

# **Iranian Women's Experience of Mandatory Hijab: A Case Study of a Campaign on Facebook**

**Pegah Hamzehei**

**Supervisor: Kristina Widestedt**



Master Thesis for the 2 year master program Media and Communication Studies

Stockholm University, JMK - Department of Journalism, Media and Communication

December 2014

**Abstract**

The current research is analyzing self-representation of Iranian women in Facebook relating to the mandatory veil case study. Social media is assisting Iranian women to demonstrate their protest against mandatory hijab in various aspects. Iranian women are benefiting from the outstanding features associated with social media, particularly Facebook, such as anonymity, publicity and freedom of speech. Therefore, this study's target is to investigate and analyze *Mandatory Veil Diaries* campaign on the *Woman=Man* Facebook page. There are fifty-nine digital diaries written by women in three different generations. The qualitative research is conducted through thematic analysis and along digital life writing discourse and sexual objectification through a feminism perspective. In this case, study-based theories provided a general comprehension for the researcher to establish an in-depth analysis of the situation and explanation of the role of women in Iran as a developing country. Digital life writing and digital self is mainly focused on the analysis. Digital life writing, after almost three decades, has provided this opportunity to Iranian women to reflect a covert reality in Iranian society. Thematic analysis was performed by gathering data that was extracted from the previous steps. These diaries were then coded and themes were extracted. These themes were then utilized to decode how Iranian women represent their experiences on Facebook regarding mandatory veiling, and how they narrated mandatory veil in different stages of their lives and if utilizing social media is influencing their digital diary writings. Finally, development of the coding and themes accommodates the enhancement of the analysis credibility. The result of qualitative research presents seven main themes that all participants have indicated: Obligation, activism, psychological and physical shame, religion, self-censorship, social life and patriarchal. In addition, Iranian women are victimized by objectification and the imposed role model of an ideal woman. The picture of an ideal woman represented in media, school, and university is a woman who has a superior veil (*chador*), is a good wife, a good mother and a perfect Muslim. Also, Facebook as a medium has assisted this campaign with its features such as anonymity, minimized censorship, digital self creation, vent rage, blow off steam, and freedom of speech.

**Keywords:** mandatory veil, Iran, women, media, digital diaries, Facebook, activism, social media

## **Acknowledgment**

I would like to thank my supervisor, Kristina Widestedt for her guidance and feedback throughout this research. I am also heartily grateful to Sven Ross for his support.

Finally, I would like to thank my family. Their endless love and unconditional support empowered me to write this thesis.

**Table of Contents**

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>6</b>
1.1	Prologue .....	6
1.2	Background .....	6
1.3	Aims and research questions.....	9
1.4	Outline of study.....	9
<b>2</b>	<b>Historical Perspective and Overview of Concepts .....</b>	<b>10</b>
2.1	History of hijab in contemporary Iran.....	10
2.1.1	De-veiling toward modernity .....	10
2.1.2	Post-revolution, mandatory veiling .....	10
2.2	Definitions of concepts .....	11
2.2.1	Veil after revolution.....	11
2.2.2	Morality police.....	12
<b>3</b>	<b>Review of the Literature and Theory .....</b>	<b>13</b>
3.1	Digital life writing.....	14
3.1.1	Digital diaries.....	15
3.1.2	Blogging and digital diaries .....	16
3.1.3	Gender and digital diaries .....	17
3.1.4	Digital self.....	18
3.1.5	Social network: Facebook.....	18
3.2	Third world feminism and veil.....	19
3.2.1	Resistance .....	21
3.3	Gaze and sexual objectification .....	21
<b>4</b>	<b>Methodology and Materials .....</b>	<b>23</b>
4.1	Method .....	23
4.2	Method application .....	25
4.3	Sampling process .....	26

4.4 Ethics and human issues ..... 28

**5 Data Description and Analysis..... 28**

5.1 Data description ..... 28

5.2 Thematic analysis..... 30

5.2.1 Coding..... 30

5.2.2 Themes; searching, reviewing, defining and naming..... 34

5.3 Themes analysis ..... 37

**6 Discussion and Conclusion ..... 53**

6.1 Findings..... 53

6.2 Suggestions and limitations ..... 56

**7 References..... 58**

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Prologue

The motivation for this study comes from my background. My generation, those who were born and raised after the 1979 revolution in Iran, have a voracious desire to examine their current situation and to compare it with life in the other countries, which they have observed in foreign movies, music and the internet. Thus, I belong to a generation which has always investigated the reasons of the cultural distinction with the rest of the world. Moreover, being a girl in Iran, one's lifestyle is distinguished by enduring enormous conflicts and restrictions. In particular, I have always faced the pressure and fear that mandatory veiling causes on a day-to-day basis. A few years after the 1979 revolution, Iranian women were forced to accept the mandatory veil as an inseparable part of their clothing. Today, after almost 30 years, they are still being arrested for their insufficient veil, which the government refers to as *bad-hijab*. Nowadays, Iranian women use the media (while surpassing the filtering that is present in the available internet services in Iran) to exhibit their desired look and diaries. I realized this is a great opportunity to analyze their 30 years' experience of the mandatory veil.

## 1.2 Background

Social media and particularly Facebook, in various aspects, are assisting people to demonstrate their protest through campaigns, activism or writing digital diaries. Women are benefiting from the outstanding features associated with social media. In this respect, Iranian women have been deprived from accessing mass media to broadcast ideas in contrast to what the state approves; thus, they have acquired Facebook as a new medium empowering them to share their thoughts and oppositions, the most important of which could be considered the mandatory veiling.

The history and functionality of veil in Iran, as a political factor during major historical events, has emerged as a historically political issue. Primarily, the effect of these mandatory de-veiling and veiling periods in the Iranian history on the Iranian women has apparently not been analyzed. On the other hand, the veil is considered as one of the pillars of the revolution while it has been neglected by the opposition, feminists and intellectual groups. As a result, in the Iranian post-revolution society, the state and intellectual groups consider the veil an obstacle. The most

significant literature in the case of veil in Iran focuses on its analysis from post-colonial perspective (Moallem, 2005; Mohanty, 1984), through historical outlook (Hoodfar, 1999), Political-historical perspective (Shirazi, 1993, 1995, 2001) and media perspective scholars examining the issue of the misrepresentation of veiled women in media (Bullock & Jafri, 2000). It is worthy to note that the majority of literature in this case use veil as a metaphor and are not directly related to veil or veiling in Iran. However, during the last three decades, there is a lack of literature about Iranian women exposing their experience of mandatory hijab in media. The first reason is the restriction of questioning hijab in Iran. Discussing women's experience about mandatory hijab is a banned topic to work on in Iran. Since it is an honored religious topic, speaking or writing about it may cause severe prosecution. Secondly, for the Iranian feminists, freedom of clothing is not a prioritized subject over the other more profound rights of the Iranian women. As a result, mandatory veiling has not been discussed during these years because of the consequences associated with this issue.

In addition, online campaigns have become popular since the woman activists started to use blogs as a medium. Being a Middle Eastern woman is a sign of limitations and restrictions by itself. This predicates how important the emergence of blog and social network is, given the enormous potentials this may offer to spread Middle Eastern women's message and to help them loosen the tight restrictions on their daily life. The existence of anonymous public sphere where they can share their diaries has a significant role in their lives. For instance, *Harassmap*<sup>1</sup> is a website established by few former members of an Egyptian NGO in 2010 against sexual harassment in Egypt. Another website *BellBajao*<sup>2</sup> (Ring the Bell) was initiated in 2008 in India where the audience is inspired to report violence against women, especially domestic violence, and to find assistance and advice. Yet another example is *Women2Drive*<sup>3</sup> Facebook campaign opposing the law that restricts women to drive in Saudi Arabia. The message contained in the diaries that are told by the women in the above websites use social media as the medium to spread. These messages and also the medium of transmitting them have inspired many other women to share their experiences. Respectively, Chris Atton (2014: 206) defined the media as created by ordinary citizens and is focusing on its conjunction with everyday life. Thus, he

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://harassmap.org/ar/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.bellbajao.org/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/Women2Drive>

overviewed a new aspect of everyday production in which it is positioned as the originating producer. He interprets that the popular media could be the primary form of cultural productions. In the same way, digital diaries, which were first initiated by blogs, are recognized as spontaneous ordinary people's productions. Along that, through online social campaigns, people with same experiences gather to realize and talk about their common issues. Consequently, online social campaigns are associated and regularly benefiting from the digital diaries. In this regard, the three famous pioneer campaigns of mandatory-veil movements in Iran are the following:

*Mandatory Veil Diaries [sic]* (2012)<sup>4</sup>: A Facebook page of *Woman=Man* campaign's announcement about collecting Iranian women's diaries<sup>5</sup> about mandatory veiling in Iran during the past three decades. Particularly, this campaign invites them to express their experience with respect to wearing their preferred outfit in public. They publish photos of women, veiled and unveiled, accompanied by their digital diaries about their experience of mandatory veiling.

*Unveil Women's Right to Unveiled [sic]* (2012)<sup>6</sup>: A Facebook campaign arranged by *Iranian Liberal Students and Graduates* acting as a medium to denounce the obligatory veil. Nearly 800 Iranian citizens have shared their photos bearing the logo of the page as a sign of support to this campaign. Among participants, there are even veiled women showing their support to the women's free choice of clothing.

*My Stealthy Freedom [sic]* (2014)<sup>7</sup>: This Facebook page was launched by Masih Alinejad, an Iranian journalist living in New York. As it is described in the page, the primary purpose of the page is to share Iranian women's photos picturing the moments when they experience freedom of veiling as a symbol of enjoying freedom of clothing in their private life. Also the page emphasizes that it solely belongs to women residing in Iran. Therefore, entire materials published on this page are collected from the photos and captions sent by women residing in Iran. The aim of the campaign is to demonstrate that general willingness of Iranians to change

---

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/page.barabari>

<sup>5</sup> *Mandatory veil diaries* is the literal translation of the name of the campaign. In this study, "diary" is referred to as the materials of this campaign which includes personal notes, recording events, and experiences about a specific issue which was written all at once.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/na.be.hejab.ejbari/info>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/StealthyFreedom>



the current situation of veiling is undeniable. After seven months of the page's creation, it has more than 700 thousand fans on Facebook.

This study sheds light on the understanding of how Iranian women express and represent themselves in the narration of digital diaries and how social networks, particularly Facebook, assist them in the process of self-representation with a focus on the mandatory veiling.

### **1.3 Aims and research questions**

The purpose of this study is to analyze the self-representation of Iranian women's experiences of mandatory veiling, in a Facebook campaign. To study this purpose, the *Mandatory Veil Diaries* campaign on the Facebook page of *Woman=Man* has been chosen. In July 2012 this campaign started to call for diaries and became the first place where women had the opportunity to share their similar experience about this issue. The published digital diaries in this online campaign emphasize on Iranian women's stories related to the mandatory veil in Iran. Accordingly, both participants and the audience work together to establish a definition of digital diary writing and its outcomes on their particular needs. Therefore, this study utilizes these digital diaries to come up with the analysis answering the following research questions:

- I. What type of self-representation do Iranian women have regarding the veil?
- II. Which aspects of the mandatory veil have been represented in different stages of the Iranian women's lives (family, school, university, work, marriage, etc.)?
- III. How did the chosen type of media channel (social network) motivate Iranian women's participation in this digital-confession campaign?

### **1.4 Outline of study**

In the following chapter, a brief historical perspective of hijab in Iran and definitions of relevant concepts are presented. In chapter 3 a review of theoretical framework is presented while it discusses existing literature that is related to this study. Then, chapter 4 consists of the methodology, thematic analysis and sampling strategy. Chapter 5 includes the data description and analysis of thesis materials. Finally, chapter 6 is a roundup conclusion and discussion that presents the findings, limitations and suggestions for further studies.

## 2 Historical Perspective and Overview of Concepts

This chapter begins with exploring the status of veiling in different stages of modern Iran's political history. Then, the second section sets the foundation of some definitions for the basic concepts that recurred throughout this study.

### 2.1 History of hijab in contemporary Iran

#### 2.1.1 De-veiling toward modernity

During Reza Shah's reign (1924-1941), women's position in terms of legal rights was not changed. However, the regime focused on educating women, since it was considered a necessary step toward modernization in the Iranian society. The unfortunate related event in the same era was to associate dress code and in particular the hijab for educating women. Modernists believed that pre-requisite for having women take part in the development process of the nation and education of Iranians is set aside the veil, since it is the symbol of backwardness in Western societies. It was thought that women wearing veil would be automatically unable to take part in intellectual and social activities. This sentiment was shared by many other reformists throughout the Middle East. Under Reza Shah's modernization program, wearing any hair-covering cloth in public, apart from European hats, was announced illegal. However, if seen worn by any woman in public, *chador* or any head-cover other than European hats were subject to be removed and destroyed immediately by the police. Until the 1979 Islamic revolution, the date in which the new law was introduced, was celebrated as the Iranian women's Liberation Day (Hoodfar, 1999:13-14).

#### 2.1.2 Post-revolution, mandatory veiling

Homa Hoodfar (1999: 15) defined the consequences of de-veiling according to the difference between women in that era; a few intellectual women supported the unveiling law. They warmly welcomed and benefited from the educational and employment advantages that this change offered. On the other hand, many women were forced to stay at home, being uncomfortable appearing without hijab in public. They abandoned their public activities and consequently lost their social contact with their family circle and acquaintance. Girls' education in modern schools

was considered a devilish source that guided them to sin and indecency by religious leaders. They even suggested to parents to prevent their daughters from attending school. This idea had a strong cultural influence on middle class social groups while the state did not attempt to interfere. It was the reason behind low rates of female literacy during this era. On the other hand, during Mohammed Reza Shah's rule (1941-1979), wearing the veil remained illegal but de-veiling was not forced. Women with different kinds of veil as well as unveiled women could study, work and had equal rights.

During the 1979 Islamic Revolution, a crowd of women voluntarily chose to conform to the hijab by veiling chador or headscarf as a sign of support to Ayatollah Khomeini's line of thought and as a gesture of disapproval to the Shah's regime. The first announcement about hijab was included in Khomeini's speech in 1979, a month after his return to Iran; accordingly, he required women to wear the chador. The day after, on International Women's Day, women demonstrated and requested equal rights and freedom of clothing. It should be noted that hijab had been optional under Shah's regime. However, veiling gradually became a public law backed up by the Islamic beliefs after the revolution. At first, women not wearing hijab to properly cover their hair and body, as it is defined and suggested by the Islamic Sharia, were denied the right to enter to the governmental institution and facilities. Hijab became mandatory in 1984. Women who refuse to wear the prescribed hijab will be sentenced to 70 lashes.<sup>8</sup> During the past 30 years, hijab has never been mentioned as a main issue or problem leading to demonstrations or campaigns (Hoodfar, 1999: 28; see also Afshar, 1996: 122-126).

## **2.2 Definitions of concepts**

### **2.2.1 Veil after revolution**

The word *veil* has a metaphoric meaning in literature and philosophy. This has been an obstacle while performing this research because lots of social studies' research has mentioned the veil in their topics, contents, and abstracts as a metaphor or myth. In this research wherever the word veil or hijab appears it shall point to the definition of the common hijab in modern Iran that follows.

---

<sup>8</sup> <http://dw.de/p/GpKe>

After the 1979 revolution, Iranian women were gradually forced to wear hijab. They could choose between two types of hijab approved by the authorities. These two are identified as the following:

1. The orthodox hijab has two basic parts: *maghnae* is a piece of clothing that fits around the head using an elastic string and covers the head to show only the face, from forehead to lips, preventing hair, neck, and ears from being visible. And chador is a long wide piece of fabric that is worn over *maghnae* and covers the whole body. It is worn like a wrap around the body. If chador is worn properly, it is meant to cover the body from head to toe. However, it is difficult to keep hold of, as there is no mechanism to have it stay put over the head. Also, if chador is worn without having an extra head cover (like *maghnae* or headscarf) underneath, there is a risk that it may fall or some part of hair fall out. So it cannot be considered an acceptable hijab unless worn along with another head cover underneath. The usual method of holding it firm around the body is to hold two sides of it with a hand (usually right) in front of the chest and under the chin (Shirazi, 1995:60).
2. The unorthodox hijab has also two basic parts: a piece of clothing that covers the head, neck and shoulders (headscarf) and a stitched outfit like a long coat, known as *manteau*. Headscarf is a piece of clothing, usually in various colors and styles, which is worn loosely over the head and fastened with a tie. Since it is loose, it does not guarantee full coverage of hair and upper shoulders. *Manteau* is also loosely worn. Although it has long sleeves and is usually buttoned in front, the length of it can be variable; from toes up to knees. It can also have various colors and patterns, although the preferable colors of *manteau* are black, brown and dark gray. Because of its flexibility, it can facilitate the movement of body and therefore it is more popular (Shirazi, 1995: 60).

### **2.2.2 Morality police**

The morality police consist of a number of chador-clad women escorted by a few policemen. They stay in front of their minivans in Tehran's main streets and squares. Bad-hijab women who have improper veiling will be forced into the back of minivans or in short, arrested because of their outfit. Detained women are then transferred to the Vozara, a temporary prison for women,

to learn about the acceptable hijab and how respected are the women wearing chador. Then their fingerprints and photographs are taken while they sign a conditional commitment. If it is their first time and their issue is just insufficient hijab, they are almost always released on the same day when their family brings a well-covering hijab for them and picks them up. If they have been arrested before for insufficient hijab, they might face more serious punishments, which are fines, lashes, or even imprisonment. The punishment type depends on the judge's verdict and according to law.

In recent years, the morality police, which is also known as the police against improper hijab, have arrested women, not only because of lack of Islamic dress code, which are mentioned above, but also based on a more specific definition of hijab. Their list of the inappropriate and insufficient hijab is constantly updating since there comes new fashion trends in women's dress that, according to their ideology, does not adhere to hijab definitions and can potentially draw men's attention, which is considered as an unethical act in Islamic society. The most recent list consists of banned items in women's wear such as a manteau in striking colors, wearing nail polish, brightly dyed hair, wearing makeup, tucking pants inside boots, or putting sunglasses on top of the head.

### **3 Review of the Literature and Theory**

In the first part of this chapter, digital life writing, digital diaries, digital self, and the use of blog and social media in narrating these diaries are reviewed as building blocks of this study. Blogs were the first examples of digital diary writings. Nowadays, social media engages many people and suggests topics for digital confession in campaigns. This encourages the members to talk about specific issues which they might not spontaneously think of or write about. Accordingly, blog and social media act as the first public spaces and media for women in patriarchal-totalitarian countries. The women grew up while having several taboos and restrictions in their behavior. Additionally, social media websites assist them to confront and express their lives and to go beyond their boundaries.

In the second part, various perspectives related to the veil are discussed as a part of the literature review. Jasmin Zine (2006) and Faegheh Shirazi (1993, 1995, 2001) are two scholars whose works are reviewed in this part to set the theory groundwork. Objectification and gaze in media and theoretical feminist approaches toward the veil are discussed in this section. These two parts define the fundamentals of this study's framework.

Finally the third part of this chapter will draw on gender and feminist analyses to map out the complex interactions of feminism theories and the veil in earlier research and relevant literature. In general, gender and feminist perspectives and discourses of gender and media have positioned women within the sociological and contemporary representational practices in media.

### **3.1 Digital life writing**

The internet is identified as a free space where the structures and patterns governed in a society no longer apply; therefore, people have this opportunity to express themselves freely. It also permits people to explore their inner being and to recognize their different aspects that are hidden underneath their social character. This, in turn, helps them evolve their current being into new horizons and thought while remaining anonymous. So, based on this definition, this free space encourages the ones who are marginalized in the society to be heard (Turkle, 2008). Internet is a reflection of our society, mirroring what we see. If what we have seen in this mirror does not please us, the problem is not to fix the mirror but to fix the society. Therefore, digital confessions or, in general, digital diaries are becoming significant sources for psychological, media, and communication studies.

Nowadays, digital diaries and media confession can serve as legal evidences. In fact, social networks, and Facebook in particular, are important primary sources to be observed by criminal or divorce lawyers to find supporting evidence. As a result, various laws legislate the legal usage of technology information, the definition of public and private spaces, and internet harassment (Jaksic, 2007).

### **3.1.1 Digital diaries**

Digital diaries emerged through the prevalent use of blogs. They provide researchers with first-hand, self-expressive information from individuals. Alan Gleaves et al. (2007: 634-642) acknowledge digital diaries as an independent tool for research and suggests including them into higher educational programs' syllabi as learning and assessment materials. He emphasizes that digital diaries will assist students in growing their abilities in creative writing, critical thinking, reflection, and, eventually, learning. However, limited research has been conducted to identify the different types of diaries that are used and how they influence teaching and learning purposes.

The findings of research performed in this case indicate that students have claimed that both forms of diaries, traditional and digital, are acceptable and that both are found convenient to be used. The only difference is how each form could be used on a daily basis, according to the repetition and length of entries. In this study, the digital diaries are more frequently used despite the entries being mostly concise. Additionally, it was shown that positive qualities (such as attractiveness and handling) have been incorporated in paper diaries that guaranteed a prolonged use, while their negative qualities were mostly related to technical limitations (Gleaves et al., 2007: 631). The same result would be predictable in using diaries as research data.

The belief that diaries are written exclusively and privately for oneself is at the same time both true and misleading. It is unjustifiable to differentiate between the use of diaries as a personal record or as a "journal of fact." As Thomas Mallon infers, diaries are not written for private purposes, emphasizing the cohesion between journal and diary. He also discussed that individuals use writing not only as a method of self-expression, but as a means of communicating with others or oneself (Mallon 1984: xvi).

Many writers have flagged the potential value hidden in the methods of digital story-telling for research and policy. According to Nicole Matthews and Naomi Sunderland (2013: 99), the notion of social and political transformation through the telling and publishing of stories has been greatly nurtured. However, less attention has been paid to the following concerns: how such stories circulate; how individual viewer and listeners have received them; and how they might help to enhance policy making for marginalized groups. Many writers have flagged the potential value hidden in the methods of digital story-telling for research and policy.

### 3.1.2 Blogging and digital diaries

The earlier research about diary writing was generally done on blog writing. In her book *Why blog? Motivation for Blogging*, Sarah Pedersen (2010) studies blogs with a focus on various reasons for blogging. In particular, she examines blogging as a diary or letter to the editor, blogging as therapy, blogging as political activism, professional blogging as a form of journalism, and blogging for profit. She also explores the distinction of the motivation for blogging between women and men. The blog can be defined by the terms online diary or journaling. The chronological structure and the focus on personal experiences and opinions are factors that highlight blogs as appropriate tools for a diarist. Wall (2005: 153 cited in Pedersen: 35) introduces blogs as a new genre of journalism that emphasizes personalization, audience participation in content creation, and story forms. Diaries become the places for "self-exploration, self-expression and self-construction" (O'Sullivan, 2005: 60). The origin of diary-keeping dates to the early modern period in Western civilization, and was the basis for the spread of literacy and the impact of the Protestant Reformation (Pedersen, 2010: 17). Online diaries emerged in the United States around 1995 on personal home pages. The authors used them to shape and present similar and different identities of themselves (Van Doorn et al., 2007: 145 cited in Pedersen, 2010: 34).

Bloggers were inspired to blog to find friends, to stay in touch with friends and family, for emotional support, to explore their inner psyche or sexuality, to vent their anger, to formulate their opinions and their writing skills, and to make money (Pedersen, 2010: 134).

Motivations to blog include a desire to let off steam, to make opinions widely known, to influence the thinking of others, and to participate in debates (Pedersen, 2010: 28). Another motivation for diary writing is therapy. Bloggers use writing about special issues as a helpful action to deal with issues that annoyed them. Bloggers become open to social support and might be able to discuss subjects that they have previously been unable to interpersonally communicate. Writing about our personal experiences can help us to understand ourselves, as well as to deal with personal problems and conflicts. A growing body of research demonstrates the beneficial effects that expressive writing about traumatic or stressful events can have on physical and emotional health. Female respondents are more likely to use the term therapy with their blogging. Venting and blowing off steam were important factors for most respondents (Pedersen, 2010: 43-51). Letting off steam has been established for some time as a useful and



cathartic component of journal writing and has been theorized to be a major benefit of blogging (Pedersen, 2010: 132). Schiano et al. (2004, cited in Pedersen, 2010: 54) mention the need to vent and let off steam as the first of five main motivations for journal blogging. Moreover, positive feedback from readers, in the form of sympathy, support, or encouragement, for instance, could offer strong emotional and social support for a diarist (Pedersen: 2010: 55). Blogs can be seen as a safe place in which to rant about upsetting or irritating problems and where an audience can be especially appreciated.

Relevant to our case study is Annabelle Sreberny and Gholam Khiabani's book *Blogistan: the Internet and Politics in Iran* (2010). They organized a comprehensive report of Iranian bloggers and earlier studies and indicated the increase of the Internet and blogosphere in Iran. They argue that when the country's regime repressed media and political discourse, the Internet became the space for social and political debate. In creating an atmosphere of suspicion and "keeping people indoors with little to do but fiddle with computers, the regime helped to induce a generation of digital adepts, the consequences of which it was to rue in the summer of 2009 [in Green movement]" (Sreberny & Khiabani, 2010: 116). They explore reasons for blogging in Iran and concluded that it is mostly used as a form of self-expression. Most of the Iranian blogs are personal diaries. "The authors point out, in the Iranian blogosphere, 'personal is political'. Another aspect which they examine is that blogging is popular between Iranian women. "Although the Iranian constitution officially denies women equal rights, women's blogging follows a long history of women's public writing and political activity" (Sreberny & Khiabani, 2010 cited in Atwood, 2012: 134).

### **3.1.3 Gender and digital diaries**

Traditionally, "diary writing is a feminine act" (Pedersen, 2010: 129). According to Pedersen's research results, the idea of blogs as diaries is more popular among women bloggers than men (Pedersen, 2010: 131). Moreover, women who use blogging for diary writing have more awareness of their audience and their texts are more self-referential than male bloggers. Women are more motivated to communicate with others while male bloggers are more satisfied with blogging to share their information about facts (Pedersen, 2010: 135-136). Women are more likely to belong to a "blog-ring." Blog-rings connect a circle of blogs with a common theme or

purpose (Pedersen, 2010: 106). Similarly, social networks could provide a version of these blog-rings for women by providing pages and campaigns to connect them for a common purpose.

### **3.1.4 Digital self**

Turkle (2008: 121) noted that, during the 1990s, people used to create online avatars to keep an anonymous profile. This helped them to hide or pronounce some characteristics attached to them. This effort created virtual selves, and playing out parallel lives in constructed worlds became possible. Self-presentation has become increasingly popular as a method to explain variations in meaning and activity of online participation. Turkle (2008: 121-122) defined a second self-concept that benefited from programmable and customizable computers. The modern communication devices drive individuals to define a new state of self. Thus, one develops a new understanding of self when considering the hundreds of people to whom one could be connected. Moreover, some individuals, even those high in social anxiety, find the Internet enables them to express hidden self-aspects (McKenna et al., 2002: 10-11). Also, Hogan (2010: 384) concluded that social media had the potential to be an empowering and engaging tool for individuals through features like self-representation and self-monitoring. Accordingly, the most important finding of this study is the shared perspectives on social media as a tool for the self-representation of women's experiences.

### **3.1.5 Social network: Facebook**

The main advantages that social media has brought us are "socializing", "entertainment," "self-status seeking" and "information seeking" (Park et al., 2009: 731). Atop the aforementioned concepts cooperation, defining new social norms, and the improved public sphere all could be considered as additional merits of social media (Park et al., 2009: 731). However, in digital diaries, Facebook's function is not accurately visible. Also, users' behavior could be shaped or manipulated simply because it is being seen by others. Thus, private behavior has become more public action. Social media are not solely dedicated to users to share their life but to control and preserve them for future reference. The Internet, specifically social media, is being used as a means in which people surf to gather information for different purposes. It is more preferred than any other information database, such as family and professionals. Finally, in the case of Iran, as Saeideh Hajinejad noted, "It seems that Iran and Facebook both are quite unique in their own

sense. Iran is a country quite different in comparison to the Western countries which previous works [have] focused on. Iran's media is run by the state and [its] content is controlled. In addition, the sexes are segregated in many parts of the society. Facebook as a 'nonymous' environment provide a situation in which people tend to be 'real and honest' " (Hajinejad, 2010:25). This 'nonymity' of Facebook and people's desire to be more honest and real in it provide a proper condition for analyzing self-representation on Facebook (Hajinejad, 2010: 11).

### **3.2 Third world feminism and veil**

Muslim feminists often argue over politically charged issues, such as veiling. Secular feminists' comprehension of hijab is an unequivocal example of religious fundamentalism and patriarchal oppression. This perception of the hijab largely dismisses the views of Muslim women who wear the veil as a sign of modesty, as "false consciousness" (Nassef, 2004). However, different cultural and ideological contexts define the purpose behind veiling (Mohanty, 1991: 347). For example, while Iranian women veiled voluntarily during the 1979 revolution to present their support to their veiled working-class sisters, in contemporary Iran, mandatory Islamic laws dictate that all Iranian women wear veils (Mohanty, 1991: 67). Having offered similar reasoning in both situations by both sides (opposition to the previous regime and the true Islamification of Iran in the latter), the concrete meanings associated to Iranian women wearing the veil are clearly different in both historical contexts. In the first case, veiling is an oppositional and revolutionary symbol among Iranian women; in the second case, it is an imposed ideological uniform (Mohanty, 1991).

Nayereh Tohidi (1991: 255) implies that the socioeconomic, political, cultural, and psychological factors, which ignited the revolution, must be examined to understand a woman's situation in modern day Iran. According to traditional norms, a woman shall not show her body in public. Thus, the model for a "new woman" proposed by the Shah's regime was found unacceptable to Iranians. The new woman, on the other hand, was expected to ornament and show herself. However, after the revolution, the ideologies of the Islamic opposition retained the traditional models of womanhood. As a result of these opposite womanhood models, Iranian women's identities are shaped somewhere between tradition and modernity (Mohanty, 1991: 258). Briefly, for Reza Shah, the veil was a sign of backwardness and unveiling symbolized modernity and

progress. Therefore, he made unveiling compulsory, although it was not an attempt to liberate women and did not improve women's status drastically; rather, it was part of an image makeover: Iran must look western. However, among the supporters of the Islamic revolution, the hijab's meaning shifted to that of a symbol of a liberated woman who was not an easy object (available) like an unveiled woman. It easily became a symbol of struggling between ideologies. Moreover, proponents of post-colonial discourse demand that women be allowed to speak in their own voices. In this field, Gayatri Spivak and Minoo Moallem are two notable scholars. Spivak's main concern is to let the woman or native speak, and that the critical outlook of feminist attitude toward other women is not accurate. She briefly noted "white men [save] brown women from brown men" (Spivak, 1988). Post-colonial feminism was challenging the development discourse that represents Third World women as the vulnerable 'other'. Women's realities can only be discovered by uncovering the voices and knowledge of the vulnerable. Once that is done, this 'vulnerability' is neither so clear nor so pervasive. Attention to difference, language and resistance provides new insight into Third World peoples' behavior and undermines the tendency to unthinkingly apply Western standards to all Third World societies. In post-colonial feminism, ethnic identity is tightly correlated to linguistic identity: "I am my language. I will no longer be made to feel ashamed of existing. I will have my voice: Indian, Spanish and White. I will have my serpent's tongue, my woman's voice and my sexual voice. I will overcome the tradition of silence" (Anzaldúa 1987: 59). Besides, in the case of this study, Minoo Moallem (2005 :59-82) explains that as Iran has never been bluntly occupied, post-colonial theories can be applied to Iran since the secular nationalism, which was established in this era, was borrowed by Iranian intellectuals. Moallem argues that the veil is considered as a global and local symbol of identity and resistance in the post-colonial era. She explores the roots of problematizing the hijab in Iran, back to the period of rule of Reza Shah (1926–41), when the state imposed the obligatory unveiling of women by violence. This led to a diversion between the state and people that further facilitated the reversal of this oppression by the Islamic state. Furthermore, in the discourse of nationalism and religion, Moallem (2005: 35-40) discussed the Persian otherness as a base concept of her study. The research conducted by Moallem (2005) and Shirazi (2001), served as complimentary analytical framework in this study.

### **3.2.1 Resistance**

Mohanty noted that Western feminism must disrupt consistent images of third world women as passive, traditional, and victimized (Mohanty, 1988: 64). The concept of resistance is about "disrupting social norms and social institutions of power, whereby subjects engage subversive tactics that undermine the legitimacy of these institutions from which social notions of 'normalcy' are created and preserved" (Raby, 2005: 162).

After the Islamic Revolution, 'ordinary' aspects of life were regulated by the state. This inclined young Iranians to be involved in behaviors that is considered 'normal' in other societies and which could be labeled as resistance against their controlling and socially strict society (Khosravi, 2008: 149). Moreover, by opposing the Islamic Republic's fundamental norms defined for citizens, the mission of the Islamic Republic which is to establish an 'ideal' Islamic society, is challenged (Shahiddian, 2002: 213). Resistance by Iranian women which represented through challenging norms and activism theme is a reaction to the rights of which they are deprived.

### **3.3 Gaze and sexual objectification**

In this part, the veil is defined in different aspects and cultures. On one hand, Katherine Bullock (2000: 186-192) argued that the imperialist masculine gaze can be inhibited when veiled Muslim women covering their bodies invert the gaze and can see but not be seen. In a different aspect, Zine (2006: 11) points out Muslim women's bodies' coverage is regulated by both dictatorial laws obliging veiling under totalitarian theocratic states, such as Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia and Iran, as well as the laws in western democratic societies that forbid women the freedom of wearing headscarves like Turkey, Belgium and France. Both cases imply that woman's body is considered submissive to the regulations of patriarchal regimes and is an anti-feminism act.

In parallel to the mentioned functions of the veil, Shirazi (2001: 62-82) stresses another aspect: she studies Indian and Iranian movies in this regard and points out that one of the factors which makes up for the success of an Indian movie is its pictorial aspect. As in Indian movies depicting sexual desire is not allowed, the veil is utilized to create sexual tension and to convey feelings. As an example, in a film called *Mere Huzoor* (1969), there is a scene where the hero is asking his lover to unveil and to show her beauty. In this scene, the spectator is prepared for the sacred

moment of unveiling with a song to feel the pleasure of being the only person, beside the hero, who has this privilege of seeing the star unveiled. The secrecy that the veil causes makes the spectator fantasize about the beauty hidden under the veil and gradually makes the spectator enthusiastic enough to embrace the moment that the star unveils( Shirazi, 2001: 75). Additionally, Shirazi argues that masochistic pleasure is obtained when the male spectator is humiliated by the cruel beloved and is subjected to female powers. Moreover, the male hero blackmailing his beloved into submitting to his wishes awards the male spectator's sadistic pleasure. By identifying with the cruel heroine, the female spectator might also enjoy sadomasochistic pleasure. (Shirazi, 2001: 78). Shirazi also believes that Islamic thinking implies that the male spectator is sexually pleased when looking at the female body on the screen. The eye's eroticization does not cause censorship of the gaze, but the Muslim conception of sexual pleasure does. The male believer will obtain sexual pleasure by looking at a woman, and, thus, his purity will be in jeopardy. By focusing on the proper hijab for female protagonists, the government censors struggle to preserve (as they call it) society's moral values. Thus, the Iranian directors have always faced some sort of censorship and caused restrictions. They had to apply harsh political censorship under the late Shah of Iran. The post-revolution era has enforced Iranian filmmakers to submit to the censorship applied by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Orientation. According to this ministry, there are forbidden scenes that should be avoided in a film, such as women's improper clothing which is showing any part of a woman's body except face and hands, any jokes between men and women or about the army, physical contact, foreign or coarse words, and any type of joyful music (Shirazi, 2001: 63). Nevertheless, Iranian filmmakers have become skillful, resourceful and determined because of the imposed censorship and limitations. They have learned to choose their subjects carefully and to practice indirect, allegorical story-telling.

However, the body of a woman is a discussable issue in different aspects. Women's various issues relate to the fact that they don't own their bodies. The body becomes a social fact. The objectification of their bodies is influenced by the violence and domination that is the cause of most domestic violence, female self-censorship, and other psychological problems.

In general, there are opposite meanings associated with the veil when it comes to social contexts. In Iran, where the veil is compulsory, women without a veil are not shown in films, even where

they do not ordinarily wear veils like inside their homes. Shirazi (2001) concludes that the major role of the veil in Iranian films is set up to deny the gaze. However, in Indian films, the veil is used to titillate. Thus, they use the veil to create sexual tension.

In general, according to the connection of women's experiences with digital diaries on social media, different theories have influenced this study. To investigate data, a theoretical framework was constructed upon digital life writing and digital self. Additionally, analyzing and interpreting the material required the use of the gaze and sexual objectification. Moreover, the fact that the diary-writing has always been seen as a feminine act, feminist perspectives are formulated into the framework, assisting this study to analyze the material more in-depth.

## **4 Methodology and Materials**

In this study, the methodology part is conducted through an interpretive approach. This qualitative study is based on thematic analysis.

### **4.1 Method**

The first stage of methodology and material chapter explores and selects the appropriate approach method furnishing the specific aim of the study to augment the reliability and validity of the result. According to the problem investigated in this research, a proper data and method were chosen; this study was also conducted through qualitative analysis. The qualitative approaches aim to reach a common goal in the results through an in-depth perception of a particular phenomenon. A qualitative researcher has to decide about the involvement and relevance of data and analysis with the aim of the study. In this respect, breaking down the research questions in to smaller parts will assist the process of qualitative analysis (Altheide, 1996: 24).

Textual analysis, or discourse analysis, is a qualitative method that is based on language. In qualitative analysis, a researcher should understand the concept of the text to realize that the text is a symbolic material organized by conventions through language and culture (Hall, 1975: 17). Every type of media products conveys various kinds of text. The main function of the qualitative

researcher is to interpret text to extract concepts and ideas to investigate the correlation between text, culture, and society. Qualitative researchers go through stories, representation, etc., which are represented in texts, to use them as tools for understanding people's lives. Moreover, the research's ground theories must be considered as the basis of interpretation in textual analysis. In general, discourse analysis is divided into planned analyses, which consists of semiotics, ideological analysis, and genre analysis, as well as the more flexible analysis, which is thematic analysis (Brennen, 2012: 193-197).

Moreover, thematic methodology can be tailored to the cases where there has been none or few background analyses relevant to the issue, and, consequently, the mentioned categories are extracted from the text. Then, thematic analysis is evaluated according to a formerly examined theory in totally different situations. This method tends to issue a description of the data overall, but simultaneously it provides a more in-depth analysis of specific factors of the research material (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Nevertheless, thematic analysis commencement includes a grounded theory framework about the specific case study for collecting or analyzing data. But since thematic analysis has a flexible characteristic, there is not any commitment to follow the theory. Also, different frameworks will benefit from this method, facilitating the process of providing answers to various types of research questions. Thematic analysis fits for questions concerning people's experiences or views and questions related to understanding or representation. Thematic analysis, being an independent methodology focusing on the descriptive characteristics of the study, is defined as a tool to identify, analyze and report patterns or themes that could be derived in data. They can offer an authentic qualitative and precise data (Braun & Clarke 2006: 78). It enables the researcher to take advantage of remarkable features of the content analysis while allowing them to merge their perceptions' analysis with that of the specific context (Joffe & Yardley, 2004: 56). Data corpus, data item, data extract, codes, themes and sub themes in the thematic method are equivalently vital elements of the thematic analysis. They are not reliant on quantity factors, but on the fact that they are capable of capturing a significant outcome based on the research aim (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 82).

According to the aforementioned facts, there are multiple benefits associated with applying the thematic method for this study. Since thematic analysis is not dependent on specialized theory



and yet this topic is a neglected research area, thematic analysis would be a preferred method here. Also, thematic analysis is an appropriate method to analyze diaries. To conduct the analysis to answer research questions through thematic analysis, familiarization with data and coding as primary steps will be followed with extracting and naming themes according to data and results from earlier stages. The process will be concluded by analyzing themes according to literature and the theory framework of the study to answer research questions and fill the gap in this issue.

## **4.2 Method application**

To apply the thematic analysis, the following model is presented, which is adapted to the features of this study:

### *Familiarizing with data*

The first step in thematic analysis is familiarizing with the data. This step deals with reading and reviewing it while writing down primary thoughts and ideas (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 87). In this section, the achieved results of the first step of thematic analysis have been gathered. I have collected the data from my own notes during the primary step of thematic analysis. This step is adopted for this study by gathering notes and summaries that were written by hand and been used throughout this study. The raw notes are available upon request. Moreover, in this step of reading and reviewing diaries, the most frequent words, synonyms, feeling and tones are collected according to the frequency of their appearance. These initial factors, themes and frequent words create a straightforward guideline and basic understanding of data toward answering the research questions.

### *Coding*

The second stage of thematic analysis includes extracting initial codes for the specific features of the data and then collecting each code's related data. The primary source for this stage was initial notes from the previous step. Then, a review of the main data was done to investigate neglected concepts and words to categorize and develop during the coding process.

### *Themes: searching, reviewing, defining and naming*

This stage consists of assembling initial codes into the potential themes and assigning the related data to them. It follows with a thematic map and controlling whether the themes are incorporated with the coding results and the data. Finally, themes are analyzed to clarify the features of each theme and relevant sub themes; then, themes are renamed and briefly defined according to the results of the previous stages, theory framework and research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 87). In this study, themes are not completely separated and share some overlap.

#### *Themes' Analysis*

This is the final opportunity for analysis in the thematic method, which contains gathered expressions and apparent extract examples. Finally, the ultimate analysis of themes illustrate through the implementation of extracts and literature in order to answer the research questions. (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 87).

### **4.3 Sampling process**

#### *Facebook campaign*

Social networking sites were used as online campaign tools in the 2006 U.S elections with the potential for promoting democracy and participation in political events. A majority of users were using the Internet to connect to the political process, including reading political news online, viewing official campaign videos, and using Facebook to engage in campaigns. This embrace of social media by politicians is changing the way that campaigns are managed, how money is raised, how resources are allocated, and the means candidates use to communicate with the supporters. Ultimately, social media have the potential to alter the dynamics of campaigns (Gulati and Williams, 2013:577). Therefore, political campaigning has gained more attention and participation by people who search for an answer online in the social media age (Davison, 2012: 33). Moreover, social campaigns provide more sophisticated contents and use their capabilities to engage supporters and even break taboos. The *Mandatory Veil Diaries* campaign is a socio-political campaign on Facebook that was benefited from Facebook campaigns' features. The campaign has defined the goal and has invited the audience to participate. It was started on a popular Facebook page and then was promoted by famous Iranian journalists and activists. Initially, published diaries on this campaign were sent by well-known people to encourage others

to participate. In general, the *Mandatory Veil Diaries* campaign has attracted attention, gained support, and raised participation by using features of socio-political Facebook campaigns.

### *Sampling strategy*

The case study in this research is built upon analyzing material of the *Mandatory Veil Diaries* campaign on the *Woman=Man* independent Facebook page. There were 59 women's diaries on this diary-writing campaign. All 59 diaries were selected as samples for this study.

Initially, the purpose of this study was to analyze the self-representation of Iranian women in their digital diaries on mandatory veiling and how chosen media assists them in this purpose. To fulfill this aim, the range in which this research is conducted is narrowed down to the internet, as this topic is forbidden in other media which are under control of the state. To gather more reliable data from the participants, a Facebook page was selected as the source of data. Different voices, more feedback, more publicity, and the digital identity of users convinced me to choose a Facebook page over blogs. While examining different Facebook pages for this purpose, three recently-created Facebook pages with specific campaigns were found relevant to the research question posed in this study: *My Stealthy Freedom* (2014), *Unveil Women's Right to Unveiled* (2012) and *Mandatory Veil Diaries* campaign (2012) on the *Women=Men* Facebook page. Then, the Facebook page of *Women=Men* was chosen because of its specific characteristics: the popularity of the Facebook page (353856 followers) and having open access. Therefore, it could be considered as available and popular media. Additionally, the page does not belong to any specific political group or person, so it has minimized the usage of any political policy or censorship in publishing diaries. In contrast, the other two campaigns have declared that they belong to a specific group or person on their page.

Finally, the campaign of *Mandatory Veil Diaries*, which I have been following since its inception in July 2012, was selected because it is unique and a pioneer in this subject. It is the first time that women talk about these issues in public media and that a campaign has allocated its goals to directly collecting these diaries and analyzing this issue. Another benefit of this campaign is the broad spectrum of variance in generations, social classes, cultures, and current situations of women publishing their diaries, all of which create an intimate digital life writing opportunity for women. Moreover, it has a specific freedom of speech policy for posting photos, as well as the

names and the method of sharing these diaries. No one has complained or noticed any censorship in the process of publishing. Also, anonymity (in both name and picture) was optional for participants. To summarize, the material for this study consists of all the 59 diaries in the campaign of *Mandatory Veil Diaries* which were published from 16th July 2012 to 12th October 2012 on Facebook page of *Women=Men*. To better analyze the material related to this research, these diaries have been studied and interpreted five times since January 2014.

#### **4.4 Ethics and human issues**

The issue of anonymity is always an important factor for studies, which is also present in this study. I intend to keep participants' identities hidden by changing the names of the sources. In contrast, the campaign aims to show people's names and pictures to exhibit their full and real support of the campaign. The campaign also caters to its users' will to publish their diaries and photos even if they want to be anonymous. As a result, just a few of the participants chose to remain anonymous in names and pictures. The rest showed their full support of the campaign by posting with their full name and pictures. Nonetheless, I decided to change those names for extra security measures. Finally, no informed consent was needed for this research and analysis phase because it was carried out on Facebook, which is a public space.

## **5 Data Description and Analysis**

### **5.1 Data description**

The case study in this research is built upon the material in the Facebook page of *Woman=Man* campaign's *Mandatory Veil Diaries*. In July 2012, an announcement was published on the campaign's Facebook page inviting Iranian women to send their diaries about mandatory veiling in Iran during the past three decades:

We will write briefly about our feelings and experiences of mandatory veil. Why do we dislike the mandatory veil? Why do we hate this obligation? We will share our experience about wearing our preferred outfit in public and write about other difficulties experienced because of gender inequality. We will publish your diaries written about one

of the topics above along with two clear or blurry photos of you. Using your name is optional.

The *Mandatory Veil Diaries* campaign published fifty-nine diaries over the campaign's existence of four months. At the beginning, at least two diaries were published per day. They slowed to one diary every three or four days by the end of the campaign. The first diary was published July 2012 and the fifty-ninth diary was published October 2012. All of them were written in Farsi.

To get an overview of the campaign's participants, they were categorized by three different aspects:

- I. Age ranges: This study contains three generations' diaries. This is a significant factor because it is a clear comparison between four periods of contemporary Iranian women's lives which are pre-revolution, post-revolution, the Iran-Iraq war and the reformist era.
- II. Location: Iran and abroad. Based on the participants' current residence location, living in Iran or abroad, each group described their experiences having this factor in mind. Women living abroad explained their situation and experience after de-veiling with more detail. They explained how they adapted themselves to the new condition after leaving Iran. In contrast, women still living in Iran did not have any notion of how permanent de-veiling in public felt because their experience was for just a few seconds or maximum a few days. In spite of that, they could clearly narrate their experience of mandatory veil as a person who is still compelled to veil. Compared to the women outside of the country, women in Iran expressed hope for achieving freedom of clothing and a wish to dance in public more frequently.
- III. Mandatory veil's variation: Chador or manteau and headscarf. This aspect has been investigated by conceptually analyzing diaries. In some schools, universities or governmental institutions as well as in some extremely religious or traditional families, chador is considered the only acceptable type of veiling. In these cases, a de-veiled woman is identified as a girl who wears a manteau and a headscarf instead of chador. There are participants who lived in the above mentioned situations. They

narrated their story of how they fought to de-veil. Finally, they succeeded to change their clothing to manteau and headscarf.

## **5.2 Thematic analysis**

### **5.2.1 Coding**

This part is based on the data extracted from the familiarization stage and further reviewing the data. It should be noted that the coding part is categorized in two sub-categories which are veiling (in Iran) and de-veiling (after living Iran).

In Table.1 the codes and their definitions are presented and followed by examples. The process of coding and reviewing among data was done by assorting similar words and stories to creating different categories.

**Table 1:** Section of the diaries Coding Frame

Code names	Definitions	Examples [translated by the author]
Family	Conservative, religious and traditional.; repression and conflict starts from family	"When I was born my father was a veteran in Iran-Iraq war and my brother was the man of the family. He was a dictator and stopped letting me wear a skirt in public when I was four." <sup>9</sup>
Childhood	Initiative contradictions about veil, questioning veil, fear of de-veiling	"When I was six, we went to the Cyprus and I could not believe that my mother and my sister do not veil. I asked them to veil or have their headscarf with them because the police may come in a helicopter and arrest us."
Teenage years	Body shame, hiding femininity and puberty related issues	"Our literature teacher said that a woman is a light and should not be out of the bulb. Our Arabic teacher said that you are valuable like jewelry which should be kept in its box to keep its value. So, we learned to hide our femininity."
University	Distinction between Ahmadinejad or Khatami presidency; insufficient hijab, dormitory issues and the culture of a new city, etc. caused at least in leaving, suspension, rejected for veil	"I was suspended from University because of insufficient veil and political activity."
Job	Hijab is a reason for suspension, losing a job, forced to leave the job	"As a reporter of Iranian parliament in response to my political questions I heard: First cover you hair completely, and then ask a question."
Reasons for veiling	patriarchal government, society or family, maintaining social life, job, for the sake of their father's honor, decency, religion(fear of hell)	"In my work place suddenly wearing chador became obligatory. I wore it because I was afraid of losing the job. One of my colleagues did not wear it and said: the person, who wears it for money, will take it off for money too."
Psychological	Feelings of fear, anger, stress, humiliation, guilt and confessing of insincerity in Iran; the fear of police and judgments and regret abroad	"Since my teacher said that we are Muslims so, we might even be guilty even if unconsciously we have our hair sticking out from the veil; I always had this nightmare that I don't have sufficient veil and I am in public and as I search for a headscarf to cover my head, I don't find any. This was an ever-recurring nightmare when I was living in Iran."

<sup>9</sup> All diary excerpts have been translated by the author of this study.

*Veiling (while in Iran)*

*Childhood and Family:* It is a common entrance of almost all the diaries. It is worth noting that the participants relate the concept of diaries to a memory from their childhood. Thus, they all began their stories by narrating a memory from that period. The memories of childhood mostly consist of the following: something frightening had happened to their mother because of incomplete veil, father forced them to have a headscarf and a social issue happened when a woman in the neighborhood or an uncle, etc. used threatening words about their incomplete veil. Also, in this part, they usually mentioned their family's attitude toward the veil. We can categorize their families, as described in the diaries, in three types:

- *Conservative:* These families have the freedom of veil in private but they are afraid of the government and they separate their private life from the public life.
- *Religious:* A radical family who oblige their female members to wear chador. These families believe in acting by the words of Islam and the government. They also expect the female members to have a more religious behavior than what the society demands.
- *Traditional:* families who accept the norms of the country as traditional and adapt their family concepts of hijab to the country norms. They expect the female members of their family to act in the same way as they act in public.

This categorization is based on how participants have described their family. Although this categorization is not strictly separated and can have some overlap. For example, many families fall between two categories.

1. *Teenage years:* This period is when Iranian women describe how they were ashamed of their feminine characteristics. It is the starting point of suffering from physical problems of wearing the veil, which starts with walking in the specific way to hide their breast during puberty. Moreover, secondary and high school are the significant parts of the memories of this period.
2. *University:* The women mention the university experience in two different ways based on the political party in power:



- Women who first experienced studying at university in Khatami's presidency refer to a few tangible changes in the society. They confirmed that they have more freedom of choice in their type of veiling.
  - Women who first experienced studying at university in Ahmadinejad's presidency period felt more restricted in university and outdoor compared to their private life style.
3. *Job*: All women mentioned at least once quitting their job because of a hijab-related issue. The same thing had happened to their mothers as well.
  4. *Reasons for veiling*:  
Aside from the government, there are major other reasons for veiling which are mentioned in their diaries: patriarchal family or society, maintaining social life, their job, for the sake of their father's honor, decency, religion (god, hell, and sin) and insincerity.
  5. *Psychological issues*: Nightmares are a common issue for these women. All women experience the same nightmares, appearing nude or without manteau and headscarf in public. They run to find a store to buy a veil but they cannot find any. These nightmares usually cease right after these women leave Iran. In addition, the words repression, obligation, fear, stress, self-censored, anger, and humiliation are the most used words related to psychological issues.

*De-veiling (after leaving Iran)*

Almost everyone used this sentence to illustrate the depth of their true feeling after de-veiling: "Nothing can be compared to the feeling of wind blowing in my hair".

The common words the women used to express their feelings of their first experience of de-veiling, or in general, wearing their preferred outfit, are as below:

Shock, strangeness, regret for the previous situation of themselves and the present situation of the Iranian women. However, only a few women living in Iran expressed their hope for the freedom from mandatory veiling in the future of Iran.

### **5.2.2 Themes; searching, reviewing, defining and naming**

All diaries in the sample were examined with thematic analysis tools. Therefore, the self-representations hidden in the text were extracted. Also, this step was further modified for this study. Rather than providing a description for the contents of data, it tries to focus on revealing subjective meanings that the text clarifies which can include representations, themes, depictions stereotypes and symbolic or metaphoric elements. The reason is that more in-depth effort is required to analyze confession diaries about a forbidden topic; as these diaries consist of feelings and fears which can cause self-censorship in the text. They assist the reader to recognize the range of themes that define media coverage. Themes are extracted from earlier investigated codes, reviewing diaries and investigating the story theme of the diaries. It should be noted that because of the material, themes categories are related to each other and thus there is an overlap.

Analyzing and revising themes and sub themes illustrated with examples are introduced in Table.2 and then a list of seven different categories of themes is constructed, which are outlined as the following:

**Table 2:** Analysis of the participants' experience with mandatory veil and its redefinition identified as seven categories and twenty-seven sub-categories, which refer to digital diaries. These are presented in table 2 along with the number of participants who reported each theme.

Themes	Sub-themes	Explicit / Implicit	No. of participants (n = 59)	Some examples of diaries quotations
Obligation	Oppression / Repression / Optional	Explicit	59	"Chador was obligatory in our school and my father forced me to wear chador everywhere. So, with the help of my mother I wore chador in school, after that put it in my bag and wore it again in front of our house."
Psychological and physical shame	Fear / Stress/ Anger / Humiliation / Beauty / Deformation / Physical injury/ Body shame	Explicit	59	"I was sexually harassed by men through words or physical actions."
Religion	God/ Hell / Sin / Guilt	Explicit	53	"A strange woman in the street grabbed my hand and said: 'if my boy sees your naked neck, you are a sinner' ".  "I wore the veil for years because of the fear of hell".
Patriarchal	Decency / Honor	Implicit	49	"Although my family respects my decision of not wearing chador, I can still see my father's sadness in his eyes."
Social life / Job	Dress code / Extend / Suspension / Expelled / Rejection	Explicit	57	"When I started to work as a teacher in the countryside, I had to wear chador in mud and rain. It was difficult but I did it because it was an obligation and finally I got fired because of the lack of sufficient hijab."
Double life	Self-censorship / Insincerity/ Family vs. Society	Explicit	53	"The veil in my father's family is not an issue and nobody cares about it. But from my mother's family, I got my first notice of wearing veil. Also in school, I was not allowed to talk about my private life because everything was different there."
Activism	Resistance/ Challenging norms	Implicit	46	"I show my opposition with veil by shaving my head. I did it a few times and this is my fight against veil"

- 1) **Obligation/ Oppression/ Repression/ Optional:** This theme places an emphasis on the obligation that participant felt which was imposed by the law enforcement organizations, society and family in fear of being arrested, domestic violence or rejection.
- 2) **Psychological and physical shame/ Fear/ Stress/ Anger/ Humiliation/Contempt/ Body shame:** This theme relates to pronounced negative feelings create within the participants during different stages of their life, by veiling. It comprises psychological states with the common symptom like having nightmares related to insufficient veiling. Also this theme places emphasis on the effect of veiling on their body image which resulted in body shame, an attempt to diminish feminine beauty and, in some cases, body deformation.
- 3) **Religion/ God/ Hell/ Sin:** This theme identified the veil in the focus of religious and cultural issues in Islam. Participants expressed their feelings about the veil through religious terms.
- 4) **Patriarchal/ Decency/ Honor:** This theme identified the body of the female member of the patriarchal family as governed by the male guardian. Participants reported covering their body to keep the male honor and value and not to be labeled indecent. This concept exists in a broader sense, identified in the society.
- 5) **Social life/ Job:** This term refers to the imposition of a dress code by various social communities and institutions. It also includes the conditions of eligibility to work, study and other social activities for women. All cases to some extent experienced suspension, rejection or expulsion due to unacceptable veiling from social communities.
- 6) **Double life/ Self-censorship/ Insincerity/Conflict Culture:** This theme relates to the lack of confidence and guilt which resulted in women's lying, pretending and insincerity in confronting the authority figure. Moreover, the contradiction between individuals, family and society values caused the women's double lives.
- 7) **Activism/ Resistance/ Challenging norms:** This theme relates to the resistance and struggles carried out by women to combat family/society norms associated with mandatory veiling.

### 5.3 Themes analysis

#### **Obligation/ Oppression**

This theme is used in all fifty-nine diaries. It places an emphasis on the obligation that a participant felt threatened by the law enforcement organizations, society and family with fear of being arrested, domestic violence or rejection. Most participants start with the very first time they were questioning the obligation:

Since I was seven [first year of elementary school in Iran], I learned how to adapt to contradiction of rules at home and the society. My first shock was when I traveled to three Islamic countries: Iraq, Turkey and Malaysia where I saw them living with no fear of the Islamic rules. Now for eight years, I have been living in Malaysia and every day, when seeing the young people's freedom here I ask myself "why?"; why have we lived in obligation and pressure of hijab? (Diary 34).

The participants remember at least one event from their childhood when they were forced to wear the veil. Patriarchal families are highlighted especially at the beginning of their diaries, when writing about their childhood. They remember they had to obey the male guardian of the family. This feeling has accompanied them for their entire life:

My father compelled me to wear chador. I carried it in my bag and wore it at the door if my father was at home (with the help of my mother). I cannot forget the day when we were on a trip in northern parts of Iran and I wasn't wearing chador so my veil was insufficient. My father's angry look told me to go inside and then he beat me. I still suffer remembering those moments (Diary 37).

The state and the morality police were the major bodies enforcing the obligation to wear the veil. Fifty-four participants confronted the morality police and were arrested at least once. They narrated their experience and feeling like criminals, and they were humiliated because of their choice of clothing.

## **Psychological and physical shame**

In this part, psychological consequences due to veiling that has been mentioned by fifty-nine participants will be analyzed. These psychological symptoms include fear, stress, anger, humiliation, shame, and lie; at least one of these is noticeable in all diaries. One of the dominant topics in this case is sexual harassment which is categorized in diaries as physical or verbal harassment. Moreover, body shame, noticed in forty-three diaries, caused psychological and physical (body deformation) issues. Also, the effect of women's veiling on their own body image and body shame, resulted in their endeavor to diminish their feminine beauty.

First of all, symptoms like having nightmares about insufficient veiling that is repeatedly indicated in diaries:

When I was a teenager, I had a bothersome repeating nightmare. It was mainly about being on the street while not wearing veil, running and searching for a store to buy manteau and headscarf with fear and insecurity. I woke up every time with a rapid heartbeat and dried out throat" (Diary 38).

Secondly, story-telling also includes the authorities that impose veiling. Diaries mention obligatory powers such as father, police and even hell:

After the revolution, I went out with my two sisters. After we saw the morality police, we tried to change paths. Eventually, they arrested us and took us in a car driving to the police station. We were scared. I never had experienced that much fear in my life, not even during the pre-revolution protests when the probability of getting shot on the street was high. They released us after my sister told a lie, that our two-year-old sister was her daughter and her husband would file for a divorce if he came home and she was not there. Actually, her imaginary cruel husband saved us (Diary 35).

The role of the male character that rules over women is apparent in the above diary. A male character always has an active role; either as an imposing or threatening power (like the husband in the above example). However, many diaries mention being given warning from women, too.

Most participants complain about sexual harassment in the society, both physical and verbal. Common values like honor and decency cause sexual harassment in public:

I was admitted to Meibod University and chador was obligatory there. I never wore chador but I accepted to wear it for the sake of my future success. Once, I was waiting for a taxi when a boy riding a motorcycle came and swore at me. Then he spit on my face. All this happened while I was wearing chador and didn't wear any make up. After that incident, I never returned to that city. Even when I was wearing chador, men kept harassing me in public by saying 'my wife is not home, let's go have some fun', 'I will treat you well', 'I will give you good money', 'I will satisfy you'. Also, in another incident, a boy riding a motorcycle came close and touched me on street. It was shocking to me. The second time he tried to do that, I ran after him and caught him. I was just thinking I should give him what he deserves. I asked people to call the police but they just told me 'leave him alone' or 'you certainly did something wrong which motivated him to touch you'. Overall, the veil never gave me calmness and security. As an Iranian girl, lots of things have happened to me. I am fed up with all these limitations and inequalities (Diary 31).

Also Iranian women are angry at society that blames them for their behaviors. In fact, they represent themselves as victims throughout their life although they indicate that they are resistant. But still, "Fear" is mentioned by almost all participants. They noted sexual harassment, living under judgment, religion and obliging powers (father, morality police, etc.) as the reasons for fear and anxiety:

I was at the beach in Dubai with some other Iranian actors and directors when a car, similar to Iran's morality police cars, passed. My headscarf was on my shoulder. I shivered and got rapid heartbeats. After a moment, I realized that we were not in Iran and it is not the veil that is bothering me; but it is the fear that makes it complicated. We were silent for hours and I was crying for being a woman (...) I am depressed now; I am sorry of the fear which accompanies me throughout my life (Diary 37).

As mentioned in the above example, these negative feelings are present in the Iranian women's lives as long as they are living in Iran. Although, their first experience of de-veiling is also composed of contradicting feelings such as fear, guilt, stress, etc.

My first trip abroad was when I was 6 years old. My mother de-veiled. I was looking at my mother and feared the morality police. I begged her to at least carry a headscarf in case the morality police showed up. My parents were laughing at me telling that we were far away from them. I answered, 'they may come in helicopters!' (Diary 51).

My struggles succeeded after 14 years of fighting, when I was 23 years old. While walking on street without chador for the first time, I felt that I was naked and everyone was looking at me like a prostitute (Diary 23).

Another psychological and physical symptom is body shame. As samples have described, school, family and mass media have preached participants to hide their body parts because they are precious (such as jewelry, light bulbs, pearls, etc.) otherwise they may be destroyed or stolen out of the cover:

Our literature teacher said that a woman is a light and should not be out of the bulb. Our Arabic teacher said that you are valuable like jewelry which should be kept in its box to keep its value. So, we learned to hide our femininity (Diary 45).

In general, it could be concluded that self-objectification effects are related to the spectator's expectations and culture. Each ethnic woman creates her own body image through objectification and then, challenges its relevant consequences. Sample diaries containing body shame are mostly dealing with teenage years. During physical puberty years as a response to the traditions, Iranian women want to conceal their feminine parts which lead to some physical issues:

I got spine deformity problems because I was wearing heavy clothes. During puberty, I tried not to walk straight to hide my body's specific parts (breast and back) and to hide my femininities. I did not notice the problem for a long time because I had worn long and loose clothes. During treatment I noticed it is a common problem for lots of girls (Diary 13).



“My deviated back [spine problem], which is the result of hiding my breast growth, is more apparent than my feminine beauty now” (Diary 37).

Dworkin (1988. P. 167) describes a process in which the person learns to obey and to be submissive; this could happen to women who learn to “goose-step” in a female way. It will ruin their creativity and freedom. In a broader concept, the male gaze or sexualized gazing leads to sexual objectification. Sexual objectification occurs whenever women's body parts are regarded as a separate existence. Thus, the woman is diminished to her body parts, disregarding her personality (Bartky, 1990: 26). In other words, when objectified, women are considered as objects that exist in respect of others' satisfaction. One significant effect of objectifying is when women adapt themselves to a particular view of self. They assess and picture themselves from the spectator perspective. Moreover, to be accepted, a woman's beauty must be appealing to the tastes of the spectator's culture (Bartky, 1990: 28). Self-objectification is followed by the women's endeavor to become more attractive by adapting their self-image to the dominant spectator's expectations. Therefore, it will result in body shame with effects like eating disorder and depression. In spite of that, the objectification that is narrated in diaries is about reducing feminine beauty by instructing women about their body parts being valuable and that they should not act as an easy girl. Consequently, it could be concluded that self-objectification effects are related to the spectator's expectations and culture. Each ethnic woman creates her own body image through objectification and then, challenges its relevant consequences. In general, body shame has resulted in diminished Iranian women's self-esteem and self-concept.

### **Religion/ Guilt**

This theme is referred to in fifty-three diaries which reveal the focus of the veil in religious and cultural issues in Islam. Also as Islam and Sharia are the basis of the obligatory veil in Iran, wearing an improper veil results in feeling guilt and fear of hell. Participants mentioned the religious concepts and reasons for veiling were internalized in school, families, and media that especially targets children. Women commonly questioned the reasons for veiling in their childhood. Teachers and family answered these questions in a way that did not convince Iranian girls.

My family encouraged me to veil. I asked them if I had option in choosing to veil. As Islam instructs, as a human being, you are free to decide. I was told that this freedom of decision is for choosing between a comfortable mundane life and to enjoy the comfort in the afterlife! (Diary 32).

I was 9 years old when I reached the age of puberty. I was obligated by the Islamic rules to live as an adult the moment I turned 9. According to my family regulations, I started to wear chador at that age. If I didn't veil properly in the first years I was beaten and then [was threaten to] burn in hell, a terrifying image for a child at that age. Once my teacher was talking about hijab and punishments of a bad-hijab person and I asked 'if someone doesn't know that her hair is out of veil, does she go to hell too?' She answered 'yes. She will burn in hell.' I asked again 'maybe she does not notice or feel it.' And she answered 'what does it mean that she does not know it? You are Muslims and you should be aware of your hair all the time' (Diary 23).

De-veiling or insufficient hijab are the reasons for feeling guilty among the participants:

I was 10 years old when my teacher saw me without veil outside school. The next day she ordered me to stay in detention the whole day and to listen to the most frightening words such as: soon I will be in hell and someone will pull out all my hairs or I will be hanged from my hair and burned in hell (Diary 46).

When I unveiled for the first time, my feelings were only fear and guilt. I did not do anything wrong but I felt guilty. This is awful that my issue is not the veil itself but the effect of veiling on me (Diary 44).

"After living three years abroad, I still cannot go to mixed swimming pools. This is the result of internalized guilt" (Diary 9).

It seems that our guilt was eternal. We [Iranian women] are the reason of the sins that comes after our de-veiling [like the sins other men may make if they see us without a veil] (Diary 24).

However, no common religious or secular paradigms can be easily identified among Muslim women with a variety of views on feminism. Global feminism has connected many Secular feminists through transnational alliances, but they are not ideologically in cohesion with Muslim feminists who seek religion-based reforms to support their resistance. A contemporary challenge though, is to reunite these two ideologies and to strengthen strategic solidarities among Muslim feminists (Zine, 2006: 2). Therefore, Muslim feminists rarely question Islam's mandatory veil because they accept their religion and do not believe it should be questioned.

### **Patriarchal / Decency**

This theme describes the male guardian of the patriarchal family's ownership of any female member of the family. Participants explained that they have accepted norms of the family which was even stricter than society's obligations. They are taught to keep their father's honor and not to be labeled indecent. The concept of genuine shame which is connected with genuine dishonor, disgrace or condemnation has objected women as preservers of male members' honor in a family. Therefore, the female body as the object of the male gaze must be covered. An uncovered female body is a threat to male honor and will result in female and male shame. In forty-nine diaries this theme was involved in a variety of situations. Most diaries paid special attention to the most important reason for veiling that is the obligation to the family. A description of family's culture of veiling usually contains a sentence about their father's approach toward veiling which could be against or supporting the veil.

Before the revolution, we had to wear headscarf even in our house! If we did not wear headscarf my father beat us. After the revolution he said: your veiling is not my business anymore, you have to veil and the Islamic Republic of Iran will control you (Diary 54).

The father is not the only person who is recalled in diaries. Obeying the father, a brother, an uncle or any male person in the family or even all of them has become a common theme especially when remembering childhood memories:

I was always fighting with my family over wearing chador when I was a child. I questioned hijab in school and I was not persuaded. When I almost persuaded my parents and planned to throw away my chador, my brother told me that it was not acceptable for

him and his honor. He gave me two options: leaving school or wearing chador. I chose to wear chador (Diary 23).

“I predict the day when my son will tell me what to wear and how much I should veil” (Diary 28).

On the other hand, the importance of female behavior and veiling in the Iranian society, in which preserving decency and honor of the male member is important, can be recognized. Therefore, there were a wide range of words in Farsi as indicators of honor. The final point regarding the importance of this issue in Iran is the honor killing which has different regulation of investigation and penalty from other murders in Iranian Islamic family laws. They indicate the internalized cultural norm which is even represented in diaries as a shame for the participant:

I was arrested as a bad-hijab and I was thrown into prison until night. My father came to bail me out and pick me up. On the way home we did not talk and I felt that I had destroyed his decency and honor (Diary 55).

“My family respects my decision of not wearing chador but I still can see sadness in my father’s eyes” (Diary 29).

Werbner (2007: 181) discussed a feminist perspective which stresses patriarchal domination and violence within the family and the inability or unwillingness of the society for intervention in their private domain. In respect to honor and decency, participants’ complained that Iran’s patriarchal state even promotes concepts like honor and decency through media and social-educational institutions.

### **Social life/ Job**

This theme is represented in fifty-seven diaries and in the following subthemes: dress code, suspension, expulsion, and rejection which occurred in various institutions.

The social life theme defined clothing that is forced as a sort of dress code by various social communities and institutions. It is also included as a condition for the eligibility to work, study and other social activities for women. Most of these stories are concluded in the narrator’s suspension, rejection, expulsion, and a warning received from social communities because of

unacceptable veiling. Diaries' narrations include special situations in women's social lives. Most of these sample diaries represent difficulties of keeping a job under the veiling policies.

I had an interview with Fatemeh Alia, a former member of the Islamic Consultative Assembly parliament. The interview was published as a headline article of the newspaper. She later complained that she was not aware of her words and did not understand why I did not delete some parts of her interview. I was called the next day in the parliament corridor and I was told that Mrs. Alia has ordered not to let me in as I don't have proper hijab. To motivate their decision, they pointed at my curly hair coming out of maghnae and not wearing socks. They advised me politely not to show up until she calms down, so they can have time to persuade her to forgive me (Diary 25).

Sometimes women decided to resign or to get dismissed as they cannot adapt to the situation. Some diaries mention that even the narrators' mothers have lost their job because of improper veiling.

I was working in a governmental company for five years until a new manager decided to set chador as a mandatory veil for every female employee there. The reason was the capability of chador in hiding women's bodily curves. At first, I wore chador because I was afraid of losing the job. But I couldn't continue working with my double life. I left that job because chador was forced upon us. Besides, I got a new job. At the new job, after some time, I was told that everyone can wear manteau and headscarf except me, and I should wear maghnae and chador. I couldn't tolerate this anymore. I told them: 'the person, who wears it for money, will take it off for money too'. Then I also left that job (Diary 16).

Women have pointed out that the minimum dress code is an important factor when choosing a school, university or a workplace. It is identified as a more significant factor than academic ranking or other priorities:

"I chose a school with fewer facilities and academic merits where chador is not mandatory (...) unfortunately, chador became mandatory when I started schooling there" (Diary 23).

In contrast, a minority group of women have to accept the society norms as a precondition to have an opportunity to work or study in Iran. As a female photojournalist describes her adaptation to social life in her diary:

The bitter truth is that I accepted any warning and written or unwritten regulation which told me how to cover my hair and body. I was persuaded that if my school teacher finds out about a party in which I was not having veil, it is her right [to punish me]. I even accepted that a government official may refuse to have me take his photo as I am wearing nylon socks. Also part of my picture was cropped in a newspaper for not having the perfect veil (Diary 34).

Moreover, two participants insisted on the fact that they never let mandatory veil affect their work or study. They emphasize that they prioritize work or study more than anything else. They accepted veiling as a price to pay, to stay and work in Iran.

Overall, even with mandatory veil, Iranian scholars' point of view is that during the last three decades, Iranian women, religious or non-religious, did not allow different governments to exclude them from social life and public sphere (Afshar, 1996: 132-133). It was argued that Khomeini gave women the best opportunity to have a social effect when he asked them to come out and attend demonstrations. However, after the revolution, women confronted restrictions which gradually overtook every aspect of their social lives. In the same manner, sample diaries represent the inequality Iranian women feel in their social lives, but it also indicates their eagerness to be active in the society.

### **Double life/ Self-censorship**

Double life has been chosen as the main theme in this section. Among the studied diaries, fifty-three of them represent self-censorship and double life by explaining them in words such as insincerity, contradictory behavior, conflicting culture, and stress:

This Facebook page and the campaign of writing memories about mandatory veil is an opportunity that I can freely express myself after a long time of silence: The freedom of clothing which we are deprived from in Iran, is the most unimportant and the least worthy

thing which a human should think about in her life; and in other countries, it is the last thing that people might think about (Diary 34).

In fact, factors of insincerity are mainly related to the fear of police and judgments of family and society. These feelings are represented in story-telling about women's phobia which is, for instance, apparent in their lifelong nightmares. One common nightmare that they complain about is that they are nude or without Islamic veil in public. But these nightmares are ceased after leaving Iran:

I always had this nightmare that I am in public and I don't have sufficient veil. Meanwhile I search for a headscarf to cover my head but I don't find any. This was an ever-recurring nightmare when I was living in Iran (Diary 28).

In addition, the contradiction between an individual's family and society's values is one of the main self-censorship factors. According to familial categorization in the previous chapter, families are represented as restricted (religious), adapted (traditional) and liberal (conservative) to norms of society. Participants from the families who are not adapted to the norms are encountering more contradictions:

In my family, there was no pressure on religion and following religious orders. But everything had to be kept secret and no one could know about it. So, we have to act according to norms in the society. I developed a dual personality. At home and among family I had complete freedom, but in public I followed all religious and societal norms (Diary 13).

For me, mandatory veil was not a mean to hide myself but it was used to get lost. It was a starting point for my contradictions and double life. In home we had parties, happiness and sadness as a normal life. But at school I was accused of having a short manteau and not wearing a perfect headscarf. And I did not feel freedom at home after my hair got knotted under headscarf in school, as every day I had more questions. Contradiction started in the family too. My father's family enticed me to wear veil by illustrating an image in which heaven is for women who wear hijab; but for me, I was moving further

away from it day by day. And in my mother's family hijab was humiliating. Where am I now? I still live in the contradiction between my real life and femininity (Diary 32).

As discussed earlier, some diaries represent evolving clothing from chador to manteau and headscarf as a de-veiling. It should be noted that chador is obligatory for some places, but the main issue for these women was not the society but their family's obligation. Many women narrated how they carried chador in their bag and wore it by the door of their house, school, university or any other place that wearing chador is mandatory. They then de-veiled [taking off chador in this case] after leaving that place:

I decided to change my clothing from chador to headscarf and I never wore revealing clothes not even leaving my hair out of headscarf. My religious family respected that. But I can still see sadness in my father's eyes and remember my mother's words about how she is dissatisfied with my [current] hijab [which is not adequate in her view] (Diary 29).

According to the voice theory, self-censorship will occur after the prediction of consequences of prosocial, potentially risky behavior during socialization (Detert and Edmondson, 2011:461). Women complained that they did not have their voices heard and defined themselves according to family, society, religion and state powers. The first place that women learn to act insincere and to have a double life is in school. They encounter incoherence between values of family versus those of their society, like the first experience of wearing mandatory veil as a school uniform.

We had a spy in our class who was not suspicious because she wore loose headscarf and had a boyfriend, yet she was a trap for other students. Overall, in school years we were expelled for having our eyebrows shaped, carrying a mirror in our purse, etc. How dangerous was having a mirror or a diary notebook in our teenage years? (Diary 13).

In a special case a political prisoner illustrates her attitude about insincerity with the example of prison's chadors:

I wrote [critically] about the design of scales of justice emblem on women's prison's chador in my articles few times until 9 years ago when I was sentenced to prison. I wore those dirty chadors bearing the design of scales of justice emblem. The authorities had my picture taken while wearing that chador, and I was being sentenced without standing



against any court. When I remember that chador I feel empty and I can't write about it. My life, like many other Iranian women, was full of self-censorship, insincerity and fear (Diary 21).

On the other hand, self-censorship was not observed in women's notes in these digital confessions. The capability to edit these diaries after sharing and receiving the audiences' comments on it exists in online writing. In the case of these diaries, this feature was not available for participants because they sent the diaries and did not have any access to the post-published diaries afterwards. Even in one case, a participant sent a note and asked audiences to not judge his father based on her diary as they did before in the comments part. It was published under her diary as a post edit of the author without allowing any change in the original text.

### **Activism/ Resistance**

This theme mainly focuses on women's resistance, those who challenge norms in their daily life experiences to reveal their oppression under veil obligation. It also signifies a broader concept representing social activism and cyber activism. The theme was noticed in forty-six diaries by defining different kinds of challenges as a battle with norms. Thus, these challenges are not always rational and they could be regarded as a spontaneous reaction to the mandatory veil. In other words, in these diaries, women narrate how they unconsciously act as anarchists to reveal and challenge the hijab. The traces of this theme are evident in diaries like the woman who recalls her lifelong domestic fight:

I was opposed to hijab since childhood. I looked at wind as an excuse to take off my headscarf and to run happily along it. When I was nine [the age of puberty for women in Islam in which they become an adult and should fulfill religious obligations, including wearing the veil] my mother bought me a manteau. It was too long and too loose for my body. So, I cut and knotted it to make it shorter (...) during my entire schooling, I took off my headscarf anytime I felt warm in class, even though I knew the punishment for it would be to stay in the classroom during break time. For my lifelong fight, my name has not been acknowledged anywhere except my diaries and weblog. I just want to do something about [mandatory] hijab's extermination. I am still fighting but now it is perhaps only a domestic fight (Diary 20).

Women in this campaign are using social media as the medium to spread the message contained in their diaries. These messages and their medium of transmission have inspired many other women to share their experiences. The same analogy has helped women activists to participate in social movements. Nevertheless, activism is naturally construed as the public sphere while the female-related issues are traditionally recognized as the private sphere. Even so, women activists have long used discourse as a method of resistance in social movements to create awareness and to create alternative discourses that challenge a common understanding of dominant ideologies (Ng, 2012: 6). Thus, women's tendency to challenge the hijab as a dominant ideology of a totalitarian state is a significant and memorable part of their lives:

For my husband, it is always strange that I complain and nag about veiling or tolerating the headscarf and that I am always looking for a shorter manteau. He said, 'Why wouldn't you accept that?' He cannot understand why I take off my headscarf in any empty ally, in a car, or in the rain. I want to take off my headscarf and hold it above my head to feel the rain and wind in my hair (Diary 15).

Another diary is taking domestic fight to the next level: with the morality police. As one of the narrators mentions in her diaries, she had been arrested many times by the morality police since she was 13:

We learn how to deal with the morality police; giving the wrong address, changing our direction; concealing our hair when we encounter them. We learn new methods of resistance every day. Once, we were in a car when morality police asked us to get out. I didn't obey. He wanted to open the car door, so I locked it. I have no fear, and the fact that I have been fighting with them since I was 13 has transformed me into a brave person. They surrounded us and finally I gave him my identification documents. He said that all you need is to feel the obligation by the authorities. But I resisted and they could not arrest me with their power that night (Diary 24).

Each of these fifty-one diaries mentioned their spectacular ways of challenging the mandatory veil in their life. For example, shaving off the hair on the head, carrying chador in bags for specific places that it is mandatory, fighting with people who compel them to cover. They unconsciously questioned and challenged the veil, and, as they have repeatedly mentioned, they

are never convinced to accept it as a part of their lives. Along with these, there were diaries who valued challenging norms in their social life, even as prisoners:

Chador is mandatory for female prisoners. A famous lawyer and activist, Nasrin Stoudeh, stood up against it as a prisoner. She refused to visit her family and yet got another punishment for this reason. So, for a short time wearing chador was not mandatory and we were walking around in the prison with just holding it but not wearing it. The authorities decided to make chador mandatory again and Sotoudeh was still fighting against it by not accepting to visit her family [as leaving the cell requires wearing chador] (Diary 5).

When I worked as a parliament reporter, instead of receiving answers to my questions, I was hearing: 'first conceal all your hair.' So, I wore a more complete veil until one of the parliament members told me 'you are insulting hijab when you hide your hair completely but wear red shoes and tight manteau.' So I ripped off my part of my maghnae and let out my hair on my forehead. Then he said: 'why are you grouchy?' Yes we are grouchy and we are also labelled grouches in our family and school because we don't like this veil that is imposed on us (Diary 1).

No one claims to have a role in challenging police and motivating people, except a girl who is a believer in future freedom in Iran and is the only person who claims to de-veil as a social activist:

My first de-veiling was when I was 28 on the 8<sup>th</sup> of March demonstration. That night I was walking in Azadi (freedom) street without a headscarf. It felt great. Girls were looking at me and whispering kindly asking to wear my headscarf and boys were telling me I was unique among these people. That night I loved people. I loved the peddler woman in metro who warned me that some undercover police were staring at me in a station. That night I felt like a hero and loved everyone around me. Since then, I take off my headscarf sometimes, especially when I am near the morality police. I imagine that people who see me will think about my protest when they see the morality police in a few seconds. So they will understand my point even though they might think it is wrong (Diary 38).

However, in recent years, a cyber-movement to break the taboo of public unveiling online in which Muslim women pose while not wearing hijab has been established in a number of Islamic states such as Iran, Egypt and Tunisia. The unveiled or either nude pictures of Muslim women have been distributed in blogs and social networks. Three main pioneers of this movement, although with different strategies, are as follows:

*Golshifte Farahani* is a well-known Iranian actress who appeared in many Iranian movies while wearing a state-approved hijab before leaving Iran. After moving out of the country, she has appeared in some Western movies and posed for various magazines. She posed for a topless photo for the French magazine<sup>10</sup>, *Madame Figaro*, which was shared in social media and caused controversy among the Iranian society.

*Aliaa Magda Elmahdy* is an Egyptian cyber activist. Her fully nude photos on her Blogspot account<sup>11</sup> hit over 2 million views. She eventually got political asylum in Sweden after being threatened with jail time, kidnapping, death threats and eventually, escaping a rape attempt.

*Amina Sboui Tyler* is a Tunisian activist who announced herself as a topless activist. Her topless photo on her Facebook account<sup>12</sup> in which she wrote "My body is my own territory and not anyone's honor" on her naked body, caused serious problems for her. She later joined the Ukrainian feminist group FEMEN (until 2013) appearing nude protesting on various occasions.

Furthermore, as Brooke Ackerly (2009: 545-549), a scholar in global feminism and transnational activism, argues, a part of the third world feminists' works have been emphasized on women's activism in transnational spaces. Many of them are about the manners in which feminism's 'global spaces' are being included in 'local activism' and how the diverse local and strategic interests of women are becoming a noticeable focal point for global networking and transnational activism. Further discussions about cyber activism and social activism are beyond the scope of this study.

---

<sup>10</sup> Available on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u2qbEuMMMPI>

<sup>11</sup> [http://arebelsdiary.blogspot.se/2011\\_10\\_01\\_archive.html](http://arebelsdiary.blogspot.se/2011_10_01_archive.html)

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=394968360618122&set=a.214213872026906.42085.100003148852304&type=1&theater>

## **6 Discussion and Conclusion**

### **6.1 Findings**

This study aims to analyze the self-representation of Iranian women's experience of mandatory veiling through the *Mandatory Veil Diaries* campaign on the *Woman=Man* Facebook page. Also, three questions are formulated according to the purpose of this study:

What type of self-representation do Iranian women have regarding the veil? Which aspects of the mandatory veil have been represented in different stages of the Iranian women's lives (family, school, university, work, marriage, etc.)? How did the chosen type of media channel (social network) motivate Iranian women's participation in this digital-confession campaign?

To address these questions, the qualitative research is conducted through thematic analysis and along digital life writing discourse, sexual objectification, and through a feminist perspective. Thematic analysis was chosen because of its flexibility and its potential to analyze story-telling data. Each diary was coded according to the content. Then, the combination of the coding category and data leads us to define seven themes. Afterwards, each theme was identified by its name and sub themes which were continually analyzed throughout the course of the analysis process, based on data and the theoretical framework of the study. Finally, the development of the coding and themes accommodated the enhancement of the analysis credibility and assisted the researcher in recognizing the key ideas to find answers to the research questions as follows:

In response to the first research question, Iranian women self-represent themselves in these digital diaries by confessing frankly about their experiences. For the first time, they felt secure enough to narrate their story and to be heard in a medium because of the existence of digital diaries. As it was discussed earlier in the digital writing section, signals need to connect to someone or something and be used as a form of self-expression. In this case, two pronounced factors that all participants have were the following: the oppression and the experience of psychological symptoms, especially fear. Obligation is represented in law enforcement organizations, society and family through implication of fear of being arrested, domestic violence, or rejection. Moreover, they represent themselves as women who want to have a social life while still feeling fear and guilt in their lives, preferring to adapt to societal values like the

mandatory veil. Another self-representation, which is related to the physical and psychological symptoms, is body-shame. It is the consequence of sexual objectification and women's self-image. Strong applications of religion and cultural values have advised these women to hide their femininity, which has resulted in physical and psychological issues. These participants have represented themselves as victims of a patriarchal society where a male guardian had forced them to behave according to family tradition, religion, and state laws. The women victimized themselves by condemning others through the narrations about how they adapted themselves throughout their lives to these standards. In the last part of diaries, Iranian women confess about challenging norms, which highlights their resistance. They refer to the concept of resistance as domestic fight. The gendered nature in which Iranian women experienced veiling, their resistance, and the nature of women's diary-writing made this campaign a feminist act. Women use any available spaces that enable them to become public actors.

The second research question is about what aspects are represented in different stages of Iranian women's lives with a focus on the mandatory veil. In the diaries, the stages are the following: childhood, family, teenage years, university years, job, and leaving Iran. In most cases, de-veiling occurred abroad. But there were cases that described de-veiling as the process of changing to their optional veiling type, from conservative veiling to a fashionable/trendy veiling. Actually, every aspect of the participants' lives is under the pressure of mandatory veil. Everyone narrates at least one memory about her family attitude toward the veil, which might contrast the varying levels of strictness regarding the obligation of hijab in the society. They understood this difference during school years. Their childhood diaries consist of religion, family tradition and memory about obligations to veil. The patriarchal family is a common theme, especially in childhood, because they remember to start obeying their father, brother, uncle or another male member of their family. According to diaries, Iranian women's experiences of double life, self-censorship and body shame stem from the teenage years. This stage of their life is related to puberty age and their understanding of the ideal woman which conducted them toward shame of feminine parts of the body. Also, veil could be a sign of uniformity which was imposed to Iranian women after the revolution. This was in order to promote the identity of an ideal woman. The picture of an ideal woman represented in media, school, and university is a woman who has a superior veil (chador), is a good wife, a good mother and a perfect Muslim. Therefore, Iranian women are victims of objectification. The next stage is university and

working years. These years are replete with feelings of obligation and inequality. University is the Iranian women's first chance to be in a mixed educational place. This experience was narrated based on two different presidential periods: President Khatami (1997-2005) and President Ahmadinejad (2005-2013). In the second period they felt more restricted and repressed in their social life. Most of the participants, at least once, had been arrested because of their veiling by morality police. Finally, women have expressed are psychological issues such as humiliation, insults, sexual harassment, violent, stress, fear, and nightmares. The nightmares are a common issue for these women. Most of them experienced the same nightmares, appearing nude or without manteau and headscarf in public..

In answering the third research question, one should consider the existence of the popular social media such as Facebook. Iranian women have greatly contributed to the emergence of resistive-nature campaigns like Mandatory Veil Diaries campaign on the Woman=Man Facebook page. Social networks are the only public sphere where Iranians have access to and it can be considered as the foundation for the above mentioned campaigns. This medium in particular has a high degree of importance in the success of this campaign because of the characteristics of online writing. First of all, as this study analyzed, mandatory veil is a daily challenge for women who do not believe in it and talking negatively about it is banned in Iran. Similarly to blogging, breaking taboos is one of the beneficial factors of using the social media as a medium. Therefore, for the very first time, social networks, virtual campaigns, and digital diaries gave this opportunity to Iranian women to express themselves with focus on the veil. Secondly, they mostly express their self- image through medium such as social media which has encouraged them to talk about their most personal experiences with veiling. A previous study (Pedersen, 2010: 46-51) has demonstrated the beneficial effects that writing about traumatic issues can have on mental health; the therapeutic aspect of diary writing helps diarists to vent rage or blow off steam about a topic that annoys them (Pedersen, 2010: 53). Also, positive feedback from readers, for instance in the form of sympathy, support or encouragement could offer strong emotional and social support for the diarists. Iranian women benefited from the digital diaries to confront their self-censorship and receive sympathy in this especially neglected issue. The other side is the opportunity to keep their individuality and personalize identity on Facebook which motivated them to feel like activists who have attachments to a group or campaign. Moreover, Facebook as a medium provided anonymity to the campaign participants. It should be noted that Iranian

residences are going through filtering to access Facebook and having a Facebook account is marked as a criminal act. Finally, by comparing this particular Facebook page to other media, one realizes that it has the advantage of minimized censorship due to the fact that no special person or ideological group is managing the page in contrast to so many other media.

## **6.2 Suggestions and limitations**

This study encompasses different aspects toward media and sociology. The researcher, because of the nature of this topic, is inclined to study the sociological aspect of the subject. As a researcher in the field of media and communication, I tried not to be biased toward sociology and to confront the inherent limitation that is associated with sources of this subject. The analysis involves few media-related themes since digital diaries are more focused on the writer's experience about mandatory veil rather than emphasizing the detailed advantages of Facebook.

Another major limitation is the current situation of social media and in particular Facebook in Iran. One should bear in mind that having a Facebook account and being active (posting, sharing information and photos not complying with the Islamic rules) is banned and considered a criminal act. In addition to this illegal activity, discussing about the legitimacy of an important Islamic issue such as mandatory hijab is extremely prohibited in Iran; if these two are combined, as in the studied Facebook pages and campaigns, they would result in harsher limitations and more scarce reliable resources. This fact affects this study two-fold: first, diaries might be written with fear of rationalization (cultural, morality and law), so they may contain self-censorship. Second, Iranian women received such social medium as a privilege to explain their true feelings about mandatory hijab and benefited from different positive characteristics of social media activism.

Another limitation was related to visual analysis. I also wanted to study the visual part of this research but the photos accompanying each story were not appropriate to conduct a case study in contrast to the text that was fully compliant with the targets of this study. Other campaigns, which include related and appropriate visual data for analysis, did not have the specific characteristics of the case study. For example *My Stealthy Freedom* campaign contains visual material consistent with research purposes, but it consists of two limitations as a data for this



study: the campaign is newly established (March 2014) and one person is accredited as the founder and admin of this campaign (Masih Alinejad).

The last limitation of this research is about the participants. This case study was chosen because of the broad range of participants from different elements: age, location, education, different types of veiling and family backgrounds. But still there are just a few participants who voluntarily chose to veil and are willing to keep their veil in any situation. Also this study, like most other studies in the field of social networks, did not include women from social classes who do not have access to the internet and are therefore totally absent.

To conduct related studies in the future, I suggest a complementary research with an anthropological approach targeting women who are in lower educational or social classes and do not have access to the internet. The other suggestion could however be regarding utilization of visual analysis as a complementary method to study about Iranian women's endeavors to de-veil in Iran. For instance, a more comprehensive study will combine text borrowed from this case study and visual material taken from another campaign to further examine women's representation of mandatory veil in Iran.

To summarize, self-representations were closely similar and shared multiple common aspects. The core message of this Facebook campaign is visible on its Facebook information page, which is women are equal to men. In fact, this campaign offered an opportunity for women to their voice heard. For the first time they felt free to discuss about their private concerns regarding mandatory hijab in a public sphere. The ownership of women's bodies has been challenged by their male guardians and to a larger extent, governments. In the case of Islamic countries and especially Iran, the veil is just one of the aspects that exhibit male dominance and ownership of the female body. Every woman in Iran has experienced thousand of warnings about not having a sufficient hijab during their life. Besides, many have narrated about sexual gaze and harassments by the patriarchal society. Some women's experiences of de-veiling lasted just few minutes in a transit airport, or in a more private place such as the rooftop of their houses.

## 7 References

Ackerly, Brooke A. (2009) "Global Feminisms: Theory and Ethics for Studying Gendered Injustice". *New Political Science: Special Issue: The Changing Face of Political Ideologies in the Global Age*, vol 31(4): 543-555.

Afshar, Haleh (1996) *Women and Politics*. London: Routledge.

Altheide, David L (1996) *Qualitative Media Analysis*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publication.

Anzaldua ,Gloria (2002) *Borderland' in Literary Theory: An Anthology*, in Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan (eds) Blackwell:UK.

Atton, Chris (2014) *Alternative Media, the Mundane, and "Everyday Citizenship*. In: Ratto,Matt & Boler, Megan (eds) *DIY Citizenship: Critical Making and Social Media*. Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press.

Atwood, Elizabeth (2012) "Book Review: Blogistan: The Internet and Politics in Iran". *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, vol 89: 133-135.

Bartky, Sandra L. (1990) Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power. In: Bartky, Sandra L. (eds) *Femininity and Domination: Studies in the Phenomenology of Oppression*. New York: Routledge, 63-82.

Bordo, Susan (1990) *Feminism, Postmodernism, and Gender Scepticism*. In: Nicholson, Linda (ed.) *Feminism/Postmodernism*. London: Routledge, 133-56.

Braun, Virginia & Clarke, Victoria (2006) "Using thematic analysis in psychology". *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, vol 3(2):77–101.

Brennen, Bonnie S. (2013) *Qualitative research methods for media studies*. London:Routledge.

Brenner, Suzanne (1996) "Reconstructing self and society: Javanese Muslim women and "the veil"". *American Ethnologist*, vol 23(4): 673-697.

Bullock, Katherine H & Jafri Gul J (2000) "Media (Mis)Representations: Muslim Women in the Canadian Nation". *Canadian Woman Studies*, vol 20 (2): 35-40.

Bullock, Katherine H (2000) "The Gaze and Colonial Plans for the Unveiling of Muslim Women". *Studies in Contemporary Islam*, vol 2(2): 1-20.

Chen J., Ping W., Xu Y. & Tan BCY. (2009) "Am I afraid of my peers? Understanding the antecedents of information privacy concerns in the online social context". *ICIS 2009 Proceedings, Thirtieth International Conference on Information Systems*, Phoenix, 15-18 December, paper 174.

Davison, Claire (2012) *Presentation of digital self in everyday life: towards a theory of Digital Identity*. Ph.D. RMIT University. Available at:

<<http://researchbank.rmit.edu.au/eserv/rmit:160334/Davison.pdf>> [Accessed 16 April 2014]

Detert, James & Edmondson, Amy (2011) "Implicit voice theories: Taken-for-granted rules of self-censorship at work". *Academy of Management Journal*, vol 54(3): 461- 488.

Downe-Wamboldt, Barbara (1992) "Content analysis: methods, applications, and issues". *Health Care Women Int.*, vol 13(3): 313–321.

Dworkin, Andrea (1988) *Intercourse*. London: Arrow Books

Gargett, Ann (2002) "Eternal Feminine: Natacha Merritt 'Digital Diaries'". *Postfeminist Deleuzean Figurations Parallax*, vol 8(4): 32-45.

Gulati, Girish & Williams, Christine (2013) "Social Media and Campaign 2012: Developments and Trends for Facebook Adoption". *Social Science Computer Review*, vol. 31(5): 577-588.

Gleaves A, Walker C & Grey J (2007) "Using digital and paper diaries for learning and assessment purposes in higher education: a comparative study of feasibility and reliability". *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, vol 32(6): 631-643.

Hajinejad, Mona (2009) *Gender representation of youth in an online social networking site visual analysis of Iranian youth on facebook profile picture*, Master's thesis, Stockholm University, Sweden.

Hall, Stuart (1975) Introductions. In: A.C.H Smith (ed.) *Paper voices: popular press and social change, 1935-65*. London: Chatto & Windus, 11-24.

Halverson, Jeffrey R (2011) *Why Story is Not Narrative*. Available at:  
<http://csc.asu.edu/2011/12/08/why-story-is-not-narrative>

Harding, Sandra (1987) *The Science Question in Feminism*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Harding, Sandra (1990) Feminism, Science, and the Anti-Enlightenment Critiques. In: Nicholson, Linda (ed.) *Feminism/Postmodernism*. London: Routledge, 83-106.

Hersberger, JA, Murray, AL & Rioux, KS (2007) "Examining information exchange and virtual communities: an emergent framework". *Online Information Review*, vol 31(2):135-147.

Ho, Christina (2010) "Responding to orientalist feminism, women's rights and the war on terror". *Australian Feminist Studies*, vol 25(66):433-439.

Hogan, Bernie (2010) "The Presentation of Self in the Age of Social Media: Distinguishing Performances and Exhibitions Online". *Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society*, vol 30(6):377-386.

Hoodfar, Homa (1999) "The Women's Movement in Iran: Women at the Crossroads of Secularization and Islamization". *WLUML - The Women's Movement Series*, vol 1(1):1-49.

Jaksic, Vesna (2007) "Litigation Clues Are Found on Facebook: Lawyers Use Social Networks as a Tool". *The National Law Journal*, October 15<sup>th</sup>.

Joffe, Helene & Yardley, Lucy (2004) Content and thematic analysis. In: Marks, David F, & Yardley, Lucy (eds). *Research Methods for Clinical and Health Psychology* (1st ed). London: Sage Publications, 56–69.

Kahf, Mohja (1999) *Western Representations of the Muslim Woman*, Austin:University of Texas Press.

Khosravi, Shahram (2008) *Young and Defiant in Tehran*. Pittsburgh: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Koivunen, Anu (2009) "Confessions of a Free Woman: telling feminist stories in postfeminist media culture". *Journal of Aesthetics & Culture*, vol 1(0):1-7.

Krippendorff, Klaus (2004) *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology* (2nd ed). London: Sage Publications.

Lipczynska, Sonya (2005) "Power to the people: the case for Wikipedia". *Reference Reviews*, vol 19(2): 6-7.

Mahdavi, Shireen (2007) "Review Article: Iran, Revolution, Intellectuals and Women". *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, vol 34(3): 399-406.

Mallon, Thomas (1984) *A Book of One's Own: People and their Diaries*. New York: Ticknor and Fields.

Martin, Vanessa (2000) *Creating an Islamic State: Khomeini and the Making of New Iran*, London: I. B. Tauris & Company.

Matthews, Nicole & Sunderland, Naomi (2013) "Digital Life-Story Narratives as Data for Policy Makers and Practitioners: Thinking Through Methodologies for Large-Scale Multimedia Qualitative Datasets". *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, vol 57(1):97-114.

McCullagh, Karen (2008) "Blogging: self presentation and privacy". *Information & Communications Technology Law*, vol 17(1): 3-23.

McKenna, K, Green, A & Gleason, M (2002) " Relationship Formation on the Internet: What's the Big Attraction?". *Journal of social issues*, vol 58(1):9-31.

Moallem, Minoos (1992) "The Ethnicity of an Islamic Fundamentalism: The Case of Iran". *South Asia Bulletin*, vol 12(2): 25-34

Moallem, Minoos (2005) *Between Warrior Brother and Veiled Sister: Islamic Fundamentalism and the Cultural Politics of Patriarchy in Iran*. Ewing: University of California Press.

Moallem, Minoos (2008) "Muslim Women and the Politics of Representation". *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, vol 24(1):106-110.

Mohanty, Chandra Talpade (1988) "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses". *Feminist Review*, vol 30.

Nafisi, Azar (2003) *Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir in Books*, London: Tauris.

Nassef, Ahmed (2004) "Egypt's Leading Feminist Unveils her Thoughts". *Women's enews*, [online] 25 February.

Ng, Melody (2012) *Contemporary Female Activism: Female Activists and Social Movements in the Cyber-Era*, Berkeley: University of California Berkeley.

O'Sullivan, Catherine. (2005). Diaries, *On-Line Diaries, and the Future Loss to Archives; Or, Blogs and the Blogging Bloggers Who Blog Them*. *The American Archivist*, 53-73.

Park, N, Kee, KF & Valenzuela, S (2009) "Being immersed in social networking environment: Facebook groups, uses and gratifications, and social outcomes". *Cyberpsychology, Behavior and Social Networking*, vol 12(6): 729-733.

Parpart , Jane L. (1993) "Who is the 'Other'?": A Postmodern Feminist Critique of Women and Development Theory and Practice". *Development and Change*, vol 24(3):439-464.

Pedersen, Sarah (2010) *Why Blogs? Motivations for blogging*. Chandos Publishing.

Raby, Rebecca (2005) "What is Resistance?". *Journal of Youth Studies*, vol 8(2)

Riessman, Catherine K. (2003) *Narrative Analysis, in Narrative, Memory & Everyday Life*. Huddersfield: University of Huddersfield.

Said, Edward (1978) *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon.

Scale, Mark-Shane (2008) "Facebook as a social search engine and the implications for libraries in the twenty-first century". *Library Hi Tech*, vol 26(4): 540-556.

Schiano, D , Nardi, B , Gumbrecht, M , & Swartz.L (2004) "blogging by the rest of us". *Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*: 1143-1146. .

Shahidian, Hammed (2002) *Women in Iran: Gender Politics in the Islamic Republic*. Westport: Greenwood Press.

Shirazi-Mahajan, Faegheh (1993) "The politics of clothing in the middle east: The case of Hijab in post-revolution Iran". *Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies*, vol 2(2): 54-63.

Shirazi-Mahajan, Faegheh (1995) "A dramaturgical approach to Hijab in post-revolutionary Iran". *Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies*, vol 4(7): 35-51.

Shirazi-Mahajan, Faegheh (2001) *The Veil Unveiled: The Hijab in Modern Culture*. Gainesvill: University Press of Florida.

Spencer, L, Ritchie, J & OConnor, W (2003) "Analysis: Practices, principles and processes". In: Ritchie J, Lewis J (eds). *Qualitative Research Practice: A Guide for Social Sciences Students and Researchers* (1st edn). London: Sage Publication,199–218.

Sreberny, Annabelle & Khiabani, Gholam (2010) *Blogistan, the internet and politics in Iran*. London: L. B. Tauris & Co Ltd.

Tohidi, Nayereh (1991) Gender and Islamic Fundamentalism: Feminist politics in Iran. In: Mohanty C , Russo A & Torres L (eds) *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminist*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 251-255.

Turkle, Sherry. (2008) "Always-on/Always-on-you: The Tethered Self". In: Katz, James E.(eds) *Handbook of Mobile Communication Studies*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.



Vaismoradi, M, Turunen, H & Bondas, T (2013) "Content analysis and thematic analysis: Implications for conducting a qualitative descriptive study". *Nursing & Health Sciences*, vol 15(3): 398–405.

Walby, Sylvia (1990) "A Critique of Postmodernist Accounts of Gender". *Canadian Sociological Association Meetings*, Vancouver, British Columbia (27-30 May).

Wall, Melissa (2005) "Blogs of War". *Journalism*, 6(2): 153-72.

Werbner, Pnina (2007) "Veiled Interventions in Pure Space: Honour, Shame and Embodied Struggles among Muslims in Britain and France". *Theory, Culture & Society*, vol 24(2):161-186.

Williams, Chritine & Gulati, Girish (2013) "Social networks in political campaigns: Facebook and the congressional elections of 2006 and 2008". *New Media & Society*, vol. 15(1):52-71.

Zine, Jasmin (2006) "Between Orientalism and Fundamentalism: The Politics of Muslim Women's Feminist Engagement". *Muslim World Journal of Human Rights*, vol 3(1): ISSN (online) 1554-4419.