Abstract

The exercise of power and the expulsion of Protestant indigenous families from Chiapas is an obligatory topic in the study of identities and social change in the region. Between 1997 and 1998, a survey of 16 percent of the population of the hamlets of Betania and Nuevo Zinacantán in the Teopisca Highlands, Chiapas, was done, with interviews of key informants. Betania had 520 families and Nuevo Zinacantán, 52. The survey showed that 65.8 percent came from San Juan Chamula, 20 percent from San Cristóbal, and the rest from villages in Teopisca, Zinacantán, Huixtán, Chenalhó and Tenejapa. In Nuevo Zinacantán, 60 percent had been expelled from Zinacantán and 40 percent from the municipality of San Cristóbal. Taking this process into consideration, we studied the communities’ trajectories historically since the 1970s, when the crisis of the traditional community began that would end up in the expulsion of the Evangelical population; later, the communities would go through a recomposition and reconstruct their ethnic and religious identities.

Keywords

Social identities, indigenous migrations, socio-religious processes, communities, Mexico’s southern border.