Rarely has a study of East European nation-forming appeared as prescient as the work under review. Published just as the recent tensions within Ukraine erupted, Andriy Zayarnyuk’s *Framing the Ukrainian Peasantry in Habsburg Galicia* offers readers a fresh look at the crystallization of national consciousness among the Ukrainian-speaking villagers of Eastern Galicia. The movement traced here, rooted in the mid-nineteenth century liberal reforms of the Habsburg Monarchy, emerges as distinct both from earlier clergy-led enterprises and from the activities of Ukrainians living under Russian rule. Zayarnyuk challenges long-standing notions of Ukrainian nationalism as rooted “merely” in class politics awakened after the 1848 peasant emancipation. Instead, he offers a much more complex trajectory, depicting a process through which Greek Catholic peasants and petty gentry alike initiated local reforms to modernize village life and eventually disrupt the power of provincial clergy and intellectuals. Educated villagers in the Ukrainian Radical Party soon transformed it into a disciplined entity based on the liberal values of education, capitalism, hard work, and sobriety. “Modernity” in all its guises brought both national and class affiliation in equal parts. Zayarnyuk is particularly keen to stress the capitalist and juridical framework within which peasant activists defended their rights. Peasants, he argues, did not automatically support clerical initiatives, and some even opposed the power of local priests, but they also did not embrace Socialism in large numbers as has sometimes been argued. Most participated regularly in Church rites, even if secretly. Set in the district of Sambir, Zayarnyuk’s study traces shifts in rural leadership and organization spanning three generations. He uses the biography of one
particular peasant leader, Ivan Mykhas, as a prism for assessing divisions in Ruthenian politics, demonstrating how intra-community power struggles were eventually aligned with broader national political divisions among Ukrainian Populists, Radicals, Russophiles, and others.

This is a deep and layered work of social history based on an enormous quantity of documentation about everything from literacy rates to land-holding patterns and the layout of peasant huts. Such detail is used to support the author’s underlying notion that rural capitalism was instrumental in bringing about shifts in village civil society and generating greater peasant independence from Ukrainian and Polish elites. Yet the sheer quantity of information at times threatens to obscure the work’s real insights. It would be helpful, for example, to understand more fully how the Ukrainian movement in East Galicia differed from its counterpart in the Russian Empire and how it compared with the more vigorous West Galician Polish peasant movement. Moreover, although the author acknowledges that village leaders employed anti-Semitic rhetoric, the book misses an opportunity to analyze this language, a gap made more surprising in light of the study’s overall emphasis on discursive frameworks. Such distractions aside, *Framing the Ukrainian Peasantry* makes several important contributions. It underlines the uniqueness of the Ukrainian national movement within the Habsburg space, a setting that provided the legal framework, political institutions, and educational establishment that shaped the peasant worldview in the region. In addition, the book demonstrates clearly that agency and self-interest guided peasant actors, contributing to a growing literature that challenges the tendency to treat “peasants” as an undifferentiated social category. Overall, this is a rich and suggestive work by a promising young author.