

“Why Did Civilizations Expand? ~ Big History Project

Directions: Answer the following questions while watching the short video. Be prepared to discuss your thoughts with the class. Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1QihY-g20QA>

1. Why did civilizations expand?
 - Increasing desire/need for resources, wealth, etc. (GOLD)
 - Make state as strong as it could be (GLORY)
 - (*GOD, as a motivator will come but most religions are in their infancy)
 - Large amounts of territory had to be conquered to achieve these ends

2. Why did many leaders of agrarian civilizations choose conquest to pay their expenses rather than trying to raise money in lands they already controlled?
 - Idea that there are “limitations of internal forces”
 - Leaders afraid that if subjects are taxed beyond a certain level the subjects would rebel (lost of authority, power, prestige)
 - Empire building is cyclical, i.e. the larger an empire gets the more expensive and difficult it becomes to maintain an empire, thus fueling even more expansion and conquest, eventually an empire will “overreach” and ultimately collapse/decline

3. What are some ways that military innovations supported trade and other important human activities?
 - **Iron Weapons** =turned into plows and other agricultural tools allowing more land to be cultivated in a more efficient manner.
 - **Roads for Moving Armies** = funded by the state, allowed trade to happen more easily
 - **Fortifications and Defense Walls** = led to innovations in both design and building techniques

4. Identify a few of the long term effects, patterns, or commonalities that resulted from the expansion of civilizations.
 - Increasing “borderlands” between civilizations/empires further increased cultural exchange and intensified collective learning = **MORE INTELLECTUAL INNOVATION**
 - Local interests and power would resist outside forces and imperial competition = **MORE CONFLICT**
 - **SHIFT OF POWER** from agricultural regions to commercial centers
 - Long term trends of exploration, colonization, imperialism, globalization = **MODERN WORLD THAT IS MORE CONNECTED**