

Polygamy and the Ethics of Transparency in Muhammad Syahrur's Theory of Limits: An Analysis of Indonesia's 2025 Viral Cases

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Abstract

The emergence of viral cases of non-transparent polygamy in Indonesia in 2025 has reignited critical debates on family ethics, honesty, and moral accountability in contemporary Muslim societies. This study examines these practices through the lens of Muhammad Syahrur's Theory of Limits (*Naẓariyyat al-Ḥudūd*), which conceptualizes Islamic legal norms as operating within defined minimum and maximum ethical boundaries. Employing a qualitative research design, this study is based on a critical literature review combined with intra-textual analysis of Qur'anic verses on marriage and polygamy, alongside an examination of Syahrur's principal works. Sociological data from publicly documented viral cases are utilized as contextual evidence to illustrate the ethical tensions surrounding non-transparent polygamy. The findings demonstrate that, within Syahrur's framework, polygamy is not an unconditional male prerogative but a conditional social practice constrained by strict moral limits aimed at safeguarding justice and protecting women's rights. Polygamy conducted without transparency is shown to violate the minimum boundary of justice by denying women access to truthful information, undermining trust, and generating psychological and social harm. From the perspective of boundary theory, such practices constitute a form of injustice (*ẓulm*) and conflict with the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, particularly the preservation of dignity, welfare, and family stability. This study argues that Syahrur's Theory of Limits offers a relevant ethical framework for evaluating modern polygamy, emphasizing transparency, honesty, and justice as indispensable principles in contemporary Islamic family ethics.

Keywords: Polygamy, Transparency, Theory of Limits, Muhammad Syahrur, Islamic Family Ethics.

Abstrak

Munculnya kasus-kasus viral poligami yang tidak transparan di Indonesia pada tahun 2025 telah kembali memicu perdebatan kritis mengenai etika keluarga, kejujuran, dan akuntabilitas moral dalam masyarakat Muslim kontemporer. Studi ini mengkaji praktik-praktik tersebut melalui perspektif *Teori Batas* (*Naẓariyyat al-Ḥudūd*) Muhammad Syahrur, yang memandang norma hukum Islam sebagai sistem yang beroperasi dalam batas-batas etis minimum dan



maksimum yang jelas. Dengan menggunakan desain penelitian kualitatif, kajian ini didasarkan pada telaah literatur kritis yang dipadukan dengan analisis intra-teks terhadap ayat-ayat Al-Qur'an tentang pernikahan dan poligami, serta penelaahan atas karya-karya utama Syahrur. Data sosiologis dari kasus-kasus viral yang terdokumentasi secara publik digunakan sebagai bukti kontekstual untuk menggambarkan ketegangan etis yang mengiringi praktik poligami tidak transparan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa dalam kerangka pemikiran Syahrur, poligami bukanlah hak prerogatif laki-laki yang bersifat mutlak, melainkan praktik sosial yang bersyarat dan dibatasi oleh ketentuan moral yang ketat guna menjamin keadilan dan melindungi hak-hak perempuan. Poligami yang dilakukan tanpa transparansi terbukti melanggar batas minimum keadilan karena menafikan hak perempuan atas informasi yang benar, merusak kepercayaan, serta menimbulkan dampak psikologis dan sosial. Dari sudut pandang *teori batas*, praktik semacam ini merupakan bentuk ketidakadilan (*zulm*) dan bertentangan dengan *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, khususnya dalam aspek perlindungan martabat, kemaslahatan, dan stabilitas keluarga. Studi ini berargumen bahwa *Teori Batas* Syahrur menawarkan kerangka etis yang relevan untuk menilai praktik poligami modern, dengan menegaskan transparansi, kejujuran, dan keadilan sebagai prinsip-prinsip yang tidak dapat ditawar dalam etika keluarga Islam kontemporer.

Kata kunci: Poligami, Transparansi, Teori Batas, Muhammad Syahrur, Etika Keluarga Islam.

Introduction

The phenomenon of polygamy has once again become a sensitive and viral public issue in Indonesia in 2025 following the emergence of a second marriage case conducted without transparency, in which a man married another woman without disclosing his marital status either to the woman or to his first wife. Although such incidents are not new, the amplification of this case through social media has transformed it into a public controversy, sparking widespread debate on marital ethics, honesty, and moral boundaries in polygamous practices. This public reaction reflects a growing awareness that the legitimacy of polygamy can no longer be assessed solely on the basis of textual permissibility, but must also be examined through the lens of justice, responsibility, and ethical accountability emphasized in the Qur'an.

In classical fiqh discourse, polygamy is often understood as a male prerogative permitted by the Qur'an, provided that the husband is capable of being fair (Abidin et al., 2022). However, contemporary social developments reveal new layers of complexity, particularly when polygamy is practiced without transparency and honesty. The concealment of marital status not only inflicts emotional harm but also generates legal and social consequences that undermine trust and stability within family structures. As a result, polygamy can no longer be treated merely as a question of legal permissibility; rather, it raises deeper concerns regarding moral integrity, justice, and the protection of vulnerable parties.

This condition necessitates a contextual and ethical approach to Qur'anic interpretation—one that moves beyond literalist readings and engages the universal objectives of Islamic law (*maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*) such as justice, welfare, and the prevention of harm (Al Munawar, 2021; Auda, 2008).

Within the broader landscape of modern Islamic thought, reformist exegetes have increasingly emphasized rationality, ethical reasoning, and social relevance in interpreting legal verses of the Qur'an. Studies on *Tafsīr al-Manār* demonstrate how Muḥammad 'Abduh and Rashīd Riḍā reject mythological and rigid legalistic interpretations in favor of a rational and maqāṣid-oriented framework that foregrounds justice and human dignity (Burge, 2021; Hamim & Abdillah, 2023). Their approach to polygamy, in particular, stresses that permissibility is strictly conditioned by the realization of justice and the avoidance of harm to women and families (Azis & Anggraini, 2023; Hasan et al., 2022). Nevertheless, while such maqāṣid-based interpretations have been extensively explored in relation to reformist tafsir traditions, their integration into Syahrur's boundary-based hermeneutics remains underexplored.

As one of the most prominent contemporary Islamic thinkers, Muhammad Syahrur offers an alternative interpretive framework through his Theory of Limits (*Nazariyyat al-Ḥudūd*) (Yuhendri, 2019). This theory interprets legal verses using linguistic, semantic, and rational approaches, positing that Qur'anic legal norms function not as rigid commands but as moral boundaries regulating human behavior (Putra, 2022). In the context of polygamy, Syahrur argues that the Qur'an establishes both minimum (*ḥadd al-adnā*) and maximum (*ḥadd al-a'lā*) limits intended to protect women and orphans and to uphold social justice (Mushlih, 2018). From this perspective, polygamy operates as a social protection mechanism rather than a license for male desire or domination.

Previous studies on polygamy from Syahrur's perspective have largely focused on reinterpretations of QS. al-Nisā' [4]:3, the issue of justice toward orphans, or the semantic implications of the inability to be fair (Mukhtar et al., 2023). However, there is a notable absence of research that specifically examines polygamy conducted without honesty or transparency as a violation of Qur'anic moral boundaries within Syahrur's theoretical framework. This gap becomes even more pronounced when viewed against the backdrop of contemporary maqāṣid discourse, which consistently emphasizes justice, human dignity, and the prevention of harm as core objectives of Islamic law (Mubarrak et al., 2025; Razali Ibrahim, 2023). Transparency, as a moral prerequisite for justice in marital relations, has yet

to be systematically analyzed as a decisive criterion within Syahrur's boundary theory, particularly in the context of digital culture and viral social phenomena (Yuliyani, 2025).

Based on this gap, the present study seeks to examine how Muhammad Syahrur's Theory of Limits can be employed as a critical ethical framework to assess the practice of polygamy without transparency in contemporary society. By reexamining the minimum and maximum boundaries established by the Qur'an, this study analyzes how dishonesty and concealment constitute violations of justice and moral responsibility. Integrating Qur'anic textual analysis, Syahrur's boundary theory, and contemporary social realities, this research aims to contribute both theoretically and practically to ongoing debates on ethical polygamy in the modern era.

In general, this study aims to explain the concepts of minimum and maximum limits of polygamy as formulated in Muhammad Syahrur's Theory of Limits, to analyze the phenomenon of non-transparent polygamy within the contemporary Indonesian social context, and to assess the relevance of Syahrur's framework as an ethical paradigm for understanding the moral boundaries of polygamy in the digital age. Through this integrative approach, the study seeks not only to enrich contemporary Qur'anic interpretation but also to offer a normative and ethically grounded perspective for responding to the increasingly complex polemics surrounding polygamy amid rapid technological development and shifting social values.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative, library-based research design that places textual interpretation at the center of analysis. The primary unit of analysis is the interpretation of polygamy-related Qur'anic verses, particularly QS. al-Nisā' [4]:3, within the framework of Muhammad Syahrur's Theory of Limits (*Nazhariyyat al-Ḥudūd*). The focus is not on measuring empirical practices of polygamy, but on critically examining how moral boundaries, justice, and ethical responsibility are constructed and articulated through Syahrur's hermeneutical approach. This design is chosen because it allows for an in-depth exploration of normative meanings, conceptual structures, and ethical implications embedded in Qur'anic interpretation.

A qualitative approach is particularly suitable for this study as it enables a critical reading of religious texts that are inherently normative and interpretive. Polygamy, as a religious and social issue, involves moral reasoning, ethical judgment, and contextual interpretation that cannot be adequately captured through quantitative methods. By adopting

a qualitative design, this research is able to trace how Syahrur conceptualizes minimum and maximum legal boundaries and how these concepts function as ethical constraints rather than rigid legal prescriptions in addressing contemporary social phenomena.

The data sources of this study consist of both primary and secondary materials. Primary data include Syahrur's major works that elaborate his Theory of Limits, especially those addressing family law, justice, and social ethics, alongside relevant Qur'anic verses related to polygamy. Secondary data comprise academic studies on Syahrur's thought, contemporary Qur'anic exegesis, *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, Islamic family law, and sociological analyses of polygamy in modern Muslim societies, particularly in Indonesia. These sources are used to contextualize Syahrur's ideas within broader scholarly debates and to situate the findings within contemporary discourses on gender justice and family ethics.

Data collection is conducted through systematic documentation and literature review. This process involves identifying relevant Qur'anic verses, examining Syahrur's interpretive arguments concerning legal boundaries, and reviewing scholarly discussions related to transparency, justice, and ethical responsibility in marriage. Particular attention is given to contemporary reports and academic analyses of non-transparent polygamy cases in Indonesia, especially those that gained public attention through digital and social media, as contextual data to illustrate the ethical relevance of the theoretical framework.

Data analysis is carried out using content analysis combined with thematic analysis. Through this method, key concepts such as *ḥadd al-adnā* (minimum limit), *ḥadd al-a'lā* (maximum limit), justice, honesty, and moral accountability are identified, categorized, and analyzed within Syahrur's interpretive framework. The analysis proceeds by examining how these concepts are constructed textually, how they function as ethical boundaries, and how their violation—particularly through the absence of transparency—can be understood as a form of injustice. The findings are then interpreted in relation to contemporary debates on Islamic family law, allowing for a critical assessment of the relevance and applicability of Syahrur's Theory of Limits in addressing modern challenges surrounding polygamy.

Results and Discussion

A. The Phenomenon of Polygamy Without Transparency in the Indonesian Social Context

The phenomenon of polygamy without transparency returned to the public spotlight in Indonesia in 2025 after a viral case emerged involving a second marriage that was conducted by concealing the marital status. Social media showed how the public responded to this practice with a variety of perspectives, ranging from defense based on "religious legality" to

harsh criticism of polygamy practiced without honesty and the consent of the parties involved. This public debate shows that the practice of polygamy is no longer seen as a private issue, but has become a social problem concerning moral values, family responsibilities, and the integrity of marriage relationships.

In the Indonesian social context, polygamy is often understood through normative religious narratives, particularly the denial that Islam allows men to marry more than one wife (Sunaryo, 2010). This narrative is often simplified, thereby ignoring the conditions of fairness and ethical aspects that accompany this commandment. When polygamy is practiced secretly, without disclosing marital status to a prospective partner, or without providing information and an opportunity for the first wife to express her opinion, such actions not only cause marital discord, but also constitute a form of manipulation that violates the principle of honesty in marital relations (Rizkal, 2019). In ethical discourse, such actions constitute a form of relational deception that contradicts the principles of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, especially those related to *hifz al-'ird* (preserving family dignity) (Makka & Ratundelang, 2022).

The virality of polygamy cases without transparency indicates a significant change in the social landscape. In the digital age, people can access information quickly, so actions that violate family ethics are easily exposed and cause widespread public reaction. This phenomenon indicates that modern polygamy practices are not only determined by legal-religious legitimacy, but also by moral and social standards that have developed in Indonesian society. Thus, research on polygamy in the contemporary era should not only refer to texts and *fiqh* products, but must also consider the accompanying social, psychological, and public communication dynamics.

Furthermore, the phenomenon of polygamy without transparency reveals a gap between classical *fiqh* understanding and the ethical demands of modern society. In many cases, polygamy has become a means of concealing dishonest behavior or a justification for actions that harm women. This situation reinforces the need for an alternative interpretive framework, such as Muhammad Syahrur's theory of limits, to reassess the practice of polygamy in the context of justice, the protection of women, and moral consistency. The boundary theory provides a new perspective that polygamy is not an absolute right of men, but an action that can only be carried out within certain limits in order to maintain justice and family welfare (Athiyah, 2010).

This viral phenomenon provides an important basis for examining the moral limits of polygamy according to the Qur'an through Syahrur's theory. By understanding the social

dynamics at play, this study positions polygamy without transparency not merely as a normative violation, but as a violation of the moral limits set by God in the sacred text.

B. The Concepts of Minimum and Maximum Limits (*Ḥadd al-Adnā and Ḥadd al-A'lā*) in Muhammad Syahrur's Theory of Limits

According to Syahrur, the theory of *hudūd* (limits) is an important concept that can respond to contemporary challenges. (Rosa, 2015, p. 161). The theory of limits/*Nazhariyyat al-Ḥudūd* is the main foundation of Muhammad Syahrur's legal thinking (Putra, 2022). This theory departs from the assumption that the legal verses in the Qur'an are not intended as rigid and final rules, but rather as minimum limits (*ḥadd al-adnā*) and maximum limits (*ḥadd al-a'lā*) that give humans room to make decisions in accordance with the developments of the times (Alhabsyi et al., 2024). Thus, the law is not understood in black and white terms, but as a flexible spectrum that remains within the moral boundaries determined by God. This room for maneuver shows that Sharia is not an absolute mechanism of restriction, but rather a system of moral protection that emphasizes justice, balance, and benefit.

In Syahrur's interpretation, *ḥadd al-adnā* functions as a lower limit that must not be exceeded so as not to diminish the rights of those protected by law. Conversely, *ḥadd al-a'lā* is an upper limit that must not be exceeded so as not to allow room for arbitrary actions (Rosa, 2015). This concept of two limits means that every rule in the Qur'an is not absolute, but rather establishes an ethical space in which humans can choose the most just action based on the context. This approach differs from classical *fiqh*, which tends to formulate law in the form of a single ruling, whereas Syahrur emphasizes the plurality of legal possibilities as long as they remain within these limits.

Syahrur applies this theory to various issues, including inheritance, criminal law, and gender relations. In the context of polygamy, this theory of limits is very important for understanding QS. al-Nisā': 3.

وَأِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تُقْسِطُوا فِي الْيَتَامَىٰ فَانكِحُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ مَثْنَىٰ وَثُلَّةَ وَرُبُعَ فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا فَوَاحِدَةً

أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ ذَلِكَ أَدْنَىٰ أَلَّا تَعُولُوا ﴿٣﴾

If you fear that you will not be able to treat orphan girls fairly (if you marry them), then marry women of your choice, two or three or four; but if you fear that you will not be able to deal justly (with them), then marry only one or (the slaves) that your right hands possess. That is more likely to prevent you from doing injustice.

For Syahrur, this verse does not command men to marry more than one woman, but sets a maximum limit of four wives for polygamy and a minimum limit of justice that must be upheld in the context of protecting orphans and women (Susanti & Yulianis, 2025). In this framework, polygamy is not a privilege for men, but rather an "emergency solution" in certain social situations, especially when women and orphans need economic and social protection. If justice cannot be fulfilled, even within the minimum limits, then polygamy must be abandoned.

Syahrur's concept of boundaries provides a strong theoretical basis for assessing contemporary polygamy practices. Polygamy can only be considered valid when all aspects of the minimum and maximum boundaries are met, including ethical aspects such as fairness, honesty, and responsibility (Nurul et al., 2025). If one of these limits is violated, then the practice of polygamy is not only morally flawed, but also contrary to the essence of Qur'anic law, which according to Syahrur aims to protect vulnerable parties. With this framework, the phenomenon of polygamy without transparency can be analyzed as a form of violation of moral and legal limits in the perspective of modern interpretation.

C. Polygamy in the Perspective of Muhammad Syahrur's Theory of Boundaries

In Muhammad Syahrur's thinking, polygamy is an issue that cannot be understood solely from the literal text of QS. al-Nisā': 3, but must be analyzed through a theoretical framework that sets strict conditions for maintaining justice and protecting women. Syahrur rejects the traditional view that considers polygamy an absolute right of men or an act recommended by religion (Sofida, 2024). Instead, he views polygamy as a protective mechanism that the Qur'an provides to resolve certain social issues, particularly those related to the protection of orphans and marginalized women in the context of early Islamic patriarchal society.

According to Syahrur, polygamy can only be practiced within a maximum limit of four wives (*ḥadd al-a'lā*), but this quantitative limit is not the most important aspect. More fundamental is the minimum limit (*ḥadd al-adnā*), which demands substantive justice. This justice is not merely material in nature, but encompasses all aspects of family relations, such as the distribution of affection, psychological protection, economic security, and honesty of information. If a man is unable or unwilling to meet this minimum limit, then polygamy becomes morally invalid according to Syahrur's interpretive framework. Thus, polygamy in Syahrur's view has a much stronger ethical dimension than merely a legal one (Hariati, 2021).

Syahrur also emphasized that the context in which the verse on polygamy was revealed was closely related to the post-war social crisis, in which many women and orphans lost their protectors. Thus, polygamy aimed to ensure that these vulnerable groups were guaranteed a livelihood, not for the personal interests of men (Ihsan et al., 2025). Understanding this historical background, Syahrur rejects modern practices of polygamy motivated by pleasure, domination, or personal desire without consideration for social justice. Polygamy that is not based on social responsibility is considered to be outside the limits set by the Qur'an.

In addition, Syahrur rejects the claim that justice in polygamy is impossible to achieve, thereby automatically prohibiting polygamy. According to him, the statement in QS. al-Nisā': 129 regarding the inability of humans to be fair should be understood as a moral warning, not an absolute prohibition. The verse requires men to maintain a minimum level of justice (*ḥadd al-adnā*) and not to commit acts that lead to total injustice, such as neglecting or abandoning their wives. If injustice cannot be avoided, then the minimum limit is violated, and polygamy is no longer justified according to Islamic law (Nurdiansyah, 2018).

Thus, according to Syahrur, polygamy is not a space of freedom, but a space of responsibility. The practice can only be carried out if it meets all the minimum requirements and does not exceed the maximum limits set by the Qur'an. Polygamy that is practiced without meeting the standards of justice, honesty, and openness violates the fundamental principles of boundary theory. This approach provides a critical framework for assessing contemporary polygamy practices and at the same time affirms that polygamy cannot be used to legitimize deception or the neglect of women's rights.

D. Polygamy Without Transparency as a Violation of Moral Limits in the Perspective of Muhammad Syahrur's Theory of Limits

Within the framework of Muhammad Syahrur's theory of limits, polygamy is not only limited quantitatively (number of wives), but also requires the fulfillment of ethical limits that are prerequisites for the establishment of justice. Contemporary literature on polygamy emphasizes that justice in the family cannot be understood solely in terms of material aspects or the division of time, but also includes the protection of wives' rights, emotional well-being, and the social security of women and children. Thus, although Syahrur does not explicitly mention the term "transparency," the principles of justice that he implicitly emphasizes require openness and honesty in marital relationships.

From this perspective, polygamy practiced without disclosing marital status to interested parties can be understood as a violation of the minimum standard of justice. Lack

of transparency deprives women of their right to know the actual situation, weakens their ability to make autonomous decisions, and damages the relationship of trust that is the basis of family welfare. Because Syahrur's theory of limits places justice as the main objective of polygamy regulations, the act of concealing marital status can be considered contrary to the value of substantive justice, which is at the core of the minimum limits in marital relations.

The lack of transparency in polygamy opens up opportunities for structural injustice. Without honesty, the first wife loses her right to know about a situation that will change her life, while the second wife (or prospective wife) is harmed by receiving inaccurate information about the status of her prospective husband. Such actions fall under the category of *zūlm* (injustice), which is the most serious violation of the minimum limits of justice (Salsabila et al., 2025). Syahrur repeatedly emphasizes that the main purpose of sharia restrictions is to prevent all forms of injustice, especially against women who are socially in a more vulnerable position. Therefore, polygamy practiced by concealing marital status constitutes a direct violation of the *maqāṣid* of justice, which is the essence of the polygamy verse.

In addition, polygamy without transparency causes family instability that has a broad impact on psychological, social, and economic aspects. In the context of modern society, the viral effect that accelerates the spread of information deepens these social impacts. When dishonest polygamy goes viral, it not only affects the family, but also gives a negative image of Islamic teachings and reinforces the stigma that polygamy is a tool to justify injustice. Within the framework of the theory of limits, Syahrur views that all forms of practices that create social damage (*fasād*) have exceeded the limits set by the Qur'an even though they do not formally violate the provisions of classical *fiqh* (Syarbini, 2018).

Thus, polygamy without transparency cannot be considered consistent with the principles of justice that form the core of Muhammad Syahrur's theory of limits. Such practices have the potential to violate the minimum limits of justice, undermine the value of honesty that is the foundation of marital relations, and result in social harm that is contrary to the *maqāṣid* of sharia. Based on Syahrur's hermeneutic framework, this assessment provides a conceptual basis that polygamy practiced without openness has moral and social flaws and is not in line with the ethical boundaries emphasized in the theory of limits.

E. The Relevance of Muhammad Syahrur's Theory of Limits to the Contemporary Phenomenon of Polygamy in Indonesia

Muhammad Syahrur's theory of limits is highly relevant to understanding the phenomenon of polygamy in Indonesia, especially when the practice is carried out without

transparency, thereby causing injustice and social controversy. Amidst the changing dynamics of modern society and increasing public awareness of women's rights, Syahrur's approach provides an analytical framework that is proportional, contextual, and responsive to the needs of the times. By emphasizing minimum and maximum limits in family law, Syahrur presents a paradigm that directs polygamy not as a male privilege, but as a social mandate strictly limited by the values of justice and protection of the more vulnerable parties (Rosi & Daafiqin Syaqqi Maulana, 2023).

In the Indonesian context, the theory of limits is highly relevant because the main problem with polygamy often lies not in the number of wives, but in the inability to meet the minimum limits of fairness and openness in family relationships. The phenomenon of polygamy without transparency shows that legal regulations alone are not always sufficient to ensure fair polygamy practices; ethical values and the spirit of justice play a much more decisive role. From the perspective of boundary theory, polygamy that is carried out through dishonesty, manipulation, or neglect of women's rights can be seen as inconsistent with the principle of substantive justice, even though such practices administratively meet the requirements of classical fiqh. This framework is particularly relevant to the Indonesian context, which still often understands the obligation of justice in polygamy in a narrow and technical manner.

Furthermore, the relevance of boundary theory is increasingly evident in the digital age, when social actions quickly become the subject of public scrutiny through social media. When polygamy is practiced unethically, for example by concealing marital status, society is quick to react and criticize the practice. This response shows increasing public demand for fair, honest, and open marriages. Although Syahrur does not mention transparency directly, his emphasis on fairness allows the theory of limits to be read as a framework that supports the values of honesty and the protection of women. Therefore, the theory of limits can provide a theological basis for criticism of polygamy that harms women or is carried out through manipulation.

Furthermore, Syahrur's boundary theory can be used as a reference for reforming Islamic family law in Indonesia. By providing room for interpretation within certain boundaries, this theory encourages the formulation of regulations that better protect women's rights and clarify the prerequisites for polygamy, especially with regard to honesty. This is important because current legal practices still allow polygamy to occur without transparency.

From the perspective of boundary theory, this gap should ideally be addressed by strengthening ethics in family policy.

Thus, Syahrur's boundary theory not only helps to understand the verses on polygamy theoretically, but is also relevant as an ethical guideline for establishing fair and responsible polygamous practices. This approach emphasizes that polygamy without transparency is not in line with the principle of justice emphasized in the Qur'an.

F. Ethical and Social Analysis of Syahrur's Boundary Theory on the Phenomenon of Modern Polygamy

The phenomenon of modern polygamy, especially when practiced without transparency, reveals ethical and social complexities that require a more critical interpretive approach. In Muhammad Syahrur's theory of boundaries, Sharia law not only establishes legal rules, but also moral boundaries that demand responsibility, justice, and honesty. Therefore, ethical analysis is important, especially when the practice of polygamy affects women's rights and dignity.

Ethically, polygamy without transparency can be seen as a violation of the principle of trust. Concealing marital status or manipulating information damages the trust that is the foundation of a family. From a boundary theory perspective, actions that undermine trust exceed the minimum limits of fairness, because fairness in polygamy encompasses emotional, psychological, and relational aspects, not just material aspects.

From a social perspective, the lack of transparency in polygamy often has widespread effects, such as psychological trauma, domestic tension, and stigma against women. In the digital age, these effects are even more apparent because the rapid spread of information makes family conflicts a matter of public concern. Syahrur believes that social practices that cause harm (*fasād*) are contrary to the objectives of Sharia law, even if they formally comply with classical *fiqh* provisions.

This analysis shows that Syahrur's boundary theory can fill the ethical void in the discussion of polygamy. When legal norms are insufficient to protect women from opacity, the boundary theory provides a moral basis that polygamy can only be justified if it does not cause ethical or social harm. Thus, the boundary theory assesses polygamy not only in terms of legality, but also in terms of its impact on the rights, responsibilities, and welfare of the family.

Syahrur's approach offers a new paradigm for modern family ethics that emphasizes honesty, openness, and justice. Within this framework, polygamy is not merely a personal

decision, but a social decision that must be carried out within strict limits. Polygamy without openness is not in line with the principle of justice, and therefore cannot be morally accepted. Thus, Syahrur's theory of limits becomes relevant as an ethical guideline in understanding and assessing the practice of polygamy in contemporary society.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the phenomenon of non-transparent polygamy that went viral in Indonesia in 2025 is not merely a private ethical issue within family relations, but a direct violation of the moral boundaries established by the Qur'an. Through Muhammad Syahrur's Theory of Limits (*Nazhariyyat al-Ḥudūd*), polygamy is understood not as an unconditional male right, but as a practice strictly regulated by minimum and maximum ethical limits aimed at upholding justice and protecting vulnerable parties, particularly women and children. The findings show that transparency, honesty, and the capacity to realize substantive justice—emotional, psychological, and material—constitute the minimum limits of legitimacy. When these limits are violated, polygamy loses its moral and religious justification, even if it formally remains within the maximum legal allowance.

The main scientific contribution of this study lies in extending Syahrur's Theory of Limits into the analysis of contemporary social phenomena shaped by digital culture. By framing non-transparent polygamy as a form of *ẓulm* (injustice) rather than a morally neutral personal choice, this research offers a contextual and ethical reading of Qur'anic norms that bridges textual interpretation and lived social reality. The study enriches contemporary Qur'anic interpretation by demonstrating that moral accountability and transparency are integral to justice, and that legal permissibility cannot be separated from ethical responsibility. In doing so, it contributes to broader discussions on Islamic family law by providing a normative framework capable of responding to modern challenges without detaching itself from Qur'anic values.

Despite these contributions, this study is limited by its reliance on textual and conceptual analysis without direct empirical investigation into the lived experiences of families affected by non-transparent polygamy. Future research could complement this approach by incorporating sociological or legal field studies, comparative analyses with other contemporary exegetical frameworks, or cross-national examinations of polygamy in digital societies. Such studies would deepen understanding of how ethical boundaries articulated in Qur'anic interpretation operate in practice and how they may inform policy, legal reform, and public discourse on family justice in Muslim societies.

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