

# Conrad-Demarest Model of Empires

**Empire:** The term was first used in English in 1297 to indicate an extensive territory made up of formerly independent states. A further refinement might be to add that an empire is a politically unified state in which one people dominates its neighbors

1. **Necessary preconditions** for the rise of empires-the region must have:

- a. State-level government
- b. High agricultural potential of the environment
- c. An environmental mosaic
- d. Several small states with no clear dominant state (power vacuum)
- e. Mutual antagonism among those states
- f. Adequate military resources (or a military or technological advantage)

2. **Ideology:** States succeed in empire building if they have an ideology that promotes personal identification with the state, empire, leader, conquest, and/or militarism

3. **Characteristics** of well-run empires

- a. Build roads and transportation systems, canals, ports, etc.
- b. Trade increases
- c. Cosmopolitan cities-art and education flourish
- d. Effective bureaucracy to ensure communication, collect taxes, oversee coinage, ensure the emperor's laws are enforced
- e. Common official language (communication)
- f. System of justice, law for entire empire
- g. Citizenship or rights extend in some degree to conquered; must be some buy-in

4. **Major results** of empire:

- a. Economic rewards, especially in the early years, redistributed to elite and trickles down to other classes (esp. merchants, scribes, etc.)
- b. Relative stability and prosperity
- c. Population increase

5. **Empires fall** because:

- a. Failure of leadership; focus on wealth, etc. not the needs of the state
- b. Ideology of expansion and conquest leads to attempting new conquests beyond a practical limit: over-stretching of bureaucracy, military, resources, communications
- c. Lack of new conquests erodes economic base and lessens faith in ideology that supported the empire
- d. Rebellions from within/ challenges from without