“They didn’t treat me as a Gypsy:”

Romani Refugees in Toronto

Abstract

With organized hate crime and institutional discrimination reaching the threshold of persecution, thousands of Roma have fled to Canada where they claim refugee status. Their arrival coincided with far-ranging reforms to the refugee determination system in 2012-2013 in addition to some actions aimed specifically at the Roma. Against this backdrop, former and current Romani refugee claimants substantiate the challenges of migration and settlement beginning with the first moments after arrival to the tasks of finding housing and work. Agency and resilience are evinced despite the government’s multiple instruments used against refugees. Romani refugees’ lives show how, for transnational groups, belongingness is always contested and the meaning of home is always nuanced.