

disease, making minorities, foreigners, the stateless, migrant Roma communities, the mental and physically challenged, and even those with visible eye impairments undesirable. The medical bureaucracy grew to provide medical certification for quotas and visas as physicians, through their professional guilds, claimed selective and exclusive expertise and authority upon which the state justified border medicalization. As borders became check points and care points, they also became lock-ups for decontamination and the destruction of pathogenic under-riables.

Lauren Fairchild, Constance A. Nathanson, and Cullen Conway find similar patterns at play in the evolution of public health in the United States. Underlying disease epidemic management has never been accurate knowledge of disease pathogenesis nor the efficacy of preventative or remedial methods—but it has been fear and panic. These authors demonstrate that outbreak anxieties are historically configured and have shifted the meanings of fear through four different milieus of American history, each era expanding public health institutions and the powers and scope of government interventions. From the moment when panic triggered geographic flight and informed quarantine systems, the evolving state system and the new field of bacteriology reinforced fears of contagion and induced conceptions of borders that were less geographic and more symbolic. Othering along racial and ethnic as well as class and behavioural classification (p. 201) generated new tools of health securitization. Enforcing securitized borders could never fully assuage fears, nor could theories that sought to desocialize individual panics. Governments therefore had to manage

disease panics whether they were rational or not, thereby expanding governmental power, institutionalizing public health, and providing for multipronged international interventions. This was regardless of disease actuality.

Overall, *Medicalising Borders* is an impressive collection of thoughtful historicisms. The chapters are short and focused, and they are full of anecdotes that are striking and also familiar. There is little scholastic jargon, which makes it very readable for non-epidemiological professionals. It explains how modern society evolved through fears and discourses about disease and how to mitigate its impacts. It reflects that the modern territorial state is not natural but is a product of imaginative responses to the physical and microscopic environment and to social and political imperatives. The multipronged historical trajectories of border medicalization have coalesced into today's state and global public health mechanisms, with the essential features remaining evident in contemporary health and border security practices.

Karl Schlögel, *American Matrix: Besichtigung einer Epoche* (Carl Hanser Verlag, 2023), 831 pp.

Reviewed by
Frank Schumacher, London, Ontario

Countless books and articles are published each year on the history and current condition of the United States. This never-ending

stream of specialized scholarly contributions to the many subfields of US history, politics, and culture poses a distinct practical challenge for those writing overarching syntheses. Furthermore, shifting theoretical paradigms continue to challenge the hegemonic implications of grand interpretations among historians, while a public interest in such meta-narratives and comprehensive orientations is stronger than ever.

All the more significant is Karl Schlögel's politically timely, conceptually sophisticated, and impressively eloquent intervention *American Matrix*. While a lifelong and fascinated student of American conditions, Schlögel is not a historian of the United States. He is a most accomplished and prize-winning historian of Russia, the Soviet Union, and Eastern Europe. In his new book, he ventures into new territory with a textured interpretation of the United States during the arc of its global imperial outreach—the “American Century.”

Many of his observations are driven by the productive tensions between these two geographies and their respective spatial formats of “world making”; part of the book thus tells of entangled and intertwined histories—of surprising connections, exchanges, appropriations, and translations by a wide cast of scholars, geographers, engineers, architects, soldiers, and ethnographers. These stories, such as the fascinating experiences of Soviet visitors on their American grand tour, are beautifully interwoven in chapters on receptions of American civilization and are sure to impress even to the most astute and knowledgeable observer of the United States.

A further connection between Schlögel's previous and current work is its unique and highly effective blend of personal observa-

tion, positionality, and scholarly analysis. *American Matrix* is not a detached historical dissection of US histories but a soothingly nuanced, romantic, and somewhat nostalgic historical and cultural reflection (even meditation) on the United States written at a time of tectonic sociopolitical shifts, inflection points, and radical transformations. At the same time, Schlögel's panoramic retrospective is not clouded by disenchantment with the vulgar betrayal of the promise of America; it is written with slight nostalgic appreciation for times gone by. The author thus affords his readers perspectives in which serious engagement, intellectual reflection, and emotion underwrite a masterful cultural history and kaleidoscope over the *longue durée*.

He unfolds his analysis in 28 chapters, crafted in Schlögel's characteristic essay style completely documented with notes and individual bibliographies. Each chapter stands on its own without being pressed into a broader overarching structure of book parts or sections. This approach of apportionment cleverly reduces impressions of grand narratives, enhances the text's versatility, and anticipates changed reading habits; it makes the prospect of sustained engagement with an 800-page book full of intellectual fireworks less daunting.

The downside of this narrative architecture is an occasional sense of disorientation for this reader as the book's ordering principles are not always immediately discernible. For example, the analytically foundational essay on the violent spatial grid configuration of the transcontinental United States is hidden halfway throughout the book and preceded by observations on free speech and on obituaries as cultural texts. While intellectually stimulating, it remains unclear

how those reflections enhance the book's analytical matrix that foregrounds spatial formats and mobilities.

As in Schlögel's previous works, the role of space, spatial formats, and formations is at the heart of the analysis. He expands on earlier excavations about the significance of spatial categories to writing history; he also enhances insights from cultural geographer D.W. Meinig's magisterial *The Shaping of America*, which still remains so curiously ignored by many historians of the United States. Both Schlögel and Meinig inspire reflections on the social construction of space and its politico-legal, social, economic, and cultural preconditions and consequences. They also highlight the central world-making qualities of the "grid" as geometric manifestation for spatial imaginaries, acquisitions, conquests, and transformations of land.

Much like a land surveyor, Schlögel uses historical analysis to identify markers, fault lines, topographies, angles, and horizons in urban and rural settings to make the grid visible. He also traces geographic imaginaries and their frequently violent consequences, from Thomas Jefferson's 1783 map for an "orderly" future development of the United States to subsequent land ordinances designed for the colonial dispossession of vast transcontinental spaces inhabited by a multitude of indigenous nations.

Below this level of meta-geography, Schlögel zooms in on a wide range of smaller scale spatial settings from national parks to skyscrapers and urban jungles, from river dams to baseball stadiums, university campuses, motels, museums, malls, and world expositions. Many of these settings evoke archetypal and iconic visual associations and have long been part of an American,

and frequently global, iconography and inventory of spatial imaginaries. Schlögel delineates each of these settings to create a grammar and epistemology for the American matrix. In-depth historical vignettes, frequently enriched by personal observations, are artfully woven into a tapestry, a quilt of often obscured yet mundane spatial formats.

In a second trajectory, Schlögel examines how challenges of connecting those spatial formats at ever greater speeds have shaped the *American matrix* and its histories. Movement and mobility constitute central analytical paradigms for a range of chapters that discuss transportation technologies via air or land (planes, buses, cars, trains); examine infrastructure grids, links, and hubs; and highlight the microcosms of related social spaces and cultural practices, from motels to leisure strolls in car-crazed urban designs. A beautifully crafted chapter on the history of transcontinental bus travel illustrates the foundational significance of mobility to the matrix; according to Greyhound advertisements, only bus travel allowed its customers to experience the "Real America."

The book's third analytical dimension ventures beyond the spatial limitations of the grid matrix and explores the unbounded qualities of a Global America. While it is not a history of globalizing projects or even US spaces abroad, global imaginaries and practices of transfer are central to its analysis. Schlögel demonstrates the mental globality of America, its imaginative foil and malleable versatility through the observations, translations, and appropriations of America by visitors. From Alexis De Tocqueville and Gustave De Beaumont to Friedrich Ratzel, Max and Marianne Weber, to Ilja Ilf and

Jewegeni Petrow, visitors crisscrossed the spaces of the United States and studied its civilizational manifestations and technological modernities. They frequently contributed to the inventory of global imaginations of the United States and translated social spaces for audiences abroad. Schlögel masterfully excavates such connections by tracing appropriations and a web of correlations between skyscraper architecture, river dam projects, and mobility infrastructure in the United States and the USSR.

Despite the fact that empire is interwoven and embedded in all three dimensions of the American matrix, its analytical utility is neither foregrounded nor exhaustively utilized in the book. While Schlögel dedicates individual chapters to settler colonial violence and racial segregation, his exploration of their significance to spatial histories and contours of the United States remains ambivalent. Many imperial spatial formats such as colonies, extraterritorial zones, special districts, military bases, and commercial production zones do not filter into the analysis, with reservations, detention centers, internment camps, and penal colonies being mentioned but frequently overshadowed by somewhat exceptionalist benign readings of empire's persistent ubiquity.

While the spatial production of empire is neither front nor center of the analysis, Schlögel acknowledges the violence of the matrix and its spaces of colonial genocide in the United States. But he is also interested in the transformative power of the matrix and thus gives ample room to spatial settings of anticolonial resilience and resistance from Alcatraz to the National Museum of the American Indian and from Selma to the National Museum of African-American Culture and History.

The rise of populism; the radicalization and polarization of the political specter; the shrill mobilization of xenophobic, racist, and misogynistic sentiment; the neo-imperialism; and the constant noise of its president have made conversations about the United States difficult. It is Schlögel's forward-looking confidence in the generative power of the *American matrix* that makes this deeply learned and refreshing book essential reading—especially at a time when the United States no longer inspires but repels and repulses many contemporary observers at home and abroad.

Thomas Kunze, Andreas Hilger, and John Zimmermann, eds., *Bis in den Krieg: Die Außenpolitik der UdSSR 1938/1939. Dokumente aus russischen Archiven* (Brill-Schöningh, 2023), 750 pp.

Reviewed by
Kees Boterbloem, Tampa

This book consists of a selection of documents mainly found in Russian archives, and mostly translated out of the original Russian into German, that chart the lead-up to the outbreak of the Second World War. Following a chronological order, the first document presented is the infamous Hossbach Memorandum of November 1937, while the last document published in this collection contains excerpts from a speech by Hitler to the senior Wehrmacht commanders in the Reich chancellery in November 1939. Original pages of some