

*With generous support from UCHI, the
Political Theory Workshop presents*
**“Transnational Identity and
Historical Development,”
Dabney Waring, POLS, UCONN,
with commentary by Justin
Theodra, POLS, UCONN**



The structure-agency debate has long been central to social theory and remains a site of controversy. This paper makes two main interventions in this debate. First, expanding the critical realist approach to social ontology, it argues that group identities can be fruitfully theorized as structures – “collectivities” – that generate causal effects. Collectivities, as socio-symbolic structures, cut across and interact with states and societies, socio-material structures with their own causal effects. This formulation offers a richer account of global social space, displacing the domestic/international distinction that defines traditional statist frameworks of International Relations as well as many sociological and constructivist approaches. Second, it argues that, even with this expansion, there remains a theoretical void within social ontology, an intermediary gap between the natural/physiological and social structures that overdetermine individuals from “below” and “above.” Although it has long been rejected, ignored, or theoretically bracketed in a liberal conception of the subject, it argues that social theorists need a better account of the nexus that links natural and social structures, i.e., the psyche, and its general causal significance.

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**November 5th
3-4:30p.m.
Oak 408**