funding and expertise. Additionally, and as outlined in the book’s conclusion, the case of Black Consciousness shows “the importance of an overarching ideology that prioritizes what happens to individuals and communities in the process of running a development initiative” (p. 162).

The only minor shortcoming in this otherwise excellent book is that given its 166 pages of text there could have been more attention paid to historical context. For instance, in discussing the history of black writing and publishing in South Africa the important work of Tiyo Soga, the first ordained Xhosa Christian clergyman who arguably advanced Black Consciousness-like ideas in the nineteenth century, and Walter Rubusana, the first black South African elected to the Cape provincial legislature and a pioneering author, are ignored. Similarly, the University of Fort Hare is mentioned numerous times as many of its students were involved in Black Consciousness, but not much is said about the history of this seminal educational institution. That said, Hadfield’s well written and thoroughly researched book should be read by anyone interested in South African history and international development studies.

TIM STAPLETON
University of Calgary


Much of the historical writing on Kenya can be seen as “tribal” history. Doctoral advisors encouraged the first generation of Kenyan historians to write the history of their own communities, and western Africanists followed this lead by writing ethnically focused social histories of the colonial era. Over the last half-century, their efforts have covered virtually every community in Kenya. But until Julie MacArthur’s incisive and thoroughly researched *Cartography and the Political Imagination*, the Luyia, or Luhyia, have been largely missing from this rich body of work. Taking their name from the common western Kenyan greeting *mulembe*, a peaceful salutation that asked visitors to explain their intentions and itineraries, “the Luyia” came into being in the post-World War II era when a small group of clerks, teachers, and other educated professionals sought to meld the relatively diverse peoples of North Kavirondo District into a single tribe. MacArthur does a fine job of explaining the difficulty of this project by detailing the enormous linguistic and cultural diversity of the district. Apparently, one local community’s word for “head” meant “anus” to their more distant neighbors.

One of the great strengths of *Cartography and the Political Imagination* is that MacArthur fills an important historiographical void by simultaneously providing the most sophisticated and detailed history of Luyia origins since John Osogo published his *A History of the Baluyia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966) in the 1960s, while productively challenging the limits of “tribal history.” Making such communities the
central unit of analysis for social history subtly perpetuates and reinforces the colonial era’s conceptions of collective identity. While MacArthur thoroughly documents the work of Luyia “ethnic patriots,” she is not actually writing the history of the Luyia as a group as much as she is explaining how these men, and they were mostly all men, came to conceive of themselves and their communities as being Luyia.

Those familiar with how ethnic innovators in the Rift Valley and on the Kenyan coast similarly brought the conglomerate Kalenjin and Mijikenda into existence will recognize the competing regional, political, communal, and gendered agendas that produced the composite Luyia identity. What makes MacArthur’s book particularly exciting is her engagement with the “spatial turn in African history.” Giving “trunk literature”—maps, lists, and other personal documents created by elite and ordinary people—equal weight with archival and oral sources, she convincingly argues that ethnic patriots based their Luyianess on a “geographic identity” that bridged the cultural and linguistic differences of western Kenya. This conception of the Luyia as a cosmopolitan people bound together by a “common geographic imagination” was a tool for personal advancement, a defense against settler encroachment, and a way to stake claims against rival communities. Paying close attention to the links between physical space and collective identity, MacArthur’s book suggests new and useful ways to read the reports of the Carter Land Commission, the Kenya Regional Boundaries Commission, and the other geographically focused investigative bodies that have influenced Kenyan history.

But it is also worth considering the limitations of “moral ethnicity” as a unit of analysis. MacArthur views elite arguments about Luyianess as debates over the very nature of belonging and civic responsibility. This usefully shows how ethnic patriots sought to weld the people of western Kenya into a coherent tribe, but there is not much room for individuals here, particularly those who did not wish to see themselves as Luyia tribesmen. MacArthur provides an interesting account of how Tachoni community leaders defended female circumcision to challenge the Luyia project. But this is the story of rival elite imagining; the more interesting characters in MacArthur’s book are the women who attempted to shake off the constraints of the new Luyia identity by pursuing opportunities in non-tribal urban areas. MacArthur rightly notes that their mobility threatened the authority of self-appointed Luyia elites, and so one wishes for more information on ordinary people who were on the margins of Luyianess or resisted the project altogether.

This of course is the challenge of Africanist social history, and MacArthur’s broader frame of reference in no way detracts from this fine book. Cartography and the Political Imagination will be of value to scholars interested in collective identity, territoriality, and mapmaking, and alternatives to conventional nationalism. It deserves a central place on any Kenyan history syllabus.

TIMOTHY H. PARSONS
Washington University in St. Louis