

SANDU FRUNZĂ

LOOKING AT PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE AMERICAN
DREAM AS POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO OVERCOME THE EUROPEAN
IDENTITY CRISIS AND THE EUROPEAN NIGHTMARE

Sandu Frunză

Babes-Bolyai University, Department of Communication, Public Relations, and
Advertising, Faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences, Cluj-
Napoca, Romania.

Email: sfrunza@yahoo.com

Abstract: Europeans speak, both through their leaders and through the media, about the crisis of the European civilization. They cultivate the image of Europe threatened in its own existence by the waves of population wishing to settle in Western European countries. Additionally, the threat is sensed in the context of their belonging to other religions but the Christian one. To solve this crisis, we start from the premise that the European dream in the refugees' case may be deemed similar to the American dream of the Europeans settling in American territories where they were to build the American Civilization.

Although the anguish of incoming foreigners is psychologically natural, problematic is the fact that they are not perceived as individuals driven by the dream of prosperity and happiness as the European dream. Lacking identity and engulfed in a diffuse mass, they are perceived as an amorphous, threatening and violent collective. I propose to reevaluate alterity in terms of that consecrated in the cultural imaginary as the American dream (the model for what was to be the European dream), by means of the philosophy of success as construed in the theories and practice of personal development.

Key words: personal identity, apocalyptic representations, European dream, American dream, European crisis, Christian crisis, muslim refugees, personal development, John C. Maxwell

1. Alterity and the European Nightmare

The European dream was one of the phantasms pursued by Romania throughout the process of accession and integration into the European Union. According to my dream, upon „waking up” from this beautiful dream, we should have found ourselves at a horizon opening towards everything that the symbolic structures of a Promised Land would bring. Although from the very beginning I wanted a lay Europe, I associated this religious symbol with the image of fulfillment, happiness and good life that, in my political imaginary, the European Union would bring. Once Romania acceded to the European Union I noticed that many European community members felt they were rather going through a crisis state than experiencing an opening toward plenitude. Neither then nor now do I share their apocalyptic feelings as my optimism remained intact. Moreover, my expectations related to a positive evolution of Europe are brighter now that I see the European dream is so attractive to very many uprooted from cultures outside the West. Driven by aspiration to achieve the European dream in their life, they are ready to abandon their places (turned unwelcoming on account of the war, poverty and all kinds of threats) in which they had lived until recently.

Seeing them ready for almost any sacrifice to achieve the European dream, I remember that it was very easy for me, from the beginning, to attach the European identity label to my person. I might even say that ten years since this appropriation took place, if I had three labels in front of me, I would comfortably enough choose identifying myself first as a European, then as a Romanian and then as Orthodox Christian. My European identification occurred almost automatically when Romania joined the European Union. I made no effort in this sense. It was the European philosophy that shaped my mind, the European literature (especially poetry) refined my sensitivity, Christianity shaped me spiritually, and the European history cultivated my patriotism and made me understand I belong to a nation that played a significant part in Europe's history. Instructed in the spirit of the European culture, my European identity went almost without saying. It did not collide with my love for the American culture and civilization nor with my passion to study and research cultures and religions beyond the Western space.

I found myself lately in the midst of increasingly intense statements on a crisis that I do not sense to be mine: the crisis of Europe and of the European identity. I do not exclude the possibility that the 10 years since our membership in the political community of Europeans represent too short a time to make me feel part of this crisis. However, I am convinced that if we can speak about a crisis, then the European crisis has also an antidote, for a quick relief from the anguish of this crisis nightmare.

One of the ways in which Europe's crisis is presented is by emphasizing the religious background of violence acts that occurred. The general perception is that they target the western civilization. A number of researchers and journalists stated their position on this religious background, their texts being collected in a challenging volume by Sorin Bocancea. The authors pay attention to the terrorist attack in Paris against Charlie Hebdo editorial office. A significant portion of the text focuses on the perception of the imminent fundamentalist danger, given the spiritual crisis of the West, and manifesting with unprecedented force in the recent Western culture. The novelty of the manifestations and the extraordinary power of these new attitudes consist especially in the fact that those causing religiously motivated terrorist acts are individuals belonging to the Western culture. They are individuals who received their education in the secular and Western Christian milieu but got in contact with extremist religious views and interpretations promoted by Islamic movements. They learnt how to use the advantages of western civilization to carry out violent actions against the culture they belong to (Bocancea 2015). The peril posed by these suicidal young people targeting the Western civilization they are part of is given by the fact that religious terrorism is becoming a diffuse phenomenon, no longer localized as external threat or external factor, and no longer controlled in its aggressive intrusions. Religious terrorism turns into a network developing horizontally in the very Western space. Nourished with suicidal souls in sacrificial acts, religious terrorism is at the same time maintained by the religious ideology that creates a wide ambiguity between religion and politics, between socio-political claims and spiritual religious ones. Such confusion inspires potential adherents and is advantageous for the leaders of fundamentalist movements presenting themselves as the only defenders of an authentic primary faith. Additionally, if there is a social message and membership to a marginalized category, economically, socially and politically discontent, we can have the image of the complexity of problems brought about by religious fundamentalism and communication through symbolic violence or religiously motivated terrorist acts. I have noted this complexity of the new religious ideologies both in the study on the book that Sorin Bocancea and the authors' team coordinated and published (Frunză 2016), and other texts among which „*Fundamentalismul religios și noul conflict al ideologiilor*” (Frunză 2003, Frunză 2015).

How this crisis deepens is revealed in the second volume coordinated by Sorin Bocancea. In this book, the danger of religious terrorism is associated with a more tangible dimension, the one of migration, perceived in an extremely negative way by many Europeans. The rapport to immigrants through a violent imaginary is growing with every immigrationist wave starting in 2015 as result of violence pressure in the Near East. In the volume „*Marșul asupra Europei. Noile dimensiuni ale migrației*” (Bocancea 2016), we find representative texts for the

explanation we can provide to the ample phenomenon of the negative perception of the crisis. Westerners sense it, on the one hand, in connection with an obvious humanitarian crisis, and on the other hand with the powerless feeling in front of populations on the move that their governments could not control coherently or otherwise convey they can provide safety to manage the migrationist phenomenon. A great part of the perceptions expressed in this volume were deemed to have too much emotional, speculative and apocalyptic charge, instead of a neutral analysis that could have lead to identifying solutions for an adequate understanding of the situation (Copilaş 2016).

Beyond exaggerations present in several paragraphs in the volume coordinated by Bocancea (2016), on such an apocalyptic wave we note the fear and the negative perception of religious groups' action via individuals inside the Western civilization. They are heightened by the so-called "barbarian invasion". There is fear that the massive movements of populace from areas deemed to be focal points of violence and extremism may any time include potentially violent individuals – capable of psychic or physical aggression to extreme violence acts or Islamic terrorism manifestations.

A similar anguish may be encountered at various times in the European history. Fear before a radical uncontrollable alterity is present in the western mentality as fear of the stranger, who appears in various contexts as a phantasm hovering often in the Western imaginary (Sartori 2007; Medveschi 2016). But in migrants' case the anguish is much greater as the stranger qualities can no longer be perceived. With migrants, the stranger appears rather as an amorphous mass, unnoticeable in its individual manifestations, revealing no personal features of those that are part of it, because it is not a composition but an indefinite overlap of violent forces. One may still relate to and communicate with the stranger, but with the new mass reality, one cannot get in touch or enter a conversation. Compared to the diffuse mass, the western world that was built on communication feels invaded, and the dialogical man of modern culture finds himself to be a potential victim.

In this crisis imaginary, the migrant does not have personal qualities, does not have what in western language we call an "image". The person's features are denied even when the media promotes the idea that the majority of the West's "invaders" are young men (partially accompanied by women and children). It would be natural for such an image to be positive in terms of the European need for labor, especially for hard labor, or in terms of the aging tendency in western countries' population. However it is the very sign of vigor, strength and force that frightens Europeans. Neither the Western humanism, nor the human rights theories, nor the multiculturalist ideologies seem to be able to meet the migrationist waves, as the mass has only the attributes of the anguish it stirs. Not even the European dream may be attributed to this individual of

the mass as the perception of its force in the imaginary of the common European is overwhelming when compared to any potential positive valorization.

The phenomenon was very well described by Peter Sloterdijk in his study of *"Crowds and power"* by Elias Canetti (Sloterdijk 2002). Despite the fact that the crowd in modernity becomes subject of the historical action and transformation, when it comes to the migrants' crowd, the European may be unable to construct a relational system based on communication and dialogue. In the foreword to Sloterdijk's book *"Contempt for the masses"*, Aurel Codoban highlights some metamorphoses in mass dynamics in Western modernity (Codoban 2002). The new communication type initiated by the mass as subject cannot be assimilated in the European crisis situation. Although the action of the masses has been long covered by the media, they were entirely dehumanized because the associated culture is presently based on subject fragmentation, drama, fear and despair.

Under such circumstances, "all of a sudden it is black with people everywhere: to anybody who finds emancipation and mass elevating to subject level close to heart, such a phrase is painful and loud. In this wording, the rationalist-romantic view of the democratic subject who might know what he/she wants, collapses; the dream of the self transparent collective disappears, the social-philosophical phantasm of an enterprise between the world spirit and the collective is shattered against the block of solid darkness: black with people" (Sloterdijk 2002, 14). What could trouble the European soul more than the perception of danger represented by these dark hordes? Once the European man feels threatened by their shadow, no light appears strong and deep enough for his daily life. Everyday life seems to be under the sign of turning the European dream into an endless nightmare, with no solutions to save oneself.

The crisis in which the European man lives is based, among others, on this incapacity to see immigrants with their personal images. One cannot relate to them until they are viewed only as successive crowd waves. Crowds cannot establish a relationship, one cannot communicate with them, they do not benefit from the advantages of a personal conscience to make them subject of communication. Diffuse masses cannot be subject of dialogue and negotiation. Not being individuals with personal traits, those that are part of the immigrant mass cannot dream and for this reason they are denied the possibility to live and materialize the European dream.

2. Understanding crisis and Europe's finding itself

However, beyond this symbolic explanation, I cannot be so uninvolved in the European reality to neglect the fears and crises felt by

the European Community members, to which I also belong. For this reason, I decided to bring into discussion a few texts investigating the crises of present Europe that provide an optimistic perspective on Europeans' future. It is about the texts in the collective volume „From “What Europe” to “Why Europe”. *Insights into the Consequences of EU Overlapping Crises*”, coordinated by Alina Bârgăoanu, Raluca Buturoiu and Loredana Radu. The volume coordinators wonder alongside other authors invited to participate in the volume: “Why Europe”. The question is not rhetorical but rather an urgent need for a response in a world in which the crisis feeling is deeper and sharper than ever. The perspective proposed by the text collection is that of communication, and in addition to the other crises, it emphasizes the existence of a communication crisis. In the world built on communication such as the global society, we may note that each aspect of the communication crisis is augmented and it triggers other crises so that we have the image of a generalized insurmountable crisis. The multiple crises experienced by the European consciousness – from the Euro crisis to Brexit, from the refugees' crisis to that of the growing populist movements – maintain a tensioned state of crisis, beyond any possible discourse on the beneficial, mobilizing and dynamizing character of crisis situations. All the more so as “They create the appearance of powerlessness in as far as both leaders and ordinary citizens are concerned. They occur along highly divisive, existential issues (security, both personal and border security) in equally divided, even polarized societies” (Bârgăoanu, Buturoiu, Radu 2017, 7).

Most significantly in the analysis is the authors' note that “Jean-Claude Juncker acknowledged precisely that the: “EU is facing an existential crisis”” (Bârgăoanu, Buturoiu, Radu 2017, 7). This statement seems relevant to me not for an implicit allusion to a potential disappearance or deconstructing of the European Union, but for bringing up the existential dimension. I see in this crisis language a metaphorical language meant to anthropomorphize and humanize the whole European construction. The metaphor makes possible the European Union perception as relational subject. I find here the resources for a possible rewriting of crisis terms and overcoming the crisis. For this reason, crisis analysis in terms of communication as proposed by the authors of the volume seems generous in meanings and solutions as it involves integrating the whole endeavor into a relational system of significance.

This relational perspective proposes investigating the perceptions, representations, feelings and attitudes of ordinary citizens and of political elite representatives so as to establish strategies to reduce alterity denial, to diminish populism, negationism and extremism, ever growing in all the cultural spaces of the European Union (Bârgăoanu, Buturoiu, Radu 2017, 9). Flavia Alupei-Durach, Paul Dobrescu and Loredana Radu point out the way representations of the EU and Europeanization are constructed and articulated in public communication. The discursive approach proposed

herein may be relevant to us at least in two viewpoints. Firstly, we may understand that a great part of constructed representations and opinions are deeply influenced by the stories frequently told among citizens and by the media images broadcasted to public audiences. Narratives and images play the role of symbolic experiences impacting upon the integration processes. Secondly, a thorough familiarity with the discourse on the European crisis is relevant to the understanding of justifying or contesting attitudes (Alupe-Durach, Dobrescu, Radu 2017, 22).

We may note that one of the sources amplifying the crisis feeling is given by too big a temptation for a competition among imaginative constructs in the imaginary of national structures and of European integration ones. In this context, the way in which crisis problems and individuals' sensitive subjects are covered by the media creates a construed reality unavoidable in the public perception, joint action and political decision. For this reason, when authors focus on the communication construction mode in the issue of refugees, insisting on similarities and differences between media discourse at national level and the way communication is achieved at pan-European level they reach the conclusion that "the consensus between the national and pan-European media on the severity of the refugee crisis should act as an alarm bell on public perceptions at the EU-level" (Alupe-Durach, Dobrescu, Radu 2017, 35). We cannot ignore the frames and narratives being construed and communicated in the national and European communication space.

One of the most interesting articles is the one authored by Elena Negrea-Busuioc and Nicoleta Corbu. Considering that the negative perception on immigrants has been exploited and deepened by populist groups in all European countries, the two authors focus on the causes leading to the consolidation of populism in Europe. Because the anti-immigrants propaganda is often motivated by an ideological language using economic jargon, the authors are concerned especially with the role of the economic factor in guiding the audience towards populist messages proposing a denial or a reserved attitude to immigrants. Their analyses lead to the conclusion that although the economic concerns could lead to increased anxiety and restlessness among Europeans, "there is no strong correlation between the economic crisis and the success of populist parties in Europe". Most likely, those that contribute to the success of populist parties in a certain country are "the perception of economic and political situation in one particular country, combined with various emotional and attitudinal predispositions of voters and with an anti-European general feeling" (Negrea-Busuioc and Corbu 2017, 220).

Populist communication strategies note that especially the call on this emotional register, linked to symbolic thinking and especially to religious options and stereotypes associated with religious alterity. A most interesting research, in view of the present discussion, belongs to Denisa-Adriana Oprea and Raluca Buturoiu who are concerned with Europe's

representation online and the particular construction of this image by considering immigrants' issue. Under such representations, the authors reveal the distance between the European dream leading the migrants and the unfriendly realities they face in their attempt to reach Europe and be part of the European community. The European dream is based on the fact that "it is implicitly represented as a Promised Land – a generous mother ready to welcome all of them to her bosom and help them overcome the trauma of their tormented pasts. Lured by this imaginary land and by the promise of a better and peaceful life, they take huge risks by running away from war and poverty" (Oprea and Buturoiu 2017, 49).

Analyzing online materials on the topic of such representations, the authors note that "The Promised Land is never to be found," as it only exists in migrants' imagination. None of the analyzed articles reveals the experience of such reality. On the contrary, the promise of the European dream's achievement is always pushed in the mediatic discourse somewhere in the future to be lived by those who, in an indefinite future, will reach the true Europe (Oprea and Buturoiu 2017, 50).

Denisa-Adriana Oprea and Raluca Buturoiu point out to the fact that materials in the virtual world show that "more than by the migrant crisis, Europe is hit by an identity crisis and a crisis of values." In this view, there are ideas about the urgent need for a reform of the way the European Union functions. One idea constantly reiterated as a salvaging solution, both in politicians' discourse and in media communication, is the idea that Europe should prove increased consistency in its spiritual fundamentals. For this very reason, both in the European leaders' discourse and in media communication there is the idea that European reconstruction must be an exclusively Christian project. Consequently, solving such a humanitarian problem should take into account the fundamentals of this project. This explains some leaders' attitude as in Slovakia, Poland and Hungary, who took a stance apparently cultural and having religious connotations, stating that they will only accept "Christian refugees," compatible with the value system in the host country and with increased capacity to integrate in the new culture of the countries receiving them (Oprea and Buturoiu 2017, 56; Bârgăoanu, Radu, Udrea 2017, 152).

Although apparently we have an attempt to see and differentiate immigrants based on identity criteria, we are left with such leveling given by the perception of belonging to a group. Although this populist discourse seems to take one step forward, such an attitude contradicts the European ethical tradition of recognizing alterity, valorizing pluralism and multiculturalism, promoting a culture of dialogue as part of the postmodern ethics germinating the present European culture (Grad 2013; Frunză 2012).

On the one hand Oana Ștefăniță and Georgiana Udrea, and on the other Radu-Cristian Răileanu, each brings up an association of the crisis and fear feelings experienced by Europeans about cultural differences, and

particularly under the pressure of religiously belonging to Islam by a great part of immigrants wishing to settle in Europe (Ștefăniță and Udrea 2017, 147; Răileanu 2017, 187). There are also studies in which we can see the special concern existing in this respect in Romania (Pop 2016; Negrea-Busuioc, Daba-Buzoianu, Cîrțiță-Buzoianu 2015; Hosu and Frunză 2013). An important role in the diminution of the negative perception of religious differences and alternative religious options is undoubtedly played by education (Golob and Matej Makarovič 2017; Verhaegen and Udrea 2017). So do all participants in the national and European public communication through their special contribution to the construction of a civic and political culture under the sign of tolerance, pluralism and alterity and multiculturalism acceptance.

In this sense, the statement “The only position that may save the EU from dissolution is to be open and tolerant, and to act with responsibility towards both the refugees and its own citizens” (Bârgăoanu, Radu, Udrea 2017, 164) is really convincing. Likewise, one cannot ignore the successive waves of immigrants that seem to come at a pace beyond control. This is why “it is important that the EU receives these people that need international protection, but at the same time it should be aware of the negative effects triggered by the uncontrolled inflows” (Bârgăoanu, Radu, Udrea 2017, 164). Besides measures to increase control, security and people’s trust, the European dream may turn into a European nightmare and a nightmare of the Europeans.

Of course, the volume coordinated by Alina Bârgăoanu, Raluca Buturoiu and Loredana Radu has, to a great extent, the advantage of neutral analysis as the proposed views are, filtered by the cultural conscience of the communicators and influenced by the specific culture of the young people that were the subjects of the research. Nevertheless, we note that Europeans are in full crisis, fear and apocalyptic representations regarding Europe’s destiny, as well as under the pressure of obsessive returns to existential anguish in media communication. Beyond researchers’ optimism, the augmented feelings of crisis, rejection, intolerance are coordinates stimulated by the negative perceptions induced by the nebulous immigrant waves. To understand how much a perception of immigrants as persons would diminish the crisis, it is enough to remember the profound change in the Europeans’ attitude under the emotional impact of the drowned Syrian boy carried by the waves to a beach in Turkey. Integrated in the media discourse as personal destiny, the child already had a statute, a face, he was even given an identity, which led to a change of immigrants’ perception as potential refugees, harassed by suffering and by the risks they had to confront. Unfortunately, for him the European dream dissolved in the sea waves that rendered him visible on the beach sand. We seem to have lived the reverse of the image proposed by Foucault of the man erased by the waters flooding the beach (Foucault 2010). There are two images of

identity on which we should reflect as regards postmodern man's destiny perspective.

3. Personal development and the identity construction

Only by abandoning this perception paradigm of mass invasion the European's feelings of fear and crisis may diminish. Only by recovering the quality of personal identity the foreigner masses may become potential carriers of the European dream. The European dream is built following a similar structure as the American dream. As John C. Maxwell opines, "Every person owned his or her dream. Every one of them saw it clearly. They all depend on their own skills, talent, hard work, and other factors within their control to go after their dream. All of them were filled with a passion that compelled them to follow their dream" (Maxwell 2009, 225). As much as with ideals, dreams do not become reality by simply experiencing them; they involve an effort, a voyage and a form of fight represented by the actions required to fulfill the dream. The dream is a personal engagement in one's inner life, in our fellow men's lives and in the whole world's life. Most often, the dream also includes living God's life, that may be a presence giving maximum intensity to living the dream and materializing it. For example, Maxwell provides several opportunities to note that "by prayer, God makes the impossible possible" (Maxwell 2000, 7) or to understand that the prayer may be a form by which we can "experience God's joy" (Maxwell 2000, 101).

In my own personal development readings, John C. Maxwell's urge seemed quite special: „Put Your Dream to the Test”. He proposed a 10-element test, one being the answer to the question: "The significance question: Does my dream benefit others?" (Maxwell 2009, 205). The dream is not only about us. It does not consider only what we aspire to be or what we fervently wish to do. The dream becomes reality only in the context of the daily life in which we are together with the others. Our aspirations become the more powerful and viable, the more we include in our plan the others. Perhaps nobody understood this better than a European thinker, Emmanuel Levinas. For this reason, his works may be understood as an explanatory paradigm of the European dream (Levinas 1991). This also explains the success of his philosophy both in Europe and on the American continent (Bernasconi and Wood 1988; Peperzak 1993).

I will not proceed to present Levinas's ideas, as I wish to follow the American dream and its significance to the European dream in terms of a few reflections on success in leadership master John C. Maxwell's view. I believe that his personal development and leadership model may be beneficial both as an example of European leadership reconstruction and as a model worth following to solve European man's crises. His vision may be valorized especially as background to an overlap of the American

dream and the European dream. Although his discourse is far from immigrants' question, this overlap makes possible a new attitude to the alterity represented by the refugees, and a better understanding of their motivation in the attempt to settle in Western countries.

As he proposed a philosophy of success in which the pursuit of happiness is seen as a specific way for personal development, one of John C. Maxwell's statements is: "The happiest people I know are growing every day" (Maxwell 2006, 108). Happiness is strictly correlated to the interest in personal development. It is the way to a good relationship with oneself, to a conscious investment in one's own growth and in developing a common platform to grow together with the others. But this is also evidently a mode of transcending that is centered on a totally special encounter in which the person choosing development sets the spiritual horizon of his/her growth. The horizon of a permanent improvement is construed starting from the decision to act at a present moment which may hide all the past and future. Attaining one's top potential depends, in Maxwell's philosophy, on the commitment that the individual makes as a continuous present of his/her life. For this reason, the voyage metaphor is deemed to be most relevant in suggesting the continuous personal development that success entails. The always open human potential is the one that ensures positioning on the way to success. Continuous improvement, permanent potential development and the improvement of already attained qualities involve not only a desire to reach higher achievements, but also a firm engagement and loyalty to personal development. Such perspective may be illustrated by very motivational passages written by John Maxwell: "The only way to improve the quality of your life is to improve yourself. If you want to grow your organization, you must grow as a leader. If you want to have better children, you must become a better person. If you want others to treat you more kindly, you must develop better people skills. There is no sure way to make other people or your environment improve. The only thing you truly have the ability to improve is yourself. And the amazing thing is that when you do, everything else around you suddenly gets better. So the bottom line is that if you want to take the success journey, you must live a life of growth. And the only way you will grow is if you choose to grow" (Maxwell 2006, 109).

Consequently, the personal development master brings forth a picture in which every line drawn to construct one's own image is also a contour of one's relationships with the other persons and with the outside world. The inner life is reflected in the outer life and triggers an improved life quality determined by one's own personal live quality and by its values. Although we cannot change the others, personal example could stir in them the strength to make the decision of a profound transformation. Personal example becomes the more charged with positive influence energy, the more personal choice is a commitment visible in our actions throughout life. In this sense we should understand

the statement that a life dedicated to personal development is a life dedicated to the others, a commitment made before the professional community, the individual's social milieu, the environment and even humanity as a whole. Moreover, personal development is a way to agree with the world enlightened within by the presence of a glimmer of transcendence.

To reach one's potential is one of the most natural tendencies. For this reason, the unattained potential is deemed by Maxwell to be one of the most crushing human faults (Maxwell 2013, 9). The negativity made permanent by the unattained potential in an individual's life is generated especially by failure load. It supposes a deadlock in a project not assumed or finalized, despite an obvious, although always postponed, desire for personal accomplishment. Unattained potential indicates, in fact, the lack of courage to take the road leading to wherever you truly wish to get. It may also mean the lack of awareness that successful people follow daily a personal development program. In view of such personal development ideal we should read a large part of the actions of those who wish to live the European dream in their attempt to settle in the European countries. Beyond running from suffering, war, existential threats, each refugee should be attributed the desire to attain his/her personal potential. This personal development model, built on the American dream, may be an effective alternative to reconsider each immigrant in view of restoration and personal experience of the European dream.

4. Instead of Conclusion

In view of restoring the European dream, significant seems to be an American-type of experience summed up by John C. Maxwell: „Every time God wishes to make something extraordinary, He starts with a difficulty” (Maxwell 2000, 124). As Europeans, we ought to overcome the burden of crisis induced by the perception of foreigners in the image of a mass that is „dark with people”.

In terms of the European spirit development, it would be beneficial instead of regarding refugees as barbarous hordes to rather see them through the lens of the dreams that drove Europeans when they decided to build a favorable place on the American continent. Instead of exclusively insisting on the rhetoric of fear, we should seek rendering the discourse constructive based on the premise that the European dream lived by a large number of refugees today has a lot in common with the American dream of Europeans that once migrated to the American territories.

Looking into Europe's cultural history, we should note that every time Europeans had a sharp and acute feeling of crisis ultimately emerged strengthened from almost all the crises they went through. The fact that

we live today the European reality in an existential crisis is a good opportunity to remember that in terms of the American dream, that we adopted as a model to solve the European dream crisis, “Dreams are valuable commodities. They propel us forward. They give us energy. They make us enthusiastic. Everyone ought to have a dream” (Maxwell 2009, xiii). In this view, one way to solve the crisis may be to cultivate among every European the empathy that would make possible for everyone, as a personal experience, to live the dream of the other as one’s own European dream.

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