

## REPRESENTATION AND CAPABILITIES OF NON-MUSLIM CHINESE WOMEN AS REGIONAL HEADS IN SINGKAWANG CITY: *A Siyasah Dusturiyyah Analysis\**

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**Abstract:** *The phenomenon of non-Muslim Chinese women being elected as regional leaders in Indonesia is considered unusual, especially when elected amid a predominantly Muslim population and the strengthening of Islamist movements in national politics. This article, therefore, analyses the representation and capabilities of non-Muslim Chinese women as regional heads in Singkawang City, Indonesia, from 2017 to 2022. In the Indonesian context, we refer to this case as a “triple minority.” The research used a socio-legal approach involving data condensation, data display, and conclusion/verification stages. The findings of this study indicate that the representation and capabilities of non-Muslim Chinese women as regional heads in Singkawang City from 2017 to 2022 align with the principles of constitutional politics (siyasah dusturiyyah) and Indonesian laws. Non-Muslim Chinese women elected as regional heads of Singkawang City, despite being in a Muslim-majority environment, have succeeded in making Singkawang City the top-ranked Tolerant City in Indonesia.*

**المخلص:** يُعتبر ظاهرة انتخاب نساء صينيات غير مسلمات كقادة إقليميين في إندونيسيا أمراً غير عادي، خصوصاً عندما يتم انتخابهن وسط سكان ذو أغلبية مسلمة وتعزيز حركات إسلامية في السياسة الوطنية. لذا، يحل هذا المقال تحت المجهر لتحليل التمثيل والقدرات للنساء الصينيات غير المسلمات كرؤساء إقليميين في مدينة سينغكاوانغ، إندونيسيا، من عام ٧١٠٢ إلى عام ٢٠٢٢. في السياق الإندونيسي، نشير إلى هذه الحالة بأنها "ثلاثية الأقليات". تم إجراء هذا البحث باستخدام نهج اجتماعي-قانوني، يشمل مراحل تكثيف البيانات وعرض

البيانات واستنتاجها والتحقق منها. تشير نتائج هذه الدراسة إلى أن التمثيل والقدرات للنساء الصينيات غير المسلمات كرؤساء إقليميين في مدينة سينغكاوانغ من عام ٧١٠٢ إلى عام ٢٢٠٢ لا تتعارض مع مبادئ السياسة الدستورية (السياسة الدستورية) والقوانين الإندونيسية. نجحت النساء الصينيات غير المسلمات اللواتي تم انتخابهن كرؤساء إقليميين في مدينة سينغكاوانغ، على الرغم من أنهن يعيشن في بيئة ذات أغلبية مسلمة، في جعل مدينة سينغكاوانغ أفضل مدينة متسامحة في إندونيسيا

**Abstrak:** *Fenomena terpilihnya perempuan tionghoa non-muslim menjadi kepala daerah di Indonesia tergolong aneh, terlebih lagi ia terpilih di tengah penduduk mayoritas muslim dan menguatnya gerakan Islamisme pada politik nasional. Untuk itu, artikel ini menganalisis representasi dan kapabilitas perempuan tionghoa non muslim sebagai kepala Daerah di Kota Singkawang, Indonesia, pada 2017-2022. Untuk konteks di Indonesia, kasus ini kami menyebutnya sebagai “triple minority”. Penelitian dilakukan dengan pendekatan sosio-legal melalui tahapan kondensasi data, paparan data, dan kesimpulan/verifikasi. Temuan dari penelitian ini menunjukkan representasi dan kapabilitas perempuan Tionghoa non-muslim menjadi Kepala Daerah Kota Singkawang 2017-2022 tidak bertentangan dengan prinsip siyasa dusturiyah dan perundang-undangan di Indonesia. Perempuan Tionghoa non-muslim yang terpilih menjadi Kepala Daerah Kota Singkawang di tengah mayoritas muslim mampu menjadikan Kota Singkawang menjadi Kota Tertoleran peringkat satu di Indonesia.*

**Keywords:** representation, capabilities, Non-Muslim Chinese women, regional heads, Singkawang, Siyasa Dusturiyah.

## INTRODUCTION

The constitution in Indonesia has exhibited a facet of “participatory parity.”<sup>1</sup> For instance, the 1945 Constitution of Indonesia (known as

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<sup>1</sup> Nancy Fraser stated, “The norm of participatory parity serves to evaluate such recognition claims deontologically, without any need for ethical evaluation of the cultural or religious practices in question”. Nancy Fraser, “Social Justice in the Age of Identity Politics: Redistribution, Recognition, and Participation,” in *Redistribution or*

UUD 1945), Article 27, paragraph (1), asserts that all citizens have an equal standing in the eyes of the law and governance. However, the issue of the relationship between women and Islam is legal reasoning, societal perspectives, and androcentric culture.<sup>2</sup> This also occurs in Indonesia,<sup>3</sup> along with the rejection of non-Muslim Chinese ethnicity.<sup>4</sup> From this, our initial arguments assert that if we consider the status of non-Muslim Chinese women actively involved in the political sphere in Indonesia, they will face strong opposition.

*Recognition? A Political-Philosophical Exchange*, ed. Translated by et al. (London, New York: Verso, 2003), 42.

<sup>2</sup> Deniz Kandiyoti, ed., *Women, Islam and the State* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1991), <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-21178-4>; Ahmad E. Souaiaia, *Contesting Justice: Women, Islam, Law, and Society* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008), 2.

<sup>3</sup> Roksana Bahramitash, "Myths and Realities of the Impact of the Political Islam on Women: Female Employment in Indonesia and Iran," *Development in Practice* 14, no. 4 (2004): 508–20, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09614520410001686106>; Susan Blackburn, "Indonesian Women and Political Islam," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 39, no. 1 (2008): 83–105, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022463408000040>; Dina Afrianty, "Rising Public Piety and the Status of Women in Indonesia Two Decades After Reformasi," *TRaNS: Trans-Regional and National Studies of Southeast Asia* 8, no. 1 (2019): 65–80, <https://doi.org/10.1017/trn.2019.14>; Ella S. Prihatini, "Islam, Parties, and Women's Political Nomination in Indonesia," *Politics and Gender* 16, no. 3 (2019): 1–23, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1743923X19000321>; Edward Aspinall, Sally White, and Amalinda Savirani, "Women's Political Representation in Indonesia: Who Wins and How," *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 40, no. 1 (2021): 3–27, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1868103421989720>.

<sup>4</sup> Leo Suryadinata, "Chinese Politics in Post-Suharto's Indonesia," *Asian Survey* 41, no. 3 (2001): 502–24, <https://doi.org/10.1525/as.2001.41.3.502>; Michael Hatherell and Alistair Welsh, "Rebel with a Cause: Ahok and Charismatic Leadership in Indonesia," *Asian Studies Review* 41, no. 2 (2017): 174–90, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10357823.2017.1293006>; Charlotte Setijadi, "Ahok's Downfall and the Rise of Islamist Populism in Indonesia," *ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute* 38, no. 2017 (2017): 1–9; Marcus Mietzner and Burhanuddin Muhtadi, "The Mobilisation of Intolerance and Its Trajectories: Indonesian Muslim's Views of Religious Minorities and Ethnic Chinese," in *Contentious Belonging: The Place of Minorities in Indonesia*, ed. Greg Fealy and Ronit Ricci (Singapore: ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 2019), 153–72, <https://doi.org/10.1355/9789814843478-013>; Sri Nuryanti, "Populism in Indonesia: Learning from the 212 Movement in Response to the Blasphemy Case against Ahok in Jakarta," in *Populism in Asian Democracies: Features, Structures, and Impacts*, ed. Sook Jong See, Chin-en Wu, and Kaustuv Kanti Bandyopadhyay (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2021), 165–75; Daniel Peterson, *Islam, Blasphemy, and Human Rights in Indonesia* (London, New York: Routledge, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003007814>; Nathanael Gratias Sumaktoyo, "Ethnic and Religious Sentiments in Indonesian Politics: Evidence from the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial Election," *Journal of East Asian Studies* 21, no. 1 (2021): 141–64, <https://doi.org/10.1017/jea.2020.35>.

Remarkably, Tjhai Chui Mie (from now on referred to as Chui Mie), a non-Muslim Chinese woman, was elected as the Head of the Region in the city of Singkawang for the 2017-2022 term, amidst a predominantly Muslim population and during the ascendancy of political Islamic movements. In this context, several studies indicate that her election resulted from a combination of ethno-religious strategies and networks,<sup>5</sup> political experience,<sup>6</sup> and political capital.<sup>7</sup> From this, it becomes evident that the case in Singkawang deviates from the explanations provided earlier in this section, leading us to change our argument to assert that Chui Mie was elected based on her capabilities. It should be noted that previous research did not encompass discussions on Islamic discourse and its influence on the local society. Therefore, this research seeks to understand the representations and capabilities possessed by Chui Mie through a constitutional political (*siyasah dusturiyyah*) analysis to gain recognition within the predominantly Muslim community of Singkawang.

Chui Mie's capabilities as the Regional Head of Singkawang City from 2017 to 2022 gained attention and significance within *siyasah dusturiyyah*. The doctrinal framework of *siyasah dusturiyyah* referred to her relates to legal reasoning associated with legislation in Islamic politics and the reciprocal relationship between the government and its citizens, including protecting citizens' rights that are mandatory to uphold.<sup>8</sup> Consequently, the state and its governance must accommodate and protect all citizens within the political landscape

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<sup>5</sup> Hui Yew-Foong, "Decentralization and Chinese Indonesian Politics: The Case of Singkawang, West Kalimantan," *ISEAS Perspective*, no. 19 (2017): 19.

<sup>6</sup> Kurniawati Hastuti Dewi, "Chinese Indonesian Women in Local Politics: The Political Rice Tjhai Chui Mie in Singkawang," *Asian Women* 35, no. 2 (2019): 53–74, <https://doi.org/10.14431/aw.2019.06.35.2.53>.

<sup>7</sup> Ika Kartika, Mudiwati Rahmatunnisa, and Neneng Yani Yuningsih, "Modal Politik Tjhai Chui Mie Dalam Pemilihan Walikota Singkawang 2017," *Jurnal Wacana Politik* 3, no. 2 (2018): 139–49, <https://doi.org/10.24198/jwp.v3i2.18526>; Ika Kartika, "Modal Kandidat Perempuan Dalam Pilkada Tahun 2017 (Studi Kasus: Tjhai Chui Mie Sebagai Walikota Terpilih Di Kota Singkawang)," *Jurnal Tapis: Jurnal Teropong Aspirasi Politik Islam* 15, no. 1 (2019): 91–114, <https://doi.org/10.24042/tps.v15i1.4297>.

<sup>8</sup> Ali Akhbar Abaib Mas Rabbani Lubis, *Ilmu Hukum Dalam Simpul Siyasah Dusturiyyah: Refleksi Atas Teori Dan Praktek Hukum Tata Negara Di Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: Semesta Aksara, 2019), 12.

of Indonesia, and conversely, citizens must adhere to the governing legal regulations.

This research is notably unique because Chui Mie, a non-Muslim Chinese woman serving as a Regional Head, is the first of her kind in Indonesia. We refer to her as a “triple minority.” Therefore, a socio-legal approach is essential, as the analysis is intricately intertwined with the discourse on the relationship between law and society.<sup>9</sup> Data were derived from literature reviews, observations, and interviews. In-depth interviews were held with regional leaders, including the Deputy Mayor of Singkawang, for the 2017-2022 term and individuals from Muslim and ethnic communities involved in the dynamics of the 2017 Regional Election in Singkawang. The data revealed that the representation and capabilities of regional leaders can influence politics that impact the values of unity, tolerance, and harmony within the community.

The discussion in this paper is divided into two sections. The first section explores the legal discourse surrounding the representation of women, Chinese individuals, and non-Muslims within Islamic politics, including in the context of Chui Mie’s election as the Regional Head of Singkawang City from 2017 to 2022. The second section analyses Chui Mie’s capabilities before and after her term as the Regional Head of Singkawang City from 2017 to 2022. It discusses them from both juridical and *siyasah dusturiyyah*.

### **TRIPLE MINORITY: Representation of Women, Chinese, and Non-Muslim**

The city of Singkawang is renowned for its various nicknames, such as “Kota Seribu Kelenteng” (City of a Thousand Temples), “Kota Amoy” (Amoy City),<sup>10</sup> “Kota Seribu Kuil” (City of a Thousand Temples) and “Kota Tasbih” (City of Prayer Beads).<sup>11</sup> In 2018, 2021,

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<sup>9</sup> Adriaan Bedner, “Introducing Socio-Legal Approach to the Study of Islamic Law”, *International Webinar*, UIN Raden Intan Mas Said, Suakarta, 2 November 2021.

<sup>10</sup> Fenny Pebrina Marpaung, *Statistik Daerah Kota Singkawang 2018*, ed. Firmansyah (Singkawang: Badan Pusat Statistik Kota Singkawang, 2018), 1.

<sup>11</sup> Amalia Irfani, “Pola Kerukunan Melayu Dan Tionghoa Di Kota Singkawang,” *Al-Hikmah: Jurnal Dakwah* 12, no. 1 (2018): 8–9, <https://doi.org/10.24260/al-hikmah.v12i1.906>.

and 2022, it was selected as the “City of Tolerance” in Indonesia.<sup>12</sup> Tjhai Chui Mie officially served as the Head of the Singkawang Region for the 2017-2022 term. She is a *Hakka*<sup>13</sup> woman of Tionghoa and the first Buddhist adherent in the city of Singkawang, as well as in Indonesia. The result of the vote count recapitulation for the Singkawang Region’s head election for the period 2017-2022 is as follows:

Table 1. Decisions of the General Election Commission of Singkawang City

No	Candidate Pair for Regional Head	Vote Count	Recapitulation of Vote Count Result and Declaration of Election Result
1	Tjhai Nyit Kim, SH dan H. Suriyadi MS, M.Sos., M.Si	12. 239	
2	Tjhai Chui Mie, SE dan Drs. H. Irwan, M.Si	38.486	
3	H. Abdul Mutalib, SE., ME dan Muhammadin, SE	24.241	Wednesday, February 22, 2017, at 11:15 am
4	Andi Syarif TUW, ST., MT., M.Si (Han) dan dr. H. Nurmansyah, M.Kes	15.321	
	Total valid votes	90.281	

Sources: Derived from the Decision of the Singkawang City General Election Commission (KPU), Number: 14/Kpts/KPU-Kota-019.435770/2017

The election result above indicates that Chui Mie received a significantly higher number of votes compared to the other three

<sup>12</sup> Halili, *Indeks Kota Toleran Tahun 2018*, ed. Ismail Hasani (Jakarta: Pustaka Masyarakat Setara, 2018), 16; “Ringkasan Eksekutif Indeks Kota Toleran Tahun 2021” (Jakarta, 2021); Halili Hasan, Iif Fikriyati Ihsani, and Ihsan Yasarie, “Indeks Kota Toleran (IKT) 2022” (Jakarta, 2023).

<sup>13</sup> Hari Purwanto, *Cina Khek Di Singkawang*, 2nd ed. (Depok: Komunitas Bambu, 2014). The explanation of the term “*Hakka*” is used as one of the numbers for a ‘clan’ and ‘ethnic group’ in China. See M. Ikhsan Tanggok, *Agama Dan Kebudayaan Orang Hakka Di Singkawang* (Jakarta: Kompas, 2017). Most Chinese ethnic community in West Kalimantan hails from Guangdong Province in southern China, where the primary spoken language is “Hakka”. See Mary Somers, *Penambang Emas, Petani Dan Pedagang Di “Distrik Tionghoa” Kalimantan Barat* (Jakarta: Yayasan Nabil, 2008); Purwanto, *Cina Khek Di Singkawang*, 154. Historically, during the Dutch colonial period, the term “Hakka” was commonly called “Khek”. Any Rahmayani, *Pemukiman Tionghoa Di Singkawang Dari Masa Kongsu Hingga Masa Kolonial* (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Ombak, 2014), 18.

candidates, totalling 38,486 votes. It is important to note that all the candidates are Muslims, and Chui Mie is the only non-Muslim candidate. Furthermore, Chui Mie is a non-Muslim Chinese woman, whom we refer to as a triple minority within the context of the political landscape in Indonesia,<sup>14</sup> where such individuals tend to be in the minority and face disparities. This discourse has gained attention in Islamic politics, as recent phenomena have made it a scorching topic, especially in the political arena in Indonesia.

## 1. Women's Representation in Islamic Politics

The enduring presence of gender bias in the tradition of *fiqh siyasah*, recognised by specific segments of the Muslim population and often associated with misogyny,<sup>15</sup> remains a prominent issue. Systematic rejection of women's participation in the political arena is often justified in the name of religion,<sup>16</sup> leading to an open dismissal of gender equality narratives despite Islam's strong support for gender parity.<sup>17</sup> This ingrained bias has deep historical roots.<sup>18</sup> Therefore,

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<sup>14</sup> According to the 2010 Census, the male population was 137,556,363, while the female population was 118,048,783, resulting in 101 males for every 100 females. Tim SP2010, *Penduduk Indonesia Menurut Provinsi Dan Kabupaten/Kota: Sensus Penduduk 2010* (Jakarta: BPS, Badan Pusat Statistik, 2010), 6, 10–11. The Chinese ethnic group in Indonesia constitutes approximately 1.2% of the population (2,832,510 people), and followers of Buddhism make up about 0.72% (1,703,254 people) of the total population of 237,641,326. Akhsan Na'im and Hendry Syaputra, *Kewarganegaraan, Suku Bangsa, Agama, Dan Bahasa Sehari-Hari Penduduk Indonesia: Hasil Sensus Penduduk 2010* (Jakarta: Badan Pusat Statistik, 2011), 9–11.

<sup>15</sup> This aligns with the content of Marhumah's speech during her inauguration as a Professor, where she stated, "However, in my view, the construction of a patriarchal social structure is heavily influenced by interpretations of religion, with the most dominant being gender bias and even misogyny..." Marhumah, "Hadis Misoginis: Resepsi, Negosiasi Dan Pergolakan Pemikiran Antara Tradisi Dan Modernitas Di Indonesia," in *Pidato Pengukuhan Guru Besar Dalam Studi Hadis Dan Gender* (Yogyakarta: UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2019), 4.

<sup>16</sup> Etin Anwar, *Jati-Diri Perempuan Dalam Islam*, ed. Diterjemahkan oleh Kurniasih (Bandung: Mizan, 2017), 63. Fatima Mermissi, *Wanita Di Dalam Islam* (Bandung: Pustaka, 1994), xii–xiii.

<sup>17</sup> Mermissi, *Wanita Di Dalam Islam*, 163.

<sup>18</sup> Nasaruddin Umar, *Argumen Kesetaraan Jender: Perspektif Al-Qur'an*, 2nd ed. (Jakarta: Paramadina, 2001), xxvii–xxix. Asghar Ali Engineer, *Islam Masa Kini* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2004), 227. Qasim Amin, *Sejarah Penindasan Perempuan: Menggugat "Islam Laki-Laki", Menggugat "Perempuan Baru,"* ed. Terjemahan Syaiful Alam (Yogyakarta: IRChSod, 2003), 50.

a dedicated effort is required to acknowledge women in the public sphere, particularly within politics.

Women encounter various obstacles to their involvement in the political sphere, including factors like menstruation, postpartum recovery, pregnancy, childbirth, and breastfeeding, all of which are considered impediments to engaging in public activities, particularly in the political domain.<sup>19</sup> Other reasons stem from specific verses (*juz'iy*), such as the interpretation of Qur'an Surah al-Baqarah: 228 as implying that men hold a degree of superiority over women. Surah al-Baqarah: 282 mentions that the testimony of two women is equated to that of one man. Additionally, some hadiths contain statements like "A society that entrusts its affairs to women will not thrive,"<sup>20</sup> and another asserting that "Women possess less intelligence and religious commitment."<sup>21</sup> The resistance to women's involvement in politics based on Islamic teachings continues to revolve around differences in interpretation.

The basis used for these interpretations is understood in a strictly textual manner because the appearance of these texts is not directly related to participation in the political sphere. In the context of Quranic Surah al-Baqarah: 228, the issue pertains to divorce, while Quranic Surah al-Baqarah: 282 is influenced by the financial inexperience of women at that time, and the context of the previously mentioned hadiths is more specific in responding to limited events and cultural factors that restricted women's roles in the public sphere.<sup>22</sup>

It can be understood that the restriction of women in the public sphere is due to the general character of these texts (العبرة بالعمم الفظا. لا ب (الخصص لسبب). Amina Wadud, for instance, attributes this to traditional interpretations.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, there is a need for recognition to clarify the position of women, particularly in the political arena in Indonesia. It is important to note that the principle of gender equality, universally

<sup>19</sup> M. Quraish Shihab, *Perempuan* (Tangerang: Lentera Hati, 2018).

<sup>20</sup> Abdul Qadir Syaibah Al-Ahmad, *Al-Jami' Ash-Shahih Al-Bukhari* (Riyadh: Maktabah Malik Fahd al-Wathaniyah, 2008), 517.

<sup>21</sup> Abu al-Husain Muslim Ibnu al-Hajjaj An-Naisaburi, *Shahih Muslim* (Riyadh: Dar at-Thaibah, 2005), 51.

<sup>22</sup> Istibsyaroh, "Hak Politik Perempuan Kajian Tafsir Mawdu'i," *Sipakallebbi* 1, no. 3 (2014): 237–50, <https://doi.org/10.24252/jsipakallebbi.v1i3.276>.

<sup>23</sup> Amina Wadud, *Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), xii.



comprehensive (*kully*), is an integral part of the mission behind the revelation of the Quran, as emphasised by scholars like Nasaruddin Umar:

"The primary mission of the Quran's revelation is to liberate humanity from various forms of discrimination and oppression, including sexual discrimination, skin colour discrimination, and other primordial bonds. Therefore, if interpretations result in forms of oppression and injustice, such interpretations need to be reexamined."<sup>24</sup>

Furthermore, according to Nasaruddin Umar, several verses in the Quran emphasise gender equality. For instance, men and women are referred to as "servants" (QS al-Zariyat: 56, QS al-Hujurat: 13, QS al-Nahl: 97); men and women are described as "stewards of the Earth" (QS al-An'am: 165, QS al-Baqarah: 30); men and women enter into a "primordial covenant" (QS al-A'raf: 172, QS al-Isra': 70, QS al-Maidah: 89, QS al-Mumtahanah: 12); Adam and Eve actively participate in the "cosmic drama" (QS al-Baqarah: 35 and 187, QS al-A'raf: 20, 22, 23); men and women have the potential to achieve excellence (QS Ali Imran: 195, QS al-Nisa: 124, QS al-Nahl: 97, QS al-Gafir: 40).<sup>25</sup> This principle of gender equality has also been reinforced by Masdar F. Mas'udi, who states:

"First and foremost, we must identify the elements of Islamic teachings that are "*qath'i*" (fundamental and universal), and therefore unchanging. Subsequently, we can examine the teachings that are "*zhanni*" (interpretive, contextual, *juz'iyah*) and subject to the constraints of time and place... Concerning the equality of men and women in the sight of Allah, it is a "*qath'i*" (fundamental) teaching. This means that the status of a man or woman is not determined a priori (automatically) by their gender but by their deeds and piety. This is the "*qath'i*" teaching regarding the relationship between men and women. Equality as fellow human beings."<sup>26</sup>

In a political context, Quraish Shihab also provides a robust analysis of the historical perspective of scholars who discouraged women from participating in the political arena:

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<sup>24</sup> Umar, *Argumen Kesetaraan Jender: Perspektif Al-Qur'an*, 13.

<sup>25</sup> Umar, 247–65.

<sup>26</sup> Mas'udi, *Islam Dan Hak-Hak Reproduksi Perempuan: Dialog Fikih Pemberdayaan*, 51.

"It must be acknowledged that, indeed, scholars and thinkers of the past did not endorse women occupying the position of head of state. However, this was more due to the circumstances and conditions of that era, including the fact that women were not prepared to hold such positions. Not to mention, not only the position of the head of state but even the roles of ministers or regional leaders were not accessible to women. Changes in fatwas (religious edicts) and viewpoints are bound to occur due to changing conditions and situations. Therefore, it is no longer relevant to prohibit women from participating in practical politics or leading a nation."<sup>27</sup>

From this explanation, the involvement of women in the political arena will continue to experience dynamics as long as women actively participate in it. Resistance within the social fabric is also inevitable. Once again, the perceptions and viewpoints of religious scholars can be influential.<sup>28</sup> This research reaffirms that the representation of women in Islamic politics still generates a controversial narrative and can even provoke strong resistance within society. This argument introduces a new understanding that women who can break these boundaries possess strong capabilities and prestige.

## 2. Representation of the Chinese in Islamic Politics

This topic pertains to an issue that has garnered attention in the political landscape of Indonesia in recent years, notably within the context of "Islamism"<sup>29</sup> movements. This movement has had a considerable influence,<sup>30</sup> as seen during the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election. At that time, Ahok, a non-Muslim of Chinese descent, became a target

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<sup>27</sup> Shihab, *Perempuan*, 379.

<sup>28</sup> Sunarwoto, "Ulama, Fragmentasi Otoritas, Dan Imajinasi Negara-Bangsa: Studi Kasus Pontianak," in *Ulama, Politik, Dan Narasi Kebangsaan: Fragmentasi Otoritas Keagamaan Di Kota-Kota Indonesia*, ed. Ibnu Burdah, Najib Kailani, and Munirul Ikhwan (Yogyakarta: Pusat Pengkajian Islam Demokrasi dan Perdamaian (PusPIDeP), 2019), 339.

<sup>29</sup> Islamism is understood as a tendency to establish the ideals of Islam in a totalising manner, through efforts to politicize Sharia law that are not rooted in Islamic moral principles. Bassam Tibi, *Islam Dan Islamisme*, ed. Alfathri Adin, Terj (Bandung: Mizan, 2016), 209.

<sup>30</sup> Ali Akhbar Abaib Mas Rabbani Lubis, "Contestation On Political Space Between Islamism and Islamic Group in Presidential Election 2019," *Al-Tahrir: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 20, no. 2 (2020): 205–29, <https://doi.org/10.21154/altahrir.v20i2.1932>; Ali Akhbar Abaib Mas Rabbani Lubis, "NKRI Bersyariah: Praktiki Spasial, Representasi Ruang, Ruang Representasional," *Al-Daulah: Jurnal Hukum*

for certain Islamic groups in a case involving religious blasphemy. The narrative of "pribumi" (native) and "non-pribumi" (non-native) resurfaced, particularly in the discourse of Anies Baswedan after he assumed the office of Governor of Jakarta for the 2017-2022 term.<sup>31</sup> The rejection of Ahok was not merely based on the issue of "pribumi" and "non-pribumi" but was further exacerbated due to its domination by Islamic groups.

The rejection of the Chinese ethnicity in Islamic politics is rooted in sentiments. The strengthening of anti-Chinese sentiments among Muslim political leaders occurred in Ahok's case, with some referring to him as "Si Cina Kafir" (the infidel Chinese).<sup>32</sup> This is due to Indonesia's long history of racial discrimination against the Chinese ethnic group.<sup>33</sup> There is no basis within Islamic politics for rejecting a particular ethnicity from assuming leadership roles; thus, such rejection is primarily driven by sentimental factors.

At the very least, there are several universal principles in Islamic politics, drawn from the works of Munawir Sjadzali and Masdar Mas'udi regarding communal and national life, including the status of humans on Earth (QS Ali-Imran: 26, QS al-Hadid: 5, QS al-An'am: 165, QS Yunus: 14), the principle of consultation (QS Ali-Imran: 159, QS asy-Syura: 38), obedience to leaders (QS al-Nisa: 59), justice (QS al-Nahl: 90, QS al-Nisa: 58), equality as humans (QS al-Hujurat: 13), equal standing in the eyes of the law (QS al-Maidah: 8), harmonious relations among people of different faiths (QS al-Baqarah: 256, QS Yunus: 99, QS Ali-Imran: 64, QS al-Mutamtahanah: 8-9), individual freedom and accountability (QS al-Zalzalah: 7-8), refraining from causing harm to oneself and others (QS al-Baqarah: 279), social criticism and control (QS al-'Ashr: 1-3, QS al-Maidah: 78-79), honoring promises and upholding agreements (QS al-Isra': 34, QS al-Baqarah: 177), mutual assistance for the common good (QS al-

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*Dan Perundangan Islam* 10, no. 2 (2020): 222–50, <https://doi.org/10.15642/ad.2020.10.2.222-250>.

<sup>31</sup> Kanupriya Kapoor and Aguatinus Beo Da Costa, "New Jakarta governor faces backlash fo racially tinged speech", *Reuters*, October 2017, 4:22 pm.

<sup>32</sup> Greg Fealy, "Bigger than Ahok: explaining the 2 December Mass rally", *Indonesia at Melbourne*, 7 December 2016.

<sup>33</sup> Taufiq Tanasaldy, "From Official to Grassroots Racism: Transformation of Anti-Chinese Sentiment in Indonesia," *The Political Quarterly* 93, no. 3 (2022): 460–68, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-923X.13148>.

Maidah: 2), and the protection of the vulnerable by the strong (QS al-Nisa: 75).<sup>34</sup> Thus, the rejection of the Chinese ethnicity in the political sphere in Indonesia is primarily based on sentiments, strengthened by their non-Muslim status, which tends to impede the representation of the Chinese in Indonesian political discourse.

The disparity does not signify a cessation of the Chinese ethnic group's participation in the political sphere of Indonesia. The representation of the Chinese ethnic group in Indonesian politics has been ongoing since the post-reformation era, including in leadership roles at the regional level. Jonathan Chen's research encompassed 30 such representations from 2003 to 2020, whether through strategic partnerships or charisma.<sup>35</sup> Despite the mounting sentiment-based resistance, the representation of the Chinese ethnicity in the political arena as regional leaders endures, driven by partnership strategies and their inherent capabilities.

### 3. Representation of Non-Muslims in Islamic Politics

The context surrounding the representation of non-Muslims in Islamic politics does not significantly differ from the previous explanation. However, this issue tends to introduce religious considerations into the political landscape in Indonesia, potentially posing a serious threat to the political rights of non-Muslim ethnic Chinese.<sup>36</sup> The case of Ahok can serve as a pertinent phenomenon to illustrate how influential Islamic politics can be in evaluating the representation of non-Muslims as heads of regions or leaders of a government, as demonstrated by his rejection in predominantly Muslim areas.

It is essential to explore the broader context where leaders who are non-Muslims residing within predominantly Muslim populations in Islamic countries, such as Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, Syria, Bangladesh,

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<sup>34</sup> Munawir Sjadzali, *Islam Dan Tata Negara; Ajaran, Sejarah Dan Pemikiran* (Jakarta: UI Press, 1990), 5–7; Ali Akhbar Abaib Mas Rabbani Lubis, *Ilmu Hukum Dalam Simpul Siyasa Dusturiyah: Refleksi Atas Teori Dan Praktek Hukum Tata Negara Di Indonesia*, 163–69; Mas'udi, *Islam Dan Hak-Hak Reproduksi Perempuan: Dialog Fikih Pemberdayaan*, 29–30.

<sup>35</sup> Jonathan Chen, "Representing Chinese Indonesians: Pribumi Discourse and Regional Elections in Post-Reform Indonesia," *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 41, no. 1 (2021): 59–87, <https://doi.org/10.1177/18681034211036716>.

<sup>36</sup> James Chin and Taufiq Tanasaldy, "The Ethnic Chinese in Indonesia and Malaysia: The Challenge of Political Islam," *Asian Survey* 59, no. 6 (2019): 959–77, <https://doi.org/10.1525/AS.2019.59.6.959>.

Iran, Jordan, and Malaysia, are typically required to be Muslims.<sup>37</sup> However, there have been instances in some Islamic countries where non-Muslim leaders have held power, such as Nigeria, Senegal, and Lebanon.<sup>38</sup>

In the social context, Indonesia, with its Muslim-majority population, tends to reject non-Muslim leaders, often citing QS al-Maidah: 51 as a primary reference. This verse was used in the political discourse during the candidacy of Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok) for the Jakarta Governor election in 2017. This issue is susceptible as it involves religious and ethnic aspects, especially given that Ahok was a Protestant Christian of Chinese descent. However, according to Sahiron Syamsudin, this verse should not be understood solely in its textual form but also within its historical context (*juz'iy*). This is crucial because the Quran was revealed to Prophet Muhammad in a specific cultural and historical context. For instance, this particular verse had a specific contextual relevance to warfare and was not related to political positions.<sup>39</sup> Nonetheless, this verse is still utilised as a tool to legitimise the rejection of non-Muslims in the political context of Indonesia. This is supported by the findings of Burhanuddin Muhtadi, who states:

"Our study found that Muslim citizens tend to be intolerant towards non-Muslims, especially in the political sphere. In 2018, 59% of Muslim respondents objected to non-Muslims becoming president, 55% objected to non-Muslims becoming vice president, and 52% objected to non-Muslims becoming governors or mayors. Our data indicates that political intolerance among Muslim citizens has been on the rise, particularly since the 212 movement in the year 2016. Muslim citizens are increasingly opposed to non-Muslims assuming leadership positions in government at various levels."<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> John L. Esposito, *Islam Dan Politik*, Translate (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1990), 132.

<sup>38</sup> H. M. Mujar Ibnu Syarif, "Memilih Presiden Non-Muslim Di Negara Muslim Dalam Perspektif Hukum Islam," *Jurnal Konstitusi* 1, no. 1 (2008): 89–110.

<sup>39</sup> Sahiron Syamsudin, "Ma'na-Cum-Maghza Approach To The Qur'an: Interpretation Of Q. 5:51," in *International Conferences on Qur'an and Hadith Studies (ICQHS 2017)* (Atlantis Press, Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research (ASSEHR), 2017), 131–36, <https://doi.org/10.2991/icqhs-17.2018.21>.

<sup>40</sup> Burhanuddin Muhtadi, *Populisme, Politik Identitas, Dan Dinamika Elektoral; Mengurai Jalan Panjang Demokrasi Prosedural*, (Malang: Intrans Publishing, 2019), 36.

Representation of non-Muslims in the political arena in Indonesia, particularly within the majority Muslim population, still faces resistance. However, non-Muslim participation in the political sphere, especially in regional leadership roles in Indonesia, is always present, often achieved through partnering with Muslim representatives. This is done to minimise the occurrence of horizontal conflicts and to avoid intense pressures stemming from tendencies of intolerance.

The three points explained earlier significantly emphasise that the representation of a non-Muslim Chinese woman, often referred to as a triple minority in the context of Islamic politics in the Indonesian political arena, continues to give rise to a series of phenomena, including social rejection. Such phenomena can hinder her participation and potentially disrupt the democratic system in Indonesia. Based on Kurniawati Hastuti Dewi's findings, women's participation in the political arena, such as in regional leadership roles, is determined by three factors: 1) being a party cadre, 2) having strong family ties as influential politicians, and 3) being both a party cadre and having strong family ties.<sup>41</sup> Is Chui Mie an exception to this? Findings indicate that Chui Mie was elected due to her ability to manage political, social, economic, cultural, and symbolic capital, as well as her ethnic networks.<sup>42</sup> Another factor is her strategic partnership with Irwan, a Malay Muslim, and the influence of the Chinese elite in Singkawang in Jakarta.<sup>43</sup> Other findings suggest that a balance of ethnic representation between the Chinese and

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<sup>41</sup> Kurniawati Hastuti Dewi, "Profiles, Statutes and Performance of Femake Local Leaders: Impact Study of Direct Local Elections," *Indonesian Feminist Journal* 3, no. 1 (2015): 52; Kurniawati Hastuti Dewi et al., *Gender and Politics in Post-Reformasi Indonesia: Women Leaders within Local Oligarchy Networks*, ed. Kurniawati Hastuti Dewi (Singapore, Jakarta: National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN) and Springer, 2022), 2–3; Kurniawati Hastuti Dewi, *Modal, Strategi, Dan Jaringan: Perempuan Politisi Dalam Kandidasi Pilkada Langsung*, ed. Kurniawati Hastuti Dewi (Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2018), 2.

<sup>42</sup> Kartika, Rahmatunnisa, and Yuningsih, "Modal Politik Tjhai Chui Mie Dalam Pemilihan Walikota Singkawang 2017"; Kartika, "Modal Kandidat Perempuan Dalam Pilkada Tahun 2017 (Studi Kasus: Tjhai Chui Mie Sebagai Walikota Terpilih Di Kota Singkawang.)"

<sup>43</sup> Yew-Foong, "Decentralization and Chinese Indonesian Politics: The Case of Singkawang, West Kalimantan."

Malay communities played a role.<sup>44</sup> However, these findings cannot fully represent the phenomena that occurred in the 2017 Regional Elections (Pilkada) and the city of Singkawang. Therefore, a more detailed explanation is required, especially regarding Chui Mie's capabilities in leading the city of Singkawang during her tenure as the regional head from 2017 to 2022.

An explanation of Chui Mie's capabilities and her election as the regional head of Singkawang City from 2017 to 2022, along with her leadership policies, can be viewed as a significant discovery within the realm of *siyasa dusturiyah* and political phenomena in Indonesia. This is due to Chui Mie's emergence as a "triple minority" in Indonesia, which demonstrates her leadership abilities despite leading in a context where the majority of the population is Muslim in Singkawang City. For instance, during her tenure, she transformed Singkawang City into a "City of Tolerance" in Indonesia and implemented inclusive development policies. Both of these aspects will be further detailed in the subsequent subsections. This illustrates that an individual's capabilities can influence the nature of leadership and specific policies within a political reality.

### **CAPABILITIES OF NON-MUSLIM CHINESE WOMEN AS REGIONAL HEADS IN SINGKAWANG CITY**

As previously explained, the resistance to the participation of women, mainly non-Muslim Chinese individuals, in the political sphere remains a subject of concern and tends to be controversial. However, the election of Chui Mie, a non-Muslim Chinese woman, as the regional head of Singkawang City from 2017 to 2022, within a predominantly Muslim majority, has paved the way for a new era of democratic openness, which had previously appeared to be discriminatory. This dynamic illustrates that the world of democracy has ushered in a politics of equal recognition and continuously advocated for the realisation of a welfare state, particularly in this discussion on the "triple minority." In line with the words of Charles Taylor, who stated:

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<sup>44</sup> Dewi, "Chinese Indonesian Women in Local Politics: The Political Rice Tjhai Chui Mie in Singkawang."

“Democracy has ushered in a politics of equal recognition, which has taken various forms over the years, and has now returned in the form of demands for the equal status of cultures and genders”.<sup>45</sup>

For this reason, the critical consideration in community and national life is the commonwealth, a universal principle aimed at achieving a welfare state. This commonweal, known in the context of *siyasaḥ dusturiyah* principles, is:<sup>46</sup>

جلب المصالح و دفع المفاسد

"prioritising common good and rejecting harm."

In the Quran, the position of men and women is equal, and the only distinguishing factor is piety. Furthermore, the equality of their positions is reaffirmed by the 1945 Constitution, Article 27, paragraph (1), which states: "*All citizens shall enjoy the same position in law and government and shall be obliged to uphold the law and government with no exceptions.*"

The compatibility between the principles of society and state in the Quran and the legislation in Indonesia by no means weakens the position of women in religious, national, and state life. Their position is equal to that of men to ensure balance and justice. The Fiqh principle, "*jab mashalih wa daf'u al-mafasid*," pertains to the pursuit of the common good and the prevention of harm, ultimately leading to social and communal equilibrium. Balance and justice became evident during Chui Mie's tenure as the Regional Head of Singkawang City from 2017-2022. This is further confirmed by Irwan and the Chairman of MABM Kota Singkawang, who stated that Chui Mie has been highly effective, with no apparent social disparities. She has demonstrated positive abilities and willingness to build a region, being trustworthy and responsible, thus fostering harmony within the community.

Several factors can be highlighted to illustrate how Chui Mie has left her mark on Singkawang City during her leadership, including 1) individual charm, 2) active involvement in community matters, 3) political experience, and 4) inclusive policies. These points aim

<sup>45</sup> Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition," in *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, ed. Amy Gutmann (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994), 27.

<sup>46</sup> H. A. Dzajuli, *Kaidah-Kaidah Hukum Islam Dalam Menyelesaikan Masalah-Masalah Yang Praktis* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2007), 147.



to address the fact that a non-Muslim Chinese woman's role as a regional head is not solely based on being a political party cadre or having strong family ties, as previously suggested by Kurniawati Hastuti Dewi's research.

### **1. Individual Charm**

The individual charm referred to in this explanation pertains to one's identity. For example, Chui Mie comes from a Chinese family, born to parents Cong Kim Chong (father) and Tjhai Lin Ngo (mother). She was born in Singkawang on February 27, 1972 (currently 51 years old) and is married to Liem Hook Nen. She has two adopted children named Mulia Harverry and Mulia Hardy, and her biological children are named Desi Bungdiana, Ahrens Bungdiono, Carissa Bungdiana, and Leticia Bungdiana.<sup>47</sup> Chui Mie identifies as a Confucian, but her religious identity on her Identity Card (Kartu Tanda Penduduk or KTP) is Buddhist.<sup>48</sup> Given her lineage, religion, and name, Chui Mie embodies a robust Chinese identity, which adds to her unique charm.

During the researcher's direct interview with Chui Mie on Saturday, November 21, 2020, at the Singkawang Mayor's Residence, her reception was friendly. Physically, Chui Mie is an attractive individual, possessing an ideal and well-proportioned figure and fair complexion, and stands at around 170 cm tall. During in-depth communication, her speech is controlled; she is quick-witted, intelligent, smiles readily, and is approachable. The researcher believes that anyone meeting her would feel comfortable and at ease. In a superficial comparison to Ahok, widely covered in the mass media, Chui Mie presents a contrasting image. It can be said that Chui Mie is the antithesis of Ahok. This forms the basis for Chui Mie's charm, which captures the public's attention, making it one of her fundamental capabilities.

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<sup>47</sup> Dwi Erianto, "Wali Kota Singkawang Tjhai Chui Mie", Kompas.id, accessed on January 29, 2023, <https://www.kompas.id/baca/tokoh/2022/04/14/wali-kota-singkawang-tjhai-chui-mie>. Sutan, "Tjhai Chui Mie: Banyak 'Sharing' mengenai Strategi Politik", accessed on January 30, 2023, <https://www.suarapemredkalbar.com/read/opini/21022016/tjhai-chui-mie-banyak-sharing-mengenai-strategi-politik>

<sup>48</sup> Dewi, "Chinese Indonesian Women in Local Politics: The Political Rice Tjhai Chui Mie in Singkawang," 58.

## **2. Active Involvement in Community Affairs**

Chui Mie possesses not only individual charm but also a deep commitment to the community. She has been actively engaged in social issues since her youth, serving as a social activist. Notable engagements include her participation in various community organisations, such as the Singkawang Community Association (Permasis), the Tzu Chi Foundation since 2010, serving as the Chairperson of the Tao Council (MTI) Indonesia from 2014 to 2019, involvement with the Setia Negara Foundation in Serpong since 2014, and her participation in the Hakka Indonesian Association in Singkawang since 2014.<sup>49</sup> Her active participation in numerous community organisations reflects her genuine concern for social and community matters.

During her tenure as the Regional Head of Singkawang City from 2017 to 2022, Chui Mie actively engaged in social and community affairs. According to the Chairman of DMC Singkawang City, Chui Mie demonstrated a solid commitment to the Muslim community by providing facilities for Islamic organisations. It was during her leadership that the Grand Mosque of Singkawang City underwent renovation and grand construction. Furthermore, as stated by the Chairman of MABM Singkawang City, Chui Mie had an exceptional ability to embrace individuals from diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds in Singkawang City. For instance, when invited to participate in laying the foundation stone for the construction of a prayer room, Ramadan safaris, and other activities, she consistently attended and contributed, even in cases related to indigenous customs, such as the "Romi" case, where she covered the customary expenses. It is no surprise that Chui Mie has a solid social network due to her capability and willingness to embrace various segments of society and actively participate in religious and cultural activities.

## **3. Political Experience**

The discussion of the factors contributing to Chui Mie's success as the regional head of Singkawang City in 2017, using a political science approach, has already been extensively covered in previous research. To avoid repeating the same discussion, we will review Chui Mie's

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<sup>49</sup> "Daftar Riwayat Hidup Calon Walikota dan Wakil Walikota Singkawang, <https://pilkada2017.kpu.go.id>, accessed on January 28, 2023.

political experience before and after her term as the regional head from 2017 to 2022. Before her role as a regional head, Chui Mie had political experience in the legislative field since 2008.

The political experience served as one of Chui Mie's assets in her efforts to enhance Singkawang City. She began her political journey as a member of the Singkawang City Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) from 2004 to 2009, representing the New Indonesia Party (PIB) through a mid-term replacement (PAW), taking over from Bong Wui Kong in 2008. In the legislative elections (Pileg) of 2009, she was elected as a legislative member for the same party and served as the Chairperson of the Singkawang City DPRD from 2009 to 2014. In the 2014 Pileg, Chui Mie switched to the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP) after PIB failed to meet the parliamentary threshold. She was re-elected as a member of the Singkawang City DPRD for the 2014-2019 term.<sup>50</sup>

From this point, Chui Mie was considered capable of participating in the 2017 Singkawang City Regional Head Election (Pilkada) due to her extensive political experience. Her continuous success in obtaining the highest number of votes in Singkawang City's legislative elections served as the foundation for her transition to the role of a regional head. According to Chui Mie, she was prepared for this role by Cornelis, the Chairman of the Kalimantan Barat PDIP Regional Leadership Council, as she was considered the best PDIP cadre in Singkawang City. For instance, in the 2009 legislative elections, she received 3,139 votes in the West Singkawang Electoral District, and in the 2014 legislative elections, she received 3,103 votes in the same district. This means that her vote count was considered a substantial political asset. The Chairman of MABM Singkawang City also emphasised that Chui Mie had built a solid voter base with her political experience. Her consecutive victories in securing the highest number of votes demonstrated the trust that the community placed in her as a legislative member.

After being elected as the regional head of Singkawang City for the 2017-2022 term, Chui Mie leveraged her political experience in leading the Singkawang City government. At the very least, several aspects can be highlighted: 1) She serves as an example of a non-

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<sup>50</sup> Kartika, Rahmatunnisa, and Yuningsih, "Modal Politik Tjhai Chui Mie Dalam Pemilihan Walikota Singkawang 2017," 143.

Muslim Chinese woman who dares to participate in the political arena amid a Muslim-majority population. This, in turn, inspires other women to engage in politics. We refer to this as a form of the struggle for political recognition; 2) Efforts to address polarisation and the tendency for horizontal conflicts through cross-cutting power. Politically, she teamed up with Irwan as the deputy mayor, representing the Malay-Muslim community and gender, thereby voicing the perspectives of both women and men; 3) Prioritizing the strengthening of tolerance as an embodiment of harmonising religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity. This is exemplified by programs like the "Ngopi Pagi Kasih Solusi" (Morning Coffee for Solutions) organised by the Singkawang City Police, where community leaders discuss and gather information related to issues that could trigger horizontal conflicts; 4) Inclusive policies encompassing a range of programs, from infrastructure development to community empowerment that are linked to ethnicity and religion. This fourth point will be elaborated on in a separate section. From her political experience, it is evident that being a regional head is not just a testing ground. In addition to individual charisma and active community involvement, political experience plays a crucial role in addressing various issues related to the region.

#### **4. Inclusive Policy**

The term "Inclusive Policy" referred to herein can be divided into three main components: 1) Organizational Accommodation of Religious and Cultural Communities, 2) Religious Celebrations, and 3) Culture-Based Infrastructure. These components will be described descriptively and concisely in the following sections. Chui Mie's role as the regional head is pivotal in implementing inclusive policies, resulting in Singkawang City's recognition as the "Most Tolerant City" in Indonesia for 2018, 2021, and 2022, as previously mentioned. This explanation emphasises that an individual's representation and capabilities as the head of a region can influence the direction of policies and the transformation of an area.

Chui Mie is highly dedicated to the aspirations of the Singkawang City community, primarily through his commitment to maintaining social harmony. This commitment is evident in accommodating organisations that represent religious and cultural groups. This is

essential because community organisations can mediate conflicts by representing their leaders. For instance, the Chairman of MABM Singkawang City notes that MABM has significantly assisted the Singkawang City government in cultural matters and has contributed to mitigating horizontal conflicts. Additionally, the Chairman of DAD emphasises that DAD aims to foster unity, familial bonds, and brotherhood among different ethnic and tribal groups. Their primary focus is on nurturing a sense of togetherness in addressing issues. The accommodative approach is supported by the statement of the Chairman of DMC Singkawang, who asserts that Chui Mie pays excellent attention to the needs of the Muslim community. For example, he oversaw the reconstruction of the Grand Mosque (Masjid Agung), a project initiated during his tenure. Furthermore, Islamic organisations like MUI received official vehicles and other facilities, as did NU-Muhammadiyah, FKUB, MABM, and DAD, all of which received significant government support.

Moreover, the Chairman of PAD Singkawang highlights Chui Mie's commitment to the Dayak community, supporting their cultural and traditional activities. This support includes restoring the Dayak Traditional House (Rumah Radakng), improving access roads to the Traditional House, and paving projects. In conclusion, the commitment to preserving and strengthening tolerance can be realised through close collaboration between the government and religious and cultural organisations or institutions. This collaboration aims to accommodate the diverse needs that serve the collective interests of the community.



Picture 1, Resecher Documentation: Klenteng or Vihara Tri Dhrama Bumi Raya (front view) and Masjid Raya Singkawang City (back view)

Singkawang City boasts its unique characteristics. For instance, as noted by Irwan, its diversity is evident in the city centre, where the Grand Mosque of Singkawang and the Klenteng (Chinese temple) or Vihara Tri Dharma Bumi Raya stand side by side. The beauty of Singkawang City isn't solely reflected in its city centre's representation of diversity; it's also found in its community, which tends to be open to differences. This is explained by the NU (Nahdlatul Ulama) cadre in Singkawang City, highlighting that conflicts arising from differences are typically resolved through consensus at a local coffee shop. For example, in 2019, the Cap Go Meh festival coincided with Friday prayers, creating a potential conflict. To ensure that the festival didn't disrupt the Muslim community's Friday prayers, the event schedule was adjusted.



Picture 2. Reseacher Documentation: Masjid Raya Singkawang in The City Center

The inclusive policies implemented during Chui Mie's tenure as the head of Singkawang City illustrate his capacity to develop the region. In an interview, Chui Mie emphasised:

"So, we sell ourselves, what we're going to do... When I was elected, during Eid Al-Fitr, we introduced an event called 'Ramadhan Fair'. It was during my first term. The community was delighted as it brought a new atmosphere. Then, during Christmas, we organised an event called "Christmas Day". As for "Cap Go Meh", it has existed since ancient times, so we didn't magnify it; it was already there. But these two events we initiated them. Perhaps this is one of the factors that contributed to our recognition as a Tolerant City."

Singkawang City's unique blend of cultures and Chui Mie's inclusive policies have played a crucial role in promoting diversity and harmony in the region, exemplifying his leadership and the city's welcoming spirit. The explanation represents one of the inclusive policies related to the observance of significant religious holidays. This policy has been formally registered with the Ministry of Tourism as an event. For example, in Singkawang City, the celebration of Eid Al-Fitr includes the "Ramadhan Fair," which adorns the entire city with an Islamic ambience to enhance the festive spirit of Eid Al-Fitr. Similarly, for the Christmas and New Year celebrations, Singkawang City organises the "Christmas Day" event, embellishing the city with a Christian atmosphere. These policies have been officially registered with the Ministry of Tourism to ensure annual implementation.<sup>51</sup> Implementing these inclusive policies aims to maintain religious harmony in Singkawang City. Viewed from the perspective of *siyasah dusturiyah*, the policies enacted during Chui Mie's leadership prioritise public welfare over potential harm.

Another form of inclusive policy is culture-based infrastructure, encompassing the construction of structures reflecting cultural and traditional values. According to Chui Mie, the urban planning undertaken during his administration has transformed Singkawang City into a "Cultural Heritage City" (Kota Pusaka). A tangible manifestation of culture-based infrastructure is the construction of City Boundary Gates.<sup>52</sup> For Instance: 1) The principal gateway from Pontianak to Singkawang, with a distinctive Chinese character, is named the "Cap Go Meh Gate." It was officially inaugurated on December 3, 2022, marking the boundary between Singkawang City and Bengkayang Regency;<sup>53</sup> 2) The principal gateway from Bengkayang to Singkawang, reflecting the Dayak culture, is known

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<sup>51</sup> MC Singkawang, "Singkawang Ramadan Fair Implementasi Kota Tertoleran," *Mediacenter.singkawangkota.go.id*, accessed on January 28, 2023, <https://mediacenter.singkawang.go.id/singkawang-ramadan-fair-implementasi-kota-tertoleran/>.

<sup>52</sup> MC Singkawang, "Rapat Kerja Awal Tahun, Lanjutkan Program Pembangunan di 2022", *Mediacenter.singkawangkota.go.id*, accessed on January 28, 2023, <https://mediacenter.singkawangkota.go.id/rapat-kerja-awal-tahun-lanjutkan-program-pembangunan-di-2022/>.

<sup>53</sup> MC Singkawang, "Gerbang "Cap Go Meh" Batas Singkawang-Bengkayang Diresmikan," *Mediacenter.singkawangkota.go.id*, accessed on January 28, 2023, <https://mediacenter.singkawangkota.go.id/berita/gerbang-cap-go-meh-batas-singkawang-bengkayang-diresmikan/>.

as the "Tama Ka' Lawakng Gate." It was officially inaugurated on December 12, 2022, signifying the boundary between Singkawang City and Bengkayang Regency; 3) The principal gateway from Sambas to Singkawang, influenced by Malay culture, is referred to as the "Mahligai Pesisir Gate." It was officially inaugurated on November 27, 2022, delineating the boundary between Singkawang City and Sambas Regency.<sup>54</sup> The development of these City Boundary Gates can also be referred to as the "Tidayu" (Tionghoa, Dayak, and Melayu) gate, as it represents each culture. From this explanation, it is evident that the Tidayu Gate not only serves as a boundary marker between Singkawang, Bengkayang, and Sambas but also stands as an inviting symbol for tourists, underscoring Singkawang City's strong commitment to diversity, unity, harmonisation, and tolerance among its residents.

## CONCLUSION

The phenomenon of resistance against the representation of women, Chinese, and non-Muslims in the political sphere in Indonesia has become a well-known issue. However, my findings have demonstrated that the election of Chui Mie, a non-Muslim Chinese woman who can be described as a triple minority in Indonesia, as the head of the Singkawang City administration from 2017 to 2022 was accepted by the majority Muslim population. This phenomenon is indeed unique and unusual within the Indonesian political landscape. Nevertheless, in reality, the representation of non-Muslim Chinese women as regional leaders is not in conflict with *siyasaḥ dusturiyyah* and the prevailing legal framework in Indonesia. Furthermore, besides gaining the public's trust, Chui Mie's leadership capabilities, rooted in her charisma, social activism, political experience, and inclusive policies, have proven her leadership effectiveness. Based on these findings, it is evident that representation in politics is not solely determined by party affiliation, solid political lineage, or any such factors. Still, the described capabilities play a crucial role in shaping policy directions.

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<sup>54</sup> MC Singkawang, "Gerbang "Mahligai Pesisir" Batas Singkawang-Sambas Diresmikan," *mediacenter.singkawangkota.go.id*, accessed on January 28, 2023, <https://mediacenter.singkawangkota.go.id/berita/gerbang-mahligai-pesisir-batas-singkawang-sambas-diresmikan/>.



This research offers a fresh perspective on studying Islamic politics and democracy. Therefore, a pertinent recommendation from this study is the need for the government to conduct extensive public awareness campaigns regarding the compatibility of Islamic political principles with democracy, especially concerning concepts of equality, tolerance, and harmony. Specific attention should be paid to promoting participatory parity between men and women openly and competitively. Beyond this, while acknowledging that this research may not be exhaustive, we suggest that future research should explore further inquiries into the representation and capabilities of women in Indonesian politics on a broader scale.

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