



Hermeneutics and Quranic Legal Interpretation: A Critical Study of Fahmi Salim's Perspective

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Abstract

The discourse on hermeneutics in Quranic studies remains a significant issue in contemporary Islamic thought. While some Muslim scholars consider hermeneutics a useful approach for contextualizing Quranic teachings, others reject its application due to its perceived incompatibility with the epistemological foundations of classical Islamic exegesis. This article aims to analyze Fahmi Salim's critique of hermeneutics in the interpretation of Quranic legal verses. Employing a qualitative approach with content analysis as the research method, the study utilizes Fahmi Salim's writings as primary sources and relevant books, journal articles, and scholarly literature on hermeneutics, Quranic interpretation, and contemporary Islamic thought as secondary sources. The analysis focuses on identifying Fahmi Salim's arguments regarding the methodological validity of hermeneutics in interpreting legal verses of the Quran. The findings reveal that Fahmi Salim rejects the application of hermeneutics to Quranic legal interpretation because it may relativize the authority of divine revelation and depart from the established principles of classical Islamic exegesis. This study contributes to the broader discourse on Quranic interpretive methodologies and provides insights into the ongoing debate between traditional Islamic exegesis and contemporary hermeneutical approaches in Islamic scholarship.

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INTRODUCTION

The discourse on hermeneutics, particularly in relation to Quranic interpretation, has become an important issue in contemporary Islamic studies. On the one hand, hermeneutics is viewed as a means of enriching the methodological repertoire of interpretation through analytical approaches that allow religious texts to be examined by considering linguistic, historical, social, and cultural dimensions (Ali, 2025; Sugilara et al., 2025). On the other hand, the application of hermeneutics to the Quran has encountered resistance from some Muslim scholars due to epistemological differences between the Islamic tradition of Quranic interpretation and the development of hermeneutics within the Western intellectual tradition. These differences primarily concern how the relationship between text, context, interpreter,

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and meaning is understood. Within the Islamic tradition, Quranic interpretation has developed through a relatively established body of knowledge, including *‘ulum al-Quran*, hadith, Arabic linguistics, and various interpretive methods inherited from the early generations of Islam (Engkizar et al., 2024; Warikoo, 2010). Hermeneutics, meanwhile, places greater emphasis on the interpretive process, historical context, and the position of the reader or interpreter in the construction of meaning.

The debate has become increasingly complex because, within the Islamic tradition, the Quran is understood as the revelation of Allah with sacred authority and is fundamentally different from texts produced by human beings. Therefore, some Muslim scholars argue that Quranic interpretation should preserve the authority of revelation while taking into account the methodological tools developed within the Islamic scholarly tradition (Nurhidayati et al., 2025). From this perspective, the use of hermeneutics is considered potentially problematic because it may introduce epistemological assumptions that are not entirely compatible with the nature of the Quran as divine revelation. In addition, the historical context in which hermeneutics developed within the Western tradition of scriptural interpretation has also contributed to criticism of its application to Quranic studies (Engkizar et al., 2023; Muhamad et al., 2020). Such concerns are particularly related to the possibility of relativizing meaning when the Quranic text is interpreted predominantly on the basis of historical context and the position of the interpreter.

Within this debate, Fahmi Salim is one of the Indonesian Muslim scholars who has consistently criticized the application of hermeneutics as a method of Quranic interpretation. Conversely, several contemporary Muslim thinkers have developed hermeneutical approaches as alternatives for rereading the Quranic text, including verses addressing social and legal issues. These contrasting positions have generated methodological debates concerning the validity, legitimacy, and limits of hermeneutics in understanding the Quran. The issue becomes particularly significant when hermeneutics is employed to interpret legal verses, which, within the Islamic exegetical tradition, carry normative implications (Engkizar et al., 2025).

For scholars who are critical of hermeneutics, Quranic interpretation should take into account the explanations of the Prophet Muhammad, the understanding of the Companions and the *tabi’in*, as well as the scholarly disciplines developed by Muslim scholars. The early generations of Islam are regarded as having an important position in understanding the context of revelation and the content of the Quran (Latif, 2017). From this perspective, an approach that places excessive emphasis on the subjectivity of the interpreter and changing social contexts may potentially produce relativistic interpretations and blur the boundaries between the normative meaning of the text and contemporary interpretation. Conversely, proponents of hermeneutical approaches argue that understanding the Quran requires consideration of historical context and social realities so that its message can continue to be understood within changing circumstances.

These differing perspectives demonstrate that the controversy over hermeneutics is not merely a debate over the choice of method but also concerns epistemological questions regarding sources of authority, the status of meaning, the position of the interpreter, and the relationship between text and context. On the one hand, this debate can generate a creative tension that encourages further inquiry, critical engagement, and methodological development in Quranic studies. On the other hand, unresolved epistemological differences may lead to polarization when each approach seeks to negate the legitimacy of the other. This situation highlights the importance of studies that not only map the debate between hermeneutics and Quranic exegesis but also specifically analyze how critiques of hermeneutics are applied to the interpretation of legal verses (Zulkifli & Rofie, 2024).

This article aims to analyze the controversy surrounding the use of

hermeneutics in the interpretation of Quranic legal verses from Fahmi Salim's perspective. The study focuses on his criticism of the interpretive approaches developed by Muhammad Shahrur and Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, particularly in their interpretation of legal verses. These differing approaches are important to examine because contextual hermeneutics tends to place considerable emphasis on historical and social dimensions as well as changing contexts in understanding Quranic legal provisions. Such approaches may produce interpretations that differ from those developed within the classical exegetical tradition, particularly when general principles such as justice are employed to reinterpret specific legal provisions. Therefore, Fahmi Salim's critique warrants further analysis to understand the methodological boundaries he raises concerning the application of hermeneutics to Quranic legal verses.

Studies on hermeneutics in Quranic scholarship have been widely conducted by academics. One of them is Reflita's study entitled *Kontroversi Hermeneutika sebagai Manhaj Tafsir (Menimbang Penggunaan Hermeneutika dalam Penafsiran Al-Quran)*, which examines the arguments of those who accept and reject hermeneutics in the context of Quranic interpretation. A study by Argo Victoria and Abdullah Kelib also discusses the controversy surrounding hermeneutics as a *manhaj tafsir* by mapping the debate over the acceptance and rejection of hermeneutics based on the views of several scholars. These studies make important contributions to explaining the methodological debate concerning the position of hermeneutics in Quranic studies. However, their discussions remain focused on the controversy surrounding hermeneutics in general and do not specifically examine Fahmi Salim's criticism of the application of hermeneutics to the interpretation of legal verses.

Based on a review of previous studies, a *research gap* can be identified in that scholarship on the controversy surrounding hermeneutics has largely focused on the general acceptance or rejection of hermeneutics as a method of Quranic interpretation. Relatively little attention has been given to specifically connecting Fahmi Salim's critique with the application of hermeneutics to legal verses, particularly in relation to the thought of Muhammad Shahrur and Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd. Therefore, there remains room for further research to analyze how epistemological critiques of hermeneutics relate to questions of textual authority, context, and changing interpretations of Quranic legal provisions.

Based on this gap, the *novelty* of this study lies in its specific focus on Fahmi Salim's critique of the use of hermeneutics in interpreting Quranic legal verses. Unlike previous studies that have primarily mapped the controversy surrounding hermeneutics in general, this study specifically analyzes Fahmi Salim's arguments against the interpretive approaches of Muhammad Shahrur and Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd. The analysis focuses on epistemological and methodological issues, particularly the relationship between text and context, the authority of revelation, the relativity of meaning, and the interpretive consequences for understanding Quranic law. Through this focus, the study seeks to provide a more specific understanding of the position of critiques of hermeneutics within contemporary debates on Quranic interpretive methodology.

Theoretically, this study is expected to enrich the discourse on Quranic interpretive methodology, particularly the debate between hermeneutical approaches and the Islamic exegetical tradition. Academically, it contributes to the discussion of the validity, limitations, and consequences of using hermeneutics in the interpretation of legal verses. Practically, this study may serve as a reference for academics, students, and scholars of Quranic studies in understanding the dynamics of contemporary Islamic thought and critically, systematically, and methodologically evaluating various interpretive approaches.

METHODS

This article aims to analyze Fahmi Salim's critique of the use of hermeneutics in the interpretation of legal verses in the Quran. Since the focus of this study lies on the thought, arguments, and epistemological constructs of a particular figure, this research does not aim to measure phenomena statistically, but rather to understand the meanings, ideas, and arguments developed in various scholarly works. Therefore, the research was conducted through a literature review by examining various relevant sources on hermeneutics, exegetical methodology, legal verses, and Fahmi Salim's critique of liberal Islamic thought. The selection of this method allows the author to gain a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter while revealing the conceptual relationship between the theory and practice of exegesis that is the focus of this study (Noh et al., 2014; Zuhdi, 2017).

Method and Type

This article employs a qualitative approach using content analysis as the research method. A qualitative approach was chosen because the research focuses on understanding the ideas, thoughts, and arguments contained in the text, rather than on testing hypotheses or measuring variables quantitatively. According to Pohontsch (2019), content analysis allows researchers to systematically interpret texts to uncover their meanings, patterns of argumentation, and underlying messages. This research method is considered appropriate because the objects of study consist of Fahmi Salim's written works as well as literature related to hermeneutics and Quranic exegesis. Through content analysis, this study can identify, classify, and provide an in-depth explanation of Fahmi Salim's critique of the application of hermeneutics in the interpretation of legal verses.

Data Sources

The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained from Fahmi Salim's works that discuss hermeneutics, the methodology of Quranic exegesis, and critiques of liberal Islamic thought. Primary data were selected because they serve as the main source containing the authentic views of the figure who is the focus of this study. Secondary data, meanwhile, comes from books, journal articles, theses, dissertations, and other scholarly works that discuss hermeneutics, Quranic exegesis, legal verses, and the thought of liberal Islamic figures such as Muhammad Syahrur and Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd. The use of secondary data is intended to broaden the analytical perspective, triangulate information, and obtain a more comprehensive picture of the hermeneutical debates in Quranic studies (Engkizar et al., 2019; Yuningsih & Ghany, 2024).

Research Instrument

The primary instrument in this study is the researcher (human instrument). In qualitative research, the researcher serves as the primary instrument because they are directly involved in the processes of data collection, selection, interpretation, and analysis. As noted by Lincoln and Guba, the nature of qualitative research positions the researcher as the instrument best equipped to understand the context and meaning of the data under study. To support this process, documentation sheets and data cards were used as supplementary instruments to classify data based on specific themes, such as hermeneutical concepts, legal verses, Fahmi Salim's arguments, and the views of liberal Islamic figures. The use of these instruments helps maintain data organization so that the analysis process can be conducted systematically.

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection was conducted using the documentation technique. This technique was chosen because all research data were sourced from written documents relevant to the subject of study. Documentation allows the researcher to obtain in-depth data without being constrained by the limitations of space and time, as is often encountered in field research. The data collection process involved

identifying relevant sources, reading them intensively, noting down important information, and grouping the data based on the research themes. This step was taken to ensure that every piece of data used was truly relevant to the research focus, namely Fahmi Salim's critique of the application of hermeneutics in the interpretation of legal verses.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted using descriptive-analytical techniques. This approach was chosen because the study not only seeks to describe Fahmi Salim's views but also to analyze the epistemological foundations and implications of his arguments. The analysis was carried out in several stages. First, identifying the key concepts related to hermeneutics and the interpretation of legal verses in Fahmi Salim's work. Second, classifying the arguments that support his rejection of hermeneutics. Third, comparing Fahmi Salim's views with hermeneutical interpretations developed by liberal Islamic figures such as Muhammad Syahrur and Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd. Fourth, conducting a critical analysis of the epistemological differences that emerge between these two approaches. The final stage involves drawing conclusions regarding Fahmi Salim's position in the hermeneutics controversy and its implications for the development of contemporary Quranic exegesis methodologies. Through these stages, the analysis not only provides a description of the thinker's ideas but also offers a broader understanding of the dynamics of methodological debates in Quranic studies (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Syahiya et al., 2021).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Definition and Scope of Hermeneutics

Etymologically, the term hermeneutics is associated with the word *hermeneuo*, which means to explain, interpret, or translate. The term has historically been associated with Hermes in Greek mythology, a figure who served as a messenger conveying messages from the gods to human beings. In carrying out this role, Hermes did not merely deliver messages but first understood and interpreted them before translating and articulating them into language that could be understood by humans. The relationship between understanding, translating, and communicating a message subsequently became one of the conceptual foundations for understanding the term hermeneutics (Guillen, 2019).

In the context of Greek mythology, Hermes was the son of Maia and one of the figures who played an important role in the belief system of ancient Greek society. The ancient Greeks recognized various gods and goddesses within their mythological tradition, with Zeus serving as one of the principal figures. Within this context, Hermes functioned as an intermediary between the divine and human worlds. This position has symbolic relevance to the early meaning of hermeneutics, namely the process of conveying a message that must first be understood and interpreted by its messenger (Boscaljon, 2024).

In its technical usage, hermeneutics was initially employed primarily in the context of biblical interpretation. Hermeneutics was understood as both a science and an art of interpretation. It was considered a science because it contains principles and rules that can be systematically formulated, while it was regarded as an art because the process of understanding and communicating meaning cannot be entirely restricted by mechanical rules. The rigid application of rules may instead eliminate the meaning contained in a particular form of communication. In its early development, hermeneutics was subsequently divided into general and special hermeneutics. General hermeneutics concerns the principles of interpreting texts as a whole, including historical-cultural, contextual, lexical-syntactical, and theological aspects. Special hermeneutics, meanwhile, focuses on applying interpretive principles

to particular genres, such as parables, allegories, typologies, and prophecies (Adrivat et al., 2024; BouJaoude & Nouredine, 2020; Sugiara et al., 2025).

Conceptually, the term *hermeneuein* can be understood through three primary meanings: saying, explaining, and translating. These three meanings are commonly summarized in English by the term *to interpret*. Thus, hermeneutic activity is not limited to reading a text but also encompasses the process of rationally explaining its meaning and restating a message from a particular language or form into one that can be understood by the reader or listener (Najwah, 2018).

Subsequent developments demonstrate that hermeneutics is no longer limited to the interpretation of sacred scriptures. Hermeneutics has developed into a general theory of understanding and interpretation, particularly when there is a distance between a text and its reader due to differences in space, time, language, or social and cultural contexts. Under such circumstances, understanding a text requires an interpretive process through which its meaning can be made more transparent. Consequently, hermeneutics is no longer concerned exclusively with religious texts but also with language, history, culture, and various products of human thought (Sahin, 2021).

The development of hermeneutics can be viewed chronologically through several stages: as a theory of biblical interpretation, a general philological methodology, a science of linguistic understanding, a methodological foundation for the human sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*), a phenomenology of existence, and a system of interpretation used to understand the meaning underlying myths and symbols (Abarchah, 2023). This development demonstrates that the scope of hermeneutics has expanded from biblical and philological approaches to linguistic, humanistic, existential, and cultural approaches.

Thus, the meaning of a text from a hermeneutic perspective is determined not only by its linguistic structure but also by the context surrounding it. Meaning can be influenced by who conveys the message, to whom the message is addressed, and the historical, social, cultural, spatial, and temporal conditions in which a linguistic event takes place. This expansion of scope has become an important characteristic of modern hermeneutics and has simultaneously contributed to debates regarding the application of hermeneutical approaches to religious texts, particularly the Quran.

Problems in the Implementation of Hermeneutics in Quranic Interpretation

The application of hermeneutics to Quranic interpretation has become one of the most debated issues in contemporary Islamic studies. The debate primarily concerns differences in the epistemological assumptions between hermeneutics as developed within the Western tradition and the *'ulum al-Quran* tradition developed within Islam. The Quran occupies a central position in the lives of Muslims as the primary source of religious teachings concerning faith, worship, law, and social relations. Therefore, applying a particular interpretive method to the Quran is not merely a methodological issue but also involves questions concerning textual authority, the status of revelation, and the limits of interpretation.

One of the issues frequently raised in this debate is the tendency of hermeneutics to regard meaning as something that can change according to the context of the interpreter and reader. In contemporary hermeneutical discourse on the Quran, this issue is associated with interpretive relativism, the deconstruction of legal norms, and the authority of the interpreter. Several contemporary Muslim thinkers have developed hermeneutical approaches by positioning historical and social contexts as important components in understanding the message of the Quran. This approach has subsequently been criticized by some Muslim scholars because it is considered potentially capable of shifting the boundary between the normative meaning of the text and contextual interpretation (Engkizar et al., 2024; Millah et al., 2024; Rosyadi & Athari, 2025).

Muhammad Shahrur, for example, proposed a contemporary reading of the Quran by reconstructing several concepts that had developed within the traditional exegetical tradition. Some of the ideas associated with his approach include the rejection of *al-taraduf*, or absolute synonymy in the Quran; a reinterpretation of the concepts of *inṣāl* and *tanẓīl*; the issue of *i'jāz al-Quran*; and the relationship between dialectics and knowledge (*al-jadalīyyah wa al-ma'rifah*) (Rambe et al., 2025). This approach demonstrates an attempt to read the Quran by considering linguistic structures and the context of modern knowledge.

The debate has become more extensive when hermeneutics is employed to interpret legal verses. Criticism of the application of hermeneutics in Quranic studies is, among other things, based on the view that the method has historical roots in the tradition of interpreting Christian scripture. Consequently, its epistemological assumptions cannot simply be transferred to Quranic studies. Furthermore, hermeneutics is considered potentially capable of producing relative and subjective interpretations because the meaning of a text is strongly influenced by the position, experience, and context of the interpreter. From this critical perspective, the tradition of *'ulum al-Quran* is considered to possess more specific methodological instruments for maintaining the relationship between the text, the context of revelation, Arabic language, hadith, and the exegetical tradition (Al Furqon & Riaz, 2025; Sugiara et al., 2025).

Criticism of hermeneutics can therefore be formulated through several concerns. First, there is a fundamental difference between hermeneutical methods and the Islamic exegetical tradition. Second, hermeneutics is not regarded as entirely neutral because its historical development is associated with theological issues and scriptural interpretation within the Christian tradition. Third, the historical character of hermeneutics in critically examining scripture is considered different from the character of the Quran within the Islamic tradition. Fourth, the application of hermeneutics is considered potentially capable of producing relative and subjective interpretations. Fifth, hermeneutics is considered to lack a single standardized procedure comparable to the methodological instruments developed within *'ulum al-Quran*. Sixth, some scholars argue that the application of hermeneutics to the Quran must be undertaken critically so that the distinctive epistemological characteristics of Islamic studies are not overlooked (Fadhil & Sebgag, 2021; Husni & Hayden, 2024).

Thus, the main problem concerning the application of hermeneutics to Quranic interpretation does not merely lie in the use of a particular terminology or method but in the underlying assumptions concerning the relationship between text, author, context, and reader. From a critical perspective, the relativization of meaning can become problematic when applied to verses regarded as having established legal implications. This issue becomes increasingly complex when hermeneutical methods are used to reconstruct legal provisions that have been firmly established within the exegetical tradition.

The Controversy over Hermeneutical Methods in Interpreting Legal Verses from the Perspective of Fahmi Salim

One example of the controversy surrounding the application of hermeneutics to legal verses can be found in the interpretation of polygamy in Quran Surah al-Nisa' verse 3. Allah states:

فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تُقْسِطُوا فِي الْيَتَامَىٰ فَانكِحُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ مَثْنَىٰ وَثُلَاثَ وَرُبَاعَ ۖ
فَوَاحِدَةً أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ أَذَىٰ ۖ أَلَّا تَعْلَمُوا

Meaning: *If you fear that you will not deal justly with the rights of orphan girls, then marry other women of your choice two, three, or four. But if you fear that you will not maintain justice, then marry only one or those bondwomen in your possession. This is more likely to prevent you from committing injustice.*

In Nasr Hamid Abu Zaid's reading, the verse needs to be understood through a contextual approach. According to the interpretation examined in this study, there are three main steps in understanding the provision on polygamy. First, the permissibility of polygamy is understood within its historical context as part of a process of liberating women from male domination. Second, the provision concerning polygamy needs to be situated within the overall value structure of the Quran, with justice regarded as the fundamental principle (*mabda*), while polygamy is viewed as a specific and contextual legal provision. Third, based on the relationship between principle and law, the Quranic permission of polygamy is understood as a restriction on an existing practice rather than as an unrestricted authorization (Galieva, 2021; Nurmila, 2016).

This approach demonstrates a hermeneutical orientation that positions social and historical contexts as important components in understanding the intended meaning of a legal provision. From this perspective, a text is not understood solely on the basis of its literal wording but also through the general principles that the Quran seeks to establish. When there is tension between a specific legal provision and justice as a fundamental value, the latter becomes an important consideration in determining the relevance of the legal provision to a particular context (Hanafi & Bin Mohamad, 2020).

This view has been criticized by Fahmi Salim. His criticism is essentially directed toward the tendency of contextual interpretation to shift the status of law from a normative provision toward a construction that is highly dependent on changing social conditions. Within this critical reading, viewing law as specific and relative may result in the alteration or even elimination of a legal provision when it is considered inconsistent with a more general principle. Ruqoiyah (2023), as discussed in the literature on Nasr Hamid Abu Zaid's thought, explains that law may be viewed as a specific and relative event depending on changes in its surrounding conditions. When there is a conflict between a principle and a legal provision, the principle is given greater priority.

From Fahmi Salim's perspective, such an approach potentially produces what is referred to as *al-taḥrīm al-dhīmī*, or implicit prohibition. In other words, although the text explicitly provides room for a particular practice, a hermeneutical construction that places a certain principle as the primary basis may lead to restrictions so extensive that the practice can no longer substantively be carried out. In the context of polygamy, this issue becomes an important point in the criticism of hermeneutical methods because it concerns the relationship between textual meaning, historical context, and the legal consequences of interpretation (Ichwan, 2003).

A similar controversy can be observed in the interpretation of *hudud* law, particularly the punishment for theft as stated in Quran Surah al-Ma'idah verse 38:

وَالسَّارِقُ وَالسَّارِقَةُ فَاقْطَعُوا أَيْدِيَهُمَا جَزَاءً بِمَا كَسَبَا نَكَالًا مِنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

Meaning: *As for male and female thieves, cut off their hands as a penalty for what they have done a deterrent from Allah. And Allah is Almighty, All-Wise.*

Nisa et al (2024) employs the concept of boundary theory in interpreting legal verses, including the provision concerning punishment for theft. In the context of hand amputation, he develops the concept of *ḥad al-a'la*, or the maximum limit. According to this approach, hand amputation is understood as the highest limit of punishment established by Allah. Accordingly, the punishment imposed on a thief may take a form below this limit but may not exceed it.

This theory constitutes part of Shahrur's broader construction of *naẓariyyat al-ḥudud*, or boundary theory. In his explanation, legal boundaries are illustrated through a mathematical concept involving a range of functions with a maximum point. Through this analogy, hand amputation is positioned as the highest legal limit, while

forms of punishment below this limit may be determined according to particular circumstances and contexts. Thus, law is not understood as a single form of punishment that must be applied identically under all circumstances but as having a range of application within the boundaries established by revelation.

Fahmi Salim criticizes this approach by questioning the paradigm underlying the interpretation of *budud* law. In his criticism, hand amputation is viewed from a secular perspective as a form of punishment considered incompatible with the spirit of modernity. This argument is based, among other things, on the assumption that hand amputation is a form of punishment that emerged from the conditions of past societies and is incompatible with the development of modern society. Furthermore, such punishment is considered inconsistent with the principle of respect for human dignity (Suleman et al., 2025).

From the perspective of Fahmi Salim's criticism, the central issue lies not only in the form of punishment but also in how the Quranic text is positioned in relation to changing contexts. When legal provisions in the Quran are understood as responses to particular historical events and conditions, there is a possibility that such provisions will be treated as rules that may change in accordance with social developments. From the perspective of an approach that seeks to preserve the normative character of legal verses, such a pattern of interpretation becomes problematic because it may reduce normative provisions to rules that are entirely dependent on context.

Based on the overall discussion, the controversy surrounding hermeneutics in the interpretation of legal verses reveals fundamental differences in how the relationship between text, context, and law is understood. Contextual hermeneutical approaches tend to provide considerable space for historical context, social change, and the general principles underlying a particular legal provision. In contrast, Fahmi Salim's criticism emphasizes the need to preserve the normative authority of the Quranic text and to exercise caution when reconstructing legal provisions on the basis of changing contexts. This difference demonstrates that the issue of hermeneutics in Quranic interpretation is not merely a technical matter of interpretation but also concerns epistemological questions regarding sources of authority, the status of meaning, and the limits of legal change within the Islamic tradition.

CONCLUSION

This article has addressed the controversy surrounding the application of hermeneutics in the interpretation of Quranic legal verses from the perspective of Fahmi Salim. The findings reveal that Fahmi Salim rejects the use of hermeneutics in interpreting legal verses because he considers it capable of shifting the authority of revelation and departing from the established principles of classical Islamic exegesis. His criticism is particularly directed at the interpretations of Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd on polygamy and Muhammad Syahrur on the punishment of amputation for theft. According to Fahmi Salim, the hermeneutical approaches employed by these thinkers tend to prioritize socio-historical contexts and modern rationality in understanding the Quranic text, thereby producing interpretations that differ from those upheld within the classical Islamic exegetical tradition. Consequently, the controversy over hermeneutics is not merely a methodological debate but also an epistemological dispute concerning the legitimate sources of authority in interpreting Quranic legal verses.

The novelty of this article lies in its specific examination of Fahmi Salim's critique of hermeneutics in the interpretation of Quranic legal verses, a dimension that has received limited attention in previous studies, which have generally focused on the broader debate over hermeneutics in Islamic studies. This article demonstrates

that Fahmi Salim's rejection of hermeneutics is rooted in his commitment to preserving the authority of divine revelation and the methodological foundations of classical Islamic exegesis in legal interpretation. Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of Quranic interpretive methodology by enriching scholarly discussions on the relationship between contemporary hermeneutics and traditional Islamic exegesis. Practically, the findings provide a useful reference for scholars, students, and researchers of Quranic studies in understanding contemporary Islamic intellectual debates and in critically assessing the application of hermeneutical approaches to the interpretation of Quranic legal texts.

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Author contribution

Rendy Pradana: writing-original draft preparation and visualization, data curation, and editing, analysis, conceptualization, methodology.

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