As the last three chapters have shown, Mixtec villages vary considerably in their acceptance of Evangelical Protestants, their continuation of the cargo system, and other aspects of their cultural systems. It could also be said that the ways that modernity is selected in each community are different from the others. At present, it probably is not possible to describe a “typical” Mixtec village. I have tried to demonstrate a certain amount of variation among the communities in my study, but this by no means exhausts the possibilities. Obviously, more field research is needed. In the meantime, it is possible to make some comments on how the communities in my study are similar and different. The one community that is quite different from the other three is Colonia Sinaí. Because of the way I conducted my research, the statistics from Sinaí are from a survey of the colonia rather than from census data. For this reason I will separate the colonia from the other communities at times during my comparisons.

VARIATIONS ON A THEME

The four communities vary along a line of rural to urban. The Mixtepec villages are the most remote, a three-hour drive from the nearest town, Tlaxiaco. San Juan Diquiyú is only forty-five minutes away from the nearest town, Tezoatlán, which in turn is near the main highway. This access to modern transportation means that
farmers can get their crops to market more easily than those in the Mixtepec villages, although the market for corn and beans is largely within the Mixtepec community. Diquiyú teenagers, if their families can afford it, can go into town to attend high school, which the Mexican government does not pay for. While there is a high school in San Juan Mixtepec, it is inferior to those in the towns and is usually full of students from San Juan itself. Neither San Lucas nor Yososcuá has a high school. The availability of banks in the towns means that remittances are easier to access from Diquiyú than from the Mixtepec villages. Of the four communities, the Colonia Sinaí, located in the city of Huajuapan de León, has the greatest access to banks, schools, and employment.

**LANGUAGE AND RELIGION**

Language and religion are indicators of the extent to which the people in a Mixtec community have maintained their traditional culture. The concept of the traditional Mixtec is one who both speaks Mixteco and participates fully in the Catholic fiesta system. The ability to speak Mixteco, as well as the ability to speak Spanish, suggest the extent to which the culture is changing. The level of participation by members of a village in the Catholic aspects of the fiesta system is another indication of change or stability.

As Table 6.1 demonstrates, there does not seem to be a strong correlation between speaking Mixteco and being Catholic. In fact, the percentage of Catholics (0 percent) in Colonia Sinaí is associated with a 91 percent level of bilingualism. There are no monolingual Spanish speakers there. In contrast, San Juan Diquiyú, which has the highest percentage of Catholics (92 percent), also has the highest percentage of monolingual Spanish speakers (34 percent). At the same time, San Lucas and Yososcuá, with very low percentages of Spanish monolinguals, differ considerably as to the numbers of non-Catholics. Although both Mixteco language behavior and participation in the cargo system are indications of Mixtec identity, they do not seem to be associated. In Diquiyú, the percentage of Catholics is high despite the fact that many people do not speak Mixteco, for example. Of course, there are many Catholics in Mexico who do not speak an indigenous language, but in Diquiyú being Catholic implies participating in the system of usos y costumbres, which includes the fiesta complex. Evidently it is possible to participate in the system without being able to speak Mixteco. On the other hand, the members of the Colonia Sinaí continue to identify as Mixtecs even though they do not participate in any way in the Catholic fiesta system. In fact, one of the conclusions to be drawn here is that participation in the fiesta system is not a necessary part of Mixtec identity. Not only do the non-Catholic members of Sinaí continue to be
Mixtec, the non-Catholic members of the other communities in the study also see themselves as Mixtec.

**SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COMMUNITIES**

In the case of socioeconomic variables, it is possible to compare only the three rural villages, as I did not collect the same kinds of data on Sinaí as those provided by the census. In table 6.2, there is clearly a similarity between San Lucas and San Juan Diquiyú. A majority of households in both villages have indoor toilets, indoor water, and electricity. A tiny minority is without all the indicators of prosperity. However, Diquiyú has the greatest percentage of Catholics, while (again, leaving out Sinaí) San Lucas has the highest percentage of non-Catholics. Yososcuá is distinctly poorer than the other two villages, yet it has a greater percentage of non-Catholics than Diquiyú. Although I do not have statistics for Sinaí, in general, the colonia has more modern facilities than the rural villages. All have indoor water, electricity, and drainage. While there are still people who cook with wood in Sinaí, wood is not as easy to come by in the city as in the countryside, and Sinaí residents do not have the right to collect wood; it must be purchased. So, Sinaí has the highest level of socioeconomic prosperity, the highest percentage of non-Catholics, and the highest percentage of bilingual speakers.

What are we to make of these data? While one might posit that Mixteco speakers would be less modern than monolingual Spanish speakers, in fact, this is not true. Being Catholic is associated with maintaining tradition, yet the largest number of people who do not speak Mixteco are in Diquiyú, the village with the highest percentage of Catholics and the most intact fiesta system. If wealth is an indicator of a willingness to accept Evangelical Protestantism, then Yososcuá should have a very high percentage of Catholics, as it is very poor. However, it has a higher percentage of non-Catholics than Diquiyú, which is comparable to

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**Table 6.1. Language and religion in four communities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>San Lucas</th>
<th>San Pedro</th>
<th>San Juan Diquiyú</th>
<th>Colonia Sinaí</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mixteco only</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixteco and Spanish</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish only</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Catholic</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: INEGI 2000; survey by author.*
San Lucas in terms of modern facilities. Clearly the explanation for these patterns lies elsewhere.

**MIGRATION AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Table 6.3, on migration and remittances, has information not found in tables in earlier chapters. These are data on emigration, return migration, and remittances. As this information is only available at the level of the municipio, it is not possible to know exactly what the figures are for each agencia, but the differences between Mixtepec and Tezoatlán are impressive. Clearly, the experience of migration must
be taken into account in order to understand the differences in language, religion and socioeconomic indicators among these communities. I believe that the statistics that are so difficult to explain in their own terms can be understood when the data on migration are taken into consideration.

In Tezoatlán, the level of emigration is lower than that in Mixtepec. Even more important is the difference in return and circular migration between the two municipios. In Mixtepec, the percentage of households with circular migrants is more than twice as high as in Tezoatlán. The percentage of households with return migrants is six times higher in Mixtepec than in Tezoatlán. This explains at least in part the lower number of non-Catholics in San Juan Diquiyú: evidently the non-Catholics do not return to the village. Perhaps knowing the level of ridicule they face if they do, they stay in the migrant stream. The percentage of households that receive remittances is also lower in Tezoatlán; this goes along with the lower level of emigration. However, in Diquiyú some remittances go to the community as whole in addition to specific households. The annual community project is funded by migrants—both Catholic and non-Catholic—and implemented by the members of the village for the benefit of the entire community. This focus on the community is part of traditional Mixtec village culture, although in this case the community is in charge of investing in modern facilities.

In San Lucas, it seems that the community is less forthcoming. As the people of the village themselves say, “we are no longer united.” This is because there are many non-Catholics in the village. There are also few community-level improvements, while individual households vary in their possession of such items as indoor water and drainage. This variation can be explained by migration: households with emigrants and return migrants tend to have more money to spend on such amenities. But in Diquiyú, the great majority of the households have indoor water because it was provided to the community as a whole by the money of emigrants in the migrant stream and the labor of community members. The same is true of drainage. Although the figures for Diquiyú show that no households have drainage, all the households received drainage in 2004 because there was a community-level project to provide it.

What can explain this difference in the ways that such symbols of modernity are distributed? The percentage of non-Catholics in San Lucas is much higher than in Diquiyú. This is a product of emigration and return migration. The people of San Lucas have made peace over the refusal of the non-Catholics to participate in the Catholic aspects of usos y costumbres, but the community is still divided over the issue of religion. This has made cooperation in the provisioning of modern facilities less likely than in Diquiyú, where the percentage of Catholics is much higher and the level of conflict over religion much lower. Thus, Diquiyú, while remaining
traditional, is also becoming modern. San Lucas, on the other hand, is developing modernity by replacing the community with individual households as the locus of economic change.

Although both Diquiyú and San Lucas are categorized as highly marginalized, the marginalization score for Diquiyú is significantly lower: 31432 as opposed to 63913 for San Lucas. I attribute the slightly greater prosperity of Diquiyú to the location of the village. The land around the village is more fertile, there is higher production of food, the village is closer to the highway than the Mixtepec villages, and the large town of Huajuapan de León is nearby. There are also more economic opportunities in the immediate area, thus the slightly greater wealth of Diquiyú even with lower emigration rates. This is consistent with DIGEPO’s finding that higher marginalization is associated with greater emigration. Lower emigration is also associated with fewer non-Catholics in the community; this is the case with San Juan Diquiyú.

The level of support for community projects in Diquiyú is comparable to that of Yososcuá. However, the socioeconomic indicators for Diquiyú are more like those in San Lucas. Thus, the residents of Diquiyú have a standard of living comparable to that of San Lucas and an orientation toward community development similar to Yososcuá’s. Yososcuá can be seen as somewhere in between the two other villages. There is still some community-level investment, although it has mainly been used to maintain and improve the community’s buildings rather than provide services to each household. Yososcuá’s percentage of non-Catholics is higher than Diquiyú’s but lower than that of San Lucas. The higher marginalization rate for Yososcuá demonstrates that simply having a relatively high percentage of non-Catholics (25 percent in Yososcuá versus 8 percent in Diquiyú) does not predict greater wealth.

The Colonia Sinaí provides several contrasts to the villages in the study. It is a constructed community rather than one that has existed for centuries, as is the case with the villages. Although the members of the colonia identify strongly with the village from which they were expelled, they no longer live in that community. As a constructed entity that is part of a city, it has characteristics that are distinct from the villages. For example, the houses are connected to the city’s electrical, water, and drainage systems, which each household must pay for individually. Although the land is still held in common and there are still cargos and tequio, these are more limited than in the villages. Participation in the non-Catholic church is distinct from participation in the Catholic churches in the village, and there are no fiestas, although the community participates in confraternidades with other congregations of the Centros Bíblicos. The availability of work in Huajuapan de León distinguishes the colonia greatly from the villages—the people in the colonia are clearly better off economically. Despite having many symbols of modernity,
however, the majority of the members of the colonia speak Mixteco. This, like other aspects of the community, is clearly intentional rather than an accident of history. Thus the colonia is a mixture of relative modernity with elements of the traditional culture still intact. Finally, the availability of work means that there are no members of the colonia in the migrant stream, although some have spent years there in previous times.

CATHOLICS AND NON-CATHOLICS

The details of migration have had a profound effect on the number of non-Catholics in each community. Diquiyú has a much smaller percentage of non-Catholics than either of the Mixtepec villages. This is because a greater percentage of migrants return to the Mixtepec villages, some having converted while outside the village. The non-Catholics in San Lucas and Yososcuá, furthermore, are very actively engaged in converting their fellow villagers, another contrast with Diquiyú.

The element of time is important in comparing the percentages of non-Catholics. In San Lucas, the first non-Catholic returned in 1991. In Yososcuá, the first non-Catholic returned in 1996. The difference of five years can explain the lower percentage of non-Catholics in Yososcuá: they have had less time to make converts in the village. But San Juan Diquiyú has had non-Catholics since 1981, and it has a lower percentage than even Yososcuá. Here again, the explanation is not so simple as implied by the histories of the Mixtepec villages.

Diquiyú’s non-Catholics are singularly unwilling to proselytize. One congregation, the Seventh-day Adventists, consists of a single extended family and has not grown since the 1980s. The other congregation remains very small despite the exhortations of outside pastors to go forth and convince their fellow villagers to convert. The combination of the presence of catechists, who encourage adherence to Catholic principles, the proximity of the town of Tezoatlán and the priests affiliated with the Catholic church there, and an overall tendency to ridicule non-Catholics, makes for a situation that is extremely unfriendly toward the latter. At the same time, the low level of return migrants and circular migrants means that the majority of village members have not seen the large numbers of non-Catholics in places like the valley of San Quintín. The fact that a large percentage of people in the Mixtepec villages are aware of the existence of non-Catholics outside the Mixteca region was given by members of both San Lucas and Yososcuá as reasons for the growth of the non-Catholic congregations there. In Diquiyú, the lower rate of emigration has resulted in a general rejection of non-Catholics as well as a more intact fiesta system.

While the Colonia Sinaí does not send migrants out of the community, the colonia itself is the product of emigration, conversion, and return migration. The early
date of the return of the first converts meant that they were absolutely rejected by
the Catholics in the village of San Antonio Yodonduda Monteverde. The members
of the village had never heard of religions other than Catholicism, and they refused
to accept the offers by the non-Catholics to take on nonreligious cargos rather than
participate in the fiesta system. The result, expulsion, seemed to solve the problem,
but in fact people in the village have continued to convert even after the expulsion.
Thus, the colonia presents yet another scenario for the ways that migration and reli-
gious conversion are related.

USOS Y COSTUMBRES IN THREE COMMUNITIES

In the Mixteca region in general, the Catholic aspects of the cargo system are
becoming simpler in response to the forces of modernity. Fewer people are willing
to take on the work associated with being fiesta sponsors because this involves large
expenditures, which result only in higher prestige in the community. The presence
of the market economy has created desires for modern consumer goods, which are
also a source of prestige and do not require giving goods away.

In San Juan Diquiyú, the fiesta system is largely intact. There is only one fiesta
sponsor for all three fiestas, but the support of the village for the fiestas is extensive.
The participation of thirty-six families in the planning and execution of the various
and complex aspects of the fiesta is an indication that the community still supports
the system. However, the level of community support for the fiestas that is still
found in Diquiyú is not found in the Mixtepec agencias. In both these villages, the
number of fiestas has been reduced from two to one and the fiesta sponsors have
had to put on the fiestas by themselves, with little participation by village mem-
bers. This has placed a tremendous burden on the sponsors, who in 2004 were both
returned migrants who wanted to shine in the eyes of their fellow villagers. The
contrast between the Mixtepec communities and Diquiyú is stark. In Diquiyú, the
community supports the Catholic aspects of the fiestas, while this support is largely
missing in the Mixtepec villages. Evidently, the lower emigration rate, along with
the smaller percentage of non-Catholics in Diquiyú, have made for fewer changes
in the fiesta system.

MIGRATION, RELIGIOUS CHANGE, AND MODERNITY

It seems clear that migration has been the force behind the emergence of Pente-
costalism in the Mixteca region. Although today people are changing religion with-
out migrating, this would not have happened if people had not migrated from their
villages to the north in the first place. Because of the tradition of usos y costumbres,
FOUR COMMUNITIES COMPARED

this change has had major repercussions in the villages where it is found—that is, in the majority of Mixtec villages.

If Evangelical Protestantism is a type of cultural remittance, what are its effects on the communities where it is found? Many people, some anthropologists included, see the changes in religious behavior as detrimental to the maintenance of traditional culture, of which the Catholic religion is a central part. However, in the communities in this study it does not seem to be as important as some might think. If Mixtec culture is seen as static and unchanging, then such a core change would destroy it. But non-Catholics continue to participate in the secular aspects of traditional culture when they are allowed to do so. Even in the Colonia Sinaí, where all are Pentecostals, one can find elements of traditional Mixtec culture. Strikingly, for example, most residents of the colonia speak Mixteco and identify as Mixtecs. That most people also speak Spanish is an indication of the changes they have gone through in order to survive in the city, where almost no one speaks Mixteco.

There are those who maintain that people join Pentecostal churches in order to avoid the expenses of the fiestas. The proponents of this position range from Catholic members of the villages to scholarly writers (Dow 2001; Cantón Delgado 1997; Gooren 2002). It can also be said that many members of the villages, regardless of religious affiliation, avoid the expenses of the fiestas by remaining away from their communities. Conversion to Protestantism cannot accurately be explained as a desire to have more money. The amount of money and labor expected by Pentecostal churches, while not having to be spent all at once during the year of the cargo, as with the mayordomos, is still quite significant. It is also true that non-Catholics espouse the Protestant ethic of Max Weber—hard work and very few earthly pleasures. The combination of the two clearly is associated with an increase in earthly possessions, whether there is a religious element to the project or not. At the same time, it is as true today as it was in Weber’s time that the modern economic system is most successfully negotiated by individuals who act independently, rather than those who adhere to a system where the community in many respects dictates what its members must and must not do.

But all these categories become blurred in the context of everyday life in the villages. To begin with, there is not much evidence that non-Catholics are more successful economically than their Catholic neighbors. Here, wealth differences come from the differences in migration status of the villagers and their relatives. Those who have relatives in the migrant stream are all wealthier than those who do not. Of course, the non-Catholics are for the most part return migrants, so they tend to have more wealth. However, return migrants who are Catholic are not really less poor than the non-Catholics. Perhaps the matter comes down to modernity. Are
the Catholics, who participate more in the Catholic fiestas, less modern than their non-Catholic neighbors?

The reality is that all the villages are both modern and nonmodern. The basic political system of the villages is clearly nonmodern: the community owns the land and has considerable power in allocating resources and political positions. But the members of the communities also express modernity in their ownership of large modern vehicles, stereo systems, and other consumer products available in the United States. In San Lucas, there is a greater emphasis on installing modern conveniences in the houses than on maintaining the community-owned buildings. This could be an indication of greater modernity as well. The fact that the villages are on dirt roads far from any modern conveniences says that they are not modern. The movement away from participation in the more expensive aspects of the religious side of the civil-religious hierarchy is an indication of modernity. However, it is not only the non-Catholics who embrace this move: Catholics also are less willing to contribute to the fiestas.

In the context of the globalized economy that Mixtecs must deal with, moving away from a system that rewards prestige to people who give away large amounts of food as well as sponsoring expensive religious rituals is definitely modern. But unlike many other communities in Mexico, the Mixtecs are being selective in their modernity. They are leaving aside the more onerous Catholic aspects of usos y costumbres while maintaining the community control that is integral to their culture. The extent to which this is happening seems to be contingent on there being both a high degree of emigration and return migration, as well as religious change, in a given community. Importantly, the maintenance of transnational networks, another key element of contemporary Mixtec society, has not been seriously affected by religious change, precisely because other aspects of the culture have not changed. The strong identity with the village of one’s birth is still intact, even for people who have not seen their villages for many years. The system of usos y costumbres, while becoming simpler on the Catholic side, remains in force in all of the communities in this study. The combination of these two traditions has so far been the way that Mixtec culture has been maintained, even in the vast migrant streams that constitute the transnational networks.