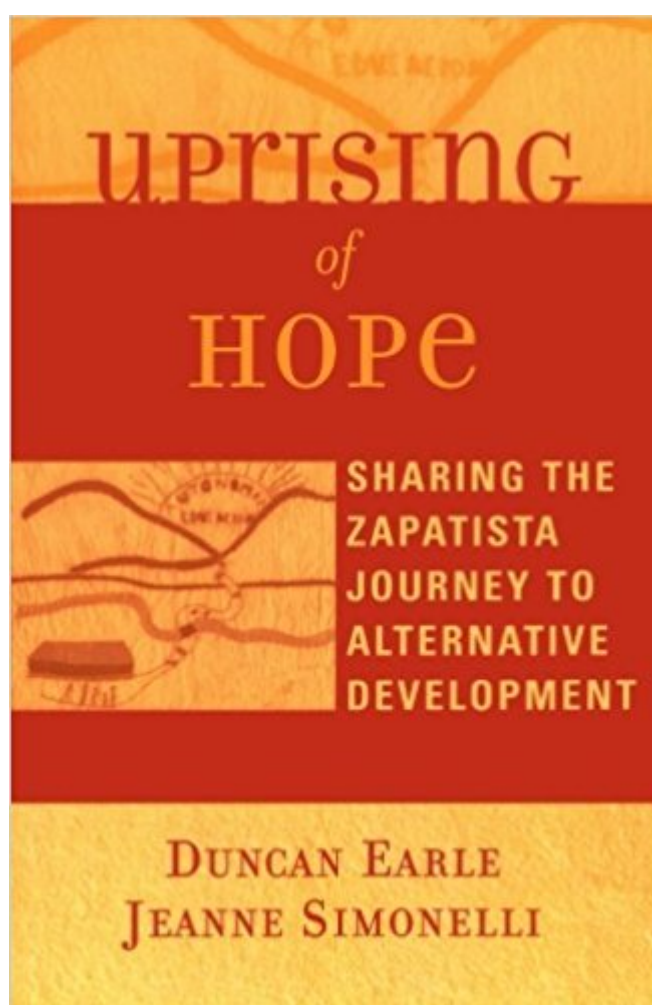




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# Uprising Of Hope: Sharing The Zapatista Journey To Alternative Development (Crossroads In Qualitative Inquiry)



## Synopsis

The Zapatistas of Chiapas, Mexico, have often been portrayed in reductive, polarized terms; either as saintly activists or dangerous rebels. Cultural anthropologists Duncan Earle and Jeanne Simonelli, drawing on decades-long relationships and fieldwork, attained a collegiality with the Zapatistas that reveals a more complex portrait of a people struggling with self-determination on every level. Seeking a new kind of experimental ethnography, Earle & Simonelli have chronicled a social experiment characterized by resistance, autonomy and communality. Combining their own compelling narrative as participant-observers, and those of their Chiapas compadres, the authors effectively call for an activist approach to research. The result is a unique ethnography that is at once analytical and deeply personal. *Uprising of Hope* will be compelling reading for scholars and general readers of anthropology, social justice, ethnography, Latin American history and ethnic studies.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Jeanne Simonelli and Duncan Earle have succeeded in their goal of sharing the Zapatista dreams with their students, anthropological fellow travelers, and what should be a wide readership with this book. En route it provides an extraordinary insight into the Zapatistas, their neighbors in the Lacondon rainforest, the governments de turno (shifting regimes), and anthropological efforts as theory and method of human lifeways. Their book may effectively change the way that ethnography is undertaken, as well as written, if their call for an activist approach to research and a collective

effort in producing results is heeded. (June Nash)The Zapatista rebellion changed the way anthropologists practice their science in the jungles and highlands of Chiapas, where instead of being objects of traditional research, the rebel Zapatistas are now the subject of their own story. Jeanne Simonelli and Duncan Earle are anthropologists for the Zapatista age, never imposing their constructs upon the communities they study, examining and re-examining their own motives about what they are doing, and above all, listening closely as the indigenas tell their poignant stories of how Mayan indian villages along the Mexican-Guatemalan border came to embrace the Zapatista struggle. Uprising of Hope is an important book that uplifts and transcends anthropology. (John Ross)Earle and Simonelli make important issues accessible, and highlight the truly innovative efforts of the Zapatista movement to resist domination from above and from outside. Their unapologetically committed scholarship seems in keeping with Gramsci's admonition to combine pessimism of the intellect with optimism of the will. (Journal Of The Royal Anthropological Institute)Highly recommended. All levels/libraries. (Choice)

Duncan Earle is an applied cultural anthropologist who is currently Associate Professor of Anthropology and Chicano Studies at University of Texas, El Paso. With over 25 years of continuing field experience in research and development in Chiapas, Guatemala, and on the U.S.-American border, his vita includes extensive publications pertaining to that work. Recent publications include "Menchu Tales," in *The Properties of Words*; "The Boundless Borderlands: Texas Colonias on the Edge of Nations," in *New Perspectives on Migration*(2000); and "The Border Colonias and Communication: Applying Anthropology for Outreach," in *Public Health and the US-Mexico Border; Asi es la Vida*.(1999) He is Co-Director of the Maya Study Program, which teaches undergraduates to do field research. Jeanne Simonelli is an anthropologist and writer who is currently Professor and Chair of Anthropology at Wake Forest University. Her field experiences are united by the broad theme of change and choice in difficult situations. Her principal publications include *Crossing Between Worlds: The Navajos of Canyon de Chelly*(1997); *Too Wet to Plow: The Family Farm in Transition*(1992); and *Two Boys, A Girl, and Enough!*(1986). She continues to work in the areas of development and conflict resolution in Chiapas, and will take this research to Israel in 2005. She received the 2000 Prize for Poetry from the Society for Humanistic Anthropology, and has published both poetry and short stories based on her field experiences. Simonelli is the new editor of the journal *Practicing Anthropology*, and is Co-Director of the Maya Study Program. Earle and Simonelli have co-authored several monographs concerning Chiapas. These include "Help Without Hurt"(Urban Anthropology, 2000), and "Meeting Resistance" (Qualitative Inquiry, 2003). They have

also written a number of articles for the popular press. In addition, Simonelli is author of "The Scent of Change in Chiapas," a book chapter published in Octob

This is the book for anyone who needs to know, whatever happened to the Zapatista rebels of Chiapas? Ever since the Mexican army dismantled the Zapatista liberated zone in 1998, it has been very difficult for outsiders who don't know Chiapas to figure out at what level the movement still exists. The two authors are U.S. anthropologists who take their students on service-learning trips. Between Earle and Simonelli, they have many years of contact with Mayan peasant families who are still Zapatistas, as well as with others who have rejected the movement. This enables them to chicken-bus their way past the rhetoric hurled by Zapatistas and their detractors. It also enables them to work their way into the *autÃfÂ* nomos, the autonomous municipalities that were set up by the Zapatistas, only to be wrecked by the Mexican army in 1998. But not destroyed, as the authors learn when some of their Mayan friends turn out to be quietly reconnecting to Zapatista headquarters. Earle and Simonelli eschew the "ongoing search for the one true Subcomandante Marcos." Their passion is instead grassroots development, and the basic issue they face, raised by a decade of political reverses since the 1994 uprising, is whether there is any hope for the Zapatistas. Their answer is yes. Instead of discrete geographical entities, the *autÃfÂ* nomos now appear to be an NGO-supported logistical system for Zapatista loyalists cut off by government patronage machinery. The current era of negotiation and reconstruction is less attractive to news media than the previous era of machete-waving. But it is a blessing for the Zapatista and non-Zapatista peasants who have to get along with each other. Earle and Simonelli argue that "live-in conservationist peasants" are the way to protect rainforest. They spiritedly defend the rationality of the smallholder even under capitalist globalization. And they believe that Zapatista-style autonomy can stabilize Mexican society. The ideal, they argue, is a subsistence-oriented farmer who has enough urban skills to earn cash through savvy forms of production for the world market, e.g., the organic honey that the authors help their friends commercialize in the U.S. under what they call ZAFITA -the Zapatista Autonomous Free Trade Agreement. So what do the Zapatistas mean by autonomy? "Like the larger national and global civil society," Earle and Simonelli answer, "they are in search of balance between isolation and loss of control, wanting to be the authors of their own lives and, most especially, the lives of their children while still being tied in and tuned in to the larger world."

The authors, Jeanne Simonelli and Duncan Earle, effectively and powerfully convey the heartfelt

and thoroughly thought out alternative economic, social, and political models found at the forefront of the Zapatista movement in La Selva Lacandon, located in the southern Mexican state of Chiapas. This ethnographic research breaks the boundaries of contemporary ethnographies by becoming part of the process, rather than observing from the sidelines. Utilizing the objective methodologies, tools, and knowledge culminating from over 100 years of ethnographic studies in the discipline of Anthropology, the authors take the next step and move into the realm of anthropologist as activist, rather than solely acting as objective observers. Earle and Simonelli make a well articulated call for action to everyone who is in a position to help others in need. With decades of combined experience in the region, Earle and Simonelli clearly and concisely express the mission of the current Zapatista movement. The intimate relations developed with the local community members involved place the authors in a position for truly understanding and expressing the ideas behind the actions of the Zapatista's alternative models. By allowing the communities to participate in the reviewing process, this ethnography becomes more precise in its information and less laden with the foreign ethnographer's bias and ideologies found in other ethnographic works. For anyone wanting to learn a detailed account of the current Zapatista movement, and how it came to its current state, this book is a must read. It avoids focusing on the famous Subcomandante Marcos, and more accurately focuses on the power of the movement, the people. A must read for anyone wanting to know about the Zapatista's history and current status and the struggles of Mayan indigenous rights movements. Further, this book serves as an excellent guide for current and future anthropologists as a new form of ethnography.

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