

La soutenance de mémoire de Master en sciences sociales  
- *pilier Migration et citoyenneté (EuMIGS)* - de

**Panagiotis Kakasadellis**

**Between Recognition and Exclusion  
Refugee Responses to Bureaucratic Violence in Athens**

aura lieu le

**3 septembre 2026 à 14h00**

A.-L. Breguet 2, salle 2.310 (2<sup>e</sup> étage)

Directrice de mémoire : Lisa Stalder

Experte : Christin Achermann

This thesis investigates the phenomenon of bureaucratic violence against people categorized as asylum seekers and refugees. Set in Athens, it explores the existential and identity-related impact of bureaucratic violence on asylum seekers and refugees, and how they experience and navigate it. Drawing on qualitative methods, this research examines the role of bureaucracy in neoliberal migration governance in the Greek asylum system. The primary data consists of 8 semi-structured interviews with refugees, complemented by 3 interviews with practitioners, ethnographic observation, and policy document analysis. The study understands bureaucracy as a mechanism of migration governance within a neoliberal system, one that shapes and enables the state's intervention in the everyday life of non-citizens (De Genova, 2019). The findings show that bureaucracy produces precarity, and the state forces refugees and asylum seekers into homelessness and undocumented labor. Furthermore, administrative documents emerge as power mechanisms, defining their inclusion in, or exclusion from, legal recognition. Moreover, interview partners described profound psychological and existential consequences stemming from prolonged legal uncertainty and the denial of formal recognition. Finally, the findings demonstrate the creation of informal solidarity networks and NGOs as important sources of practical and emotional support that enable individuals to navigate bureaucratic barriers. Ultimately, this study shows that asylum seekers and refugees actively navigate bureaucratic violence, rather than merely enduring it. In this light, bureaucracy emerges not as a neutral administrative process but as a lived form of structural violence, shaping legal status, material conditions, and personal identity.