

**PUBLIC CONFERENCE
CONFÉRENCE PUBLIQUE**

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***“Political equality, de-clustering disadvantage and limiting the
political right of the ‘super rich’”***

Résumé/Abstract :

How to limit the ability of the ‘super-rich’ from translating their economic power into political power has been a theme in political philosophy for a surprisingly long time. Machiavelli’s comments on how a Prince might limit ‘the Grandi’ have resonance today as we attempt to limit the power of its 21st century equivalent.

Through utilizing recent work that focuses on ‘de-clustering’ inequalities I advocate a novel solution to this problem. My proposal seeks to insulate the political realm from the influence of super-rich (SR) by imposing the following choice on them:

- A. The SR must forfeit all the things that make them super-rich, or,
- B. They must forfeit some of their political rights.

The political rights to be forfeited include (but are not exhausted by) entitlements to fund political parties and issues; to stand for office; to work or volunteer for political parties; and to own or control media outlets. The right to vote, though, is not among the political rights to be forfeited.

With a couple of nuances, I argue that the imposition of this choice is morally permissible. I also show that it has other merits and that it avoids the problems faced by other more comprehensive attempts to realize political equality. These are (mainly) the problems of envy, of leveling down, and of incentive-effects.

**Friday October 21, 2011
Vendredi, le 21 octobre 2011**

**Arts 509
University of Ottawa
15h00 – 3:00 pm**