Political parties' portrayal attempts in creating an image of Aceh's women politicians

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Abstract This study aims to provide an overview of political imagery done by political parties for their female politicians. The constructivist paradigm with a descriptive qualitative approach is used in this study. The informants were the chairman of the DPC of the Democratic Party, the PPP Party, the PKB Party, the chairman of the PDI-P DPD, and female politicians from these parties. The data analysis technique used in this study was the Interactive Model Data Analysis method. The results show that the political parties establish a positive image of women politicians, including involving all women members of the political party in every activity carried out by the party, both in a formal party and non-formal activities within the community. In every activity in the community, political parties attempted to provide the public with an understanding of the importance of the presence of women in the political space, because women will understand women's needs and produce feminist policies. The political imagery was done through political communication media, interpersonal (face to face), groups, mainstream media, and modern media. Political image establishment attempted by political parties for female politicians still has not shown a promising direction. Therefore, political parties must form a positive image for female politicians of their parties. This should be done massively by utilising various media of political communication, involving all community groups, such as the Ulama, Academics, and Non-Governmental Organisations.

Keywords: political image; political parties; female politicians; aceh

INTRODUCTION
A political party is generally perceived as an organisation that aims at fighting for certain values or ideologies through mastery of the power structure, and that power is obtained through its participation in elections, Sigit Pamungkas (M. Iwan Satriawan, 2015). A political party is an organisation that shares relatively the same values and goals (Muchtar, 2016). Political parties have an important position and role in the system of people's sovereignty. Political parties become pillars of democracy (political infrastructure) because they play an important role as a liaison between the state government and its citizens.

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The Law of the Republic of Indonesia concerning political parties stipulates the functions, objectives, and membership in those political parties. Djuhandar in (Suherman 2019) states that the function of political parties is as a means for political education, communication, socialisation, recruitment, and conflict management advice. Political parties are stable organisations through which politicians coordinate their political activity, engage in electoral processes, and manage political power (Fjelde, 2020).

Women's membership in political parties is also clearly regulated. For political party administrators at the central, provincial, and district levels, there must be 30% women's representation. This is the same for candidates for legislative members as emphasised in Law Number 8 of 2012 in article 55, that the list of prospective candidates contains 30% female representation. Furthermore, Article 56, paragraph 3 states that there is at least one female candidate for every three candidates, and there is at least 1 female candidate. Affirmative action was originally intended to open up political access for all women, especially for women with personal abilities that enable them to join political parties by taking 30% of the opportunities provided (Wardani & Subekti, 2021).

Aceh is one of the regions in Indonesia which also participates in implementing this affirmative rule. In the Aceh Province, due to the Aceh Governance Law (UUPA), Number 11 of 2006, women's political participation is needed so that the interests and perspectives of Acehnese women can be articulated. The rules contained in the law become the main basis that the presence of women in politics is mandatory and important to achieve.

Women's membership in managing one political party and nominating its legislature members becomes the main requirement for that party to be eligible for participation in the legislative elections. Therefore, this should be an important concern for political parties recruiting their members and women legislative candidates. Several political parties are considered to have given women a strategic role in managing political parties. However, many still only provide minor roles to fulfil the requirements stipulated by law. Women are often placed in the positions of secretary, treasurer, or roles related to finance consumption and the arts (Parwati & Istiningdiah, 2021).

It cannot be denied that in Indonesian society, especially Aceh, there is still a negative stigma that develops within the society regarding the involvement of women in politics. Men dominate political parties, and there is a stigma that women are only complementary (Mikail, 2015). Indonesian people hold a patriarchal ideology which leads to a gender-biased decisions. This makes the women's struggle to achieve a political position becomes rather difficult. Moreover, there is also an interpretation of religious law that reinforces the situation of gender bias (Hasni, 2015). Ideological, psychological, and patriarchal factors; the lack of experience, capacity, and understanding of women related to political parties has become a bad stigma about politics.

Based on the above statements, it can be said that there is a stigma about the struggle of women to be actively involved and participate in politics by becoming party administrators. The negative images and assumptions about their presence in politics are still developing. Political parties (party structures, bodies, and party wings) must attempt to eliminate women's stigma and bad image in politics. As mentioned in the law, the presence of women in politics is very important. Therefore, if only a few or no women are present in politics, then most of the policies made can be considered paternalistic policies that do not consider women as implementers of these policies.(Yunita Kurniaty et al., 2016). Hence, the political policies must be viewed from a gender perspective.

Politics is genderless, but men largely build the political system, so women become less confident in political culture. So this exacerbates the stigma that women are unable and cannot compete with men, so the electoral process in the citizenship system is expected to create not only the views of men but also a transformation process in political parties that are also represented from the views of women.

According to the research (Wayan & Nyoman, 2020) about the political phenomena of women in a patriarchal culture in Gianyar Regency, Bali, and the perception of the community in Gianyar Regency, Bali on women's representation in the 2019 legislative elections, gender equality is an important pillar in supporting development. With equality between women and men, women have the same opportunities as men to develop their potential in all areas of life. Neglect of the importance of equality of roles and women's rights is one factor inhibiting a country's progress. The system's injustice holds that men are stronger than women in personal, family, community, and state affairs. Even today, in Indonesian society, the patriarchal culture persists. We can find this action in various sectors, such as economy, education, law, and politics and this is also internalised in social institutions such as political, educational and trust institutions. So that subordination is not perceived as a system that directly oppresses and corners women.

If in practice, political parties become a great cultural barrier to women's formal political roles, the quota for women in each political party becomes necessary. Women's political rights are fundamental human rights, and human rights are the essence of the democratic framework. Women's struggle to participate in the political space has its challenges due to the various stigmas placed on them, and their task is not easy when negative images are also present. This problem also happens in Africa, where women are perceived negatively when they are attended to in the political space (Kanjere, 2019). The situation is similar in Nigeria, where traditional, cultural, and institutional barriers prevent Nigerian women from actively participating in politics (Nnamchi & Ph, 2019). Women are still considered unfit for politics (Hapsari, 2019).

If we pay attention again, the presence of women in the political space has a major influence on the country's political system. Women's

quotas provide many positive things, including increasing the number of women elected, increasing women's voter participation in elections, reducing gender bias on the part of party leaders, and reducing negative stereotypes about women leaders in society (Allen & Cutts, 2018). The results of research (Bilal, 2021) state that women's participation in politics in Pakistan has not been as expected because their families do not support them in political activities because it clashes with social and cultural norms.

Therefore, Women have to form a positive political image within the community to gain sympathy and become candidates in the election. In addition to the maximum efforts of female politicians to be well received by the community, full support from political parties is also important in establishing a positive political image for female politicians. Political parties must build good communication with the community to create a positive image of female politicians.

This study aims to obtain an overview of the efforts made by political parties to create a positive political image for female politicians in the party. According to Nimmo (Azhar, 2017),.imaging is a way for a person to connect himself with others, so that imaging in political activities can be done through: First, *pure publicity*; popularising oneself through community activities with natural social settings or as they are. Second, *free ride publicity*; publicity by utilising access or riding other parties to participate in popularising themselves. Third*, tie-in publicity* is taking advantage of extraordinary events, such as tsunamis, earthquakes, floods, and others. Fourth, *paid publicity* is a way to popularise oneself through purchasing rubrics or programs and others.

From the explanation above, it can be understood that imaging is a part of political communication that determines the success or failure of political goals. Imaging influences voters by instilling an opinion in the community that a politician or political party is a person or party that can protect the community. In instilling these opinions, political parties always bring sensitive issues appropriate for imaging because, through imaging, people can choose what to do and what not to do. With positive imaging attempts, everyone expects to be able to look perfect in the eyes of others. In creating a positive image, it is not uncommon for someone to do anything to package their attitudes and behaviour so that they could give a positive impression to others. All in all, imaging helps a person to make the best decisions for himself in his social environment.

Political imagery can also be done through the media. The media is a powerful strategic tool in instilling public opinion about a party and party personnel. Therefore, through imaging, it is hoped that there will be a shift in opinion for the better. With positive public opinion, choosing becomes a necessity for parties attempting to be successful in the political arena. In the wider communication system, public opinion is considered a method of persuasion. That image is needed as a positioning strategy to distinguish one political party from another.

Image is a construction of representation and public perception of a political party or individual regarding all matters related to political activities. The political image is not real. It can be created, built, and strengthened (Firmanzah, 2012). The objective of political communication is to make some attempts to create a political image, political information, and the formation of an open conclusion. The main objective of political communication is to establish a positive political image (Alam et al., 2019). Political image is formed based on information received directly or through political media (Muchtar, 2016). Political image can be understood as a set of ideas, beliefs about politically related characteristics, represented as competencies and skills, integrity in the dimensions of the social-cognitive image, and affective-expressive image—the image of a politician's charisma (Ingenhoff & Klein, 2018). Furthermore, (Baikalova Sergeevna, 2021) said that political imagery is a very complex process related to character, biography, appearance, and style of speech.

Political party leaders are interested in shaping female politicians' political image through political communication to build a positive image of their politicians. The public's choice of a politician is not only determined by the size of the party, but the public will also value the positive image of the politician in the party. So the existence of a politician is also determined by the relationship that continues to be built with the community. Closeness will foster the confidence of constituents to choose political personalities in the end.

METHODOLOGY

This research departs from the constructivist paradigm. Adler (Jung, 2019) said that constructivism is a view of human behaviour and interactions that make up its material world and is closely tied to normative and epistemic interpretations of the material world. Coşkun (2020) said that constructivism is a social reality that is assumed to be inseparable from the mind and has many forms, where relationships between subjects must be accepted in an epistemological sense, the values and perspectives of the researcher must be taken into account when designing research, collecting and analysing field data.

This research uses the descriptive qualitative method. According to Lester et al. (2020), broadly, qualitative research is used to assist researchers in gaining a deep understanding of a phenomenon, qualitative data including; conversational data, images, observations, and unstructured, semi-structured, or structured interviews.

This research is included in descriptive research, namely describing, summarising various conditions, various situations, and various reality phenomena that exist in the community that is the object of research, and trying to draw that reality to the surface as a feature, character, trait, model, sign or description of the condition, particular situation or phenomenon. The data collected is in the form of words and not numbers; all that is collected is likely to be the key to the research.

This approach will provide an overview of the portrait of political parties in forming a positive image for female politicians in their party.

Informant selection of the research is made by purposive sampling. Research subjects are based on people considered the most understanding and knowledgeable about the information needed in this study. This will make it easier for researchers to explore the research data. The informants in this study were the chairman of the DPC of the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI) in Banda Aceh City, the chairman of the DPC of the Democratic Party in Aceh Besar district, the administrator of the Democratic Party of women, the chairman of the DPC of the National Awakening Party (PKB) in Lhokseumawe City, the chairman of the DPC of the United Party Development (PPP) in North Aceh Regency along with female politicians from the four parties.

The data analysis technique of this research is the Interactive Model Data Analysis method, data analysis from Miles and Huberman. This interactive model conveys that qualitative data analysis is carried out interactively and takes place continuously until it is considered complete. There are three stages in analysing data: data reduction, presentation data, and drawing conclusions or verifying data (Maulana, 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A political party is generally considered an organisation that aims to fight for a certain value. Political parties are responsible for regulating their party's organisations, vision, mission, goals, and certain ideologies as determined by the provisions they agreed upon at the beginning of their establishment. In addition, there is clear legality that is regulated in the Law of the Republic of Indonesia regarding political parties in Indonesia, which must be followed by all founders of political parties throughout Indonesia. This regulation should be followed by all levels of political parties, from the central, regional, and district/city levels.

The participation and presence of women in politics are important. In addition to the legislation requiring 30% of women to be involved in managing political parties at the central, provincial, and district/city levels. There is also the enactment of affirmative rules at the level of legislative candidates. The involvement of women in the political space is considered vital since they can bring women's aspirations that will be a consideration in making decisions and policies that are more pro-women (feminist) and will eventually create humanist communication in the parliament.

Bringing women into the political space by becoming the administrators of political parties, for example, is difficult because various prejudices and negative stereotypes are attached to them. Therefore, it is necessary to have a strong motivation for women to be actively involved in parties, in addition to full support from political parties for their presence in political parties. Various bad stigmas develop in society about female politicians. Hence, it requires hard

efforts from political parties to change this negative image into a positive image. Based on the information obtained in the field, there are several things that political parties do to carry out a positive political image for female politicians in their party.

Political socialisation to the community.

Political socialisation is political awareness among a large part of the population which increases their capacity for decision-making. Be in a position to articulate their interests and fill them politically effectively. Political education for women and active participation in politics is wise. Women's political awareness and participation have a profound positive and democratic impact on society, ensuring basic services are provided. Women have special abilities needed for the nation's maximum development. They are very responsive to constituent issues (Elekwa, 2019). Although in many countries, politics and political activity belong to only one party, namely men. Politics and political activities are still considered a male domain, thus putting women aside (Ahmad et al., 2019).

One of the attempts made by political parties to create a positive image of women politicians is by involving female politicians in party activities, both informal and non-formal activities. The participation of female politicians in various programs is part of introducing them to the public that they are members of certain parties, and this is also part of the self-promotion of political parties and female politicians.

The participation of female politicians in the party's organisations can be seen from the space and place provided for female politicians in the bodies, wings, and party structures within certain political parties. Women are allowed to be included in these formations, as was the case with the Democratic Party, namely the PDRI (Democratic Women's Association of the Republic of Indonesia). The PPP Party has WPP (Women of the United Development) for its female politicians' organisation. These bodies become a space for female politicians to be creative and show their capacities. The involvement of female politicians in the bodies, wings, and structures of political parties can become a space for them to promote and show themselves to the public, the potential voters.

Furthermore, other forms of promotion that have been conducted allow women to become speakers in seminars or other activities carried out by the community, both the district, sub-district levels, or other activities organised by Community Social Institutions (NGOs) and other communities. These party's organisational activities become a forum and means for these female politicians to introduce themselves to the community.

The study results show that party administrators / political party elites encourage female politicians in that direction. Female politicians are encouraged to be active in activities and meetings with the community as part of their self-political image and form of self-

promotion to the community because, as is known, promotion becomes an important part of political parties as well as politicians within the party. Sutrisno et al. (2018) assert that promotion has become "a tool to sell political products". Elekwa's (2019) research shows the benefits of women participating in politics that motivate women to fight for political emancipation. It advances gender equality. Empowerment of women must be done by involving women in all political fields and institutions. Women's political participation and education levels must be increased to be equal to men's and achieve social development goals (Ahmed, 2021).

Political Imagery Through Social Activities In Society
There is something else that political parties do for female politicians who are within their party in the formation of their political image through their participation in social activities in society. These social activities became a means for political parties and female politicians to create their images.

Political imaging of women politicians in social activities in society is an effort to introduce these women politicians to the community and the same time, an effort to eliminate and reduce the bad stigma about the presence of women in politics.

The image of female politicians carried out by political parties is by presenting them to social activities carried out by political parties, for example, during the distribution of masks and hand sanitisers and the distribution of *qurban* meat on Eid al-Adha, as was done by the PDI-P Party. Another example is conducting regular Quran reading and recitations in villages and presenting female politicians, visiting villages when *Posyandu* (Integrated Health Care) was held in villages, planting trees, and others, as was done by the Democratic political party.

The involvement of female politicians in various political party activities has become a means and a forum for female politicians to be known by the public. This will provide benefits for political parties and female politicians personally. Therefore, people can see first-hand what they have done and given to the community. At the same time, the public can see the role of women in society who will later become their voters.

Researchers found that the strategy carried out by political parties together with female politicians is a way to build closeness with the community so that there will be emotional closeness and will cause public trust in the party and their politicians. Political parties hope that this closeness will bring them a positive perception and automatically provide concrete support by choosing a particular candidate. Political parties are well aware that the closeness built with the community through social activities will give a deep impression on the community and provide benefits for political parties and female politicians.

Promotion through Social Media and Mass Media

Based on the results of field research, it can be explained that the formation of political images carried out by political parties of female politicians has also been done through social media and mass media. The term "social media" includes tools and services that allow people as users to interact directly with people around using a computer (Bandiera et al., 2011). Social media uses internet networks and mobile-based tools to share and discuss information (van den Berg & Struwig, 2020). Social media further strengthens the bonds of the offline context online, and, due to the ambient nature of this technology, awareness of the opinions, interests, and activities of social ties has become widespread (Hampton et al., 2017)

Apart from directing female politicians to the activities carried out by political parties in the community, there are other things that political parties do. Utilising modern communication media, political parties are well aware of the influence of social networks such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, and Twitter in promoting their political parties and politicians. Using social networks to expose the activities of political parties which also involve female politicians is one way to foster a positive image to the public. Nowadays, social networks are very important to use in the political sphere (Sampietro & Sánchez-Castillo, 2020).

As well for politicians, imaging through the media is important. Research conducted by Lalancette & Raynauld (2019) shows that image has an important role in society when people evaluate a politician. This image is related to the honesty, intelligence, and trust that the politician has and gives the impression to the public that she has qualities. Russmann, Svensson & Larsson (2019) said that visuals or images on social media are used as strategic media for political actors to influence voters (Farkas & Bene, 2021).

Political parties also use the old media to expose the activities of political parties and politicians from those parties. In addition, it turns out that political parties also use outdoor media, such as banners and billboards, to expose their activities and all members of their political parties, including female members.

Based on many studies that have been conducted on the related subject, the media (mainstream and modern) can reach a wider audience with a stronger influence compared to interpersonal and group communication. Research conducted by Azman (2018) shows that the effect of mass media not only affects a person's attitude but can also affect his/her behaviour. The use of modern media that allows us to interact online is also effective in achieving the communication purpose. Research by Puspita shows that modern media enable people to communicate, participate, share, and create networks online (Puspita, 2015). Political actors have utilised social media to increase the community's trust in them and create a political image (Rahmah, 2021). The use of social media is a medium for governments, voters and

policymakers to interact with one another (Lampe et al., 2011). Stets & Serpe ((Kasperiuniene & Zydziunaite, 2019) said that social media enables individuals to establish their online identities, negotiate and verify identity claims and enforce their multiple identities.

Researchers identify that political parties are well aware of the advantages of political media (modern and mainstream), which can be used as a tool to change the party's image in a more positive direction, maintain the existing image, and even improve the image of political parties and all their members in the party structure, wings and bodies. A. A. Azhar (2017) conveyed that political imagery is a vital aspect that is carried out to gain public support and sympathy. Therefore, many political elites use self-image and their groups to gain public support. Social media focuses public attention on the private aspects of politicians (Ekman & Widholm, 2017).A

Researchers also found that political communication built by political parties in Aceh has not been maximised, especially in shaping political imagery for female politicians. This is due to various reasons and challenges that political parties face. For example, as it is known that political parties have many members, thus, it is very difficult for the parties only to portray certain people or certain parties because each political party member has the same rights and opportunities within the party. Political image is not only an obligation for political parties. Female politicians should also have the initiative to carry out their self-image within the community by being active in activities within the community. It is also found that female politicians in the party rarely did this.

Political parties realised that it is very difficult to change people's understanding of the importance of the involvement of women in the political space. On every occasion or activity involving the community, political parties have taken the chance to educate the people on the importance of women's involvement in politics, especially in making a policy. However, the community does not seem to care. Therefore, the attempts made by political parties have not been effective. This has also contributed to the religious interpretation of women participating in politics and the patriarchal culture still very strong in Aceh. These have always been challenges for female politicians. This reality makes it difficult for political parties to bring female politicians into parliament, even though attempts have been made to create a positive political image for female politicians.

Based on the research results, it can be described the political imagery that political parties do to women politicians in Aceh, as shown in Figure 1.
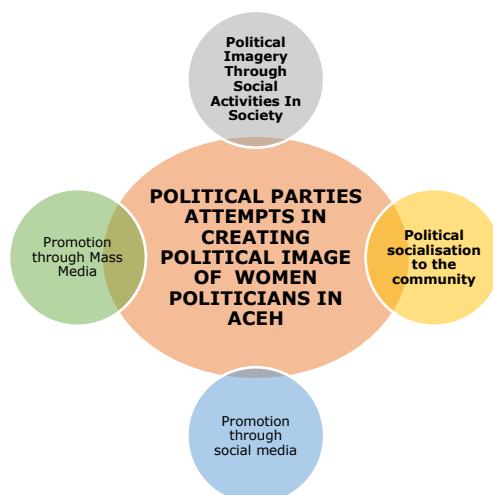
Figure 1. Political Parties in Creating political Image of Women Politicians in Aceh. Source: Author Compilation (2022)

CONCLUSION

The political imagery political parties carry out for female politicians in the PKB, Democrat, PPP, and PDI-P political parties is still not considered effective. However, political parties have made various efforts, such as involving female politicians in the party structure, wings, and bodies within the political party. It involves all female politicians in party activities/activities, especially in social activities, because this is believed to be a forum for female politicians to introduce and promote themselves. Furthermore, political imaging is also carried out by exposing all activities carried out by political parties involving all party members, including female politicians in mainstream media (newspapers, radio) and modern media (WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, and online media).

Political imagery for female politicians by political parties needs to be done massively since the social system and the society's culture are so unique and diverse that it requires the political parties to work harder to improve political imagery for female politicians. It has been recognised that it is very challenging to change people's perceptions and views of something he believed to be true. Besides, political parties must sincerely intend to include women in the political arena. Women are not used as political objects and political tools to merely fulfil the requirement for participating in the legislative and presidential elections.

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