

Press release

Sociologist Marc Helbling new Hans Blumenberg Visiting Professor

During stay at Cluster of Excellence, Helbling to work on Islamophobia and right-wing extremism – Lecture on 8 June on Islamophobia in Western Europe

Münster, 6. June 2021 (exc) Social scientist Marc Helbling is the new Hans Blumenberg Visiting Professor at the University of Münster’s Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics”. “At the Cluster of Excellence, he will work on Islamophobia and right-wing extremism”, says legal scholar and Cluster spokesperson Nils Jansen. Those interested are invited to the public evening lecture “Islamophobia in Western Europe: Fear of Muslims or Fundamentalists?” on 8 June (via Zoom).

“Marc Helbling analyzes political and social conflicts in which religion can be an escalating factor. He looks at both religious and political extremism as well as populism”, explains political scientist Bernd Schlipphak. “In doing so, he can provide valuable ideas for our current annual theme, ‘Belonging and Demarcation: Dynamics of Social Formation’. The fact that his research not only describes but also explains these phenomena means that it can help us to grasp the dynamic role of religion in pluralistic modern societies”.

In his evening lecture, Marc Helbling will shed light on the question of what the term “Islamophobia” stands for. Is it xenophobia, fear of religion, or rejection of religiosity? His findings are based on surveys in several European countries that reveal clear differences in how fundamentalist and liberal Muslims are perceived.

The programme of the Blumenberg Guest Professorship also includes a master class on 9 June. Entitled “Islam(ophobia) in Western Europe: Attitudes, Practices, Structures”, this master class will see Marc Helbling work together with the Cluster of Excellence’s early-career researchers and advanced students. The group will focus on attitudes towards migrants, religious fundamentalism, and the visibility of Muslim practices.
(apo/vvm)

Hans Blumenberg Visiting Professor Marc Helbling

Born in Chur, Switzerland, in 1977, Marc Helbling is Professor of Sociology of Migration and Integration at the University of Mannheim, and Research Fellow at the Social

Science Research Centre Berlin (WZB). He was previously Professor of Political Science at the University of Bamberg, and Head of an Emmy Noether Junior Research Group at the WZB. He has spent research stays at Harvard, Princeton and Oxford, among others. His research interests include policies surrounding immigration and citizenship, xenophobia, populism, and extremism. His current projects investigate the impact of climate change on migration flows, and the connection between terrorism and migration policy.

His recent publications include articles such as “Transnational Terrorism and Restrictive Immigration Policies” in the *Journal of Peace Research* (with Daniel Meierrieks), and “What is Islamophobia? Disentangling Citizens’ Feelings Towards Ethnicity, Religion and Religiosity Using a Survey Experiment” in the *British Journal of Political Science* (with Richard Traummüller).

The Immigration Research Network, Council for European Studies, gave Marc Helbling the Best Paper Award in 2018. In 2016, he received the Fernand Braudel Fellowship of the European University Institute Florence. From 2010 to 2015, he was an elected member of the Junge Akademie at the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities, and of the National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina.

The Hans Blumenberg Visiting Professorship for Religion and Politics

Named after the influential Münster philosopher Hans Blumenberg (1920-1996), the “Hans Blumenberg Visiting Professorship for Religion and Politics” aims to help bring innovative ideas to Münster and to strengthen interdisciplinarity at the Cluster of Excellence. (apo/vvm)

Registration: Evening lecture “**Islamophobia in Western Europe: Fear of Muslims or Fundamentalists?**”, Tuesday, 8 June 2021 | 6:15 pm. | Participation via Zoom:
Registration by the Friday before the event at veranstaltungenEXC@uni-muenster.de

Caption: Marc Helbling (Photo: David Ausserhofer)