Today, 144 countries have committed to grant asylum to those fleeing persecutions by signing the 1952 Geneva Convention on Refugees. However, the Convention does not specify how this should be done in practice. As a result, today there are as many asylum institutions – set of rules that govern how refugees are admitted in a particular country – as there are signatory countries. What are the consequences of this eclectic institutional design for refugees? How do these institutions affect who gets asylum status, and how well refugees integrate into the host society?

To answer this question, I will construct a database of a random sample of 10,000 applications filed at the Office français de protection des réfugiés et apatrides (OFPRA) since 1952. This database will contain rich information on the applicant, the application, and the decision. For those asylum seekers who successfully obtained refugee status in France, I will also collect information on their civil status throughout their lives in France. Finally, I will also collect data on OFPRA’s employees. With this database, I will analyze how institutional changes regarding asylum in France since 1952 have affected the lives of refugees in the last sixty years.