An Examination of the Causes and Factors Behind the Promotion of Western Culture and Its Impact on Islamic Lifestyle in Iran: Emphasizing the Statements of the Supreme Leader

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
Article type: Research Article **Article history:** **Received:** 17 June 2025 **Received in revised form:** 4 August 2025 **Accepted:** 13 September 2025 **Available online:** 21 September 2025 **Keywords:** The Quran, Islamic lifestyle, cultural invasion, Supreme Leader, Western culture.	Following the triumph of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the concept of lifestyle has assumed paramount importance, particularly through the Supreme Leader's recurrent emphasis on revitalizing Islamic lifestyle while countering Western paradigms. This study investigates the underlying causes and mechanisms facilitating the dissemination of Western culture - rooted in consumerism, hedonism, individualism, luxury-seeking, and capitalism - and its deleterious effects on Islamic lifestyle in Iran. Drawing upon the Supreme Leader's statements and Quranic verses, the research employs a descriptive, library-based methodology to analyze these dynamics. Findings reveal that Western lifestyle, propagated via cultural instruments (e.g., cinema, music, toys), mass media (e.g., television, literature), and communication technologies (e.g., internet, social networks), constitutes a form of cultural invasion antithetical to Islamic principles, eroding religious values, familial bonds, and national identity. This infiltration fosters moral decline, social fragmentation, and psychological insecurity, undermining the Quranic ideal of "ḥayāt ṭayyibah" (a good life) predicated on faith and righteous deeds. The study advocates for comprehensive strategies, including cultural fortification, media regulation, and adherence to indigenous Islamic wisdom, to safeguard Iran's socio-cultural integrity and advance a new Islamic civilization.

Introduction

Since ancient times, the manner of human life has been a subject of concern in divine religions, although the term "lifestyle" in its independent conceptual sense was not in common use at that time. In human societies, the understanding of lifestyle is closely tied to the worldview of each individual or community, as human beings define their way of living based on the values and norms they accept. Lifestyle refers to the specific mode of living of an individual, group, or society, encompassing a set of values, behaviors, interests, attitudes, and cultural orientations.

In recent years, with the emphasis of the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution, the notion of "Islamic lifestyle" has emerged as one of the central pillars of religious cultural formation and the project of constructing a new Islamic civilization. He regards lifestyle as transcending superficial or merely personal concerns, encompassing all dimensions of life—material and spiritual, individual and social. By contrast, the Western lifestyle, grounded in individualism, hedonism, and materialism, presents a reductionist model that is fundamentally incompatible with Islamic principles and Iranian identity. Within Iran's cultural sphere, Western powers, through media, education, and economic instruments, seek to propagate this model, thereby weakening religious and national beliefs—a process that ultimately leads to cultural assimilation and the erosion of Islamic-Iranian identity.

Accordingly, a thorough examination of Western cultural invasion and its impact on lifestyle in Iran, particularly in light of the statements of the Supreme Leader, is an undeniable necessity. This study seeks to analyze the dimensions, causes, and instruments of this invasion and to propose strategies for safeguarding Islamic identity while reinforcing the religious discourse.

Research Background

Several studies have so far been conducted in the area of lifestyle, among which is the book "Lifestyle Based on Islamic Teachings (with a Media-Oriented Approach)" [in Persian] by Ḥamīd Fāḍil Qāniʿ

(2013). In this work, the author addresses perspectives on Islamic lifestyle, values and tendencies within it, actions and practices associated with it, the pathology of existing lifestyle models, and the role of media in promoting lifestyle. Likewise, Pūr-Amīnī (2013), in his book "Lifestyle: A Charter of Life from the Perspective of Imam al-Ridā (ʿa)" [in Persian], revisits the religious foundations of this lifestyle. Another important contribution is the article, "The Concept of Lifestyle and Its Scope in the Social Sciences" (2008) [in Persian] by Muḥammad Saʿīd Mahdavī. In this article, he first provides an etymological analysis of the concept and then examines its conceptual dimensions within the field of social sciences.

Studies such as Āvīnī (2004) in "Foundations of Development and Western Civilization" [in Persian] and Tawḥīdfām (2005) in "Westology" [in Persian] have focused on critiquing the foundations of Western civilization and its mechanisms of domination. Although these works provide valuable insights into the nature of Western culture, they have not systematically examined its direct and concrete relationship with the components of "lifestyle" in contemporary Iran.

A considerable body of scholarly literature has referred to lifestyle and Western culture. However, what distinguishes the present study from previous works is that, unlike those which addressed the subject in a general manner, this article specifically focuses on analyzing the causes and instruments of Western cultural promotion with reference to the statements of the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution. It argues that the Leader's discourse on lifestyle, cultural invasion, and resistance to global arrogance constitutes a coherent intellectual system that can serve as a foundation for in-depth socio-cultural analysis.

Moreover, this research offers a comprehensive analytical model in which both the "causes" and hidden motives of Western cultural promotion (such as consumerism and hedonism), as well as the "factors and instruments" of its realization (including media, communication technologies, and cultural products), along with its direct impact on Islamic lifestyle in Iran, are examined in a continuous and systematic manner. In addition, the study provides a detailed analysis of the

influence of specific cultural instruments (cinema, music, toys), mass media (television, fictional literature), and communication tools (the Internet and cyberspace), supported by concrete examples.

Methodologically, this research adopts a descriptive and library-based approach, relying on authoritative Islamic sources to examine: the definition and types of lifestyle, the causes and factors behind the promotion of Western lifestyle, and its influence on Islamic lifestyle in Iran.

1. Concepts

The term "lifestyle" (*sabk-i zindigī*) has gained global prominence and has become a significant tool in the success of soft warfare strategies employed by adversaries to infiltrate other societies and spread Western cultural values. For a better understanding of the present study, it is essential to clarify related terms and examine the conceptual foundations.

1.1. Lifestyle

The term "lifestyle" is composed of two words: "style" (*sabk*) and "life" (*zindigī*). The literal meaning of "life" is clear. In Persian, the term "style" was initially employed primarily in the field of literary and artistic stylistics (Dihkhudā 1993, 6:1339). Gradually, however, it came to be used in other domains as well, carrying meanings such as manner, method, and approach (Muʿīn 1992, 1:677). In Arabic, the root form of the word carries multiple meanings: 1. to melt silver and cast it into a mold (Ibn Fāris 1984, 3:129); 2. to refine and beautify speech (Bustānī 1996, 475); and 3. to test someone through experiences (ibid.). In modern Arabic, the word "*uslūb*" is commonly used as the equivalent of "style" (Ṭurayḥī 1996, 2:83).

Technically, "lifestyle" refers to "a way of life or manner of living that reflects the attitudes and values of an individual or group, including habits, beliefs, tastes, moral standards, and economic status—all of which collectively shape the way people live" (Mahdavī Kanī 2007, 51).

The Islamic lifestyle, in accordance with the objectives of the Quran, may be understood as the education of a proper way of life. By identifying the values and norms, as well as their opposites, referenced

in the Quranic verses, this lifestyle can be discerned, and by aligning one's way of living with Quranic methods, the summit of felicity can be attained. The Quran refers to the accepted Islamic lifestyle and the ideal Islamic way of life as "a good life" (ḥayāt-i ṭayyibah).

﴿مَن عَمِلَ صـالِحاً مِن ذَكَرَ أو أُنثى وَ هُوَ مُؤمِنٌ فَلَنُحيِيَنَّهُ حياةً طَيِّبَةً وَ لَنجزِيَنَّهُم
أجرَهُم بِأحسَنِ ما كانوا يَعمَلُون﴾ (النحل/ ٩٧)

"Whoever acts righteously, [whether] male or female, should he be faithful, We shall revive him with a good life and pay them their reward by the best of what they used to do" (Quran 16:97)

This verse indicates that "faith and righteous deeds are the fundamental criteria of the Quranic lifestyle; both ḥayāt ṭayyibah (a good life) and the encounter with the Lord are attained through faith and righteous action" (Jawādī Āmulī 2004, 2:162-163).

Ayatullah Makārim states: "the concept of ḥayāt ṭayyibah is so expansive that it encompasses all dimensions of human life. Thus, the Quranic lifestyle is one purified and cleansed of all forms of pollution, oppression, betrayal, hostility, bondage, humiliation, and anxiety—indeed, of anything that would embitter the pure clarity of life for the human being" (Makārim Shīrāzī 1993, 11:394). In Islamic sources, numerous hadiths discuss the Islamic lifestyle, the life of felicity, righteous living, and the necessity for Muslims to adhere to divine commands at every stage of life.

The expression "lifestyle," which was originally inspired by the Sunnah of the Prophet Muḥammad (s), was redefined in the West in 1929 by Alfred Adler, subsequently acquiring diverse definitions within the fields of social sciences, sociology, and anthropology (Mahdavī Kanī 2007, 67). Gradually, this term expanded into sociology and psychology and thereafter into other areas of the humanities, drawing increasing attention from researchers and scholars (Mahdīzādeh 2011, pp. 103-104). The emphasis of the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the issue of lifestyle further encouraged scholars and intellectuals to examine this subject from multiple perspectives. Thus, it may rightly be said that "lifestyle is among the key concepts in the social sciences and humanities." (Ḥājiyānī, 2012, pp. 7–8).

A comprehensive definition states: "Lifestyle encompasses systems of communication and livelihood, methods of recreation and leisure, patterns of consumption and purchasing, attention to fashion, outward expressions of social status, the use of technological products, modes of engagement with cultural industries, and focal points of cultural interest, such as religion, family, homeland, art, and sports" (Mahdavī Kanī 2007, 78). Furthermore, the Supreme Leader has described lifestyle as "… what makes up the essence of life ... This is the important part of civilization. The issue of family, wedding customs, housing, clothing, norms of consumption, food, cuisine, hobbies, orthography, language, business, behavior in the workplace, behavior in university, behavior at school, behavior in political activities, behavior in sports, behavior in the media, behavior towards one's parents, behavior towards one's partner, behavior towards one's children, behavior towards one's boss, behavior towards one's employees, behavior towards the police, behavior towards government officials, travel, personal hygiene, behavior towards friends, behavior towards enemies, behavior towards foreigners: these things are the essential part of civilization and they make up the essence of human life" (Imam Khamenei, Leader's Speech to Youth of North Khorasan, October 14, 2012, https://B2n.ir/nn4482).

1.2. Types of Lifestyle

From an Islamic perspective, progress encompasses both the hardware and software of civilization, with lifestyle playing a pivotal role in achieving spiritual salvation and societal well-being. The hardware of civilization includes tangible achievements like science, technology, industry, politics, and military power, where significant progress has been made despite external challenges. However, the software—lifestyle—forms the essence of civilization, encompassing family dynamics, social behaviors, personal hygiene, consumption patterns, and interactions in various spheres like work, education, and media. This lifestyle, rooted in Islamic "life wisdom," is critical for building a new Islamic civilization. While the hardware provides the tools for progress, it is the software - guided by Islamic principles in daily

conduct and relationships - that ensures true salvation and a meaningful, secure life. If one fails to make progress in the latter part, one cannot achieve salvation and spiritual peace and security, no matter how much progress one makes in the former part (Imam Khamenei, Leader's Speech to Youth of North Khorasan, October 14, 2012, https://B2n.ir/nn4482).

1.2.1. Islamic Lifestyle

The Islamic lifestyle comprises the set of life matters accepted by Islam, where individuals' behaviors must be based on Islamic teachings. God-centeredness and the sovereignty of Islamic values are among the most important criteria of the Islamic lifestyle, in which both individual and social life should be founded on Islam and Quranic guidance.

In the Quran, the highest degree of lifestyle is *ḥayāt ṭayyibah* (a good life):*"Whoever acts righteously, [whether] male or female, should he be faithful, We shall revive him with a good life and pay them their reward by the best of what they used to do" (Quran 16:97).* Indeed, it can be asserted that a correct lifestyle constitutes the very essence of *ḥayāt ṭayyibah*, which manifests materially and spiritually in the fabric of human society as lifestyle. Another relevant verse states:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا هَلْ أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَى تِجَارَةٍ تُنْجِيكُمْ مِنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ * تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ﴾

(الصف/۱۰-۱۱)

"O you who have faith! Shall I show you a deal that will deliver you from a painful punishment? Have faith in Allah and His Apostle, and wage jihad in the way of Allah with your possessions and your persons. That is better for you, should you know" (Quran 61:10-11)

In this lifestyle, the ultimate aim of religious teachings is liberation from non-Islamic patterns and the attainment of *ḥayāt ṭayyibah*—a life whose fundamental criterion is faith and righteous deeds. Within this framework, every dimension of human life—ranging from worship and business to education, social relations, health, food, art, architecture, production, consumption, and even outward appearance—is oriented

toward the path of a good life (see Fāḍil Qāniʿ 2013, 51; Pūr-Amīnī 2013, pp. 17-18). Reforming lifestyle within the family constitutes the first step toward the realization of an Islamic lifestyle in society, since socialization begins in the family, where the transmission of many economic and social values takes shape (Muṣṭafavī 2003, see pp. 58–65).

Faith in Islam serves as the cornerstone for constructing a new Islamic civilization, guiding its lifestyle and ethical framework, as Islamic sources, including the Quran and hadith collections like "*Kitāb al-Ishrat*," provide comprehensive directives on behaviors, relationships, and social interactions, collectively termed "life wisdom," which transcends mere financial concerns. Seminaries, scholars, and universities are tasked with prioritizing research and education on Islamic ethics and practical rationality, making these principles the foundation for planning and teaching to shape the civilization's essence, while steadfastly avoiding imitation of conflicting external lifestyles to preserve authenticity. The Islamic Revolution, with its immense power and potential, is capable of overcoming numerous obstacles to build a distinguished, noble, and glorious civilization, a transformative vision expected to materialize within your lifetime (Imam Khamenei, Leader's Speech to Youth of North Khorasan, October 14, 2012, https://B2n.ir/nn4482).

1.2.2. Western Lifestyle

To evaluate the Western lifestyle, it is essential first to understand the nature of the West. Geographically, the West includes America, Europe, and territories such as Australia and Russia. Some Central Asian countries like Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Turkey also consider themselves part of the Western world. (Tawḥīdfām 2005, 52). The West is associated with a geographic location (Europe and America), a religion (Christianity and Judaism), a race (the white race), and an economic system (capitalism). However, it is not defined by any single one of these features alone (Latouche 1999, 46).

Western culture - variously referred to as Western civilization, the Western lifestyle, or European civilization - constitutes a comprehensive concept encompassing the intellectual and material products of Europe,

including its social laws, moral values, traditions, beliefs, attitudes, political systems, artifacts, and technologies (Āvīnī 2004, 187). The term is particularly employed in reference to societies whose history and culture have been shaped by European colonialism or influence, such as those of South America, Australia, and Southeast Asia. Modernity, which Westerners present as a lifestyle, permeates all dimensions of human existence—from food and clothing to individual and social relations, and even sexual relations—and remains in a state of continual transformation. Within this framework, the human being assumes the role of legislator of his own life, determining what to eat, what to wear, and how to define good and evil. The Western lifestyle outwardly portrays an image of absolute individual freedom from the constraints of tradition, perpetuated across generations (Naṣr 2003, 331).

In contemporary times, Western civilization, founded on anthropocentrism and humanism and positioned in opposition to theocentrism, seeks to assert its cultural dominance over nations—most notably the Islamic Republic of Iran—through mass media and modern instruments of soft power. The Supreme Leader has cautioned: "Tashālugh gharb dar tarrvīj-e sabk-e zendegi-ye gharbi dar Irān, zeyānhā-ye bījabrān akhlāqi va eqtesādi va dini va siāsi be keshvar va mellat-e mā zade ast; moghābele bā ān, jihādi hame-jāneh va hovmandāneh mītalabad ke bāz cheshm-e omid dar ān be shomā javān-hā ast." ("… the West's attempts to promote the Western lifestyle in Iran has caused a lot of irreversible moral, economic, religious and political detriments to our country and our nation. Countering them requires a comprehensive and intelligent jihad that again here you, the young individuals, are expected to carry out" (Imam Khamenei, On the Occasion of the Fortieth Anniversary of the Victory of the Islamic Revolution. February 11, 2019, https://B2n.ir/a27996).

In this paradigm, religion is marginalized, and individual life replaces collective and religious existence. In the Western lifestyle, the human being is presented as an autonomous, self-contained entity (Guenon 1963, 19). Although Western anthropology rhetorically emphasizes humanism and human dignity, in practice, it often acts contrary to these principles (see Muṭahharī 2004, 23:322). One of the

foundational intellectual premises of the West is the primacy of humanity and the denial of any power beyond the individual, establishing absolute freedom of thought and action as a central tenet (Āvīnī 2004, 137). Furthermore, the Western notion of progress relies less on work and effort and more on the expansion of leisure and unrestrained pursuit of pleasure. In these societies, work is minimized and leisure maximized, to the extent that the avoidance of labor and extreme indulgence in pleasure have become indicators of advancement (ibid, 30).

In Third World and developing countries, the West pursues specific objectives in promoting its lifestyle, as outlined by the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran:

1. Cultural transformation: through strategic and controlled use of media and information to influence public opinion (Imam Khamenei, Leader's Speech in Meeting with Government Officials, 10 October, 2006, https://B2n.ir/xx7997).

2. Political transformation: by portraying the governing system as ineffective and undermining its institutions (ibid).

3. Inducing fear of poverty, war, or external threats, followed by calls for submission through rumor-mongering and fostering psychological insecurity.

4. Creating divisions between the public and political-military authorities to facilitate the fragmentation of the country (Imam Khamenei, Leader's Address on New Year's Day, 21 March, 2003, https://B2n.ir/yn7187).

5. Promoting despair and hopelessness instead of vitality and a sense of achievement from progress (Imam Khamenei, Leader's Speech on the Occasion of the 19th Demise Anniversary of Imam Khomeini, 03 June, 2008, https://B2n.ir/ny6527).

6. Indifference among the youth toward critical national issues.

7. Reducing morale and effectiveness of military personnel and creating discord within security forces.

8. Disrupting communication and control systems of the target country (Imam Khamenei, remarks in meeting with diverse social groups, 1 August 2016, https://B2n.ir/eb4596).

9. Exploiting black propaganda, including rumor-mongering, dissemination of obscene images, and incitement (Imam Khamenei, Leader's Address to Directors of Friday Prayers Headquarters, 27 July, 2002, https://B2n.ir/qb6569).

10. Amplifying religious, ethnic, and political discontent to lay the groundwork for national fragmentation (Razzāqī 1995, 35).

2. Causes and Factors in the Promotion of Western Lifestyle in Iran with Emphasis on the Supreme Leader's Statements

The West has sought to penetrate developing and Islamic societies by promoting the Western lifestyle in those regions. This promotion involves particular causes, factors, and tools, among which are:

2.1. Causes for the Promotion of the Western Lifestyle

The expansion of the Western lifestyle has numerous causes, all rooted in materialistic and carnal life. This study cannot address all these factors exhaustively; hence, the following key causes are highlighted:

2.1.1. Consumerism

Consumerism constitutes one of the foundational pillars of the Western economic system. It refers to excessive consumption and embodies an ideology that can dominate a society or culture. In modern times, mass production and supply exceeding demand have led to a surplus of goods. To address this issue, widespread advertising campaigns were launched, all serving a unified purpose, though only part of these efforts were devoted to promoting actual products, many of which were non-essential. Consumption, also referred to as "expenditure" (Depreciation), is defined as "a process in which the use value is destroyed - either through its conversion in the production process (productive consumption) or its simple and direct use in ownership to satisfy needs (consumptive or final consumption)" (Bahār 2007, 169).

The Quran states: *"... and do not be wasteful; indeed He does not like the wasteful"*[1] *(Quran 6:141; 7:31)*; It also commands: *"and do*

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[1]. ﴿... وَ لا تُسرِفُوا إِنَّهُ لا يُحِبُّ الْمُسرِفين﴾ (الأنعام/۱٤۱؛ الأعراف/۳۱)

not obey the dictates of the profligate"[2] *(Quran 26:151).* A society governed by this culture becomes a consumer society, wherein, as Jean Baudrillard suggests, "consumption is driven by desire rather than need; consumption is intertwined with desire, and individual desires shape its patterns within society" (Bahār 2007, 169). In such a society, consumption is not merely a response to actual needs but rather a symbolic expression of identity and a tool for social differentiation. Consequently, consumer behavior often assumes a symbolic function, serving as a means of signifying social status or distinguishing one social class from another.

2.1.2. Hedonism

In Western thought, the pursuit of pleasure is considered a fundamental human right. One of the most prominent moral principles in the West is hedonism—the belief that nothing is good except pleasure. According to this doctrine, pleasure is the sole ultimate end (Moore 2006, 205). Western ethical schools, by reducing the human being to the material dimension, present sensory pleasure as the final goal of human life. In terms of lifestyle, Western culture is based on hedonism and a materialistic worldview, whereas Islamic culture focuses on a divine worldview and an afterlife-oriented perspective. To counter the intellectual and ideological assaults of the West, appropriate strategies must be implemented (see Riḍā'ī 2024, 31).

Islamic teachings critique this worldview, arguing that unbridled indulgence in worldly pleasures leads to heedlessness, a loss of purpose in creation, and ultimately the ruin of the human being. As the Quran states: *"Leave them to eat and enjoy and to be diverted by longings. Soon they will know"*[3] *(Quran 15:3).* In contemporary Western life, pleasure has become the supreme aim, and the culture of indulgence is widespread. This tendency for variety and excess permeates many aspects of life in Western societies. Even mass media—radio,

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2. ﴿وَ لا تُطِيعُوا أَمْرَ الْمُسْرِفِينَ﴾ (الشعراء/١٥١)

3. ﴿ذَرْهُمْ يَأْكُلُوا وَيَتَمَتَّعُوا وَيُلْهِهِمُ الْأَمَلُ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ﴾ (الحجر/٣)

television, newspapers—have come to regard the entertainment of the public as their primary function (Āvīnī 2004, 55).

2.1.3. Extravagance and Luxury Orientation

One of the prominent features of the Western lifestyle, which has unfortunately gained significant traction in Islamic societies—particularly in Iran—is the tendency toward luxury and extravagance. This aspect of Western living has deeply influenced various dimensions of family life.

Luxury orientation differs depending on an individual's social status. Accordingly, resources and amenities are allocated based on one's societal position. If an individual exceeds the bounds of their social class by acquiring or pursuing possessions incongruent with their status, this behavior is considered luxury-oriented (Rastigārān 2003, 31).

Verse 79 of Sūrat al-Qaṣāṣ vividly illustrates this point through the depiction of Qārūn, who emerged before his people in splendid adornment:

﴿فَخَرَجَ عَلَى قَوْمِهِ فِي زِينَتِهِ قَالَ الَّذِينَ يُرِيدُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا يَا لَيْتَ لَنَا مِثْلَ مَا أُوتِيَ قَارُونُ إِنَّهُ لَذُو حَظٍّ عَظِيمٍ﴾ *(القصص/٧٩)*

> *"So he emerged before his people in his finery. Those who desired the life of the world said, We wish we had like what Korah has been given! Indeed he is greatly fortunate" (Quran 28:79)*

In this verse, the Quran condemns Korah's ostentatious display of wealth, portraying it as a source of temptation for the worldly-minded and ultimately showing its catastrophic end through his downfall.

From the perspective of Imam Khomeini (r.a.), luxury-seeking stands in opposition to Islamic and human values. He emphasized that the Islamic Revolution was founded by the barefooted and the middle classes, and safeguarding it also rests with them. In his view, the inclination toward opulence and palatial living stems from improper upbringing and poses a barrier to the implementation of Islamic law as well as the scientific and industrial advancement of the nation (Khomeini 2000, 17:217).

Extravagance carries numerous detrimental effects, both directly and indirectly, in the short and long term. Based on Quranic verses, prophetic traditions, and historical experience, its consequences include waste of resources, promotion of sin, increased poverty, value inversion, weakening of domestic production, decline of spirituality, dependence on foreign powers, loss of inner peace, failure to fulfill responsibilities, negligence toward God and the hereafter, and ultimately, financial ruin (Rastigārān 2003, 100). Undoubtedly, the spread of such attitudes in Islamic societies aligns with the cultural objectives pursued by the West.

2.1.4. Capitalism

Capitalism is an economic system in which the foundations of the economy rest upon private ownership of the means of economic production. These means are utilized to generate economic gain within competitive markets. Capitalism is also a social system wherein the means of production, distribution, and exchange are fundamentally and entirely under private ownership (Jāsbī 1997, 59).

The capitalist system operates based on several core principles, which include:

1. Economic Liberalism: Economic liberalism is the most fundamental philosophical and ideological tenet of capitalism. Liberalism advocates the value of individual freedom. In such a system, individuals are free to choose how they will utilize existing resources; individual interests take precedence over collective or societal considerations.

2. Principle of Competition: The capitalist economy is also referred to as a competitive system. A perfectly competitive market is defined by an abundance of producers and sellers of homogeneous goods, where each buyer and seller holds an insignificant share of the market.

3. Market Mechanism and Economic Equilibrium: This principle emphasizes the automatic functioning of the market mechanism as the sole factor that ensures equilibrium and regulates supply and demand. Any governmental interference in economic activities is considered contrary to the natural order and automatic equilibrium. In other words,

if the demand for a product exceeds its supply, the price will naturally rise; conversely, if supply surpasses demand, unsold inventory will pressure producers to lower prices. Such adjustments are expected to occur organically, without state intervention, in order to maintain continuous market equilibrium.

3. Profit Motive: In capitalism, the profit motive is inherently self-centered. A society built on personal gain pays little heed to moral considerations, as success is measured primarily by profit and loss.

4. Freedom to Choose One's Occupation: Within this system, unemployment caused by changes in demand for production factors and shifts in technology is considered a natural phenomenon. The concept of freedom to choose one's occupation loses its significance in economies characterized by prolonged unemployment. Moreover, capitalist governments do not directly employ labor forces. This lack of public employment can lead to widespread joblessness during economic recessions and crises (see Namāzī 2008, pp. 132-150; Madanī 1973, pp. 40-44).

Unbridled capitalism and unrestricted free-market economies—driven by an inherently insatiable pursuit of accumulation—inevitably yield a range of adverse consequences, including corruption, sedition, lawlessness, and the escalation of insecurity and warfare on a global scale. Notably, when the interests of capitalist powers dictate, the system imposes no limitations on the means employed to secure those interests.

In contrast, Islamic teachings recognize personal enjoyment and the consumption of worldly blessings as legitimate, but only within the bounds of Shariah and legal norms. As the Quran states: *"Say, Who has forbidden the adornment of Allah which He has brought forth for His servants, and the good things of [His] provision?"*[4] *(Quran 7:32).* Nevertheless, within the Islamic worldview, when individual interests conflict with collective welfare, the latter takes precedence. Furthermore, Islam's conception of public interest is not limited to material benefit but encompasses spiritual and moral dimensions as well. The Quran

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4. ﴿قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِينَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ وَالطَّيِّبَاتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ...﴾ (الأعراف/٣٢)

introduces the objective of prophetic governance as the realization of justice and the emancipation of humankind from oppression and discrimination. It declares: *"Certainly We sent Our messengers with manifest proofs, and We sent down with them the Book and the Balance, so that mankind may maintain justice"*[5] *(Quran 57:25).*

2.2. Factors and Instruments of Promoting the Western Lifestyle

Methods for promoting or altering lifestyles, based on style-forming tools and influential factors, are diverse. The most significant include:

2.2.1. Cultural Instruments

Culture is the most valuable asset of any civilization and constitutes a critical part of a society's identity. Undoubtedly, progress and prosperity in any region cannot be achieved without regard for its cultural characteristics. Culture shapes beliefs and behaviors; development programs will fail without conscious and scientific cultural development. Social identity formation depends on social institutions and lifestyles, and this social identity embodies national cultural power. Cultural instruments—such as music, theater, cinema, and even video games—constitute cultural productions. Imam Khamenei has stated in this regard: "'soft war' … is a war fought through cultural means and influence, through lies, and through slandering. The soft war is fought through the communication facilities which were not available 10, 15, or 30 years ago. The soft war means creating doubts in the hearts and minds of the people" (Imam Khamenei, Leader's Address to Members of Basij, 25 November, 2009, https://B2n.ir/zu5602). One of the consequences of promoting the Western lifestyle is its impact on the cultural instruments of societies and, consequently, public opinion; therefore, it is necessary to elaborate on some of these influential tools.

The impact of art on the formation of culture within societies is undeniable, to the extent that many global powers have long used art as both a facade and a tool of influence. Cinema, particularly imported from Europe to Iran, was influenced by Western culture from the outset. The history of Iranian cinema prior to the Islamic Revolution

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5. ﴿لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَ أَنْزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَ الْمِيزَانَ لِيَقُومَ النَّاسُ بِالْقِسْطِ...﴾ (الحديد/٢٥)

demonstrates its role in undermining religious and national values, altering cultural identity, and fostering a sense of dependence on the West. In the realm of dramatic literature, figures such as Mirzā Fatḥali Ākhundzādih emphasized, through their works, the public's lack of awareness, the attack on superstition, and the promotion of unconventional social relations (Bihbūdī 2017, pp. 18-19). Regarding this issue, the Supreme Leader has emphasized: "Cultural invasion is carried out to render the new generation unbelieving—unbelieving in religion, unbelieving in the revolutionary principles, and unbelieving in the active thought that today has brought arrogance and the domains of imperial powers into danger and fear" (Imam Khamenei 1995, pp. 4-5).

Another cultural tool is music, which, according to psychologists, can shape human emotions in unnatural ways, stimulate the imagination, and immerse individuals in the subconscious, producing pleasure that is not genuine and merely heightening fantasy and unreal experiences (Muḥammadī-Niyā 1999, 355). Dr. Wolf Adler, a professor at Columbia University, asserts that music, by unnaturally stimulating the nerves and producing excessive auditory vibrations on the skin, can lead to physical and psychological fatigue (ʿAbdullāhī Khurūsh 2007, 133). Similarly, Dr. Arnold Friedman, head of the Headache Clinic at New York Hospital, using electronic brainwave recording devices and clinical experience, has demonstrated that music can be a primary factor in mental exhaustion, cognitive fatigue, and neural headaches (Riḍwānī 2007, 47).

A third Western cultural tool that influences lifestyle is toys. Video games and semi-nude dolls, especially in societies where religious values and hijab are significant, produce negative educational outcomes. Children, by modeling themselves on these toys, adjust their behavior and appearance accordingly and, unconsciously, become indifferent to religious and cultural values. The Supreme Leader has emphasized in this regard: "… cultural invasion is a fact which exists. They want to influence the minds and the behavior of our people - our youth, our teenagers and even our little children. Internet games are an example. The toys which are imported into the country are another example" (Imam Khamenei, Leader's Speech in Meeting with Members of Council of Cultural Revolution, 10 December, 2013, https://B2n.ir/zg5714).

2.2.2. Mass Media

With the expansion of mass communication channels and media tools such as satellite television, the Internet, cyberspace, and social networks, Western cultural influence—under the banners of liberal democracy, civilization, and culture—has posed significant challenges to independent nations, in addition to affecting the private lives of families. The rapid advancement of technology and the information explosion have destabilized lifestyles, ethics, spirituality, national and religious traditions, placing individuals detached from God on a civilizational path that leads only to confusion and disorientation; a challenge observable both domestically and in international relations.

Television viewing, as a prevalent behavior worldwide, has a profound impact on individuals' beliefs, values, and norms. Postman regards television as a tool that has empowered human epistemic tendencies, enabling engagement and interaction with images and moments (2012, 176). Iʿzāzī similarly identifies television as a central medium for guidance and the focal point of leadership in modern epistemology (Iʿzāzī 1994, 52).

Within the framework of soft warfare, the West, particularly against Islam, extensively employs computer game technology to align the minds of children and adolescents with its ideologies and to reshape their cultural and value preferences in accordance with colonial objectives. Many imported games propagate non-Islamic lifestyles and, by directly engaging with children and adolescents, exert significant educational and social influence (Ḥusaynī 2013, 120).

Regarding advertising in mass media, the main focuses include:

1. Emphasis on beauty and youth, fostering a desire to maintain youthfulness in later years, and body management such as diets and cosmetic surgery, framing these as social rather than biological issues.

2. Visualizing human standards through promoting body management, thereby extending human values toward physical appearance and symbolism.

3. Media's repeated display of the human body aims to instill the concern that the ultimate anxiety is presenting an ideal image of oneself, achievable at minimal cost.

4. Media portrayals of ideal lifestyles through celebrities, athletes, artists, and others.

One of the most significant impacts of the Western lifestyle is the promotion of its values and worldviews through literary forms such as short stories, novellas, and novels. These forms, within prose literature, serve as effective tools for transmitting ethical, religious, and value-based concepts—a function explicitly recognized in the Quran, which states: *"This is indeed the true account, for sure…"*[6] (Quran 3:62). The history of Islamic and Iranian literature also provides numerous examples of this attention, including the short stories within the Mathnavī, Saʿdī's *Gulistān*, hadith and ethical texts, and *Dāstān-i Rastān* by Martyr Muṭahharī. However, contemporary domestic literary production in the forms of short stories, novellas, and novels with ethical, religious, or revolutionary content remains extremely limited, while the majority of works are influenced by Eastern or Western cultural paradigms (Ḥusaynī 2013, 120).

2.2.3. Communication Tools

One of the most significant channels for the penetration of the Western lifestyle into Islamic and developing societies is the control and utilization of modern communication tools. The expansion of the Internet, satellite networks, news media, and technologies such as email and mobile phones has enabled rapid and extensive interaction with global audiences. The exclusive design and production of these tools by Western powers has facilitated profound influence over public opinion, social communication, and political attitudes in target societies.

The Internet, due to its appeal, accessibility, and low cost, has emerged as the most prominent new media platform and a critical instrument of soft power against independent cultures and societies. Its influence is so pervasive that it enables the suppression or weakening of cultural and political opponents at minimal cost. The post-election protests following Iran's tenth presidential election, particularly the role of social networks such as Twitter and Facebook in guiding and intensifying unofficial gatherings and disseminating false information, exemplify this form of influence.

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[6]. ﴿إنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ القَصَصُ الحَقُّ...﴾ (آل‌عمران/۶۲)

Imam Khamenei has also cautioned in this regard:

Imitating the west and foreigners on the issue of lifestyle is the exact opposite of cultural independence. Today, global imperialism is working on this matter. The issue of engineering information and the new means of mass communication that have entered the arena are all tools for dominating the culture of a country. I am not saying that we should throw these tools out of our lives.--This is not what I am saying. These are tools that might be beneficial, but the enemy's domination over these tools should be eliminated. For example, in order to have radio and television show, you cannot give your radio and television networks to the enemy. The same is true of the internet, of cyberspace and of information services and tools. These things cannot be in the hands of the enemy. Yet, today they are in his [the enemy's] hands. Today, they [media networks] are tools and instruments for cultural infiltration. Today, they are the enemy's tools for cultural domination. (Imam Khamenei, Ayatollah Khamenei's Speech on 27th Demise Anniversary of Imam Khomeini (r.a.), https://B2n.ir/xz6130)

These statements indicate that, although the Internet and modern communication tools possess positive and constructive capacities, if they fall into the hands of cultural adversaries, they can become powerful instruments of cultural infiltration and dominance, aimed at weakening cultural independence and altering the lifestyle of Islamic societies.

Conclusion

The findings of this study, which investigated the causes and contributing factors of Western cultural promotion and its impact on Islamic lifestyle in Iran—drawing especially on the statements of the Supreme Leader—demonstrate that the infiltration of Western culture through the alteration of attitudes, values, and various indicators of lifestyle poses a serious threat to the cultural, social, and identity foundations of Iranian-Islamic society.

According to religious teachings and the emphatic guidance of the Supreme Leader, lifestyle is not only the foundation of individual and social life, but its correct and indigenous revival plays a crucial role in fostering psychological security, social stability, and national cohesion. The Islamic lifestyle is grounded in faith, righteous action, and divine guardianship (*wilāyah*), which together lead to the realization of *ḥayāt ṭayyibah* (a good life) and true prosperity for both the individual and society.

In contrast, the Western lifestyle - based on individualism, consumerism, and material ostentation - not only undermines human and religious values but also weakens familial and social relationships, increases behavioral disorders, and promotes moral decline. Moreover, the influence of the West through mass media and modern communication networks such as the internet and satellite broadcasting has enabled the widespread and targeted dissemination of the Western lifestyle, directly contributing to the erosion of cultural independence and the transformation of societal identity.

Therefore, an effective response to Western cultural aggression necessitates a comprehensive and multifaceted approach. This includes the strengthening of indigenous and religious culture, the reconstruction and reform of the Islamic lifestyle, the enhancement of cultural and social awareness, and the intelligent and regulated management of media and communication tools. Only through these measures can cultural independence, social security, and national identity be preserved, thereby laying the groundwork for the growth and elevation of the Islamic community.

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