

# Darwinism, Organic Theory Of State And Lebensraum

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## **Abstract: -**

The goal of this paper is to look at how Darwin's evolutionary philosophy was applied to German geography in the nineteenth century, particularly in Friedrich Ratzel's formulation of the concept of Lebensraum. Specifically, Friedrich Ratzel's political philosophy and his famous "Lebensraum" notion. The paper will also show how Rudolf Kjellen's later articulation of "an organic theory of the state" was influenced by the Ratzelian Lebensraum.

Geopolitics emerged in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, these notions have now become a significant element of global history and literature and accurate study and recognition of geopolitics is impossible without a thorough understanding of these theories. As a result, geopolitical theories are now studied, evaluated, analysed, and critiqued as part of geopolitical studies. The current study examines and discusses the state of implemented recommendations in traditional geopolitical theories in this regard (1875 to 1945). Finally, the article will conclude with a brief consideration of the 'synthetic' features of the Lebensraum idea, concentrating on the seemingly disparate ways in which the notion was mobilised within National socialist ideology and planning. The significance of tracking and tracing Darwinism, Organic Theory of State, and Lebensraum is discussed in the final section of our research.

**Keywords:** - Lebensraum, Ratzelian Philosophy, Social Darwinism, Racialism, Vital materialism, Geopolitical theories, Organic state.

## **Hypothesis: -**

This geopolitical investigation into Darwinism, the Organic Theory of State, and Lebensraum examines the status of applied recommendations in classic geopolitical theories (1875 to 1945). The study looks at current political and economic events, as well as the future implications and risks that could influence them and other countries throughout the world.

## **1. Introduction: -**

In any international crisis, the influence of ideas and attitudes in determining nation-state conduct is a key component. The German ideology "Lebensraum" is one of the more distinctive ideologies that is increasingly determining national activity. It is one of those phrases that has

been in the German language for a long time but has been popularised by Nazi politics lebensraum entrenched, the belief of nationalist socialists that nothing will save Germany except true expansion, which led to the sole underlying cause of World War II (S. Gliboff et al., 2008).



Lebensraum

German geography began a prolonged conversation with Darwinian ideas and views in the mid-nineteenth century. However, note how this resulted in a context shift at a later point. However, it is critical to consider how unique geographical imagination merged with specific political imagination to form the holistic concept of Lebensraum.

Before delving into the origins of the concept of Lebensraum, it's critical to understand the geographical and historical setting in which Ratzel's ideas grew and blossomed. The publication of Darwin's classic "On the Origin of Species," according to Glib off, did not go unnoticed among German geographers at the time.

In order to interpret Darwin's idea into geographical terms, Oscar Peschel coined the term Lebensraum (S. Gliboff et al., 2008).

Despite the fact that Ratzel provided the most detailed definition of Lebensraum, he did not coin the term or establish the concept. His ideas, on the other hand, were based on nineteenth-century debates in the scientific and social sciences regarding the dynamics of human civilizations' interactions with the outside world. For him, two viewpoints stood out. The first was the claim that geographic factors were not only passive but actively shaped human behaviour. The ethnographer Oscar Peschel coined the term Lebensraum in the 1870s to describe the specific natural location in which a particular people formed and developed. In the sense that people 'adapted' to the conditions of their particular habitat, Peschel claimed that there was a clear causal link between land and people. The impact of the external environment on social development and progress can be either beneficial or negative (O. Peschel et al., 1874). The interaction between natural regions and the human communities that inhabited them was also addressed in the second perspective (T.R. Malthus, 1826).

Classical geopolitics spanned the years 1875 to 1945, beginning in the late nineteenth century and ending with the end of World War II. Two movements occurred during this time period: one arose from the widespread social Darwinism of the time, with Friedrich Ratzel of Germany serving as its predecessor. He proposed the notion of the "Organic State" in his article "The Laws of the Spatial Growth of States" (1896), his book "Political Geography" (1897), and other works, claiming that "In the state, we are dealing with an organic nature." Rigorous circumscription, on the other hand, contradicts the nature of the organic".

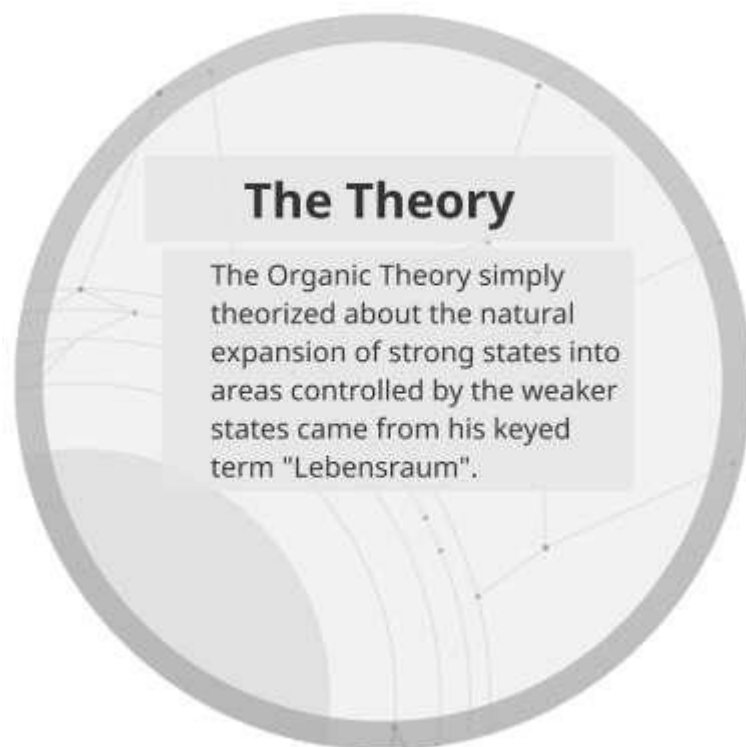
Another movement, known as geostrategy, was based more on geographical facts and policies influenced by geographic factors. This trend has also been linked to theories such as "Sea Power," "The Geographical Pivot of History," and "Rimland." The book "The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1783," published in 1890 by the American "Alfred Thayer Mahan," established the thesis of "sea power," arguing that "the use and control of the sea is and has been a tremendous factor in the history of the globe." Following this, in 1904, British "Sir Halford J. Mackinder" proposed the thesis of "the geographical pivot of history," which coincided with the commencement of the transcontinental railroad period.

After adding a substantial portion of Eastern Europe to the "Pivot Area" in 1919, he dubbed it "Heartland," declaring that "Who controls eastern Europe controls the Heartland; who controls the Heartland controls the World Island; and who controls the World Island controls the World." Following "Mackinder, American Nicholas J. Spykman" published "The Geography of the Peace" in 1943, which introduced the Rimland idea. In contrast to Mackinder, he emphasised the importance of neighbouring countries in the Heartland. "Who controls the rimland controls Eurasia; who controls Eurasia controls the fate of the world," Spykman asserted. With the end of World War II, a new era of geopolitics began, known as Cold War geopolitics.

Lebensraum is possibly the most well-known of all German political expressions from the twentieth century. As a result, Lebensraum met two criteria for political idea efficacy: it aided in aggregating support for its employers, and it was acknowledged as a basis for policymaking by those who used it. The lack of correlation between the notion and the social reality that it was designed to describe resulted in devastating consequences as a result of its success (Woodruff D. Smith et al., 1980).

Following 1901, geographers, political scientists, and anthropologists were all influenced by Ratzel's Lebensraum. After 1918, German political geographer Karl Haushofer adopted the term, which was incorporated by "Rudolf Kjellen" into his theory of geopolitics. It was used to criticise the Versailles Treaty for removing living space from the German Volk in the 1920s, and it became a catchphrase of conservative politics (Vandana Joshi, 1789-1945).

The concept of evolutionary change was a significant driving force behind Darwinian thinking in the late 1800s. Continuous growth was critical in the creation of great powers and the viability of individual nations in Ratzelian political geography.



### **The impact of Darwinism on German geography**

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the publication of Charles Darwin's "On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life" affected German geographic philosophy. It's fascinating that "The Origin of Species" was published in German translation only a few months after the original book was published. A younger generation of German geographers were captivated by the publication of Darwin's "Origin of Species" at the time (Glib off et al., 2008).

Peschel used the term "lebensraum" to translate Darwin's concept into spatial terms. According to Peschel, "the concept of Lebensraum called attention to the fact that natural selection has always been a telluric selection" (Peschel, 1860). Without going into considerable detail, suffice it to say that Darwin's views in Germany drew a wide range of responses. The battle lines were drawn along intellectual lines more frequently than not, with Darwinism associated with a liberal-universalist ideology and British civilization distinct from Germanic culture. The difference between monogenism (the belief in a common ancestry of man) and polygenism (the concept that man's races are of diverse lineages) was another significant dividing line in Darwinism's adoption. These two battle lines are key in understanding the reception of evolutionary theory in German geography (Zimmerman, 2001; Richards, 2008; and Livingstone, 2005 and Smith, 1991).

Differences that were previously thought to be part of religion, area, and culture and might be remedied by conversions or long-term assimilation were given the label of race as a scientific and thus superior manner of explaining differences, according to the principles of "Intellectual History." As a result, differences became immutable, fixed, and unchangeable. Both of these categories weakened the enlightenment concepts of equality and liberty as fundamental human rights.

The ideas produced by political intellectuals at different times, such as Darwin and Ratzel, and others, show how anti-Semitism, racism, and eugenics were complimented and culminated into state ideologies, and how states usually utilised them to justify their control over "others" (Vandana Joshi, 1789-1945).

### **The Ratzelian Lebensraum**

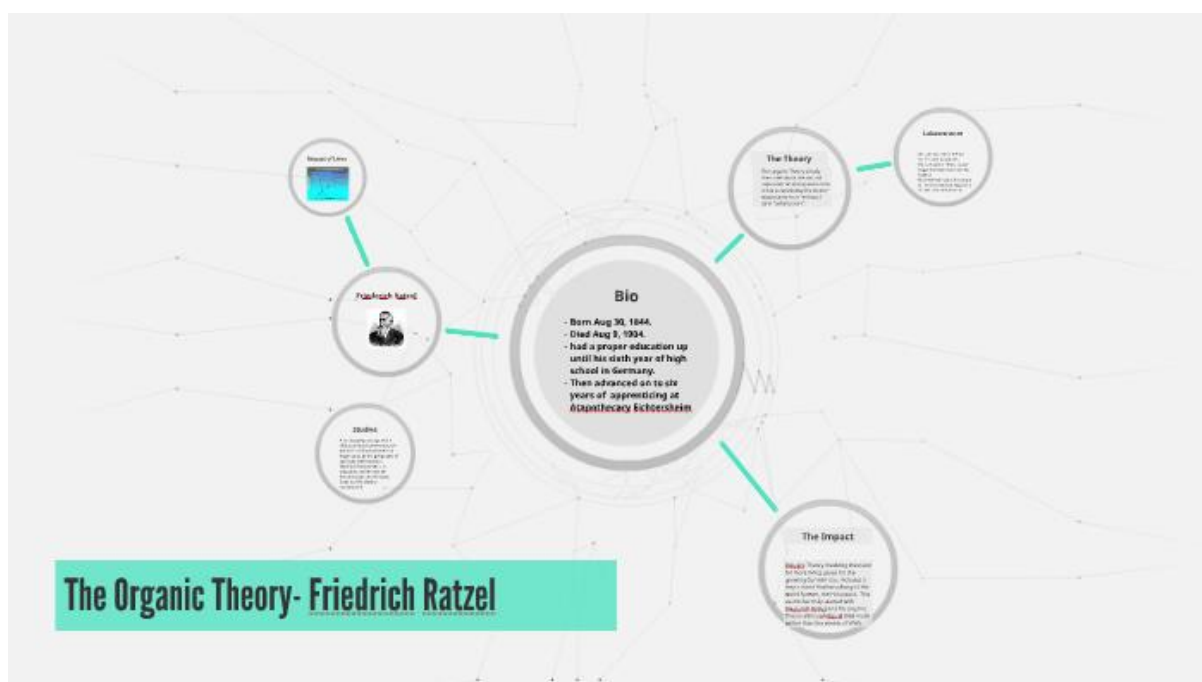
Despite the Nazis' scepticism of intellectuals, Friedrich Ratzel's Lebensraum concept was one of the few "academic" notions that inspired and legitimised the National Socialist Weltanschauung, according to a considerable literature (W.D. Smith, 1980-1986; M. Rossler, 1990; C. Abrahamsson, 2013 and M. Halas, 2014). After Ratzel's death, the notion of Lebensraum became well-known, and its appeal originates from its influence on political practise rather than scholarly debates. Ratzel's ideas were completely outside of the mainstream of geography (H.D. Schultz, 1993)

They were scorned by academic geographers throughout his lifetime, and it wasn't until after World War I that they gained traction, thanks to the extensive transmission of Rudolf Kjellen's works and his notion of Geopolitics. Recent scholarship on the Lebensraum idea after WWII has introduced additional insights on its history, addressing both Ratzel's article analysis and its political relevance, however the border between these levels of investigation can be muddled at times (Abrahamsson et al., 2012)

“Life is movement, which constantly returns to a given shape,' says Ratzel, and 'Every increase in organic mass, every development, every reproduction indicates spatial movement; and every movement is a mastering of space.”

At the same time, he describes the oecumene as "the space that [a species] occupies on the earth and on whose size and shape its viability is partly dependent," and asserts that "each living thing is bound to its space and connected to its space” (F. Ratzel, 1896).

Ratzel's theory takes these new facts into account and transforms the dynamics of political and social life into a complicated synthetic theory based on two assumptions: “the historical acceleration of the struggle for space in modern times; and the 'hierarchization' of social and political spaces through the classification of peoples based on their place in the general process of cultural-historical evolution”



In today's globe, the concept of a nation-state is a widely accepted political entity. The membership of the United Nations General Assembly, which is the most authoritative representation, is based on state recognition. In 1648, the Treaty of Westphalia established the current form, existence, and acknowledgment of nation states as separate political entities. A specified territory inhabited by a people and organised for law are the fundamental elements of a state. Aristotle devised this basic concept of state, which has survived the test of time for almost 2400 years. The notion of inalienable state sovereignty envisioned by Italian political theorist Machiavelli, French political thinker Jean Bodin, and English political thinker Thomas Hobbes is the foundation of the modern polity. The primary need for state recognition is a state's territory with clearly defined limits.

Organic Theory of State has its roots in Aristotle's time, but it wasn't until the mid-nineteenth century that it took on a more defined form and theoretical framework. After the publication of British naturalist Charles Darwin's magnum opus, "On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection," in 1859, the resurrected idea of organic theory

of state, which equates state to an organism, took shape. It was a ground-breaking effort that looked into the certainty of species mutability by putting systematic evidence in place based on observation, gathering, and documentation of biological and geological evidence over a 20-year period. Throughout the mediaeval period, the hypothesis of species origin was hotly debated, and any concept on genesis and mutability of species attributed beyond the theological area was seen as heretical and punishable by death. The publication of "Origin of Species" sparked heated debates and discussions throughout Europe. The publishing elicited various reactions, including eulogies and amusement, as well as harsh criticism from certain areas. The "Origin's" effect extended beyond biological sciences and sparked new ideas in other fields of study. Herbert Spencer, a British philosopher, was one of the most influenced by the "Origin" and evolution theory. Spencer was a polymath, a great thinker who straddled multiple disciplines in his day. He was enamoured with Darwin's concept of organic evolution and applied it to social and political situations. Spencer proposed that society, like an organism, undergoes metamorphosis. He was profoundly affected by Darwin's notions of battle for survival in nature, which mirrored the struggle for survival of individuals in society. The English Economist and Population Theorist Thomas Malthus' theories on population expansion impacted Darwin's use of the phrase "battle for existence." The notion of survival of the fittest was developed by Spencer from the principle of fight for existence. Darwin incorporated Spencer's "Survival" principle into his theory of evolution as a natural extension of the struggle for existence in odd circumstances of intellectual exchange. Darwin stated that organisms in nature perpetuate themselves by producing offspring, and that there is a battle for survival among its members, with the fittest of them ultimately surviving. The phrase "survival of the fittest" is not mentioned in the first edition of "Origin," but it appears in later editions after Spencer uses it in his book "Principles of Biology," published in 1864. If organic evolution theory sparked debates, "Social Evolution" and its version "Social Darwinism," as envisioned by Spencer's works and ideas, sparked many more.

Darwin's views became a hot topic of debate in biology and evolutionary research, and the word "Darwinism" was coined by "T. H. Huxley", a British scientist and staunch Darwin supporter. The phrase "Social Darwinism," coined by Spencer, was coined to describe a new branch of Darwinism that applied to society. Darwin was an abolitionist, which is a term for someone who believes in abolishing slavery, and he did not believe in the thesis of the existence of separate human species based on racial profile and skin colour, which was popular at the time. Darwin's family, as well as his in-laws the Wedgwoods, had a long history of championing abolitionism.

Today, like in the Victorian era, social Darwinism elicits a lot of criticism. Spencer stated unambiguously that human life in society is contingent on individual efficiency, effort, or fitness. Independent of Darwin's thought, the theory was either misapplied or misconstrued in the social framework. Social Darwinism is a divisive theory that places humans at the mercy of their own ability to survive in society. Spencer, who did not

believe in the Welfare State and attacked the welfare measures introduced by the state for the well-being and protection of citizens, was a staunch supporter. Spencer was the High Priest of a school of Social Darwinism that had its own disciples in Europe. Spencer's bicentenary was observed in 2020.

Friedrich Ratzel, a German geographer, was the first to apply Darwin's theory to a political framework, starting with the social background of Darwin's theory. Ratzel was a pioneer in Human Geography who was heavily influenced by Darwin, Ernst Haeckel, and Spencer. Ernst Haeckel was a German biologist who vehemently backed Darwin's evolutionary theory in his home country. The phrase "Lebensraum," which meaning "living space," was popularised by Ratzel. As Spencer characterised the evolution and transformation of society as an organism, Ratzel applied the same ideas to the state, arguing that it, too, grows and that it cannot remain static, and that it will perish if it does not grow. The necessity of a state's expansionist behaviour, according to Ratzel, is essential to its existence. After seeing Germany's unification, Ratzel believed in the country's expansion through purchasing neighbouring areas.

Ratzel's advocacy of the state as a living entity vying for space reverberated in following politico-geographical developments in Europe and Germany. The humiliation of Germany during World War I prompted introspection among German geographers and political intellectuals, resulting in the birth of a new subject, geopolitics, as an offshoot of Ratzel's Political Geography. During the interwar period, German geographer Karl Haushofer made significant contributions to geopolitics as a subject of study and as a war tactic. Ratzel's concept of Lebensraum became a basic premise in German geopolitics, influencing Adolf Hitler, who followed the concepts of Lebensraum and drew the world into the Second World War. It was a dramatic transition of an idea that began with Darwin's evolutionary theory, mutated into applications in society and polity, and manifested in substantial ideological influences on states and territories.

## **2. Study Objective: -**

- Examine the evolution of political geography using Friedrich Ratzel's views on state and growth.
- Consider Charles Darwin's original theory before considering possible applications in political geography

## **3. Research Methodology: -**

The current study is a fundamental-theoretical method that evaluates and determines the status of applied recommendations in four of the most important and well-known classic geopolitical theories - theories of "Sea Power," "Organic State," "The Geographical Pivot of History," and "Rimland" - through descriptive-content analysis using first-hand library resources.

## **4. Study Area and Data Analysis: -**



To gather information, statistical records, and data, affiliated agencies/institutions/functioning bodies/research organisations use official portals, research/survey/journal references in this field, opinion polls, and review reports formally published by affiliated agencies/institutions/functioning bodies/research organisations. Data and information were collected until 2020 to follow trade and political transitions. To confirm the reliability of these data/information, the credibility and methodology specified in those information sources are employed, and they are thoroughly examined to ensure there are no contradicting or deceptive facts that could undermine social/political/economic or other platforms.

##### **5. Result and Discussion: -**

Mahan's "Sea Power" theory, based on research findings and analysis, offers the politicians of his country a number of practical recommendations for restoring the US military and commercial fleets and transforming the country into a superior sea power. He advises US policymakers to strengthen naval power, excavate the Panama Canal, gain multiple colonies throughout the world, take stations near the Panama Canal, control shipping routes, and maintain a robust naval force throughout the conflict. Two US presidents ("McKinley and Roosevelt") were motivated by these ideas to expand the navy and cease the country's isolation strategy. As a result, the US conquered several bases and islands in the Pacific and Atlantic, and the Panama Canal was built, transforming the US into one of the world's greatest powers and eventually displacing British naval power after WWII. Ratzel presents a set of presuppositions for German policymakers in his "Organic State" theory, which is influenced by social Darwinism. According to Ratzel, the German Empire as an organism requires space to thrive, and the politicians of this empire must search for vital space in accordance with their rising population and consider colonial colonisation. He also recommends and encourages his statesmen to adopt a realistic policy (territorial development policy) and to reach more space, which will require Germany to become a superpower, otherwise Germany will be marginalised. Being interested in preserving the hegemony of the British Empire, Mackinder also offers the most important and applied recommendation to the leaders of the British Empire in the "Geopolitical Pivot of History" theory. According to Mackinder, British Empire leaders should prevent the unification of German and Russian land forces in order to prevent them from reaching the "Pivot Area" and forming a united front between the two countries. To this goal, buffer countries should separate Germany and the Soviet Union; otherwise, the two countries would rule Eastern Europe, seizing the "Heartland" and dominating the entire world. Spykman promotes strengthening the nation's sea power in "Rimland" theory, emphasising the value and role of sea power in international dominance. He advises US officials to control the "rimland" area in order to dominate the world by emphasising that "who controls the rimland controls the destinies of the world."

##### **6. Conclusion: -**

The greatest challenge to a world government today is "majoritarian fundamentalism." The term "majoritarian" refers to the belief that pre-existing ethnic, racial, or religious majority have a natural right to rule a political institution.

How this emotion became acceptable and the final arbitrator of political right, might, and legitimacy in the twenty-first century is disturbing. To summarise, while classic geopolitical theories have a fundamental-theoretical nature, so that the presentation of functional recommendations has become an inherent responsibility for these theories. As a result, executed recommendations are one of the most important aspects of traditional geopolitical theories, and they hold a unique place among them.

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