

Contextualizing Arnold Toynbee's Challenge and Response Theory in the Nexus between American Cultural Hegemony and the Islamic World
in the Post-9/11 Era

Contextualiser la Théorie du Défi-Réponse d'Arnold Toynbee dans le Lien entre l'Hégémonie Culturelle Américaine et le Monde Islamique Après
les événements du 11 Septembre

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Date of receipt: 03.06.2024

Date of revision: 12/11/2024

Date of acceptance: 15/12/2024

Abstract

This article examines Arnold J. Toynbee's influential theory of "challenge and response," which explains the reasons behind the rise and fall of civilizations by focusing on the U.S. post-9/11 attempts to bring about change in the Islamic world. It aims to place Toynbee's theory in a modern context by exploring the fusion of the past and the present. The U.S. has presented a challenge to the Islamic world by infusing its culture, through the mechanism of cultural hegemony, into the fundamental aspects of Islam as both a religion and a way of life. The continuous influx of American cultural products has given rise to a new social order that significantly diverges from Islamic values and closely approaches American ones. Muslims are grappling with feelings of inferiority and an identity crisis, stemming from the lack of leadership and a culture of creativity. However, it is important to acknowledge that the path towards Americanization does not necessarily align with Toynbee's perspective on the ultimate decline of civilizations. While Muslims may face challenges, the essence of Islam remains resilient and enduring. To address these challenges and promote growth and prosperity, Muslims are encouraged to reconnect with the fundamental principles of Islam.

Keywords: Arnold Toynbee, challenge and response theory, American cultural hegemony, the Islamic world, September 11.

Résumé:

Cet article examine la théorie d'Arnold J. Toynbee du « défi-réponse », qui explique les raisons de l'essor et de la chute des civilisations en se concentrant sur les tentatives des États-Unis après les événements du 11 septembre pour changer le monde Islamique. L'article donc vise à placer la théorie de Toynbee dans un contexte moderne en explorant la fusion du passé et du présent. Les États-Unis ont lancé un défi au monde Islamique en infusant leur culture, par le biais du mécanisme de l'hégémonie culturelle, dans les aspects fondamentaux de l'Islam en tant que religion et mode de vie. L'afflux continu de produits culturels Américains a donné naissance à un nouvel ordre social qui s'écarte considérablement des valeurs Islamiques et se rapproche

étroitement de celles des Américaines. Les Musulmans sont aux prises avec des sentiments d'infériorité et une crise d'identité, résultant du manque de leadership et d'une culture de créativité.

Cependant, il est important de reconnaître que la voie vers l'américanisation ne correspond pas nécessairement à la perspective de Toynbee sur le déclin ultime des civilisations. Même si les Musulmans sont confrontés à des défis, l'essence de l'Islam reste résiliente et durable. Pour relever ces défis et promouvoir la croissance et la prospérité, les Musulmans sont encouragés à renouer avec les principes fondamentaux de l'Islam.

Mots clés : Arnold Toynbee, la théorie du défi-réponse, l'hégémonie culturelle américaine, le Monde Islamique, 11 Septembre.

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1. Introduction

Arnold Joseph Toynbee used the term "challenge and response" in his monumental twelve-volume work, *A Study of History*, providing and explaining the factors behind the rise and fall of civilizations. The concept of "challenge" indicates various types of threat that groups of people are subjected to, while "response" signals the strategies adopted by the same people to cope with the new situation in the hope of attaining survival and prosperity. Toynbee's "challenge and response" theory is remarkably expansive, as it can be applied to a wide range of phenomena.

This framework serves as a valuable schema that can help in understanding contemporary international events and issues that continue to fuel heated debates. The 9/11

attacks on the United States and the subsequent events that unfolded serve as a prime example of the "challenge and response" theory. The American reaction to these events has reverberated throughout the years. In an effort to face terrorism and extremism in the Islamic world, the U.S. not only resorted to violence but also embraced a far-reaching endeavor to impose its cultural hegemonic policies. This illustrates how the theory can be applied to understand the complex dynamics at play in international affairs. The United States has long held the belief that it possesses a unique status and a distinct mission.

Throughout its history, it has adopted and implemented various strategies to establish and maintain its global dominance across political, military, economic, and cultural domains. This pursuit of a global monopoly has shaped the actions and policies of the United States from its earliest days to the present.

The end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Bloc had a profound impact on the United States, igniting its desire to establish itself as the supreme power and assert its unilateral dominance. This period marked a significant shift in American foreign policy, as the U.S. sought to shape the global landscape according to its own interests. The events of 9/11 significantly bolstered this ambition, as the United States specifically singled out Muslims and Islam as part of its broader agenda. This encompassed not only military operations but also the propagation of cultural hegemony. The longing to exert its influence on a global level has emerged as a defining attribute of American foreign policy in the 21st century.

2. Arnold J. Toynbee's Challenge and Response Theory: An Analytical Profile

Arnold Joseph Toynbee is one of the most devoted scholars to the philosophy of modern history and his works have inspired entire generations of philosophers, historians and sociologists. His primary objective was to solve the mysteries of

human life through both 'time and space'. Toynbee had a universal and global perspective of history. By providing a holistic synthesis, he had successfully discussed all ages and places ever known to humanity in a new and different framework he called "challenge and response".

2.1 Challenge and Response: The Cornerstone of Toynbee's Study of History

Arnold Joseph Toynbee (1889-1975) was a prolific and highly influential English writer. His scholarly contributions are significant in terms of both breadth and depth. For over six decades, he dedicated his life to the study of history and served as a perceptive commentator on international relations and politics. He has a staggering number of approximately 3000 publications (Hall, 2014, p.23). However, Toynbee is most renowned for his *magnum opus*, *A Study of History*, a twelve-volume work that left an indelible mark on the field of historical theory. In fact, Whittaker Chambers, an American writer and editor, hailed it as "the most provocative work on historical theory written in England since Karl Marx's *Capital*" (Whitman, 1975).

Toynbee's "Challenge and Response" theory is widely regarded as the theoretical cornerstone of his monumental work, *A Study of History*. This theory is based on the premise that every civilization or culture encounters a series of challenges or obstacles throughout its existence (Kerslake, 2008, p. 18). Toynbee posited that the way a civilization responds to these challenges determines its growth or decline. In his analysis, Toynbee emphasized that if a civilization faces minimal challenges and easily obtains all the resources it needs for sustenance, there is little incentive for cultural evolution or the development of problem-solving techniques. On the other hand, when a civilization encounters significant challenges, it is compelled to adapt and evolve in order to overcome them (Lewicki, 2017, p. 73).

2.2 Creativity and Leadership: The Fuel of Civilizational Growth and Decline

Every society, when considered as a unified entity, faces a succession of obstacles throughout its life cycle. However, not everyone within the society is burdened with the responsibility of surmounting these challenges. As a matter of fact, "particular individuals and minorities are called upon to undergo 'ordeals' which permit them to solve these evolving problems" (Kerslake, 2002, p.18). Through his theory of "challenge and response," Arnold Toynbee describes and explains the processes by which civilizations experience both growth and decline. He identifies leadership and creativity as the most crucial factors contributing to the survival and advancement of a civilization. In essence, the development of a civilization is contingent upon the manner in which its leaders confront and address challenges. Toynbee postulates that the process of responding to challenges is carried out by creative leaders within a society (O'Hagan, 2002, p.88). The creative leaders are surrounded by a group known as "the creative minority" or "the elite." This creative minority comprises individuals who possess special skills and abilities. Their role is to inspire and influence the majority of society to embrace or imitate their actions and deeds. Toynbee's primary objective was to establish the notion that all civilizations follow a similar trajectory or destiny. He argued that a civilization experiences growth and progress when its members actively engage in providing "creative responses" to the challenges they encounter (Toynbee, 1946, p. 296). The functioning and survival of a civilization are contingent upon the presence of creativity. When creativity

ceases to exist within a civilization, the civilization itself begins to decline. This decline can be attributed to a combination of factors, including violence and a diminishing capacity for creative responses. A civilization moves from being "an atomized social and political organization" to "a universal state". Ruined by "barbarians without and new religions within", a "universal state" operates "only as a period of uncreative stability" until the civilization dies (Hall, 2003, p. 394).

The growth of a civilization relies on the dynamic relationship between the "inert majority" and the "creative minority."

Toynbee posited that when the "inert majority" imitates and follows the lead of the "creative minority," the civilization experiences growth and progress. However, the breakdown of a civilization occurs when the "creative minority" loses its creative power. Toynbee (1946) identified a serious symptom of civilization disintegration, which he referred to as "the tendency of the creative minority to degenerate into a dominant minority" (p. 428). This social phenomenon indicates a shift in the nature and role of the creative minority within a civilization.

3. 9/11 and the Challenge of American Cultural Hegemony

In the past four decades, there has been a notable surge in passionate discussions surrounding the intricate relationship between culture and hegemony. This surge has given rise to a new wave of scholarly inquiry, wherein researchers endeavor to explore and analyze the interplay between these two topics, collectively known as cultural hegemony. The rapid global dissemination of American culture during the late 20th and early 21st centuries has sparked a sense of curiosity and interest among numerous academics. The 21st century was inaugurated by the September 11th attacks which marked a new phase in the United States endeavors to reshape the cultural world order. Since that day, American cultural hegemony has been used to remold Islamic traditions, institutions, and practices. In other words, the United States has actively embraced a long-standing project aimed at westernizing Islam and implementing a multitude of reforms.

3.1 The Sheriff of a Globalized Village: Propagating American Culture

The widespread influence of American culture, often referred to as Americanization or globalization, has captured the attention of scholars from various disciplines seeking to understand its impact on societies around the world (Shimemura, (2002), Beck, Sznaider, Winter, (2003), Nurullah, (2008). The theory of cultural imperialism or cultural hegemony is often employed to describe the increasing impact of the United States and its commercial media system worldwide during the Cold War. As the two leading powers, the United States and the Soviet Union sought to persuade and convince other nations to embrace their respective socioeconomic systems (Sussman, 2021, pp. 70-71). In their work "Cultural Imperialism Theories," Rodrigo Gomez Garcia and Benjamin Birkinbine argue that cultural imperialism or hegemony expose how American culture is propagated and imposed on other developing countries. This occurs through the influence of American communication and media corporations, specific media products with their imagery and messages, as well as the expansion of the private model of the media system (2018, p.1).

American cultural hegemony is not a new phenomenon; it can be traced back to the

earliest days of America's foundation. It is bred by what is known as the American "exceptionalism," which is built upon the principle of considering the American culture as exemplary—an ideal model for the rest of the world to follow (Walt, 2011). The discourse surrounding American exceptionalism has undergone a transformation throughout history, transitioning from the perception of the United States as a "redeemer nation" to its role as a "conqueror of the world's markets," and ultimately evolving into a "global security state" in the 21st century (Pease, 2007, pp. 108-111). This shift in perception can be attributed to significant events, particularly the September 11th attacks, which marked a turning point in the nation's approach to global security.

American cultural hegemony has been further amplified and strengthened due to the rapid pace of technological advancements, particularly in the field of telecommunications. These advancements have facilitated a more efficient and pervasive dissemination of American culture, resulting in an increased and far-reaching influence worldwide. The United States dominates the flow of ideas and information in the current global arena, exerting a monopolistic control over this crucial aspect of international discourse. American television, music, and software have become readily available and easily accessible to individuals worldwide. This accessibility has facilitated the operation of American cultural hegemony, primarily through multinational corporations such as McDonald's, Coca Cola, Hollywood, Disneyland, KFC, and many others. These companies play a significant role in disseminating and promoting American culture on a global scale (Aggarwal, Knudsen, Maamoun (2009), Belkhyr (2012), Sayfo (2018). The influence of American popular culture extends far beyond its borders, exerting a global sway and evoking a profound resonance overseas.

As a superpower, the United States has embarked on a mission to shape a homogenized and interconnected world that is influenced by the American cultural mindset. The United States leverages the process of globalization to disseminate its lifestyle and consumption patterns worldwide through various means. Tools such as mass media, motion picture industry, music, cultural exchanges, trade, tourism, and partnerships are used to spread American cultural influence on a global scale. While globalization is often portrayed by its advocates as a means to share ideas, offer opportunities, and promote democracy and freedom globally, there are arguments that it is used as an instrument to restructure the world according to American cultural and ideological specifications (Nurullah, 2008, p. 46). Globalization is often described as "the cumulative processes whereby the cultural traits of the dominant group becomes the powerful one, and is being transmitted and assimilated by lesser groups" (Nurullah, 2008, p. 46). This perspective suggests that globalization serves as a mechanism through which the cultural traits of the dominant group, in this case, the United States, become widespread and influential, while other groups assimilate and adopt these cultural traits.

3.2 9/11 and the Spiraling towards Intensive Measures in the Islamic World: The Increase of American Cultural Hegemonic Policies

The day of September 11th, 2001 will forever be remembered as a dark chapter in the history of the United States. The events that unfolded on that fateful day marked a significant turning point, announcing the end of an era and the start of a new

one. The shocking ability of individuals to breach American borders and carry out devastating attacks on iconic buildings in the heart of New York City sowed seeds of skepticism, fear, and distrust in the hearts of every single individual. Since the tragic events of September 11th, 2001, Islam and Muslims have indeed occupied a significant space in American news and public discourse. The 9/11 attacks had a profound impact on world politics, particularly in relation to American-Muslim relations. In the words of George W. Bush, they signaled "a fundamental transformation of history that took place in history" (Pease, 2007, p. 112).

The fear of Islam in the United States has been a topic of discussion and analysis. Some argue that the American government and mass media have played a role in igniting and fueling this fear. It is important to note that this is a complex issue with various perspectives and factors at play. The post-9/11 era has undeniably been marked by instances of religious bigotry against Islam and Muslims. This can be attributed, at least in part, to the dissemination of hateful statements by high-ranking politicians and media outlets with a wide-reaching audience base. In an article titled "Neo-Orientalism and the Neo-Imperialism Thesis: Post-9/11 US and Arab World Relationship," Mubarak Altwaiji presents the argument that the year 2001 marked the beginning of "a century of practicing symbolic power on the perpetrators, the Arab world." Altwaiji's analysis suggests that the events of 9/11 had far-reaching implications for the relationship between the United States and the Arab world, leading to a shift in power dynamics and the emergence of a form of neo-imperialism. Altwaiji suggests that this symbolic power, or what is known as soft power, "refers to a power used by the empire to create a hegemonic version of reality" by producing "distorted images of dominated people" (2014, pp. 313-314).

Backwardness, terrorism, and extremism were used as pretexts to impose American culture on Muslim-majority countries. The post-9/11 era has seen discussions and debates regarding calls to reform Islam and mold the Islamic world into a globalized version of the United States by instilling American ideals and practices to contain terrorism. The West, particularly the United States, seeks to impose radical changes on the Islamic world and break away from the basic teachings of Islam. After 9/11, the United States adopted a cultural hegemonic strategy to serve its own interests and promote regional order. This strategy involves the exertion of cultural influence and the promotion of American values and ideals in Muslim-majority countries.

The United States leveraged its global cultural influence to strengthen its economy. The American administration recognized that promoting American culture would generate increased demand for its products, thereby leading to economic prosperity. The desire to emulate American culture makes consumers eager to readily adopt any products that originate from the land of opportunities. The United States turned 9/11 into an economic opportunity to expand global trade in general and the American one in particular. (Brainard, 2001). American Trade Representative Bob Zoellick emphasized the significance of trade in the fight against terrorism, and President Bush himself expressed support for this notion when he openly stated, "the terrorists attacked the World Trade Center and we will defeat them by expanding and encouraging world trade" (Brainard, 2001).

The aftermath of 9/11 triggered a heated debate on the concept of "soft power," which refers to the ability to shape and influence the preferences of others (Nye, 2004, pp. 7-8). The expansion of American culture on the global stage reflects the

implementation of soft power strategies by the White House, aiming to mold the cultural values and preferences of other countries, particularly those in the Arab and Islamic world. Liberal ideologists argue that utilizing soft power is the most effective approach for the United States to exercise and exert its "global imperium." They believe that by shaping the cultural values and preferences of other countries, especially in the Arab and Islamic world, the United States can promote its own interests and maintain its cultural dominance. Even radical critics consider the invasion of Iraq a giant and necessary step towards clearing

"the ground for the success of soft power in the Middle East" (Aysha, 2004, p. 245) by turning Iraq into a role-model for other Arab and Islamic nations to follow.

Richard Haass, the State Department's Director of Policy Planning, declared in December 2002 that past administrations had allowed the Middle East to become a "democratic exception," thus creating fertile ground "for extremists and terrorists who target America for supporting the regimes under which they live." In his address to inaugurate The United States-Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), Secretary of State Colin Powell emphasized the importance of reforming education and the economy, empowering women, developing the private sector, and promoting civil society. Powell argued that after 9/11, it was determined that it was "not in the U.S. interests...or that of Muslims, for the United States to continue this exception" (qtd. in Aysha, 2004, p. 246).

English language is used as an effective means by the United States to infiltrate non-English speaking countries, particularly in the Arab and Islamic world, with the intention of manipulating people's consciousness and exerting control over them.

Following the events of 9/11, the American government initiated a highly objectionable campaign against Muslim and Arab nations, advocating for reforms across various sectors, notably in education. These educational reforms seek to shape pro-American Muslim elites, enabling the United States to establish a stronger presence in the Islamic world. These calls for change stem from the American belief that the Arab and Islamic educational systems played a significant role in shaping the ideological orientations of the attackers. The validity of these claims is reinforced by the fact that fifteen of the hijackers hailed from Saudi origins.

According to Sohail Karman, the teaching of English is a meticulously devised program cemented with the objective of de-Islamizing Islamic countries. This agenda is underpinned by the motto of "less Islam, more English." Arabic, being the sacred language of Muslims as it is the language of *Quran*, should be preserved and safeguarded. As per Karmani, the implementation of intensive English-based educational programs and the substantial increase in investments in this domain have resulted in the marginalization of Arabic. In essence, the relentless imposition of English has fostered the perception that Arabic is an inferior language incapable of fulfilling modern global requirements. Concerns are mounting regarding the heavy reliance on English which may ultimately lead to the Anglicization of the educational system or the dissemination of the cultural values of English-speaking nations at the expense of Arabic and Islamic culture (Karmani, 2005, pp. 88-93).

In a paper titled "English Language Textbooks and Portrayal of Culture: A content analysis," Abd Rashid and Ibrahim conducted an examination of the religious and socio-cultural content within the English language teaching program utilized at

the International Islamic University of Malaysia. They affirmed that “it is exceedingly challenging for teaching materials to remain socio-culturally neutral because they inherently express a social order and value system, whether implicitly or explicitly.” The findings of their study confirmed that the English language textbooks appeared to present the value system and social order of the Judeo-Christian tradition in a favorable light, while portraying Islam and Muslims in a negative manner. Both scholars emphasized that “prolonged exposure to negative depictions of Islam and Muslims in English language teaching textbooks, without the guidance of experienced teachers, may erode the worldview and Aqidah of the students.” Upon analyzing the textbooks, it became evident that there was a noticeable subjective and biased representation of non-Islamic cultural values in general, and American cultural values in particular, “at the expense of Arab-Islamic culture, as no unit discussed Arabs or Muslims” (2018, p.5). The perpetuation of negative images about Islam and Muslims, particularly in the aftermath of 9/11 through films, news media, and various television programs, coupled with sweeping generalizations, has had a detrimental psychological impact on Muslims and their culture, fostering skepticism and raising questions about many cherished cultural Muslim values.

4. The Islamic World’s Responses: The Path towards Americanization

Islam, as a social religion, emphasizes the importance of collective life and discourages individualism. Islam is characterized by a dynamic sense of moderation, harmonizing both the material and spiritual aspects of human personality. Contrary to Western perceptions, Islam is not static but rather exhibits a dynamic pattern. It is a value-laden religion that encourages authenticity and originality, rejecting mere imitation (2008, p.47). On the other hand, Western culture is often described as a value-free or open culture, focused on pursuing material pleasures and easily accessible content. While the Islamic religion governs and guides its followers in matters of spirituality, lifestyle, and governance, the Western culture, under the influence of the United States, primarily relies on rationality alone. It is important to note that Islamic principles incorporate both religious and rational elements (p.47). Consequently, the United States, through its cultural hegemony, is seen as contributing to the transformation of the world into a secular globalized village, devoid of religious values, with Muslims being no exception to this trend.

4.1 The Increase of American-Flavored Media Production and Consumption in the Islamic World

Muslim and Arab nations such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Morocco have adapted American-English animated cartoons into their respective dialects. This practice of using native languages serves to strengthen the influence of Disney “over Arab consumers as it facilitates the assimilation of cultural messages and values conveyed in these animated films. When expressed in their mother tongue, children are more likely to identify with the mediated animated images” (Belkhyr, 2012, p. 707). This process of identification goes beyond mere admiration for the heroes portrayed; children may also adopt their way of life, including fashion choices and dietary preferences, as advertised on both national and international Arab TV channels (p.710).

Considering Islamic media, the absence of influential platforms has allowed for a significant impact from the unfiltered influx of cultural products on Muslims and Arabs. One prominent example is the MBC Company, which stands as the “largest and leading media company in the Middle East and North Africa” with a primary focus on entertainment (MBC Group, 2023).

Over the span of three decades, the company has launched numerous channels catering to viewers of all ages, operating more than 20 free-to-air TV channels and radio stations. According to Walid bin Ibrahim Al Ibrahim, the chairman of MBC group, their objective is to shape the future of broadcasting by providing audiences with the latest trends and captivating programming (MBC Group, 2023). However, the majority of MBC group channels predominantly showcase Hollywood movies, American-like TV programs such as Arab Idol, the Voice, X Factor, and ET in Arabic, which fail to reflect and uphold Islamic values. Despite this, the MBC group, being a Saudi conglomerate, holds a vast viewer database, as millions of Arabs and Muslims avidly consume and absorb the broadcasted programs, along with their accompanying cultural implications.

4.2 Americanizing Islamic Culture: The Infiltration of English and the Re-shaping of the Educational System

English (the American form) has emerged as the language of choice for the educated and affluent individuals, not only in Saudi Arabia but also in various Islamic nations like Egypt, UAE, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, and more. In today's society, people in these countries actively incorporate English into their daily conversations, driven by the belief that it signifies prestige and modernity. The benefits of learning English, or any foreign language for that matter, are undeniable. The Islamic faith itself promotes a thirst for knowledge and encourages an open-minded approach. However, this pursuit of knowledge should not come at the expense of Islamic values and principles. Unfortunately, Arabic, the sacred language of *Quran* and the bearer of a rich cultural heritage, is gradually being overshadowed and disregarded by both the elite and the general population, as they succumb to the allure of modern American culture.

In an article published by *The Washington Post* titled “Qatar Reshapes its Schools, Putting English over Islam,” Susan B. Glasser (2003) uncovers Qatar's post-9/11 strategy of prioritizing English education over Islamic studies. This shift is evident in the establishment of branches of renowned American universities like Carnegie Mellon (business school) and Cornell (medical school) in Qatar, as well as educational reforms in public schools. The impetus for these changes came from a group of experts from RAND's headquarters in California, who advocated for a thorough review of the existing educational system and curricula in primary and secondary schools, with the aim of implementing radical changes.

The article further highlights concerns that the educational system in Qatar, and the broader Gulf region, promotes fanaticism, intolerance, and even espouses the ideological inclinations of Osama Bin Laden. This contentious issue has sparked heated debates, particularly in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. In response to the fact that 15 of the 19 hijackers involved in the 9/11 attacks hailed from Saudi origins, Saudi leaders issued strict instructions for a comprehensive review of textbooks at all levels. The objective was to identify and purge themes that could potentially propagate extremism. As a result of this review, it was determined that approximately 5 percent of the content needed purification. In this context, Mohammad Salem Sabah, the

Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs, remarked, "September 11th crystallized our thoughts...it's a necessity-driven agenda" (Glasser, 2003). This statement underscores the urgent need for comprehensive reforms in education and curricula, taking into account the evolving global landscape and the imperative to counter extremist ideologies.

The adoption of English as a global language by Saudi Arabia, known as the leader and defender of the Islamic faith, has had a profound impact. In the country, English has gained the status of a "semi-official" language, on par with Arabic. Television and radio programs are now broadcasted in both English and Arabic, while newspapers, signs, and public notices are commonly presented in both languages. Within the Saudi educational system, English holds a significant position as it is the only foreign language taught in schools and serves as a core introductory course for all majors in Saudi universities (Alsolamy and Saaty, pp. 4-5). This shift towards English underscores the evolving linguistic landscape in Saudi Arabia and its implications for both education and communication.

The current cultural trends reflect the profound impact of American cultural infiltration on Arabs and Muslims. The rapid dissemination of American cultural principles, centered around consumerism and individualism, is gradually eroding the core values of Islamic culture, transforming it into a materialistic society. One notable example is the prevalence of fast-food culture, which promotes individualism and consumerism, undermining the traditional Islamic sense of collectivism. This shift is also disrupting the longstanding Islamic practice of communal eating. In Saudi Arabia, the influence of American consumerism is particularly pervasive. Almost everything, with the exception of pork and alcohol, resembles what can be found in the United States. For instance, Red Sea Mall in Djadded is an exact replica of its Southern California counterpart. Bars, such as those found in Applebee's, feature American songs, menus replicated from the United States, and walls adorned not only with images of Saudi icons but also with extensive praise for American figures.

The Islamic civilization has encountered challenges as Muslims have gradually forgotten about "the real teachings and guidelines of Islam" in their daily lives. While it is not entirely accurate to claim that all aspects of Western culture are detrimental, the lack of critical judgment in adopting certain cultural elements has contributed significantly to this crisis (Osmani and Nurullah, 2005, pp. 52-53). Among the noticeable changes is the replacement of the Islamic greeting "*Assalamualeikun*" with "hi" and "hello" in many Muslim communities. Additionally, the Islamic dress code, particularly among the youth, is undergoing significant transformations. There is a visible emulation of Western, particularly American, fashion, hairstyles, and social norms. These changes are clearly evident on the streets of most Muslim-majority countries, serving as a testament to the process of Americanization.

5. Conclusion

Since 9/11, the propagation of American culture as superior has been used against Muslims. The United States has capitalized on this event as an economic opportunity to increase the demand for American products. The United States has been actively working to replace Islamic cultural values with American ones, aiming to eliminate cultural barriers that may hinder the consumption of American products. The increasing consumption rates of American cultural products in the Islamic world are

evident. The steady flow of these products has contributed to the rise in demand. The gradual infiltration of American culture has led to a transformation in the traditional social order of the Islamic world. Furthermore, the unrestricted influx of American cultural products has sparked a sense of inferiority among many Muslims, resulting in the emergence of a new social order imitating that of the United States. The growing sociological dynamics of materialism, individualism, and consumerism are evident in the Islamic world. As a result, many Muslims have embraced global ideologies influenced by the United States, altering their identities in order to seek acceptance. This shift in values and behaviors has brought about changes in the traditional social order, aligning it more closely with American cultural norms.

Considering Arnold Toynbee's theory of challenge and response and its implications, it can be deduced that the Islamic civilization has already shown symptoms of decline. The passive response of Muslims to the challenge of American cultural infiltration serves as a reflection of the lack of creativity and effective leadership within their communities. Muslims lack influential Islamic role models to aspire to, particularly due to the approval and implementation of American-led calls for significant cultural reforms by governments in many Arab and Muslim-majority countries. This absence of positive role models further contributes to the challenges faced by Muslims in maintaining their cultural identity and resisting external influences. The gradual erosion of Islamic values and the rapid proliferation of American cultural principles indicate the Islamic world's struggle to confront the challenge of American cultural hegemony.

While Arnold Toynbee's theory of challenge and response suggests that the destiny of a civilization that ceases to grow and progress is collapse, it is important to note that the Islamic civilization is still struggling and has not yet reached a state of demise. Finally, the idea of an Islamic awakening, based on the teachings and principles of Islam, unity, and creativity, is a concept that has been discussed and advocated by scholars. It suggests that a revival of Islamic values and principles, coupled with a sense of unity and creativity, can contribute to the revitalization of the Islamic civilization. However, the realization of such an awakening is a complex and ongoing process that requires addressing various challenges and factors.

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