

# PhD student: Nicolas Wüthrich

## **1. Can you summarize your research in three sentences?**

I am working on methodological issues in contemporary macroeconomics. I try to use philosophy of science as a toolbox to illuminate ongoing controversies in this scientific practice; such as the controversies about the value of small, highly idealised macroeconomic models, the need for a new simulation-based framework in macroeconomics as well as techniques to deal with uncertainty in economic policy-making.

## **2. Why is your research important? What does it change? What do you want it to change?**

Macroeconomic issues, such as the setting of interest rates by central banks, are of tremendous importance for everyone. Macroeconomic decision making relies heavily on mathematical modelling. Hence, I do think that by illuminating and clarifying the modelling practice in macroeconomics, we can gain a better understanding of how economic policy making should be conducted. In light of the recent financial crisis, I think this is something which we should aspire to.

## **3. Who influenced you? Who do you dramatically disagree with?**

I would say that I have been influenced by Thomas Kuhn's work. His article

*PhD student: Nicolas Wüthrich*

on theory evaluation triggered my interest for the question of model evaluation in macroeconomics. In addition, there are many authors in Philosophy of Economics which influence me: Dan Hausman, Kevin Hoover, Alex Rosenberg, Julian Reiss. So far, I have not found someone with whom I dramatically disagree. I hope I'll find this person soon!

#### **4. Have you ever had an aha-moment that proved pivotal?**

There was one moment which proved pivotal for my career choice as a philosopher. When I was 14, my father gave me a book about constructivism. Constructivism is an epistemological position which says that each individual is constructing his own picture of the world. This idea really shook me. It was the beginning of my interest in epistemological questions.

#### **5. What is the most important thing for a philosopher?**

In my point of view, the most important thing for a philosopher is to be open for criticism. Your ability to respond to constructive feedback is decisive for whether you can develop your own work further.