I. Student Information

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I hereby certify that the work presented in this TMA is my own and is not copied from any source.

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Date of Submission: 29/12/2010

II. Questions

<table>
<thead>
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I. Tutor's Comments

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Student's Total Mark

Tutor's Name: Dr. Rima Rouhana
Signature: ........................................ Date Returned: ........../......./20
T306. Managing Complexity: a systems approach

The Fear of Niqab being a Shameful and Righteous sensation

Final Project Presented by
Milany Saliba Hajj

Supervisor: Dr. Rima Rouhana

Fall 2010
Acknowledgments

I would like to show my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Rima Rouhana, who without her endless support, this project would not have been possible, and without her guides, the project would have been a lifeless one. Also it is an honor for me to admit that it is due to her motivating and interesting lectures I became a more understanding and a better person in real life matters. In addition, I would like to thank Dr. Elian Nehmeh for making me realize the importance of system thinking and practice and also for making me love the course of T306 and use its concepts in every aspect of my life. It is a pleasure for me to thank my daughter, Anastasia Al Hajj, who without her artistic drawings, my ideas of the rich picture would not have been embodied. I am indebted to my sister Rima Saliba because she was the one who convinced me to enroll in the Arab Open University which provides this course and which hopefully will grant me the degree I deserve. Last but not least, I would like to thank my husband Ziad Al Hajj and my other daughter Alexandra Al Hajj for being so considerate and thoughtful while I was busy in developing this project.
Ethicality Statement
My philosophy in life is to treat people the way I like them to treat me. As such I would always adhere; polite truthfulness in my talking, complete honesty in my deeds, and faithful concerns for the interest and well being for all human kind. I also don’t believe in judging people that is why I always try my best to listen carefully to what they have to say and find excuses for them. Lately I have learned that people perspectives add a contribution to any subject and could make it richer even if those opinions are contradictory of mine. So I will always appreciate the other’s perception. Moreover, I believe that God has created the earth for our benefit, so the least thing to do is to show our gratitude by maintaining and protecting earth. Thus I would make the most of my potential to prevent the sabotage of our environment.
Abstract
This paper aims to show that sustainable development does not always have to do with environment conservation although it is important. Yet it can also be projected towards the quality of human lives in their societies. And lately it has been viewed that the issue of niqab ban is affecting the lives of many: those who are wearing it in the first place and those who perceive it to be a threat to their culture. It involves a web of interrelated Systems of problems where the power of politics, religion faith, and culture values interact to worsen the situation more. As such, niqab ban is a complex problem situation in which systems thinking and practice as well as the systems approach mainly the Soft System Methodology are highly required. This is so because SSM is one of the fewest methodologies that can contain the physical and human elements, not to mention that as a process it is holistic and reductionist which can empower the user to apply it systematically and systemically and gain learning during the process and after it.
Introduction
Based on the assumption that we don’t know the real world but we can only create a mental image of it and construct models of reality, thus any situation in real life is always perceived differently by people with various traditions and is interpreted in terms they find meaningful. What they assume is meaningful would of course depends on their tradition i.e. experiences, knowledge, backgrounds, values, etc. The complexity then is created due to our relationships which portray different, conflicting, and contradictory perceptions and here is the importance of system thinking and practice for it allows the appreciation, understanding and taking the different perspectives into consideration in an ethical manner. So that; much more variety and options can be developed at the disposal of an aware system practitioner who is conscience enough about their own epistemological traditions of knowing and equipped always with the readiness to reflect on the role they are playing, the situation of interest they are interacting and the approaches they are using. This reflection would enable learning to occur; learning here is actualized only when an individual change his appreciation of something according to the theory of Vickers’s Appreciative System, (Blackmore et al, 2000). I present the issue of niqab as a complex messy situation on which I apply the Soft System Methodology as a systemic inquiry and a learning participative process so that a better understanding of the problem situation can be attained in an attempt to enable learning or changing to happen so that an improvement can be achieved.
The Tutor Report

The issue of niqab which is a woman full face and body veil has been lately a food for thought and is under the spot in many countries all over the world. While some think it is in the heart of the holy Quran and is a requirement by Islam, specially the Salafi movement followers, other moderate Muslims deny its relation to religion (Benlafquish, 2009). And while some people consider it to be a personal behavior and individual choice, others believe that niqab provokes social norms and cultural values. Niqab is also unarguably associated with politics and is linked to nations’ economical state since tourism is a key factor to growth. Furthermore, niqab entails questioning powerful concepts like liberation, freedom, democracy, feminism, multiculturalism, discrimination, equality, and integration among many others.

So I would start by collecting enough information so that I can become aware of the situation I am intending to approach.

A description of the Problem Situation

Some Arab countries like Egypt and Syria banned niqab only in schools and universities. Each with different apparent reasons though. The government in Syria is secular and there was a fear of increasing Islamic extremism among young Muslim students (Gardner, 2010). Whereas in Egypt, veiled female students had to show their faces while entering examination rooms to verify their identities. This was triggered when men wearing niqab tried to sneak into women’s accommodation. Not to mention that niqab hinders the interaction between the teacher and student during the learning process. The Egyptian streets and press went beyond the immediate decision, and the Nekab became more than just a matter of women hiding their faces, or a difficulty to be handled. It caused many veiled teachers and students to be trapped in their homes. This has paved the way for Europe to prevent wearing niqab in public. For example, the center right Reform Movement Party (MP) in Belgium, Denis Ducarme said "I am proud that Belgium would be the first country in Europe which dares to legislate on this sensitive matter, after all we cannot allow someone to claim the right to look at others without being seen, niqab is a degradation of women rights”. However, the Belgium Muslim council considers this act as a security measure specially that several extremist Islamists organizations were discovered in the country (Memmi, 2010). In France, the lower house of parliament approved a bill that prevents wearing niqab in public. This nation’s wide ban was advanced on
the eve of Bastille Day; whether this was intended or it was simply a mere coincidence was not declared. The bill imposes fines of $185 or/and citizenship lessons on women who break the law, and $38,000 as well as one year in jail for men who force their wives/daughters to wear the niqab. The moderate Islamic leaders don’t approve of the niqab, yet they criticized the law for being an unnecessary legislation that might alienate moderate Muslims. A particular study made by the French internal security services showed that the official count of women wearing niqab is no more than 2,000 while the number of Muslim women population is about 1,500,000. France’s main Muslim organizations said that the ban is likely to encourage discrimination against Muslims. However, the French minister of justice said that France was never as great and never as respected as when its people united around its values. Mr. Jean-Francois Copé, a center right French politician, via his interview with Le Figaro said: “the ban was justified by security concerns; there is a need to oppose extremist forms of Islam, but also by an obligation to protect the rights of women”. Spain, Italy, Switzerland and the Netherlands did not yet pass a formal bill, but their municipals are preventing niqab in public buildings and imposing other restrictions to insure freedom and equality to all women. However, the Spanish socialists accused the Popular Party of using the religious issue as a means of gaining an unfair political leverage. “Denmark is not a place for veiling” this was declared by the Danish prime minister on 20 January 2010. Denmark is an open democratic society and the face veil is opposed to Denmark values. The center-right government is discussing ways to limit its wearing although niqab represents 0.15% of Muslim in the country. The ban of niqab seems to spread out as the Canadian province became the first in North America to perform it; 95% in Quebec province supported the law according to a survey made by Angus Reid. The Canadian’s view of niqab is a contradictory to the liberal, secular values of their society. Especially that the view of women wearing niqab recalls bad memories of Catholic dominance when priests ordered women to stay out of the workplace. There is liberation from the weight of church on the state and people would hate to think a return of such incident. Nevertheless, Muslim and human rights groups are fighting the ban in international and national courts, because niqab ban would not liberate oppressed women but

Bastille Day is a celebration of the French revolution which initiated the very beginning of Human Rights Declaration (Cody, 2010).
would deprive them from their human rights like healthcare, education, and social security among others. The ban is yet to be approved by the European Court of Human Rights. To sum up, the issue of niqab presents a huge challenge for both Muslim and non Muslim countries. In the Islamic world, the supposed religious garment is tearing moderate and radical Muslims apart. And in the non Muslim world wearing niqab defies cultural values and social norms; not to mention its relation to politics and economics. Never in the world has a piece of cloth covered this much of contradictions.

**Systems Thinking and Practice**

As systems practitioner I perceive the issue of niqab ban as an excellent example of a mess situation where many and diverse elements like religion, culture, politics, and societies’ norms interact to create a complex problem situation. It is a network of problems that are described differently by those who have a stake in it. This would require me to think and act differently i.e. systemically and systematically, holistically and reductionist; so that, I can improve the situation or at least minimize the unwanted emergent properties in a purposeful manner. However, I need to unearth my own strengths and weaknesses concerning systems thinking and practice so that I don’t let it affect my way of dealing with this complexity.

Table 1: the table shows my strengths and weaknesses concerning system thinking and practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>System thinking</td>
<td>As a married woman for 25 years and a mother for almost 22 years and being able to step over all types of problems that confronted me while managing my family, I think I am a system thinker by nature or by instinct.</td>
<td>My system thinking was always focused on my family and social life. I have never had the chance to apply it on a certain line of professional work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System practice</td>
<td>As an undergraduate, I have succeeded T205 and T306-a. All my TMAs were graded: very well. The TMAs required engaging in cases</td>
<td>I have never been engaged in any business work. Thus I lack the professional experiences. I am unaware of specific businesses</td>
</tr>
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</table>
and applying system approaches like HSM, SSM. So I had a good practice on papers. I am always open to learn more. I am a hard worker. I have never experienced how it is to be an employee or an employer. So, I don’t really know if I would be successful in those roles.

### Systems Approach and Tools

The best way to deal with this complexity is through using systems approach because unlike the scientific approaches they are more holistic and they don’t exclude people particularly the soft system methodology since it involves second order process and can be evolved to a third order process. In addition, it can be employed and adapted in a way to appropriately suit the problem situation (Blackmore et al. 2000). However, this would not prevent me from using the hard system method when needed. Therefore, knowing the strengths and weaknesses of each would help me to become more effective system practitioner.
Table 2: The table shows the strengths and weaknesses of SSM and HSM (Bell & Chapman, 2000).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Systems Approaches</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| SSM                 | 1) Applicable on a wide range of ill defined situation.  
                      2) People can use it without technical backgrounds.  
                      3) Gives a structure to complex situations.  
                      4) Allows a holistic overview of the situation and enables identifying the relationships that may not initially be apparent.  
                      5) Stresses the importance of learning.  
                      6) A learning system.  
                      7) A participatory process and qualitative research.  
                      8) Allows iteration. | 1) The outcomes may not be predictable.  
                      2) The tendency to be used mechanistically as a substitute for intelligent investigation and good judgment.  
                      3) It can be constrained by conventional ways of organizing. This result in improving the immediate problems but leave the situation which gave rise to the problems unchanged.  
                      4) It is said to be fuzzy because it relies heavily on individual’s perception.  
                      5) Lack of theoretical rigor and practical value since it is an inception (Zohu, 2007). |
| HSM                 | 1) An engineering system.  
                      2) A quantitative research.  
                      3) Used by experts.  
                      4) Applied on well defined problems.  
                      5) Objectives are clear.  
                      6) The outcome is well defined. | 1) Treats all problems in the same way.  
                      2) Logic and rational focus. A scientific approach.  
                      4) The thinking that underpins it is mathematical.  
                      5) A linear problem solving.  
                      6) There is a separation between the expert and the rest of the stakeholders.  
                      7) A systematic approach.  
                      8) Can’t be adapted. |
Approaching the Niqab Issue;
I used a spray and rich picture diagrams as tools to help me become more aware of the situation. While both of them allowed me to make sense of the problem situation, the latter allowed me to spread the whole situation in front of me where I can see the different components, their relationships, their opinions’ and their emotion (Armson & Ison, 2000) without letting any previous assumptions to take place. Yet, I am conscious enough to know that this rich picture would not be my last version since immersing more will mean more findings.

Figure 1: A spray diagram that illustrates the important notes about niqab issue.
As a system practitioner it would be wise to surface my interests in the situation as well as my epistemological tradition concerning the niqab ban to insure both; that I am being ethical enough not to exclude those stakeholders whose opinions are opposed of mine, and that I am not excluding any element too early in case they later turned out to be valuable or important.

**My Interests in the Situation**

I am interested in the niqab issue not only because hypothetically I am going to play the role of the problem-solver but also because engaging in the situation would enable me to satisfy my curiosity, examine my ability of being an aware and effective system practitioner, and guarantee my graduation. After further engagement I drew a system map diagram in order to structure the components of the niqab issue as an initial attempt of understanding.
Summary: the system map diagram presents the structure of the niqab problem situation. It also illustrates the boundary of my system of interest as I perceive it and the elements of the environment within which my system of interest exists.

Because I need to understand better what has led to the existence of niqab issue and what are the reasons behind it as well as the effects that it made, I engaged more and used influence map and multiple cause effect diagrams.
Figure 4: An influence map diagram to show what has led to niqab issue

Summary: the diagram illustrates the main relationships that exist among the different stakeholders. Not to mention that it highlights the significant influences from the environment in which they impose either constraints or opportunities.
Figure 5: A multiple cause diagram that reveal the web of interrelated causes and effects of my niqab ban issue.

Summary: the diagram enabled me to detect the roots of niqab ban and the multiple effects that resulted from banning niqab and how they interact to create causal loops. Through it I was able to spot the feedback loops and made me understand better why the ban of niqab was initiated as an intervention.
Figure 6: A sign graph diagram of the niqab issue ban.

Summary: I developed a sign graph diagram to help me distinguish between the positive and negative feedback loops. So that a better clarification can be captured preventing any ambiguity to occur.
Stakeholders’ Perspectives

After doing that I realized that a wide range of stakeholders are involved. Each is having though their own circumstances, beliefs, and values which determined their perspectives. The list of stakeholders includes me since I have certain interests that are mentioned in page 13. This will allow me to be epistemologically aware of my own and other understands traditions.

Table 3: the table shows the stakeholders and their perspectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholders group</th>
<th>perspectives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>European secular countries</td>
<td>As governments being based on secularism where there is a clear separation between states and religion, we started by banning all religious symbols in public education establishments and state institutions. However, it was not enough assurance to actualize secularism to its fullest. Thus we believe that banning all religious symbols including niqab in public is the best way to correspond to what we value much that is secularism. Not to mention that niqab hides the identity and this is dangerous due to security concerns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab secular countries like Syria</td>
<td>As a government we are adamant about secularism. That is why we can’t let our next generation be raised to embrace the strict Islamic values for which the niqab is the expression. This will threat the project we are trying to build of secularism and coexistence of religions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab countries like Egypt</td>
<td>Due to the condition of anonymity that niqab impose, and because the highest Muslim authority; sheikh Mohamed Tantawi, dean of al-Azhar University; denied any relation of niqab to religion, the educational institutions with government’s permission banned wearing niqab since they have the right to verify the identity of their female students. Especially that there are delinquent individuals who could use niqab to illegally enter a dormitory or an examination hall to commit dishonest acts (Sherbini, 2009). The integrity of the educational process is valued.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminists groups</td>
<td>We have suffered a lot to gain freedom from male superiority, not to mention that we struggled even more to prove gender equality and witness its establishment being admitted and recognized. Niqab wearing is a brute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European countries</td>
<td>After intensive struggle to remove the authority of the church, our thinkers, philosophers, and intellectuals have developed comprehensive change in European ideas with the aim of uniting Europe under secular, liberal democratic society. We believe that wearing niqab represent a betrayal to the European history that endured a hard battle to insure freedom, democracy and equality which we value the most. Not to mention that due to the current active terrorism, niqab threatens the national’s security and public safety which are our core responsibilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The moderate immigrant Islamic leaders</td>
<td>As interpreters of Quran, we don’t approve of the niqab, yet we don’t mind if other Muslims wore it. We believe that the legislation of banning niqab would alienate moderate Muslims. And we value living together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The radical immigrant Muslims</td>
<td>As the only right interpreters of Quran, we believe that niqab is a requirement from God. So, we will fight this ban in national and international courts especially that we don’t mind our women to show their faces in critical places. It is a discrimination against Islam since niqab is a religious necessity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Rights Group</td>
<td>We, as defenders of human rights, acknowledge that there are women who are coerced into veiling themselves and that there are women who freely choose to wear the niqab. We are against the former and with the latter. But we are also against any measure that might restrict one’s right to manifest their religion beliefs unless there is a compelling and legitimate reason for that. Human rights should be promoted and protected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milany, the system practitioner</td>
<td>As a Christian and according to the moderate Muslims, I think that niqab is not a religion requirement. I believe that in this case immigrants just like the native people should obey the host countries’ rules. If they feel that their existence is being discriminated and isolated then it is better to leave the host country and go back to their homes. When someone decides to migrate they should make a thorough study of the host country they are considering to ensure that it fits and matches their beliefs and values. When it comes to immigration, integration is a value to be sought and respected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People against niqab ban</td>
<td>We can’t understand how a government that bans a certain form of dress is inherently any less oppressive than a one which demands it! The principle of banning is a clear violation of personal liberties. If we allow governments to decide how we dress ourselves, then we are allowing them to interfere in every private aspect in our lives. This means that our democracy is vanished, since we would not have the freedom of choice.</td>
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<tr>
<td>People with niqab ban</td>
<td>Niqab ban is not about making our homes less welcoming, but about stressing the values that unite us. It is a respect for ourselves and for those to whom we open our arms because accommodation can’t be granted unless it respects the principle of equality between men and women and the religious neutrality of the countries.</td>
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**The History Context of the Situation;**

Having looked at the situation holistically and then identifying the main parts of the situation, I aimed to investigate more about the history context of the situation in order to gain a helicopter view because I believe that nothing in the world is independent from its historical and social creation, a second order cybernetic (Blackmore et al, 2000). I discovered that niqab although linked to Islamic faith; its history actually predates Islam by thousands of years. And that niqab ban was made before by Reza Shah who prevented all variations of face veil in 1936, as incompatible with his modernizing ambitions. Between 1941 and 1979 wearing the niqab was no longer against the law, but it was considered by the government as a badge of backwardness. Fashionable hotels and restaurants refused to admit women with niqab. High schools and universities actively discouraged the niqab (Azzat, 2010). Furthermore, previous to 9/11/2001, the West or more specifically Europe, hardly thought of Islam or Muslims, but that has changed completely after the terrorist attacks on New York. It was said that those who planned and performed the attack were all Muslim fundamentalists who are against the West politics. So, governments in the West became more sensitive to Muslims and their religious practices. Therefore, the issue of niqab is based on different set of values and the reasons behind the ban are multiple and integrated. Moreover, this ban took place during the worst time ever, a time in which political suspicions of terroristic deeds was very legitimate in order for governments to secure and protect their nations, giving them a sort of alibi.
SWOT Analysis
Identifying the context history, the stakeholders, and their perspectives helped me in developing a SWOT analysis by which I can stem some issues and shortcomings.

Table 3: SWOT analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
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<tr>
<td>1) No agreement among Muslims on niqab being a religion requirement.</td>
<td>1) The Extremists Muslims are clingers to their values Specially those that are related to religion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) The West is armed with a culture of meaningful and desirable values like liberty, gender equality, democracy, etc.</td>
<td>2) The ban of niqab is in principle a violation of individual freedom of choice.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3) Extremists Muslims don’t represent the majority of Muslim immigrants</td>
<td>3) No clear and legitimate justification for niqab ban.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) The West is equipped with the best and recent technology advances which enable them to develop measures to identify hidden identities.</td>
<td>4) It can never be found out whether the woman is being forced to wear niqab or because she wants so.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Secularism doesn’t mean that religion is not acknowledged but that there is a clear separation between religion and governments.</td>
<td>5) Some of Muslims immigrants believe in male superiority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Moderate Muslims understand that the ban is for security concerns</td>
<td>6) The enactment of niqab wear hides the individual identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Radical Muslims women don’t mind to show their faces in check points.</td>
<td>7) The continual interference of Western countries in Eastern affairs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8) Stereotyping Muslims.</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
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<tr>
<td>1) Media is becoming a huge influential element.</td>
<td>1) The fear of spreading Extremist Muslims ideas among people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Technological Communication developments are advancing so quickly.</td>
<td>2) Terrorism deeds that might be made by fundamentals Muslims.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) The West is known of their acceptance of multiculturalism.</td>
<td>3) Riots, demonstration, and strikes from the Human Rights Group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) The deployment of good international relationships to clarify issues.</td>
<td>4) Possibility of negative affects with some Muslim countries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Issues, Gaps and Shortcomings

According to Jackson (1991), I can say that the stakeholders’ relationships or better said the participants’ relationships are complicated as they share diverse and conflict interests and values; however they all agree that security and safety of population should be appreciated. Thus, the relationship among them can be described to be complex pluralism. Since the issue of niqab is grounded on different values, then the motives to prevent niqab could be mistakenly interpreted, communicated, and understood. The issue of niqab ban is a doubled standard; while it aims to liberate oppressed women, it forces women not to wear niqab in spite of their wills. In addition to that, there is the fear of terrorism, crimes and assaults that might occur through nekab disguise. Also, there is the issue of measures that different governments ought to develop in order to protect their nations without being discriminatory against a minority. Not to mention, the gap of how the Muslim immigrants ought to respect the foreign countries’ values, beliefs, and norms and integrate especially that many countries banned nekab on the grounds of adopting secularism i.e. everyone’s keeps their religion to themselves. Another important issue is how governments could guarantee that banning niqab would not worsen the life of those women who are forced to wear it? Would they be forced to stay home and be furthered withdraw from societies by their husbands, brothers, and fathers? (Gouby, 2010), or by fears of being arrested? And, what about the negative consequences of not being able to benefit from public services like education, healthcare, etc.? Is banning niqab which has become a well-known symbol of the growing Muslim presence across Western countries which are immersed in traditions of secularism and Christianity would be as throwing oil on the fire (Cody, 2010)? Would this ban affect the lives of Christian people living in Muslim countries? The bottom line is that could governments contain the implications of banning niqab? The issues and gaps are related to human affairs and have the dimensions of conflicting cultures, power, and ethics. As such it is better to be addressed through Soft System Methodology.
Soft Systems Methodology as a Systemic Inquiry in the Niqab Issue

Soft systems Methodology is one of fewest methodologies that allow the embodiment of both objectivity and subjectivity especially if it is linked to the Hard System Method resulting in capturing both; the hard (physical) and soft (human activity) elements. Also it could be progressed to enable users as systems to co-evolve with their environments confining a third order process.

According to table 2 on pages 18, 19, 20 and the issues mentioned previously, I can stem out multiple transformations and root definitions of the different relevant systems of stakeholders. Each perceives the niqab issue in a different way and according to their world view. This will help me to come up with a conceptual model of the purposeful activity systems, and then debate about its cultural feasibility and systemic desirability with the other stakeholders, in order to reach accommodations that the different stakeholders can live with.

Figure 7: A model of transformations to illustrate how the inputs of the niqab issue are transformed into outputs according to the participants’ world views
Relevant Systems and Their Root Definitions with the help of CATWOE checklist

In relevance to the different transformations, I can deduce different relevant systems and their root definitions by the help of CATWOE checklist

C= refers to customers who can be the victims and the beneficiaries. So, the Moderate Muslims, the Radical Muslims, Human Right Group, actually all the stakeholders can be customers

A= refers to actors who would do the transformation. So, those who are involved in Media, employees of the governments, activists in Human Right Groups and Feminists, immigrant Muslims whose voices are heard and respected, and I am as systems practitioner can be actors in this problem situation.

T= refers to the transformation process which convert the input into output.

W= refers to the weltanschauungs. These are the worldviews that influence and shape the problem situation. They are mentioned in the previous page.

O= refers to the owner or owners who have control over the whole process. So, governments and holders of the different media types, plus the educational establishments can be the owners of the problem situation among many others like me the system practitioner i.e. the problem solver and the client who initiated the intervention. However, each of them is with different qualitative and quantitative amounts of power.

E= refers to the environmental constraints that exist outside the system of interest (Blackmore et al, 2000). Accordingly these could be the cultural, political, social, ethical, legal, economical factors.

Examples of relevant systems;

1) “Liberate oppressed women through effective media; so that; individual’s freedom of choice is achieved”.

Its root definition could be

1) A system that liberate oppressed women who are forced to wear niqab through the cooperation among government, media, educational entities and the deeds of all the activists of Human Right Group as well as those feminists so that individual’s freedom of choice and gender equality are achieved in countries that are characterized of being multiculturalism where different values can be conflicted.
2) “Limit the spread of Extremist Muslim ideas through banning all symbols of religion in public spaces and private educational establishments so that secularism is actualized to its fullest”.

Its root definition could be

2) A system that limit the spread of Extremist Muslims ideas by the help of law experts to introduce a governmental official law that prohibit wearing all symbols of religion in any public spaces and private educational establishment so that secularism on which the country is based is fully actualized in an environment where different religions practices may lead to problems and bring memories of bad time when the church was heavily interfering in the state affairs.

Another relevant system could be;

3) “Separate the connection of Islam and terrorism through media and educational campaigns to erase the so called Islamophobia”.

Its root definition could be

3) A system that separates the connection between Islam and the violent political ideology while showing that the values of Islam are of no contradictory with other cultures. This is done through media and educational campaigns with the help of moderate Islam leaders and respectful governmental Christian clerks so that the entire world knows that Islam is about pure faith and the so called Islamophobia is erased in countries that don’t appreciate or know the Muslim religion.

Another relevant system could be

4) “Foster the integration of Muslim immigrants through regulating and not banning the wear of mask on face. And by heavy civil education in which people learn to abide societies’ regulations. So resistance feelings or movements can be eliminated from the outset”.

Its root definition could be

4) A system that foster the integration of Muslim immigrants within the cultures of their host countries through regulating niqab wear and not banning it. This is done without getting into the details of whether the reasons behind this enactment of hiding identities are related to particular religion beliefs or to certain hidden political agendas. This also can be achieved through heavy civil education campaigns in all types of media, and educational
establishments, so that immigrants understand, respect, learn, and adopt the host societies’ regulations, values and norms in order to eliminate any resistance feelings and/or movements from the outset; particularly in countries where multi cultures co-exist and may not be compatible with each others.

Since integration within host countries societies means very much the respect of their values and norms and since this is done through education and the help of regulations without banning in order not to elicit the resistance nature of humans when they feel they are being discriminated or stereotyped, and because radical Muslims women don’t mind to show their faces at check points, I would like to use this root definition as a source for the conceptual model mostly because it involves implicitly the inclusion of appreciating cultures, values, secularism, religion and politics.

Figure 8: The Conceptual Model
Comparing, Debating, and Iterating
Comparing the conceptual model of the relevant system; a system to foster the integration of Muslims immigrants within the culture of their host countries; with the real life situation would help to find ideas for change and then debate about their feasibility and desirability with the other stakeholders. However, if I found that there was no much agreement about this conceptual model I will iterate back to compare the other relevant systems and their models of operational sub-systems with the rich picture to find out more about changes. Again I will structure a debate about their feasibility and desirability in order to attain some accommodation in which the different stakeholders can live with. This would achieve two important things; first it would assure the participation element and the appreciation of the different perspectives hence being systemic and second it would assert the purposeful behavior which would lead to purposeful activity since all the stakeholders were willingly involved.
Table 4: Illustrates comparison and debates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conceptual model</th>
<th>Real world</th>
<th>Comparison and ideas for change</th>
<th>Debate about the systemic desirability and cultural feasibility changes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) A system to foster the integration of Muslim immigrants within the culture of their host countries.</td>
<td>There is a sense of discrimination and alienation.</td>
<td>There is a gap between the real world and how it ought to be</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Impose regulations concerning hiding identities.</td>
<td>The regulation revolves only around banning niqab in public spaces, and imposing fines</td>
<td>There is an idea for change</td>
<td>This is culturally feasible and systemically desirable. Especially that it does not involve the term ban which entails resistance. Yet it requires heavy research and legal experts to identify the types of regulations and the measures required. For example how faire the fine is, or/and would be there a measures of pulling the national passport from citizens who don’t obey the regulations, or even would jail be an option too. And if so, how many are the fines to cause someone to be arrested.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.2 Identify the critical places where regulation should be imposed

| There are identification about critical places but there is ban and not regulation |
| There is an idea for change |
| It is systemically desirable and culturally feasible but with some conservatism. This is because it means that there are other places where identities can be hidden and as such; how can we guarantee that there will not be terrorism attack even if the place is not critical. Furthermore, crimes and assault can be committed through niqab disguise. But this can be managed through allocating check points in places of possible crowd to avoid terrorism deeds. |

1.3) decide angles like gender equality, secularism, liberty, and other important values to focus on within the content of the civil educational curriculum and media campaign.

| There is educational civil in schools, but with no specific emphases. And there is no civil educational media campaign. |
| There is idea for change |
| It is culturally feasible and systemically desirable. However, this would entail time consuming and requires professional specialists. Not to mention the need to allocate financial budget. |
1.4 launch concentrated civil educational curriculum in educational establishment.

There is civil educational curriculum in educational establishment but they are taken for granted and they need updating.

There is an idea for change

It is culturally feasible and systemically desirable. Our young future generation whether natives or immigrants would benefit from such act. This would foster our unity and enable immigrants to integrate more within our culture. Yet, some certain measures should be made to insure that it is not taken for granted like the determination of certain grades to pass the subject, or put certain incentives to encourage our students to learn about civics with enthusiasm. Again this would require experts and specialists.

1.5 Launch heavy civil educational campaign in all types of media.

There is no heavy civil educational campaign in all types of media

There is an idea for change

It is culturally feasible and systemically desirable. This is because the civil education would reach to everyone and will not be excluded to students. However, this would require certain financial budget.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.4 launch concentrated civil educational curriculum in educational establishment.</th>
<th>There is civil educational curriculum in educational establishment but they are taken for granted and they need updating.</th>
<th>There is an idea for change</th>
<th>It is culturally feasible and systemically desirable. Our young future generation whether natives or immigrants would benefit from such act. This would foster our unity and enable immigrants to integrate more within our culture. Yet, some certain measures should be made to insure that it is not taken for granted like the determination of certain grades to pass the subject, or put certain incentives to encourage our students to learn about civics with enthusiasm. Again this would require experts and specialists.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Launch heavy civil educational campaign in all types of media.</td>
<td>There is no heavy civil educational campaign in all types of media</td>
<td>There is an idea for change</td>
<td>It is culturally feasible and systemically desirable. This is because the civil education would reach to everyone and will not be excluded to students. However, this would require certain financial budget.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After debating with the stakeholders, we found that this conceptual model would not be enough to foster the Muslim integration in their host countries. So, I thought that it would be better if I constructed a debate about the other relevant systems with their different conceptual models; after all it is a situation of interest and not just a system of interest; so that I can select all the activities that the stakeholders can live with since they are both systemically desirable
and culturally feasible in an attempt to reach to accommodations between the different and multiple interests.

Table 5: Illustrates the comparison of the other relevant systems with their activities so I can select the activities that are agreed on from the multiple perspectives in order to draw a purposeful activity system to show it to my client.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2) A system to liberate oppressed women who are forced to wear niqab.</th>
<th>There is a gap between the model and real life.</th>
<th>There is an idea for change</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1 use educational institutions and media to spread the merits of gender equality and freedom of choice.</td>
<td>The use of media and educational institutions is weak in this matter.</td>
<td>There is an idea for change</td>
<td>Feasible and desirable. However, there is a need for certain amount of money to launch those merits in media and also employ specialists to write the appropriate curriculums in educational institutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Teach women how to appreciate their own self worth and not to be defined or dressed purely for the benefit of men.</td>
<td>There are some women who do that but not all</td>
<td>There is an idea for change</td>
<td>It is culturally feasible and systemically desirable provided that women themselves are willing to change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Spread the negative social consequences of wearing niqab</td>
<td>The social consequences are well known but not enough spread</td>
<td>There is an idea for change</td>
<td>Feasible and desirable but its usefulness would depend on whether the Salafi followers view the fake communication and uncomfortable movements as negative consequences or trivial sacrifices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 conduct religious campaigns to show that niqab is not a religion requirement but a custom.</td>
<td>There is no much of this religious campaigns</td>
<td>There is an idea for change.</td>
<td>desirable and feasible provided that the Salafi don’t consider this as an attack on their beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 organize movements that demonstrate the accomplishments of many liberated women in their social and /or career life to reveal that women are capable of leading a successful life.</td>
<td>There is no act of such movement</td>
<td>There is an idea for change</td>
<td>Feasible and desirable. Specially that it will make oppressed women to feel challenged and as such would rebel against the suppression.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) A system that separate the connection between Islam and the violent political ideology.</td>
<td>In the West there are some connection between extremist Muslims and terrorism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Develop Muslim religion programs to show that Islam is about pure religion faith and have nothing to do with terrorism.</td>
<td>There are no such programs</td>
<td>There is an idea for change</td>
<td>Feasible and desirable specially that there is democracy in the West and they are open countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 organize peaceful Islamic demonstration to show the refusal for any violent political attack that might occur</td>
<td>There is no such demonstration</td>
<td>There is an idea for change</td>
<td>Feasible and desirable especially that the demonstration will be peaceful. This will prove Islam civilization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 spread the values of Islam to show that they are of no contradictory to the host culture’s values</td>
<td>Such effort is so little</td>
<td>There is an idea for change</td>
<td>Feasible and desirable and it will not take long time before the natives realize that such religion is so far from being connected to terrorism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 organize TV’s talk shows in which Muslim leaders and respectful governmental clerks are side by side and are gathered under the country’s unity</td>
<td>There is no such talk shows programs</td>
<td>There is an idea for change</td>
<td>Feasible and desirable but this needs certain arrangements like selecting powerful governmental clerks and prominent Muslim leaders so that the program is effective.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
#### 3.5 invite Muslim religious personnel to explain that radical Islam do not represent the belief system of Islam

There is no such effort

There is an idea for change

Feasible and desirable provided that this will not lead to a problem between the moderate and the radical. So, awareness of how explanation should be verbalized is very important.

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**Figure 9:** Another conceptual model that portrays the purposeful activity systems in which Muslims integration can be fostered.
Control Model and Managing Complexity

From the debate I was able to set a goal and draw a control model to insure that the system would work as expected.

Figure 9: The control closed loop model
The term managing involves four main functions: (1) planning i.e. setting the specific goal and decide how to achieve it, (2) organizing i.e. arranging people and tasks, (3) leading i.e. motivating people to work hard to achieve the goal, and (4) controlling i.e. monitoring the system and making corrective actions as needed. Yet, as a systems practitioner who appreciates system thinking and practice, managing for me is not only about those functions but also it is tightly linked to managing oneself, engagement, and approaching. As such, it involves juggling the four balls: B, E, C, M. This means that I should be aware of how to manage my practice i.e. will it be intervention or more as interaction, would it be deciding for stakeholders by considering them to be passive, and neglecting how they perceive the situation of interest and telling them what they should do. This is because I view the situation as a system that exists out there in the world in which I can engineer regardless of any consideration to ethics since I am being objective. As a result I will be the one who learns about issues in the situation, and learn more about my practice, in other words, by conducting first order process where the outcome is less or more about the same thing; or I will choose to interact with the key stakeholders, understand how they view the problem situation and how it is affecting their lives; so I act ethically and choose to decide with them in a participatory manner where they too become responsible, and conduct second order process in which the outcome is a change of the whole system and the learning occurs for both of us: the stakeholders and I. Even better I decide to enable the stakeholders to decide for themselves by giving away the thinking that underpins the approach or methodology I use and illustrate its weaknesses and strengths so that they can decide whether to use it in possible future situations or not. In turn, both of us become co-learners, and co-evolver with our environments. Because I view the niqab issue to be managed in terms of sustainable development, I will choose to manage my practice by enabling the stakeholders to decide. This is much more in tune with sustainability which entails the ability to adapt and adjust. This consequently requires learning how to learn in order to truly reach advancement and development.
The Culture Stream-based Analysis

From the beginning I hypothetically played the role of problem solver for being the system practitioner in the niqab problem situation, I will continue this pretention and assume that I have received an invitation to play this role from the client, who could be for example any of the involved governments, or Human Right Groups, or even any concerned political or religious institutions. However, power intensity and its practice would be different in each condition and this is a very important point to be taken into consideration as it will affect and influence the whole process of management. This acknowledgment would make me more aware of the amount of pressure that might be exerted upon me and upon other stakeholders. Usually, it is up to the problem solver i.e. I am; to decide who would be the problem owner and it is always better to include the problem solver and the client in the list of the possible problem owners who usually are many, because they are viewed to be the best sources of the relevant systems. Actually that is what I did to come up with those relevant systems; I have put myself in the position of the clients and perceived the problem situation from their point of view. Accordingly I tried to illustrate the cultural analysis in the comparison and debate table.
Client Report

Dear Government;

I would like to thank you for inviting me to investigate and intervene in the niqab problem situation. After engaging I found out that there are many key stakeholders who are involved deeply in this situation and that everyone has their own opinion and interest which are not only different from each other but may also be contradictory and this has worsened the situation even more. I used soft system methodology to appropriately unearth and approach this complexity due to the heavy existence of human interrelations. The stakeholders and I were able to reach some certain accommodations among the different interests which can improve the problem or at least minimize its negative properties.

I recommend turning the niqab ban legislation into niqab regulation. This would have great deal in alleviating resistance, after all choosing suitable linguistic words proved to be very effective and beneficial in influencing people’s mode. Particularly that those who wear niqab don’t mind to show their faces when they are legally asked. The regulation would entail recruiting legal experts to identify suitable measures. Also, a need to allocate the critical times and places where regulation’s imposition should be applied; this would be accompanied by developing check points in areas where there is fear from any terrorism, assault and crime deeds and places where gatherings might exist like cinemas, sports event, etc. In addition, I suggest investing heavily in civil education curriculum and in using all types of prominent media to promote the country’s culture with huge emphasis on the secular values and their meanings. Through doing that, Muslim minority would not consider niqab regulation as a discriminatory act against them but as a natural complementary to which the country is based on. And the young generations in educational institutions as well as the Muslim immigrants would appreciate more the promoted values and integrated easier within your country’s culture. Yet, I would like to drag your attention that if you choose to apply what I have recommended, the appearance of the hoped results will take time before they come to light. But, there are other suggestions that can faster the integration of Muslim immigrants. These can be summarized by effective cooperation between your role as a government and the role of respectful Islam leaders. This cooperation may involve using the media to organize TV’s talk shows where governmental clerks and Muslims leaders are side by side and are gathered under the country’s unity showing that the values of Islam are not of contradictory to yours.
Moreover, you can invite Muslim religious personnel to explain that the fundamentalists Muslims do not represent the belief system of Islam; I have attached a copy of the two models of activity systems you can consider to actualize fostering integration. Such activities will have double benefits; the natives would be more tolerant with the immigrants, and the Muslim immigrants would feel that the host country is really opening its arm for them. This in turn would accelerate the integration more as Muslim immigrants would be comfortable to do so. After all integration in a certain culture can never happen by force, it is a willing activity.

Sincerely

Milany Saliba Hajj
### The Log Frame

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Satisfy my curiosity about niqab issue while managing its complexity and assess my ability to be an aware and effective system practitioner through the feedback of my supervisor, also insure that I gain learning. Not to mention the guarantee of my graduation.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Finish the tutor report, client report and log frame before the due time and receive the feedback from my supervisor, and ensure that I have learned something. As well as receive my major degree from the Open University.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Outputs | 1) Tutor report is made  
2) Client report is made  
3) Received feedback from my supervisor  
4) Learning  
5) Received my certificate from the Open University |
| Activities 1.1 | Describing the problem situation of niqab  
1.1.1 collecting enough information about niqab issue through the use of internet  
1.1.2 Review T205 in order to draw systems diagrams  
1.1.3 Drawing spray diagram and rich picture  
1.1.4 Surfacing my interests in the problem situation  
Those are covered in the first week and involve juggling the B-ball; Being aware of the situation and being aware that I am till now an observer. |
1.2 Engaging further in the niqab problem situation

- 1.2.1 Reading more articles in the internet about niqab
- 1.2.2 Asking relatives, friends, and acquaintances about their perspectives in the issue. Also, findings out how the women wearing niqab feel and view the niqab ban issue.
- 1.2.3 Investigate more about the history context of niqab problem situation
- 1.2.4 Review rich picture to add more findings
- 1.2.5 Identify key stakeholders involved in niqab issue
- 1.2.6 Organizing and structuring my thinking by drawing system map, and recognize the different influential relationships by drawing influence diagram.
- 1.2.7 In addition I draw multiple casual, and sign graph to realize the processes within my situation of interest.
- 1.2.8 I unearth my epistemological traditions of knowing through comparing the strengths and weaknesses of SSM and HSM.

Those are covered in the second week and involve juggling the E-ball and iteration to the B-ball at the same time.

1.3 Contextualization

- 1.3.1 Choose the SSM to approach my situation of interest
- 1.3.2 Adapt the methodology to fit appropriately the problem situation
- 1.3.3 Develop transformations according to the different world views’ of the key stakeholders.
- 1.3.4 Develop relevant systems and their root definition through the use of CATWOE checklist.
- 1.3.5 Build the model of relevant purposeful activity system that is stemmed from the root definition.
- 1.3.6 Reflect again on the rich picture and the model to insure that I was not biased to my own perspective and that the model covers the minimum set of necessary activities that would satisfy the root definition.
- 1.3.6 conduct culture based stream analysis
- 1.3.7 Construct a structured debate through a table of comparison between the model and the real life problem situation and identifying ideas for change while
debating about their culture feasibility and systemic desirability. Those are covered in the third week and involve juggling the C-ball, and iteration to the B-ball and E-ball

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.4</th>
<th>Managing the complexity of niqab ban</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.4.1 Drawing control model diagram according to what the debate ended up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.4.2 Monitor, communicate feedback, and control.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.4.3 Considering how to manage my engagement with the other stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.4.4 Choosing the option of enabling deciding for stakeholders through giving away the thinking that underpins the methodology which is used to approach the problem situation. And illustrating the strengths and weaknesses of the methodology so that they can use it in future situation (Blackmore et al, 2000). Those are covered in the fourth and the early days of the fifth week. This involves juggling the four balls M, E, C, and B.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.1</th>
<th>Writing the client report</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.1.1 Decide to whom I should address my report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.1.2 Write the report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Those are covered in the rest of the fifth week.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3.1</th>
<th>Receiving the feedback from my supervisor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.1 Wait until I receive the comments and feed back to know if I were aware and effective system practitioner.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4.1</th>
<th>Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.1.1 I reflected on the way I used SSM and I found that I used it in mode 2 instead of mode 1. I even allowed myself to adapt mode2 when instead of debating the conceptual model I debate the relevant systems with their conceptual models to attain not only the accommodation but also to select the desirable and feasible activities from the different perspective. This has made me appreciated SSM even more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.1.2 I reflected on the way I managed my engagement and I found that I used enabling stakeholders to decide instead of deciding for. The latter is easier though. So I was ethical enough not to think of my own interest but also of others interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.1.3 I reflected on the first conceptual model and I found that although it is not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5.1</strong></td>
<td><strong>Receive my diploma</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.1.1 Study well block 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.1.2 Review well block 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.1.3 Set for the final exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.1.4 Wait the result</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

totally close to how I view niqab issue, yet the fact that I choose the relevant system of fostering immigrants’ integration makes me doubt little my ethicality on this matter. So, next time I would be more careful particularly if my supervisor confirmed this issue.
A review summary
I can still remember my first and second session of T205 course when I said to myself “Oh my
God, this will not be an easy course, what’s all this talk about diagrams, models, rich pictures?
What do they have to do with business?!?” but now and after studying T306 in its two parts I
came to understand the importance of system thinking and practice. Yes it was true when I
doubted the worth of the courses in relation to business because they go far beyond it. They
are about everything in our lives not only one aspect. It is true that these courses are rich with
sophisticated and educational terms like first order, second order, boundaries, environment,
emergent, awareness, reflection, embodiment, systemic, holistic etc. but I came to believe that
those terms are not new; we exhibit them in each and every minute during our lives. The
courses only put them in a frame where we can’t any more take them for granted due to their
significant consequence. As they allow us to ethically change the situation of interest in a way
that permits it to escape the trap of complexity. In addition, they enlighten me to appreciate
differences and not to judge them; as the dialectic of variation gives rise to creativity and
emergent. Even, I started to value varieties much more because they provide more options to
be thought of in managing real life issues. My understanding of ethicality has changed, it is
not only about not to lie, not to steal, or not to do bad things in general, but it is also about
how one chooses to view the world and approaches it. It is not only about me and my deeds,
but it is about me and others, about giving the chance for each other to respond back and
become responsible. The courses provided me with the opportunity to braid the theories I have
studied in classes with the practice in real life issues so that a synergy can be brought up. This
synergy or emergent is summarized by learning, and I acknowledge that learning can never
end; because the more you know, the more you change, and the more you change, the more
you know, the cycle doesn’t end, and it continues to go on. I truly wish that there are more of
such courses not only because of the preceded comprehension but also because they sincerely
reduce the gap between espoused knowledge and knowledge in use and as such we can really
be better people in living our lives as well as in conducting our work.
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