



# **Cognitive Paradigm of Radical Consciousness: The Case of Pedro V. Salgado, O.P.**

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*In order to be renewed as a church, we must leave behind many ways of thinking, speaking, and acting which no longer effectively serve and perhaps even obstruct our evangelizing mission. This will mean an unsettling pain, a disengagement from what is cherished but now obsolete or obstructive, a dying to what is sinful, that we may come to newness of life.*  
– Plenary Council of the Philippines (PCP)-II, No. 143

This paper revolves around the life story of Fr. Pedro V. Salgado, OP that focuses on the significant events in his life that ran through his childhood up to the present time. This life story is interpreted according to the framework of cognitive paradigm in the transformation of his social consciousness as he undertook the drama or adventure of his life experiences. There is a continuing trend and intensifying arena in his life that altered his consciousness which is his involvement and commitment to the poor. It is this encounter with the other that is critical and crucial in that paradigm shift that radicalizes his social consciousness.

**Keywords:** *Cognitive Paradigm, Contradiction, Other, Poverty, Radicalization, Revolution, Social Consciousness*

## Introduction

**H**ow is social consciousness radicalized? The ‘how’ question sets to answer the procedure or process of radicalization. This question has been recurring in my mind and I have just kept it to linger in my mind. I have posed this question a long time ago, but I have not found a convincing explanation to it. Only now that I have seriously reconsidered and revisited this question so I can forward my provisional explanation or interpretation of it.<sup>1</sup>

In the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines (PCP-II) held between 1990-1991, the official church has adopted the so-called new paradigm of the church, namely, the church of the poor, together with the preferential option for the poor as an important mission of the church for the third millennium. The delegates have honestly admitted that the Philippine Catholic Church must be renewed and the clergy must be prepared in this direction.

However, though it has accepted that it needs renewal and preparation, the document has not laid down the processes of that paradigm shift of the institutional church, especially of church people, who will be the social actors in such a process. Considering the historically affected social consciousness of the clergy in our institutional church, there is an urgent need for some concrete processes towards attaining and shifting to such a direction. This research hopes to fill in the gap in the literature and to contribute to the renewal and preparation of church people in this direction.

Before we further proceed to our discussion, let me clarify my terms that I use in this paper for our common understanding. First, cognitive paradigm is a mental model developed in the person’s interaction or socialization with the environment. The context of this cognitive paradigm is the social situation that impacts on human mind that can change one’s worldview. That constant and persistent relationship will transform the mind of the individual undergoing a change (Marc de Mex, 1982).

Second, my understanding of radicalization comes from Renato Constantino with his ideas on decolonization and counter-consciousness, where he also spoke of radicalization. In his discussion, to be radical means to have a critical mind in reading social realities and to advocate some fundamental social changes in society

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<sup>1</sup> The field of cognitive psychology has progressed tremendously both in theoretical as well as in experimental studies on human consciousness. This psychology is potentially promising because it will unlock many problems and questions in different fields and disciplines. See, Nick Braisby and Angus Gellantly (2012). *Cognitive Psychology*. New York. Oxford University Press; Matthew Coxon (2012). *Cognitive Psychology*. California: Sage Publications.

(Constantino, 1978, p. 82). Radicalism is a product of a long process of digging into the underlying reasons of a phenomenon. Finally, I take social consciousness from a Marxist perspective. To quote Karl Marx: “It is not consciousness that determines life, but life that determines consciousness.” Again, “Consciousness can never be anything else than conscious experience, and the consciousness of people is their actual life process” (Marx, 1994, p. 211). Thus, social consciousness emerges from the actual engagement of people in the real world.

### **Profile of Fr. Pedro Salgado, OP**

At the outset, I would like to provide a general view of the chronology of the life of Fr. Pedro Salgado, OP, also known as Fr. Pete among his peers and colleagues. This chronology is not just a presentation of dates in his life, but an account of the events that contain dramatic changes in the transformation of his identity. The drama will be presented in his life story as we unravel or unfold it.

| Dates         | Activities/Assignments                                              |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| June 29, 1937 | Birth, Bantayan, Cebu, Philippines                                  |
| 1944-1949     | Elementary Education, Bantayan Elementary School, Cebu, Philippines |
| 1950-1955     | Seminario Menor de San Carlos, Cebu City                            |
| 1955-1958     | UST Manila, Philosophy                                              |
| 1958-1963     | UST Manila, Theology                                                |
| 1963-1966     | UST Manila, Doctor of Philosophy                                    |
| 1963-1965     | Professor, Studium Generale, Quezon City                            |
| 1965-1972     | Vice Rector, UST Manila Seminary/Regent College of Law              |
| 1972-1976     | Professor, Studium Generale, Quezon City                            |
| 1976-1982     | Parish Priest, Our Lady of Peace, Benito Soliven, Isabela           |
| 1982-1985     | Parish Priest, St. Joseph Parish, Delfin Albano, Isabela            |
| 1985-1988     | Rector, Aquinas University, Albay, Bicol                            |
| 1988-1995     | Professor, Studium Generale, Quezon City                            |
| 1995-2012     | Parish Priest, Sto. Thomas, Isabela                                 |
| 2012-2013     | Prior, Manaoag, Pangasinan                                          |
| 2013-2014     | Parish Priest, Delfin Albano, Isabela                               |
| 2014-Present  | Assignment in Bahay Dominiko, Quezon City                           |

## **Life Story of Fr. Pedro Salgado, OP**

Fr. Pete hailed from Bantayan, Cebu, Philippines. Fr. Pete is a son of public school teachers in their home town. He recalled that as public teachers, his parents inculcated in his young mind what is always right and what is good and he always remembered this lesson in his life. As he grew up, he would always keep this memory of doing what is right and what is good in his behavior and his relationship. Moreover, being teachers, his parents would inculcate in his juvenile mind the value of study. Being his first teachers at home, he would devote much of his time to serious study under the supervision of his parents. His early schooling has prepared him for scholarship. He recalled that aside from regular study in the school, he also spent his weekends for serious study at home. During vacation, he would not waste his time but spent with his study. He recalled that he was even accelerated because of his intelligence.

Being public servants, his parents openly discussed about local and national issues affecting the country and their community which he often heard from his parents. He would see his parents getting involved with issues which they discussed not just among themselves but also among other people. They would talk about issues on good governance which would benefit the general populace. Being a home boy, he would always stay in the house and listen to these discussions. Hearing them, he unconsciously internalized these issues in his mind thinking that when he grew up he would always think and do what is beneficial to the people. He said that this early exposure to social issues at home became a fertile ground for his subsequent interest in social analysis and involvement with the poor.

In his seminary life, his formation in study reinforced his already disciplined life of study at home. He remembered that that in his studies of philosophy and theology at the University of Santo Tomas (UST), Manila, he was taught to think critically by delving into the “whys” of things. He mentioned his philosophy professor, Fr. Jesus Gayo, OP, who would always call him to stand up in class to recite. The method used in teaching is the question and answer type of Socratic approach. This method challenged him not just to study hard but also to think critically. However, he recalled that this teaching is purely an intellectual exercise in abstraction. It helped him to be more studious rigorously. This training provided him a profound knowledge and later guided his mind to penetrate into social reality.

After ordination, he was assigned at the University of Santo Tomas, Manila. The UST community is a mixture of Filipino and Spanish friars who worked in the different institutions or departments of the University. Living in the University provided him an opportunity to impart his knowledge in teaching the students in their

intellectual formation. However, it also provided him a crisis where he witnessed the division and the conflict of the Filipinos and the Spaniards. The Spaniards were more superior to the Filipinos in the hierarchy. His experience elicited his nationalism that sparked a desire for independence.

In the national scene, there was the awakening of the nationalist spirit among the Filipinos. There was then a movement for the nationalization of the University that the rectorship should be given not to a Spanish friar but to a Filipino friar. Although he sided with the Filipino friars who were aspiring for the nationalization of the University, he sided more with the student activists who were stirred with real idealism and nationalism. He recalled that he was invited to speak to the student body on nationalism and, in that occasion, he openly supported the nationalization of the University. The headline of the *Varsitarian*, the official student publication of the University, quoted him as saying, "Spanish Rector should resign, says Fr. Pedro Salgado, OP within three months." Due to the strong support for the nationalization of the University, the UST rectorship was subsequently given to the Filipinos.

The breakthrough of his priestly life is his actual involvement with the farmers. By accident, he met the President of the Federation of Free Farmers (FFF), Atty. Jeremias Montemayor, in a conference organized by the Diocese of Naga. Two speakers were invited – Atty. Jeremias Montemayor and Fr. Pedro Salgado – who were given different and unrelated topics. Atty. Montemayor discussed about the despicable plight of the farmers in the countryside, whereas Fr. Pete lectured on the theology of original sin.<sup>2</sup> In their conversations, Atty. Montemayor challenged Fr. Pete not just to read books and deliver lectures but also engage with the farmers and join in their struggles. He was then invited to visit the farmers in Central Luzon and in visits to them, he learned from their lives and their struggles. He was then appointed as a chaplain of the FFF Central Luzon areas and he frequented them in his visits. Intensely, he was awakened to the miserable plight of the farmers who were struggling for land reform. Their poverty left an indelible mark on him that slowly shifted his interest not on philosophical studies, but on social sciences. He was transformed from being a scholar in the university to being an activist in the field.<sup>3</sup>

Because of this love for the poor, eventually he got assigned to the rural areas in Isabela and worked in remote parishes in the diocese. By happenstance,

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<sup>2</sup> In the book, *God in South Africa: The Challenge of the Gospel*. Nolan has linked the theology of the original sin and social pathology of the apartheid. For him, he considers the apartheid as the original sin existing and prevailing in South Africa. See, Albert Nolan (1988). *God in South Africa*. South Africa. David Philip Publisher.

<sup>3</sup> See for example his book, *Social Science for Filipinos*, which contextualizes social science discourses in the Philippine contexts.

his assignment coincided with the dramatic event that occurred in the Diocese of Isabela in 1983. The business tycoon Danding Cojuanco was planning to purchase the hacienda Santa Isabel and hacienda San Antonio. However, if he would take control of these lands, Cojuanco would deprive the farmers of their livelihood who will suffer from joblessness. The farmers sought the intervention of the then Bishop Miguel Purugganan who, after reflection and consultation, sided with the farmers in their struggle. The diocese would not want to see the farmers put out of place from their usual work and turned into pitiable difficulty. The priests and sisters joined hand in hand with the bishop defending the struggle of the farmers and opposing the ownership of Mr. Cojuanco to the haciendas. The haciendas were heavily militarized by armed forces that terrorized the people. A number of farmers were already killed and others were horribly scarred in that continued militarization of their community. The diocese was not spared from the threat and intimidation. The bishop's residence was raided by armed men. The bishop decided to cancel the vigil mass for Christmas on December 24, 1983 in protest to Mr. Cojuanco. The people of Isabela were united in their protest and struggle that eventually forced Mr. Cojuanco to withdraw his interest in the haciendas. The people succeeded in their struggle and celebrated their victory. Behind the scene was the leadership of Fr. Pete who was then the president of the priests' assembly in the diocese that advised the bishop and planned the protest actions.<sup>4</sup>

Fr. Pete loved his mission in Isabela as can be gleaned from the long years which he spent with the farmers. That love is translated not just in his generosity to them but also in his scholarships. As a scholar, he has been known in the field of political economy and the social teachings of the church.<sup>5</sup> He has written a number of books that showed his engagement with the farmers. Behind those words written on the pages of his books and essays are the faces of the small farmers whom he defended in their struggle for social justice. He deepened his knowledge on the poor, spoke about their situation, and sided with them in their fight. His love to the people has been reciprocated by them with their care and concern for him. He has always been remembered by the people who frequented him in their visits to him. Although he has aged, Fr. Pete never gets tired and is still preoccupied with the situation of the poor in the country. His unending and unwavering love for the poor remains steady and vibrant in his spirit.

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<sup>4</sup> See for example his book, *Cory Aquino, Militarization and Other Essays*, that narrates this incident.

<sup>5</sup> For example, his best-selling books are on the social teachings of the church, *Social Encyclicals: Commentary and Critique* (1992) and on political economy, *The Philippine Economy: History and Analysis* (1985).

## Forces of Radicalization

I use the word force because in physics it is the push and pull action of energy exerted on matter that can change its direction. The force, as I would explain, would impact on the social consciousness of the person as it is manifested in the way he feels, thinks and behaves in his life. There occurs a shift in the worldview of the person affected by this impact. As we shall see, forces are multiple. There are varied forces at work in the radicalization of social consciousness (Guererro, 1997, 207). However, the encounter with the poor is the *sine qua non* of radicalization. It is in the face of a concrete situation of the poor which is decisive and crucial in the radicalization of social consciousness of the person (Lucia, 1978). These forces are the following:

1. The Force of Family Background
2. The Force of Passion for Study
3. The Force of Social Marginalization
4. The Force of Social Engagement

Let me now elaborate these forces as exemplified in the life story.

### *The Force of Family Background*

The agency of the parents figured in the initial path to the radicalization of social consciousness. Born to professional teachers, his parents discussed social issues affecting their local community. Fr. Pete heard and absorbed them innocently, unknowingly preparing his mind to have interest on social analysis. Although as a young kid, he was unaware of the consequences of these early exposures, later on he realized that he continued to pursue this interest on society. Looking back, these exposures left a lasting mark on his mind that, as he recalled them, his exposures became a fertile ground for his eventual radicalization.

As we know, the family is the primary place of socialization of the person. The child is born in a family and reared by the members. Because the mind is still young and fresh, the child can register the images and ideas generated by the parents being the significant others in his life. He was able to get the basic education at home, his parents being his first teachers who inculcated in his mind the value of justice and welfare for the people. Although these are preliminary, the person can eventually reinforce them in his further exposures and systematize them in his mentality as he matures (Kagan, 1984, pp. 185-276).

### *The Force of Passion for Study*

Having professional teachers as his parents, Fr. Pete was able to develop the passion for study. When he entered the seminary, his formation includes assiduous study that further reinforced his intellectual acuity. This habit of study is further reinforced by his Dominican formation since the charism of the Order of Preachers (OP) is the pursuit of truth in his philosophical and theologian formation. He studied the voluminous works of St. Thomas Aquinas, not in the English translation, but in the original language of Latin. He internalized the mind and heart of the Angelic Doctor whom he embraced as his personal patron saint of study. As a reward for his study, he was given the highest honors *Summa Cum Laude*, in his graduation at the University of Santo Tomas.

In his academic profession, he loved to teach philosophy. He was engrossed with the Thomistic concept of the GOOD. The good is something that one desires. The good (object) and desire (subject) are correlative in his experience – in a way an integration of the subjective desire and objective good. However, the good in St. Thomas is a metaphysical concept, that is, abstract, that needs to be realized in practice and in fact. He saw in Karl Marx the concrete and real good in the pursuit for liberation from the bandage of poverty of the working class. Thus, the empty and abstract good must be filled and concretized by the real lives and situations of the people on the ground. This integration of Thomism and Marxism becomes real in his social engagement with the poor. The good is the social welfare of the ordinary people who are wallowing in poverty. The people are embodied in the faces of the farmers in the fields and workers in the factories who are oppressed and exploited. In short, the good is the liberation of the poor from poverty. Thus, the integration of desire and good impels one to struggle for social justice in society. Fr. Pete found them compatible and complementary in his social analysis of poverty in the country since Thomas Aquinas dealt with the good, while Karl Marx delved on the welfare of the people (Boff, 1987).

Moreover, he also cited the example of the concept of the STATE. For St. Thomas, the state is good in the abstract because it is an instrument for the welfare of the people. Theoretically, the authority (leader) enacts laws for the benefits of the people. For Karl Marx, the state is evil because it is an apparatus of capitalism that exploits and oppresses the laborers into poverty. Thus, the evil state must be abolished by revolution in order to install a good society that takes care for the welfare of the people. He was convinced that the true liberation of the poor from poverty can only be achieved through revolution. When that revolution succeeds, the people can install a government that ameliorates them from poverty. The Marxist ideas

enabled him to understand the reasons for the continuing poverty of the people and Thomistic philosophy provided him the abstract idea of good that must be pursued. In his writings, he continuously defended his position in favor of revolution. For him armed revolution is the solution to ending the poverty of the people. His works are his best contributions to this discourse on revolution.<sup>6</sup>

### *The Force of Social Marginalization*

Having been assigned at the University then managed by the Spanish Dominicans is an awakening experience for him. In his stint at the University, he witnessed the division of the Spanish and Filipino friars in that community. During that time, the Spanish friars occupied the superior positions in the institution. With the emergence of nationalistic sentiment and movement of the Filipinos trying to assert themselves in the nationalization of institutions, the Spaniards were pressured to give way and turn over the rectorship to a Filipino. Like any other nationalists in the country, Fr. Pete aspired for autonomy. He wanted to press on to what is good and right, that is, equality of people and freedom from domination.

In that institutional setting, he experienced cognitive dissonance where he cannot reconcile his citizenship and his priesthood. According to psychology, cognitive dissonance is the mental incongruity experienced by a person that involved conflicting beliefs, ideas or values. That experience splits the individual and results in discontent. Confronted by that conflict, the person tries to reduce that discomfort and restore that balance, by the alteration of that conflict and harmony with reality. According to cognitive dissonance theory, there is a tendency for individuals to seek consistency among their cognitions (i.e., beliefs, opinions, values, etc.). When there is an inconsistency between cognitions (dissonance), something must change to eliminate the dissonance (Cooper, 2007).

### *The Force of Social Engagement*

Fr. Pete was invited to visit the farming community organized by the Federation of Free Farmers (FFF) and eventually appointed as the chaplain of the farmers in the Central Luzon areas. He recalled that he was then challenged by the national leader, Atty. Montemayor, to join him in the movement so that he will not just remain in the academe but also in the movement. He readily acceded to that invitation and passionately committed himself to their cause. In his constant exposures to the farmers, he learned their situation and sympathized with their

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<sup>6</sup> See for example his book, *Christianity is Revolutionary* (1976), translated into Filipino as, *Ang Kristianismo ay Rebolusyonaryo* (1989).

plight. That actual interaction with the farmers and attentive listening to their stories convinced him of the legitimacy of their struggles. That social involvement provided fresh and blood to his study of the good and of the society (Levinas, 1985).

In those constant exposures, he slowly plunged his life into the despicable situation of the farmers and reflected on their continuing struggle. At the beginning, he was just looking on and listening to them. Here, there is passivity involved in looking at people and listening to their stories. Fr. Pete absorbed or internalized the lifeworld of the people and vowed to help them as an imperative of his mission. He confronted their situation and posed questions. He reflected on their situation of poverty using the resources of his critical knowledge. These questions zeroed in on the poverty of the farmers. He always posed the questions: *Why are they poor? What is the cause of their poverty?* These questions are not only tackling the objective situation of poverty of the farmers but also addressed to his identity as a priest: *What is my role in alleviating their poverty? How can I help in their liberation from poverty?* They challenged him to seek answers and to ask more questions. They provoked him to think (Freire, 1989). Thereby, he learned to identify himself with the farmers and to be in solidarity with their struggle. He shared with their pains and their joys as expressed in his spirituality.<sup>7</sup>

This experience led him to realize that there is no substitute for actual social engagement. One can study the situation of the poor in the library but that study will only remain a mental exercise. One must reach out to the poor and live with them. In that way, one can see and feel the situation of the poor. Seeing and feeling are necessary experiences in entering into their social world and lifeworld (Bourdieu, 1977). Only after this engagement can one study their situation. Thus, action precedes reflection. Thus, activism and study is the ideal situation whereby one can relate reality with the mind avoiding the pitfalls of the binarism or dualism, or mentalism and activism. One needs to have the feeling of compassion and mercy to these poor and to accompany it with thinking and researching. This combination of action in behalf of the poor and reflection for the sake of their welfare is the practice of social justice.

### **The Process of Radicalization**

An individual is historically located and socially constructed (Burger and Luckmann, 1966). One is socialized within the tradition he or she belongs. Tradition is a set of social norms that guide human behavior. Of course, tradition is dynamic and not fixed. The dynamism can be slow or fast depending on the receptivity of the people and the influence of forces that can impinge into it. Social consciousness is

<sup>7</sup> See for example his book, *Essays on Spirituality*, which basically expresses his spirituality of liberation in the Philippine contexts.

historically affected and socially embodied (Gadamer, 1993; Berger and Luckmann, 1966). Tradition normalizes social consciousness since it guides behavior and provides expectations. Social consciousness defined social situation and that definition is real in its consequences. This definition of the situation reflects the prevailing ideas of the society reproduced by various apparatuses in society (Althusser, 1971).

Radicalization does not happen in a spontaneous or automatic way, but is mediated by various social forces that impact on human consciousness that mold social consciousness in the process (Wegner and Wallancher, 1986). There are multiple forces surrounding the person that may affect him or her. These forces that impact on the person is overdetermined (Althusser, 1966) in the sense that there are multiple forces that are intertwined and crosscut together in the radicalization of social consciousness (Guererro, 1997, p. 207).

It is only in entering into the world of the “other” that one is transformed. In our case, the farmers occupy the other in the life story of Fr. Pete. By means of social interaction with the other that one appropriates the world of the other (Ricoeur, 1992). It is this intense encounter that one can eventually shift social consciousness. One can shift by directly encountering the other and experiencing the world of the other (Adrain and Apter 1995). The constant exposure of Fr. Pete allows him to enter into the world of the farmers. Poverty of the people creates discontent that looks for a way-out. This discontent is a venue that radicalizes social consciousness and galvanizes protest movements.

Radicalization of social consciousness is an imputed consciousness (Lukacs, 1968). It remains dormant in human consciousness that once provoked by situation can lead its alteration or transformation. Fr. Pete started as a scholar in the University but due to his engagement with the farmers, was transformed into an activist. Outside social forces provoke social consciousness to ask fundamental questions and to search for answers. All knowledge begins with some sort of questioning the status quo (Freire and Faundez, 1989) and questioning is the mark of knowledge (Gadamer, 1993).

Admittedly, there are dominant forces that have a lasting and significant impact of the radicalization. In our case study, the encounter with the other is a necessary condition. The other is appealing for mercy and one is called to responsibility to the other (Lervinas, 1989). The other is the poor who are languishing from poverty. Poverty is a critical situation that serves as a resocializing agent to the person (Giddens, 1993, pp. 80-82). By means of resocialization, one acquires a fundamental reorientation that creates a fluorescent political self (Rinehart, 1986, p. 13). Resocialization is marked by disruption of prevailing tradition or ideology, followed

by the adoption of radical consciousness. In critical situations, the transformation of the self may be dramatic as evidenced by the life story of our case study (Giddens, 1993).

Once this critical situation is encountered and internalized, it can pose questions to the person that can provoke him to think regarding the social world of the other. This question can disturb or disrupt the individual's consciousness (Burger 1973). The taken-for-granted situation becomes odd. Once the disturbance or disruption persists, it can eventually restructure social consciousness (Rinehart, 1986, p. 23). This can radicalize social consciousness under the pressure of the situation (Coulson, pp. 73-75).

Problem-posing questions can dispose the person to engage in reflection whereby the individual becomes self-conscious of his taken for granted and everyday social realities that he has been accustomed (Burger and Luckmann, 1966). Reflection allows the person to examine or interrogate his or her identity. The encounter with the other is a social force that impels the person to become self-conscious. Since the social situation is considered unfamiliar to his or her consciousness, it may be ignored at once. But when the individual reflects on this situation, he or she penetrates into the situation. This reflection breaks the taken-for-granted situation because the person realizes the complexities of it. It is this disruption or incongruity that self-focused attention can occur in human consciousness (Wegner and Waallancher, 1986, pp. 37-47).

This reflective act can lead the person to discover the social contradictions that emerges from the disparity between society and mind (Mao, vol. I, p. 317). This social contradiction in society is basically the socialized nature of labor and the private appropriation of profit (Giddens, 1979). The social contradiction is an incompatible social force. It is, in fact, exploitative and alienative social practice (Marcuse, 1941, p. 274). It is then reflected in human thought that influences human conduct. Through reflection, the person can discern the social contradiction. (Habermas, 1978). When the person becomes self-conscious of this contradiction, he or she becomes critical of his situation and eventually changes it. (Eyerman and Jameson, 1991, p. 165). However, the person exerts some forms of resistance especially when the social contradictions are made conscious to thought (Habermas, 1972). It is by resolving such social contradiction (conflict) that the person derives a better understanding of his or her social identity (Wegner and Wallancher, 1986, p. 233).

The mediating forces can lead to the radicalization of social consciousness. However, the most important force in radicalizing social consciousness is the experience of encounter with the other. The situation of the other can expand our horizon (Gadamer, 1993). In our case, Fr. Pete combines his knowledge of Thomism

and Marxism. Thus, human knowledge is corrected since the abstract idea of good is complemented by the idea of revolution (Habermas, 1972) or in some case, may even break from dominant tradition (Kuhn, 1968). Radical social consciousness opens itself to the acceptance of an alternative definition of the situation of the other. It involves an examination of the existing social contradiction that is unjust and a determination to change the situation (Giddens in Giddens and Held, 1982, p. 166). Through the action of social agents, the actors can restructure the situation. The capacity and knowledge of actors lend this restructuring of society possible. One only needs to trust the people in their struggle for a better society (Giddens, 1991).

## Conclusion

The study of social consciousness is difficult to deal with because of its abstract and complex reality. We cannot deal with consciousness directly so we have to rely on the mediations of forces that share and reshape it. As we have in the life story of Fr Pete, social consciousness is structured and can be restructured. As the person interacts with the other, social consciousness advances, as greater social contradictions in society is confronted. Viewing the other with compassion and mercy, the individual feels a personal responsibility to end the suffering of the poor (Adrain and Apter, 1995, pp. 249-250).

Social consciousness is not given, but rather constructed by the dynamic interplay of what C. Wright Mills calls biography and history (1978). The social identity is a social construct. A person is always located in a particular situation. What will link our biography and history is our emphatic solidarity with others. Emphatic solidarity enables us to enter into the world of the other. This entrance is the actual experience with the other so that one can understand the situation. However, emphatic solidarity must start from the experience of their suffering and cruelty (Meyers, 1994; Rorty, 1989).

Hence social consciousness is artifactual. It can be altered in the process of engagement. Confronted with some critical situations of the other, social consciousness can be radicalized. Radical social consciousness is self-creation since it involves an option and commitment. The transformation of social identity is a construct of the dynamic interplay between the self and the other depending upon the receptivity and appropriation of the person (Strauss, 1991). A radical social consciousness is not value-free or conflict-free. It takes sides with the victim of injustice. Massive poverty is violence against human dignity and an injustice to humanity is an affront to the Creator. Radical social consciousness is a risk and we have to risk in possessing it. ■

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