

THE BASQUE: ETHNIC PRESERVATION THROUGH LANGUAGE ^{MAS}

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The concept of ethnicity has played a very important role throughout the world in the last three decades, and will continue to do so well into the twenty-first century. But without an understanding of how, and why, groups maintain their individual ethnic identities, the concept remains ill defined and, consequently, poorly

understood. The Basque community of the American West illustrates two important aspects of an understanding of the concept of ethnicity: language and comfort. Not only are these aspects of ethnicity important to the maintenance of the group, but they are also ethnic markers which are essential to the group's preservation.