

## Friedrich Ratzel's Law of the Spatial Growth of States in the Situation of the New World Order Formation

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**Abstract.** In this paper, on the basis of an institutional approach, it is analyzed how fair the "law of expansion" of F. Ratzel is in the current situation of the formation of a new world order. It is shown that in modern conditions the instinct of self-preservation induces social systems not to territorial expansion due to an increase in the occupied geographical space, but to integration in various forms, which is based on a single normative approach to the mechanisms of the functioning of the union. In this sense, integration is a kind of expansion of the space occupied by society. Integration unions can increase, but up to a certain limit (saturation limit), determined not by the boundaries of geographical space, but by the possibility of developing a common position on the main issues of functioning, common norms and practices. As a rule, alliances are not absolutely symmetrical and include the "core" and the periphery of integration. The former include the most economically and politically strong states. At the same time, due to the asymmetry of the unions, the "core" institutions are transplanted to the periphery and there is a bidirectional institutional diffusion, which is due to the desire for institutional convergence, and this facilitates interaction within the union. Thus, "channels" for the institutional expansion of integrable societies are formed within the unions. Transplantation and diffusion of institutions are the mechanisms for the implementation of expansion in modern conditions. It is shown that when integrating social systems in order to mitigate possible institutional imbalances, the action of institutions that are complementary to the dominant ones in the institutional matrix is included: when integrating X-matrix countries - market ones, and vice versa.

**Keywords:** geopolitical approach, geopolitical space, expansion, institutional approach, integration, regionalism, regionalization

**For citation:** Barakhvostov P.A. Friedrich Ratzel's Law of the Spatial Growth of States in the Situation of the New World Order Formation. *Russia & World: Scientific Dialogue*. 2023;3(9):20-33, [https://doi.org/10.53658/RW2023-3-3\(9\)-20-33](https://doi.org/10.53658/RW2023-3-3(9)-20-33)

## Introduction

At the turn of the XIX and XX centuries. the founder of geopolitics F. Ratzel formulated the "law of expansion". Based on the ideas of Darwinism, he argued that the state is a living organism [45], similar to natural organisms, evolving and improving in relation to the physical environment. His main instinct is self-preservation, and the indicator of life is development (internal change, movement), growth [18]. Wondering what the indicator of the life of the state is, F. Ratzel believed that this is the space occupied by it [45]. Thus, developing and gaining strength, each state strives for spatial growth, which continues to its natural borders through conquest or colonization. According to F.Ratzel, in the process of growth, the state tries, first of all, to absorb "politically valuable" places: coastlines, riverbeds, plains, resource-rich regions. At the same time, the "impulse" to territorial expansion comes from outside [38]. The growth of states contributes to the stratification of the world: the strong powers create colonial empires, the lots of the weak powers are to be attached to strong powers or involved in the orbit of their influence [6].

The "Law of Expansion" became the foundation for the infamous, tarnished ideologies of colonialism by European powers, American expansionism, Italian fascism, German Nazism, and Japanese militarism. The world has changed a lot over the past period. However, the problem of expansion research has not lost its relevance. Its forms and causes in the XX century and at the turn of the XX-XXI centuries were considered by S.Huntington, G.Morgenthau, S.Cohen, G.Kissinger, R.Stoikers, I.Lacoste, Z.Brzezinski, etc.

E.Battler, W.Gray, V.Kupchan, J.Galtung, K.Rayet, R.Collins analyzed the geopolitical changes in the period after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Various aspects and forms of geopolitical expansion in the post-bipolar era are described by A.Abazov, V.Kudryavtsev, D.Malysheva, M.Ilyin.

A.Utkin, K.Sorokin, E.Pozdnyakov, Yu.Tikhonravov analyzed the processes of expansion of individual states in various regions of the world. K.Gadzhiev, N.M.Rakityansky, N.V.Eliseev, N.A.Komleva studied the impact of globalization on the manifestations of geopolitical expansion.

Despite the close attention to this problem, which has been repeatedly intensified due to the change in the global balance of power, the challenge to the leadership of the collective West from Russia and China, and the formation of a new world order taking place before our eyes, as a rule, this phenomenon is analyzed within the framework of a geopolitical approach that allows us to explore only its individual aspects. In this paper, a different method of solving this problem is proposed – an institutional one, when the focus of analysis is directed to considering the state and evolution of the institutional environment of a developing open social system, which is an integrated combination of interrelated and interdependent subsystems: economic, political and socio-cultural. Based on this approach, we will try to answer how fair is F.Ratzel's "Law of expansion" in modern conditions.

## Materials and methods

The research is based on an institutional approach, in which institutions are considered as stable models of interactions in society, as ways of actions and judgments that exist in society outside of a single individual (5), as “rules of the game” that structure social action [32].

In the analysis, we use the idea of society as a holistic integrated phenomenon [T.Parsons], in which interrelated and interdependent subsystems (economic, political, socio-cultural) are equivalent [I.Wallerstein]. A complex institutional structure allows regulate the functioning of the entire system, in which it is possible to identify the “backbone” – the economic, political and socio-cultural basic institutions forming an institutional matrix that set the direction of collective and individual actions.

There are two main types of basic institutions: redistributive and market-based. This position is based on the hypothesis of two types of economic systems, substantiated in the works of A.Smith, K.Marx, M.Weber, V.Oiken, K.Polanyi, D.North, as well as the idea of K.Wittfogel, T.Parsons, I.Wallerstein on the connection of economic, political and socio-cultural institutions.

The basic redistributive institutions include: in the economic sphere - public property, redistribution relations (accumulation – coordination – distribution), official labor; in the political sphere – a unitary (unitary-centralized) political structure, a hierarchical vertical of power, appointments as an order of occupation of managerial positions, complaints by instances as a feedback mechanism; in the socio-cultural sphere – a communitarian worldview (awareness of the priority of the rights and interests of “We” over “I”); egalitarianism [7]. Basic market institutions: in the economic sphere - private property, purchase and sale as an institution of exchange, profit as an institution of feedback, wage labor, competition; in the political sphere – federal political structure; electability as an order of formation of personnel of managers at all levels, self-government and subsidiarity; in the socio-cultural sphere – subsidiary ideology expressing dominance “I” over “We” [7]. In the institutional matrix, the basic institutions of two types – redistributive and market-based - coexist simultaneously on the principles of dominance and complementarity. An institutional matrix dominated by redistributive institutions is called an X-type matrix, a market-type matrix.

The analysis of empirical data shows the relationship of the type of institutional matrix with the geographical space occupied by the social system [8; 20; 21; 27; 30; 33; 34; 36; 40; 42]. In the work [24] it was revealed that the temperature, precipitation level and risk of natural disasters determine the greatest influence on the nature of institutional models emerging in states. It is shown that in territories with relatively mild climatic characteristics (optimal air temperatures and precipitation), as well as low risks of natural disasters, states with Y-type institutional matrices are usually formed. In turn, in regions where there are significant fluctuations in precipitation amplitude and air temperature, average temperatures and average precipitation levels are very high or very low and disaster risks are high, countries with X-type institutional matrices prevail.

This feature can be explained by the fact that the formation of a social system begins at a stage when sedentary agriculture occupies a dominant position in the economy, which allows society to survive and provide itself with food, regardless of environmental conditions. It is in the agrarian epochs that mechanisms for coordinating social activities arise, thanks to which it is possible to master nature and use it for public needs. At the same time, the agricultural sector is strongly influenced by climatic factors and the landscape. The transition to subsequent stages of development does not cancel out the institutional results of previous historical epochs, but absorbs them into itself due to the mechanisms of cumulative causality [T.Veblen], the effect of dependence on the path [P.A.David, S.Ya. Libovits, S.Ya.Margolis, etc.], “blocking” effects [D.North].

Institutions are stable enough, but they are not a fixed structure (35). Institutional changes can be gradual [3; 17; 25; 28; 31] and fast. They are caused by both endogenous and exogenous factors. The latter include, for example, the impact of other countries due to diffusion or targeted transplantation (the term was introduced by V.Polterovich [10] of their institutes.

The process of institutional diffusion is difficult to predict, while the transplantation of institutions can be facilitated through a number of technologies: by modifying the transplant [26], local transplantation within not the entire country, but its separate region [41], borrowing the institute from the past of the donor country at any stage of its development [44], “building sequences of intermediate institutions connecting the initial structure with the final one corresponding to the transplanted institution” [10].

The above provisions are used further to analyze the features of the manifestation of expansion in modern conditions.

## Results

A social system is an integrated formation of three interconnected and interdependent subsystems (economic, political, sociocultural), each of which can be associated with the space it occupies (economic, political, sociocultural). The economic space arises and functions on the basis of the material needs of a person due to his biological nature, the political and socio-cultural space – on the basis of higher social needs associated with the fact that a person is a social being. These spaces are closely intertwined, their boundaries are blurred and do not coincide with the state ones. The number of actors in these spaces has increased dramatically (along with the state, the role of non-state actors has increased), and it is often impossible to accurately determine their affiliation to a particular social system. The problem of the homeostasis of society is now more connected not with the geographical space occupied by it, but with non-territorial spaces: economic, political, socio-cultural. How can we ensure the development of the social system with such an “overgrowth” of the spaces associated with it?

Currently, an attempt to give “geographical territoriality” to their economic, political, and socio-cultural space by joining other peoples and the territories they occupy can lead

society to destruction. The instinct of self-preservation motivates social systems not to territorial expansion by directly increasing the occupied space, but to integration in various forms. It is based on a unified normative approach to the mechanisms of functioning of the union. In this sense, integration is a form of expansion of the space occupied by society (expansion).

It should be noted that integration is understood as “the emergence of some new community, some integral formation with orderly, organic relations between its constituent elements” [2:32], “the process of formation and development of connections leading to the emergence of a state of connectedness” [4:11], the unification of social systems into a kind of “community or even a system with self-sufficient integration mechanisms” [19].

As a rule, unions are not absolutely symmetrical and include the “core” and “periphery” of integration. The former include the most economically and politically powerful States. At the same time, due to the asymmetry of unions, there is a transfer of “core” institutions to the periphery and bidirectional institutional diffusion, which is due to the desire for institutional convergence (in the optimal case, unification), which facilitates interaction within the union. Thus, “channels” of institutional expansion of integrated societies are formed within unions. Transplantation and diffusion of institutions are the mechanisms of expansion in modern conditions. An example of such an institutional expansion is the influence of the German legal tradition on the legal community of the European Union. The EU law, which is currently applied in all member states of the union, has an obvious German imprint. At the same time, the European Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights are based mainly on French legislation and legal practices in France.

Often, the countries of the “core” of integration resort to managing the processes of institutional transplantation and diffusion through the use of incentive conditionality mechanisms (financing the transplantation of institutions, granting economic preferences to the acceptor country) and socialization (training the elite of the target country in their practices). Negative conditionality (forcing the introduction of institutions) is rarely used. An example is the adoption of the EU in 1999 Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe.

Institutional diffusion has a spatial limit, which is determined by the following factors:

1) the difference between the types of institutional matrices of the donor and acceptor countries: the greater the difference between them, the more difficult the diffusion process is. Due to their inherent creative potential, peoples have the opportunity to creatively rethink (hybridize) diffused (transplanted) institutions, “adjusting” them to their matrix. The high degree of hybridization, in which the essential characteristics of a hybrid institution allow it to be attributed to the type of institutions dominating the matrix of the acceptor society, determines the limit of the diffusion of institutions;

2) the depletion of the donor social system, which must expend enormous efforts (invest significant funds) to maintain the process.

Integration unions can increase, but up to a certain limit (saturation limit, or expansion), determined by the possibility of developing a common position on the main issues of functioning, common practices. An example of this is the European Union, which

has experienced several expansions in different geographical directions, joining states with different levels of economic development and different cultures. The achieved limit of expansion to the East is due not only to geopolitical reasons (Russia's disagreement), but also to significant difficulties in coordinating the institutional matrices of the Western European EU countries and the post-Soviet states. R. Prodi, President of the European Commission, stated in 2002 that the EU could not expand further, since the union could only be reduced to a free trade area, having lost the “political” component of interaction<sup>1</sup>. Thus, the limit of the union's expansion in modern conditions is determined not by natural geographical limits, but by the possibility of coordination, “docking” of the main institutions that set the principles of its functioning. The saturation limit of a stable integration union cannot exceed the spatial limit of institutional diffusion.

As a rule, an integration association is formed within the framework of a certain region with an established regional order, which is determined by the ratio in the integration processes of regionalization (integration “from below”) and regionalism (integration “from above” with the transfer of part of sovereignty to supranational structures) [43]. It is noted that regional orders in Europe and Asia differ significantly [1; 9; 12; 13; 23; 37]: if regionalism occupies a significant place in the first case (integration of countries with Y-type institutional matrices), regionalization occupies a significant place in the second (mainly integration of X-type countries). In addition, regional governance in the West and East differs significantly, understood as ways to coordinate social actions to create mandatory rules and/or public goods and services in one or more problem areas at the regional level [15; 16; 29; 39]. Regional governance includes hierarchical and non-hierarchical ways of shaping regional policy on key issues. The former, as a rule, prevail in regions uniting countries with the Y-matrix, the latter are typical for regions of countries with the X-matrix, in countries united by the struggle against colonialism and apartheid [46, chapter 12, 13]. For example, the institutions of regional governance in East Asia are not as rigid as in the EU. They are based on informal confidence-building tools, bilateral and multilateral meetings of country leaders, bilateral and multilateral free trade and security agreements, etc. This feature has been called “self-blocking multilateralism” [22:116], “permanent underinstitutionalization” [14:330].

Due to the complexity of the space occupied by the social system, integration in modern conditions is a multidimensional and multidimensional process that does not always boil down to the formation of protectionist schemes in trade. Security remains one of the main drivers of integration, as a result of which stable unions with a high level of regionalism seek to extend their institutions outside the integration association (to the nearest neighbors) to facilitate interaction with the outside world, on the one hand, on the other - in an attempt to create a zone of security and prosperity not only directly at their borders, but also at the borders neighbors due to the huge connectivity of space in the modern world. An example of such a phenomenon should be considered the European

<sup>1</sup> Prodi R. 2002. A wider Europe: a proximity policy as a key to stability: EU Doc. SPEECH/02/619, Brussels, 5–6 Dec. 2002. Available from: [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_SPEECH-02-619\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-02-619_en.htm).

Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), implemented in relation to the EU's closest neighbors from the East and South. Since its launch, the European Neighborhood Policy has been an "expansion without expansion." The European Neighbourhood Policy did not imply direct access to the benefits of EU membership and was aimed at spreading EU institutions beyond the integration association [11:9]. Institutional diffusion far beyond the geographical space occupied by the social system, outside the integration union, is a form of expansion in modern conditions.

## Discussion

The features of the integration processes discussed above as manifestations of institutional expansion are largely determined by the type of institutional matrix of the social system. The X-matrix countries have a strong state with a hierarchical system of power, which, when integrated, do not need anyone's coordinating action: the State takes over this function itself. This leads to the fact that unification is carried out "from below" (at the level of non-state actors), and the main mechanism of integration is regionalization, which is based on the involvement of market (complementary) institutions that perform a compensatory function, preventing institutional imbalances in the matrix.

The countries of the Y-matrix type, the construction of power relations in which is carried out on the principle of decentralization (self-government and subsidiarity), when united, need some kind of coordinating, guiding force. This leads to the predominance of the mechanism of regionalism in the integration, which is based on the use of redistributive (complementary) institutions, which, as in the previous case, perform a compensatory function in order to mitigate institutional imbalances.

For countries with different types of institutional matrix, convergence is possible (for example, cooperation in the field of security, or participation in a Free Trade Zone), but integration in this case will be limited only to certain areas of exceptional importance for public systems, with the prevalence of regionalization processes (integration "from below" without creating any significant and effective supranational bodies).

Because of this, a number of researchers argue that the modern world order is a regional world order (23), emphasizing the regional architecture of world politics [46].

## Conclusion

Thus, as in the time of F. Ratzel, any society is driven by the instinct of self-preservation, which in modern conditions encourages not direct expansion in the form of annexation of new territories, but integration in various forms, based on a unified normative approach to the mechanisms of functioning of the union. In this sense, integration is a kind of form of expansion of the space occupied by society (expansion). Integration unions can increase, but up to a certain limit (saturation limit, or expansion), determined not by the natural

limits of geographical space, but by the possibility of developing a common position on the main (fundamental) issues of functioning, common norms and practices.

As a rule, unions are not absolutely symmetrical and include the "core" and "periphery" of integration. The first include the most economically and politically powerful States. At the same time, due to the asymmetry of unions, there is a transplantation of "core" institutions to the periphery and bidirectional institutional diffusion, which is due to the desire for institutional convergence (in the future, unification), which facilitates interaction within the union. Thus, "channels" of institutional expansion of integrated societies are formed within unions. Transplantation and diffusion of institutions are the main mechanisms of expansion in modern conditions.

It is shown that when integrating social systems in order to mitigate possible institutional imbalances, institutions complementary to the dominant ones in the institutional matrix are involved: when integrating X (Y)-matrix countries, market (redistributive) ones are used.

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## Contribution of the author

The author declares no conflicts of interests.

## Article info

Submitted: May 15, 2023. Approved after peer reviewing: May 20, 2023. Accepted for publication: June 10, 2023. Published: September 15, 2023.

The author has read and approved the final manuscript.

## Peer review info

«Russia & World: Scientific Dialogue» thanks the anonymous reviewer(s) for their contribution to the peer review of this work.