**Draft schedule: Approaches to Public Goods: Solidarity and Social Justice**

**University of Toronto, May 13-14, 2016**

Friday May 13

09:00 Coffee, registration

09:15 Welcome/introductory remarks

09:30 – 12:00 **Approaches to Solidarity**

Mara Marin, University of Frankfurt

*Relational Solidarity as Commitment*

Charles Lesch, Harvard University

*Social Citizenship: A Theory of Non-Rationalism and Liberal Solidarity*

Waheed Hussein, University of Toronto

*Dog Eat Dog*: *Institutions, Rivalry and Solidarity*

12:00 – 13:00 Lunch

13:00 – 15:30 **The Solidarity Economy**

Craig Borowiak, Haverford College and Keally McBride, University of San Francisco

*Solidarity Economy vs. Sharing Economy: A Comparison of San Francisco and**Philadelphia*

Thilo Schaefer, University of Toronto

*The Provision of Public Goods in the Emerging Sharing Economy*

15:30 – 16:00 Coffee

16:00 – 18:00 **Solidarity, Legitimacy and Citizenship**

Margaret Kohn, University of Toronto

*The Theory and Practice of Solidarism*

Rutger Claassen, Utrecht University

*Property as a Basis for Political Legitimacy: Towards another Conception?*

18:30 – 20:30 Workshop dinner

Saturday May 14

09:00 – 11:00 **Approaches to Public Goods (I): Justificatory Concerns**

Avigail Ferdman, University of Toronto

*Perfectionist Considerations in the Distribution of Non-Universal Public Goods*

Patrick Turmel, Université Laval

*Justification of Taxation: From Public Goods to Solidarity*

11:00 – 11:15 Coffee

11:15 – 13:15 **Approaches to Public Goods (II): Distributive concerns**

David Robichaud, University of Ottawa

*Freedom and Taxation*

Karel Martens, Technion-Israel Institute of Technology, and Radboud University *Distributive Justice and Transportation Planning*

Michael Kessler, Trinity College, University of Toronto

“Engaging the Reluctant Taxpayer: how to justify public support for the arts”

13:15 – 14:30 Lunch

14:30 – 16:00 **The Politics of Solidarity**

Chair: Ronit Levine-Schnur

Avery Kolers, University of Louisville  
*In and Out of the Vanguard of Brownfields Reclamation*

Thad Williamson, University of Richmond

*Community Wealth Building: The Experience of Richmond, VA*

**Theme**

Public goods like national security, language, transportation systems, parks—to name a few examples—are goods without which society cannot function. However, scholarship on the distributive justice of public and collective goods is underdeveloped. This is surprising because, barring a few extreme cases (like national security), the decision whether to supply goods as *public* goods (free of charge, and non-exclusionary) is a political decision, which requires explicit moral justification. Any theory of justice must therefore explicitly incorporate public goods.

This is especially important in the case of *non-universal* public goods—goods that are not in everyone’s basic interest. These goods span from religious amenities, through cultural preservation, vibrant cities, transportation systems, support for the humanities, arts and basic science—where citizens are often required, coercively, to collectively subsidize goods that they may not be interested in or may not have any use for. However, precisely because they do not accord with everyone’s preferences and are not in everyone’s direct self-interest, distributive equality in non-universal public goods may actually promote *in*justice. Justifying this sort of state coercion is even more urgent in multicultural and fragmented societies, where a shared ‘common good’ to which everyone a priori subscribes is either precarious or non-existent, in which case citizens will not be willing to cross-subsidize each other’s interests in public goods.

This workshop explores two possible distributive justice approaches that are especially well-placed to address the problem of social justice through public goods. The first is ‘perfectionism’—a general term for ethical theories that aim to define the good human life or human flourishing. Perfectionism can ground justifications for distributions of non-universal public goods so long as they prove to be fundamental to human flourishing. The advantage of the perfectionist approach is two-fold: first, it is not affected by the degree of social fragmentation. Since it appeals to an objective, universal concept of human flourishing, perfectionism does not have to rely on the precariousness of willingness to cross-subsidize between groups or willingness to participate in sharing the distributive burdens. Second, it is not vulnerable to the ‘tyranny of the majority’ problem, where incumbent majorities consistently outvote less powerful minorities in decisions on public goods distributions. Yet perfectionism is indeed vulnerable to the following suspicion: that it is not the job of the state to determine for persons what their human flourishing consists of, and as such, when the state promotes certain controversial modes of being in the name of human flourishing, it uses its coercive force paternalistically – or worse – illegitimately.

The second distributive-justice approach—solidarism—is a more materialistic approach to public goods. Solidarism rests on the premise that the modern division of labor creates a social product that does not naturally belong to the individuals who control it as their private property.  Property is “common wealth” which is divided into individual and public shares. As such, much of the value of public goods owes to the efforts of previous generations. When the wealthy appropriate a disproportionate share of the social product, they have a quasi-contractual debt to society that they are obliged to repay. This approach looks at solidarity as the ‘social cement’ which therefore grounds the justification for cross-subsidization between different groups. Yet the solidaristic approach is itself vulnerable to skepticism about its normative role, i.e. whether it is indeed a necessary condition for the achievement of justice, and if so, what are the implications for less solidaristic societies in which arbitrary historic contingencies preclude social justice from materializing as long as the solidaristic sentiment is non-existent or weak.