

Narrative Closure in Honor killing Cases: How Judgments Stabilise Meaning, Eliminate Ambiguity, and Produce Sentencing Certainty

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ABSTRACT

Honor killing judgments were often read as straightforward applications of homicide doctrine, yet the written reasons frequently performed additional work by stabilising contested meanings. This article examined how criminal courts produced narrative closure in honor killing cases by narrowing interpretive possibilities, fixing causal chains, and translating a settled story into sentencing certainty. A qualitative judicial decision analysis was conducted using a structured protocol that segmented judgments into factual narrative, evidentiary assessment, legal qualification, and sentencing reasons, then mapped closure across causal, moral, evidentiary, and sentencing dimensions. The analysis found that judgments commonly elevated a reputational “trigger” into the dominant cause, embedded respectability scripts that redistributed moral weight, and constructed credibility hierarchies that converted honor claims into neutral-seeming facts. These moves frequently enabled mitigation drift, in which honor-based frames softened perceived agency without explicit doctrinal endorsement. The study concluded that relevance boundaries in judicial reason-giving were necessary to prevent honor narratives from operating as implicit excuses while preserving their probative value for **planning, coercive control, and collective enforcement.**



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INTRODUCTION

Honor killing cases place criminal courts in a peculiar position (Kadir, 2026b). Homicide law supplies a clear prohibition, yet the case is rarely narrated as a straightforward episode of unlawful violence. Parties, witnesses, and community intermediaries may frame the events through an honor vocabulary that recodes the act as a response to shame, reputational injury, or the restoration of family order (Mammadova & Joamets, 2021). That vocabulary does not merely describe; it proposes a moral logic for why violence occurred and how it should be judged. The court is therefore asked to do more than determine what happened. It must decide which meanings are legally admissible, which are merely contextual, and which are normatively dangerous because they can shift blame away from the perpetrator (Abdullah, 2023).

Judgment writing is where this struggle over meaning becomes durable. A criminal judgment is not a neutral transcript of the trial record but a crafted account that selects facts, orders them into a causal chain, and converts contested testimony into a stabilised version of reality (Pears & Eastale, 2025). What looks like routine fact-finding often involves a deeper operation of reason-giving that produces coherence and authority. In honor killing adjudication, this operation is especially consequential because it determines whether honor is treated as legally irrelevant motive, as probative evidence of planning and control, or as a soft pathway into implicit mitigation (de Castro Rodrigues et al., 2023). The narrative architecture of a judgment can make a killing appear as a calculated enforcement of family governance or as an emotionally compelled reaction to humiliation. Those are not simply stylistic differences; they distribute agency and culpability differently.

Existing scholarship on honor-based violence has advanced indispensable agendas by mapping patterns of gendered control, tracing diasporic dynamics, documenting institutional failures, and

evaluating reforms that abolish explicit honor excuses or mitigation (Matos et al., 2025). Doctrinal studies often highlight statutory design and appellate standards, while socio-legal work explains how community norms and policing practices shape case trajectories (Mappaselleng & Kadir, 2025). Yet a gap persists at the level where law becomes text. Too often, judicial reasoning is treated as either a mechanical application of rules to facts or a thin justificatory layer over deeper social forces. Both views obscure a crucial mechanism: courts author narratives that resolve ambiguity, install a moral framing, and make the sentence appear not only lawful but natural.

This article centres that mechanism by analysing narrative closure in honor killing judgments. “Closure” here refers to the set of discursive practices through which a judgment stabilises meaning by narrowing interpretive possibilities and presenting the selected account as the most reasonable reading of the record. Closure is produced through seemingly technical moves: chronologising events to create inevitability, defining what counts as a relevant trigger, building credibility hierarchies among witnesses, and adopting conventional reason-giving formulas that mask normative choices as evidentiary necessity. The critical risk is not overt endorsement of honor, but the conversion of honor claims into neutral-seeming “facts” about provocation, domestic conflict, or social pressure, which can reduce perceived voluntariness and recalibrate blame (Brennan & Myhill, 2022). At the same time, closure can also work in the opposite direction by treating honor talk as evidence of instrumental violence, collective orchestration, or coercive control that aggravates culpability (Ridley et al., 2023).

The inquiry is organised around three questions. First, what recurring forms of closure appear in judicial reasons in honor killing cases, particularly in how judgments organise causality, allocate moral weight, and settle credibility disputes. Second, which narrative techniques are used to eliminate ambiguity that would otherwise complicate culpability assessments, including evidence of prior threats, patterns of control, or alternative accounts of the alleged “trigger.” Third, how does closure translate into sentencing outcomes, including the subtle drift by which honor shifts from motive to implicit mitigation, or conversely becomes an aggravating marker of disciplined violence (Faisal et al., 2023). By answering these questions, the article offers a framework for auditing judicial reason-giving in honor killing adjudication and for designing guidance that blocks honor narratives from functioning as de facto excuses while preserving the capacity to treat them as probative of planning, control, and heightened blameworthiness.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study used normative legal research with a conceptual approach. The legal materials consisted of primary legal materials in the form of selected criminal court judgments on unlawful killing in which honor or reputation narratives appeared in the court’s reasoning, and secondary legal materials in the form of recent journal articles on judicial reasoning, sentencing, and honor-based violence. The materials were collected through document-based research by tracing, selecting, and organising accessible judgments and scholarly sources that matched the study focus. The analysis applied qualitative doctrinal analysis to the text of judgments by identifying recurring patterns in how facts, evidence, and sentencing reasons were structured, then interpreting how those patterns stabilised meaning and supported the final legal conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Causal Closure

Causal closure is the judgment’s most powerful technique for making an honor killing appear narratively “settled.” It works by installing a privileged causal chain—typically a trigger-and-response storyline—through which the court frames the killing as the foreseeable culmination of a sequence rather than a contestable choice among alternatives (Ali, 2024). The point is not that courts openly excuse violence. The more subtle operation is that causality is narrated in a manner that reallocates explanatory weight: attention moves toward the precipitating episode of shame, conflict, or alleged misconduct, while the perpetrator’s agency is recast as constrained by circumstance, emotion, or social expectation. Once the causal chain is stabilised, later stages of legal qualification and sentencing inherit a pre-shaped moral landscape in which the killing already appears “understandable,” even if still unlawful (Taylor, 2024).

A recurring mechanism is trigger engineering. The judgment selects one moment as the decisive spark—an act interpreted as dishonoring the family, a perceived sexual transgression, a refusal to

comply with familial control—and then treats that moment as the hinge that converts normal life into violence. Technically, this selection can be presented as mere chronology. In practice, it is a normative choice about relevance (Dai, 2024). When the trigger is narratively elevated, other causal materials are pushed into the background: prior intimidation, repeated surveillance, coercive constraints on mobility, or a longer arc of disputes that reveal domination rather than sudden humiliation. The closure effect emerges when the text repeatedly returns to the trigger as the key to meaning, allowing the killing to be narrated as an outcome that “follows” from dishonor rather than an act that imposes violence to enforce hierarchy (Munro et al., 2024).

Context-as-cause is a second mechanism. Here, the judgment invokes social pressure, communal gossip, customary expectations, or family reputation not simply as background but as explanatory force. The court may describe a social environment in which dishonor is portrayed as unbearable, with reputational loss framed as a form of injury that requires restoration (Makouar, 2024). In narrative terms, this move translates normative claims into causal facts: honor becomes something that “drives” behaviour. The risk is that the legal analysis begins to treat a culturally saturated account of reputational injury as if it were equivalent to a legally cognisable constraint, smoothing the path toward diminished agency. The causal chain is then built around an implicit proposition that pressure is a cause that diminishes choice, even when the judgment does not explicitly adopt any doctrinal category that would warrant such diminution (Kadir et al., 2026).

A third mechanism is the foreclosure of alternatives. Narrative closure is strongest when the judgment does not merely tell one causal story but actively prevents competing causal stories from standing as plausible. This foreclosure can take the form of omission—failing to mention patterns of prior threats or the availability of non-violent responses—or the form of rhetorical downgrading—mentioning such materials only to treat them as tangential, unproven, or emotionally irrelevant. Alternative causal accounts that would implicate planning, instrumental violence, or collective enforcement often require attention to temporal structure: what happened before the alleged trigger, what communications occurred, what preparations were made, whether weapons were obtained in advance, and whether the defendant exercised control over the victim’s movements. When a judgment compresses these temporal details, it becomes easier to narrate the killing as sudden and reactive, thereby stabilising the causal narrative around the honor trigger (Khayam, 2022).

The causal narrative is further stabilised through chronologisation and inevitability cues. Judgments frequently rely on sequential ordering—first dishonor, then confrontation, then violence—to make the progression appear natural. Yet sequence is not causality, and causal closure depends on conflating the two. Linguistic signals matter: verbs that depict escalation as automatic, connectors that imply necessity rather than choice, and descriptions of emotion that function as causal engines. The more the judgment adopts a language of “escalation” and “loss of control” without precise evidentiary anchoring, the more causal closure is achieved by narrative plausibility rather than by adjudicative demonstration (Kadir, 2026a). The result is a story in which the perpetrator is located inside a chain of events that seems to propel him forward, and the moral burden of explaining the violence subtly shifts away from deliberate choice toward situational propulsion.

In honor killing cases, causal closure also interacts with evidentiary and moral dimensions in ways that are mutually reinforcing. When the judgment treats the honor trigger as the core cause, witnesses who endorse the trigger narrative may be rendered more credible because their accounts fit the privileged causal chain (Rees, 2025). Conversely, testimony that complicates the causal story—accounts suggesting coercive control, fear, or premeditation—may appear inconsistent or excessive, and therefore easier to discount. Causal closure thus becomes a form of narrative governance: it arranges the evidentiary field and positions the reader to accept the final legal conclusion as the only coherent outcome. This is precisely why causal closure is not a stylistic curiosity but a decisive mechanism in honor killing adjudication. It builds the stage on which culpability will later be performed, and it can quietly determine whether honor functions as a mere descriptive motif or as an outcome-shaping cause within the court’s public reasons.

2. Moral Closure

Moral closure is the judgment’s way of settling the normative meaning of the case while appearing to do nothing more than evaluate evidence and apply legal categories. In honor killing adjudication, moral closure does not usually announce itself as moral judgment. It emerges through

subtle allocations of evaluative weight: which conduct is described as provocative, which emotions are framed as comprehensible, whose reputation is treated as a relevant stake, and which social norms are allowed to structure the narrative horizon (Molina, 2024). Once moral closure is achieved, the killing can be positioned within a moral economy that makes some forms of violence appear more intelligible than others, and that makes certain victims more “readable” as deserving of protection than others, even when the legal prohibition of homicide remains formally intact (Manikis, 2022).

A recurring pathway is the respectability script. Judgments may incorporate cues of sexual propriety, obedience, and “proper” femininity as background descriptors, yet these cues often operate as silent criteria for moral evaluation. The victim’s conduct may be narrated with details that do not bear on any element of the offence—where she went, whom she met, whether she returned home late, whether she resisted family instructions—while the perpetrator’s conduct is narrated primarily at the moment of violence. This asymmetry matters. When the narrative invests the victim’s life choices with moral texture, the reader is invited to treat those choices as part of the causal and normative explanation of the killing. The judgement thereby creates an implicit hierarchy of victims: some appear as fully wronged subjects, others appear as agents of reputational disruption (Dziewa & Glowacz, 2021). Moral closure is produced when this hierarchy is not contested within the text, and when the judgment presents its account as a commonsense reading of social expectations rather than as a contested normative stance (Muh Sutri Mansyah et al., 2024).

Moral closure also operates through character laundering. Perpetrators may be framed as otherwise responsible individuals—devoted sons, husbands, or family providers—whose moral identity is threatened by dishonor and community judgment. Even when the court does not explicitly praise the defendant, the narrative can reconstitute him as a moral subject acting under reputational strain. This laundering often relies on the idiom of duty: family responsibility, protection of lineage, avoidance of communal humiliation. Such descriptions are not neutral. They are moral resources that can soften the reader’s perception of the violence by presenting it as a distorted execution of social role rather than an assertion of domination. The judgment can thereby stabilise a moral account in which the defendant is partially re-humanised through social duty at the very moment when the victim’s subjectivity is narrowed to her impact on family reputation (Sneha S et al., 2020).

A third mechanism is gendered asymmetry in moral scrutiny. Honor narratives are rarely gender-neutral, and judgments can inadvertently replicate this asymmetry by the way they distribute evaluative language. Women’s conduct may be discussed in terms that imply moral deviation, while men’s conduct is described through emotional states that imply diminished control. The defendant’s anger, humiliation, or shame may be narrated as internally compelling, whereas the victim’s autonomy is narrated as externally disruptive. This asymmetry is not merely unfair; it has analytic consequences for culpability. If the perpetrator’s emotional narrative is treated as psychologically legible and socially conditioned, the judgment creates a moral environment in which the killing reads less like instrumental enforcement and more like a tragic breakdown (Hudspith et al., 2024). Moral closure is achieved when this environment is stabilised through conventional phrases of understanding and propriety that do not need to be defended because they track familiar cultural scripts.

Moral closure is often reinforced through the management of ambiguity. Honor killing cases frequently contain morally complex materials: competing testimonies about harassment, coercion, threats, prior violence, or the victim’s attempts to seek help. Such materials can destabilise the honor narrative by reframing the case as a pattern of control rather than a response to transgression. Moral closure depends on how the judgment handles these destabilising elements. One common move is moral compartmentalisation: acknowledging troubling details but placing them outside the “core” narrative, treating them as peripheral disputes that do not alter the main moral meaning of the case. Another move is moral reversal: presenting the victim’s resistance to control as the source of disorder, thereby transforming autonomy into provocation. When these moves succeed, the judgment produces a moral settlement that keeps the honor frame intact while appearing to have considered all relevant circumstances (Parsons & Mojtahedi, 2022).

Importantly, moral closure does not require explicit victim-blaming language. It can arise from the cumulative effect of small narrative choices: where evaluative adjectives attach, which actors are granted interiority, how social norms are described, and what the judgment treats as worthy of elaboration. In this sense, moral closure is a technology of legitimacy. It allows the court to present its outcome as the morally appropriate response to the “real” problem the judgment has identified—

dishonor, family conflict, reputational crisis—rather than to the legal wrong of homicide itself. That redirection is precisely where honor can begin to function as more than motive. Even when formally rejected as a justification, honor can shape the moral field in which proportionality is assessed, and moral closure becomes the bridge that enables the later drift into sentencing certainty and, in some cases, implicit mitigation (Frey et al., 2021).

3. Evidentiary Closure

Evidentiary closure is the process by which a judgment converts contestation into certainty. Honor killing cases are often saturated with competing accounts: family members may offer a reputational narrative, neighbours may supply gossip-based reconstructions, the defendant may articulate a language of shame and necessity, and the victim's voice may be largely absent or mediated through others. The court must decide which of these accounts will be elevated into the authorised "facts" of the case. That elevation is not achieved solely by citing rules of evidence (Porter, 2021). It is achieved through narrative techniques that install a credibility hierarchy and render some versions of events more evidentially legible than others. Once evidentiary closure is established, the judgment can present its account as an objective derivation from the record, even though the record is itself filtered through the court's choices about relevance, reliability, and narrative fit (Roberts & Petzsche, 2025).

A common mechanism is credibility hierarchy. Judgments often rely on implicit rankings of witnesses and sources: family elders, community leaders, or socially respected actors may be treated as more reliable narrators of what "honor" means and why certain conduct is shameful (Kadir & Mappaselleng, 2025). Conversely, witnesses who contest the honor frame—friends of the victim, younger relatives, or individuals positioned as morally "less credible" within the community—may be treated as biased, speculative, or emotionally motivated. This hierarchy can be expressed through small textual signals: the amount of space devoted to a witness's account, the presence or absence of corroboration language, and the use of verbs that convey certainty ("established," "proven," "clear") versus doubt ("alleged," "claimed," "uncertain"). Over time, these signals stabilise a particular narrative as the evidentiary spine of the judgment. In honor killing adjudication, that spine can align with the honor narrative not because it is necessarily better evidenced, but because it is narratively coherent with the moral closure already installed (Grip & Dynevall, 2023).

Selective quotation is another powerful tool. A judgment cannot reproduce the trial record; it must curate it. The danger is that curation can become a mechanism of closure by extracting lines that support the privileged storyline while summarising, compressing, or paraphrasing countervailing testimony. When honor talk appears in a witness statement, the judgment may quote it verbatim to give it the aura of direct fact. When evidence points to coercive control, stalking, prior violence, or collective orchestration, the judgment may render it as a brief summary without detail, making it appear thin or speculative. The reader then experiences an asymmetry of vividness: the honor narrative feels concrete, while counter-narratives feel abstract. Evidentiary closure is achieved when this asymmetry persuades the reader that only one narrative is truly supported by evidence.

Evidentiary closure also frequently relies on the management of silence. In many honor killing contexts, victims may not have reported threats, may not have left written traces of fear, or may have been structurally constrained from seeking institutional help. A judgment can treat such absences in two divergent ways. It can interpret silence as evidence of constraint and vulnerability, thereby supporting a narrative of control. Or it can interpret silence as evidence that threats did not exist, that the relationship was not coercive, or that the conflict was a sudden interpersonal dispute rather than a pattern of domination. The latter interpretation is a closure device because it transforms the absence of documentation into positive proof of normality. This move is particularly consequential in honor killing cases because honor regimes often operate through social surveillance and informal enforcement precisely to avoid institutional visibility. Treating invisibility as exculpatory therefore risks aligning the evidentiary logic of the judgment with the operational logic of honor control (Barrera, 2019).

A further mechanism is the naturalisation of "community knowledge." Honor narratives often circulate as shared understandings: what counts as shameful, what counts as restoring dignity, what consequences follow from reputational loss. Judgments may incorporate such understandings as if they were background facts that require no evidentiary demonstration. This can occur through generalising language that presents communal expectations as self-evident, or through the uncritical uptake of

witness assertions about customary norms. Once such assertions are treated as factual premises, they can support legal inferences about motive and emotional state. Evidentiary closure is reached when the judgment does not ask what would ordinarily be demanded of a factual premise in criminal adjudication: specificity, source reliability, and corroboration. Instead, the honor narrative becomes a platform on which further inferences are built (Antariksa & Setiawan, 2026).

Evidentiary closure is not merely about believing some witnesses over others; it is about making one storyline the only evidentially possible storyline. That is why it interacts tightly with causal and moral closure. When the judgment has already installed a trigger-and-response causal chain and a respectability-inflected moral frame, evidence that fits those structures becomes easier to accept and easier to present as “proved.” Evidence that destabilises them becomes easier to treat as irrelevant, uncorroborated, or inconsistent. The result is a closed evidentiary world in which honor appears not as a contested claim but as an established fact that explains the violence. In that world, sentencing becomes less a fresh normative assessment and more a conversion exercise: the authorised narrative is translated into punishment. This is precisely the pathway by which honor can migrate from being merely narrated to being outcome-shaping, even without doctrinal acknowledgement (Schneider, 2025).

4. Sentencing Closure

Sentencing closure is the moment when narrative becomes outcome. By the time a judgment reaches the sentencing section, the case has usually been stabilised through causal, moral, and evidentiary closure. Sentencing reasons then function as a conversion device: they translate a settled story into a calibrated punishment and present that calibration as proportionate, necessary, and publicly intelligible (Janssen, 2025). In honor killing cases, this conversion is unusually sensitive because the vocabulary of honor is morally charged and socially familiar. Even where the law formally rejects honor as justification, the sentencing narrative can still allow honor to shape the perceived gravity of the wrong, the perceived agency of the offender, and the perceived legitimacy of leniency. The central analytical issue is not whether a judgment mentions honor at sentencing, but whether the prior narrative architecture makes mitigation feel natural, or makes aggravation feel inevitable, without explicitly confronting the normative stakes.

A frequent pattern is mitigation drift (Bettinson, 2024). Honor begins in the judgment as a motive claim—an explanation of why the offender acted. As the narrative closes, that motive claim can quietly migrate into mitigation language: humiliation, emotional disturbance, social pressure, fear of communal ridicule, or reputational collapse. None of these terms necessarily invoke honor explicitly, yet in honor killing contexts they often operate as functional substitutes. The sentencing section may then describe the offence as arising from a situational crisis rather than from an assertion of dominance, and the defendant may be framed as having acted under a form of constraint that is social rather than legal. Mitigation drift is particularly difficult to detect because it can be accomplished by tone and emphasis: the judgment may acknowledge the unlawfulness of the killing in doctrinal terms while describing the precipitating shame in humanly sympathetic terms, and sympathy becomes a vehicle for lowering punishment without naming honor as a mitigating factor.

Another mechanism is proportionality reframing. Sentencing closure does not merely set a number; it narrates why the number is “right.” In honor killing judgments, proportionality can be reframed by shifting the reference point of harm. Instead of centring the victim’s lost life and the violation of autonomy, the judgment may implicitly treat the reputational crisis as a competing harm that contextualises the offender’s action. This does not require explicit equivalence; it can occur through the structure of the sentencing reasons, where extended discussion of family shame or social stigma precedes or outweighs discussion of the victim’s vulnerability and the offender’s domination. The moral centre of gravity shifts. Once the reputational harm is allowed to occupy space within proportionality reasoning, the killing can be cast as less culpable, more reactive, or more tragic, thereby making lower punishment appear proportionate within the narrative world the judgment has built (Petrov, 2023).

Sentencing closure also relies on the aesthetics of certainty. Courts frequently conclude sentencing reasons with formulaic claims—fairness, balance, deterrence, rehabilitation, social order—that function as closure signals. In honor killing cases, these signals can mask the normative choice embedded in the narrative: whether the court treats honor as an illicit normative frame that must be neutralised, or as an understandable social pressure that partially explains and softens culpability. The language of certainty can therefore operate as a legitimating seal that prevents the reader from revisiting

the earlier narrative choices. When a judgment declares that a sentence is “commensurate” with the defendant’s fault, it invites acceptance of the constructed narrative of fault as if it were a natural product of evidence and doctrine rather than a contested moral settlement (Kadir, 2026c).

At the same time, sentencing closure can also operate in an aggravating direction, and this possibility is analytically important. Where a judgment narrates honor as instrumental governance—planned enforcement of family authority, collective orchestration, or coercive control—honor talk can become a marker of heightened culpability. The sentencing section may then treat honor not as pressure but as purpose: a deliberate decision to impose social order through lethal violence. In this configuration, the narrative has to resist mitigation drift by keeping agency and choice at the centre of the story (Dambe & Balule, 2024). It does so by emphasising preparation, targeted selection of victim, use of threats, involvement of accomplices, or the use of violence as a communicative act intended to restore status. Here, sentencing closure converts honor from a sympathetic context into an aggravating sign of instrumental domination. The contrast between these two sentencing configurations—honor-as-pressure versus honor-as-purpose—shows that the decisive factor is the judgment’s narrative architecture rather than the mere presence of honor vocabulary.

The core contribution of sentencing closure analysis is to reveal how judicial reason-giving can inadvertently reintroduce honor as a normative resource even in jurisdictions that have abolished explicit honor defences. The pathway is not doctrinal, but narrative. When the judgment stabilises a trigger-and-response story, invests respectability scripts with moral weight, and treats community expectations as evidentiary facts, the sentencing section inherits a softened account of agency and harm. The sentence then appears to follow from “what happened” rather than from a contested normative decision about what counts as blameworthy (Simbolon & Nababan, 2025). Conversely, when the judgment keeps honor claims within strict relevance boundaries—probative for planning, coercive control, or collective enforcement, but irrelevant as a basis for compassion—the sentencing reasons can reinforce the rule-of-law premise that reputational injury does not diminish the wrongfulness or culpability of homicide. Sentencing closure is therefore the key site for intervention: it is where narrative certainty must be made compatible with normative clarity, so that honor cannot function as implicit mitigation while the judgment continues to sound formally correct.

CONCLUSION

The analysis shows that honor killing judgments often achieve legitimacy through an aesthetics of certainty that is produced narratively rather than doctrinally. Causal closure installs a trigger-and-response storyline; moral closure distributes respectability and sympathy asymmetrically; evidentiary closure stabilises one storyline by credibility hierarchies, selective uptake, and the treatment of silence as exculpatory normality. When these closures align, the judgment can appear rigorously reasoned while quietly relocating the moral centre of gravity away from the legal wrong of homicide and toward a reputational crisis framed as socially intelligible. This is where rule-of-law risk concentrates: the court may formally reject honor as justification yet still allow honor to function as an outcome-shaping premise through narrative stabilisation, especially when community expectations are treated as causal forces and reputational injury is narrated as a quasi-harm competing with the victim’s life and autonomy.

The practical implication is a need for explicit relevance boundaries in judicial reason-giving. Honor narratives should be admissible only as probative material for legally cognisable issues—planning, coercive control, collective enforcement, and the intentional use of violence as governance—while being treated as normatively irrelevant to mitigation and proportionality. That boundary is not secured by legislative abolition of honor defences alone; it must be implemented through narrative discipline: resisting trigger engineering, avoiding respectability scripting, requiring corroboration when “community knowledge” is invoked, and refusing to convert social pressure into diminished agency without doctrinal warrant. Methodologically, the closure lens offers an audit tool that is portable across jurisdictions and can be used to evaluate whether sentencing reasons reproduce implicit honor mitigation or, alternatively, reframe honor as an aggravating sign of instrumental domination, thereby aligning narrative certainty with normative clarity.

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