Unfortunately, when Western history stands in for “human history,” culturally specific beliefs and definitions become universalized in ways that can blind the historian to the presence of ideology. As one example, *Energy* takes for granted that certain kinds of suffering are worthwhile for technological advancement and economic efficiency. As Rhodes’s nuanced history makes abundantly clear, the working out of shared values and desires over centuries led Western society to implicitly condone a wide array of externalities resulting from energy innovations: the occasional miner shot ballistically from the mouth of a coal mine after a gas explosion, acres of scarred forests drained of sap, “occupational deaths of around 0.019 per TWh” to name a few (pp. 21, 140, 336). If energy history is to help us realize more sustainable ways of engaging with the natural world and each other, such work must also historicize the ideologies that led to our unsustainable practices in the first place. Energy historians are well positioned to shed light on these values as part and parcel of technological innovation, but only when we can separate those parts of humanity that are truly universal from those parts which have universalizing desires.

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Reviewed by Kolleen M. Guy

In this monograph, David M. Higgins, professor of accounting and finance at Newcastle University Business School, provides us with a comprehensive history of national and international laws protecting geographical origins. Higgins’s approach is ambitious. He draws on a vast array of studies from diverse disciplines to narrate the history of indications of geographical origins (IGOs) from around the globe, from their emergence in the medieval period to their legal articulation in the nineteenth century and finally to their current global deployment. Canadian bacon, Jamaican rum, French champagne, Swiss watches, New Zealand lamb—the broad range of products analyzed offers the reader a comprehensive narrative of how the evolution of IGOs from national concerns to international significance emerged as an integral part of globalization.
Although it touches on earlier periods, Higgins’s work effectively begins in the early nineteenth century with the efforts of businesses and industries to secure national and international protection of geographic brands. He demonstrates how these campaigns culminated in the creation of legal protocols to protect place-based brands such as champagne, “Swiss-made” watches, and even the broader “Made in the USA.” Examining major themes surrounding these branding strategies, he manages to weave in a story of the development of laws governing intellectual property as well as a broader history of marketing on a global scale.

Higgins develops three main conclusions at the end of this sweeping study. First, he demonstrates the importance of state intervention to protect IGOs. Creation of legal structures to protect the linkage between place and agricultural produce were meant to simply indicate provenance. For consumers, however, official intervention reinforced a sense of a product’s superiority. Second, he makes a convincing case that these official interventions are critical in curbing imitations and fraudulent deployment of IGOs that significantly impact fair market exchanges. For products with reputations based on a linkage between origin and quality, appropriation of an indicator of origin by outsiders had the potential to disrupt consumer confidence and undermine claims of authenticity. The author notes the problematic nature of the notion of quality and is quite skeptical of European Union policy to promote “regional” and “local” foods. Even within a region, he points out, quality variation can be pronounced. Recent developments in the creation of private standards—for example, for a department store or food chain—has further complicated this story by creating a tension with publicly set quality schemes. Third, Higgins argues that “the evolution and protection of IGOs were integral to globalisation” (p. 286). Both marketing campaigns and agricultural policy fixated on product origins as trademarks, brands, and “Made in” labels resonated with consumers.

Much of the evidence for these conclusions is drawn from extensive archival research in the United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia and from European Commission reports. The author’s ability to provide detailed case studies using rich data and source material is invaluable in illustrating many of the key points. The extensive bibliography is equally impressive. But the overwhelming focus on Europe, Britain and the Commonwealth, and North America undermines the book’s claims to offering a global history of brands and IGOs and leaves the conclusions tentative. We know, for example, that China has a sophisticated brand infrastructure dating back to 2700 BCE and strongly objected to European imitations of products made in China in the eighteenth century. How does that fit into this global story of
geographical branding? Are countries in Asia and Latin America simply following the lead of European or North American businesses or brands when it comes to geographical indications? Or do geographically based brands developed in New Delhi or Kuala Lumpur have different sets of assumptions and expectations?

Despite this book’s constrained geographic reach, it has a number of strengths. The most important of those strengths is readability. The prose is clear and accessible to those without a background in finance or international law. The opening chapter, for example, not only sets out the basic issues and concerns surrounding IGOs but also provides concise definitions of what the author identifies as the “alphabet soup” of nomenclature used in place-based branding—appellations (AOC), geographical indication (GI), indications of source (IoS). The author makes clear distinctions between the majority of delocalized brands (Apple, Nike, and Sony) and those with a historic link between a region and a product’s characteristics. Yet he wastes no time with the cultural questions about “taste” or “authenticity” that trip up so many cultural historians. It is precisely this accessibility that makes the price of the book unfortunate. With such a hefty volume cost, a book that would have been excellent for use in advanced business classes or food studies courses suddenly becomes inaccessible.

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Reviewed by Andrew M. Schocket

Legislative language adopted nearly verbatim from lobbyists’ drafts. Speeches written for scoring points in the media read to a sea of empty seats in Congress. Industry groups taking sides and forming alliances to lobby and fund politicians willing to do their bidding. Tensions between party loyalties and local economic priorities. Sweeteners added to legislation to gain specific votes, and poison pills inserted for the purpose of spiking it. Public outrage over Washington aslosh with money. Amendments proposed to force potential presidential candidates to cast a vote that, either way, would offend a major bloc. The