



Ruling the Void

The Hollowing of Western Democracy

By Peter Mair

ISBN 9781839767890 • PB • 208pp • Pub: Jan'23

Publisher: Verso Books

Feelbooks Special Edition: Rs. 995



"Every so often one comes across a book, a poem or a work of art that is so original, perfectly crafted, accurate and true that you can't get it out of your head. You have to read or look at it many times to place it in context and understand what it means. ... Peter Mair has written what is by far and away the most powerful, learned and persuasive anti-EU treatise I have come across. It proves that it is impossible to be a democrat and support the continued existence of the European Union. His posthumous masterpiece deserves to become a foundation text for Eurosceptics not just in Britain, but right across the continent."

– Peter Osborne, *Daily Telegraph*

"Peter Mair was one of the leading scholars in the area of comparative politics. He was especially noted for his path-breaking work on change in both political party organizations and party systems ... and his insights into the intersections of politics and society were always worth hearing and reading."

– Alan Ware, *Professor of Politics at Oxford University and author of The American Direct Primary*

Chilling account of the end of party democracy, by the leading political scientist

In the long-established democracies of Western Europe, electoral turnouts are in decline, membership is shrinking in the major parties, and those who remain loyal partisans are sapped of enthusiasm. Peter Mair's new book weighs the impact of these changes, which together show that, after a century of democratic aspiration, electorates are deserting the political arena. Mair examines the alarming parallel development that has seen Europe's political elites remodel themselves as a homogeneous professional class, withdrawing into state institutions that offer relative stability in a world of fickle voters. Meanwhile, non-democratic agencies and practices proliferate and gain credibility—not least among them the European Union itself, an organization contributing to the depoliticization of the member states and one whose notorious 'democratic deficit' reflects the deliberate intentions of its founders.

Ruling the Void offers an authoritative and chilling assessment of the prospects for popular political representation today, not only in the varied democracies of Europe but throughout the developed world.

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About the Author

Peter Mair (1951–2011) was one of the leading political scientists of his generation. He studied at University College Dublin and the University of Leiden, and worked at universities in Ireland, the UK, the Netherlands and Italy, finally becoming Professor of Comparative Politics at the European University Institute, Florence. His books include *Party System Change* and, with Stefano Bartolini, *Identity, Competition and Electoral Availability*.