

**Abstract:**

Recent economic research has highlighted the importance of labor-market and welfare-state mechanisms in the explanation of individual attitudes towards immigration. By contrast, political scientists argue that attitudes are mostly determined by individual cultural values and beliefs. This paper takes a fresh look at this debate and contains the following contributions to the literature. First, we address the problem that unobserved cultural values and beliefs might be correlated with education, a potential source of bias in the estimations. Second, we compile a detailed database on the education levels of immigrants and natives and on the degree of fiscal redistribution in European countries. Third, our econometric estimates rely on a simple structural model, taking individual heterogeneity (with respect to education) explicitly into account. The structural model enables us to evaluate quantitatively the importance of the labor-market and welfare-state channels and of other individual factors (such as cultural values and beliefs). Our results show that the labor-market and welfare-state mechanisms play a significant role in explaining individual attitudes. However, the quantitative importance of these two mechanisms turns out to be rather limited compared to other individual factors.

**Tobias Müller** is an associate professor of applied economics at the University of Geneva. His current research focuses on different aspects of migration (temporary migration, political economy of migration, trade and migration networks) and on the empirical analysis of tax-benefit reforms and their impact on income distribution and the labor market. His past research also includes studies on European integration and computable general equilibrium modeling. After completing his PhD at the University of Geneva, he was invited professor at the University Laval in Québec. He has also served as a consultant for the World Bank and the Swiss federal government.



The Center for Research in Economic Analysis of the University of Luxembourg is pleased to invite you to the **Lunchtime Seminar in Economics**:

## Individual attitudes towards migration: a reexamination of the evidence

*joint with Silvio H. T. Tai (University of Geneva)*

By Tobias Müller  
University of Geneva

**May 26, 2010**  
13:00 – 14:00

Campus Limpertsberg - Room BS001  
162a, avenue de la Faiencerie  
L-1511 Luxembourg

Lunch is planned for the participants

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