**How did the Core and the Periphery shift over time? Consider the history of our connected world. Provide explicit details examples of the shift from your readings and lecture notes. In your answer make sure to explain the Core and Periphery relationship, as proposed by Wallerstein. Please also describe the factors that contributed to the shift, according to the class lectures and course readings.**

The Core and Periphery are not separate entities – they operate simultaneously and emulate a symbiotic relationship. Although this dynamic is mostly defined, countries and powers will shift from being a Periphery to a Core and vice versa. As said by Dennis (2023), according to the Core and Periphery relationship proposed by Wallerstein, the Core is responsible for manufacturing high value goods, while the Periphery is responsible for producing raw materials, as well as exporting them. Thus, the Core exports their manufactured goods to the Periphery and the Periphery exports their raw materials to the Core (Lecture). It can be seen that the Core is more powerful than the Periphery, despite their reliance on one another. In the present day it is obvious how America is a Core due to their high value manufactured exports, but when America was only comprised of the 13 colonies, it was a Periphery. How this shift happens is due to a variety of factors. Reasons such as trade routes, new transportation methods, and abundance or lack of raw materials drove the shifts between the Core and the Periphery.

To analyze how the Core and the Periphery shifted over time, let us look back to the 1400s. Dennis (2023) describes the shift of Europe from a Periphery into a Core and China from a Core into a Periphery and their reasons. For example, the decrease of importance of the Silk Route was due to the Ming Dynasty of 14th century China deploying military to their borders as well as closing borders from Mongolian threats. This slowed trade down and made the cost of trade greater. Additionally, China’s production of silk was no longer a specialty due to silkworms being smuggled out into other countries for their own silk production. This caused China to shift from Core to Periphery within a relatively short period of time, and showed how important trade routes affect the shift between Core and Periphery (Lecture). Trade routes are the primary way goods and raw materials are transported, and would be categorized, based on what Steger (2020) defines as “*object-extended globalization*, (which) refers to the global movement of objects – in particular traded commodities” (pp.12). The presence of trade routes confirms the existence of a Core and Periphery relationship, and the direction of the influx of goods or raw materials usually indicates who is Core and who is Periphery.

An example of a shift from Periphery to Core was of Europe’s rise to power from 1400s and onwards. Dennis (2023) mentions the lack of European currency in terms of physical gold and silver because of drying up mines. Its impact was felt all the way through China because of deflation, in which the value of a “dollar” increased, and furthermore halting economies due to a lack of incentive to risk waiting for a higher rise in value. This is otherwise known as the Great Bullion Famine (Lecture). Wolf (2021) also mentions the importance of trade, especially geographically, and how “the balance of trade and power was firmly in the East. Europe provided raw materials and even some slaves” (pp.6). After this, according to Dennis (2023), a lack of gold and silver motivated Europeans to search beyond their own land. This was possible due to the creation of Carrack Ships which were able to bring Europeans to Northern Africa and the New World, or the Americas. This would be, as Steger (2020) defines, as “*embodied globalization,* (which) involves the movement of people across our planet” (pp.11). This led to colonialism and meant that Europe claimed many colonies solely for trade routes and raw materials, which then were exported back to them. This further led to Mercantilism, which was essentially a triangle trade between West Africa – slaves purchased with high value manufactured goods; The New World – slaves are brought here to produce sugar or mine gold and silver; and Europe – goods are shipped here in return for high value manufactured goods (Lecture). Ultimately, this maximized European’s exports and their shift from a Periphery to a Core was catalyzed and felt globally.

The Core and the Periphery always shift. These shifts were prevalent throughout the course of history, whether it be rapid or gradual. Trade routes, motivation to discover more raw materials, new forms of transportation, and the reliance of civilizations on others are important decisive factors in whether a country or power shifts between a Core and a Periphery.

References

1. Dennis, Evan (2023). Lectures. CCNY.
2. Antrosio, Jason (2013). “Eric Wolf, Europe and the People Without History (Rediscovered).” Living Anthropologically website, <https://www.livinganthropologically.com/eric-wolf-europe-people-without-history/>. First posted 26 January 2013. Revised 24 October 2017.
3. Steger, M. B. (2020). *Globalization: A very short introduction* (5th ed.). Oxford University Press.