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### **Romani Europeans. The Forgotten Enslavement**

#### Abstract:

Unlike enslavement in the American colonies, the enslavement of the Roma has been largely absent from analyses of the legacies of enslavement on structures of racial discrimination and exclusion. Beginning as a practice of enslaving prisoners of war, it took place on the territory of today's Romania for over five hundred years, as part of a labor regime with an elaborate infrastructure that produced its own forms of racialization. The Orthodox Church was one of the main enslavers, while the Ottoman empire was an inter-imperial partner in enslavement and racialization. I suggest that focusing on these little explored actors of the "other" European enslavement, while moving away from nation-state-centered models of analysis, contributes to our understanding of the institution of chattel slavery in a global framework: it connects the theory and histories of multiple enslavements in Europe and their current legacies with the analysis of inter-imperiality, the condition of being shaped by the crossroads of European empires, as theorized by Laura Doyle. To this day, the Roma are not part of Europe's reckoning with either racism or enslavement, which restricts European racism temporally to the Holocaust, conflating racism with antisemitism; and relegates enslavement spatially to Africa and the Americas, equating enslavement with the transatlantic trade. I trace this structural oblivion to an Occidentalist imaginary that equates Europeanness with whiteness and that has historically produced unequal Europes in the South and East of the continent, to which non-white and other non-conforming populations, histories, and events can routinely be relegated.

#### Bio:

Manuela Boatcă is Professor of Sociology and Head of School of the Global Studies Programme at the University of Freiburg, Germany. She has published widely on world-systems analysis, decolonial perspectives on global inequalities, gender and citizenship in modernity/coloniality, and the geopolitics of knowledge in Eastern Europe, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Together with Anca Parvulescu (Washington University, USA), she has recently co-authored "Creolizing the Modern. Transylvania Across Empires" (Cornell UP 2022), which has received the René Wellek Prize for best monograph from the American Comparative Literature Association and the Barrington Moore Award for Best Book in Comparative and Historical Sociology from the American Sociological Association in 2023.