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## Demographic Change and White Identity Politics in the United States

## Invitation

Professor Eric D. Knowles, New York University

Wednesday July 20, 2016, in Room A 310, 11 am – 12.30 pm

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Moderator: Marc Helbling

Compared to other racial-ethnic groups, Whites are less likely to view themselves as members of a discrete, tangible, and coherent social category. Eric Knowles posits that ongoing demographic changes in the United States — where the non-White population is growing and will exceed that of Whites around mid-century — are altering Whites' subjective experience of their race. Specifically, he theorizes population changes underway in the U.S. are rendering racial identity increasingly salient, concrete, and important to Whites, with profound implications for intergroup relations and politics. To test the hypothesized link between demographics and the “reification” of White identity, he examines the degree to which a nationally representative sample of American Whites have a well-defined (i.e., reified) sense of their race. Whites with a history of rapidly increasing exposure to non-Whites are the most racially reified. In turn, Eric Knowles presents evidence from this and other datasets indicating that racial reification encourages ethnocentrism and “White identity politics,” in which dominant-group members adopt political preferences and affiliations with the (sometimes explicit) purpose of advancing the ingroup's interests over those of racial minorities.

Eric D. Knowles is Associate Professor of Psychology and Director of the Politics and Intergroup Relation Lab (PIRL) at New York University in the United States. He is guest of the research unit „Migration, Integration, Transnationalization“ in July 2016.

Marc Helbling is Professor in Political Sociology at the Department of Political Science, University of Bamberg, and a Research Fellow at the WZB Berlin Social Science Center where he has previously been Head of the Emmy-Noether research group ‘Immigration Policies in Comparison’ (IMPIC).

The MaD-Colloquium is organized by the research area “Migration and Diversity” (coordinator: Prof. Dr. Ruud Koopmans).

*To register, please reply by July 18, 2016, to [susanne.grasow@wzb.eu](mailto:susanne.grasow@wzb.eu)*