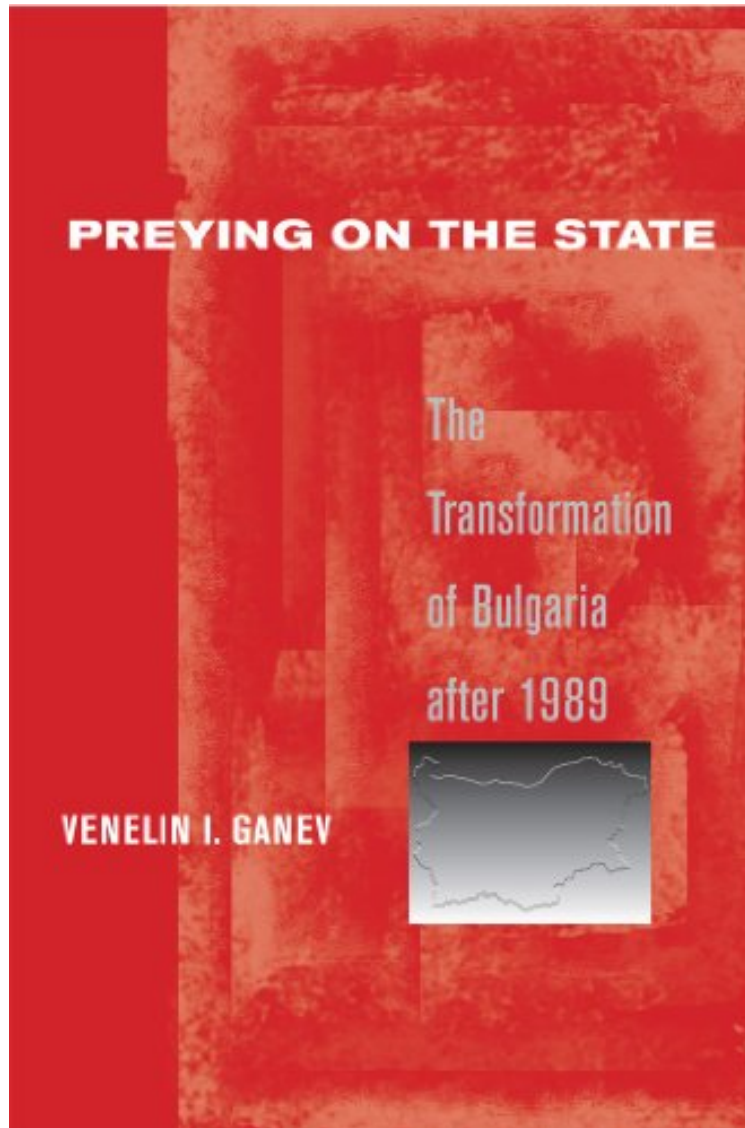


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Venelin I. Ganev

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Venelin I. Ganev : Preying on the State: The Transformation of Bulgaria after 1989 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Preying on the State: The Transformation of Bulgaria after 1989:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. ExcellentBy Petar Zhivkov PetrovExcellent book.Helped me see what was actually behind the scenes in those 8 years. Coming from a Bulgarian family that always believed in the greatness of Communism, I had my own doubts that seem to match the opinion of the author.What I liked the most is that this book contains a pile of facts, names of political parties and the names of the main players.It also discusses the strengths and weaknesses of the newest Bulgarian constitution.There's also a multitude of comparisons with other post-

Communist states in Eastern Europe.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A must read if you like to understand how most of the Bulgarian society wealth was stolen in very short historical period. By George DOne of the most in-depth scientific analysis on the main forces, the main actors, their incentives and the means that party cadres user to siphon most of the Bulgarian society wealth in very short historical period. This is a scientific work so it takes a little bit of extra effort to read but its content is amazing and definitely worth it. If you like to know what, who and how, this is the ultimate book to read. With the fundamental framework that Prof. Ganev creates one can project the behavior of the main actors in the future and understand the motivation of the current events in the country. Incredible work!

Immediately after 1989, newly emerging polities in Eastern Europe had to contend with an overbearing and dominant legacy: the Soviet model of the state. At that time, the strength of the state looked like a massive obstacle to change; less than a decade later, the state's dominant characteristic was no longer its overweening powerfulness, but rather its utter decrepitude. Consequently, the role of the central state in managing economies, providing social services, and maintaining infrastructure came into question. Focusing on his native Bulgaria, Venelin I. Ganev explores in fine-grained detail the weakening of the central state in post-Soviet Eastern Europe. Ganev starts with the structural characteristics of the Soviet satellites, and in particular the forms of elite agency favored in the socialist party-state. As state socialism collapsed, Ganev demonstrates, its institutional legacy presented functionaries who had become accustomed to power with a matrix of opportunities and constraints. In order to maximize their advantage under such conditions, these elites did not need a robust state apparatus; in fact, all of the incentives under postsocialism pushed them to subvert the infrastructure of governance. Throughout *Preying on the State*, Ganev argues that the causes of state malfunctioning go much deeper than the policy preferences of "free marketeers" who deliberately dismantled the state. He systematically analyzes the multiple dimensions, implications, and significance of the institutional and social processes that transformed the organizational basis of effective governance.

"An innovative and thought-provoking study." *Foreign Affairs* "A wonderfully contrarian book, *Preying on the State* compellingly contradicts both the Washington consensus and its numerous critics, who accuse the neoliberals of wrecking states. Did neoliberals possess the power to have wrought such consequences? And if they didn't, who stole the postcommunist states, and why and how did they do so? This is a landmark study of corruption with implications for the whole world." *Georgi Derluguian*, author of *Bourdieu's Secret Admirer in the Caucasus* "This is the best book on the postcommunist state. Almost two decades after 1989, political scientists now know that democracy is not enough. Venelin I. Ganev's erudite and insightful book shows us how difficult it has been to transform the smothering communist state into a competent agent of market regulation and social security." *Jeffrey Kopstein*, University of Toronto "In Venelin I. Ganev's reading, the state does not disappear overnight. Rather, it is gradually gutted of its most important functional capacities by members of the state itself or by powerful economic elites with old state connections and knowledge. This development leaves postsocialist society with institutions that are distorted, incapacitated, or both. This exceptionally readable book will enjoy a broad audience among political scientists, sociologists, and political economists interested in transition issues, and also among students in those areas." *Mieke Meurs*, American University, author of *The Evolution of Agrarian Institutions* "This is a wonderfully provocative, thoughtful, articulate, and learned book. Venelin I. Ganev's interpretations will appeal to scholars not only of postcommunism but also of the state, informal institutions, and institutional transformation." *Anna Grzymala-Busse*, University of Michigan, author of *Redeeming the Communist Past* "The work of Venelin Ganev is what area studies should be at its best: rich in local knowledge and theoretically sophisticated enough to make explicit the links between one country and the whole world." *Andrew Wachtel*, Director of Roberta Buffett Center for Comparative and International Studies and Dean of Graduate School, Northwestern University "For decades, students of democratization and economic reform have neglected the study of the state. While regimes and markets were in motion—emerging, consolidating, or eroding—state institutions were treated as if they did not change at all. In *Preying on the State*, Venelin I. Ganev argues convincingly why changes in state institutions have constituted the real drama in post-communist transitions. His book provides the definitive treatment of post-communist politics in Bulgaria, while also making provocative arguments derived from his 'reversed Tillyan perspective' which will resonate with anyone interested in state formation and deformation." *Michael McFaul*, Stanford University *From the Back Cover* "In Venelin I. Ganev's reading, the state does not disappear overnight. Rather, it is gradually gutted of its most important functional capacities by members of the state itself or by powerful economic elites with old state connections and knowledge. This development leaves postsocialist society with institutions that are distorted, incapacitated, or both. This exceptionally readable book will enjoy a broad audience among political scientists, sociologists, and political economists interested in transition issues, and also among students in those areas." --*Mieke Meurs*, American University, author of *The Evolution of Agrarian Institutions* "This is a wonderfully provocative, thoughtful, articulate, and learned book. Venelin I. Ganev's interpretations will appeal to scholars not only of postcommunism but also of the state, informal institutions, and institutional transformation." --*Anna Grzymala-Busse*, University of Michigan, author

of Redeeming the Communist Past About the Author Venelin I. Ganey is Associate Professor of Political Science at Miami University of Ohio.