to a specific period of time, its rate may be high or low.
4. **Criteria of larger population:** Social change is accepted as such only when the majority of individuals in society accepts it in their life, behaviour and beliefs.
5. **Planned as well Unplanned:** There was a time when changes were unplanned and undirected. But in the modern time changes can be planned to achieve the goals of the society.
6. **Self-Reliance:** Social change is self-reliance of the desire and will of the people of the society.
7. **Influences:** Social change is caused due to internal and external factors influences on the society.
8. **Functional:** Any change in the social structure or its function is social change.
9. **Interconnected:** Change in one area can impact others aspects of society.
10. **Multi-Causal:** Social change results from multiple factors, including technological, economic and cultural influences.
11. **Temporal:** Social change is temporal. Change in anything or any object or in a situation take place through time.
12. **Social change creates chain reactions:** Social change produces not a single reaction, but chain reactions as well the parts of the society are interrelated and interdependent for example, the economic independence of women has brought changes not only in their status but also a series of change in home, family, relationships etc.
13. **Prediction is uncertain:** Making it challenging to forecast social change with accuracy. The future remains unpredictable.

14. Complex: Social change may be complex.
15. Removal of Old Elements: Social Change may mean discarding some old elements or old things.
16. Mode of Change: Social Change may be brought about by violent or non-violent means.
17. Impact on Social Relations and Values: Social Change is revealed in the social relations and values.

Concept of Modernization:

Modernization is a multi-dimensional process that describes the transition of a society from 'traditional' or 'Pre-modern' structures to that characteristic of industrialized, technologically advanced and urbanized natures. It isn't just about new gadgets, it involves deep shifts in how we think, work, and govern. Modernization is often associated with Western development models but has been adapted differently across societies. Modernization refers to the process of societal transformation towards modernity. It involves shift from agrarian to industrial economy, adoption of new technologies, growth of cities and urban lifestyles, separation of religion and state, emphasis on reason, science and efficiency. Modernization accelerates the pace of change, it is quickened. This transformation affects all aspects of life, including economic systems, social relationships, political structures, and cultural values. Modernization is not just about technological progress: it also involves changes in people's thinking, behaviour with scientific reasoning and promotes development, efficiency and progress. The change is both the characteristic and goal of social change. Change is a cultural goal towards which every society advances. The change must be towards the achievements of greater human dignity and greater social equality.

Features of Modernization:

1. Social Mobility: Social mobilization is a process in which traditional, social, economic and other commitments are removed or even ignored and new social values of human conduct are set up. This leads to mobility in the society. Modernization provides more opportunities for individuals to improve their social and economic status through education and employment.
2. Value Change: No process of modernization can be regarded as successful unless it is followed by a radical modification in the traditional value system.
3. Material Prosperity: Material Prosperity is to be attained by the progressive Programs.
4. Social Disparity: As a result of modernization new trends in philosophy, religion, science and literature become visible.
5. Structural diversity and changes: Modernization is characterized by structural diversity and continuous change. Change take place in social economic and political field.

6. Emphasis on present and future: Modernization believes in living in present and planning for the future. A modern person tries to improve his present in order to secure and ensure a bright future for him or her.
7. Scientific Attitude: Development of scientific temper and attitude is an important part of modernization. The improvement in science and technology leads to the development of scientific attitude among the people.
8. Education Expansion: Comprehensive and multi-sided education is an important feature of modernization. Greater access to formal education and literacy
9. Progress of Science and Technology: Modern societies make great lead way in the Arena of science and technology. Increased use of science and technology in everyday life.
10. Development of mass-media Techniques: These mass media techniques include newspaper, broadcasting, postal facilities, movies, Airlines, all these facilities the citizen become enlightened.
11. Rise in National and per -capital Income: As it has to support the idle members of the society also. Therefore, in order to raise the national and per capital income, the old economy based on agriculture has to be improved by industrial growth and its income because by exporting the industrial goods the country can make huge profits.
12. Cultivation of National Identity: When the modernization of any country take place, then the people begin to give up their narrow loyalties and considerations of caste, colour, sex or creed. Their interest becomes identified with the interests of the nation.
13. Urbanization: Migration from rural to urban areas. They are centers of trade and commerce and are linked with the outside world. Cities grow rapidly, leading to the development of urban culture.
14. Industrialization: Modernization leads to the growth of industries. Shifted from agrarian to industrial economy. Due to use of machines production on large scale become possible. Factories, machines, and mass production become central to economic life.
15. Technological Advancement: Use of modern technology in production and communication. New technologies improve communication, transportation, healthcare and production. For example, the internet, mobile phones, and machines make life faster and easier.
16. Individualism: Greater emphasis on personal freedom and autonomy.
17. Secularization: Decline in the influence of religion on social life. Religion becomes less dominant in public life. Social institutions like education and politics become more independent from religious control.

18. Rationalization: Decisions increasingly based on logic, efficiency and scientific thinking rather than tradition. People begin to question superstitions and adopt scientific thinking.

19. Bureaucratization: Growth of organized institutions and administrative systems.

Review of Literature

Various sociologists and scholars have contributed significantly to the understanding of social change and modernization:

- **M.N. Srinivas (1972)** emphasized concepts like *Sanskritization* and *Westernization* in explaining social change in India. He highlighted how caste mobility and cultural imitation shape societal transformation.
- **Yogendra Singh (1993)** viewed modernization in India as a process of structural transformation influenced by tradition, arguing that Indian society reflects a synthesis of modern and traditional values.
- **A.R. Kamat (1983)** analyzed social change in India through economic and political transitions, emphasizing the role of development policies.
- **Max Weber** linked social change to ideas, beliefs, and rationalization, especially the role of religion and ethics in shaping modern society.
- **Dependency theorists** argued that modernization often leads to inequality between developed and developing nations due to exploitation.
- **Rostow's theory** presented modernization as a linear process of economic growth, while critics highlighted its Western bias.

Overall, literature suggests that modernization is not uniform and varies across societies depending on historical, cultural, and economic contexts.

Research Methodology:

This study is based on a qualitative and descriptive research methodology. The data has been collected through

1. Review of books, Journals and academic articles
2. Analysis of sociological theories
3. Observation of social trends and practices

The research focuses on conceptual and analytical understanding rather than empirical investigation.

Theories of Social Change:

1. Unilinear Theory: According to this theory change takes place in a straight line. The society moves ahead towards fixed aims by means of social change. Historical events are helpful in this change in the society.
2. Spiritual Theory: The world civilization points to the thing that spiritual aspect is very important in human life. The disintegration of spiritual values causes the downfall of civilization. Religion makes special contribution to Indian society.
3. Cyclical Theory: According to this theory the motion is like that of the pendulum of a clock and various states are repeated again and again. There is recapitulation of social change. In the cycle of universe, the world and deluge follow each other.
4. Evolutionary Theory: According to this theory, Change is not liner but like the growth of a plant. Many Branches come out from the stem of a plant during its growth and they go in various directions.
5. Theory of Deterioration: The fall of world civilization is possible due to the unlimited growth of physical powers and loss of moral powers. Man does not have the capacity to use his own power properly.
6. Purposeful Theory: The production of material thing influences social, political and religious activities other words, we can say that economic elements are the causes of social change.
7. Greatmen Theory of History: Greatmen play special role in social change. Example: Mahatma Gandhi in India, Lenin in Russia.
8. Theory of Technological Progress: Many revolutionary changes have taken place in our social life because of discoveries and inventions. It remains to be an established fact that inventions have an important place in bringing social change.
9. Veblen’s Theory of Social Change: This theory is related to economic and human goals. He holds that economic purposes may be constructive, or they may be used for exploitation change is therefore necessary to eliminate unsatisfactory conditions and situations.
10. Conflict Theory: Emphasizes that social change results from conflicts between different groups.
11. Functionalist Theory: Social change as a gradual and adaptive process that maintains social stability.
12. Modernization Theory: Societies progress from traditional to modern through industrialization.
13. Dependency Theory (Critical Theory): This theory criticizes modernization theory and argues that underdevelopment is caused by exploitation by developed countries.

Theories of Modernization:

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1. Classical Modernization Theory: Argues that all societies follow a similar path of development. Societies progress from traditional to modern through industrialization and urbanization.
2. Developing Theory: Underdevelopment is a result of exploitation by developed countries.
3. World System Theory: Analyzes global economic system and their impact on development.
4. Globalization Theory: Global interconnectedness drives modernization and social change. Spread of technology, ideas and culture worldwide, Increased interconnectedness of societies. Use of internet, global trade and multinational companies.
5. Rostow's Stages of Growth: Societies progress through five stages.
 1. Traditional Society
 2. preconditioned for take-off
 3. Take-off
 4. Drive to Maturity
 5. Age to high mass consumption
6. World Systems Theory: An extension of dependency theory, it explains modernization in terms of a global economic system. Unequal exchange maintains inequality. World divided into three parts
 1. Core (developed Countries)
 2. Periphery (underdeveloped countries)
 3. Semi-periphery (developing countries)

Factors influencing Social Change:

The factors for social change may be internal or external factors, for example demographic change, changes in technology. On the other hand, contact with other societies with different technology, social structure and culture may produce significant social change in a given society.

1. Cultural Factor: change in values and beliefs influence behaviour and institutions. Social change take place along with cultural change.
2. Geographical Factors: Like climatic conditions and human factors affect social change. In one country different regions or areas are affected by peculiar climatic conditions which happen to occur there.
3. Environmental Factors: Environmental Factors are responsible for mobility. Climate change, natural disasters and resource depletion.

4. Political and legal Factors: Polices, laws and government actions or movements shape social change.
5. Demographic Factors: Population growth, migration and urbanization affect social structure.
6. Economic Factor: Change in employment, income and economic systems. Economic development and industrialization drive social transformation. The use of machines production on a large scale started in India.
7. Migration Factor: Certain economic and political crises are responsible for migration of people. An earthquake flood or war may result into moving of people from one place to another.
8. Technological Factor: Use of machines in industries, developments of means of communication, development of means of transportation, development of new methods or processes of agricultural. This change is usually seen in all the societies.
9. Population Factor: Population growth puts pressure on resources like food, water and housing leading to social and economic changes. The 20th century has witnessed tremendous and unprecedented explosion in population.
10. Psychological Factor: A person’s own psychology is the reason of social change. Man by nature loves change. He desires to have new inventions and new experiences.
11. Ideological Factors: Social change is influenced by philosophical, scientific and political ideas as well. These ideals have given a new thought to human mind have changed its attitude towards life and social values.
12. War Factor: War is known to be huge single generator of social change. War upsets the whole structure of society. It destroyed the established inventions and affects inter-personal relations. The way of living changes in war.
13. Diffusion Factor: The cultural diffusion factors like the impact of western civilization and American culture in the Indian life.
14. Modernization: Modernization is a process of social change which emphasizes rational, secular, and scientific approach.
15. Miscellaneous Factor: The rise of new thoughts also accounts for social change. For example, considerable social changes have been there because of changes in thoughts towards dowry, caste system, women education etc.

Impact of Social Change and Modernizations on Society:

Positive Impacts:

1. Economic growth and industrial development
2. Improved Education and literacy

3. Technological Progress, Technology advancements
4. Better health care and living standards
5. Increased individual freedom and rights
6. Access to quality Education and information
7. Increased access to Education and job opportunities for women
8. People can move up to the social ladder through hard work
9. Globalization promote diversity and understanding
10. Faster travel and logistics connect people
11. Internet and media inform and educate
12. Import waste management and hygiene
13. Technological advancements help predict and respond to disasters
14. Technological farming improves yields and food security
15. Economic growth lifts people out of poverty

Negative Impacts:

1. Cultural Erosion
2. Social Inequality
3. Environment Degradation
4. Breakdown of traditional institutions
5. Stress and mental health issues
6. Automation and technology advancement leads to job losses
7. Excessive screen time and digital dependency
8. Increased online risks and data breaches
9. Fast paced city life leads to burn out
10. Lavish lifestyle contributes to obesity and diseases
11. Loss of community -weekend of social bonds and family ties
12. Traffic and congestion
13. Local identities get lost in globalization
14. Reduced self – reliance and skills.
15. Overconsumption- Materialism and waste generation strain resources

Social Change and modernization in India:

Social change and modernization in India represent a shift from traditional, caste, and agricultural structures towards an industrial, urbanized and democratic society, include education, technological advancements and economic reforms, leading to the rise of nuclear families, empowerment of marginalized groups and expanded women’s right. A new thought has been created in India against irrational thoughts and beliefs. Another effect of modernization of India is development of spirit patriotism and democracy. India represents a unique case where tradition and modernity coexist:

1. Growth of urban centers and industries
2. Expansion of Education
3. Changing family structures (joint to nuclear)
4. Persistence of caste and traditional practices.

Government initiative, globalization and technological advancement have accelerated social change in India. Modernization in India has brought significant changes, especially in education and urbanization. The National policy (NEP)2020 aims to make education more meaningful and aligned with the real-world needs, focusing on producing job creator rather than job seekers.

Role of Education in Social Change:

Education is a powerful agent of social change. At the same time, it is influenced by social change. This relationship functions in three ways.

1. Education as a condition of social change.
2. Education as an instrument of social change.
3. Education as a result of social change.

It empowers individuals’ shapes attitude, and drive progress. It acts as a key instrument for bringing social, economic, political, and cultural change in society. Through education, individuals gain knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that help them adapt to modern life. Educated people rely more on science and technology rather than traditional myths. As the same time, it helps preserve useful cultural traditions in a balanced way. Education allows individuals to move upward in society based on merit than birth. However, for modernization to be inclusive and sustainable, education must be accessible, relevant and equitable for all sections of society.

1. Expansion of knowledge: During the last few years, there has been an explosion of knowledge. In the traditional society, the quantum of knowledge was limited, and the main aim of education was preservation, maintenance and promotion of the existing culture. But in the present society quantum of knowledge is very vast. Education helps to expand the arena of knowledge through the form of technology, distance Education, expansion of literature almost every field of education.

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2. High Standard of Living: Education provides the framework for economic development among individuals, bring awareness of different forms of vocation and thus prepare them for high standard of living.
3. Creation of a Broader outlook: Education helps to bring awareness among individuals by removing the social ills in the society and promoting a just society with rational thinking.
4. Coordination Between Tradition and Modernization; Education helps to coordinate between tradition and modernity which is deed results in the modernization of the society. It creates a balance between the old tradition and new mind set.
5. Helpful in Bringing Social Change: Education helps to remove the social ills in the society and thus bring a social change by transforming the thinking patterns of the society towards a positive side. Education acts as a bridge between family and society, preparing individuals for modern roles.
6. Powerful force of Modernization: Education acts as a powerful force of modernization by developing national outlook and international understanding. It helps the pupils in knowing the latest development in social, economic, technological and cultural domains of human life.
7. National Integration: Education can help in the achievement of emotional and national integration which is the basis for establishing unity among people and for the development of nation -social, culture and political aspects.
8. Advancing Values: Modern Education promotes democratic ideals like freedom, justice and gender equality which eventually become the new social norms.
9. Social Integration: Schools acts as a 'melting -pot' where people from different backgrounds interact, fostering tolerance and national unity. Teaching common values and norms.
10. Empowerment: It makes people aware of their legal rights and social responsibilities, giving marginalized group a voice to demand equality. Women's education leads to gender equality.
11. Shifting Perspectives: It challenges outdated traditions prejudices and superstitions replacing them scientific temper and logical reasoning.
12. Economic Mobility: By providing skills and knowledge, education helps individuals break the cycle of poverty, which levels the socio-economic playing field. Growth of IT sector due to educated workforce.
13. Inclusive Growth: Education bridges gaps and promotes social cohesion.
14. Encourage equality and social justice.
15. Helps in adapting to modernization. Preparing individuals for modern society.

16. Role in Globalization: Education connects individuals to the global world by: Teaching international languages, promoting global awareness, Enabling participation in global economy. Student studying abroad or working in multinational companies.

Findings of the Study

Based on the analysis, the study reveals the following key findings:

1. Social change is continuous, universal, and multi-dimensional.
2. Modernization acts as a major driver of social change, especially through technology and education.
3. There is a coexistence of traditional and modern values in Indian society.
4. Education plays a crucial role in promoting modernization and social mobility.
5. Modernization has both positive (economic growth, empowerment) and negative (inequality, cultural erosion) impacts.
6. Technological advancement is the most influential factor accelerating change in contemporary society.
7. Social change is uneven, affecting urban areas more rapidly than rural regions.
8. Government policies and globalization significantly influence modernization in India.

Challenges of Modernization:

Modernization is not a simple transition from ‘old’ to ‘new’. It is a complex often disruptive process that introduces significant social, cultural, and economic hurdles.

1. Skill Gaps: Rapid technological change requires constant reskilling. Those without access to digital literacy or advanced education face chronic unemployment.
2. Wealth Concentration: Modernization can worsen economic inequality.
3. Access Disparities: Modernization often benefits urban and elite population first, leaving rural and marginalized communities behind.
4. Loss of Tradition: Modernization can lead to cultural homogenization, where global western trends overshadow local languages, crafts and values.
5. Social Fragmentation: The shift from traditional joint families to nuclear families can weaken community support system and leading to isolation especially for the elderly.
6. Compartmentalization: Individuals often struggle to navigate ‘multiple modernization’- acting modern at work while adhering to traditional rituals at home-which can create internal identity conflicts.
7. Resource Depletion: The growth at all costs models often leads to deforestation, pollution and the over exploitation of natural resources.

8. Climate Vulnerability: Developing nations often face the highest risks from climate driven disasters despite contributing the least to global emissions.

9. Institutional Lag: Schools and government systems often fail to evolve as fast as technological, leaving graduates unprepared for the modern job market.

10. Ideological Friction: Modern values like secularism or gender equality often clash with deep-rooted traditional beliefs, leading to social tension and resistance to reform.

11. Technological Ethics: Modernization brings new threats like AI-driven misinformation, data privacy, and increased cyber-crime.

12. Lifestyle Diseases: Modern lifestyles have increased the prevalence of non-communicable disease like obesity and heart disease.

Discussion

The findings indicate that social change and modernization are deeply interconnected processes that cannot be studied in isolation. While modernization brings economic development and technological progress, it also creates social inequalities and cultural tensions.

In the Indian context, modernization does not completely replace tradition but rather coexists with it. For example, while urbanization promotes nuclear families, traditional values still influence social behavior.

The role of education emerges as central in balancing modernization with cultural preservation. It helps individuals adapt to change while maintaining social cohesion.

However, modernization also raises serious concerns such as environmental degradation, unemployment due to automation, and weakening of social bonds. These challenges highlight the need for **inclusive and sustainable modernization policies**.

Thus, modernization should not be viewed merely as economic growth but as a holistic process that ensures social justice, equality, and cultural continuity.

Conclusion:

Social change and modernization are deeply interconnected processes that reshape how societies function. While modernization provides the technological and economic tools for progress, social change ensures that institutions and cultural mindsets evolve to meet these new realities. Ultimately the goal of this transformation is to improve the quality of life, through it requires a careful balance between embracing innovation and preserving essential cultural identity. For a society to thrive, it must adapt to the future without losing the social cohesion that defines its past. The intersection of social and modernization is visible in almost every routine activity. We see it when digital banking replaces physical cash (modernization) which in turn changes our social expectations of speed and trust in transaction (social change). Similarly, the shift from traditional office setups to remote work uses modern software to facilitate a massive social shift in how we balance family life and professional identity. While

these advancements make life more efficient, they also challenge us to maintain personal connections in an increasingly automated world. True progress occurs when we use modern tools to enhance, rather than replace, the human values that keep a community together. Traditional classroom is being supplemented by online learning platforms. Such development has positive reinforcement to the process of social change. IGNOU and ISRO share a common vision of creating educational India. The move from local neighborhood market to massive e-commerce apps. The rise of ride sharing apps like uber or ola. Modernization is the GPS and app infrastructure, but the social change is the newfound comfort in trusting a stranger to drive you, replacing the rigid routine of waiting for a public bus or owning a private car. Last month I personally experience this ride. It was economical, eco-friendly, and gave me a chance to interact with new people. I would definitely consider choosing a shared ride again in the future. The transition from physical doctor visits to telemedicine. Modern technology allows for video calls, but the social change is evolving expectations instant access and the democratization of medical advice. The technology (modernization) builds the bridge but our changing behaviour (social change) is what actually crosses it.

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