The slide features a dark blue background with decorative geometric patterns on the left and right sides. These patterns consist of overlapping, colorful shapes (yellow, pink, blue, and grey) that resemble stylized arrows or chevrons pointing towards the center.

Geopolitical Theory

Unit 4: Political Geography



Essential Question

- How does the study of geopolitics help us understand the world?
- Pages 245-248

What is Geopolitics?

- Study of the state and its relationships to space – Considers economic, political and military space.
- Term is coined by Fredrich Ratzel

How Does the Study of Geopolitics Help Us Understand the World?

Classical Geopolitics

- Late 19th century/early 20th century geopoliticians were usually either part of the German school or the British/American school.

The German School

- Tried to explain why certain states were powerful and how they became powerful.
- Friedrick Ratzel: influenced by Darwin; the state resembles a biological organism whose life cycle extends from birth through maturity and, ultimately, decline and death.

How Does the Study of Geopolitics Help Us Understand the World?

The British/American School

- Sir Halford J. Mackinder, “The Geographical Pivot of History” in the Royal Geographical Society’s *Geographical Journal*.
- Land-based power, not sea power, would ultimately rule the world.

Geopolitical Theories

1. Alfred Mahan's Sea Power Doctrine

- Having a strong navy will mean a greater world-wide impact
- Acquire overseas bases- Hawaii, Guam
- Had a big impact on the US

2. Ratzel's Organic Theory

- Environmental Determinism
- Idea that borders do not exist permanently- states are organic and growing – give it more life by getting more territory
- Nazi Philosophy-'Space is the state's essential, life-giving force'

Geopolitical Theories

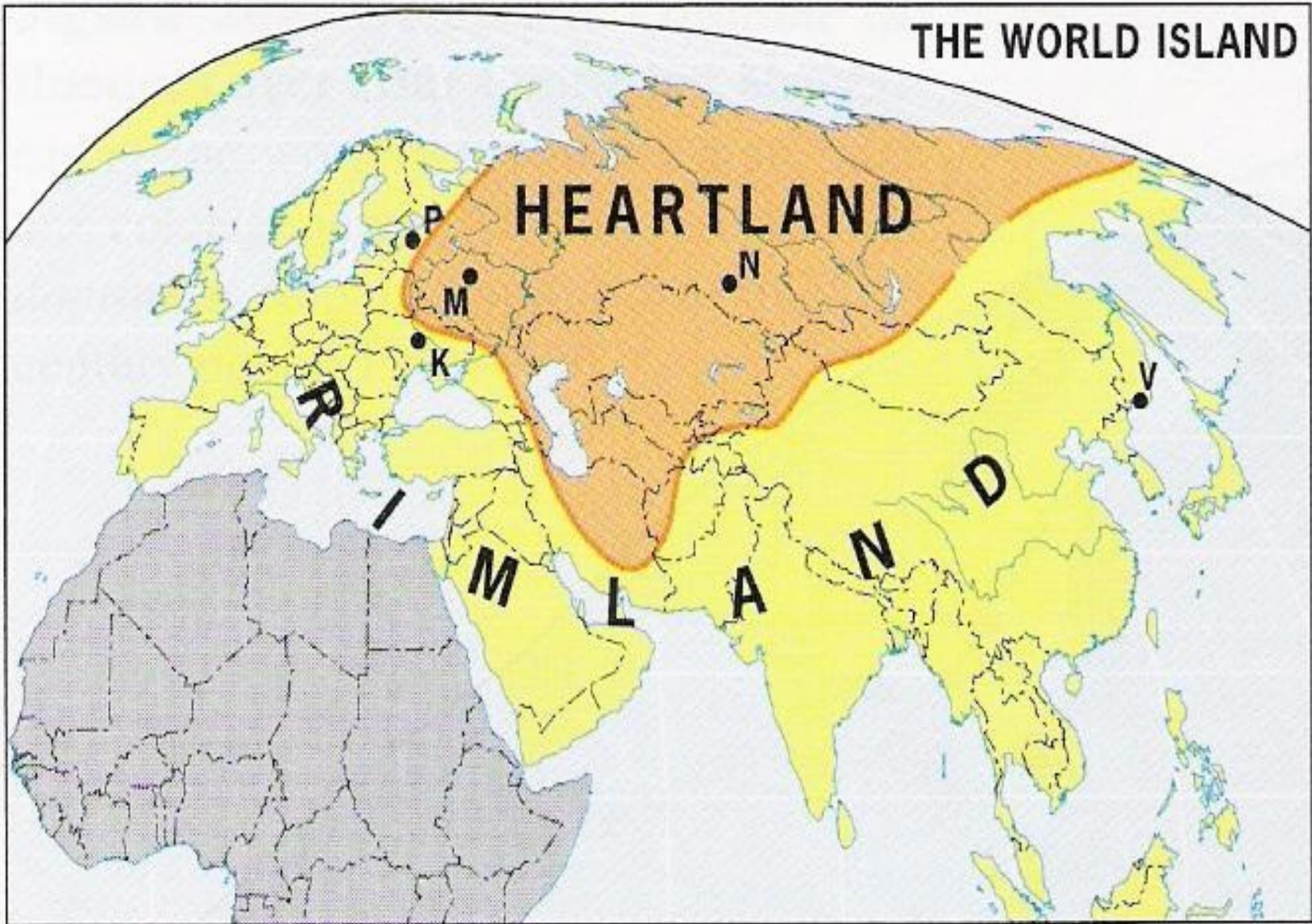
3. MacKinder's Heartland Theory (1904)

- Argued that land power, not sea power was the key to world dominance
- Idea of the Heartland/Pivot mass
- He who controls the Heartland (Eastern Europe/Central Eurasia) is, in practice, set to dominate the "World Island" and therefore the world
- Will exert power over the inner crescent/Rimland

4. Spykman's Rimland Theory (1944)- idea of containment

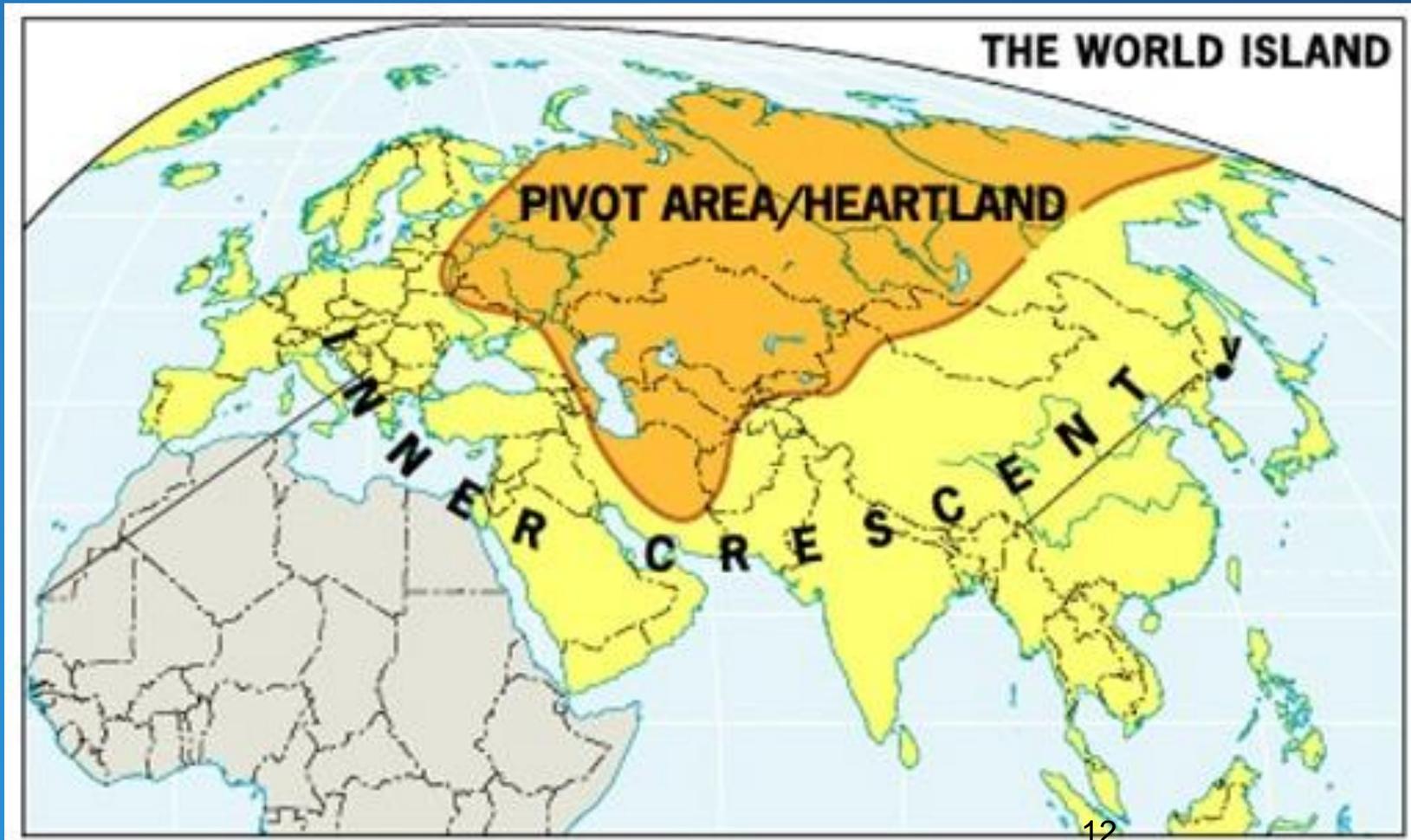
- Controlling the Rimland- (perimeter of the Heartland) will lead to world power/domination
- Forming Alliances is crucial to keeping the Heartland in check
- The Heartland may control the land by the Rimland will control the seas
- This was seen at the end of WWII where Russia had heartland, but NATO and Western countries prevent their spread (Containment) by controlling the Rimland

THE WORLD ISLAND



Mackinder's Heartland Theory:

“Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland
Who rules the Heartland commands the World Island
Who rules the World Island commands the world”



MACKINDER'S WORLD (1904)



How Does the Study of Geopolitics Help Us Understand the World?

Critical Geopolitics

- **Critical Geopolitics:** intellectuals of statecraft construct ideas about geographical circumstances and places, these ideas influence and reinforce their political behaviors and policy choices, and then affect what happens and how most people interpret what happens.
- Ideas like “Us vs. Them”, “Evil Empire”, “Axis of Evil”

How Does the Study of Geopolitics Help Us Understand the World?

Geopolitical World Order

- Cold War: bipolar, with Soviet versus West alliances
- New World Order: Global cooperation to bring discipline to rogue states
- **Unilateralism:** one country (e.g., United States) in position of dominance, with other countries following its lead

World Systems Theory

- Wallenstein's World Systems Theory
 - States develop as capitalistic core countries and periphery countries
- 1. The world economy has one market and a global division of labor
- 2. Almost everything takes place within the context of the world economy
- 3. The world economy is a three tier structure

Construction of the World Economy

Capitalism – people, corporations, and states produce goods and services and exchange them in the world market, with the goal of achieving profit.

Commodification – the process of placing a price on a good and then buying, selling, and trading the good.

Colonialism – brought the world into the world economy, setting up an interdependent global economy.

Three Tier Structure

Core (US)

Processes that incorporate higher levels of education, higher salaries, and more technology

* Generate more wealth in the world economy

Periphery (Sub Sahara Africa)

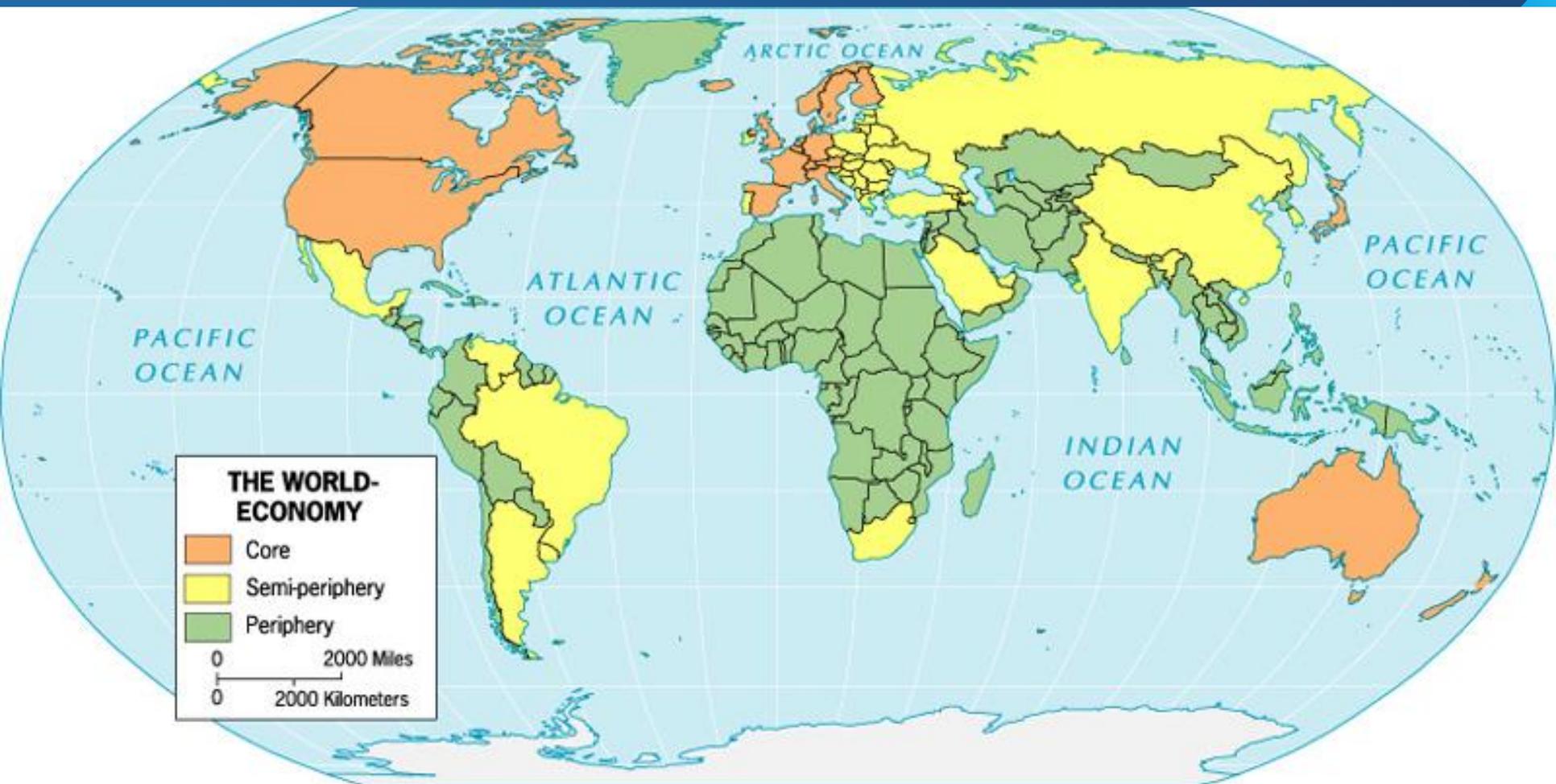
Processes that incorporate lower levels of education, lower salaries, and less technology

* Generate less wealth in the world economy

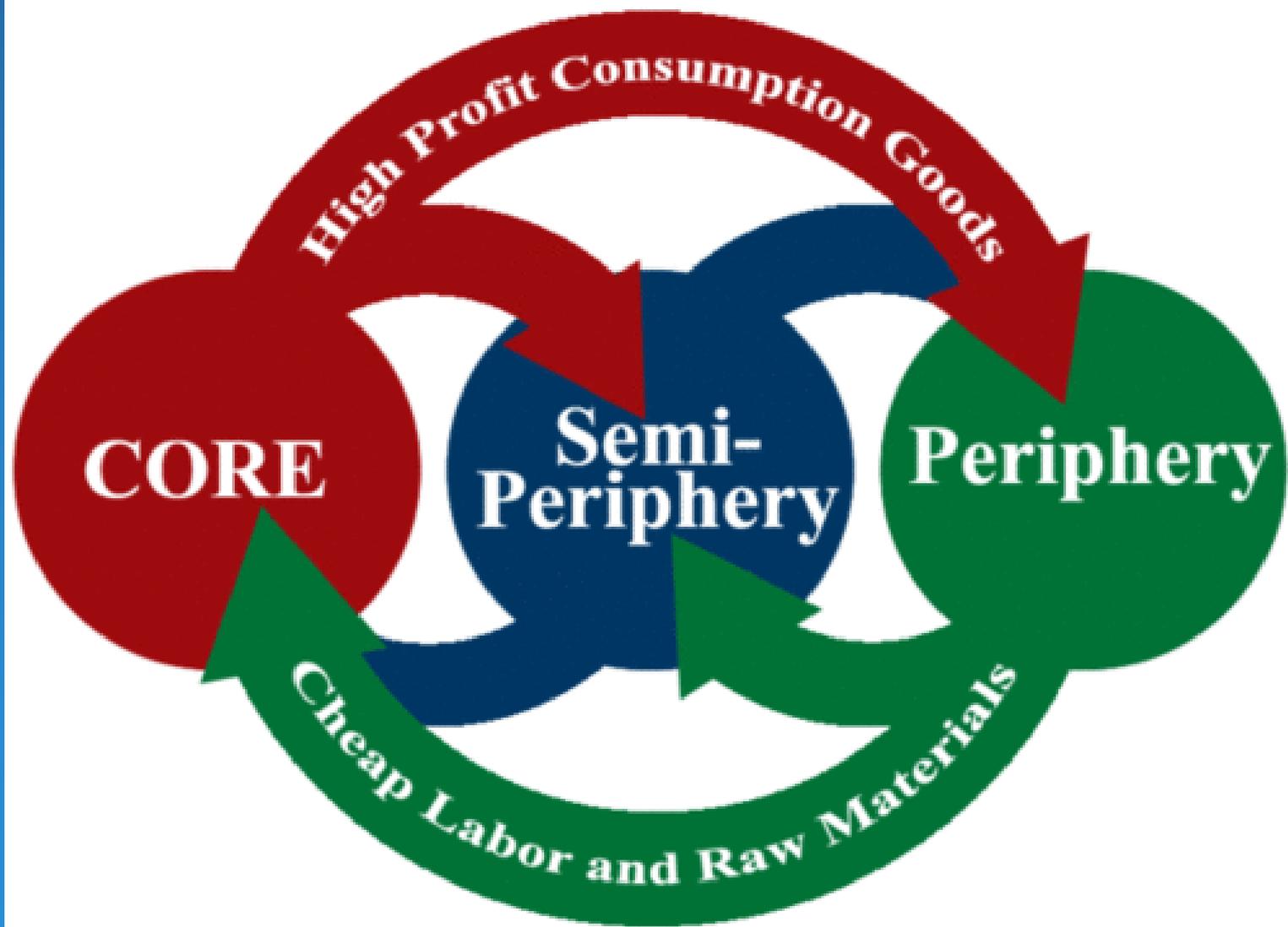
Semi-periphery (Brazil)

Places where core and periphery processes are both occurring. Places that are exploited by the core but then exploit the periphery.

* Serves as a buffer between core and periphery



How does the core to periphery representation on this map relate to other world map representations we have looked at? (MDC, LDC, colonization, etc)



Wallerstein's World System Theory Model