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God, the Nation, and Anxiety: Global Power Politics of Identity

National/cultural as well as religious identities have been awarded a much larger role in the understanding of international relations during the last 25 years than before. This general observation, however, hides a wide variety of types of identity analysis. The presentation first briefly discusses what difference God makes, i.e. to what extent religion can be studied as yet another cultural identity, or ethno-cultural and religious identities have distinct properties.

The core of the presentation is a differentiation of four types of impact from culture and religion on international relations: a) causal impact from the *content* of identities on for-

oreign policy (different identities generate different policies); b) *anxiety* of identities, where effects follow not which identity, but how certain or fragile is it experienced to be; c) the *identity card* as an alleged right to defend given identities (and religions) because they are identities (and religions); and d) clashes stemming from variation in *ways of holding an identity*. These four are illustrated (mainly) with examples from the recently terminated post-Cold War period, and an aggregate picture is drawn of both the relative significance of the different types during this eras and of the dominant constellation of specific instances that powered global dynamics. The terror/war on terror engine is analyzed as a macro-securitization between liberal politics and Islamic faith, both

cast as endangered identities and thereby diminished as politics/religion respectively.

This picture of roughly 'the world, 1990-2008' is then contrasted with the current Post-Western World. The relative relevance of the four types changes with a new global power structure, and (a little more speculatively) new dominant constellations are identified. Will the coming clash be a second order struggle over how identities count?

The analysis is finally refracted through yet another effect of identities on International Relations: the rise of non-Western theories of International Relations.