

The University for Social Change and the Legacy of Ignacio Martín-Baró, S. J.

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This article examines the emergence of a remarkable stratum of Jesuit scholars at the Central American University José Simeón Cañas in El Salvador. In the 1970s, Jesuit intellectuals articulated a new vision on the relationship among the university, society, and politics, which informed their individual and collective work as scholars, educators, and social activists. Jesuit scholars Ignacio Martín-Baró, Ignacio Ellacuría, Jon Cortina, Jon Sobrino, Segundo Montes, and César Jerez played major roles in this process. Since the early 1970s, state institutions, the official press, business associations, and clandestine paramilitary groups known as “death squads” deemed the Jesuit scholars and other popular intellectuals the instigators of Marxist subversion in El Salvador. They articulated a set of public discourses and public opinion campaigns that sought to justify state terror against the Jesuit scholars. The intellectual legacy of Ignacio Martín-Baró is inextricably linked to this historical process.

Keywords: history of El Salvador, Catholic Church history, Jesuits, state violence

In the late 1960s, a remarkable cohort of Jesuit scholars converged at the Central American University (UCA) José Simeón Cañas in San Salvador. During roughly two decades, Ignacio Ellacuría, Ignacio Martín-Baró, Jon Cortina, Segundo Montes, Jon Sobrino and other Jesuit intellectuals devoted their lives to the

creation of an institution of higher learning closely identified with the socially excluded population in El Salvador, which they called “The University for Social Change.”

Reflections on the political dimension of UCA formulated by the philosopher Ignacio Ellacuría epitomize not only his personal views on this matter but also the collective thought of the Jesuit scholars. The university, according to Ellacuría, had a fundamental political mission (*politicidad fundamental*) in the deeply unjust, violent, and polarized Salvadoran society (Ellacuría, 1993, p. 31): “In this divided society, the university’s option is or must be in favor of the oppressed majorities and consequently against the exploiting minorities and even the state, in that it represents these minorities and it constitutes an instrument at their service” (pp. 38–39). In this vein, Ellacuría deemed “social projection”—the university’s capacity to influence Salvadoran society and politics—UCA’s fundamental task (p. 31).

... Among its diverse functions—teaching, research, and social projection—[the university] gives the maximum directional role to social projection in a way in which this one ultimately determines the others, although they also determine it. Of course it is not any social projection, but one that chiefly aims at the radical transformation of the established disorder and the structural injustice. (Ellacuría, 1993, p. 31)

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This vision of the relationship among university, society, and politics informed the Jesuits' scholarship, teaching, and social activism. The legacy of Ignacio Martín-Baró is inextricably linked to the construction of UCA as an institution deeply connected with the dispossessed.

Like Ellacuría, Martín-Baró also pondered the construction of the university as a vehicle for social change. The task of transforming UCA from an institution serving "the oppressing elite" into a university addressing the needs of the "oppressed people" required fundamental institutional adaptations (Martín-Baró, 1976, p. 2). During the early 1970s, UCA viewed its service to "the Salvadoran (and Central American) people" as its fundamental mission, however, Martín-Baró found a disjuncture between this stated objective and the university's teaching and research orientation (pp. 1–2). In 1976, UCA still served "students and other institutional . . . sectors [linked] to the elite minority" and it "lacked a deep, broad, and scientific knowledge of El Salvador's national reality" (pp. 2–3). UCA scholars often "conflate[d] Salvadoran people's problems with those that concern[ed them] . . . as academics who belong to a privileged social class" (p. 3). Ultimately, these flaws, as well as the lack of integration of its academic departments, prevented UCA from effectively functioning as a teaching and research institution at the service of the socially excluded population.

For Martín-Baró, a careful examination of UCA's fundamental objective was necessary to overcome these institutional limitations:

UCA aims at the historical liberation of the Salvadoran people [by] working on the liberation of its consciousness . . . [we] talk about the liberation of consciousness and not liberation through consciousness. A historical liberation implies a political process that can only be implemented through the use of power. Clearly consciousness has power and weight: consciousness weights. But it would be idealistic and naïve to think that in our contemporary world, consciousness can really achieve a process of liberation. There are forces and powers capable of silencing the most transparent consciousness . . . UCA has to promote the liberation of Salvadoran society's consciousness. Once this consciousness is liberated, it will promote change through the creation of a new communal power, a cherished goal; however, that is no longer the university's responsibility as such. (Martín-Baró, 1976, p. 11)

In light of UCA's main objective, Martín-Baró deemed that UCA faculty had to "liberate [their] academic consciousness related to [their]

small particular interests as well as prefabricated analytical schemes" (Martín-Baró, 1976, p. 11). To become the critical consciousness of Salvadoran society, UCA faculty "had to learn to look at our reality with new eyes, from the perspective of the oppressed and not the oppressor" (p. 11). UCA needed to expand its research capabilities in order to develop "a deeper and acute consciousness about El Salvador's reality" and to break away from "the cart of scientific dependency . . . borrowed knowledge . . . [and] second hand knowledge" (p. 13). Research, in the words of Martín-Baró, was "the door for the liberation of our consciousness," which would transform teaching into "the vehicle of our consciousness" (p. 13). It would also enable UCA to share its knowledge of El Salvador's reality with the rest of Salvadoran society or to "make visible to all Salvadoran society our conscious science" (p. 14).

Arguably, Martín-Baró's most enduring contribution to the university for social change was the formulation of what he called *liberation psychology*. In his writings on liberation psychology Martín-Baró posed a fundamental criticism of Latin American psychology, which he deemed a byproduct and an instrument of American "neocolonialism" in the region. He also advocated for the redefinition of Latin American psychology's theory and practice "from the standpoint of the lives of our people: from their sufferings, their aspirations, and their struggles" (Martín-Baró, 1994, pp. 19–25):

In my opinion the roots of the misery of Latin American psychology are sunk in a history of colonial dependence—not the history of Ibero American colonization, but rather the neocolonialist "carrot and stick" imposed upon us a century ago. The "cultural stick" that continually prods our people finds in psychology yet another tool with which to mold minds. It also finds in psychology a valuable ally for soothing consciences when explaining the indisputable advantages of the modern technological carrot. (Martín-Baró, 1994, pp. 19–20)

According to Martín-Baró, liberation psychology was deeply informed by the knowledge and historical experiences of the oppressed. He deemed the "recovery of historical memory," the "de-ideologizing [of] everyday experience," and the "utilizing of the peoples' virtues" as liberation psychology's three most urgent challenges (Martín-Baró, 1994, pp. 30–31). He considered the preservation and interpretation of the collective memory of past social struggles the basis for the "reconstruction of models of identification that, instead of chaining and caging the people, open up the horizon for them, toward their liberation and fulfillment" (p.

30). According to Martín-Baró, Latin American societies and the Salvadoran society in particular, “live burdened by the lie of a prevailing discourse [mostly formulated by the mass media] that denies, ignores, or disguises essential aspects of reality . . . conforming to a fictional common sense that nurtures the structures of exploitation and conformist attitudes” (p. 31). In this context, “to de-ideologize means to retrieve the original experience of groups and persons and return it to them as objective data. People can use the data to formally articulate a consciousness of their own reality, and by doing so, verify the validity of acquired knowledge” (p. 31). Relying on peoples’ virtues meant, according to Martín-Baró, to value the historical experience of “uncompromising solidarity with the suffering . . . ability to deliver and to sacrifice for the collective good . . . [and] tremendous faith in the human capacity to change the world” (p. 31) shown by Salvadorans despite the systematic state violence inflicted on them during the 1970s and 1980s. Martín-Baró’s multiple contributions to UCA seem inspired by these tasks, as this article discusses.

In what follows, I discuss the circumstances that led to the formation of UCA in the 1960s and its transformation into the university for social change in the 1970s, as well as Martín-Baró’s contributions to this process, in particular two expressions of liberation psychology in his writings on the psychosocial impact of political violence and the creation of the Instituto Universitario de Opinión Pública (IUDOP) during El Salvador’s Civil War (1980–1992).

My research relies on analysis of both oral histories and archival sources. I draw on a series of interviews conducted by Teresa Whitfield with Spanish and Central American Jesuits in 1991. Between 2005 and 2007, I also conducted in-depth interviews with a Jesuit priest and two former Jesuit students who were active participants in the events of the 1970s in El Salvador. My analysis of these interviews addresses issues of subjectivity, memory, and oral history methodology. I have also examined documents of the U.S. Department of State at the U.S. National Archives, as well as documents of UCA and Salvadoran paramilitary groups (known at “death squads”) at the UCA’s Centro de Información, Documentación y Apoyo a la Investigación.

The Central American Clan

The Spanish-born Jesuits who joined UCA initially arrived in El Salvador as young seminarians in the mid 1950s and returned to El Salvador in the 1960s as fully ordained priests.

They were part of a generation that grew up during the Franco dictatorship in Spain, which was deeply impacted by the legacies of the Spanish Civil War. Jon Cortina, a Basque Jesuit seminarian in the 1950s, commented on this issue in 1991:

At the seminary in Spain, I faced all the problems related to the [Spanish] civil war . . . [traveling to Central America] was also a liberation, because I did not have to keep listening to the same things about the Spanish Civil War, which was presented to us as a crusade and the triumph of good over evil . . . as Basques we perhaps had more facilities to leave Spain. I asked for it. (J. Cortina, personal communication, April 3, 1991)

The Jesuit seminarians’ adaptation to the workings of Salvadoran society in the 1950s was problematic, to say the least. When Cortina first arrived in El Salvador in 1955, he was stunned by the Salvadoran elite’s ostentatious lifestyle, the dire poverty in which most Salvadorans lived, and the disdain that the upper-class students at Externado de San José—a Jesuit high school in San Salvador—showed toward the underprivileged. Cortina remembered one occasion when he supervised a group of Externado students during a physical education class. To his surprise, a Jesuit priest instructed him to “collect all their weapons before they started exercising.” Cortina “collected some 20 pistols from the students” and remarked that “until that point in my life I had never touched a gun.” When he asked the students why they carried the guns, one of them responded: “because these Indians can harm us.” Cortina recalled this exchange as follows:

They were referring to the peasants. They said they used the weapons as a defense. They felt entitled to kill a peasant just like that. “If I feel like it and I believe that my life is slightly threaten[ed] by a peasant, then I [will] kill him and that’s it.” That was one of my greatest shocks here in Central America. (J. Cortina, personal communication, April 3, 1991)

The students’ views on this matter echoed discourses formulated by the official media and the state in the aftermath of the mass killings perpetrated by state forces against indigenous communities in Western El Salvador in 1932 (an episode known as *La Matanza*), which often justified and even celebrated the killings as acts of patriotism (Gould & Lauria-Santiago, 2008).

As Cortina described, Martín-Baró, Ellacuría, Cortina, Sobrino, and Montes constituted “a

Central American clan or colony” in the Jesuit order. Their shared experiences in El Salvador and Central America created indissoluble bonds among them and informed their educational and intellectual pursuits for the rest of their lives. Cortina recalled that members of this cohort maintained close communication while they studied in Frankfurt, Madrid, Louvain, Eegenhoven, and other European cities during the 1960s. “There was a kind of clan or union among us. It was very strong. We had sense of our common mission in Central America” (J. Cortina, personal communication, April 3, 1991). They also established solid alliances with Central American Jesuits like César Jerez, a Guatemalan Jesuit who became the head of the Jesuit Central American Province (El Provincial) in the early 1970s, and other Jesuits who advocated for social change.

Jerez reminisced about the sense of anticipation that preceded the arrival of Ellacuría and the Spanish Jesuits among members of the order in the region. According to Jerez, Jesuits in El Salvador feared that Ellacuría’s radical ideas and strong character would jeopardize the Jesuit order’s traditional alliance with the elites. A Jesuit priest ostensibly advised Jerez “to be careful because Ellacuría will get you into trouble [with the elites] and once you are in trouble, he will leave you alone and go back to Spain” (C. Jerez, personal communication, February 18, 1991). However, Jerez considered Ellacuría a friend and a colleague who offered him sound advice on matters pertaining theology, politics, and social sciences. Jerez even shared with Ellacuría the reservations other Jesuits had about him:

I had such trust in him that I told him, “Look what they think of you.” Ellacuría was sober to express his feelings. He put his hand on my shoulder and told me, “Those are foolish thing they are telling you, the only thing I can tell you Chubby [Jerez’s nickname]: I am with you until death.” That is something that actually did happen. (C. Jerez, personal communication, February 18, 1991)

The University for Social Change

According to Ignacio Paniagua, a physician and a former member of Salvadoran Catholic University Action, during the 1960s, Catholic intellectuals at the University of El Salvador often labeled Jesuits as “materialist priests” because of their close ties to the Salvadoran elites

and their exclusive focus on the education of the upper-class youth (I. Paniagua, personal communication, July 20, 2007). The founding of UCA in 1965 apparently was an initiative sponsored by prominent Salvadoran businessman. The purported goal of founding UCA was to counter the radicalization of students and faculty at the University of El Salvador that was occurring during the university reform led by rector Fabio Castillo between 1963 and 1967 (I. Paniagua, personal communication, July 20, 2007).

Alfonso Álvarez, Miguel Dueñas Palomo and other leading Salvadoran businessmen and intellectuals, Thorsten Kalijarvi (U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador), and Oscar Osorio (President of El Salvador 1950–1956) discussed the creation of a private Catholic university as an alternative to the politicization of the University of El Salvador that had started in the 1950s. During a meeting held in August 1958, Ambassador Kalijarvi reportedly asked Osorio’s opinion about Alfonso Álvarez’s initiative to create a new Catholic university. Osorio showed little interest in the formation of the new university and instead favored the consolidation of the University of El Salvador as the sole institution of higher learning in the country (U.S. Embassy in El Salvador Report, 1958).

Since [Alfonso] Álvarez is one of the key figures connected with the proposed new Catholic university, I asked Osorio in his presence what his views were. Without hesitation he said that one university was all El Salvador could support, and that he believed it would be much better for those who had money to contribute it to the National University instead of setting up a new one by themselves. (U.S. Embassy in El Salvador Report, 1958)

Notwithstanding Osorio’s reservations about the creation of a private Catholic university, prominent Salvadoran businessmen supported the foundation of UCA in 1965.

The theological changes in the Catholic Church and the Jesuit order during the 1960s and 1970s informed the emergence of UCA as the university for social change. The Second Vatican Council (1962–1965), the Second Conference of Latin American Bishops (1968), as well as various Jesuit councils held at that time motivated the reexamination of the Jesuit order’s role in Central America. Rafael Moreno, a Mexican Jesuit who arrived in El Salvador in the early 1970s, remembered:

The Theology of Liberation, the Letter of Rio [a document of the Jesuit order in Latin America] everything went in the same line, consequently the Jesuits had to relinquish their association with the powerful classes and side with the poor . . . It was a very brusque change. However not all Jesuits aligned [with this change]. (R. Moreno, personal communication, July 2, 2005)

Jerez recalled that the redefinition of the Jesuits' traditional alliance with the Central American elites and their increasing identification with the poor and the oppressed generated tensions between the Jesuits and the elites:

Since the late 1950s and early 1960s when the new thing . . . the commitment with the poor, the workers, and the peasants . . . those old and traditional schemes when Jesuits came from the Central American elites, were formed in an elitist way, and were trained to form the elites were [gradually] broken . . . We were highly educated, we were not a bunch of fools [*un atajo de tontos*] but we no longer were devoted to [the education of] a tiny elite; on the contrary, the fight with that elite started. (C. Jerez, personal communication, February 18, 1991)

According to Jerez, during the early 1970s, Jesuits at UCA feared repercussions because of the increasingly critical position that the University had adopted toward the military—oligarchic regime in El Salvador. When Jerez and Ellacuría organized workshops on liberation theology at the Jesuit-run San José de la Montaña Seminary and criticized the government's repression of a national teachers' strike in 1971, a Jesuit at UCA warned Jerez, "You [Jerez and Ellacuría] will be responsible if we get beaten, if the [government] subsidy [to the UCA] is cut; you will cause that nobody else will give us a cent." (C. Jerez, personal communication, February 18, 1991).

The polemic on the new social role of UCA also involved a debate between UCA scholars, known as "developmentalists" (*desarrollistas*), and those influenced by dependency theory. *Desarrollismo*—a technocratic vision of development promoted by multilateral institutions, particularly by the Inter-American Development Bank—was in vogue among UCA faculty and administrators since the institution's inception in 1965. However, in the late 1960s, dependency theory, a paradigm formulated by Latin American sociologists and economists that explicates the colonial and neocolonial origins of Latin American underdevelopment, became an intellectual approach generally favored by Je-

suit scholars identified with progressive Catholicism. One can find themes from this analytical frame in Martín-Baró's formulations on the purported neocolonial origins of what he termed the "misery of Latin American psychology" (Martín-Baró, 1994, p. 19), as I explained in the introduction of this article. According to Emilio Baltodano (E. Baltodano, personal communication, February 20, 1991), a former Jesuit seminarian, these debates were ubiquitous at UCA and at the San José de La Montaña Seminary in the late 1960s.

According to Baltodano, Ellacuría, who was a professor of philosophy at UCA in the early 1970s, led the debate on the transformation of UCA from an elitist institution into a center of learning identified with the socially excluded: "In 1974 there was a very strong polemic [at UCA]. There [was] tension on what the university will be at that moment" (E. Baltodano, personal communication, February 20, 1991). Baltodano depicted Ellacuría's leading role in the transformation of UCA and the Jesuit order in Central America, as follows:

In order to sweep all that [the elitist positions within the Jesuit order and the Catholic Church,] it was necessary to have an enormous energy and to fight. [Ellacuría] led that position in a very strong and conflictive way. He was very individualistic. He was not the kind of person who shared group positions. He shared a position with those who agreed with him and it was very difficult to agree with him. (E. Baltodano, personal communication, February 20, 1991)

Ellacuría sought to transform UCA into an "institutional platform" to promote social change in El Salvador. According to Baltodano, Ellacuría advocated "conquering" UCA (i.e., taking institutional control of UCA) and the rest of the Jesuit universities and high schools in Central America to put them at the service of social change (E. Baltodano, personal communication, February 20, 1991).

[Ellacuría] considered that the [Jesuit] universities and even high schools have a weight in society . . . all this was very coherent with his intellectual position: without an objective base it is impossible to influence society. He admitted that the base could be another institution or organization, a political party, whatever. The problem was to take control of the institution and to orient it. He used to say, "Hanging on with intellectuals without platform is a waste of time. One writes, speaks here and there, but do[es] nothing." (E. Baltodano, personal communication, February 20, 1991)

In a similar vein, Jerez recalled that Ellacuría deemed the Jesuits' work with the Guatemalan poor "more Christian" but less efficacious than his plan for UCA (C. Jerez, personal communication, February 18, 1991). Once Ellacuría told Jerez, "Your testimony of poverty, living in a poor barrio [in Guatemala City], working in the countryside . . . is more Christian [than the plan to transform UCA into the "University for Social Change"] but in the long run, is more effective what we want to do at the UCA" (C. Jerez, personal communication, February 18, 1991).

The Pedagogy of Terror

The state and the elites reacted violently to the transformation of the Jesuit teaching institutions. The first open conflict between the elites and the Jesuits occurred in 1974 when the Jesuits introduced social science courses at the Externado de San José. Baltodano, who taught at Externado at that time, recalled that a group of parents sued the school and the social science teachers for allegedly indoctrinating students in Marxist theory. Although Baltodano and the other teachers were acquitted at the end of the trial, the case resonated widely in the country's media and politics (E. Baltodano, personal communication, February 20, 1991).

A flurry of publications produced by government agencies, business associations, and clandestine paramilitary groups (i.e., death squads) blamed the Jesuits and other popular intellectuals (i.e., teachers, scholars, and diocesan Catholic priests) for the escalation of the social conflicts during the 1970s. State agencies such as The Center of National Information, which operated under the direct authority of President Fidel Sánchez Hernández (1967–1972) and his successor Arturo A. Molina (1972–1977), ran media campaigns depicting popular intellectuals as subversives. The public discourses formulated by state agencies, business associations, and death squads had different audiences, rhetorical strategies, and purposes, but they all framed popular intellectuals as "the internal enemy." These discourses depicted activists, political opponents, and progressive Catholic priests as subversives or terrorists, and equated the social mobilizations with the escalating guerrilla operations in the 1970s. They constituted a

set of symbiotic discourses that sought to justify acts of terror against popular intellectuals. I call these discourses "the pedagogy of terror." While the university for social change and other pedagogical initiatives promoted by the Catholic Church and secular organizations (e.g., the training centers for leaders of rural cooperatives known as the "Peasant Universities" and a primary education program geared toward adult peasants called the "Radio Schools," sponsored by the Archbishopric of San Salvador) sought to create active historical subjects able to transform the world, "the pedagogy of terror" aimed at forming objects rendered passive by the world.

For instance, circa August 1977, an anonymous right-wing group produced a flyer (see Figure 1) denouncing what they called "The Great Marxist Conspiracy against El Salvador." They represented "the Salvadoran People" as a heavily built male figure carrying a work tool that stood on a pedestal inscribed with the words "Democracy," "Work," and "Tranquility." Scores of minute and slightly disfigured male figures represent peasant leaders and "some Marxist priests" undermining the pedestal using rudimentary tools. The "Jesuits" and "the Alas priests" (José Inocencio Alas and Higinio Alas, two Catholic priests) are also represented as threatening or verbally attacking the gigantic male figure ("The Salvadoran," 1977). Other crude representations of "communist priests" were also widely circulated at that time.

Another flyer produced by an anonymous right-wing group at that time showed the backs of two heavily built male figures, each riding a motorcycle and with the inscriptions "traitor priests" and "communists" ("Traitor," 1977). The flyer included the following text: "in times of Christ there was a Judas . . . now the Judases have multiplied and have constituted a nucleus of Marxist priests within the Church. For the conversion of these traitors . . . we pray to you Lord" ("Traitor," 1977).

The state attacks against the Jesuits escalated with the assassination of the Salvadoran Jesuit Rutilio Grande in 1977. Grande, a former rector of the San José de La Montaña Seminary, worked among peasant communities in Aguilares and El Paisnal. Jesuits at UCA were deeply moved by Grande's murder. It apparently challenged their intellectualized approaches to social change and motivated them



Figure 1. Anonymous right-wing flyer, dated August 1977, distributed in San Salvador, declaring: "The Salvadoran People Are the Victim of the Great Marxist Conspiracy."

to develop closer ties with the emerging peasant movements. Jon Cortina stated that, after Grande's murder,

Ellacuría came down from the ivory tower. There was the problem of the legacy of Rutilio [Grande], which we considered ours. Rutilio was a very transparent man . . . and the fact that [Archbishop Oscar A.] Romero vindicated him so much during three years, until Romero's death [on March 24, 1980], made Rutilio a very central figure. (J. Cortina, personal communication, April 3, 1991)

In the mid 1970s, Antonio Cardenal Caldera, Fernando Áscoli, and Alberto Enríquez, three Jesuit students at UCA who conducted educational activities among peasant communities in Aguilares, joined the Popular Liberation Forces Farabundo Martí, a revolutionary movement that became a founding organization of the Farabundo

Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) in 1980. The FMLN fought a 12-year war against the U.S.-backed Salvadoran government between 1980 and 1992. Relations between this cohort and Ellacuría (as the representative of the Jesuit order) became increasingly tense as the incompatibility of their political affiliation and their allegiance to the Jesuit order became obvious. Cardenal, Áscoli, and Enríquez quit their institutional affiliation with the Jesuits and eventually became leaders of the insurgency (A. Enríquez, personal communication, March 16, 2007). However, they maintained a sporadic but cordial relation with Ellacuría and other Jesuit scholars at UCA (A. Cardenal, personal communication, March 19, 1991). This connection between the Jesuit intellectuals and the former

Jesuit students was crucial for maintaining a channel of communication between the Jesuit order and the insurgent leadership during El Salvador's Civil War (1980–1992). It also enabled Ellacuría to serve as a mediator between the insurgency and the government on several occasions. Martín-Baró also maintained an infrequent but friendly relationship with the former Jesuit students turned insurgent commanders (A. Cardenal, personal communication, March 19, 1991).

The Jesuits at UCA emerged as a very influential intellectual elite in the 1970s. Their ethos, scholarship, and political commitment had vast ramifications for El Salvador and for the rest of Latin America, as well as for Europe and the United States. However, their decisive engagement with Salvadoran politics and society cost them dearly. The Salvadoran elites and high-ranking military maliciously framed the communication between the Jesuits and the leaders of the insurgency in El Salvador as a proof that the Jesuits constituted the “high command” of the insurgency. They repeatedly used this spurious claim to justify the growing state terror against the Jesuits in the 1970s and 1980s.

Martín-Baró's Legacy at UCA

Martín-Baró's contributions to UCA were vast. He first taught at UCA in 1967. In 1971, he served as dean of student affairs and director of Central American Studies, the UCA journal. In 1981, he served as vice-rector of academic affairs and was a member of the university's board of directors. In 1982, he became the chair of the department of psychology. In 1986, he founded IUDOP and served as its first director (Cardenal, 1999).

Martín-Baró sought to interpret political violence in the midst of El Salvador's Civil War. The conflict between the Salvadoran government and the FMLN was arguably one of the most consequential modern conflicts in Latin America. It claimed the lives of 70,000 civilians. One in 56 Salvadoran (1.8% of the total population) died during a war (Wood, 2003). The war generated a half million refugees, devastated the country's infrastructure, and became the focus of U.S. political, military, and diplomatic efforts. Peace negotiations brokered by the United Nations in 1992 ended the 12-year

conflict and opened up the first sustained democratic period in Salvadoran history.

According to Whitfield (1994), “Martín-Baró found the war to be characterized by violence, polarization, and the institutionalized lies” (p. 251). The creation of IUDOP was largely Martín-Baró's attempt to unravel the polarization of the public discourse and to allow “people's opinions” to come to fore. It was certainly a daunting task to conduct opinion polls amid the ongoing war and to do it with methodological and scientific rigor. The IUDOP succeeded in creating, in the words of Martín-Baró, a “social mirror” in which contrasting opinions could be compared (Whitfield, 1994, p. 253). This “social mirror”—the IUDOP's polls—contributed to making the idea that peace was possible and desired by the vast majority of Salvadorans despite the perverse logic of the war.

Martín-Baró's contributions are lasting. His extensive studies on the psychosocial effects of political repression offer a crucial framework for interpreting the long term impacts of state terror among several generations of Salvadorans. His insightful analysis on the ramifications of political violence among repressors, victims, and spectators and on the behaviors it foments helps us to identify the connections between legacies of the war and the high levels of social violence and crime that characterized contemporary Salvadoran society (Martín-Baró, 1994). Twenty years have passed since the end of the civil war in 1992, but the psychosocial impacts of political repression among war veterans, civilians, and the generations born after the war are still very much part of the daily lives of Salvadoran communities at home and abroad. Martín-Baró's studies on political violence taught us that “the systematic and protracted use of state terror prior [to] and during the civil war reinforced violent cultural attitudes with regard to resolving various kinds of conflict—personal, communal and social—in Salvadoran society. Indeed, the psychosocial effects of political violence not only reinforced violent cultural patterns among the direct participants of the civil war but in society as a whole” (Chávez, 2004, p. 35).

On the night of November 16, 1989, Ignacio Martín-Baró, Ignacio Ellacuría, Segundo Montes, Joaquín López y López, Amando López, Juan Ramón Moreno along with Elba Ramos, an employee at UCA, and her young daughter,

Celina, were murdered by members of the Salvadoran army, “an institution financed and trained by the United States” (Whitfield, 1998). Whitfield (1998) examined the circumstances that led to the murder of the Jesuits at UCA by asking two fundamental questions: “Why were they murdered? What is the meaning of their deaths?” (p. 17). Whitfield (1998) proposed that the Jesuits’ active role in promoting negotiations between the government of President Alfredo Cristiani and the FMLN to put an end to the conflict—and in particular Ellacuría’s fundamental contributions to this process—was a fundamental motive behind the murders of the Jesuits. I can only add that the Jesuits’ sustained commitment to the creation of the university for social change ignited a systematic campaign of intimidation and terrorism against UCA, perpetrated by both state agents and paramilitary groups since the early 1970s, which lasted until the end of the Civil War in January 1992.

After assessing Martín-Baró’s extensive publications and the multiple academic, teaching, and administrative roles he played at UCA between 1967 and 1989, Cardenal (1991), a Jesuit historian, concluded: “UCA owes Martín-Baró a lot.” Despite the assassinations of the Jesuit scholars in 1989, the university they envisioned and built—a university that challenged the ominous state terror for two decades—has become a reality in El Salvador.

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