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Reinterpreting the Qur'anic Concept of Poverty: A Novel Hermeneutical Reading of the Term Miskīn in Al-Baqarah (2:184) through Paul Ricoeur's Perspective

Mohammad Maulana Khoirur Rifki¹; Istiharokum Laily²; Satrio Anugrah Pangestu³

Abstract

This research departs from the urgency of understanding poverty not only as an economic issue, but also as a multidimensional phenomenon that is full of social and spiritual meaning in an Islamic perspective. This study aims to reinterpret the term "miskīn" in Surah Al-Baqarah verse 184 using Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutic approach. The research aims to explore the textual and contextual meaning of the verse through Ricoeur's three stages of hermeneutics: semantic understanding, reflection, and existential appropriation, to produce meanings that are more relevant to contemporary social conditions, especially in the context of poverty in Indonesia. The method used is qualitative with literature studies as a data collection technique, and analysis is carried out descriptive-analytically based on a hermeneutic theoretical framework. The results of the study show that the term "miskīn" in the verse does not only refer to material conditions, but also reflects the structural vulnerability, helplessness, and social responsibility of Muslims towards vulnerable groups. This verse contains an ethical dimension that demands the internalization of the values of care, empathy, and social justice through worship such as fidyah. The conclusion of this study emphasizes that the understanding of the text of the Qur'an needs to be contextualized with social realities through a hermeneutic approach, so that the divine message can be a transformative inspiration in overcoming poverty as a fundamental humanitarian problem.

Keywords: Poverty; Hermeneutics; Paul Ricoeur; Surah Al-Baqarah 2:18.

¹ Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, Corresponding Email: khoirur.rifki01@gmail.com, Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-0433-7757>

² Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, Email: lailyistiharokum@gmail.com

³ KTO Karatay Üniversitesi, Konya, Turkey, Email: 200633028@ogrenci.karatay.edu.tr

Introduction

Poverty is a social condition in which individuals or groups cannot properly meet their basic living needs, such as food, clothing, shelter, education, and health [1]. The term is not only understood economically, but also includes social, cultural, and even spiritual dimensions. In the academic literature, economists interpret poverty through measures of income and economic distribution, while sociologists highlight aspects of social class, marginality, and stratification [2]. On the other hand, observers of social problems focus on the level of general well-being of the community which includes education, health, and access to other basic services.

Maxwell (2007) in Wulansari (2023) [3] describes poverty as economic limitation, social underdevelopment, physical and psychological incapacitation, and lagging behind in various aspects of life that cause individuals or groups to be excluded from the mainstream of society. Etymologically, the word "*miskīn*" in Arabic comes from the root word *sakana*, which means to be silent or calm, which then develops into *sakuna*, *askana*, or *tamaskana*, which indicates the condition of being *miskīn* [4]. Al-Malibary in Khairi (2022) [5] even states that a person is still classified as *miskīn* even though he has material possessions, if he is not able to meet his life needs adequately.

The problem of poverty has become a central issue faced by almost all countries in the world. Poverty not only has an impact on the low quality of life of individuals, but also gives rise to various derivative problems such as low levels of education, *miskīn* access to health, and increasing crime rates. Poverty is closely related to the inability to meet basic human needs such as clothing, food, and shelter [6].

In the Indonesian context, the problem of poverty is not new; it has become a structural problem since the establishment of this republic. The Indonesian government itself has been trying to overcome poverty since the Old Order era. The Indonesian Constitution, through Article 34 of the UUD 1945, states that the state is obliged to take care of the *miskīn* and abandoned children [7]. In practice, the Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS) uses a *basic needs approach* to measure the poverty level. This approach sees poverty as an economic inability to meet basic food and non-food needs based on a defined poverty line [8]. Therefore, poverty alleviation must be carried out comprehensively, across sectors, and multidimensionally [9].

In the midst of the complexity of these problems, the Qur'an, as a guideline for Muslims, has its own view on poverty. The term "*miskīn*" is mentioned in the Qur'an 25 times in three word forms, namely *miskiīn*, *masaakiīn*, and *maskanah* [10]. The form of the word *miskīn* appears in Surah Al-Baqarah (2): 184, the verse that is the focus of this research. In this verse, Allah provides *rukhshah* or relief for those who are unable to observe the fast of Ramadan by providing an alternative to paying *fidyah*, which is to feed the *miskīn* as many days of fasting as they have left. This reflects God's compassion and justice for His servants, while also showing the Qur'an's concern for socially vulnerable groups (Ahmad & Hidayati, 2024). This verse not only provides legal provisions for worship, but also contains a profound moral and social message: that the *miskīn* should not be ignored, even becoming part of the primary concern in the context of worship.

Research on the term "*miskīn*" in the Qur'an, as well as hermeneutic studies of religious texts, has been conducted previously. For instance, several works have explored the linguistic, theological, and philosophical aspects of poverty and interpretation within Islamic discourse. However, there has been no research that specifically examines the term "*miskīn*" in *Surah Al-Baqarah (2:184)* through Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutical approach. Previous studies reveal valuable insights yet leave a notable research gap. Mubarak and Nafsi (2024)[11] applied Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutics to *Q.S. Al-'Alaq 1–5*, highlighting its role in fostering reflective literacy but without addressing socio-ethical concepts like poverty. Simon (2019)[12] examined Ricoeur's hermeneutics in relation to poverty and injustice, though his analysis remained philosophical rather than engaging directly with Qur'anic discourse. Meanwhile, Habibah (2023)[4] explored poverty in the Qur'an using traditional exegetical and linguistic approaches, lacking a hermeneutical integration. Thus, the existing literature has yet to offer a Ricoeurian interpretation of the Qur'anic term *miskīn*, particularly in *Al-Baqarah (2:184)*, which this study aims to address by uncovering its multidimensional meaning through a novel hermeneutical lens.

Based on this background, this study aims to explore the meaning of the term "*miskīn*" in Surah Al-Baqarah verse 184 through Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutic approach. In line with this objective, the main research question addressed in this study is: How can Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutics reveal the multidimensional meaning of the term *miskīn* in Surah Al-Baqarah verse 184? This research will go through three stages of analysis: first, semantic understanding by deciphering

the linguistic aspects and literal meaning of the word "*miskīn*"; second, the reflective stage by including the horizon of the researcher's understanding of the current context of the *miskīn* in Indonesia; and third, the existential stage by exploring a more profound and contextual meaning of the verse to be relevant to the dynamics of the times.

With this approach, researchers hope to make a conceptual contribution to understanding poverty not only as a material problem, but also as a spiritual and social problem. The main formulation of this research is: how can the understanding and meaning of the term "*miskīn*" in Surah Al-Baqarah verse 184 be explained in depth through Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutic approach? The goal is to present a reinterpretation of the text of the Qur'an so that it remains relevant and contextual (*sholih li kulli zaman wa makan*), and can be a foothold in understanding and overcoming the problem of poverty in contemporary society.

Method

This research uses a qualitative approach with a data collection method through library research [13]. Data are obtained from various relevant primary and secondary sources, then analyzed and interpreted using a hermeneutic methodology developed by Paul Ricoeur. The primary source in this study is the Qur'an, which is the primary basis for reinterpreting the text. The secondary sources include supporting literature such as books, scientific journals, proceedings, and websites related to the topic of poverty, Ricoeur's hermeneutic theory, and the interpretation of Surah Al-Baqarah verse 184. All data collected were processed using descriptive-analytical analysis methods to explore the meaning contained in the text and its relevance to the problems raised.

Result and Discussion

Definition and Concept of *Miskīn*

Defining poverty is not a simple matter because poverty is a complex and multidimensional social phenomenon [14]. This term does not simply refer to a condition of economic deprivation, but also reflects various interrelated social, cultural, and psychological aspects. In general, poverty is often understood as a state of underdevelopment, helplessness, or an individual's inability to meet a humanely decent standard of living [15]. One of them is that a single approach to the definition of poverty tends to simplify problems that are actually more complicated.

Poverty cannot be completely solved because it reflects living conditions that are below the standard of feasibility and are influenced by a variety of structural and individual factors. One of the factors is the nature of certain human beings who are reluctant or unable to overcome the social gaps they face [16]. In this context, Mahdi et al. (2024)[17] emphasized that poverty is not just an economic problem, but also the root of the potential emergence of various other social problems, especially those related to the resilience of individual values and beliefs in social life.

Furthermore, Lister in Adon et al. (2023) [16] states that there is no concept of poverty that is completely neutral from cultural and historical influences. Therefore, to fully understand this phenomenon, a multidimensional and contextual analytical framework is needed, which is able to explain the interconnectedness between economic, social, and cultural aspects in the dynamics of social welfare. In this case, structural approaches must be juxtaposed with cultural approaches so that the understanding of poverty becomes more comprehensive and coherent.

Poverty is a complex, multidimensional phenomenon encompassing a lack of income, basic resources, inability to participate in social activities, and a lack of freedom of expression and power. Poverty can be defined as absolute (the inability to meet basic physical needs) or relative (a low standard of living compared to other groups in society). This multidimensional approach highlights the importance of the capability and functioning aspects of society according to Amartya Sen. This paper also underlines the importance of a comprehensive definition of poverty for effective poverty measurement and alleviation [18].

The *culture of poverty* describes a situation in which individuals or groups have been trapped in a social environment that maintains negative mindsets and attitudes such as apathy, fatalism, and an orientation to momentary gratification. This state is also often accompanied by justification for deviant behavior, including criminal acts [19] Lewis in de Bruijn (2022) [20] states that there is a view that sees the behavior of the *miskin* as a rational response to their economic conditions. In this view, norms and values in *miskin* groups are believed to shape preferences and behaviors that diverge from other groups of society, which in turn reinforces the cycle of poverty itself.

Based on the above concept, poverty needs to be understood not only as an inequality in the distribution of resources, but also as the result of complex interactions between social, cultural, and behavioral structures of individuals. An

approach that ignores one of these elements will tend to give birth to ineffective solutions in efforts to eradicate poverty in a sustainable manner.

Dynamics and Problems of Poverty in Indonesia

Poverty in Indonesia is a complex and ongoing social problem, despite efforts made by the government, the private sector, and civil society. This reality shows that poverty is not only purely economic, but is also influenced by structural and multidimensional factors that require a dynamic approach in its response [21] The Government of Indonesia has demonstrated its commitment through the formulation of strategic policies, as stated in the Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional (RPJMN) 2004–2009. One of the main targets in the document is to reduce the poverty rate to 8.2 percent by 2009 [9].

According to the BPS, poverty criteria are divided into two, namely relative poverty and absolute poverty. Relative poverty refers to the condition of poverty due to the influence of development policies that have not been able to reach all levels of society, causing inequality in income distribution [17].

Data from the BPS noted that the number of *miskin* people in March 2011 reached 30.02 million people (12.49 percent), a decrease compared to the previous year which amounted to 31.02 million people (13.33 percent), reflecting progress altogether slowly. The poverty line is determined by looking at the amount of rupiah spent per capita per month on food and non-food needs. Food needs are set at 2,100 kcal/capita/day, as recommended by the 1988 Food and Nutrition Workshop [22].

To support the sustainability of poverty reduction, the government also issued a minimum wage policy as one of the instruments to improve welfare. Since 2016, this policy has been adjusted periodically based on national economic growth and inflation, with the aim of creating a more predictable increase [4]. However, the effectiveness of the minimum wage policy as the sole tool for poverty alleviation is still considered limited because it is not able to address the structural roots of poverty comprehensively.

In addition to the income aspect, poverty in Indonesia is also closely related to inequality in human resource development. Indeks Pembangunan Manusia (IPM) is one of the important indicators in measuring the quality of life of the population. Inequality in the distribution of education, health services, and

employment opportunities leads to IPM disparities between regions. Therefore, the government's active role in the equitable distribution of human development is the key to reducing poverty in the long term[1]. Furthermore, in the global framework, Indonesia also adopts the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda, which targets poverty eradication, achieving socio-economic balance, and strengthening partnerships and peace until 2030 [7].

Guzel on Priambodo and Djirimu [23] emphasized that the issue of poverty is highly complex. Its causes can be diverse, including unemployment, low wages, limited education, high and difficult-to-control inflation, unequal distribution of opportunities across income groups, discrimination, geographic barriers to access, and other factors. Myrdal and Nurkse explain poverty as a vicious cycle, where low income results in *miskin* health, inadequate education, and reduced productivity, which then sustains the condition of poverty [24].

About Paul Ricoeur's Hermeneutic

Hermeneutics, as a discipline, has undergone significant development since its introduction as a method for understanding language and text. In its development, hermeneutics is not only an approach to interpreting writing or conversation, but also a foundation for other disciplines in understanding meaning in depth. As expressed by Mahridawati (2022),[25] hermeneutics can be understood as a method of understanding, the process of understanding, and criticism of understanding itself. Ricoeur's interesting assertion [26] that Hermeneutics needs only to develop the concept of understanding, which was first used to interpret texts, into a general theory of prejudice that encompasses the entire historical relationship.

Figures such as Schleiermacher and Gadamer made important contributions to the foundations of modern hermeneutics. Schleiermacher, for example, formulated hermeneutics as the art of correctly understanding the language of others, especially written language. In contrast to Gadamer, he developed the idea of hermeneutics not only as the art of exegesis, but also as a discipline that investigates the theoretical justification of the interpretive process [27].

The ideas of these two figures also influenced Paul Ricoeur, who is known for his distinctive approach to uniting the two major poles in the hermeneutic

tradition: methodological and philosophical. Ricoeur offers a middle ground by combining phenomenological and hermeneutic approaches, thus giving birth to a concept known as phenomenological hermeneutics [28]. Within this framework, Ricoeur proposes that texts be understood autonomously, without depending on the author's intentions, historical context, or initial audience. This view marks a shift from romantic hermeneutics – which tends to reconstruct the author's intentions – toward a paradigm focused on the production of meaning as it developed in Gadamer's thought [29].

Furthermore, Ricoeur views text as *a discourse fixed by writing*, that is, a patented discourse in the form of writing [30]. In Interpretation Theory [31], he explains that reading is a dialectical pair of writing. The process of reading creates a dialectic between understanding (*verstehen*) and explanation (*erklären*), two important elements in the German hermeneutic tradition. He emphasized that this dialectical structure in reading reflects the dialectical structure in the discourse itself – between events and meanings. Thus, comprehension in reading equals events in speech, and explanation equals the objective meaning of the discourse itself.

To carry out the process of interpreting the text, Ricoeur developed three stages of understanding [32]. The first is the semantic stage, which is to make language the main medium of ontological expression. This stage emphasizes the importance of symbols and sign systems in understanding the text. Second is the reflection stage, which brings hermeneutics to the philosophical level by connecting the understanding of the text with self-reflection. This is where understanding becomes a dialogical process between the subject and the object. Third is the existential stage, which is the culmination point where hermeneutics transforms into the ontology of understanding itself. At this stage, interpretation not only unpacks meaning but also reveals the existence of meaning through an in-depth interpretation methodology. These three stages show how Ricoeur not only understands the text structurally, but also makes it a path to understanding the self and the world ontologically.

Implications of Al-Baqarah verse 184 Interpretation, Paul Ricouer's Perspective

Before further implying Paul Ricouer's hermeneutics, here is Surah Al-Baqarah verse 184, which reads;

أَيَّامًا مَّعْدُودَتٍ ۖ فَمَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مَّرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ ۗ وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ يُطِيقُونَهُ فِدْيَةٌ طَعَامُ مِسْكِينٍ ۚ فَمَنْ تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّهُ ۚ وَأَن تَصُومُوا خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

Which means:

in a certain number of days. So whoever among you is sick or on his way (and breaks the fast), then (it is obligatory for him to fast) as many days as he has left on the other days. And it is obligatory for those who are heavy to carry it out (if they do not fast) to pay fidyah (i.e., feeding a miskīn person). Whoever willingly does good deeds, that is better for him. And fasting is better for you if you know [33].

In analyzing this verse, the initial approach used is to detach the text from its original autonomy, which is closely related to the horizon of the author – in this case, Allah SWT. This verse is placed as a religious text that has undergone codification in a certain historical context in the past. By placing the researcher as a contemporary reader, it can be understood that the existence of texts always undergoes a process of distancing – that is, the separation between the text and its author, between the text and its historical context, and between the text and the initial context that gave birth to it [11].

This process of distancing is the foundation for applying Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutic approach, which in practice resembles the process of recontextualization. This approach allows the text to be seen from the inside, without ignoring the historical and cultural dimensions inherent in the text. Efforts to remove the distance between the reader and the text will help avoid the dichotomization of understanding and at the same time, bridge the tension between subjective and objective elements in interpretation [30].

After occupying the position of the text as an autonomous entity, this research will take three stages within the framework of Ricoeur's hermeneutics, which is expected to generate a new horizon of meaning. The three stages will be described in the following sections:

Semantic Understanding

In the early stage, i.e. the semantic stage, language is understood as the main medium of ontological expression. Symbols and linguistic structures play an important role in shaping meaning, not just conveying a message. Hermeneutics functions to maintain a balance between methods and ontology, as well as to strengthen its relationship with phenomenology in understanding human beings as dynamic meaningful entities [34].

The term *miskīn* in the Qur'an that has been classified by Baqi is [10] found 25 times in three derivative forms, namely *miskīn* (مُسْكِين), *masākīn* (مَسَاكِين), and *maskanah* (مَسْكَنَة). The singular form of *miskīn* is recorded 11 times, which appears in a number of verses, namely: Al-Baqarah (2): 184; Ar-Rum (30): 38; Al-Isra' (17): 26; Al-Mujadalah (58): 4; Al-Qalam (68): 24; Al-Haqqah (69): 34; Al-Mudatsir (74): 44; Al-Insan (76): 8; Al-Fajr (89): 18; Al-Balad (90): 16; and Al-Ma'un (107): 3. Meanwhile, the plural form of *masākīn* is found 12 times, in: Al-Baqarah (2): 83, 177, and 215; An-Nisa' (4): 8 and 36; Al-Ma'idah (5): 89 and 95; Al-Anfal (8): 41; At-Taubah (9): 60; Al-Kahfi (18): 79; An-Nur (24): 22; and Al-Hashr (59): 7. The form of *mashanah* appears twice, namely in Al-Baqarah (2): 61 and Ali Imran (3): 112.

Etymologically, the word *miskīn* is derived from the root سَكُنَ (*sakuna*), as explained in the *Al-Munjid* Dictionary [35], which classifies this word in derivatives of the root سَكَنَ-يَسْكُنُ. Basically, *sakana* means to be silent or calm, but it undergoes the development of meaning to become *sukūnah* (سُكُونَة), which refers to a state of weakness or helplessness. This semantic process gives birth to several derivative forms, such as *askana* (أَسْكَنَ), which means to make a person *miskīn*; *tasakkan* (تَسَكَّنَ) and *tamaskana* (تَمَسَّكَنَ), which reflect the condition or effort to become *miskīn*. The verbs *istakana* (اسْتَكَانَ) and *istakana* (اسْتَكَنَ) contain the meaning of submission and contempt, describing a situation of surrender due to helplessness. From the root of this meaning, the term *al-maskanah* (المَسْكَنَة) emerged, which encapsulates aspects of poverty, humiliation, and weakness, and the term

al-miskīn (المسكين) which refers to individuals who do not have enough to meet their basic needs.

This definition is in line with the classical definition in Arabic literature, such as in *Lisān al-'Arab* [36], which describes a *miskīn* as "a person who does not have enough for his family (*alladhī lā shay'a lahu yakfī 'iyālahu*). This view is reinforced by the opinion of Al-Aṣma'ī, who states that *the condition of miskīn* is lighter than *that of faqīr*. This shows a conceptual distinction between *faqīr*, which refers to someone who has a part of something that can sustain him, and *miskīn*, which better describes a state of absence and structural vulnerability as a whole.

Reflective

The reflective stage is a philosophical level in the hermeneutic approach, which emphasizes the dynamic interaction between the understanding of the text and the understanding of the self. This dialectical process allows researchers to understand themselves through interpretation of texts and the experiences of others, transcending the dichotomy of objectivity and subjectivity. In the context of this study, the approach is applied by first exploring the meaning of the word "*miskīn*" semantically and objectively, which is then associated with the researcher's subjective understanding in order to interpret the values contained in the text.

Surah al-Baqarah verse 184 discusses the provisions of *fidyah* as a form of consequence for the use of *rukhsah* (relief) in fasting, namely for those who experience *masyaqqah* such as *safar* (journey) or *maradh* (illness). This verse is part of a series of verses that affirm the obligation of fasting, but also emphasize the flexibility of the shari'a by giving those who are unable to observe the fast the option to replace it by paying *fidyah*, i.e., feeding the *miskīn*.

Tafsir al-Manar [37] interprets this verse with a contextual approach, that the level of *fidyah* of one mud – enough to satisfy an adult man – reflects the sensitivity of the shari'a to physical limitations and social conditions. This interpretation emphasizes the value of social solidarity towards the *miskīn*. In line with that, the words of the Prophet Muhammad affirm that poverty is not always visible to the naked eye, because the essence of poverty is not just a lack of materiality, but a hidden inability that is not socially detectable. In this commentary, Muhammad Abduh emphasizes that *fidyah* is not just a technical

substitute for fasting, but a manifestation of social responsibility in Islam. Even in certain circumstances, such as when traveling or facing danger, breaking the fast can be a more preferable option, reflecting the humanitarian dimension in Islamic law.

A similar view is expressed by Hamka through his interpretation of the verse *tathawwu*, which is interpreted as a *tathawwu*. Generally, the term [38] فَمَنْ تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَهُ sunnah practice, but Hamka interprets this phrase in the context of *fidyah*, namely that whoever gives more than the prescribed level of *fidyah*, then it is good for him. Hamka supports this interpretation with the hadith of Anas bin Malik, which describes how one can give *fidyah* more than the rate of one mud, such as cooking a large pot of bread to give to thirty *miskīn* people. This interpretation shows that the main value of *fidyah* is not only in its quantitative provisions, but in the spirit of sharing and social empathy that comes from Islamic humanitarian values.

A broader interpretation of the concept of *ṭa'ām al-miskīn* can also be found in *Surah al-Haqqah* verse 34, which, according to Rodin [39] associates this term with a stern warning against the infidels on the Day of Judgment. This verse illustrates that those who live in this world in wealth and power without moral integrity and do not care about the fate of the *miskīn* will be rewarded in the form of punishment in the hereafter. Az-Zuhaily interprets the word *ṭa'ām* in this verse not only as food in the physical sense, but as a noun form meaning the act of feeding, similar to the word '*aṭā*' (giving) [40]. Thus, the meaning does not simply refer to material objects, but to the process of social charity involving empathy and moral sensitivity.

Based on the meaning of these verses, the researcher concludes that *Surah al-Baqarah* verse 184 contains a much deeper value than just the provision of paying *fidyah*. This verse reflects Islamic social ethics that encourages concern for others, especially those in conditions of need. Therefore, *fidyah* should be understood as part of a moral and spiritual commitment to share and strengthen social solidarity.

Appropriation

The appropriation stage in Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutics, also known as the existential stage, marks the achievement of an ontological understanding [25]. At this stage, interpretation no longer relies solely on linguistic and semantic structures but touches on the depths of human existence based on instinctive desires and impulses. Through a psychoanalytic approach, Ricoeur's hermeneutics reveals that the understanding of texts, especially the Qur'an, is not one-sided and subjective, but involves a transcendent relationship between the interpreter and the text itself. This understanding then develops into self-understanding, in which the subject not only reads the text but also experiences the text in its existential reality.

In this context, the meaning of the term *miskīn* in Surah al-Baqarah verse 184 is not only limited to semantic aspects or jurisprudence, but needs to be brought into a contextual and ontological understanding, especially related to the reality of poverty in Indonesia. The verse implies the command to feed the *miskīn* as a form of worship that is at the same time full of moral and social values. When contextualized, the command represents the Qur'anic call for the active involvement of the community in tackling poverty as a systemic and multidimensional problem [41].

The reality of poverty in Indonesia itself is a complex problem that cannot be solved through social assistance alone. The current poverty determination standard in Indonesia is based on the results of the Survei Sosial Ekonomi Nasional (Susenas) [42], which collects data on people's spending and consumption patterns. However, government intervention through direct assistance has not been able to significantly improve the level of welfare. Problems such as mass layoffs, mismatches between job acceptance criteria and community conditions, working age limits, and rising prices of basic necessities actually worsen the socio-economic conditions of the *miskīn*.

From the results of the interpretation of the verse, it is found that moral values in Islam prioritize sympathy and empathy for the *miskīn*, not only in the form of state involvement, but also in the form of individual awareness of the community to participate in empowerment and poverty alleviation. In this case, *community empowerment* [43] is an important key, especially for the economically

miskīn who are in the low-income category according to national standards. Therefore, the understanding of the text of the Qur'an must be linked to concrete actions in social reality, so that the meaning of the term *miskīn* does not stop at the symbolic realm, but becomes a trigger for real social transformation.

Conclusion

Based on the hermeneutic analysis carried out in this study, it can be concluded that the reinterpretation of the term *miskīn* in *Surah Al-Baqarah* verse 184 through Paul Ricoeur's three-stage hermeneutic approach – namely semantic understanding, reflection, and existential appropriation – provides a profound insight that poverty should not be understood merely as material deprivation, but as a multidimensional and existential condition concerning both structural vulnerability and social interdependence. The semantic stage reveals that the root of the word *miskīn* conveys weakness and helplessness not only in a physical sense but also in psychosocial dimensions. The reflective stage shows that the provisions of *fidyah* in the verse contain ethical values that promote empathy and social responsibility among Muslims toward vulnerable groups. Meanwhile, at the stage of appropriation, this verse becomes a transformative moral appeal that calls for active engagement in addressing poverty as a complex systemic issue.

This study emphasizes the importance of a contextual hermeneutical approach in interpreting religious texts, especially the Qur'an, so that divine values can serve as a foundation for developing socially responsive ethics relevant to contemporary challenges. However, this study is limited to conceptual and textual analysis without empirical validation, which may restrict its practical scope. Future research may therefore apply Ricoeur's hermeneutical framework to other Qur'anic social concepts such as *'adl* (justice) or *mustadh'afūn* (the oppressed), and combine hermeneutical interpretation with socio-empirical methodologies to foster a dialogical relationship between theological reflection and community-based praxis.

Author Contributions

Mohammad Maulana Khoirur Rifki: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing – review & editing, Supervision, Project administration. **Istiharokum Laily:** Methodology, Writing – review & editing, Investigation. **Satrio Anugrah Pangestu:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing – review & editing, Investigation.

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Conflict of Interest

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