

here I am writing this book. I don't really know why it turned out like that. I don't think it's especially sinister, though it's not very imaginative on my part. I suspect that for many politicians the situation is not much different.

Does it matter that the political class is shrinking? In one sense, no. It is a sign of broad satisfaction with the political system that most people don't want to have anything to do with politics if they can help it. If they were really unhappy, the high entry barriers would not put them off. More likely in their rage they would tear them down. There are far greater incentives to get involved in politics when things are going badly than when they are going well. That was one of Hobbes's fundamental insights. Politics in Syria is awful, which is why many Syrians want more involvement, to stop the Assads from running the show for their own benefit. The Assads aren't in charge because they happen to be a family with an interest in politics; they are thugs and tyrants who have despoiled the state for their own advantage. The only way to stop them is to take politics away from them. Denmark is a country whose current leader is also a member of a political dynasty: the prime minister, Helle Thorning-Schmidt, is married to Stephen Kinnock, the son of the former British Labour leader Neil Kinnock and his wife, Glenys, a one-time MEP and ex-minister for Europe. This cosiness irritates plenty of Danes, especially when it emerged that Stephen Kinnock, who works for the World Economic Forum, had been avoiding paying income tax in Denmark. However, it didn't annoy ordinary Danes enough to

make them want to become politicians; they just wanted Kinnock to pay more tax. The new political aristocracy riles voters when they can be bothered to think about it, and occasionally it scandalises them. But it doesn't politicise them. That's the basic reason it exists in the first place.



However, there are real dangers to this narrowing of the political class. It opens up a gap between politicians and the rest of us, which