

Ritual Apologies: The Kalderash Conflict Resolution System¹

Scuse rituali: i Kalderash e la risoluzione dei conflitti

RICCARDO MAZZOLA², CIPRIAN SANDU³

Abstract

This article develops the Apology Model (AM), a theoretical framework for explaining community-based, customary systems of conflict resolution in which apologetic acts and their acceptance operate as socially regulated transactions. Rather than treating apology as a private emotion or a purely linguistic formula, AM conceptualizes it as an institutional sequence through which a wrong is made publicly intelligible, responsibility is allocated, and social closure is produced through recognizable uptake. The framework is specified and examined through an in-depth analysis of the Kalderash (*căldărari*) Roma justice system in Romania. Drawing on fieldwork-based interviews, the article examines how disputes are settled across multiple arenas, including the *Kris* (community court), regulated fighting, and mechanisms such as gossip and avoidance. Particular attention is devoted to the ways reconciliation becomes publicly certified and durable, often through ritualized re-acceptance gestures and material devices (including payments) that signal accountability without reducing forgiveness to a market exchange. While the Kalderash case is the primary empirical focus, the article argues that AM provides a portable analytic lens for comparative research on informal justice, especially where honor, reputation, and membership are at stake.

Keywords: apology; informal justice; Kalderash Roma; conflict resolution; legal anthropology.

1 The article is the result of a joint effort by both authors. The contributions can be acknowledged as follows: Riccardo Mazzola authored sections 1 and 2; Ciprian Sandu authored sections 3 and 4.

2 Università degli Studi di Macerata, Dipartimento di Giurisprudenza, riccardo.mazzola@unimc.it.

3 Babeş-Bolyai University, Conflict Studies Center, ciprian.sandu@fspac.ro.



Sommario

L'articolo sviluppa l'idea di Apology Model (AM), un quadro teorico volto a spiegare i sistemi consuetudinari di risoluzione dei conflitti, nei quali l'atto di scuse e la loro accettazione operano come transazioni socialmente regolate. Anziché considerare le scuse come un'emozione privata o una formula puramente linguistica, l'AM le concettualizza come una sequenza istituzionale attraverso la quale un torto viene reso pubblicamente intelligibile, la responsabilità viene attribuita e la chiusura del conflitto è prodotta attraverso un riconoscimento chiaramente identificabile. Il quadro teorico viene definito ed esaminato attraverso un'analisi approfondita del sistema di giustizia dei Rom Kalderash (*căldărari*) in Romania. Sulla base di alcune interviste, l'articolo analizza il modo in cui le controversie vengono risolte in molteplici arene, tra cui il Kris (il tribunale comunitario), il combattimento regolamentato e meccanismi quali il pettegolezzo e l'isolamento sociale. Particolare attenzione è dedicata alle modalità attraverso cui la riconciliazione viene pubblicamente certificata e resa duratura, spesso mediante gesti ritualizzati di ri-accettazione e trasferimenti di proprietà materiali, inclusi i pagamenti, che, in questi contesti, segnalano un'assunzione di responsabilità pur senza ridurre il perdono a uno scambio di mercato. Sebbene il caso dei Kalderash costituisca il principale focus empirico, l'articolo sostiene che l'AM offra una lente analitica applicabile alla ricerca comparata sulla giustizia informale, soprattutto nei contesti in cui onore, reputazione e appartenenza assolvono un ruolo primario.

Parole chiave: atto di scuse; giustizia informale; Kalderash; risoluzione dei conflitti; antropologia giuridica.

1. Introduction

1.1. *Why Kalderash?*

This article introduces a theoretical framework designed to explain certain community-based, customary systems of conflict resolution. We refer to this framework as the “Apology Model” (hereafter: AM).

We will investigate a specific version of the AM by examining its application to the Kalderash (*căldărari*) justice system in Romania, which we treat as a representative case study. Selecting the Kalderash as a case study is justified, in comparison to any other population, because their dispute-resolution order provides an unusually clear and analytically legible instance

of AM. First, the Kalderash justice system is a relatively institutionalized form of customary justice: as we will see, it relies on recognizable roles, procedures, and public forums for handling disputes. This degree of proceduralization makes it easier to observe how “institutional” apologies, at the core of AM, are produced, assessed, validated, and translated into concrete outcomes. Second, the Kalderash system places strong emphasis on the moral economy of honor and reputation, where wrongdoing is understood not merely as harm to an individual but as damage to social standing and relational equilibrium (Chereji, Sandu 2018; Sandu 2018). In such contexts, (what we call) apologies are not peripheral rituals, but rather core mechanisms for repairing status, restoring trust, and re-stabilizing community relations: precisely the dynamics the AM aims to capture. Third, Kalderash adjudication tends to be explicitly community-facing. Because the audience matters, as witness and as guarantor of the settlement, the process makes visible the social criteria by which an apology is judged (sincerity, adequacy, proportionality, and the willingness to accept obligations). This public dimension helps disentangle the interpersonal from the collective functions of apology and forgiveness. Finally, the Kalderash case is valuable precisely because it is neither a state court nor a fully private negotiation: it occupies an intermediate space where normative expectations, as well as symbolic gestures and material compensation are closely intertwined (Sandu 2018). This makes it a particularly informative setting for testing our claim about the AM, namely that apologies can operate as structured, norm-governed “transactions” that convert recognition into social closure.

We also selected Kalderash among the diverse Roma subgroups because of their sustained adherence to norms, practices, and social institutions commonly associated with a “traditional” Roma way of life. Previous research has emphasized that the Kalderash continue to maintain customary rules governing kinship, labor organization, and community conduct (Moisă, 2000). Both other Roma groups and members of the majority population frequently regard them as one of (as such literature defines them) the most conservative and tradition-oriented Roma communities, often portraying them as the only group that still consistently upholds collective values and inherited customs. This perceived cultural continuity makes Kalderash a particularly relevant case for examining mechanisms of social regulation and conflict management. However, although the Kalderash system is our primary point of reference, we argue that the AM offers a broader lens for understanding also other informal justice systems, generating insights that can travel across diverse cultural contexts⁴.

⁴ This idea is developed further in Mazzola (2023; 2025), which compares conflict-resolution systems in Albanian traditions and in *salha* (Middle Eastern) practices through the lens of apology. More broadly, comparative scholarship on informal justice such

1.2. *Framework and Methodology*

The idea that apologies serve as a model for conflict resolution has been explored, albeit to varying degrees, in studies on restorative justice within Western contexts (Bennett 2008, p. 131; Wright 2011, p. 12), as well as in research on Indigenous approaches to conflict management (Bottoms 2003, p. 94). These studies, though not always explicitly, suggest that apologies function not merely as a component of reconciliation, but as a paradigmatic structure, an archetype through which resolution is enacted. Within certain communities, engaging in apologetic interaction is therefore not simply one possible avenue for repairing relationships, but a constitutive element of the reconciliation process itself. More broadly, the AM centers on direct engagement between the parties in conflict, emphasizing their cooperation as a critical step in achieving resolution. In this sense, it stands in marked contrast to the so-called ‘adversarial’ model (see, e.g., Tuso 2016, p. 29; Zehr 2002, p. 35), which tends to isolate the parties involved and conceptualize them primarily as opponents rather than as co-participants in a shared process of repair. These dynamics take shape within some justice systems through what are known as re-acceptance ceremonies: ritualized or semi-ritualized interactions that may involve elements of degradation, as well as gestures and words of peace. The aim of this article is to situate these dynamics within the context of Kalderash society and to draw some conclusions about the nature of conflict resolution in cultures where the emphasis lies not on punishing the offender, but on restoring honor and social harmony following an offense.

Methodologically, the article is structured in two parts. The first part (§2) draws on sociological, anthropological, and philosophical scholarship on apologies. It develops a conceptual account of apology, with particular attention to its ritualized forms, and provides the analytical framework for the second part. The second part (§3) applies this framework to the Kalderash system of informal conflict resolution. It is based primarily on Ciprian Sandu’s fieldwork in three Kalderash communities in Romania (Boișoara from Vâlcea County and Târgu Cărbunești and Scoarța from the Gorj County) in 2017. This part draws on the semi-structured interviews collected during that research. Interviewees included a total of 31 Kalderash members (17 women and 14 men, the younger member being 18 and the older one 87 years old) as well as individuals recognized locally as knowledgeable about customary conflict resolution (including *krisinitori*, see below § 3.3). Interviews were conducted in Romanian but there were cases where some members of the community knew only Romani language. In these cases, Sandu was assisted by a Romani language teacher and also a

as Tuso, Flaherty (2016) has identified substantial similarities across a wide range of informal justice systems

krisinitor, both helping him with translation both during the interviews and revising the transcript⁵.

2. Outlining the Apology Model⁶

Especially in the anthropology and sociology of law, practices of re-admission and reconciliation are rarely reducible to a single utterance or a purely psychological transformation. They are, rather, patterned sequences of conduct, often highly conventional and publicly legible, through which a community manages moral disruption, reallocates roles, and repairs the normative fabric that makes social life possible (Goffman 1971; Ide 1998; Mani 2002, esp. part 2; Teitel 2002, p. 84; Minow 2003, ch. 5; Horelt 2019). Apology is a particularly revealing object of inquiry since it sits at the intersection of language, morality, emotion, and social ordering. It is also a privileged window onto informal normative orders, where the restoration of peaceful coexistence frequently depends less on formal adjudication than on procedures capable of stabilizing relationships, reputation, and honor (Brutti 2017, p. 13).

The aim of this section (§ 2) is to provide a conceptual scaffolding needed for the ethnographic analysis developed in § 3. In the terms of the AM, introduced in § 1, apologies matter here insofar as they function as *institutionalized transactions*: they are moves within a sequence through which liability is allocated, status is reordered, and social closure is produced (or withheld). Accordingly, this section proceeds in two steps. First, it develops a conceptual framework for understanding apologies as *complex social acts* – that cannot be grasped by focusing only on linguistic formulae such as “I’m sorry” – with specific presuppositions, sequences, and effects. Second, it treats apologies as a *ritual model of reconciliation*: a structured performance through which the offender is repositioned, offended parties are publicly recognized, and communities can decide whether to restore membership, trust, and cooperation.

The AM conceptualizes then apology (and its functional equivalents) as a socially regulated sequence that produces a recognizable passage from

5 All interlocutors were informed of the research aims and the intended academic use of the material prior to each interview. Given the sensitivity of the topic, consent was also reaffirmed during the interviews: after each response, Sandu asked participants which parts could be made public, and which could not. As is customary, we did not use real names throughout to protect anonymity.

6 This section draws primarily on Mazzola (2023). However, the material from the book has been translated, substantially reworked, and adapted to the main focus of this article: namely, the Kalderash informal model of conflict resolution.

wrongdoing to reintegration. Analytically, the sequence can be described in six recurrent “moves”:

- *Wrong made intelligible* [AM1]: the contested event is publicly nameable as a wrong within a shared normative grammar.
- *Responsibility stabilized* [AM2]: agency and accountability are allocated (to individuals and/or to groups/kin), reducing ambiguity about “who owes what to whom.”
- *Costly acknowledgment* [AM3]: the wrongdoer performs a credible burden-bearing act (verbal admission, humiliation, compensation, bodily exposure, or other costly signals) that makes repair socially plausible.
- *Calibration by authorized third parties* [AM4]: mediators, judges, witnesses (or other authority structures) shape proportionality and adequacy, preventing escalation and aligning the settlement with local expectations.
- *Uptake and re-acceptance* [AM5]: forgiveness is not presumed but achieved through observable acceptance (often via re-acceptance gestures) that completes the transaction.
- *Certification and closure* [AM6]: the settlement is publicly registered as valid (through announcement, witnessing, or other certification devices), producing durable closure and raising the cost of reopening the dispute.

This framing is deliberately calibrated to § 3: it explains *what to look for* when the empirical material shifts from abstract models to Kalderash arenas of conflict composition. § 3 will track these operators across different Kalderash arenas: formal (*Kris*) and informal (regulated fights, gossip/avoidance, re-acceptance gestures).

2.1. Apologies: Structures, Presuppositions and Uptakes

A first methodological move is to detach apology from exclusively linguistic or psychological definitions. Ordinarily, apologizing is often treated as the act of uttering a formula such as “I’m sorry” (see, among others, Owen 1985, p. 21), perhaps accompanied by an inner state of remorse (see, e.g., Tavuchis 1991, p. 3; Lazare 2005, p. 195; Smith 2008, p. 97) and followed, ideally, by forgiveness (Tavuchis 1991, p. 20). Yet sociologically and legally salient apologies do not consist merely in a verbal expression. They are interactive acts: they presuppose another person (Tavuchis 1991, pp. 46-47; see also Smith 2008, p. 65; Yamasaki 2006, p. 21), address a wrong that is treated as relevant (Mazzola 2023, pp. 61-64; also for references), and aim at remodeling normative relations (Kampf, Löwenheim 2012; Mazzola 2023, p. 35, referring to Reinach’s phenomenology). An apology is therefore best approached, from the standpoint of legal anthropology and sociology of law, as a kind of social transaction that unfolds in time and requires uptake, some recognizable response, by the person who has been offended

and, often, by a wider audience. Importantly, in many customary settings, uptake is not only verbal: it is performed through re-acceptance gestures that make reconciliation observable (e.g., handshakes, shared food or drink, formal declarations in front of others, and, in some cases, ritualized handling of money). These gestures do not merely “express” forgiveness; they function as the practical completion of the transaction, turning an apology into a collectively recognizable return to ordinary interaction.

From this perspective, apologizing belongs to a broader class of acts that *do* things rather than merely *describe*: creating expectations, triggering obligations, and opening social possibilities (Austin 1962, p. 63). Through apologies, the apologizer positions themselves as responsible for a morally or legally salient disruption; the offended party as someone entitled to a response; and third parties may also be positioned as witnesses, guarantors, or mediators (Tavuchis 1991, pp. 48, 51, 53; Horelt 2019, p. 32). In informal systems, this relational architecture may matter more than the apologizer’s private feelings: what counts is typically whether the apology is socially readable as an admission, whether it is accepted as adequate, and whether it successfully reconfigures future conduct. This point will be central in § 3, where we will show how different Kalderash arenas of conflict composition rely on public legibility, even when the interaction itself is not “public” in the strict sense.

Treating apology as an “act” also makes it possible to identify its internal structure. Apologies contain at least four components, which can be present explicitly or distributed across “silent” gestures: (i) an acknowledgement that some wrong has occurred; (ii) an attribution of responsibility (to oneself, to groups, or to institutional roles); (iii) an expression of regret or a performance that stands in for regret; and (iv) an orientation toward repair, either through a promise of non-repetition, an offer of compensation, or a request for re-admission (see Mazzola 2023, pp. 57-61). Such components are not necessarily cumulative: in contexts when ritual apologies have been studied, acknowledging wrongs is already a heavy cost, while in others a material gesture is required to make the apology credible (see the examples in Mazzola 2023, ch. 3).

Crucially, the act of apologizing has conditions of felicity. It can misfire (Benoist 2012, pp. 233-235), be rejected (when the offended party refuses re-admission), or be treated as insufficient, if the ritual form is followed but the wrong committed is not adequately named or compensated (Smith 2008, p. 56). The possibility of failure is not accidental: it is precisely because apology is normatively constructed that communities develop criteria for judging whether it is valid, timely, and proportionate. These criteria can be explicit (stated rules; see Brutti 2017) or implicit, but in both cases, they make apology an object of evaluation rather than a purely subjective expression.

Apologies operate against a background of presuppositions that are often more important than the explicit words. Most prominently, apologizing presupposes that a *wrong* has occurred in a sense that is socially meaningful (Mazzola 2023, p. 57): they typically help ensure that the relevant parties share a minimally convergent record of the event (Smith 2008, p. 64). In this sense, apology does not merely respond to a fact; it helps stabilize what will *count as* the fact. Once accepted, it can consolidate an account of what happened and who bears responsibility. This stabilizing function is particularly visible when the event is contested: in some cases, the offended party demands that the offender explicitly name the wrong; a recurrent format is “I’m sorry ‘plus’ naming the offense” (Cirillo *et al.* 2016). Naming does not simply add information: it signals a willingness to adopt the offended party’s normative description of the act. This is also true within informal normative orders, where there is often no written record and no official fact-finding, apologies can contribute to the creation of a shared narrative that makes reconciliation possible (Mazzola 2023, pp. 47–48).

A second presupposition concerns *responsibility*. Apology usually presupposes some agency on the part of the apologizer: they could have acted otherwise, or they represent a group that could have acted otherwise. This is why questions of standing matter: who may apologize on behalf of whom? In kin-based settings, leaders or elders may apologize for younger members (Bottoms 2003, p. 90); in other institutional contexts, spokespersons apologize for organizations (Tavuchis 1991, p. 53); and in state contexts, officials apologize for historic wrongs (Horelt 2019; Celermajer 2009, p. 17). These are not merely pragmatic substitutions: they encode a theory of collective responsibility: by apologizing, a representative can reaffirm that the wrong matters to the group and that the same group is bound by an obligation to repair. This point prepares the analysis of Kalderash settings where responsibility and repair can be distributed across kin networks and recognized figures.

A third presupposition concerns the offended party’s *entitlement*. Apologies assume that the offended party has a claim to recognition and to some form of repair. This claim is not necessarily legal; it can be moral, relational, or status-based. In honor-oriented systems, the entitlement often derives from the social standing of the offended party and the public character of the offence (Mazzola 2020, p. 79). In this case, the apology can be framed as a public acknowledgement that the offended party’s perspective is normatively relevant.

Because apology is a social act (Mazzola 2023, ch. 1), it is not complete at the moment of utterance. In fact, it requires uptake: an identifiable response that registers the apology as having occurred, and assigns it a social value. Uptake can take, among others, the form of acceptance or refusal (Drew *et al.* 2016). The response, in any case, is not a mere epilogue: it is

part of the mechanism through which reconciliation is produced or withheld. Acceptance, if expressed appropriately (Wagatsuma, Rosett 1986, p. 472), is a decision that has normative effects: it can close a dispute, lift a sanction, reopen cooperation, and re-authorize ordinary interaction (for an ethnographic example, see Pely 2009, p. 85). Hence communities often surround acceptance with additional devices, as public witnesses, mediators, or compensatory payments, that distribute responsibility for the decision and make it durable.

Refusal likewise has consequences. It may escalate conflict, trigger countermeasures, or shift the dispute into another arena (for example, from interpersonal negotiation to a council, an elder's court, or state law). For analytical purposes, refusal is therefore not simply a failure of apology; it is a reminder that reconciliation is not a purely moral ideal but a socially regulated outcome. An apology is one move within a broader game of status, honor, and collective order. This is precisely why, in § 3, apology will be tracked across multiple arenas rather than assumed to "occur" once and for all.

2.2. Apology Rituals

As anticipated, in the field of anthropology and sociology, apologies become especially significant when they take on a ritualized form. In many contexts, apology is not improvised but follows a recognizable script (see, among others, Horelt 2019, pp. 30-31; Rappaport 2002, p. 179). It is embedded in a frame that marks it off from ordinary conversation: a specific place, time, set of participants, and sequence of actions (Horelt 2019, p. 40). Here, 'ritualization' does not mean theatricality in a pejorative sense; it indicates that reconciliation is treated as a public matter requiring a conventional procedure. These ritual forms make apology legible to third parties and allow the community to monitor whether the offender has properly submitted to the process of repair.

Several features may characterize apology as ritual (Horelt 2019, p. 40). First, it is *conventional*: it draws on shared formulae, gestures, and objects. Second, it is *formalized*: the act must be performed in the right way, often in the presence of the right people. Third, it is *public* or at least publicly accountable: even when the immediate exchange is private, the fact of apology and acceptance is often communicated to others (for an ethnographic example, see Lang 2002, p. 56). Fourth, and crucially, it is *transformative*: the ritual aims to remodel social relations, moving participants from conflict, or exclusion to renewed membership.

Seeing apologies as rituals clarifies why they frequently involve more than words. Bowing, kneeling, removing a hat, offering a gift, touching the feet

of an elder, embracing, sharing food, participating in prayer can all serve as ritual media for apology (see, e.g., Tambiah 1985, p. 133; Horelt 2019, pp. 50-51). These acts externalize submission and provide for observable evidence that the offender is willing to bear a cost (Mazzola 2023, pp. 118-122; from Fittipaldi 2022, p. 62). In contexts where trust is fragile and reputation is central, the willingness to endure humiliation or expense may carry more evidential weight than verbal avowals of sincerity.

Anthropological approaches to ritual emphasize that reconciliation is not a single moment, but a process with phases (Turner 1980). A conflict disrupts ordinary relations and opens a period in which roles and expectations are unsettled. The parties may experience a kind of social suspension: the offender is not fully reintegrated, the offended party is not fully secure, and the community's order is under strain (Turner 1982, p. 92). Apology rituals can be understood as redressive performances that intervene in this liminal interval (Horelt 2019, pp. 73-74; Mazzola 2023, p. 92; drawing from Kampf, Löwenheim 2012, p. 45). Their aim is to convert conflicts into a manageable narrative, channel emotions into forms that can be collectively evaluated, and create a pathway back to ordinary interaction (Turner 1980).

In this view, apology is just one out of several possible redressive mechanisms alongside, for example, mediation, compensation, oath-taking, or public adjudication (Terradas 2008). What makes apology distinctive is that it is explicitly oriented toward moral *recognition*: it acknowledges that the offensive action was not merely inconvenient but *wrong*, because it violated some social or legal norm (Mazzola 2023, p. 67; see § 2.1). Yet apology rituals do not operate in isolation. They are often part of a broader procedure of composition that includes the gathering of kin, the involvement of elders or respected mediators, and the negotiation of terms that make peace practically sustainable (see § 3; several ethnographic examples are in Mazzola 2023, ch. 3). The AM also allows for functional equivalents of apology rituals: structured performances that do not take the form of an explicit "I am sorry," yet accomplish the same sequence: (i) allocation of responsibility, (ii) costly submission, (iii) publicly readable outcome, and reintegration.

The liminal nature of apology rituals explains their ambivalence. On the one hand, they promise restoration. On the other hand, they expose power: the offended party (and the community) can demand submission, impose conditions, and decide whether re-admission will occur (see § 3). The ritual then offers a controlled setting in which hierarchy can be temporarily inverted or at least reconfigured (Turner 1982). The offender, who may have asserted dominance through the offence, is placed in a lower position; the offended party, who may have been humiliated, is elevated as the gatekeeper of reintegration (Mazzola 2023, p. 67). Many apology rituals work by producing such a visible asymmetry: the offender's body and speech display humility (Turner 1995, p. 188; see, for an ethnographic example, Lang

2002, p. 55), while the offended party's posture can signal authority (Lang 2002, p. 58). This is not simply an expression of individual character; it is a *technology of reconciliation*. By lowering themselves, the offender recognizes the offended party's claim to honor and restores the balance that the offence disturbed. The offended party's acceptance, in turn, can be read as magnanimity (Lang 2002, p. 55) rather than capitulation since granted from a position of superiority.

Importantly, humility is not merely symbolic. It can involve real costs, as time, money, reputational exposure, or the risk of rejection. These costs are part of what makes the ritual credible. A perfunctory apology that imposes no cost can be treated as empty because it fails to demonstrate that the offender is willing to bear the burden of repair. Conversely, excessive humiliation can be counter-productive, generating resentment or undermining the possibility of durable peace (see, Kampf, Löwenheim 2012, p. 50). Communities therefore develop calibrated forms of humility that are "just enough" to signal submission while keeping reintegration possible.

2.3. An Economy of Honor

Ritual apologies traditionally operate in what has been called an "affective" economy: they manage not only facts and obligations but also socially organized feelings such as shame, anger, fear, pride, and relief (Ahmed 2004). In informal orders, honor and shame provide a moral grammar for interpreting offences and evaluating repair. Here, offences are not primarily understood as violations of abstract rules; they are understood as humiliations, insults, or degradations that alter status (Mazzola 2023, pp. 115-116). Apology rituals therefore aim to reallocate honor: to lower the offender's standing temporarily and to restore the offended party's public worth (Horelt 2019).

Shame, in this context, is not, then, simply a private emotion. It is a relational signal that the offender recognizes the community's judgement and standards (Scheff 2000). By accepting shame through submissive gestures, self-abasement, or public confession, offenders perform alignment with shared norms (Lazare 2005, p. 58).

The offended party's anger, likewise, is not merely personal; it can be a socially expected display of self-respect and a claim to recognition (Mazzola 2022, ch. 3). Reconciliation requires a transformation of these displays: anger must be cooled in a way that does not erase offences, and shame must be acknowledged without turning into permanent stigma. This is a reason why apology rituals often involve mediators. A mediator can translate anger into demands, convert shame into a structured performance, and protect both parties from losing face (e.g., Saxon 2018, p. 39). The mediator can

also provide a narrative that makes acceptance intelligible: forgiveness is not framed as forgetting but as a controlled decision to restore coexistence. In such settings, reconciliation is indeed less about inner healing than about restoring the conditions for living together – conditions that include respect, predictable behavior, and the re-establishment of boundaries (Mazzola 2023, p. 56).

Many reconciliation processes supplement, or even replace, verbal apology with material elements: gifts (Mazzola 2021), compensation, or shared meals (Mazzola 2023, ch. 3), but material signs are not merely add-ons. They can function as guarantees (Mazzola 2023, p. 191), especially where future interaction is unavoidable and the risk of renewed hostility is high (see Hann 2000, p. 125): a compensatory payment can be interpreted as an acknowledgement that the offence had costs and that the offender accepts responsibility for rebalancing (Saxon 2018, p. ix); a gift can symbolize respect and restore reciprocity; a communal meal can enact the return to ordinary sociality by re-establishing commensality (for ethnographic examples, see Mazzola 2022, especially ch. 3, with references).

In informal normative orders, compensation commonly possesses a double logic. On the one hand, it is reparative: it addresses concrete harm (e.g., medical costs, lost work, damaged property). On the other hand, it is symbolic: it restores honor by demonstrating that the offender is willing to “pay” for the breach (Mazzola 2020). These different logics may interact. A payment that is materially adequate but symbolically insulting (too low, offered in the wrong manner, or presented without deference) may fail. Conversely, a symbolically generous payment may be required even when material harm is minimal, because the offence was primarily a status injury (Mazzola 2020, p. 61). Material gestures can also distribute responsibility beyond the individual: kin may contribute to the payment, thereby affirming that they accept a role in preventing recurrence (Terradas 2008). This collective dimension is especially important in contexts where conflict is understood as involving families or clans rather than isolated individuals. The payment then functions as a public investment in peace: it creates shared stakes in the maintenance of reconciliation.

At the same time, there are limits. Excessive monetization can be criticized as buying forgiveness and turning moral wrongs into economic transactions (Mazzola 2022, pp. 127-131). Communities often manage this tension by embedding compensation within a ritual frame: payments are delivered with specific words and gestures, sometimes to mediators rather than directly, and accompanied by acts that emphasize humility in ways that explicitly deny its reduction to a market exchange (we will discuss this kind of dynamics in the Kalderash community in § 3). In some settings, the public handling of money (its delivery, refusal, or even destruction) can serve to reaffirm that what is being restored is not merely a balance of assets, but a

balance of honor and membership. Under AM, such practices are best read as costly signals and devices of certification, or as ways of making closure publicly credible without turning forgiveness into a commodity.

2.4. Sincerity, and the Apology Model (Brief Notes)

AM raises a classic problem: does reconciliation require sincerity? In many modern moral discourses, an apology is treated as authentic only if it expresses genuine remorse (Lazare 2005; for several criteria to recognize sincerity in restorative justice see Mannozi, Lodigiani 2017, p. 233). Yet legal, sociological and anthropological approaches suggest a more complex picture. As we have pointed out, rituals are public performances governed by convention. Their efficacy depends on recognizability and on the willingness of participants to treat the performance as binding (Rappaport 2002, p. 180). This does not eliminate sincerity, but it shifts the analytical focus from inner states to social criteria and consequences.

A useful distinction can be drawn between personal belief and ritual commitment. Participants may or may not “feel” what the ritual expresses, but by performing it they publicly commit themselves to the norms it embodies. The apology ritual thus creates obligations even when subjective feelings lag behind (Rappaport 2002, p. 123). This is one reason rituals are valuable in high-conflict settings: they allow parties to coordinate on publicly shared forms of peace without requiring immediate emotional harmony. Of course, communities do care about sincerity, but they treat it as something to be inferred from the broader pattern of action. Was the apology offered promptly or after pressure? Was it accompanied by restitution? Did the offender accept humiliation without resistance? Does their subsequent conduct align with the promise of non-repetition? These questions show that sincerity is not an all-or-nothing property. It is a socially assessed probability, built from signs that have become meaningful through repeated practice.

This also explains why ritual apologies can be socially contested. Where power asymmetries are strong, rituals can be used to enforce submission without genuine repair, producing coerced apologies that stabilize hierarchy rather than mutual respect (Kampf, Löwenheim 2012, p. 49). While, quite crucially, apology rituals have efficacy because they reorganize relations, in such cases they are, in fact, not, since there is no credible shift in obligations, and ritual form alone may be insufficient.

2.5. *Apology as an Archetype*

Informal normative orders such as familial, communal, or customary systems often rely on reconciliation (Braithwaite, Gohar 2014, p. 554). This does not mean that they are lenient. They can impose harsh sanctions, including exclusion, but since everyday life requires ongoing interaction, the restoration of peaceful relations is frequently treated as a practical priority (Hann 2000, p. 125; Bottoms 2003, p. 91; Rohne *et al.* 2008, p. 28). In such systems, apology rituals provide a flexible mechanism for transforming conflict into coexistence. They can accommodate negotiation, preserve dignity, and re-establish predictability.

Several features make AM well suited to informal settings, since it is relatively fast compared to formal litigation; it can incorporate local moral vocabularies (honor, respect, purity, kin responsibility); it can involve mediators who have social authority; and, as we have seen, they can produce outcomes that are publicly legible to the community. In these contexts, what matters is not simply that reconciliation occurs, but that it is certified. Certification can take the form of an explicit announcement by authorized third parties, the presence of a witnessing audience, or any procedural device that turns reconciliation into a shared public fact. The point is to transform a fragile interpersonal understanding into a settlement that the community can monitor and enforce.

At the same time, informal reconciliation is not purely consensual. Social pressure, threats of exclusion, and fear of escalation can compel parties to participate (see, for an ethnographic example, Abu Nimer 2003, p. 103). This is one reason why apology rituals must be studied as part of a broader ecology of power. Who has the authority to demand an apology? Who decides the terms? Who can refuse without consequences? These questions matter for socio-legal analysis because they reveal the normative structure that underpins ritual: reconciliation is a form of governance.

As already stated, mediators or witnesses are not peripheral. They are devices through which a community certifies that the apology and its acceptance are valid. A mediator can ensure that the ritual follows proper form, translate between parties, and guarantee that agreements are remembered (see, e.g., Pely 2011, p. 436). Witnesses can diffuse the knowledge that peace has been made and can sanction parties who attempt to reopen conflict by recalling, and attesting to, the publicly recognized settlement. Public certification matters since reconciliation is not only about the parties, but also about bystanders who must adjust their behavior: they need to know whether they may interact with the offender, whether the offended party remains in a state of grievance, and whether collective sanctions are lifted. AM provides a communicative technology for producing this shared knowledge. It is, in that sense, a form of social documentation.

The conceptual points above can support an ethnographic analysis of Kalderash forms of re-admission in at least three ways. First, they invite attention to the apology's *presuppositions*: what counts as a wrong, how responsibility is allocated, and how a shared record of the event is produced. Second, they suggest that reconciliation should be analyzed as a *process* rather than a moment: one can ask how liminal phases are marked, how redressive performances are staged, and how acceptance is publicly certified. Third, they highlight the *political* dimension of ritual: apology is a technology for reordering status, honor, and membership. In practice, this means looking beyond verbal formulae to the full choreography of re-admission: who initiates the approach, who speaks for whom, where the encounter occurs, what gestures are required, what material transfers are involved, and which third parties oversee the sequence. It also means treating apology acceptance as an event with its own criteria and effects, rather than as a private feeling. By framing apologies as ritualized social acts, socio-legal analysis can describe re-admission not as a residual cultural phenomenon outside law, but as a practical way of normative ordering. In many communities, as Kalderash, apology rituals are one of the principal ways in which obligations are created, breached, repaired, and remembered. They provide a bridge between morality and governance, emotion and obligation, individual wrongdoing and collective peace. Finally, §3 will also show the other side of the model: when no certified pathway toward re-admission is activated, conflicts may remain socially "open." In such cases, diffuse forms of publicity – including gossip and avoidance – can operate as ongoing sanctions, sustaining reputational damage and preventing closure. From an AM standpoint, these mechanisms matter not as peripheral noise, but as part of the ecology that either pushes disputes toward certified settlement or prolongs exclusion when settlement fails.

3. The Kalderash Apology Model

In § 2, we argued that apology-based reconciliation can be treated as a technology of re-admission: it stabilizes a shared record of the wrong, allocates responsibility, and produces uptake through publicly recognizable acceptance often under conditions of social pressure and with the crucial involvement of mediators and witnesses. In what follows, we show how these analytical coordinates illuminate the Kalderash case: not only through the *Kris* (where third parties certify the conflict's outcomes), but also in fighting (where honor is washed away through a regulated ritual), and in gossip/avoidance (where publicity and reputational exposure can function as diffuse, ongoing sanctions). To make this mapping explicit, the discussion below highlights the specific AM moves activated in each arena (AM1 to AM6).

3.1. *Kalderash: A Brief Outline*

Demographically, the Kalderash are concentrated primarily in the historical region of Oltenia, especially in the counties of Vâlcea, Dolj, Olt, Gorj, and Mehedinți, although significant communities are also present in parts of Transylvania, such as Sibiu and Alba. Their ethnonym derives from their historically specialized occupation: the manufacture and repair of metal vessels, particularly boilers and cauldrons. This craft-based specialization has long structured both their economic strategies and their social identity. Beyond producing and tinning large metal containers, Kalderash artisans also fabricate a range of household goods from sheet metal or aluminum, which are distributed through local markets and fairs. Central to their occupational repertoire is *alămirea țigănească*, a traditional brass and copper-working technique transmitted within families, typically through male lineage, and often treated as specialized, guarded knowledge requiring considerable technical skill (Stănescu 2004). Thus, craft production functions not only as a source of livelihood but also as a key marker of ethnic distinctiveness and intergenerational continuity.

As in many Roma communities (Grigore & Sarău 2006; Piasere 2016), social life among the Kalderash is organized around the extended family, which constitutes the primary unit of economic cooperation, socialization, and authority. Family size correlates strongly with prestige and influence within the community, as larger kin networks provide both labor resources and social protection. Authority is structured along gendered lines: men are typically responsible for external economic activities and represent the family in public or intergroup relations, while women oversee domestic labor and the internal management of the household. Processes of social reproduction likewise follow gendered patterns, with parents transmitting knowledge and skills to children of the same sex. Girls are socialized into domestic competencies, whereas boys are trained in metalworking and in the normative expectations associated with future household leadership. Such practices reproduce not only economic roles but also broader moral and social hierarchies.

Mobility and settlement patterns further illustrate the interplay between tradition and adaptation. Although the Kalderash continue to self-identify as nomadic, their present-day mobility is better characterized as semi-nomadic and strategically oriented toward economic opportunity rather than constant movement as a cultural imperative. Historically, everyday life revolved around the tent and the horse-drawn cart, which symbolized both material autonomy and cultural identity; as noted in earlier accounts, a Roma person without a horse and cart was not considered a fully Roma (Stănescu 2004). Contemporary processes of sedentarization, however, have led many families to maintain permanent dwellings. Nevertheless, seasonal

mobility persists: from spring until late autumn, many Kalderash temporarily relocate to the outskirts of villages, setting up tented camps where they engage in craft production and repair work. With the onset of winter, they return to their permanent homes. This cyclical pattern reflects a pragmatic accommodation to market demands while simultaneously preserving symbolic elements of a mobile lifestyle.

From the perspective of AM, these basic features matter because they clarify who can plausibly speak, apologize, and accept on behalf of whom (standing and representation), and why conflicts rarely remain “private”: dense kinship structures and recurrent interaction make reconciliation a collective problem, requiring forms of settlement that are publicly legible and socially enforceable.

3.2. Romanipen: The Roma’s Moral Code

Like any other small community, the Roma people – in general, and specifically Kalderash – have a very strict moral code that governs the life of their members. For the Roma, this is *Romanipen* (Grigore 2008). *Romanipen* is the set of values or codes that Roma have to follow to be “a true Roma”, as they called themselves. These values are based on four principles (or elements): honor, good fortune, family (understood as belonging to the whole community) and cleanliness/purity.

Honor (*pakiv* in Romani language) is a concept that introduces the basic values of the Roma community, values that must be respected with sanctity (respect, religious belief, shame). Honor is taught to children at a very young age. For example, if a child has a bad behavior, his family (especially the grandfather) will tell him don’t do that anymore, it’s shameful. If the child asks why, the response will be because God sees you and the child will stop his or her bad behavior. The foundation of the *Romanipen* and its supreme value is (avoiding) shame (Grigore 2008).

Good fortune (*baxt*) represents the luck that a Roma person will have if he or she respects the moral code. More exactly, *baxt* is a *reward* for respecting the moral code of the community (Grigore 2008).

Phralipen is the sentiment of brotherhood, and it refers to the fact that the whole community is in fact a big family. For this reason, the level of interaction and interdependence in a Roma community is very high. For a Roma person, a member of the community is a member of his or her family and they will protect that person in any given moment.

The last principle of *Romanipen* is the dichotomy between “pure” (*uxo*) and “impure” (*maxrime*). The whole life philosophy of the traditional Roma culture is based on this dichotomy (Grigore 2008), *uxo* meaning the respect for harmony and universal order. The principle of purity is interdependent

with the other three principles of the moral code. In traditional Roma culture, purity involves both the inner (soul) and outer (body) bodies, with physical purity reflecting moral purity. The best example to understand this is *illness*. In the Roma view, illness is the result of deviant actions that lead to the loss of luck (*baxt*) and divine protection, things associated with a sense of shame, and which lead to isolation from the community (*phralipe*) and implicitly a loss of honor (*pakiv*). The Roma view of purity is rooted in the mystical beliefs of the community, in the importance given to luck, as well as in unclean forces. If purity brings luck and respect to the one who respects its principle, impure behavior brings bad luck, perhaps the most feared thing for the individual and the community. At the same time, because standing, voice, and reputational vulnerability are unevenly distributed within the community, these mechanisms can also reproduce internal hierarchies, by granting greater authority to elders and high-status families, and by exposing women and younger members to forms of public shame that are not equally reversible.

Romanipen can be read, for AM purposes, as the background grammar that specifies what counts as a “wrong” worth naming and repairing; how responsibility is attributed (including kin-based responsibility and representation); and what “acceptance” must look like in order to count as genuine re-admission rather than mere avoidance of sanctions. In other words, *Romanipen* provides the presuppositions that make apology intelligible and uptake effective within the group. Analytically, *Romanipen* provides the background grammar that enables AM1 (naming the wrong) and AM2 (stabilizing responsibility), while also shaping what counts as an adequate burden-bearing act under AM3.

3.3. *The Community Court*

The violation of the norms that underpin a community’s moral codes – whether through the transgression of established rules or through acts perceived as disrespect toward other members – inevitably generates conflict. Within Kalderash communities, such disputes are first addressed through direct negotiation or other informal procedures like asking the help of a priest or talking with the elders of the families for advice. When these mechanisms prove insufficient, conflicts are referred to the *Kris*, an institution commonly described as the Roma Court. Alternative designations occasionally appear, such as *Kris Romani* – a more formalized term used especially by community elites – or *stabor*, a label introduced during the communist period that does not originate in the Romani language. Regardless of terminology, the *Kris* constitutes the most authoritative and, typically, the final

stage of internal conflict resolution, a point consistently emphasized by informants (Chereji & Sandu 2018, Sandu 2018).

In practice, the *Kris* takes the form of a community assembly convened to deliberate upon a specific dispute and to determine an appropriate resolution. Rather than operating as a specialized or professionalized court, it functions as a collective forum in which responsibility for judgment is distributed across the community. This participatory structure reflects a broader moral logic in which individuals are not understood as isolated actors but as embedded within dense networks of kinship and mutual obligation. As discussed above, this implies that members are considered accountable not only for their own actions but, to some extent, for those of their relatives and affiliates. Such a conception is grounded in the principles of *Romanipen*, particularly the emphasis on fraternity, solidarity, and attachment to the group (Sandu 2018).

From this perspective, the preference for internal adjudication is not simply pragmatic but normative. Resorting to external authorities – especially state legal institutions – is widely regarded as shameful, as it signals the community's inability to regulate itself and undermines collective autonomy. The *Kris* therefore operates not only as a mechanism of dispute settlement but also as an expression of legal pluralism and cultural sovereignty, marking the boundary between Roma self-governance and the jurisdiction of the state.

According to our sources, the primary objective of the *Kris* is reconciliation and the restoration of social harmony rather than the abstract determination of guilt (or innocence):

we say to them: Only God (*Devel*) judges everyone, we are trying to make peace. If you listen to us, it is good for your families, for you and for your future. No, go kill yourselves, cut yourselves and let me see where you end up. Our role is to bring peace and quiet to your families (interview, *krisinitor*, Târgu Jiu, 6 September 2017).

Justice, in this framework, is oriented toward repairing relationships and re-establishing equilibrium within the social body. In contrast to modern state legal systems, which are predominantly punitive and focus on individual culpability, Roma justice tends to be *compensatory* and *reintegrative*. Sanctions often emphasize restitution, mediation, and the reinsertion of the offender into community life, rather than exclusion. Only in particularly serious cases does the process become disintegrative, leading to forms of ostracism or expulsion. Moreover, responsibility is frequently conceptualized in distributive rather than strictly individual terms: conflict is understood as emerging from a web of relational tensions in which multiple parties bear some degree of accountability. In this sense, the *Kris* does not simply

identify a single guilty party but seeks to redistribute obligations and restore balance among all those involved. Justice thus appears less as a matter of retribution and more as a process of moral negotiation aimed at preserving the cohesion and continuity of the community.

From the perspective of conflict studies, the *Kris* can be understood less as a formal court of law and more as a hybrid mechanism that combines elements of mediation and arbitration (so-called “med-arb”)⁷, while remaining deeply embedded in Roma customary tradition. Its procedures do not neatly correspond to the institutionalized categories of state justice; rather, they reflect a vernacular legal practice shaped by local norms, moral expectations, and collective participation. For this reason, the *Kris* occupies an intermediate position between negotiated settlement and authoritative decision-making: a “med-arb” model adapted to the specific social and cultural logic of Roma community life. What follows is a brief outline of the *Kris* procedure (Sandu 2018).

Proceedings are led by *krisinitori*, a term that, in Romani, translates roughly as “those who bring peace”, although it is commonly rendered in Romanian as “peace judges”. These individuals are not professional jurists, but respected elders recognized for their moral authority, life experience, and reputation for impartiality. Their legitimacy derives less from formal credentials than from communal trust and social standing. Decisions are reached through consensus rather than unilateral pronouncement, and their service is compensated through an honorarium known as *vătrărit*, which symbolically acknowledges both the time invested and the responsibility assumed in restoring social harmony.

Importantly, the role of the *krisinitori* is closer to that of *facilitators* than adjudicators in the strict legal sense. Rather than imposing solutions, they guide the deliberative process, ensure that all parties are heard, and create the conditions under which disputants may negotiate an agreement themselves. In this respect, their authority is relational and process-oriented, aimed at managing dialogue and de-escalating tensions rather than enforcing abstract legal norms. The emphasis falls on enabling reconciliation and preserving community cohesion, rather than determining guilt through adversarial procedures. This facilitative dimension is illustrated in the following interview excerpt:

7 Med-arb is a hybrid alternative dispute resolution mechanism which combine the procedures of mediation with the ones of arbitration. Specifically, if two parties have a conflict and follow these procedures, for a specific amount of time, the third party acts first as a mediator trying to facilitate the negotiation between the parties; if an agreement can't be reached, the third-party transforms himself into an arbitrator and give the parties a mandatory decision. As we'll see below, especially when we'll talk about the role of the *krisinitor*, we'll see that they do the same during the *Kris*, especially when the verdict must be decided.

in the past, people used to say: “Let’s gather among ourselves, among the Gypsies” or “Let’s hold a judgment”. These terms like *Kris* or *stabor* are new; we simply knew it as a judgment. When disagreements arise between us and we cannot settle them on our own, we ask to go to judgment. We say *me man-gav kris* – something like ‘I ask for justice,’ but also ‘I ask for judgment.’ It is a way of restoring honor and respect. The judgment takes place at someone’s home [...] a decision is reached, we apologize (ask for forgiveness), and we receive a fine (a penalty) (interview, Kalderash man, Scoarța, 14 June 2017).

Another interlocutor described the role of this tribunal as follows:

we have our own judgment. If someone has a problem and decides to come here, it is very good for them, because it shows respect for all of us [...] we all take part in the judgment, because we want to listen and to see the resolution as well (interview, Kalderash man, Târgu Cărbunești, 17 June 2017).

The number of *krisinitori* must always be odd, typically three or five, to preclude the possibility of a tied verdict and to ensure that the process culminates in a clear and collectively accepted decision:

a judge has to be respected; otherwise, no one will listen to you. How could you judge us if you are quarrelsome or not someone worth looking up to [...] that’s how it is with us – respect matters. And so that there are no disputes, there must be three or five of us; rarely more. The number has to be odd so there are no problems with the verdict (interview, *krisinitor*, Târgu Jiu, 6 December 2017).

The *krisinitor* occupies a central position within the *Kris*, serving as both the guarantor of a fair verdict and the mediator tasked with reconciling disputing parties. In fulfilling this role, the *krisinitor* must possess an intimate knowledge of Roma customs, practices, and traditions, particularly those governing communal justice. Because these traditions are transmitted orally, the position requires not only wisdom but also a deep understanding of customary law and the methods by which it is applied.

Beyond technical knowledge, the *krisinitor* must demonstrate extensive life experience, enabling them to navigate the diverse situations and personalities encountered during proceedings. Economic independence is also crucial, as it reduces the risk of bias or susceptibility to influence by any party. Perhaps most importantly, the *krisinitor* must enjoy widespread respect within the community, as authority in this context is derived from social recognition rather than formal office. They are expected to embody the ethical standards of the community, serving as a moral exemplar and a trusted figure in the resolution of disputes.

Finally, it is important to recognize that the *krisinitori* is, fundamentally, a member of the community. They are bound by the same traditional values and moral expectations as other members, and their decisions are always subject to communal scrutiny. The fear of error or issuing a verdict perceived as unjust carries significant social consequences, potentially bringing shame both upon themselves and their lineage. This concern reflected in the fact that many *krisinitori* come from families with a history of holding the same role. The authority of the *krisinitori* thus rests not only on expertise and procedural skill but also on the maintenance of trust, respect, and moral integrity within the community.

During the *Kris*, the *krisinitori* consistently take into account the social and economic status of the parties involved. When one party is unable to meet the prescribed fines or financial compensation demanded by the other, the *krisinitori* highlight and contextualize this position before the entire assembly. They then leverage their authority, experience, and persuasive skills to encourage the other party to accept a reduced settlement, recognizing that insisting on full compensation in cases of incapacity would only prolong or escalate the conflict. This approach underscores the *restorative* logic of the *Kris*: conflict resolution is aimed at ending disputes and preserving communal harmony rather than maximizing punishment or enforcing abstract notions of justice. This calibrating role makes explicit a key claim from §2: re-admission procedures must impose costs that are socially meaningful, yet not so excessive as to foreclose reintegration. In this sense, the *krisinitori* do not simply “apply rules”; they manage the conditions under which an apologetic settlement (or its equivalent) can be accepted as adequate and can actually produce closure. In AM terms, the *Kris* is the setting in which AM2 (responsibility) and AM4 (third-party calibration) are made explicit, and where closure depends on AM6 (public certification).

Although there is variation, the *Kris* typically spans three days. The first day is dedicated to the party initiating the proceedings. During this stage, the *krisinitori* meet with the claimant, hear their account, present their interests and demands, and, where applicable, listen to the testimony of witnesses from their side. The second day follows the same procedure for the respondent, allowing them to present their case and witnesses. The final day is devoted to deliberation, the announcement of the verdict, and the rationale underpinning it. The proceedings are public: all community members have the right to attend and participate actively. This openness reinforces the collective nature of accountability and ensures that decisions are socially recognized and legitimate, reflecting the central principle that justice in the Roma context is inseparable from communal engagement and consensus.

In both the testimonies of the parties and those of witnesses, the principal marker of credibility is the oath, or *solax*. The most commonly employed oaths invoke death as a punishment for lying – expressions such as “may I

die” – or appeal to one’s children, considered the most solemn form of oath, for example: “may my children die,” “I swear on my children,” or “may I have no children.” In more complex cases, oaths may be sworn within a church and involve specific ritual objects, such as a cross, an icon of the Virgin Mary, or a pig’s head – an animal of particular symbolic significance for the Kalderash – always accompanied by a lit candle. These practices illustrate the interplay of superstition, moral authority, and ritualized performance within the *Kris*. False oaths carry dual sanctions: one invoked by the divine, potentially manifesting as illness or death, and another enforced by the community, typically through exclusion triggered by the perceived impurity of the individual who swore dishonestly.

Once all parties have been heard and participants confirm that they have no further statements, the *krisinitori* retire to deliberate and determine the verdict. Decisions are based on careful evaluation of facts and testimony, interpreted in accordance with *Romanipen*, customary practices, and precedent. Every verdict includes a sanction, either moral or financial. Financial penalties, primarily in the form of fines, are the most commonly applied today. Moral sanctions, now less frequent, may involve temporary or permanent ostracism from the community.

Given the overarching goal of the *Kris* – the restoration of peace rather than the abstract pursuit of justice – verdicts take into account the social and economic status of the parties, the circumstances and context of the events, prior conduct, and the character and standing of those involved. This is a paradigmatic instance of AM4: the settlement is calibrated so that the costs are socially meaningful yet compatible with reintegration. This also situates the *Kris* as a relational and context-sensitive system of justice, oriented toward conflict resolution and communal cohesion rather than rigid rule enforcement:

when a decision is reached, and if the judges see that the verdict has been accepted by both parties, we go out into the middle of the community. People come from both sides, and the ruling – the verdict – is announced in front of everyone so that the whole community is informed. We say: “Mr. X or Y, what happened has now been settled. We have reached this decision, which has been accepted by both sides. But from this moment on, anyone who breaks or ignores the judges’ decision will be committing a much more serious offense than before, because we have reconciled you, both of you accepted the reconciliation and our verdict. That would mean you are just being quarrelsome, and if you still want trouble, then don’t say there is peace and then try to take justice into your own hands. It’s better to say now, if you’re not satisfied, you can appeal. If you are unhappy with our decision, you can choose other judges and make an appeal—but you cannot take justice into your own hands (interview, *krisinitor*, Târgu Jiu, 6 September 2017).

This final public announcement performs the function emphasized in §2: it certifies a shared record of “what happened,” it makes uptake visible (“accepted by both sides”), and it turns acceptance into a status-changing act with collective effects. It functions as AM6: it publicly registers uptake and turns reconciliation into a binding social fact. The dispute is not considered closed because the parties feel reconciled, but because reconciliation has been publicly produced, witnessed, and rendered socially binding, so that reopening the conflict becomes a new and more serious offence.

3.4. *Fighting*

From the standpoint of the AM, regulated fighting is analytically relevant not as an “alternative” to apology, but as a functional equivalent that can accomplish the same sequence: public accountability, costly exposure, and a socially legible outcome that enables reintegration. In other words, what closes the dispute is not the violence as such, but the way the confrontation is framed, witnessed, and disciplined so that it can generate recognizable uptake, often explicitly described by interlocutors as “washing away” dishonor and making reconciliation possible. Regulated fighting can be read as a functional equivalent that compresses AM3 (costly acknowledgment) into a public performance and then pivots toward AM5/AM6 (uptake and certified closure).

While the *Kris Romani* represents a formalized form of justice, it is used relatively infrequently, as the Kalderash generally resort to this tribunal only as a last resort, when other mechanisms of reconciliation or informal dispute resolution have failed. By contrast, physical confrontations, such as fights or brawls, are far more common.

Among the Kalderash communities studied, these organized fights retain significant legitimacy and, like other internal conflict management strategies, are generally prioritized over formal judicial procedures. When a conflict arises, members of the community may plan and stage a fight in which the accused has the opportunity to restore their honor and be forgiven for their actions, while the injured party has a structured avenue for redress or revenge. According to our sources, this practice is also invoked when one of the parties refuses to submit to the *Kris*, serving as an alternative mechanism for resolving disputes and reaffirming communal norms:

if you have something against me, let's talk it out like men, we call two or three Roma. I make my appeal before the community so they can see that I am not guilty, that I am not looking for trouble or trying to take justice into my own hands.

If you don't want to listen to the community, then we settle it man to man, or family to family, and see who prevails. But first of all, I want to show the community – even if it ends up in a quarrel – that I avoided the conflict or that I am not at fault; you are the one who was looking for it (interview, *krisinitor*, Târgu Jiu, 6 December 2017).

In both cases, participants engage in this activity in the name of honor, which is why the fight must be fair and follow rules clearly established from the beginning:

we call it the defense of honor [...] you could say it's settling accounts between us [...] what happens is, two people have a conflict over something trivial, they confront each other, talk it out, go somewhere, and fight. But they don't fight recklessly [...] they must follow rules, a circle is made around them, it's not that simple. If the problem is minor, like a theft or an insult, only the guilty party and the injured party fight [...] there are also cases where the conflict is serious, like if the bride wasn't of age or a girl was abducted, then entire families fight, 10–15 from each side [...] those are more serious because they can escalate, there are many people, and anything can happen. Why do we do this? Well, a true Roma must have honor. In any conflict, both parties have their honor at stake – one because they did wrong, the other because they suffered or were shamed. The fight is, for us, like washing away dishonor. The one who wins is considered to have been right, because they were lucky to win, and the conflict ends. The loser acknowledges this, and reconciliation follows (interview, *krisinitor*, Târgu Jiu, 6 December 2017).

In AM terms, regulated fighting can be read as a functional equivalent of an apology ritual in an honor-centered setting. It is a publicly intelligible performance that reallocates status, imposes visible costs (risk, exposure, potential defeat), and culminates in a socially recognized form of uptake (“the loser acknowledges this”). The circle, the elders' involvement, and the rule against interference operate like the mediators and witnesses discussed in §2: they secure procedural form, prevent escalation, and make the outcome legible as a certified closure rather than a private act of revenge.

The excerpt above also illustrates that, for the Roma in question, the ability and opportunity to defend one's honor through a fight are highly significant. Because the matter at stake is honor, this system of combat is regulated: fights are scheduled and organized according to community traditions to ensure that the entire process is conducted fairly. All participants in our study emphasized the importance of these fights within their society and culture, with some referring to practices of the past and others to more recent events.

Nevertheless, the fighting system used by the Kalderash Roma in the communities I studied does not result in the perpetuation of violence. This is

largely due to the rules governing the system. In the following excerpt, one of the women interviewed explains the rules that are observed during a fight:

well, it wasn't allowed before, and it's the same now [...] no one is allowed [...] because if someone intervenes, a new fight would break out [...] it has rules, because it has to be fair (interview, *Kalderash* woman, Boișoara, 12 July 2017).

According to her, not only were the fights conducted fairly, but they also followed strict rules designed to regulate the system itself and to prevent the perpetuation of violence. Continuing from the previous excerpt, the woman highlights several important elements of this system. For example, she notes that men would strip to the waist before a fight to demonstrate that they were not hiding any objects or weapons. She also describes how the fights were organized to protect children and women, and she emphasizes the prohibition against interference by those not involved:

as it was – and still is, to some extent – it's like a ritual. They would strip, show that they were clean, and shout loudly – 'Look, we have come to fight cleanly, so that everyone sees we are true Roma and that we are right'. Then they would talk among themselves, or elders would intervene and explain how the fight would proceed, how to fight properly. Afterwards, they would address those around them, and sometimes a curse would even be placed on anyone who intervened. No one was allowed to interfere or take sides, because the fight would stop immediately [...] that person would be punished, and the others would have to fight on another day, because that fight was already 'spoiled'. In our tradition, the fights took place in the forest; women and children had nothing to do with it [...] the tradition still continues, though more rarely now (interview, *Kalderash* woman, Boișoara, 12 July 2017).

3.5. *Gossip and avoidance*

Beyond the *Kris* and organized fights, the *Kalderash* Roma in the three communities with whom we worked during field research employ two additional mechanisms for managing conflict and sanctioning deviations from communal norms: *gossip* and *avoidance*. These practices, though less formalized, play a significant role in everyday processes of social regulation and moral control.

Avoidance, as a form of informal justice, can exert a powerful influence within small-scale communities (Bohannan, 1957; Leach, 1954). In addition to the ostracism formally imposed as a sanction following the *Kris*, avoidance may take several forms. The most common consists of the sus-

pension of communication between the parties involved. In such cases, individuals continue to reside within the same settlement but refrain from interacting with one another. From a structural perspective, this type of avoidance allows the group to retain its members, who continue to contribute economically and socially to the collective. At the same time, however, it often prolongs tensions, as conflicts may persist for months, years, or even indefinitely without reaching a definitive resolution. From an AM perspective, avoidance often marks a failure or suspension of AM5/AM6: without uptake and certification, the dispute remains socially “open” and reputational sanctions become chronic.

In this respect, avoidance – and gossip as well – differs markedly from the more formal mechanisms discussed earlier. Both the *Kris* and organized fights, despite their distinct procedures, are oriented toward *closure*: provided that the parties participate, respect the rules, and accept the outcome, the dispute is considered settled and social equilibrium is restored. By contrast, gossip and avoidance rarely produce such clear endings. Instead, they may sustain or even intensify antagonisms over time. This contrast makes §2 framework sharper: where there is no recognized pathway toward re-admission – namely, no ritualized apology, no certified equivalent, no collectively validated uptake – conflict can remain socially “unclosed,” and reputational sanctions can become chronic. At the same time, gossip often functions as one of the engines that can *push* disputes toward the institutions described above: by making the alleged wrong publicly visible and difficult to ignore, it can *pressure* the parties toward a forum (such as the *Kris*) where responsibility can be stabilized, and closure can be officially produced. When that shift does not occur, gossip and avoidance tend to sustain exclusion rather than resolve it.

Indeed, according to our interlocutors, these practices can sometimes escalate into long-standing feuds or vendettas. Gossip circulates reputational damage across kin networks, reinforcing moral judgments and social boundaries, while avoidance fragments everyday relations and undermines opportunities for reconciliation. From an anthropological perspective, these mechanisms operate as diffuse but pervasive forms of *social control*: rather than resolving conflict through formal deliberation, they regulate behavior through pressure, stigma, and the threat of social exclusion. Consequently, while less visible than the *Kris* or public confrontations, they may have equally profound – and sometimes more enduring – effects on community cohesion:

[...] it doesn't last just a few years, but generations... people gossip about all sorts of things, and it just continues like that (interview, *Kalderash* man, Boișoara, 20 May 2017).

The situation described above highlights the ongoing nature of a vendetta. One of the women interviewed also discussed the long-lasting nature of these disputes and the importance of avoidance by family members during a conflict:

[...] we all see each other at weddings and funerals, at events like these. That's when you are respected, when many people come to the events. But there are cases when you don't go – anyone could be there from the community, and you don't go because you know some troublemakers might show up, and that would mean problems [...] you have to stay away from them (interview, *Kalderash* woman, Boișoara, 20 May 2017).

Gossip is another strategy used by members of the three communities studied in Vâlcea and Gorj to manage deviant behavior informally:

[...] in a Roma community, when there is a conflict, the women are the first to react. One shouts at the other, then someone else shouts at someone from the other side, and so the community becomes informed. They have to expose the shame, meaning that the community must see clearly what happened... to make the truth visible. A suspicion is voiced, and very often, the parties who end up at judgment were not actually guilty. But if two women argued, each would call out their side, and the truth had to be clarified, because the community was informed. The gossip might claim that someone did wrong, acted immorally, or committed a shameful act, and it had to be brought to light. Discussions took place openly in the community, not inside houses. If someone had something on their mind, they would go to the center of the community, and the women would start shouting and talking, so that the entire community was informed. This was the women's goal: to make the community aware and to publicly expose the person responsible (interview, *Kalderash* woman, Boișoara, 20 May 2017).

According to the interlocutor cited above, gossip occupies a particularly important place within *Kalderash* communities precisely because of their small scale and dense social networks, where information – especially negative information – circulates rapidly. In such closely knit settings, reputations are highly visible and socially consequential. Gossip therefore functions as a powerful moral sanction: it is closely associated with shame and can result in the loss of respect and social standing within the group.

Often initiated and circulated by women, gossip performs at least two interrelated social functions. First, it operates as an informal communication network or local “news bulletin”, *alerting* the community to the existence of tensions, transgressions, or emerging disputes. In this sense, gossip can act as a precursor to more formal procedures, effectively triggering the Kris by bringing allegations into the public sphere where they require clarification

and adjudication. The *Kris*, as the community's most legitimate forum for establishing facts and restoring order, becomes the appropriate institutional response to rumors that demand verification.

Second, gossip serves a *preventive* and regulatory role. The possibility of becoming the subject of talk – of having one's behavior scrutinized and morally evaluated by others – functions as a deterrent against deviance from communal norms. Fear of public embarrassment and reputational damage encourages conformity and self-discipline. As the examples below will illustrate, members often avoid actions that might generate rumors precisely because such exposure is experienced as deeply shameful:

if I were to go broke and go to our meetings and start trouble and behave very badly with everyone, then I would get a bad nickname and people would say they wouldn't want me to get involved or participate in the meetings anymore (interview, Kalderash man, Boișoara, 15 March 2017).

Another person added:

for us, respect is a big thing, maybe second only to family and children; when a gossip appears, for that specific amount of time, you've lost it, you've lost everything, who will want to marry your children? (interview, Kalderash woman, Boișoara, 20 July 2017).

From an anthropological perspective, gossip thus operates as a diffuse but effective mechanism of social control. Rather than relying on formal sanctions, it shapes conduct through the management of honor, reputation, and belonging. In this way, everyday speech becomes a form of normative enforcement, demonstrating how regulation in small-scale communities is embedded in ordinary social interaction rather than confined to institutional arenas.

3.6. Re-acceptance Rituals

This section focuses on the “end” of the AM sequence: how AM5 (uptake) becomes observable through re-acceptance gestures, and how AM-6 (closure) is stabilized – sometimes through the ritualized handling of money as a costly, but explicitly non-commodifying, signal under AM-3. As noted earlier, the Kalderash court and regulated fighting system together constitute a set of dispute-resolution mechanisms through which processes of social reintegration become clearly visible. These are not simply procedures for settling disagreements, but structured ceremonies of re-acceptance that mark a person's return to the moral community. Among them, the Roma Court (*Kris*) occupies a central role. It addresses conflicts that arise from

violations of tradition and shared moral codes, while simultaneously functioning as a ritual of readmission for those who have transgressed communal norms. In this sense, the court does more than judge wrongdoing: it publicly stages accountability and orchestrates the offender's reintegration. This dynamic is illustrated in the following fragment, where the accused openly acknowledges his actions and participates in the proceedings with full awareness of the sanction he is expected to receive:

if we have two people, yes, and one knows he did something wrong, he will be called to judgment by the other and before the judgment he will prepare himself with money because he knows that they have to pay to end things between them. He apologizes, gives the fine and receives forgiveness [...] that's what usually happens (interview, *krisinitor*, Târgu Jiu, Romania, 6 June 2017).

This fragment suggests, as anticipated, that the purpose of judgment is not merely to determine guilt or impose sanctions, but to offer the offender an opportunity for rehabilitation before the community. Through apology and compensation – most often expressed in the form of a *fine* – the wrongdoer demonstrates accountability and readiness to be readmitted into collective life. In this sense, the fine should not be understood simply as punishment, but as part of a broader ceremony of *re-acceptance*. As the interviewee explains, the accused typically arrives at the trial already carrying the necessary money, fully aware that compensation will be required. This raises an important question: if restitution is expected, why not compensate the victim privately, before reaching the *Kris*? The answer lies in Kalderash traditions and in *Romanipen*, where the community takes precedence over the individual. Conflict is never treated as a purely personal matter. Because wrongdoing disrupts the moral order of the group as a whole, resolution must also be collective and public. For this reason, disputes are expected to pass through the *Kris*, whose function extends beyond mediation. It publicly exposes the offense, subjects the guilty party to communal scrutiny and, through that very exposure, enables reintegration:

[...] it still comes to judgment and we have a saying: No matter what you do, even if it is a criminal act, it is judged, but there is no peace between them until the judgment is reached gypsy. Regardless of whether the justice makes a decision, it's still a gypsy judgment it's enough There were cases when they did not listen to us. The court judges, but there is no peace. Even if the court made a decision [...] here are cases that reached the court, crimes, you can't get into gypsy here and over crime, that one goes to prison [...] or the family, whenever he comes from prison we still judge. That remains to be put let us come with the gypsy judgment that he paid for what he did, but peace in there is no family until the gypsy judgment is made [...] the gypsy must

hear what she has to say, why did he do what he did, to judge and ask for forgiveness from everyone [...] the conditions we also put them, because we are the trust [...] if they still commit or violate rule, they also come to us, to put us in mind, to be held accountable by us, that they are not allowed to do their justice until they come to us (interview, *krisinitor*, Ramnicul Vâlcea, 12 December 2017).

In this way, the *Kris* can therefore be understood as a mandatory ceremony of readmission. Peace between the parties is considered legitimate only once the community has heard their accounts, evaluated their explanations, and witnessed the settlement. The community's presence and consent give the verdict its moral force; without this collective endorsement, reconciliation would remain incomplete. Seen from this perspective, it becomes clearer why the *Kris* is convened even when disputes have already been addressed by the formal justice system. State courts may punish wrongdoing, but they do not provide the offender with the opportunity to apologize before the community or to restore their moral standing within it:

I'm going to tell you something about our judgment that will surprise you, but it's normal for us for whom it is true. It was a dangerous combination, a lot of money, the woman he had messed with the wrong person, finally, and this one with the money given and the dishonest woman sued him and he had to pay him money [...] he took the money, set it on fire in front of us and forgave him (interview, *krisinitor*, Ramnicul Vâlcea, 12 December 2017).

The destruction of the payment is best read as an anti-commodification device: it preserves AM3 as a costly signal while reaffirming that what is restored is membership and honor, not a market balance.

The ritual character of judgment becomes especially visible in moments that exceed strictly legal logic. In one case, for example, the injured party publicly burned the compensation money in front of the *krisinitori* and the assembled crowd. When asked about the meaning of this gesture, the participant explained that it signaled that reconciliation and public apology mattered more than material gain. The act transformed compensation from an economic transaction into a symbolic statement about restored relationships. Once again, judgment appears less as punishment and more as a ceremony of re-acceptance.

Such practices are closely aligned with principles commonly associated with restorative justice. Re-acceptance is not limited to formal proceedings but is followed by a range of gestures that mark the normalization of relations. These may be simple and informal – a smile, a handshake, a nod of approval – or more formal, such as public statements of forgiveness delivered before witnesses. During our fieldwork, we encountered several examples of these everyday rituals of reintegration. One woman, who had previously

run away from home to live with her partner, described how her mother initially expressed disapproval by avoiding her and refusing to welcome her back. Over time, however, this distance softened and was gradually replaced by small gestures of acceptance that signaled forgiveness. Through these ordinary yet meaningful acts, reintegration was achieved not through formal judgment, but through the slow restoration of everyday social ties:

[...] at first, my mother smiled at me and invited us for a cup of tea, everything was in rule as if nothing had happened (interview, Roma Caldărara, Târgu Cărbunefi, Romania, 20 September 2017).

As we can see, the girl's mother uses gestures of re-acceptance for the girl, for her lover and for the deed committed. Using certain gestures, apparently simple, the mother forgives them and accepts them as family members again.

Another example shows the end of a *Kris* and the gesture of re-acceptance within it:

[...] took the money, spat on the last paper (banknote), they spat in their palms and they shook hands, like with us, and the one who was right took the floor – me, in front of you and of God, I declare myself reconciled, I forgive this one and from this day forward I have no other demands from him (interview, *krisinitor*, Târgu Jiu, Romania, 6 December 2017).

Also:

[...] at the end, I told them that I don't pay them anything, but I would like to know how the victim would feel if the culprit asked for forgiveness [...] this culprit said he accepts to apologize because that's our tradition [...] she raised her voice to hear him, the rest and said I, X, ask forgiveness from Y for this and that thing and from today I promise not to mess with him or his family again [...] in response, the other reached out a hand and in an equally high tone publicly accepted the apology and forgave him [...] otherwise there is no peace [...] then he said something very precious to us [...] may God give us health at all of them [...] a sign that he really forgave him (interview, *krisinitor*, Târgu Jiu, Romania, 6 December 2017).

In this case, the gesture of re-acceptance has a solemn air, it is performed in front of the audience and takes the form of a proclamation in which he pardons the guilty and removes any kind of other claims that could still have them. According to our source, this public gesture of forgiveness is also accompanied by promises to improve the relationship or future economic collaborations with the goal to show the community that the tensions between the parties have been removed, they hold no grudges and continue to

be the members of the community for which they provide their economic contribution or social.

4. Concluding Remarks

This article has argued that apology should not be understood as a simple expression of regret or a matter of individual psychology. Rather, as the AM demonstrates, apology is a fundamentally social act: a ritualized practice through which communities reorganize responsibility, reassert moral hierarchies, and make renewed coexistence possible. Far from being peripheral to conflict resolution, apology constitutes one of its central technologies. The Kalderash case shows that reconciliation is not achieved primarily through abstract norms or formal law, but through embodied performances – assemblies before the *Kris*, public gestures of compensation, regulated confrontations, and the quiet yet powerful circulation of gossip and avoidance. Taken together, these practices form a coherent moral and institutional ecology in which apology operates as the decisive mechanism that transforms rupture into order.

This ethnography yields three central claims. First, apologies are not private moral sentiments but *institutional transactions*. They require a collectively recognized narrative of wrongdoing, distribute accountability across kin networks rather than isolated individuals, and depend on public witnessing to become socially binding. Closure, in this sense, is not something one feels; it is something a community declares. Through ritual certification, conflict is converted into a settled social fact.

Second, apology unfolds within what can best be described as an *economy of honor*. Words alone carry little weight. Instead, sincerity must be materialized through payments, gifts, commensality, or the assumption of visible risks and humiliations. These costs render commitment legible. By making repair observable and tangible, they stabilize trust in densely interconnected social worlds where reputation is both fragile and enduring. Apology, therefore, works less as speech than as *sacrifice*: a public expenditure of status and resources that demonstrates willingness to re-enter the moral community.

Third, and crucially, these practices are not inherently emancipatory. The same rituals that restore relations also reproduce *power*. Because apology is embedded in existing hierarchies of gender, age, and authority, it can compel submission as easily as it fosters reconciliation. Ritual compliance may conceal coercion, and reintegration may come at the price of unequal recognition. Apology thus operates as a double-edged instrument, simultaneously repairing social ties and reaffirming the very structures that produced the conflict. Any account that romanticizes customary justice as purely restorative risks overlooking this constitutive ambivalence.

Theoretically, the AM contributes to anthropological debates on ritual, legal pluralism, and restorative justice by shifting attention from interior states to observable practices. Treating apology as a socially evaluated signal rather than a window into sincerity clarifies how communities create enforceable settlements without written contracts or state institutions. What matters is not whether remorse is “genuine”, but whether it is publicly enacted in forms that others recognize as binding. This perspective situates apology alongside other ritual processes that transform uncertainty into order by staging accountability before witnesses. It also suggests that similar mechanisms are likely to recur across diverse customary systems, making apology a comparative entry point into the anthropology of justice.

At the same time, our claims must be grounded in the limits of the evidence. The analysis is based on a circumscribed set of communities and a specific historical moment, and local variation undoubtedly exists. Moreover, the apparent male dominance of formal arenas such as the *Kris* contrasts with women’s substantial influence in informal domains of regulation, pointing to forms of power that remain partially obscured by official procedures. A fuller account of apology practices must therefore attend more carefully to gendered and generational dynamics, as well as to the longer-term effects of ritual settlements. Whether these performances generate durable transformations or merely temporary truces remains an open empirical question.

Even with these limits, the broader implication is clear: apology should be recognized as a core social technology through which communities govern themselves in the absence – or alongside – state law. For external actors, the lesson is not simply to incorporate such practices instrumentally, but to understand the moral worlds they sustain and the inequalities they may entrench. Engagement requires both respect for local legitimacy and critical awareness of the power relations embedded in ritual order.

Ultimately, this study invites a shift in how we think about conflict resolution. Reconciliation is not primarily achieved through rules or procedures, but through collectively staged acts that reconstitute belonging. Apology, in this sense, is less about saying “sorry” than about remaking the social fabric. By foregrounding apology as a ritual practice of accountability, the Apology Model offers an anthropological framework for understanding how communities transform disorder into order, how they remember and forget injury, and how they continuously negotiate the fragile balance between dignity, authority, and coexistence.

References

- Abu-Nimer, M., (1996), Conflict Resolution Approaches: Western and Middle Eastern Lessons and Possibilities, *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, 55, 1, pp. 35-52. doi: 10.1111/j.1536-7150.1996.tb02706.x
- Ahmed, S., (2004), *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press.
- Austin, J.L., (1962), *How to Do Things with Words*, Oxford, Clarendon Press.
- Bennett, C., (2008), *The Apology Ritual: A Philosophical Theory of Punishment*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Benoist, J., (2012), *Cosa rende sociali gli atti sociali? Osservazioni sul realismo sociale di Adolf Reinach*, in De Vecchi, F., ed., *Eidetica del diritto e ontologia sociale*, Sesto San Giovanni-Udine, Mimesis, 2012, pp. 229-244.
- Bohannon, P., (1957), *Justice and Judgement Among the Tiv*, London, Oxford University Press.
- Bottoms, A., (2003), *Some Sociological Reflections on Restorative Justice*, in von Hirsch, A., Roberts, J.V., Bottoms, A., Roach, K., Schiff, M., eds., *Restorative Justice and Criminal Justice: Competing or Reconcilable Paradigms?*, Oxford-Portland, Hart, pp. 79-114.
- Braithwaite, J., Gohar, A., (2014), Restorative Justice, Policing and Insurgency: Learning from Pakistan, *Law & Society Review*, 48, 3, pp. 531-561. doi: 10.1111/lasr.12091
- Brutti, N., (2017), *Law and Apologies. Profilo comparatistico delle scuse riparatorie*, Torino, Giappichelli, 2017.
- Celermajer, D., (2009), *The Sins of the Nation and the Ritual of Apologies*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Chereji, C. R., Sandu, C., (2018), Romania: The Kris Procedures. A Brief Incursion in the Roma Community-Based Dispute Management Mechanism. *Conflict Studies Quarterly*, 24, pp. 3-11.
- Cirillo, L., Colón de Carvajal, I., Ticca, A.C., (2016), I'm Sorry + Naming the Offense: A Format for Apologizing, *Discourse Processes*, 53, 1-2, pp. 83-96. doi:10.1080/0163853X.2015.1056691.
- Drew, P., Hepburn, A., Margutti, P., Galatolo, R., (2016), Introduction to the Special Issue on Apologies in Discourse, *Discourse Processes*, 53, 1-2, pp. 1-4. doi:10.1080/0163853X.2015.1056689.
- Goffman, E., (1971), *Relations in Public: Microstudies of the Public Order*, New York, Basic Books.
- Grigore, D., Sarău, G., (2006), *Istorie și tradiții rrome*, București, Editura Salvați Copiii.
- Grigore, D., (2008), Romanipen "Fundamente ale identității romilor", in Turda, G., ed., *Monitor cultural-educativ*, București, Miram, pp. 72-90.
- Hann, C., (2000), *Social Anthropology*, London, Hodder & Stoughton.

- Horelt, M.-A., (2019), *Dramas of Reconciliation: A Performance Approach to the Analysis of Political Apologies in International Relations*, Baden-Baden, Nomos.
- Ide, R., (1998) 'Sorry for Your Kindness': Japanese Interactional Ritual in Public Discourse, *Journal of Pragmatics*, 29, 5, pp. 509-529. doi: 10.1016/S0378-2166(98)80006-4
- Kampf, Z., Löwenheim, N., (2012), Rituals of Apology in the Global Arena, *Security Dialogue*, 43, 1, pp. 43-60. doi: 10.1177/0967010611431095
- Lang, S.D., (2002), Sulha Peacemaking and the Politics of Persuasion, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 31, 3, 2002, pp. 52-66. doi: 10.1525/jps.2002.31.3.52
- Lazare, A., (2005), *On Apology*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Leach, E.R. (1954), *Political Systems of Highland Burma: A Study of Kachin Social Structure*, London, Bell and Sons.
- Mani, R., (2002), *Beyond Retribution: Seeking Justice in the Shadows of War*, Cambridge, Polity Press.
- Mannozi, G., Lodigiani, G.A., (2017), *La giustizia riparativa. Formanti, parole e metodi*, Torino, Giappichelli.
- Mazzola, R., (2020), *Componere. Offesa e riconciliazione nell'ordinamento vendicatorio*, Milano, Giuffrè.
- Mazzola, R., (2021), Sulla natura della composizione. A partire dalla (meta) teoria del dono di Marcel Hénaff, *Rivista internazionale di filosofia del diritto*, 98, 1, pp. 129-154.
- Mazzola, R., (2023), *Chiedere scusa. Studio di filosofia del diritto*, Napoli, Editoriale Scientifica.
- Mazzola, R. (2025), Riti di riconciliazione. La giustizia riparativa in ottica transculturale, *Jura Gentium*, 22, 1, pp. 77-98.
- Minow, M., (2003), *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness: Facing History after Genocide and Mass Violence*, Boston, Beacon Press.
- Moisă, F., (2000). Experiences, achievements, and perspectives on programs for Roma, *International seminar on Roma issues*, Cluj-Napoca, January.
- Owen, M., (1985), *Apologies and Remedial Interchanges: A Study of Language Use in Social Interaction*, Den Haag, Mouton.
- Pely, D., (2009), Resolving Clan-based Disputes Using the Sulha, the Traditional Dispute Resolution Process of the Middle East, *Dispute Resolution Journal*, 63, 4, pp. 80-88.
- Pely, D., (2011), Where East Not Always Meets West: Comparing the Sulha Process to Western-Style Mediation and Arbitration, *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, 28, 4, pp. 427-440. doi: 10.1002/CRQ.20028.
- Piasere, L., (2016), *I Rom d'Europa. Una storia moderna*, Roma-Bari, Laterza.
- Rappaport, R. A., (2002), *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

- Rohne, H.-C., Arsovska, J., Artesen, I., (2008), *Challenging Restorative Justice: State-based Conflicts, Mass Victimisation and the Changing Nature of Warfare*, in Artesen, I., Arsovska, J., Rohne, H.-C., Valiñas, M., Vanspauwen, K., eds., *Restoring Justice after Large-scale Violent Conflicts: Kosovo, DR Congo and the Israeli-Palestinian Case*, Portland, Willan, pp. 3-45.
- Sandu, C., (2018), Romania: Traditional Conflict Resolution Mechanisms Used by the Roma Communities, *Conflict Studies Quarterly*, 22, pp. 95-108.
- Scheff, T.J., (2000), Shame and the Social Bond: A Sociological Theory, *Sociological Theory*, 18, pp. 84-99. doi: 10.1111/0735-2751.00089
- Saxon, E.D., (2018), *Peacemaking and Transformative Mediation: Sulha Practices in Palestine and the Middle East*, Cham, Palgrave.
- Smith, N., (2008), *I Was Wrong: The Meaning of Apologies*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Stănescu, C., (2004). *Romii căldărari*, in Alexandrescu, G., ed., *Tradiții ale romilor din spațiul românesc*, București, Organizația Salvați Copiii, pp. 23–31.
- Tavuchis, N., (1991), *Mea Culpa: A Sociology of Apology and Reconciliation*, Stanford University Press, Stanford.
- Teitel, R.G., (2002), *Transitional Justice*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Terradas Saborit, Ignasi, (2008), *Justicia vindicatoria : de la ofensa e indefensión a la imprecación y el oráculo, la vindicta y el talión, la ordalia y el juramento, la composición y la reconciliación*, Madrid, CSIC.
- Turner, V., (1980), Social Dramas and Stories about Them, *Critical Inquiry*, 7, 1, pp. 141-168. doi: 10.1086/448092
- Turner, V., (1982), *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play*, New York, Performing Arts Journal Publications.
- Tuso, H., Flaherty, M. P., eds., (2016), *Creating the Third Force: Indigenous Processes of Peacemaking*, Lanham-Boulder-New York-London, Lexington.
- Tuso, H., (2016), *Indigenous Processes of Conflict Resolution. Neglected Methods of Peacemaking by the New Field of Conflict Resolution*, in Tuso, H., Flaherty, M. P., eds., *Creating the Third Force: Indigenous Processes of Peacemaking*, Lanham-Boulder-New York-London, Lexington, pp. 27-52.
- Wagatsuma, H., Rosett, A., (1986), The Implications of Apology: Law and Culture in Japan and the United States, *Law & Society Review*, 20, 4, pp. 461-498.
- Wright, M., (2011), Restorative Justice: A New Response to Crime and Conflict, *Mediaries*, 17-18, pp. 11-56.
- Yamasaki, J.W., (2006), *Japanese Apologies for World War II: A Rhetorical Study*, London-New York, Routledge.
- Zehr, H., (2002), *The Little Book of Restorative Justice*, Intercourse, Good Books.

