

Maria Hart

Abstract:

When the EZLN burst onto the world stage on January 1, 1994, it took the world by surprise. The Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional was a homegrown indigenous army that rose against the Mexican government in order to make its voice heard. It put down its weapons after only twelve days of fighting and soon turned to non-violent tactics, even though the government would soon paramilitarize the Chiapas countryside in a low-intensity war. This assignment teases out the meanings of non-violence to an initially violent army, and the effectiveness of the non-violent tactics to the conflict's outcome. How did violence become non-violence and democracy. How effective has this tactic been? How did the war end, if we can say it did, given that a teacher at the Zapatista school at La Realidad, in the heart of the Zapatista territory, was murdered in June of 2014, and Subcomandante Marcos, the EZLN spokesperson, declared that he "ceased to exist," and would henceforth take the teacher's nom de guerre of "Galeano." This assignment will explore these ideas and bring up the student's ideas of a non-violent conflict fought for hearts and minds that shows that it is much larger than a two week war that took place in 1994.

This was used in Introduction to cultural anthropology and asked students to write a 7-10 page paper based on journal articles using persuasive writing. Students had six weeks to complete this assignment, which is worth 30 points. The assignment explores the concepts of non-violence and low-intensity war, explored in the Meanings of War seminar.

“Low-intensity War and Non-violence in Chiapas, Mexico from 1994 to 2003”

Please write a 7-10 page paper that answers the following questions, using evidence from five journal articles.

1. What is low-intensity war? What is non-violence?
2. Who is the Ejercito Zapatista de Liberacion Nacional (EZLN), and why are they important?
3. Why was low-intensity war used in Chiapas, Mexico in the 1990s?
4. View the video, Chiapas, Mexico, Unarmed Zapatistas take over military base, from 2001 (Alan Lodge) <https://youtu.be/hdkwEF>. Why do you think the soldiers' eyes are welling up with tears? How effective was the maneuver? What was involved?
5. From “Fiesta of the Word,” by June Nash, why do you think the two week war radically changed into democratization in Chiapas by the EZLN?
6. What happened in 2003, and how effective has the tactic been?