

The semantics of gender, sexuality and women in the Malaysian editorial cartoon *Senyum Kambing*¹

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Abstract

In the paper, we analyze the syndicated editorial cartoon *Senyum Kambing* in the mainstream newspaper *Utusan Malaysia* using a cognitive-linguistics approach to reveal the conceptualization of issues relating to women. This method of analysis focuses on the schemas underlying the language and metaphors in the portrayals of Malaysian women in the editorial cartoons. Out of 715 cartoon strips produced between 2005 and 2007, only 97 (13.3 percent) make references to women. Three main categories of women appear to dominate the samples: women celebrities, politicians and women in power (minister's wives and women holding high public office). Our analysis reveals that they are often conceptualized in the emotional and domestic domains rather than the rational domain. The results also show negative stereotyping and negation or trivialization of the achievements of these women.

Editorial cartoons offer a minefield of data to reveal inherent social implications in a myriad number of issues. A regular feature of most contemporary newspapers, editorial cartoons provide forceful and often penetrating commentary on sociopolitical and cultural issues of the day. Embedding humor, wit, satire and overstatement, they can either offer a hilarious sketch of ourselves (as a nation or as human beings) or be used as propaganda to promulgate a particular ideology or point of view. In particular, editorial cartoons or gag cartoons are often used for conveying political commentaries and editorial opinions in newspapers. This paper will focus specifically on the depictions of women and gender in an editorial

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cartoon, *Senyum Kambing*, in *Utusan Malaysia* to show the ways in which gender relations are played out in the Malaysian-mainstream media. Using a cognitive linguistics and semantics approach to gender representation (cf. Luchjenbroers, 1995), the linguistic expressions used in the cartoons are examined to reveal the conceptual representation or conceptualization of women.

To put the cartoon scenario in Malaysia in context, a number of cartoonists such as Lat, Maro (Malaysia Kita), Rejabhad, Akee and Reggie Lee are regular contributors of cartoons and comic strips in various mainstream newspapers. Even though they are recognized by their pen names, their identities and real names are known to the public. However, *Senyum Kambing* is not authored by one person but forms the collective voice of the editorial group. The prominent space on the front page of *Utusan Malaysia* given to *Senyum Kambing* reflects its importance and highlights what is considered as attention-grabbing news of the day.

The Analytical Framework

Geeraerts (1997) perceives cognitive linguistics as an approach to the analysis of natural language that focuses on language as an instrument for organizing, processing, and conveying information. In this context, the analysis of the conceptual and experiential basis of linguistic categories is seen to be of primary importance. 'The formal structures of language are studied, not as if they were autonomous, but as a reflection of general conceptual organization, categorization principles, processing mechanisms, and experiential and environmental influences' (Geeraerts, 1997, p. 7).

Although the CL enterprise is not a monolith (Goldberg, 1996, p. 3), most if not all cognitive linguists share some foundational assumptions. Newman (1996, p. ix) summarizes the theoretical assumptions of the cognitive linguistics enterprise as follows:

- a. there are important links between linguistic structure and human cognition, making it imperative to acknowledge the role of human cognition and human experience in motivating and explicating linguistic structure;
- b. a language community imposes its own categorizations upon the entities which constitute reality and such categorizations may differ considerably from one language community to another;
- c. most of the categories relevant to linguistics are viewed as having central and less central members rather than being criterially defined;
- d. where the meaning of a form needs to be elaborated, then a larger context or 'frame' [domain] needs to be invoked in order to properly describe the meaning.

A particular strong influence in the cognitive semantics paradigm has been the work of Lakoff (1987). For him, our conceptual system *is fundamentally metaphorical in nature*. Non-metaphorical thought is for Lakoff (1987) only possible when we talk about purely physical reality. He seeks to illustrate the above thesis by recourse to the everyday language we use to talk about various things.

The present paper shares the above assumptions and accepts the Cognitive-Linguistics conception of semantic representation and their views on a system of conceptual metaphors in everyday language as essentially correct. Specifically, the semantic structure of an item or expression can be explicated in terms of conventionalized conceptual metaphors and the meaning of the expression can be defined with respect to some domain (Rudzka-Ostyn, 1989, p. 615). In cognitive linguistics, a metaphor is defined as understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain, e.g. one person's life experience versus another's. A conceptual domain is any coherent organization of experience (Lakoff, 1987). The semantics of *Senyum Kambing* to be drawn out in this study is dependent on the identification of the source domains to reveal evidence of the conceptualizations (or, in Lakoff's terminology, idealized cognitive models) about women in *Senyum Kambing*. Fundamentally, the framework accepts that the expression used in the cartoon may utilize different conceptual metaphors, with some conventional metaphors being the 'default' or the 'preferred' metaphor. Concomitantly, *Senyum Kambing*'s representation of women is dependent on the organizing metaphor or the 'framing' of the discourse. Such framing can place a portion of coherent referent situation into the foreground of attention while placing the remainder of that situation into the background. In this regard, how women are represented might very well be dependent on what is fore-grounded and what is back-grounded.

Women in Malaysia

As a multi-racial country, Malaysian women are not homogeneous, having their own religious beliefs, customs and practices. As Cecelia Ng, Maznah Mohamad and Tan Beng Hui (2006; 140) argue, Malaysian women are constrained by the Asian discourse which has been used to promote a very strict prescription of female behaviour and roles. Inherent within the discourse is the symbolic notion of women as upholding the nation and honour, vital in their role of keeping together the family unit. While they are allowed – and in most instances, encouraged – to go out of their homes to work in the public sphere whenever the need arises, they are also expected to give up their jobs and prioritize the interests of their families. If they put their own self interests before the family, 'the disintegration of the family unit is blamed on their assertiveness in the public sphere and their neglect of domestic roles' (Ng, Mohamad and Tan, 2006, p. 141). Ruzy Suliza Hashim's (2003) study of Malay women in Malay court narratives show them to be at the margins of court politics. The marginalization and muteness of women betray male ideals concerning women and their place in society:

- what is asked of them and what is withheld from them;
- under what favourable circumstances they may achieve and contribute to society; and
- what types of female behaviour fall outside the prescribed limits of gender.

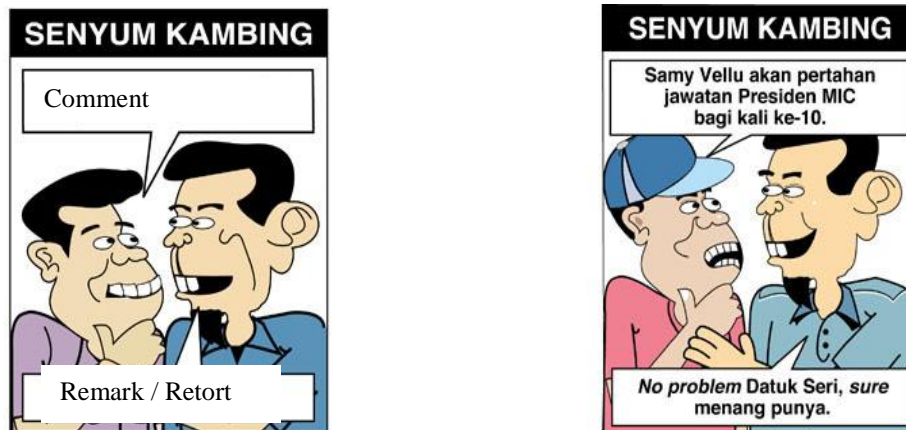
Women who work in support of patriarchal ideals and then return to their prescribed roles are privileged, whereas those who rebel against stipulated norms are constructed as 'not normal, dangerous, and certainly not sexually appealing' (Ruzy Suliza Hashim, 2003, p. 229). Khoo Gaik Kheng's (2006) work on the representations of the modern Malay woman of the 1990s, which include female characters in films and Malaysian literary texts, shows the cultural tensions about gender and sexuality. Framed within the

discourses of modernity and Islam, Malay women must eschew their desires and sexuality and must return to Islamic ideals of morality and propriety. As this paper will show, some of these parameters in discourses on Malay women are made overt in *Senyum Kambing*.

The data and procedure of analysis

The aim of this paper is to examine how women are conceptualized in the front-page-syndicated cartoon *Senyum Kambing* in *Utusan Malaysia*. *Utusan Malaysia* is the leading Malay daily in the country with a daily circulation of 234,542 (http://www.utusan.com.my/utusan/content.asp?y=2001&dt=1106&pub=Utusan_Express&sec=Corporate&pg=co_02.htm). The target audience is the general reading public with no specific target of men / women. In terms of the structure of *Senyum Kambing*, the cartoon essentially consists of two characters (see Figure 1). The character on the left, the commentator, a man in his thirties makes a statement captured in a speech bubble (caption) on the top, and the second character, another man with a goatee beard (hence, *Kambing* – Goat) makes a retort or remark captured in a speech bubble on the bottom.

Figure 1: Structure of *Senyum Kambing*



The two characters almost never change except for the colour of their clothes or additional head gear for specific occasions such as *Hari Raya* (a festival celebrated at the end of Ramadhan – the fasting month) when *Kambing* wears a songkok (a formal Malay head gear), or when commenting on a death where the two characters don black clothes. Occasionally, the character on the left is replaced by a man in a cap. Primarily, the cartoonist comments or picks up on current issues or trends reported in the newspaper of that particular day.

The name of the cartoon *Senyum Kambing* is a Malay adage which refers to ‘a cynical smile or smirk that is to tease, taunt, mock, or make fun of someone’ (*Kamus Dewan Edisi 4*, p. 1457). In particular, the cartoon teases and pokes fun at certain people or highlights certain issues which are reported in the press. Hence, it serves as ‘unofficial’ editorial comment on a current issue.

A total of 715 cartoons appearing between 2005 and 2007 were analyzed. The number of cartoons sampled in each year is shown in Table 1. Cartoons with reference to women in the dataset were identified, separated and further analyzed to determine the distribution and types of women that are highlighted or the subject of the cartoon as well as the conceptual domains they are associated with.

Table 1: Number of *Senyum Kambing* cartoons sampled according to year of appearance.

Year	Number
2005	191
2006	323
2007	201
Total	715

In the identification of the referents in the cartoon, in most instances, a specific name of a person is mentioned. In others, acronyms are used but the referent can be identified because she is linked directly to the issue of the day. Cartoons which refer to a specific person and generic ones are separated. In addition, the domain or subject matter of the cartoon is identified and categorized. Specific use of language and metaphors are noted and categorized into semantic groups to reveal evidence of idealized cognitive models about the women in *Senyum Kambing*.

Results and discussion

Out of the 715 cartoons examined, only 97 (13.3 percent) make reference specifically to a particular woman or about women in general. The proportion of sentences that refer to women is relatively small because the subject matter covered by *Senyum Kambing* addresses a diversity of current issues. Perhaps this is testimony to the fact that women are rarely among the movers-and-shakers in current issues in Malaysia. In effect, the cartoon focuses more on events and issues within national news – politics, society, people in the news, crime, sports, business and economic affairs – whereby the discussion of human agents is often incidental to the subject matter. Out of these 97 cartoons, a total of 68 cartoons have specific female referent where the name of the woman is mentioned or a noun phrase which clearly identifies the referent is used, such as *Naib Canselor baru UM* (new Vice-Chancellor of UM).

Women celebrities/TV personalities and politicians comprise the largest group being commented on by *Senyum Kambing*. These two categories constitute more than half of the total cartoons on women (53.6%). There were an equal number of cartoons on women celebrities/TV personalities (26) and female politicians (26). However, as we shall examine later, the domains of the comments are different for these two groups of females.

Table 2: Distribution of different types of women in *Senyum Kambing*

Types	Number	Percent
Celebrities/personalities	26	26.8%
Politicians	26	26.8
Women in public office	12	12.4
'First ladies'	6	6.2
General	23	23.7
Same-sex marriage ²	4	4.1
Total	97	100

Female artists/celebrities/TV personalities

In the data set, the artist celebrities in the entertainment industries highlighted are popular Malaysian and Indonesia singers Siti Nurhaliza (15), Sheila Majid (1), Ella (1) and Ima (1); singer-actress Erra Fazira (1) and actress Sharifah Amani (1). TV personalities in the data set include newscasters Normala Samsudin (2) and Azrinaz Mazhar Hakim (1). Only one cartoon about a female sports personality (Nicol David – Malaysian world squash champion) was featured.

For the celebrities group as a whole, in terms of domains, 73 percent (19 out of the 26) of cartoons about the celebrities pertain to their personal affairs/life, especially their love life. For instance, out of the 15 cartoons about Siti Nurhaliza, 80 percent or twelve of the cartoons focused on her love life and marriage. Siti Nurhaliza is a highly popular singer who hails from a sleepy town in Malaysia. She came from a poor background and her singing talent has made her into a millionaire. She has always been spared from gossips because of her prim and proper image in the entertainment industry thus far. But when news that she was dating a rich man whose former wife was Siti Nurhaliza's business partner, the paparazzi had a field day with gossips and insinuations about her true personality. Her fans are mystified by her choice, a middle-aged 'Datuk' (Dukat K). Anyone who has been awarded the title 'Datuk' by a state ruler or the king has been deemed as contributing to the public in a meaningful way. The title is much coveted, and not easy to come by. Hence, a young woman being affiliated with a Datuk almost always makes the news. But for Siti, two main factors have been identified as damaging: she is cast as the 'other' woman, a home-wrecker; and the fact that Datuk K is significantly older than her (about 20 years' difference in age). For example, the cartoon on August 5, 2005 pokes fun of Siti being 'hurt' (*'terluka'*) due to innuendoes about her and Datuk K:

1. Commentator: *Siti 'terluka' digosipkan dengan Datuk K.*
(Siti is 'hurt' for being gossiped with Datuk K)
Kambing: *Sabarlah, jodoh pertemuan di tangan Tuhan.*

² During the time period of the data-set, there was 4 instance of same sex marriage, all relating to the same couple. In all instances, the marriage was ridiculed or strong objections recorded. This category will not be dealt with in this paper.

(Be patient, the choice of partners is in God's hands.)

And subsequently after much has been said about her marriage, Kambing (16/06/2006) declares that the whole issue has been such an 'overkill'.

2. Commentator: *Siti Nurhaliza kahwin Ogos ni?*

(Siti Nurhaliza is getting married this August?)

Kambing: *Eloklah, aku pun dah penat dengar cerita dia nak kahwin.*
(It's good, I'm sick to listen to her story of getting married.)

The other artists whose love life gets commented on are Erra Fazira, a popular actress (3) and Ella, a pop-rock singer (4).

3. Commentator: *Erra Fazira nafi akan kahwin dengan Datuk M.*

(Erra Fazira denied that she will be marrying Datuk M)

Kambing: *Siti pun mula-mula nafi juga.*
(Siti also denied (her relationship) at the beginning.)

(*Utusan Malaysia*, 09/01/2007)

Erra Fazira was a divorcee whose first marriage received huge coverage in the press. Barely two years later she divorced, and was reported as dating 'Datuk M' – another rich, divorced candidate. But it appears now that it was merely gossip, because she has recently married a man who is not the coveted Datuk M.

4. Commentator: *Ella bertemu jodoh pada usia 41 tahun.*

(Ella has found her soul-mate at 41).

Kambing: *Lamanya dia mencari!*
(Her search took a long period of time!)

(*Utusan Malaysia*, 19/01/2007)

In Ella's case, the Malaysian 'queen of rock' (www.ella.com.my) generates her fair share of gossip. At 41, she is considered to be an '*anak dara tua*' (old maid); hence the excitement or perhaps sarcasm, that she had finally found her '*jodoh*' (partner) and 'soul-mate'. Unfortunately, as in the case of Erra Fazira, the relationship melted before it could solidify and, to this day, Ella is still single.

Other interesting data highlights the marriages to (or involvement with) prominent and/or rich men as in the cartoons in the editions of 22/08/2005 and 24/08/2005. The two women put into the limelight are both newscasters of TV3, a popular local television station.

5. Commentator: *Sultan Brunei kahwin bekas personaliti TV3.*

(The Sultan of Brunei is marrying a former TV3 personality)

- Kambing: *Semoga bahagia ke anak cucu.*
(Pray that they will live happily ever after.)
6. Commentator: *Sah Azmi Khalid akan kahwin Normala.*
(It's confirmed that Azmi Khalid will be marrying Normala.)
- Kambing: *Eloklah, lama sangat menduda pun tak molek.*
(Good for him, staying single for too long is not good.)

The TV3 personality referred to in (5) is Azrinaz Mazhar Hakim, a broadcasting journalist and prime-time-news anchor, who caught everyone by surprise when it was announced that she was marrying the Sultan of Brunei as his third consort. However, the congratulatory note '[I] pray that they will live happily ever after' is tinged with sarcasm because the Sultan has recently divorced his second wife, and the cartoonist casts aspersions as to the possible longevity of his third marriage. For Normala, another newscaster who is known for her beauty and has been divorced for some time, her marriage to Datuk Azmi Khalid (a Cabinet Minister) also received ironic comments from the cartoonist. Datuk Azmi's marriage to Normala comes just five months after his first wife's demise, hence, he has not been 'single' for that long. By contrast, Normala has been a single parent for a longer time, divorced since 1996 (<http://www.kehakiman.gov.my/judgment.coa/latest/w02-386-99g.htm>). But the word '*menduda*' in (6) refers to his eligibility.

While it is not peculiar that the press (tabloid) should want to focus on the life and romance of celebrities and TV personalities, the cognitive domains of the discussion seem to treat the women celebrities as objects to be possessed by rich and powerful men. For instance, in the cartoon of the 01/08/2005 issue of *Utusan Malaysia*, mention is made of the Datuk K as a *jutawan* (millionaire), although Siti herself, also a millionaire, is not mentioned.

7. Commentator: *Gossip panas Siti Nurhaliza dengan jutawan Datuk K.*
(Hot gossip is between Siti Nurhaliza with millionaire Datuk K.)
- Kambing: *Aku pun Datuk K, tapi 'kambing', duit pun tak ada.*
(I'm also Datuk K, but a goat with no money.)

Implicit in this domain is that celebrities are seen as gold-diggers, often 'preying' on men who are rich but slightly older than themselves. Thus, the sarcastic remarks by Kambing in response to Siti's statement that she will marry a man who is '*bijak dan beriman*' (smart and pious), is '*Kalau berusia sedikit macam aku layakkah?*' (If that man is slightly older like me, do I qualify?).

8. Commentator: *Siti Nurhaliza cari lelaki yang bijak dan beriman.*
(Siti Nurhaliza is searching for a smart and pious man.)
- Kambing: *Kalau berusia sedikit lebih macam aku layakkah?*
(If that man is slightly older like me, do I qualify?)

The cartoon seems to deflate Siti's preference and pokes fun at her choice of a much older man. The May-December domain is also present in the TV personality (26 years old) who married the Sultan of Brunei (58 years old) as his second wife as in (5). Even the terms of endearment between the celebrities and their husbands are subjected to sexual innuendoes:

9. Commentator: *Menurut Siti, dia panggil Datuk K 'Pak Besar'.*
(According to Siti, she called Datuk K 'Mr. Big')
Kambing: Wow!

It is considered unromantic to call one's husband 'pak' or 'uncle'. The exclamatory 'wow' can be interpreted as Datuk K being endowed with other things that are 'big' in size. A term of respect is reduced to a crude joke.

Another cognitive domain in the personal life of the artists is the focus on the other woman, especially if the man is a divorcee. The cartoons appearing on 13/08/2006 and 20/08/2006 pit the female artist, Siti Nurhaliza, against the ex-wife:

10. Commentator: *Tengku Zawiyah harap Datuk K temui kebahagiaan.*
(Tengku Zawiyah hoped that Datuk K will find his true happiness.)
Kambing: *Aku harap beliau juga akan temui kebahagiaan baru.*
(I hope that she would also find new happiness.)
11. Commentator: *Esok, Siti akan bergelar isteri.*
(Tomorrow, Siti will become someone's wife.)
Kambing: *Sayanginya, ada yang sudah bergelar janda.*
(It's a pity that there will be one person that has lost her husband.)

Considered together the two cartoon strips suggest that Siti Nurhaliza is much maligned. She becomes someone else's 'new happiness' and a wife at the cost of the other woman's loss of happiness and divorced status.

Apart from the love life, another aspect of the personal life of female celebrities which is targeted by the editorial cartoonist is the maternal side of the women, including their childbearing age.

12. Commentator: *Sheila Majid lahir anak ke-4 pada usia 42 tahun.*
(Sheila Majid had her fourth child after her age is 42.)
Kambing: *Kehebatan wanita pertengahan umur!*
(That is the power of middle-aged women!)

(*Utusan Malaysia*, 02/05/2007)

Sheila Majid is the Jazz Queen of Malaysia. Divorced from her first husband, and remarried to a much younger man than herself, Sheila became pregnant at 42, an age considered to be well past childbearing. She is therefore declared as '*hebat*' (powerful).

However, interestingly, there is very little on the professional capacity or performance of the women. In total, 26.9 percent (7/26) of the dataset addresses the women in their professional capacity. In their professional capacity as performers, competition with fellow artistes laced with sexual innuendoes and references to their sex appeal are the focus of the cartoonist. Thus when Mawi (a popular male singer) defeats Siti for the best musician award in 2006, Kambing cynically says that it is acceptable because Siti has won a 'bigger' prize, referring to her husband, Datuk K.

13. Commentator: *Mawi tewaskan Siti.*

(Mawi defeats Siti.)

Kambing: *Takpalah, Siti dah dapat 'hadiah' lebih besar.*

(No worries, Siti already won a bigger 'prize').

(*Utusan Malaysia*, 10/09/2006)

Similarly, when the popular Indonesian artist Ina (well known for her gyrating dance moves on stage) was defeated in a musical show by Fiq (a new Malaysian male artist), Kambing alludes to her sexy dance:

14. Commentator: *Fiq tewaskan Ina.*

(Fiq defeats Ina)

Kambing: *Barangkali kerana goyang Ina kurang menggerudi.*

(Perhaps her shakes were not 'drilling' enough)

(*Utusan Malaysia*, 26/12/2006)

Fiq is a newcomer, being a winner in *Akademi Fantasia*, a reality show that pits contenders in gruelling situations to bring out the best of their singing skills. Ina, on the other hand, is a seasoned entertainer, one who sings and dances in very sexy moves. The cartoon depicts her as one who could not sing and even her dance was not 'drilling' enough for a win.

Women celebrities in their professional capacity are also seen as emotional and as letting their emotions interfere with their job, as featured in the cartoons of 28/02/2007:

15. Commentator: *Isu pakaian punca Linda Onn enggan hadir acara karpet merah anugerah Akademi.*

(Choice of dressing is the factor for Linda Onn not attending the Academy Award ceremony.)

Kambing: *Itu pun nak merajuk.*

(Sulking over small matters.)

Linda Onn received huge publicity when she was chosen to interview artists at the 79th Star Movies Award in Los Angeles in 2007. She received a lot of attention from the local media when she went missing for the assignment. It was reported that she did not attend because she was not allowed to wear her chosen dress, designed by Jovian Mandagie, because her sponsor wanted her to wear something different. The cartoonist portrays her as someone irresponsible who is overly fussy and picky about dresses to the extent of failing in her responsibilities to cover the event and conduct the interview.

Senyum Kambing also depicts the celebrities as ambassadors for various charities. In the case of Siti Nurhaliza, two of the 15 cartoons about her focused on her work with charity. Siti, who is ambassador for the Red Crescent Society, is commended on her work visiting flood victims and sick children in hospital. Similarly, acknowledgement of the feat of Nichol Davids becoming World Squash Champion and the hope that she gets due recognition and be given the same accolades/rewards as male swimmer, Malik Mydin, is highlighted in the 02/11/2005 edition of *Senyum Kambing*.

16. Commentator: *Nicol David semakin hebat.*

(Nicol David is becoming greater.)

Kambing: *Aku harap dia diiktiraf macam Malik Mydin.*

(I hope that she would be acknowledged like Malik Mydin.)

But such renditions are rare, because the analysis of the references to celebrities in *Senyum Kambing* has identified a very clear picture of the domain by which women are represented. Their love life appears central to the comments forming a picture of the female referents described in *Senyum Kambing*.

Women politicians

Politicians, especially women cabinet ministers in the limelight due to various current national issues, are favorite targets of *Senyum Kambing*. In the data set only three women politicians are referred to. The low number of women politician mentioned is reflective of the small number of women in Cabinet (3) but not reflective of their representation in Senate – 28.1 percent (18/64) – or the House of Representatives – 9.6 percent (21/219). Dato' Seri Rafidah Aziz, Minister of International Trade and Industry, dominates the data set with 15 out of 26 cartoons (57.7%), mostly over the Approved Permit for imported cars (AP) scandal and her tiff and war of words with former Prime Minister and mentor, Tun Mahathir Mohamad. Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil, the Minister of Women, Family and Social Development, is the second most popular with 7 out of 26 cartoons (26.9%). Since she is in charge of women's affairs, most of the comments relate directly to gender issues such as polygamy and violence of women against men. The third politician is Senator Dato' Dr. Norraesah Mohamad (a former banker and UMNO Supreme Council Member). The features on these three women produce some compelling results.

How do the female politicians fare compared to the celebrities? As expected, almost all of the comments on the politicians related to current political events and issues. The only exception being one

where reference is made to their domestic skills (and that too is met with sarcasm or a sense of disbelief) as shown in the cartoon on 19/03/2006:

17. Commentator: *Kata Rafidah, beliau cuci sendiri tandasnya.*
(Rafidah says she cleans her toilet herself)
Kambing: *Rafidah memang hebat!*
(Rafidah is really great!)

In their public/professional capacity as politicians, women are portrayed as being emotional and prone to crying or getting angry bordering on the dramatic in the face of adversity, as is revealed in these cartoons:

18. Commentator: *Rafidah menangis, peluk Tun Mahathir.*
(Rafidah cries, hugs Tun Mahathir)
Kambing: *Drama kecil hari merdeka.*
(Mini drama for Independence Day.)
(*Utusan Malaysia*, 01/09/2005)

19. Commentator: *Peluk sudah, menangis pun sudah.*
(She has hugged and she has cried.)
Kambing: *Isu AP kira selesaikah?*
(Should we consider the AP issue settled?)
(*Utusan Malaysia*, 02/09/2005)

Examples 17 to 19 highlight that despite Rafidah's firm ways, she is very much a woman. Her domestic skill in cleaning the toilet and her melodramatic crying and hugging of the former Prime Minister affirm her female status.

20. Commentator: *Ada orang marah betul dengan kita.*
(Someone is really angry with us.)
Kambing: *Tidak mengapa, asalkan jangan Puteri yang marah.*
(That's ok, as long as Puteri isn't mad at us.)
(*Utusan Malaysia*, 22/07/2005)

However, the women's political youth wing (Puteri UMNO) is shown in (20) as comprising women who can hold their emotions in check. However, there is also suggestion of women politicians being the 'weaker sex':

21. Commentator: *Puteri UMNO tak mudah merajuk jika tak dipilih bertanding pilihanraya.*
(Puteri UMNO will not sulk if she is not chosen to compete during election.)
Kambing: *Alangkah baik jika semua begitu.*

(If only everyone was like them.)

(*Utusan Malaysia*, 06/08/2007)

22. Commentator: *Shahrizat lalui detik cemas lawat mangsa banjir.*

(Shahrizat experienced anxious moments visiting flood victims.)

Kambing: *Gunung sama didaki, banjir sama diharungi.*

(Malay proverb: Joy and sorrows are shared together.)

(*Utusan Malaysia*, 15/01/2007)

In (22), Kambing comments on an instance when the Minister, Shahrizat was caught in the flood while distributing aid to flood victims. The focus on her emotions being 'cemas' (fearful) are deflated because it is only fitting for politicians to experience their constituents joys and sorrows with them.

Senyum Kambing also chooses to focus on the responses of Datuk Seri Shahrizat, being the Minister of Women, Family and Community Development. These responses to certain womens issues are often highlighted with a twist or belittled. In the 02/08/2005 issue, the cartoonist, tongue in cheek, asks the Minister to comment on a news story about a man who was splashed with acid by his wife after he asked her for permission to wed a second wife. By focusing of the wife's violent reaction to the husband's request, the cartoonist is pointing the finger at women in general.

23. Commentator: *Tak minta izin salah, minta izin kena simbah.*

(Wrong to not ask permission, yet when we seek for permission, we would be splashed [with acid])

Kambing: *Macam mana ni Datuk Shahrizat?*

(Care to comment Datuk Shahrizat?)

It is deemed proper for a Muslim married man who wants to take on subsequent wives (up to four) to ask the permission of the first wife. Most men, however, choose to marry behind their first wives' back because of the repercussions that follow. Hence, Shahrizat's explanation is sought as to what can be done for a man wanting to engage in polygamous marriages. Similarly, her statement on the increasing numbers of house husbands, highlighted in the 15/05/2008 edition, is met with ridicule:

24. Commentator: *Shahrizat kata suami jadi suri rumah kes terpencil.*

(Shahrizat claimed that house-husband issue is a small case.)

Kambing: *Kalau gitu tak payah lah buat gawat.*

(If that's the case, don't start a ruckus.)

Despite the examples above, serious treatment by *Senyum Kambing* of what female politicians have to say is also present in the data set. Dr. Norraesah is a Malaysian Senator affiliated to the ruling party. Her remarks on certain issues relating to Malays and economic growth were highlighted as the issue at hand, albeit with a slightly humorous twist.

25. Commentator: *Dr Norraesah tegur budaya berseminar nak tolong Melayu.*
 (Senator Dr Norraesah questioning 'giving seminar' culture to help Malays.)
 Kambing: *Hasil tak ada, resolusi berguni, Melayu tak ke mana.*
 (Plenty of resolutions, yet the Malays go no way – no solutions.)
 (*Utusan Malaysia*, 10/07/2005)
26. Commentator: *Masalah kita, menurut Dr Norraesah, ada pertumbuhan, tiada pengagihan.*
 (Our problem, according to Dr Norraesah, is there's growth, but not distribution.)
 Kambing: *Contoh klasik, pemberian AP.*
 (The classic example is the awarding of AP.)
 (*Utusan Malaysia*, 18/07/2005)

Similarly, the reference to Rafidah, Minister of International Trade and Industry, as 'iron lady' in the 10/10/2005 edition in (27) also suggests acknowledgement of strength on the part of female politicians. However, the context in which she acquires this title is more humor than real praise (unlike Lady Thatcher). She has acquired the 'title' because she had to be fitted with a walking brace after the saga of not turning up for a Parliament session. In some way, the episode was construed by some as 'more theater and drama' on her part and for the purpose of evading scrutiny by Parliament of her role in the Approved Permit issue. Thus the cartoon pokes fun at her.

27. Commentator: *Iron Lady kini ada lutut besi.*
 (The Iron Lady has now got an iron knee.)
 Kambing: *Awas semua!*
 (Let everyone beware!)

In summary, analysis of the references to female politicians in *Senyum Kambing* reveals the emotional aspects of women politicians. Their actions and comments as Ministers and politicians are often met with sarcasm and are belittled.

Women in positions of high public office

Women holding public office also were singled out but in most cases with regards to their appointment to office. During the period of 2005 to 2007, the policy towards achieving at least 30 percent participation by women at decision making levels in Malaysia was initiated by the government. Most of the cartoons in this category relate to this issue. The appointments are in most cases met with approval (congratulatory) but mixed with some sarcasm.

For instance, the 01/03/2007 edition highlights the appointment of the first woman to the position of Brigadier General. Kambing's response to the statement is '*Tahniah, aku tabik lagi kuat.*' (Congratulations, I will salute **harder**.) The use of *lagi* (superlative emphatic marker) can be interpreted

positively as it is no mean feat for a woman to be promoted to Brigadier General in an army-elite hierarchy that is dominated by men. Thus the person deserves to be saluted harder. The fact that there is a double standard in the appointment of women is apparent from the cartoon.

- 28.** Commentator: *Roshidah wanita pertama berpangkat Brigedier Jeneral.*
(Roshidah is the first woman to be appointed Brigadier General.)
Kambing: *Tahniah, aku tabik lagi kuat.*
(Congrats, I salute you harder.)

Other women in this category include two women Vice Chancellors. In the case of UM, some 'controversy' (or at least speculation) surrounded the appointment of the first women vice chancellor in the country and *Senyum Kambing* has two cartoons on this issue in the dataset. In the first instance (*Utusan Malaysia*, 30/03/2006 – prior to the appointment being made), the first character asks '*Siapa Naib Canselor baru Universiti Malaya*' and Kambing comments '*Elok bagi kepada wanita*' (Best give it to a woman). The patronizing attitude towards women is apparent in the comment.

- 29.** Commentator: *Siapa Naib Canselor baru Universiti Malaya?*
(Who's the new UM Vice-Chancellor?)
Kambing: *Elok bagi kepada wanita.*
(Better to give it to a woman.)

In the second instance, when news comes that the person could be a woman, *Senyum Kambing* corrects the perception '*Dengar-dengar orang UM tak mahu Naib Canselor wanita*' (word has it that UM staff do not want a woman Vice-Chancellor) with '*atau mereka tak mahu orang luar*' (or they do not want someone from outside UM). This in effect plays down the issue of gender in the appointment.

- 30.** Commentator: *Dengar-dengar orang UM tak mahu Naib Canselor wanita.*
(Big rumours being heard that UM does not want a female Vice-Chancellor)
Kambing: *Atau mereka tak mahu orang luar.*
(Or they do not want outsiders.)

(*Utusan Malaysia*, 02/04/2006)

After her appointment and when the Times Higher Education Supplement ranking of universities was announced, *Senyum Kambing* feels it appropriate to respond to the decline in the ranking of UM with reference to this new 'lady' vice chancellor:

- 31.** Commentator: *Ranking UM jatuh lagi.*
(UM's ranking drops further.)
Kambing: *Aku harap VC barunya dapat berbuat sesuatu.*
(I hope the new VC can do something about it.)

(*Utusan Malaysia*, 07/10/2006)

The appointment of the nation's second female vice chancellor was also given attention in *Senyum Kambing* (03/08/2006). In this case, (as with the Brigadier General case), there was a congratulatory remark for women in general mixed with some sarcasm in the form of expressing 'well done' to the Minister of Women's Affairs – who was seen to have exercised her patronage or pushed for a women candidate, perhaps suggesting political patronage in the appointment. (Incidentally, the candidate is also the President of the National Council of Women's Organization).

32. Commentator: *Sharifah Hapsah Naib Canselor UKM.*
(Sharifah Hapsah is the new UKM Vice-Chancellor)

Kambing: *Tahniah wanita, syabas Datuk Seri S.*
(Congrats ladies, congrats to Datuk Seri S.)

(*Utusan Malaysia*, 03/08/2006)

Other examples in the data set include comments on a female judge for the Syarie Court (28/04/2006) and the first Muslim woman astronaut (20/09/2006). In the latter, the achievement of the astronaut is belittled and seen as a threat to men.

33. Commentator: *Wanita Islam pertama akan ke angkasa lepas.*
(The first Muslim woman will be going into outer space.)

Kambing: *Tak lama lagi giliran kita jadi suri rumah.*
(Soon it will be our turn to become house husbands.)

Angela Merkel's appointment as German Chancellor is also highlighted by *Senyum Kambing* (11/11/2005). The appointment is used to taunt women in Malaysia to do the same but with sexual innuendo in the use of the word '*teransang*' (stimulate).

34. Commentator: *Angela Merkel Canselor Jerman.*
(Angela Markel is the new German Chancellor)

Kambing: *Tidak terangsangkah wanita Malaysia?*
(Don't Malaysian women feel challenged?)

Overall, the domain is best summed up by the 23/04/2006 edition where Malaysian women are acknowledged to be '*semakin hebat*' (awesome). The response takes a similar approach to Angela Merkel's cartoon by questioning when a woman will become Prime Minister:

35. Commentator: *Wanita kita semakin hebat.*
(Our ladies are becoming are getting more awesome.)

Kambing: *Bila agaknya mereka akan jadi PM?*
(When will they become the PM?)

In summary, the references to women in positions of power seem to be met with some resistance and (slight) derision. They are seen as threats to the male dominated society and a challenge to the socio-economic order.

First ladies

Under this category, we have included the wives of the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and former Prime Ministers as well as the ex-King's consort. There are only five cartoons with references to first ladies: two pertaining to the late Datin Seri Endon, wife of the Prime Minister; two on Siti Puan Aishah, consort of the 12th Yang Di Pertuan Agong; and one each about Dr Siti Hasmah and Datin Rosmah Mansor.

In the case of the late Datin Seri Endon, one cartoon refers to her passing (with the character donning black) and a reverence to her passing away. The other refers to the Textile Museum being named after her. In both cases, the responses were respectful. In contrast, the treatment of the Queen Consort – Siti Aishah – is less than respectful. In both cases the focus is on her 'availability'. The contrasting treatment of Puan Siti Aishah is especially telling and irreverent since they pertain to her personal life – 04/12/2005 and 05/12/2005 editions:

36. Commentator: *Siti Aishah muncul selepas dua tahun menyepi.*
(Siti Aishah reappeared after two years being 'silent'.)
Kambing: *Rindu terubat tetapi aku masih tertanya-tanya.*
(Her presence has soothed my grief, but I'm still wondering.)
37. Commentator: *Kemunculan Cik Puan Siti Aishah cetuskan bualan hangat.*
(Reappearance of Cik Puan Siti Aishah created hot gossips.)
Kambing: *Kerana yang hilang belum berganti.*
(Because the missing hasn't been replaced.)

To provide a context: Puan Siti Aishah was a commoner who became the Queen of Malaysia because she was married to the late Sultan of Selangor. She married him at the young age of 20 – an age difference between them of some forty years. While her husband was in office as the King, he died. No one knew what became of her until *Senyum Kambing* picked up the news that she had 'reappeared' and was still a widow.

The commentary in the case of Dr Siti Hasmah (the wife of the 4th Prime Minister of Malaysia) was related to her choice of possible career as a journalist (28/07/2005) and in the case of Datin Rosmah (wife of the current Deputy Prime Minister) (22/03/2006), on the need of ministers' wives to appear with their respective husbands. In the latter case, the comment of Kambing is sarcastic implying that there would otherwise be all kinds of rumours if they were not in the presence of their husbands.

General

This category captures cartoons commenting on women as a group or women issues in general. The category also includes cartoons on particular women or groups of women (Indonesian maids) who are in the news limelight (often for the wrong reasons). In total, 23 (23.7%) of such items were identified. The issues dealt with in the cartoon fall into several domains:

- a. Gold diggers – ‘May to December’ pairs (05/06/2005) (21062007)
- b. Women smarter than men (29/12/2006) (16/07/2006)
- c. Mothering: single women’s conduct (28/12/2006); motherliness (14/05/2006)
- d. Maternity leave for women
- e. Marriage/unmarried women/spinsters (07/06/2006)
 - i. Men marrying foreigners, local women thus to be objects of pity (09/11/2006)
 - ii. Women as commodities and exchangeable (19/08/2005) (26/11/2005)
- f. Women as emotional (17/05/2006)
- g. Women as violent – often in the case of the husband wanting to take on a second wife (23/02/2005) (19/08/2005)
- h. Maids: running away; demanding more pay – sex workers Indonesian maids (13/02/2007)
- i. Obesity – as an attribute of women in a developed nation (13/06/2007)
- j. Women as sexual objects (using food metaphor)
- k. The issue of rape is belittled with suggestion of chastity belt
- l. Women as loquacious
- m. Women con artists
- n. Women’s modesty – types of swimsuit (05/02/2007)

Negative comments and belittlement of women seems to be the order of the day when dealing with these issues. Most of Kambing’s retorts are stereotypical, revealing a male-gender bias in his comments.

Conclusion

Interesting cognitive domains are revealed in the representations of women in *Senyum Kambing* – an editorial cartoon and a form of popular culture. The knowledge in the domains foregrounding the cartoon influence how different ‘categories’ of women are conceptualized. In this way, women celebrities are conceptualized as desirable, with perhaps a hint of the tendency to be married to rich and slightly older men. These women are also emotional. Women politicians and women in power too are conceptualized as emotional and the issues they address are often belittled or mocked. The cognitive-linguistics approach attempted here to analyze the representation of women in the cartoons is promising and is an instructive way of capturing the categorization of women in the mind of the cartoonists – perhaps representative of the Malaysian male psyche, or at least the male dominated editorial. Despite women having attained power and status, their successes seem to be negated or stereotyped. This disquieting scenario shows deep-seated misconceptions that still permeate mainstream discourse.

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