

EXAMINING THE INTEGRATION AND INCLUSION OF SYRIAN REFUGEES THROUGH THE LENS OF PERSONAL CONSTRUCT PSYCHOLOGY

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In this article, we discuss the usefulness of Personal Construct Psychology (PCP) to examine the integration and inclusion of Syrian refugees, who are facing an urgent humanitarian crisis. As Syrians are fleeing their country and seeking asylum in Europe and North America, online transnational conversations are bursting with debates between people who wish to accept them and people who reject them. We discuss how Kelly's (1955) PCP theory sheds light on the issues, through the lens of people's constructs. We consider the postulate and eleven corollaries and identify their applicability to possible constructs regarding the crisis.

Keywords: Personal construct psychology, inclusion, integration, Syrian refugees, host society, transnational online environments.

INTRODUCTION

Almost everybody has heard of the influx of Syrian refugees in North America and Europe through online interactions, including posts and comments in social media. These refugees face an urgent humanitarian situation: they can no longer live in their country. Once they arrive in their host societies, they face integration barriers and inclusion issues, making their situation worse. The problem facing Syrian refugees is complex beyond what the eye can see. The fact that they are settling imposes pressure on them to change in order to become integrated. What has been neglected so far in this whole situation is that the environment needs to change as well to include them.

Personal Construct Psychology (PCP) provides “a framework that is simultaneously compassionate and accepting of alternative constructions of reality, and dispassionate in providing a set of methods for mapping and analyzing interpersonal problems and group polarizations” (Procter & Procter, 2008, pp.353-354). In this paper, we present George Kelly's PCP as a lens to examine the integration and inclusion of Syrian refugees. While both concepts might appear to be the same at first glance, they are signifi-

cantly different: integration occurs when newcomers adjust; and inclusion occurs when the host society adjusts. In an ideal situation, both groups need to engage in change.

We expose how Kelly's PCP can help identify the core issues to address regarding the settlement of Syrian refugees. Using PCP places the individual in the position of a knowing subject who uses his/her experiences and construct systems to anticipate the future. This is the fundamental assumption of this paper and we are cautioning the reader that we base our reasoning on Kelly's fundamental postulate and the underlying corollaries.

KELLY'S PCP APPLIED TO SYRIAN REFUGEES' SETTLEMENT

The aim of personal constructs, put at its most pious, is liberation through understanding.

(Bannister & Fransella, 1971, p.201)

Originating from George Kelly's experience in psychotherapeutic practice, and detailed in his two volumes of ‘The Psychology of Personal Constructs’ (1955), Personal Construct Psychology (PCP) is a “theory of human personality, a

therapeutic approach and a research methodology” (Brown & Chiesa, 1990, p. 411) that aims to help individuals develop an understanding of their own understanding (Bannister & Fransella, 1971) and reconstrue their lives (Kelly, 1955). In 1955, PCP rejected the historic dichotomy between cognition and emotion, and positioned individuals at the helm of their behaviors, views and attitudes in response to events they encountered (Björklund, 2008), as opposed to a role, defined by influential currents in psychology, as passive victims of their past, their ego, their unconsciousness, their needs, external stimuli, reinforcements or their quest for pleasure. According to Kelly, we do not respond to a stimulus, we respond to our interpretation or construal of a stimulus. For instance, while many debate the influence of media on the everyday choices we make, Kelly would have argued that we control how the media affect us through our construal of its messages, and not the other way around. Similarly, we can apply this logic to how the construct systems that we use control our interpretation of online interactions about Syrian refugees, which influences our processes.

In the sections that follow, we start by presenting the overarching view of [wo]man-the-scientist – the basis of PCP. Second, we discuss PCP’s fundamental postulate and eleven corollaries, and we apply them to the context of the Syrian refugees’ settlement. Last, we examine how PCP explains the concept of change, central to the integration and the inclusion of Syrian refugees in new environments.

[Wo]Man-The-Scientist

Kelly acknowledges the existence of a ‘reality’ outside the individual, but asserts that contact with this reality will never be interpretation-free (Bannister & Fransella, 1971). In order for any element in the world to be significant, it has to be construed by a person (Kelly, 1955; Procter, 1978). Kelly explains that we, similar to scientists, have theories of our reality. We hypothesize what will happen and then we test our predictions or anticipations through the behaviors we adopt, similar to scientists engaged in experiments (Boeree, 2006).

Through the lens of PCP, our hypotheses are generated from ‘constructs’ – patterns or tem-

plates that are “at once perceptual, emotional, concerned with action, narrative and, of course, personal” (Procter, 2009, p.1). We create constructs based on our interpretation of ‘elements’ – a thing, an event, an instance of occurrence, a situation, a person, a feeling, or any entity we have contact with – and then we use constructs to perceive and understand the world in an attempt to anticipate events and control them (Kelly, 1955). Further, constructs have “trans-contextual identities” (Hinkle, 1965, 2010, p.10); their meaning depends on their context.

Kelly (1969) argues that “all of our present interpretations of the universe are subject to revision or replacement” (p. 94) – which he called constructive alternativism – and that our behavior is our strategy of inquiry (Bannister & Fransella, 1971; Chiari & Nuzzo, 2003) about ourselves, other people and the world we live in (Bannister, 2003). We validate our constructs by using the feedback we receive to improve our understanding of our reality and confirm or modify our initial theory.

In Kelly’s perspective, prediction and validation are two very distinct and interdependent concepts. As Kelly (1991) states, “to predict is to construe movement or trend among surrounding events” (p.86). These predictions are specific to situations as “the particular movement construed is always a construct tailor-made for a particular situation (...)” (p.86). However, the predictions are also shaped by the convergence of relevant constructs: “time, the movement construct, and the coordinate readings of the hypothetical event”. Once a prediction is constituted, Kelly explains that validation occurs when we “see whether any event falls smack on this imaginary point so as to fulfil all of its presupposed conditions.” (Ibid., p.86)

For instance, a large number of citizens from host societies predict that if Syrian refugees enter their countries, they will consume the tax payers’ money, abuse all the services offered to them and impose their own culture. Consequently, they express their frustration online. Let us call this group *Host Society First* (HSF). HSF perceives an ‘if-then’ relationship between the refugees’ arrival and the ramifications HSF will have to endure. However, this is more than a one-to-one relationship between the arrival of refugees and the influence it will have on the HSF’s lives. To predict the ramifications, HSF

has to construe a variety of events, namely the refugees' cultural background, the situation that led them to flee their homes, the value they place on the opportunity they have to live in host countries, their expectations from the host countries' government and society, and their understanding of their responsibilities towards the host society. HSF will also have to consider their previous experiences with refugees, namely the circumstances which surrounded previous influxes of refugees, the ramifications they engendered, and the conflicting online discourses and interactions that attempted to explain and analyze the Syrian refugees' crisis. In a perspective that resembles Kelly's, we argue that from these events HSF will abstract a trend or a 'construct' – "a way in which some things are construed as being alike and yet different from others" (Kelly, 1991, p.74) – and will use it to reach negative forecasts or positive expectations. 'Canadian identity/ Canadians first', 'supportive/antagonist', 'refugee/terrorist', and 'assets to the Canadian economy/abusers of tax payers' money' are examples of constructs we elicited from opinions shared online in petitions launched to support or object the settlement of Syrian refugees. Such constructs are found in a wide array of online petitions, notably the "Stop resettling 25,000 Syrian refugees in Canada" petition

(<http://www.thepetitionsite.com/790/431/152/stop-settling-25000-syrian-refugees-in-canada/>).

HSF's construct will be validated or invalidated based on whether its predictions take place or not. Kelly (1991) explains, "validation represents the compatibility (subjectively construed) between one's prediction and the outcome he observes. Invalidation represents incompatibility (subjectively construed) between one's prediction and the outcome he observes" (p.110). In order to validate its prediction, HSF must interact with Syrian refugees or observe their behavior. However, these refugees are people too, and they will act based on the theories and predictions they establish about the host society, and they will look for validation through observing the host society's behavior. This leads us to what Kelly calls a 'spiraliform' model (ibid., p.66) – "our construction system subsumes the construction systems of others and theirs, in part, subsume ours." (ibid., p.66) We will discuss the

'spiraliform' model further in the 'Sociality Corollary' section.

Kelly recognizes an epistemological issue that lies in our capacity to evaluate adequately our knowledge when our knowledge originates from our subjective construal of the world (Adams-Webber, 1989). In response to this problem Kelly suggests to use the constructs' predictive efficiency as criterion for evaluating their adequacy. In other words, our construal is adequate if it successfully serves as a useful axis of reference for determining our future behaviors and for reviewing previous ones (Ibid.).

The Syrian refugees' settlement through the lens of Kelly's fundamental postulate and eleven corollaries

In this section we illustrate the fundamental postulate of Personal Construct Psychology and its eleven corollaries using examples from current events related to the settlement of the Syrian refugees in host countries such as Canada.

Through his fundamental postulate, "a person's processes are psychologically channelized by the ways in which he anticipates events" (Kelly, 1991, p.32), Kelly assumes that our processes – thoughts, feelings and behaviors – operate in a structured manner and are determined by our predictions of the future. Seen through the lens of this postulate, members of the host society who demonstrate racialized habitus and anticipate real or symbolic threats from the Syrian refugees will feel frustrated and assertively oppose their settlement. Conversely, Syrian refugees who anticipate exclusion from their Canadian counterparts might choose to avoid them, distance themselves, or worse, create a self-fulfilling prophecy by adopting a stereotypical behavior that validates unfounded mistrust expressed by the host society (Amichai-Hamburger et al., 2015).

Construction corollary: *A person anticipates events by construing their replications* (Kelly, 1991, p.35)

We interpret events and their replications, identify their characteristics, similarities and contrasts and determine recurring patterns or templates

that we call ‘constructs’ and use to predict future events. Consider the recent terrorist attacks on Paris and Brussels and the sexual assaults in Cologne. Many members of the online transnational environments predict similar calamities in other parts of the world where refugees have resettled, and claim that host societies’ female youth could be at risk of being raped by Muslim refugees. In the “Stop Settling 25000 Syrian Refugees in Canada” petition, one supporter expresses his concern about Muslims by warning other Canadians that what has happened in Europe will automatically come to Canada: “Please look to Europe, the mass murders, mass rapes that are being committed by Muslims every day. (...) Canadians, especially women, will not be safe to walk the street alone without fear of being harassed or raped. We’ve seen this happening already. Please wake up Canada before it’s too late.”

(<http://www.thepetitionsite.com/790/431/152/stop-settling-25000-syrian-refugees-in-canada/>)

In contrast, other members look back on the atrocities that the Jews endured in the 1930s during the rise of Hitler in Germany, and the refusal of the Canadian government to admit Jewish refugees in the country, which cost many lives. They compare these atrocities to the events in Syria, and anticipate similar consequences to Syrian refugees if they are refused entry to Canada or other host countries. A supporter to the “Petition in Favor of Welcoming Syrian Refugees to Canada” writes: “Those who instigated the Paris attack were mainly residents of Europe, not refugees. We have yet to get over the shame of turning away Jewish refugees out of fear of German spies”

(<https://www.change.org/p/petition-in-favour-of-welcoming-syrian-refugees-to-canada/c/336691058>)

Individuality corollary: Persons differ from each other in their constructions of events (Kelly, 1991, p.38)

We all live in the same world yet our personal interpretation of its events makes this world unique to each one of us (Brown & Chiesa, 1990). Bannister (2003) observes “this central idea offers its own explanation for the mysterious but everyday fact that people respond to the

same situation in very different ways” (p.34). While most Canadian citizens followed the same online updates on the unfortunate Paris attacks and Cologne assaults, two camps emerged: ‘an against settlement camp’ and a ‘for settlement camp’. Members of the former group construed these atrocities as accurate representations of the Syrian refugees’ and the Muslim immigrants’ intentions. Members of the latter group however, construed these acts as similarly targeting refugees and Muslims, and considered this population as victim.

Organization corollary: Each person characteristically evolves, for his convenience in anticipating events, a construction system embracing ordinal relationships between constructs (Kelly, 1991, p.39)

Constructs are personal, and their orders, arrangements and implications, the links between them, and when and how they are used are also personal (Kelly, 1955). They constitute a system in which some are deemed central and, in most cases, fall under personal values (Jankowicz, 2001; Kelly, 1955), some subsume others and are dubbed ‘superordinal’, and others are subsumed by another and thus become subordinal. Hinkle (1965) adds that “with the exception of the constructs at the top and bottom of a hierarchy, all other constructs are both superordinate and subordinate” (p.8). For instance, most Canadian citizens use a construct such as ‘European/Arab’ when dealing with newcomers. After the Paris attacks, many users of online transnational environments adopted more central constructs such as ‘Canadian’s warmth or empathy/Canadians first’ to voice their opinion and anticipation in regards to the arrival of the Syrian refugees. Others used superordinal constructs such as ‘humane/inhumane’. The order of their construct in the system influenced the nature of the anticipations they shared online.

Dichotomy corollary: A person’s construction system is composed of a finite number of dichotomous constructs (Kelly, 1991, p.41)

Constructs are bipolar (Kelly, 1955). The likeness or emergent pole represents the way in

which the elements are perceived similar in a specific aspect. The contrasting pole or the implicit pole represents the way in which elements are perceived different in regards to the same aspect. The dichotomy is personal, which prevents some from accessing the thinking of others. For instance, the conventional opposite of 'unsafe' is 'safe' however, for many Quebecois the opposite of 'unsafe' is 'secular' (Dhamoon, 2013).

Choice corollary: A person chooses for himself that alternative in a dichotomized construct through which he anticipates the greater possibility for extension and definition of his system (Kelly, 1991, p.45).

We are constantly choosing between the alternatives we set for our constructs, and we lean towards the direction that increases the total meaning of our life (Hinkle, 1965). Our decision aims to better help us anticipate events, elaborate our construction system and influence our behavior. Consider this quote from "Stop Settling 25000 Syrian Refugees in Canada" petition: "I want to help the Syrian people, but I don't want my family get blown up. I really want to believe that these are all good people, but then again I don't want my family blown up. So call me a selfish pussy, I still don't want my family getting hurt" (<http://www.thepetitionsite.com/790/431/152/stop-settling-25000-syrian-refugees-in-canada/>).

Through the expression of such concerns, this person chooses the security of his family over saving Syrian refugees who are associated to terrorist attacks. Through the choices we make we strive to control our future. Kelly explains that our choices could arise from our goal to protect ourselves from potential harm. In accordance with his line of thought, when the host society chooses the terrorist pole instead of the refugee pole, they could be acting in a perspective of self-protection.

Range Corollary: A construct is convenient for the anticipation of a finite range of events only (Kelly, 1991, p.48).

A construct is limited to specific events (Jankowicz, 2001). For instance, when arguing

about the right for Syrian refugees to receive governmental support, the construct 'good for the economy/ wasting tax money' can be applied to comments shared online. One supporter who signed the "Stop settling 25000 Syrian Refugees in Canada" petition shared the following comment: "I am a hard working Canadian woman and have always contributed and paid more than my fair share of taxes. Every year at tax time the government tells me I haven't paid enough and takes more. When I see this type of spending it frustrates me immensely. I do feel for these people, but I also believe that we can do other things to help"

(<http://www.thepetitionsite.com/790/431/152/stop-settling-25000-syrian-refugees-in-canada/>).

Another supporter signed the "I Welcome Refugees" petition and shared: "I work with numerous people who have come here fleeing their war torn homes and have made Canada their new home. They contribute to our economy and become members of our communities. Stop the hate" (<https://www.change.org/p/i-welcome-refugees/c/336780922>). When referring to the range corollary, any productive Canadian citizen would find it absurd to apply the 'good for the economy/wasting tax money' construct to his/her right to receive governmental support.

Experience Corollary: A person's construction system varies as he successively construes the replication of events (Kelly, 1991, p.50)

Bannister and Fransella (1971) explain: "Kelly repeatedly pointed out that we can have ten experiences if we reconstrue each time, or else have one experience repeated ten times if we fail to reconstrue" (p.114). In other words, in order to describe an occurrence as an 'experience', elements of the occurrence should be construed and used to either validate an anticipation or review it. The experience we get modifies our personal construct system. Prejudiced individuals fall under the category of those who neglect the construal of events and opt for pre-emptive constructs (Fransella, 2003). For instance, for some, Muslims are extremists and cannot be other than extremists, regardless how many varied contacts they may have had with any of them.

Modulation corollary: *The variation in a person's construction system is limited by the permeability of the constructs within whose ranges of convenience the variants lie* (Kelly, 1991, p.54)

A construct is permeable if it can embrace new elements. For example, host societies who are convinced that Syrian refugee settlement is a threat to the security of their countries would not consider a construct such as *personal relationship/professional relationship* when discussing potential future relationships with these newcomers. One user expressed his refusal to any kind of relationship through sharing this comment: "No Syrian rapists and terrorists in Canada! Stop this madness now!" (<http://www.thepetitionsite.com/790/431/152/sto-p-settling-25000-syrian-refugees-in-canada/>).

Once host societies encounter Syrian refugees, their predictions are put to the test and the construct that they assumed impermeable could become permeable and becomes applicable to newcomers. Conversely, Syrian refugees who read such comments and interpret them as excluding would anticipate minimal relationship with the host society and keep their distance. Their construct *personal relationship / professional relationship* could be permeable to members of the host society who are publically and actively engaged in the settlement of newcomers but would be impermeable to the remaining members of the host society. Once the Syrian refugees meet their counterparts from the host society in classrooms or work environments and witness some welcoming behaviours, their anticipation is revisited and the assumed impermeable construct becomes permeable and includes host society members from these contexts.

Fragmentation corollary: *A person may successively employ a variety of construction subsystems, which are inferentially incompatible with each other* (Kelly, 1991, p.58)

In this corollary Kelly states that inconsistency between personal construct sub-systems is tolerated (Bannister, & Fransella, 1971), which explains the inconsistency between the different

roles we play in life (Boeree, 2006). A refugee youth could adapt to his/her host society peers' culture when he/she is with them, dresses like them, listens and dances to their music and enjoys their activities. He/she could play a different role when he/she is with his/her parents. He/she respects his/her parents' culture and acts based on their expectations. The role he/she plays depends on the context he/she is in. This could be alarming to an observer, but according to the youth, it could be a strategy to be included in both environments. His/her peripheral constructs could be incompatible yet he/she maintains his/her core constructs or values consistently.

Commonality corollary: *To the extent that one person employs a construction of experience, which is similar to that employed by another, his processes are psychologically similar to those of the other person* (Kelly, 1991, p.63)

Individuals are considered similar if they share the same constructs – they construe their experiences in the same way (Kelly, 1955). As a result, there is a big chance they feel, think or behave similarly, belong to a same cultural group and perceive similarly what is expected from them. However, being part of the same cultural group does not necessitate or imply that members share all the constructs of that culture. A typical example would be the frequent misconception of Arabs by many members of host societies who assume that all Arabs share exactly the same constructs and that these constructs are set in stone. Furthermore, we do not necessarily belong to only one culture (Scheer, 2003). Hyphenated identity (Aarhus Universitet, 2014) is an example of individuals who share constructs with different cultural groups.

Sociality corollary: *To the extent that one person construes the construction processes of another he may play a role in a social process involving the other person* (Kelly, 1991, p.66)

Successful social processes and interactions are not conditioned on commonality. They require construing how others construe. Kelly explains, "the person who is to play a constructive role in a social process with another person need not so

much construe things as the other person does as he must effectively construe the other person's outlook" (p.66). In Stojnov (2003)'s words:

Understanding all those voices we disagree with means understanding them from the point of view of those who are articulating them. Construing them from their own perspective, as an alternative to our own. Measuring them with their own original yardstick, not with ours. Judging them at their own price, including all the genuine anxieties, threats and guilt, not our own affordances. Rallying all voices different from our own – and that takes some understanding (p.197)

By recognizing others' construal and how they anticipate events, we identify the role that others expect from us and adjust our behavior accordingly. For example, if refugees subsume the constructs of those posting offensive comments online in regards to refugees, their behavior and their role in the host country context would probably differ from the behavior and role of those who read these comments using solely their own constructs system.

In fact, cross-cultural construing is presently paramount in the contemporary global connected world. It impacts, inter alia, tourism, international relations, business and mostly the successful integration and inclusion of immigrants (Burr, Giliberto, & Butt, 2014). Kelly (1955), Scheer (2003) and Burr et al. (2014) state that social alienation happens when groups lack access to each other, which leads to a lack of understanding of how others construe events and thus considering them different and strange.

However, challenges exist when we engage in construing others' constructs. For example, in an attempt to construe the host society's behavior, refugees anticipate what the host society will do. They also anticipate what the host society thinks they, refugees, will do. Refugees further anticipate what the host society thinks they expect the host society will do. In addition, refugees anticipate what the host society thinks refugees expect the host society to predict that refugees will do. And so on! (adapted from Kelly, 1991, p.66). They become lost in loops of anticipations. Kelly calls this occurrence the 'Spiraliform model'.

According to Bannister and Fransella (1971), a personal construct system is "the person's guide to living. It is the repository of what he has learned, a statement of his intents, the values whereby he lives and the banner under which he fights" (p.27) and, although the system undergoes ongoing validation, any change in a construct is often resisted and prompts feelings of threat, fear, anxiety, guilt, aggressiveness and hostility. In the section that follows, we will discuss Kelly's constructive alternativism, how personal construct psychology defines change and some of the different emotions that it could cause, and illustrate them using the context of Syrian refugees' inclusion and integration.

Constructive alternativism, change, threat, anxiety, guilt, aggressiveness and hostility

Constructs have a variety of aspects. Some are pre-emptive (Kelly, 1955), e.g. Muslims cause trouble, and they only cause trouble. Some are constellatory (Ibid.) e.g. most Syrian refugees are Muslims so they definitely cause trouble. Others are prepositional (Ibid.) e.g. some of the Muslims are extremist so, with the group of Syrian refugees entering host countries, some extremists could be included, but it is not a definite certainty. Further, constructs could be comprehensive, incidental, core, peripheral, situational, tight, loose, superficial, or vague (Ibid.). However, despite their different aspects, all constructs should be considered subject to revision or replacement (Kelly, 1955; McWilliams, 2003).

Kelly's 'constructive alternativism' liberates us from being victims of our circumstances or our biography. It asserts that, in our quest for a better understanding of the world, we have the right to our own construal of it and to construe the same world differently on separate occasions. Yet, we resist change and dread its impact on our personal construct system. A change necessitates a reconstruction of the meaning one places on the world and "in order to reach reconstruction, we often have to pass through a road to hell. The period in which we do this travelling is psychological transition" (Stojnov, 2003, p.196). This transition is attended with a variety of emotions (Bannister, 2003).

We feel threatened when we become aware of a forthcoming change in one of our core constructs (Fransella, 2003). Religious beliefs or a position towards a cultural group are examples of core constructs that, when challenged by others, could force the individual to revisit her fundamentals, and cause a feeling of threat.

We are anxious when we are “caught with our constructs down”, namely when we realize that our personal construct system cannot be applied to the event we are witnessing and thus we are unable to use it to interpret the event or anticipate its occurrence (Adams-Webber, 1989). In other words, when an event lies outside the range of convenience of one’s construct system, uncertainty prevails. It triggers a feeling of anxiety that prompts us to modify our construct system in order to make our experiences predictable (Ibid.). The attack on Paris left many puzzled because what happened was not included in their construct system.

Guilt is experienced when we do something that does not fit or respect our core concepts and makes us feel stranger to ourselves. Bannister (2013) explains:

Core constructs are those which govern a person’s maintenance processes, they are those constructs in terms of which identity is established, the self is pictured and understood. (...) The guilt is experienced not because one has defied and upset social taboos but because you have misread yourself (pp.71-72).

Members of the host society who hold some forms of racism within their constructs, might feel guilty helping Syrian refugees integrate within their context. It might be against their identity and what they expect from themselves. Conversely, members of the host society who believe that helping is a fundamental component of their identity might feel guilty to oppose the settlement of Syrian refugees who are fleeing the atrocities of war.

Kelly focuses on the aggression that happens within ourselves, when we actively experiment to validate our constructs and when we explore to widen their range (Bannister & Fransella, 1971). An aggressive refugee would actively engage in interactions with his/her host society counterparts, analyze their constructs, compare

them with his/her own and choose what helps him/her best understand his/her world. While Kelly associates aggression with commitment, risk taking and inquiring about the unknown (Bannister, 2003), he considers hostility as the ultimate self-preservation act, where we insist on maintaining our construct system intact, despite the occurrences that highlight its failure. We are terrified from falling into a chaos so we keep on insisting that our constructs are valid until we find an alternative way to view and interpret an event. Members of the host society would rather bully refugees into behaving violently in order to confirm their anticipations instead of admitting that many of these refugees are here in good faith, yearning for a sense of belonging and willing to play their part in helping the host country reach its economic prosperity. Kelly states that hostility often indicates resistance (Fransella, 2003).

McWilliams (2003) explains:

In science and in life we must find ways of dealing effectively with our passionate commitment to our beliefs and to the realization that we must hold these beliefs tentatively and revise or replace them when circumstances warrant. Unfortunately, we do not always behave as ideal scientists (p.76).

He continues:

Because we desire certainty we tend to certify our constructions as objective representations of the universe, forgetting that we have invented them (p.78).

McWilliams (2003) confirms Hinkle’s (1965) statement that superordinate constructs are the most difficult to change. When the host society expects refugees to change, to adapt and to integrate, they are asking them to revisit their core constructs, to change many aspects of their life, including their social identity, as prerequisite to their inclusion. Similarly, when refugees expect the host society to include them, they are asking them to plunge into a serious reconstruction of their core constructs. Resistance, consolidation of identity or constriction should be expected from both parties. Brophy, Fransella, and Reed (2003) confirm that no change should be asked

from any group before an understanding of their construct system is established.

IN CONCLUSION

In this paper, we have exposed how Kelly's Personal Construct Psychology (PCP) can be useful to understand the dynamics about how members from a host society construe their relationship to Syrian refugees and how Syrian refugees construe their integration process with the host society. We argued that PCP can be a useful theory to understand construction systems with regards to refugees. One might think simply that society needs to reflect and be more inclusive, or that Syrian refugees need to adapt to get integrated. However, everything we have stated points to the idea that both need to change, that change is difficult, and that the construction systems need to be revealed. Once the construction systems are revealed, the host societies and the Syrian refugees need to allow their superordinate constructs to be permeable to new elements based on new experiences in order for both parties to change and accept the other. Such disclosures might help practitioners to better intervene with regards to Syrian refugees' issues and might inform policy makers about the issues surrounding how a host society construes the potential presence of newcomers and how refugees might construe their own presence in a host society. Everything suggests that all parties have a lot of work to do on their constructs and that working on these constructs might help change how we act in the Syrian refugee crisis context.

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