



The Lost Man and the End of Western Civilization's Hegemony

Abstract: The decline of Western civilization is evident, mainly caused by internal cultural decay and moral confusion that weaken the core of Judeo-Christian values. Contemporary debates about the decline of Western civilization often focus on internal cultural issues. However, examining sociological and economic data more broadly shows that the leading causes of Western decline are moral confusion, violence, and the erosion of traditional values. This self-destructive cultural nihilism, rather than external threats, is a leading cause of the problems Western civilization faces today. Signs of this decline include moral ambiguity, widespread violence, drug abuse, lawlessness, and the erosion of traditional values rooted in the history and culture of the primarily Western civilization. The level of tolerance in each civilization must be based on profound truth. It cannot mean accepting all views and behaviors as equally valid. It requires moral limits, and tolerating evil or falsehoods weakens society.

Keywords: Western civilization, liberty, liberal order, freedom, ethics, moral ambiguity, tolerance, pluralism, justice, hegemony.

Zagubiony człowiek i koniec hegemonii cywilizacji zachodniej

Abstrakt: Upadek cywilizacji zachodniej jest widoczny, głównie spowodowany wewnętrznym rozkładem kulturowym i moralnym oraz zamieszaniem, które osłabiają rdzeń wartości judeochrześcijańskich. Współczesne debaty na temat upadku cywilizacji zachodniej często koncentrują się na wewnętrznych kwestiach kulturowych. Jednak szersza analiza danych socjologicznych i ekonomicznych ujawnia, że głównymi przyczynami są moralne zamieszanie, przemoc oraz rozpad tradycyjnych wartości. Ta autodestrukcyjna perspektywa kulturowa, a nie zagrożenia zewnętrzne, jest główną przyczyną wyzwań, z jakimi dziś mierzą się społeczeństwa zachodnie. Oznakami tego upadku są moralna niejednoznaczność, powszechna przemoc, nadużywanie narkotyków, bezprawie oraz erozja tradycyjnych wartości zakorzenionych w historii i kulturze zachodniej cywilizacji. Poziom tolerancji w każdej cywilizacji musi być oparty na głębokiej prawdzie. Nie może oznaczać akceptowania wszystkich poglądów i zachowań jako równie ważne i wymagającej naszej tolerancji, przyzwolenia, i bierności.

Słowa kluczowe: cywilizacja zachodnia, etyka, moralna niejednoznaczność, tolerancja, pluralizm, sprawiedliwość, hegemonia.

Introduction

Each civilization develops its own moral and ethical framework—values concerning justice, duty, family, authority, and institutions—that give meaning and legitimacy to society and political power. As civilizations evolve, their ethical and institutional “DNA” tends to remain recognizable. This is why Spengler called civilizations ‘organisms’ with life cycles, and why Koneczny argued that each civilization has a unique, non-transferable system of values, norms, and a moral compass that helps it stay on course despite social, political, and external changes (Spengler 1922; Koneczny 1935).

Western civilization often views the idea that other civilizations are unique as pointless and lacking in political and technological progress. Western academic and political elites believe in the universal validity of values that mirror a Western perspective on human development, history, and progress. Since the Enlightenment, members of Western civilization have frequently claimed that rationality, science, and liberal institutions are universally relevant. Other civilizations are judged based on how closely they align with these ideals.

The entire enlightened elite supports the progressive narrative as the main intellectual framework, shaping how others view and evaluate their own ideas about liberty, freedom, tolerance, and democracy. Civilizations that focus on spiritual, moral, and ethical values or non-material principles are usually labeled as “*backward*.” Misjudging human nature and disrespecting other civilizational achievements are significant factors that lead to ongoing distraction. Many scholars often equate social progress with technological innovation, tolerance, consumer choice, wealth, and political liberalism. Particularly by promoting excessive tolerance, Western civilization undermines essential aspects of social life, such as shared purpose, justice, morality, and a sense of belonging to a community with shared values.

With issues of identity, misguided tolerance, and unclear moral boundaries, Western civilization is on an irreversible path toward self-destruction, social decline, and political disintegration. Philosophers like Karl Popper warned of the “paradox of tolerance”—that unlimited tolerance may allow intolerant ideologies to destroy freedom and communities.

1. Anglo/Saxon Perspective on Civilization

During the colonial era, Western powers portrayed non-Western civilizations as inferior to justify their dominance. This reinforced the idea that anything outside the Western model was not worth considering and also created a barrier to “modernization,” progress, and democracy. Anglo-American pragmatism views civilization as an ongoing, practical assessment of democracy and social cooperation, rooted in historical accomplishments rather than future possibilities. Western pragmatism is a philosophical tradition that emphasizes

practical outcomes, problem-solving, and the importance of experience in shaping truth and meaning. It developed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Charles Sanders Peirce, 1934; William James, 1909; John Dewey, 1927).

Clearly, Anglo-American pragmatism sharply contrasts with German civilizational pessimism and social determinism. German pessimism advocates a doctrine centered on adaptability, technological progress, political determinism, the predictability of social systems, and total state control over political ideas and reforms.

The idea of Western civilization's collapse has been explored from various philosophical and historical angles, especially in Oswald Spengler's *"The Decline of the West"* (Spengler, 1922). Spengler's work, published between 1918 and 1922 after World War I, reinforced his pessimistic outlook. He believed that civilizations are living entities with their own life cycles and rejected the idea of a single, universal progress, highlighting that each culture follows its own unique path. His deterministic view is clearly rooted in German history, particularly in post-World War I Germany, where many thinkers felt trapped in a cycle of decline, political instability, and moral fatigue.

Oswald Spengler represents the German perspective on world civilization and clearly demonstrates the German historical perspective—the idea that civilizations follow predictable, law-like cycles of rise and fall. His work reflects a philosophical tendency to analyze deep structures and *"logic destinies"* in history, rather than viewing events as sometimes random or as a "black box" where political inputs are simply determined (Spengler, 1922).

Spengler demonstrates German determinism by depicting civilizations as living beings caught in a fixed cycle of birth, growth, decline, and death. His argument rejects randomness and reform, claiming that the West is destined to fall into Caesarism and face cultural fatigue. He argues that civilizations follow natural cycles of development and decay. Spengler contended that each "high culture" (e.g., Classical, Faustian, Western) functions like a living organism, experiencing about 1,000 years of expansion followed by roughly 1,000 years of decline (Spengler, 1922).

Spengler's rejection of linear progress in civilization challenged the Enlightenment and liberal ideas of steady advancement. Instead, he argued that history follows a cycle: no culture is inherently superior, and all eventually evolve beyond their early stages. He believed that the West, characterized by Faustian culture, had entered its "winter" phase, similar to the late Roman Empire, marked by corrupt democracy, oligarchic power, shady financial dealings, and the replacement of ethics, creativity, and faith with military technology and territorial expansion. Spengler differs from others by rejecting the idea that the final stage of a civilization is necessarily "better" than earlier stages (Spengler, 1922).

Spengler argued that exercising one's constitutional rights requires financial resources and that voting can only function properly with organized leadership overseeing the election process. According to his view, if political leaders control the election, to the extent that money allows, the vote loses its true significance. It becomes no more than a recorded opinion of the masses on government institutions over which they have little real influence.

Spengler argued that as wealth becomes more concentrated among individuals, the struggle for political power increasingly centers on money and capital. According to Spengler, this was an inevitable result of mature democratic and capital-friendly systems, not a sign of corruption or moral decline (Spengler, 1922).

Institutions tighten, creativity declines, and power shifts toward technocracy, bureaucracy, oligarchy, and empire. Spengler saw the West's "Caesarism" — reflected in strong leaders supported by corporatist politicians, mass politics, and the decline of freedom and democracy — as signs of this phase. He stated that military expansion and confidence in a free-market economy suggest that civilization believes it already knows its destiny and will eventually cease developing new, bold ideas, leading to decline. The dominance of scientific rationality lessens spiritual depth (Spengler, 1922).

According to Spengler's view, democracy is the political tool of "*money*," and the media are the channels through which money functions and influences the democratic and liberal political system. Spengler argued that civilizations cannot escape their destiny. The free-spirited, cultural flourishing of earlier epochs is replaced by mechanization and mass production. Decline is not just a matter of chance but is inevitable, driven by each culture's internal "*soul*." He claimed that Western (Faustian) culture has exhausted its creative energy (Spengler, 1922).

2. Spengler and "*the trap of Caesarism*"

Oswald Spengler viewed tolerance not as a universal virtue but as a sign of cultural decline—especially during the late stages of Western civilization. He believed that civilizations go through cycles, and tolerance appears when a culture loses its vitality and conviction. Spengler argued that tolerance is a sign of weakness rather than moral growth. To him, tolerance occurs when a civilization loses confidence in itself. It signals a shift from conviction and passion to skepticism and detachment. He linked tolerance to the decline of Western civilization, in which Western societies became more permissive but less purposeful (Spengler, 1921: 73-84).

Spengler's critique influences debates on Western liberalism, multiculturalism, and identity politics. He warns that excessive tolerance might signal a decline in cultural confidence. This idea challenges the modern belief that tolerance is always beneficial for society. His intellectual and historical perspective emphasizes German determinism by portraying civilizations as living entities caught in a fixed cycle of birth, growth, decline, and death. His argument dismisses randomness and reform, asserting that the West is doomed to fall into the trap of Caesarism and face cultural exhaustion. He recognizes that "*the trap of Caesarism*" refers to the late stage of a civilization when political leadership is seized by strongmen, charismatic leaders, or military figures who override institutions and free speech (Spengler 1922).

3. Felix Koneczny and His view on civilization

Feliks Koneczny's "On the Plurality of Civilizations" examines different civilizations worldwide, highlighting their distinct histories, values, ethics, and contributions to human progress from a historical viewpoint (Koneczny, 1935). Unlike Spengler, Koneczny did not see civilizations as organisms with predictable life cycles. Instead, they endure as long as their value system remains relevant. Civilizations may decline, but they do not follow a strict biological pattern. They either survive or fall apart depending on the strength of their ethical foundations.

Koneczny argued that each civilization has its own ethical and institutional system that cannot be reduced to others. For him, judging all civilizations by Western standards was a mistake. A key part of his work was analyzing the ethical and legal systems that support different civilizations, emphasizing their roles in development and interaction.

He believed these systems are mutually exclusive — you cannot follow, for example, Latin-Christian ethics and Byzantine or Turanian ethics at the same time without contradiction. In his view, attempts at synthesis either lead to violent military clashes or to dilution, where a civilization loses its distinctiveness and vitality. According to Koneczny, the Roman Empire's attempt to incorporate Christianity changed Rome itself more than creating a balanced mix. The coexistence of Islamic and Christian communities was not proper integration but a hierarchy in which one civilization ruled over the other (Koneczny 1935).

Koneczny focused on comparative historical and cultural analysis to study civilizations and believes that highlighting each person's unique qualities can offer valuable insights into the human condition and societal development. For him, the main idea was that human history is shaped by the ongoing presence and conflicts among many different "*civilizations*," each characterized by its own distinctive moral, legal, and cultural values. By rejecting the idea of a single universal civilization (Western Civilization), he instead emphasized the diversity and fundamental differences among civilizations (Koneczny 1935).

According to Koneczny, each civilization is distinct and should be studied independently. He rejects the idea that differences in civilization are due to physical or racial traits, instead focusing on the spiritual and cultural qualities that define each one (Bezat 2002). For Koneczny, civilizations are characterized not by race, geography, or technology but by their ethical, moral, and legal principles. He stresses that civilizations are moral communities that shape how people relate to law, family, religion, and politics. Koneczny thoroughly explains how Western European ideas and cultural practices have spread worldwide, resulting in similarities in material conditions and social life, while also warning against the dangers of losing unique civilizational identities (Koneczny 1938).

Feliks Koneczny's laws of historiography aim to show that history follows objective, discoverable rules—similar to those in the natural sciences (Koneczny, 1935). His study led him to the conclusion that civilizations are guided by fundamental principles, especially

in how they interact, endure, and decline, in contrast to Spengler's strict "*life cycle model*". Koneczny stressed ethical foundations and the dynamics of civilizational coexistence. Koneczny proposed "*laws of historiosophy*" such as:

- Civilizations are resilient and endure change.
- Progress occurs only within specific civilizational frameworks.
- Decline occurs when a civilization loses its ethical and moral base.

Koneczny considered Latin (Christian) civilization unique because it emphasizes ethics, justice, natural law, and moral responsibility. His well-known saying: "*One cannot be civilized in two ways at once*" (Koneczny, 1935 55-60). From his perspective, civilizations cannot merge without one dominating or destroying the other. Efforts to combine them often lead to violent conflict or a loss of their cultural significance and respect.

Koneczny argues that as long as a civilization remains vibrant and not in decline, it naturally tends to grow and assert itself. It seeks influence beyond its borders through culture, religion, law, or political power. Civilizations inevitably clash when they come into contact, and this conflict continues until one is either destroyed or absorbed. His warning about dual civilizations was partly aimed at Poland's historical struggles with influences from Byzantine (bureaucratic, state-centered), Anglo-Saxon (hegemonic-based, expansionary), and Turanian (militaristic, steppe-based) models. He understands that coexistence without conflict is impossible because each civilization represents a unique ethical and organizational system. This reflects his belief that every civilization is a unified whole (Bukowska 1991).

According to Koneczny, a civilization is primarily a way of organizing social life, encompassing family, natural law, the economy, morality, institutions, and politics. Each civilization has its own consistent ethical and institutional system that directs the collective behavior of people and organizations. The fundamental differences are so significant that trying to organize collective life with multiple civilizational methods is "absurd"—it weakens the unity crucial to a civilization's functioning. An individual or society cannot follow two fundamentally different sets of civilizational codes simultaneously because of their core historical differences. The Western colonial period of territorial expansion (XVI-XX), during which European powers often forcibly displaced indigenous peoples instead of collaborating with and respecting them, supports Koneczny's assertion.

World Wars I and II demonstrate how Western empires pursue their own political and hegemonic goals by exploiting neighboring nations and dehumanizing them. Nazi Germany's racial ideology was the most extreme example of anti-human policies, but colonial powers also exploited occupied territories through forced labor, resource extraction, and discriminatory policies. The wars revealed how Western powers often subordinated neighboring nations and colonized peoples for economic and political gain.

Koneczny's thesis provides a Polish view of justice and acts as a counterpart to the German perspective on civilization (Spengler, 1922), emphasizing morality, ethics, and religion. His critical stance on Western Civilization was based on practical observations of the highly offensive practice of claiming 'superior Western Civilization' achievements.

Civilizations cannot be combined, and efforts to merge Latin with other influences, such as Byzantine or Turanian, in Europe have caused tension, corruption, or decline (Skoczynski J. 2000).

For Koneczny, a civilization is fundamentally a way of organizing collective life (such as family, law, economy, morality, and politics). Each civilization has its own consistent ethical and institutional system. He believes that multiculturalism leads to absurdity and tension among different civilizations and cultures. He argues that trying to organize society with multiple civilizational approaches simultaneously creates contradictions, instability, and moral chaos.

The Latine civilization system emphasizes ethics, religion, personalism, and natural law, while Western society focuses on mechanization, technology, wealth, and territorial expansion. Another might prioritize military hierarchy or religious dogma (Turanian or Byzantine). Trying to implement both simultaneously weakens coherence and spiritual guidance. His work demonstrated that civilizations cannot be permanently merged. This supports one of Koneczny's "*laws of historiosophy*," which states that civilizations cannot be permanently combined. Mixing them results in confusion, conflict, or decline because their ethical and cultural foundations clash.

Koneczny underlines civilization as a moral, intellectual, and collective system: (...) *The fullness of civilizations consists in the fact that society has such a system of collective, private, and public, social and state life, such material institutions, and the same moral and intellectual system, that all areas of life, feelings, thoughts and actions form tunings of uniform moderation, consistent in the set of their ideas and actions.*" (Koneczny 1935, p. 155)

Koneczny believed that civilizations are cohesive ethical systems, not interchangeable tools that can be easily combined through simple economic mercantilism backed by military force. A society must choose a single civilizational approach to shape life, law, social structure, institutions, and religious beliefs. Koneczny argues that adopting multiple civilizations at once leads to contradiction, instability, chaos, and eventual decline.

Koneczny's ideas remain relevant today in debates about whether Western liberal-democratic values can coexist with other civilizational models or if one inevitably dominates. His work demonstrates a deep understanding of each civilization's distinctiveness, leading him to conclude that civilizations are separate and incompatible systems. Efforts to merge civilizations often result in domination, destruction, or loss of cultural heritage — a view that still influences discussions on cultural identity and globalization. Rejecting his perspective has contributed to political environments that allowed Nazi and Bolshevik ideologies and widespread human destruction to flourish in the 20th century.

Koneczny's main argument is that civilizations are diverse, morally distinct, and do not easily blend. In current debates, his emphasis on civilizational incompatibility is often cited in criticisms of globalization and multicultural policies, which are accused of causing cultural chaos and social unrest. His perspective on doctrine was based on rejecting purely

speculative or abstract philosophies of history and maintaining that the study of civilizations should be grounded in empirical analysis rather than metaphysical guesswork (Koneczny, 1935).

Koneczny's doctrine rejects any purely speculative philosophy of history and the history of civilization. He assumed that if the philosophy of history is to become a science of civilizations, it must be an inductive science based on the study of facts rather than being driven by subjective preconceptions or ideas that lead to a narrow view and misleading conclusions (Koneczny 1948 and 1991).

Koneczny argued that history and civilization should be studied through observable facts, institutions, and cultural practices, not through abstract "*laws of history*" or deterministic schemes similar to the Western view and perception. His work shaped later debates on multiculturalism, civilizational studies, liberalism, nationalism, and the "*clash of civilizations*."

Koneczny's work championed civilizational pluralism by rejecting the idea of a single, universal history (Hegel's dialectic and Marx's materialist determinism). Based on Poland's historical experience, he emphasized the need for the coexistence of multiple civilizations, each with its own logic and ethical system deeply rooted in its historical development. He was among the first advocates of what is now known as comparative historical and civilizational studies. His strict methodological approach was rooted in the philosophy of history and closely connected to comparative civilizational research. He aimed to avoid the pitfalls of grand narratives that suggest inevitability or universality, which are common in Western dogmatic thinking and academic orthodoxy.

4. Tolerance – respect and dignity

Feliks Koneczny viewed tolerance as a product of Latin civilization, rooted in respect for personal dignity and moral responsibility. He also warned that tolerance should be based on truth and ethical order, not relativism. Koneczny argued that tolerance must be founded on deep truth. It doesn't mean accepting all views as equally valid. Instead, it requires moral boundaries, and tolerating evil or falsehood weakens civilization. Tolerance is active and demands ongoing engagement with different opinions, guided by conscience and reason.

Koneczny clearly argued that Latin civilization uniquely upholds principled tolerance but warned that relativistic tolerance undermines moral order and social cohesion. He criticized liberalism for equating tolerance with indifference or moral relativism and for diminishing truth and ethical standards in the name of inclusivity or liberal ideals.

Koneczny's view of tolerance is not permissive but principled. It reflects his profound belief that freedom must be rooted in truth and ethics, and civilization flourishes only when tolerance is guided by moral clarity. Contrary to Fukuyama's simplified view of

world development in his “*End of History*” thesis, which exemplifies what Koneczny so profoundly rejected — Marxist determinism and speculative ideas about humanity’s final destiny (Fukuyama F., 1988). Koneczny’s “On the Plurality of Civilizations” remains an important contribution to understanding human affairs, offering valuable insights into the complexities of civilizations and their interactions.

5. Samuel Huntington: Clash of Civilizations

Samuel Huntington’s main argument in *The Clash of Civilizations* is that, in the post–Cold War era, the primary source of conflict will no longer be ideological or economic but cultural. He believed that, although the age of ideology has ended, the world has returned to a normal state characterized by civilizational clashes and argued that future conflicts will mainly occur along cultural boundaries (Huntington 1993).

Huntington was heavily influenced by Spengler’s “*The Decline of the West*” in his “*Clash of Civilizations*” theory. However, Huntington definitely rejected Spengler’s idea of deterministic cycles. He argued that civilizations do not “die” after 1,000 years; they last as long as their identity persists. Conflicts happen because the West believes in the universality and superiority of its own civilization and destiny, while others focus on their differences.

In his political theory, Huntington outlines a historical development. Traditionally, world history has mainly focused on conflicts among monarchies, religions, and nations, especially within Western civilization. Samuel Huntington contends that although history has primarily centered on struggles between monarchs, nation-states, and ideologies, the post–Cold War era signifies a rapid shift: the primary source of conflict in the 21st century will be cultural and civilizational rather than political or ideological.

He believed that during the Cold War, conflicts were mainly ideological (capitalism versus communism). After the Cold War, global politics entered a new phase in which non-Western civilizations were no longer merely the exploited recipients of Western influence. Instead, they had become influential players alongside the West. They help shape and influence world history based on their own histories, cultures, religions, and views of the global order.

After 1991, following the collapse of the Soviet empire, Huntington argued that cultural identity had become the main dividing line in global politics. While globalization encourages interaction among civilizations, it often highlights differences rather than promoting harmony and cooperation. This can intensify identity politics and lead to more regional and global conflicts. He believed that future wars and international tensions would mainly occur between major civilizations defined by religion and cultural identity, rather than between nation-states (Huntington 1993).

Huntington cautioned Western policymakers not to assume that Western values, such as liberal democracy and secularism, are universal. He contended that trying to impose them worldwide could lead to ongoing resistance. Huntington's main argument is that culture and religion, rather than ideology or economics, will drive global conflicts in the 21st century. Civilizations, not nation-states, are the critical actors, and their conflicts will shape the future world order (Huntington 2002: 207).

Huntington's thesis often questions notions of tolerance and pluralism, arguing that civilizations such as Western, Islamic, and Sinic have fundamentally different values, making deep tolerance among them difficult. He states that excessive tolerance risks cultural relativism and undermines universal values like human rights, liberty, and democracy. His research questions the idea of universal tolerance by emphasizing cultural boundaries, sparking debate over whether tolerance is possible between different civilizations. He contends that cultural identities are deeply rooted and more complicated to change than political beliefs. Political ideas or economic modernization cannot erase cultural differences, meaning political and ideological reforms have their limits. Huntington's ideas influence Western elites politically and shape debates on foreign policy, immigration, and global security, although critics argue his model oversimplifies and may reinforce stereotypes.

Huntington's thesis was a direct response to Francis Fukuyama's *End of History*, which claimed that liberal democracy was the final stage of political development. Huntington disagreed, arguing that history was far from over and was entering a new era of cultural conflict.

6. Fukuyama and the Lost Man

Fukuyama, unlike Koneczny's perspective, supported the Western narrative of liberal democracy as the "*end of history*," implicitly ignoring other prominent civilizational models in many countries.

Written by Fukuyama in 1992, the philosophical book *The End of History and the Last Man* argues that with the rise of Western liberal democracy—which occurred after the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Empire — humanity has reached "*not just ... the passing of a particular period of post-war history, but the end of history as such: That is, the end-point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human development*" (Fukuyama, 1992: 13-18).

He is among the most recognized figures of Western Universalism and Progressivism. This portrays Western institutions not just as one civilization among many but as the pinnacle of human progress. Other civilizations are implicitly considered temporary or inferior. Fukuyama argues that the key idea is that liberal democracy and market capitalism are the final stages of ideological development. He emphasizes that history, seen as the conflict between competing systems, has "*ended*" because no credible alternatives remain.

Fukuyama argued that liberal democracy represents the final stage of ideological development. This idea primarily draws on Hegelian dialectics, which defines history as a rational, purposeful process in the evolution of human consciousness and freedom (Fukuyama 1992). He maintains that history is a continuous evolutionary process and that the end of history indicates liberal democracy is the ultimate form of government for all nations, regardless of their unique historical backgrounds, religions, economic situations, or social structures. Therefore, for him, liberal democracy is not only practically effective but also morally superior in fulfilling human needs (Fukuyama 1989).

Fukuyama's narrative is built around three core elements of his political doctrine. His doctrine rests on liberal democracy, market capitalism, and universal recognition as the final synthesis of political, economic, and ideological development. According to Fukuyama, they form a narrative that sidelines civilizational pluralism by declaring the Western model the destiny of all humanity. For him, the lack of economic incentives in socialist central planning weakens an essential part of human capital: the work ethic. Even a strong work ethic can be undermined by social and economic policies that reduce personal motivation to work, making recovery very hard (Fukuyama, 1989).

Fukuyama emphasizes the importance of economic modernization by highlighting: *"A too-simplistic view of 'technologically driven economic modernization' creates strong incentives for developed countries to accept the basic terms of the universal capitalist economic culture, by permitting substantial economic competition and allowing prices to be determined by market mechanisms. No other path to full economic modernity has been proven viable"* (Fukuyama 1989: 3-8).

Fukuyama's approach to predicting social and political change was influenced by the German philosophical tradition and Leninism's ideological determinism. A simple intellectual shift allowed him to base his ideas on liberal principles and a rules-based international order. His thesis resonated with policymakers, who saw the fall of communism as the ultimate victory of liberalism over communist regimes. The quick spread of liberal democratic ideas, especially in Central and Eastern Europe and parts of Asia and South America, seemed to confirm his argument but only for a short time.

His thesis appeared to symbolize the triumph of Western civilization in the broader ideological battle that shaped much of the 20th century. His liberalism is ideologically connected to Western democracy, arguing that the "animal spirit" will push societies toward a free-market economy that generates wealth and prosperity, which he views as essential for social justice, technological progress, and happiness.

Francis Fukuyama links tolerance to the survival of liberal democracy, but he cautions that tolerance must be balanced with recognition of identity and dignity. In his view, tolerance is not just about accepting differences; it involves making sure that individuals and groups feel respected within a political system. His analysis falls short of offering a complete picture due to ideological biases and a lack of a critical, nuanced approach that considers the rapid political and social changes driven by national goals, positive nationalism, and cultural heritage.

7. The cause and the roots of decline

The widespread influence of money's power across society is seen as another sign of Western civilization's decline. Economic polarization, the rise of oligarchic control in the economy (Silicon Valley and Wall Street), and the lack of opportunities for the middle class are also viewed as factors contributing to this decline. The origins of these problems trace back to the early days of the mercantilist economy, which was based (and is still widely practiced) on tariffs and usury, with unlimited public and private debt and the economic exploitation of people of different races, colors, and social status.

Rising national debt hinders economic growth unless governments invest in new production methods. Today, most Western credit markets prioritize inflating stock, bond, and real estate prices over rebuilding industrial capacity. Because of this debt-without-production approach, the domestic economies of the U.S., UK, Germany, and France are burdened by debt owed to their own financial elites and the global financial system.

Moral confusion and a profit-focused mindset have altered modern financial systems, perpetuating inequality as a harmful factor that undermines long-term national interests, social unity, and global competitiveness. The man's social status and hegemony of the Western elite depend on wealth obtained through speculation and risky behavior involving clients' money, rather than on character, moral commitment, hard work, or collective achievement.

The West, under its U.S. neoliberal policies, seems to be following the pattern of Rome's decline and collapse. Concentrating wealth in the hands of the One Percent has consistently been the direction Western civilization has taken, enriching the king, his family, relatives, friends, government officials, oligarchs, and corporate financiers.

8. The Lost Man - Cultural decline and moral confusion

The colonial and post-colonial empires of the 20th and 21st centuries, along with Western civilization's political influence worldwide, are rapidly declining as rising nationalism, cultural awareness, and ethnic ambitions drive a strong desire to protect their own destiny, religion, and cultural heritage. Believing in a false mission of history, including ideas of racial, cultural, and civilizational superiority, was a mistake that has cost many innocent lives. It has led to the destruction of various nations and their unique cultures and social structures, rooted in values, religion, family traditions, and respect for the environment.

Historical events demonstrate that Western "*superior civilization*" did not act as a civilizer and teacher to the world but instead exploited it. This colonial behavior undermined trust in Western civilization, its uniqueness, and its universal value as a symbol of progress and prosperity. Undoubtedly, the concentration of wealth among cosmopolitan elites weakens traditional values such as morality, liberty, community, and freedom of speech, especially

as power shifts toward a more hierarchical system controlled by financial interests, lobbyists, wealthy elites, and oligarchs.

The liberal ideology often promoted in academic and political circles for both domestic and international reasons has been, and still is, not only a “*grand ideological mischief*” but also seen in many countries as a new way to restore Western political, ideological, and economic dominance. The “*Grand ideological mischief*” appears to be an effort to promote a single, universal civilizational model that disregards the diversity and accomplishments of non-Western civilizations. Today, only a few independent scholars and thinkers challenge rigid ideological dogmas that limit critical thinking, natural law, tolerance, and free expression. Ultimately, it is consequences, not ideology, that should test truth.

Modern debates about the decline of Western civilization often center on internal cultural issues. However, a broader look at sociological, political, and economic factors shows that the leading causes are moral confusion, violence, and the weakening of traditional values. This self-destructive cultural nihilism, egocentrism, and economic egoism, rather than external threats, are key factors in the problems Western societies face today.

Fukuyama’s premature view of historical and political processes led him to a mistaken diagnosis of the liberal system as a whole. The liberal order is a social, political, and economic construct that primarily generates wealth and technological progress for political and business elites, serving only as a short-term solution to temporary socio-political problems that have emerged so dramatically in the 21st century.

Failing to offer critical analysis and sustainable long-term solutions to help Western civilization overcome its current crisis will weaken key institutions and hinder political reforms. The laissez-faire system, driven by profit-maximizing investors, speculation, and unlimited resource spending, faces profound inequality and creates fundamental barriers that cause lasting damage to the social and political fabric of Western and other societies. This system is primarily driven by economic, technological, and military achievements, as reflected in stock market trends, consumer confidence, and spending levels.

Western civilization often sees morality and pragmatism as closely linked to profit-driven, mercantile practices focused on increasing wealth, accumulating capital, and unlimited spending. However, it overlooks other civilizations with their own unique traits and cultural backgrounds. Additionally, this selfish pragmatism can lead to the destruction of entire communities with their distinctive historical, moral, and institutional structures, practices, and experiences.

Academic institutions and independent journalism are not just neutral spaces—they are supposed to be engines of democratic vitality. When they fail to amplify diverse perspectives, they risk betraying their own purpose.

Western civilization currently faces notable challenges. First, life in the Western world has become more materialistic, driven by excessive consumerism, the animal spirit, and market instincts, and marked by a lack of independent media often controlled by wealthy

oligarchs. Second, all of Western civilization's historic economic achievements, territorial gains, military dominance, and cultural principles are now being questioned as models for younger, more critically thinking, community-responsible, and educated people.

Records in the S&P 500 and DJIA in 2025 are often seen as signs of strong investor confidence. However, they do not guarantee social progress, economic equality, justice in wealth distribution, or political stability. A new high can boost short-term optimism, but it doesn't address critical structural issues like inequality, climate change, or geopolitical tensions.

Although headlines about Nvidia's record share price, Apple's market peaks, and OpenAI's soaring valuation dominate financial and political news as mainstream topics, these are not necessarily the forces that inspire or motivate younger generations to make positive change. The new S&P 500 record is just temporary news for today, not a permanent solution for the future or a better society.

Clearly, the Western civilization that once dominated is now nearing disintegration. Supported by large sums of money, power, liberal ideology, and influential lobbying, wealthy financiers aim to weaken traditional values, religion, morality, national and local patriotism, and the sense of belonging to shared community principles. They grant just enough liberty to prevent rebellion, but not enough to allow social change and open the door for more abuse. A "safety valve" in the form of social transfers suppresses aspirations while maintaining systemic control.

Conclusion

Democracies flourish through disagreement and debate. The political and financial power used to suppress voices narrows the range of acceptable conversation, leading to conformity instead of progress. Upholding moral values guides us toward compassion, honesty, and integrity in our actions. It involves protecting freedom and individuals' rights to express themselves, pursue their goals, and live free from oppression. It includes celebrating differences in ethnicity, beliefs, and identities as sources of strength and creativity, by honoring traditions and cultures that reflect our wisdom from the past while embracing innovation that positively shapes the future—without harming communities that hold different values and ideas.

Since the European Enlightenment, tolerance has been a key part of Western civilization's identity. However, when detached from moral and cultural foundations, it can give rise to indifference or relativism. True tolerance and moral principles require strength—the courage to engage, to disagree, and to uphold values. If Western civilization is to renew itself, it must rediscover a tolerance rooted in conviction and morality, not just convenience.

By offering a broader perspective, we can stay open to new ideas and inspire fresh

thinking to build a society grounded in justice, morality, genuine freedom, and respect for diversity, tradition, and culture, reflecting our awareness and shared responsibility. Ensuring justice and equality in all aspects of life (including unborn children) so that no voice is ignored and no community is left behind.

The 'Lost Man' expression should inspire conversation and encourage academia, students, and the public to analyze the decline of Western civilization, its causes, and the systemic failures in embracing and valuing different perspectives. A new approach in the 21st century should highlight open, respectful diversity across cultures and civilizations.

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