

A (Not-Just-Virtual) Space of Our Own: Exploring the Sociomaterial Constitution of a ‘Space of Resistance’ through Facebook

Mahya Ostovar

ESSEC Business School

Abstract. Virtual spaces are growing in prominence; in such a way that nowadays most aspects of our lives are entangled with an online dimension. Resistances also happen in the entangled online/offline world. The emergence and diffusion of online activism and the use of different types of social media in social movements (such as the Arab Spring) indicate this. But, as Ingold (2000) argues, we must not forget that these spaces are not given themselves; rather they are constituted through practices of people ‘dwelling’ therein. In this paper, I study a Facebook page, ‘My Stealthy Freedom’ (MySF), where Iranian women publish their hijabless photos in Iran’s public place to protest against the compulsory wearing of the hijab. Using a sociomaterial lens (Orlikowski 2007; Orlikowski and Scott 2008) and Ingold’s ‘dwelling perspective’ as my theoretical framework, I investigate: how do Iranian women constitute a space of resistance through their sociomaterial practices of everyday resistance to the compulsory hijab?

Keywords: Social media, Sociomateriality, Everyday resistance, Space