

Celebrating Basque Diasporic Identity in Ethnic Festivals: Anatomy of a Basque Community: Boise (Idaho)

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BIBLID [0212-7016 (2000), 45: 2; 569-598]

Zaila da Idahoko euskal komunitatearen elkartzailer gisa Euzkaldunak Incorporated Boise Basque Center-ek izan duen garrantzia neurritz kanpo baloratzea. Ondoko artikuluan, egileak Boiseko (Idaho, EEBB) euskal erakunde eta elkarteen garapena laburbiltzen du, eta Nazioarteko Euskal Jaialdia Jai Aldi 2000 deiturikoan azaldu euskal diasporaren egungo adierazpideak aztertzen ditu. Landa lanean erabiliriko estatistikak 1995-2000 bitartean bildurikoak dira, 348 elkarrizketa pertsonal eta idatziz erantzuniko 832 galdesorta anonimo barne.

Giltz-Hitzak: Diaspora. Nortasun etnikoa. Estatu Batuetako euskaldunak. Jai Aldi. Festivals Jaialdi etnikoak.

No se puede sobrestimar la relevancia del Euzkaldunak Incorporated Boise Basque Center, como variable aglutinadora en la comunidad vasca de Idaho. En el siguiente artículo la autora resume el desarrollo de las instituciones y asociaciones vascas en Boise, Idaho USA, y examina las manifestaciones contemporáneas de la identidad de la diáspora vasca en el Festival Internacional Vasco Jai Aldi 2000. Las estadísticas utilizadas en el trabajo de campo fueron recogidas entre 1995 y 2000 incluyendo 348 entrevistas personales y 832 cuestionarios anónimos rellenos por escrito.

Palabras Clave: Diáspora. Identidad étnica. Vascos de los Estados Unidos. Jai Aldi. Festivals Étnicos.

On ne peut pas surestimer l'importance de l'Euzkaldunak Incorporated Boise Basque Center, comme une variable "agglutinatrice" dans la communauté basque d'Idaho. Dans l'article qui suit, l'auteur résume le développement des institutions et des associations basques à Boise, Idaho USA, et étudie les manifestations contemporaines de l'identité de la diaspora basque dans le Festival International Basque Jai Aldi 2000. Les statistiques utilisées dans ce travail de terrain furent recueillies entre 1995 et 2000 y compris 348 entrevues personnelles et 832 questionnaires anonymes remplis par écrit.

Mots Clés: Diaspora. Identité ethnique. Basques des Etats-Unis. Jai Aldi. Festivals Ethniques.

An estimated 30,000 people from the western United States, New York, Florida, Canada, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay, Australia, and hundreds more from the Basque Country itself, descended onto Boise, Idaho for the Jai Aldi 2000 International Basque Festival. A welcoming banner read, "Because of them, we are. Because of us, they will be". The motto of the 50-Year Anniversary of the Boise, Idaho Euzkaldunak Incorporated Basque Center demonstrated the feeling of responsibility that numerous United States diaspora Basques have toward their ancestors and toward their grandchildren.

Established in 1949 with 500 charter members, the Euzkaldunak Incorporated (Boise Basque Center) was created as a place to be utilized for Basque dance practice, to hold dinners for the membership social gatherings, to play the card games of *mus* and *briska*, and most importantly to connect with other Basques and share language, food, and camaraderie. Its significance as an agglutinating variable in the Boise area Basque community cannot be overstated. Following, I will summarize the development of Basque institutions and associations in Boise, and examine the contemporary manifestations of diasporic Basque identity in the Jai Aldi 2000 International Basque Festival.

1. EUZKALDUNAK INCORPORATED

The first phase of the Boise Basque Center was constructed in 1949 with the voluntary labor of members and was completed in 1951. Throughout its 50 years, the success of this ethnic social-cultural organization has resulted from volunteer work, private donations, and endless public fundraisers. Most of the membership is made up of emigrants from the Franco era, and first and second generation Basque-Americans whose ancestors emigrated immediately before the Spanish Civil War. These comparatively recent migrants have affected the lingering anti-Spanish political values and the traditional Aranist conservatism of the ethnic community, as well as distinguished this diasporic population for its ongoing efforts to utilize and to reinforce Basque language usage.

The Board of Directors of the Euzkaldunak Incorporated is composed of volunteers who are democratically elected from the membership for a two-year term. Open to all members, which includes the non-Basque spouses of those who are ancestrally Basque, there have been serious disagreements in the past regarding non-Basques serving as Directors, and still today, non-Basques cannot become members of the organization unless they are married to a Basque. The definition of "Basqueness" in the United States diaspora communities follows the traditional, conservative and exclusive "ancestry" model. Though there are people in the Boise community who have learned the Basque language, married a Basque, and lived in the Basque Country for years, they are still categorized as "non-Basque". For some there is a spectrum of "Basqueness", and they speak of the children of these unions as "half-Basque", or "quarter-Basque", and often in a hierarchical manner. Others use this terminology only to inform the listener that one of the parents is non-

Basque, but place no evaluation on the category. This traditional concept of Basqueness follows ancestral paradigms and definitions of ethnicity based on biological heritage. This may not be the contemporary ideology in the homeland, and I argue that the diaspora lags behind the homeland's more inclusive category of who counts as a Basque. In the 1995 Basque Autonomous Government Department of Culture survey research data of homeland definitions of 'ethnocultural origins', investigators asked about "conditions necessary to be Basque"; 59% responded to be "Born in the Basque Country", and 51% responded to "Live and work in the Basque country" (Aizpurua 1995:207). Ironically, it is the United States diasporic Basques that promote the traditional ancestral model, which in the end is dangerous to their own survival because of their intermarrying with other ethnicities.

As demonstrated in the table below, when compared to different diasporic communities in other countries, the United States Basques demonstrated their more conservative approach to Basque ethnic identification¹.

Table 1. Responses to statement "A person must have Basque ancestors to be Basque"

	Agree or Strongly Agree	No opinion	Disagree or Strongly Disagree
United States	91%	2%	6%
Peru	83%	0	17%
Australia	73%	4%	23%
Uruguay	69%	6%	26%
Argentina	62%	8%	29%
Belgium	50%	4%	46%

Responses from written anonymous questionnaires. Total=832 self-defining Basques from the above listed diaspora Basque communities.

Another aspect of Aranist Basqueness was Catholicism. In the United States surveys, when asked if "continuing Catholic beliefs and traditions" was of great importance, 83% agreed that the Catholic religion is consequential to Basque culture, and only eight percent responded that Catholicism is NOT of any importance. This has been evident in Boise Basque ethnic celebrations such as *Aberrri Eguna* (Day of the Homeland), Saint Agatha, Saint Ignatius, and *Omenaldia* (Day of Homage), which all have a Catholic mass component to the festival and are well-attended. The mass for the annual Saint Ignatius feast day is standing room only and for the Jai Aldi 1995 and

1. Data presented in this article are from the author's Ph.D. fieldwork collected from 1995-2000 in Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Peru, United States, and Uruguay. Results are the compilation of 348 personal interviews and 832 written anonymous questionnaires answered by self-defining Basques. Publication forthcoming University of Nevada Press.



San Ignacio Mass at the Saint John's Cathedral in Boise, Idaho.

2000 masses, hundreds of Basques were turned away from a brimming Saint John's Cathedral.

Other sponsored events of the Boise Euzkaldunak Incorporated include monthly Basque dinners for members and a newsletter sent to 635 families and institutions with information about members and upcoming Basque Center events. There are BINGO games, dances, *mus* and *briska* card tournaments, cooking classes, language classes, dancing classes, photography exhibits, celebrations of *Aberri Eguna*, Saint Agatha, and Saint Ignatius, and a Christmas dinner with a food and crafts bazaar. Athletes also enjoy golf tournaments, and *pala* and *pelota* handball and racketball tournaments.

The Boise Basque Center's charter is apolitical and it does not institutionally participate in either United States or Basque Country politics. Though members are free to endorse the parties and candidates of their choices, the Basque Center itself does not get involved with either. However, ethnicity seems to be a significant factor of voting behavior for many Basques in Idaho as they report crossing party lines to vote for Basque candidates in local and State elections². Though most do not participate in the homeland elections, they have the right to do so under Public Law 8/1994 passed by the Basque Autonomous Government's Parliament. There are currently 31,600 persons in the worldwide Basque diaspora that hold citizenship rights in Euskadi and of those 26,396 are qualified to vote. There are an additional 12,690 Navarrese eligible to vote in

2. Several interviewees described themselves as registered Democrats but stated they cross over to vote for Basque Republican candidates such as Pete Cenarrusa, Secretary of State of Idaho, or John Bastida, or Dave Navarro in Ada County government. Others who identified themselves as "normally Republican", stated they cross party lines to vote for Dave Bieter for the Idaho Legislature.

elections in Navarre. Though there is no specific breakdown by city or State, in 1999 there were 2,010 people in the United States who were registered to vote in the Basque Autonomous Government elections³. In the 1998 parliamentary election, of the 26,396 eligible diaspora voters for Euskadi 6,888 of them actually voted— a 26.1% participation rate. Anonymous questionnaire results from Basque communities in the United States demonstrate that more than 40% admit they do not know enough about homeland politics to choose a homeland political party preference. For those that do, the *Partido Nacionalista Vasco* (Basque Nationalist Party) consistently ranks first, not only in the United States, but in each of the forty-three diaspora communities researched. The following table illustrates the actual official diaspora, and homeland, vote.

Table 2. Diaspora Voting 1990; 1994; Diaspora and Euskadi Voting 1998 Elections

	1990 Diaspora	1994 Diaspora	1998 Diaspora	1998 Euskadi
Registered	7,005	14,373	26,396	1,700,000
Actual Voters	2,152 (30.7%)	3,119 (21.7%)	6,888 (26.1%)	1,241,315 (73%)
PARTIES	DIASPORA votes	DIASPORA votes	DIASPORA votes	EUSKADI Votes
PNV	647 (30.1%)	978 (31.4%)	2,011 (32.%)	28.0%
PSOE	523 (24.3%)	858 (27.5%)	1,500 (24.3%)	17.6%
PP	205 (9.5%)	431 (13.8%)	1,343 (21.7%)	20.1%
HB/EH	204 (9.5%)	312 (10%)	522 (8.5%)	18.0%
IU	0	31 (1%)	256 (4.2%)	5.7%
EA	105 (4.9%)	251 (8.1%)	378 (6.1%)	8.7%
Others	468 (21.8%)	258 (8.3%)	166 (2.7%)	1.9%
Nullified votes	0	0	712	
TOTAL	2,152 (100%)	3,119 (100%)	6,176 (100%)	

Election data compiled from Basque Government published results. *Euskal Etxeak*, No. 40, 1998 PNV=Partido Nacionalista Vasco; PSOE=Partido Socialista Obrero Español; PP=Partido Popular; HB/EH= Herri Batasuna/Euskal Herritarrok. The political movement favored by ETA previously known as Herri Batasuna has changed its name to Euskal Herritarrok. IU=Izquierda Unida; EA=Eusko Alkartasuna.

In the early 1980s with the return of democratic government in Euskadi and Navarre, homeland politicians made tours through the United States visiting the Basque Centers, and one such junket included representatives from five homeland political parties. The Boise Basques' interest in the presentation proved to be dismal. Out of a membership of approximately 600 families, less than twenty people attended. No Basque Country politicians have since returned to the Euzkaldunak Incorporated to request any time whatsoever to discuss partisan politics. Unlike Galician campaigns where the diaspora votes have determined electoral outcomes, the Basque diaspora's vote is basically ignored by homeland political parties— in the United States and equally in other host countries.

3. The Foral Community of Navarre did not release the actual number of registered Navarrese abroad, nor the number that actually voted. These statistics were not available for Iparralde.

Today the Euzkaldunak Inc. has nearly 900 registered members who are from all seven provinces of the Basque Country. The factors of chain migration have influenced a very heavy emphasis from Bizkaia, and most are first, second and third generation. Because of the more recent immigration to Idaho (as compared to Argentina, Uruguay, or Mexico) there is still much *euskera* (Basque language) spoken by emigrants, and *euskera batua* (the unified official Basque language) spoken by latter generations who have attended classes or have lived in the Basque Country. Many visitors to the Jai Aldi 2000 celebration commented that they felt they were in *Euskal Herria* (Basque Country) because of the Basque language they heard being used by adults and children.

Another salient observation by Basques visiting from the homeland regarded the lack of division between the “French-Basques” and “Spanish-Basques” and their descendants in the United States. Though this is a phenomenon of the last twenty years, the efforts to integrate and collaborate between Basque Centers in the United States have been the domain of the North American Basque Organizations (NABO) federation of Basque institutions in the United States. Each of the more than 40 Basque Centers sends delegates to NABO meetings three times a year where common problems are discussed, and joint projects are organized. The emigrants’ French and Spanish accents influencing spoken English and Basque are easily noted but disappear for the following generations. Most Basque surnames, or spellings of surnames, point to regional affiliations but for the following generations, a delineation of which side of the border this Basque person is from is not significant. The descriptors “French-Basque” and “Spanish-Basque” are not commonly utilized by the youngest 15-30 year-olds who participate in the dance groups and travel to each other’s festivals. Festival masses combine music, dance, instruments, and regional traditions. Foods consumed, dances performed formally by a dance troupe or informally at the street dances *verbenas*, songs sung, *mus* card game rules, and the Basque language itself all denote the regional differences inside *Euskal Herria*. However, there seems to be less and less differentiation and the Basques from Idaho (mainly Vizcayan) have learned the festival dances from the San Francisco and Chino dancers (mainly from *Iparralde*) and vice versa. Now participants are more likely to say, “those are the dances *from the north*”, rather than “those are the *French* dances”. It may be that the “imagination” of a unified Basque identity is stronger in diaspora communities than it is in the politically and administratively divided homeland, though this type of research is yet to be scientifically conducted.

Members of the Euzkaldunak Incorporated’s *euskal etxea* (Basque Center) have also formed smaller sub-groups of interest with other Basques. The *Aiztan Artean* (Among Sisters) is composed of Basque women who volunteer to support Basque fundraisers, events, groups, and activities in the Boise area. The club commenced meeting in 1972 and is a social-service group of women who are of Basque heritage or are married to Basques. The forty members host Basque Center dinners, a Mothers’ Day Luncheon, and several meetings at private homes.

A similar club, the Basque Girl's Club was established in 1936 and has been active for all of these past 64 years. At one time there were 33 members but now the group has 12 active members. These Basque women have volunteered in community projects such as for the Red Cross, the Lung Association, and the Nampa, Idaho State School and Hospital. The Basque Girl's Club originated the November Basque Center *Morzilla* Dinner and Carnival Bazaar, where Basque cuisine is enjoyed by all and Basque foods are sold to the public. Children play and have fun at the carnival and adults play BINGO for hours hoping to win a prize while raising money for the Euzkaldunak Inc. There is nothing distinctly "Basque" about the event anymore except for the cuisine and *morzillak* (blood sausages) and the ethnically Basque customers.

The Basque Charities Association raises money throughout the year from funeral donations and from an annual sheep auction at the Shepherders' Ball Dance. This money is then donated to Basques and non-Basques in the Boise area that are in need of relief from medical bills. Basque Charities Association has purchased wheelchairs, paid for dental work, physical therapy, surgeries and hospital bills for more than 100 people over the years. Decades ago a similar organization, the *Socorros Mutuos* (Mutual Aid), also helped pay for repatriation to the Basque Country for Basques who could not financially afford their return trips home.



Shepherders lived in mobile wagons that they moved as the sheep grazed to new pastures.

Playing cards has always been a favorite pastime in Basque homes and gatherings, and is also popular at the Basque Center. *Mus* players regularly frequent the Basque Center and hold tournaments annually to see who will represent the Euzkaldunak for the NABO tournament and the World *Mus* Tournament. There were forty-two players in the 2000 tournament and everyday at the Basque Center retired Basques come to play, continue friendships, and re-tell stories of their youth. The Euzkaldunak has participated in NABO Junior *Mus* Tournaments and holds classes to teach the younger generations the rules and tricks of the card game, though fewer than ten to fifteen people under the age of twenty participate in the Junior *Mus*.

Briska players also meet Sunday nights at the Center to enjoy each other's company and share several laughs in Basque while playing cards. However, there are not many players under sixty years of age, and this could mean the end of *briska* tournaments if a younger generation does not show an interest in learning and playing together at the Basque Center. In the 2000 Euzkaldunak tournament, twenty-four members played *briska*. Obviously, the actual playing of cards is not the important socialization factor, but the friendships established, the sharing of Basque language, and continued participation in Basque Center programs perpetuate the Basque identity in the participants.

At the opposite end of the age spectrum the Euzkaldunak sponsors two different dance groups. For the *txikis* (young ones), the *Boise'ko Gazteak* (Youth of Boise), and for over fourteen years of age, the Oinkari Basque Dancers. The *Boise'ko Gazteak* combines 170 children between the ages of four and fourteen to teach traditional Basque dance and song. They are divided into three different age groups and utilize seventeen teachers and seven musicians. Every Tuesday night the Basque Center, the adjacent Basque Museum and Cultural Center, and next door *fronton* (handball court), are filled with the energy of youth, music and dance. It is an important part of the construction of ethnic identity for the youth to meet each other as children and make friends at the Basque events. The dancers' parents wait in the Basque Center bar, or the Bar Gernika just a few buildings away where they also become friends and are more likely to continue to participate in Basque Center functions. Many of these children continue on to dance with the Oinkari Basque Dancers because of the friends they have made and the desire to carry-on with Basque dance and music.

The Oinkaris were established after a group of friends from Boise traveled to *Euskal Herria* in 1960 to visit their relatives and experience the Basque Country for the first time. These youths met a troupe of dancers in San Sebastian-Donostia and after learning dances from them, returned to Boise to perform for the first time at the winter Shepherders' Ball Dance in 1960. Since that time, Sunday afternoons and Tuesday nights have found the Basque Center as the meeting place for dance and music practice, and more than 100 Oinkari dancers have visited or lived in the Basque Country at one time or another. They have brought back to Boise additional dances, authentic costumes, music, and new energy for Basque ethnic expression

through dance and music. More importantly, they have updated the Boise community's comprehension of contemporary issues in the Basque Country.

In 1985 the group of sixty dancers and musicians made a 25th Anniversary return voyage tour to *Euskal Herria*, visiting all seven provinces and performing for the surprised crowds. "Surprised" because many in the audience could not believe the quality performance of these dancers from Boise, Idaho. Most had never seen a group from the diaspora perform in the Basque Country and were incredulous that the surnames were not Smith, Jones, and Robertson, etc. but were such as Arrubarrena, Etxebarria, Uberuaga, Almirantearrena, and Urrutia. Years of this author's conversations with Basques in the homeland and those in the diaspora exemplify a mutual ignorance of each other. For some this extends to apathy as they do not expect their paths ever to cross. Often homeland Basques do not define diaspora Basques as "Basques", while those in the United States make no differentiation of where a person was born or where they live. A person of Basque ancestry born in Boise is Basque equally to a person of Basque ancestry born in Bilbao, or Buenos Aires. Conversations are often confusing because those born in the Basque Country use "Basque" for those actually born in the Basque Country. When dancers were asked if they were Basque, they answered, "yes- from the United States", which did not fit into the homeland Basques' schema of definitions.

The second-generation children of Oinkari Basque Dancers are now performing in this folk dance group. Hundreds of young people between the ages of 14-30 have been a part of the ethnic socialization process of this dance troupe, becoming life-long friends, and even marriage partners. These young people, especially the teenagers, are influenced by their other Basque friends and families, and they create ties with dancers from other Basque groups around the western United States. For adolescents, the summer tours of Basque festivals have proven to be a powerful marker in maintaining interest in the Basque culture when witnessing hundreds of others their own age participating in these cultural events. It has become "cool" to be ethnic, and the positive social status is reinforced at each Basque event.

The Oinkaris are self-financed and earn money for travel to Basque festivals across the United States by performing for business functions, conferences, and conventions, and by selling thousands of chorizo and solomo sandwiches every year at community fairs and carnivals. More than 40 dancers and their musicians, Jimmy Jausoro, Juan Zulaika, and Edu Sarria, give countless volunteer hours to promote this aspect of Basque culture which unites dance, song, and music from the seven provinces.

2. THE BASQUE MUSEUM AND CULTURAL CENTER

The Basque Museum and Cultural Center is the only Basque museum in the United States and works to give all its visitors information about Basques in the American West. Many Basques who have lost touch with their

heritage enter to ask about genealogy and the history of *Euskal Herria*. Director Patty Miller records that in just 1999 over 17,000 people visited the Basque Museum and Cultural Center and its events. The Center is next to an original Basque boarding house, which functioned mostly for sheepherders from 1910 to 1969 and was operated by the Uberuaga family. Adelia Garro Simplot first purchased this boarding house, the Jacobs Uberuaga Boarding House, in 1983 with the idea to preserve the building and its historical importance to the Basque population⁴.

The Cultural Center was officially established in 1985 under Adelia Garro Simplot's leadership. The original boarding house is preserved and visitors can see how sheepherders lived in the winter months when coming down from the mountains into Boise. The original kitchen still functions and special dinners have been prepared in the house for exclusive guests. Many dedicated volunteers and directors who give their time and expertise in everything from language and cooking classes to building repairs and landscaping have nurtured Garro's vision.

Next door to the boarding house is the Basque Museum and Cultural Center which houses an extensive display area used for photography, sculpture, and special collections regarding Basques in the homeland and in the American West. There is also a classroom for *euskera* lessons, and dancing, several offices for researchers, the Juanita Uberuaga Hormaechea Collection of photographs and scrapbooks of newspaper articles and announcements of Basques, and the Joseph V. Eiguren Memorial Library— a small library archive. The Cultural Center is also currently working on the transcription of over 200 oral histories of Basques who immigrated to the area. This is all accomplished with committees of volunteers and people who believe in the future of Basque studies.

The gift shop is very popular with jewelry of *lauburus*, (a Basque symbol) dancers, provincial coats-of-arms, and Catholic religious symbols. Basque ethnic music on tape and CD promote the works of Oskorri, Imanol, Kepa Junkera, Tapia eta Leturia, Enrike Zelaia, Xabier Lete, Txomin Artola eta Amaia Zubiria. There are abundant red, white and green linens, woodcrafts, books, T-shirts and other items from *Euskal Herria* and from Boise with Basque themes. Basques from the United States are very proud to advertise their ethnic heritage and to decorate their homes with representations of their ancestral homeland. Their manifestations of ethnonationalism are cultural and not usually political.

The streetscape in front of the Euzkaldunak Basque Center, the boarding house, and the Basque Museum and Cultural Center was pedestrianized in 2000. It is landscaped with red and green flowers, red and green colored cement was poured in the shape of *lauburu*, granite stones are placed with

4. For a detailed study of the Basque boarding houses in the American west please see Jerónima Echeverría, *Home Away From Home*, Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1999.

the engraved surnames of Basques from the Treasure Valley area, and two sculptures of *Laiak* placed at the welcoming entry. The Basque Block will likely be closed to automobile traffic for outdoor Basque celebrations. This is another example of Basques from Boise volunteering together to accomplish a community goal that benefits the city of Boise, and also educates the larger community of non-Basques. They have reached out to the local businesses and governmental agencies to work together to promote the city's awareness of Basque ethnicity. Both the Euzkaldunak Basque Center and the Basque Museum and Cultural Center can also be rented by businesses and civic groups for their own events and this helps the institutions earn money and also service the Boise area for social functions.

Boise's Basques are also mindful of their future *euskera* speakers and their education. The *Boise'ko Ikastola* is a Basque language preschool, fully licensed by the city of Boise, which was created to teach children from ages 3-5. Opened in 1998 with help from a Basque Government of Euskadi grant to bring a teacher, there are currently 22 children attending the playful classes everyday Monday through Friday. Children learn by receiving the latest educational techniques from teachers who have earned childhood education degrees from the University of the Basque Country. The *ikastola* is operated with parent volunteers and under the administration of Elena Cook of Boise, and teaching of Izarne Garmendia of Irura, Gipuzkoa. Parents and students of the Boise *ikastola* have held video conferences with other *ikastolak* in the Basque Country and are very proud of their English and Basque-speaking children. *Amumas* (grandmothers) and *Aitxitxes* (grandfathers) are also happy to listen to their grandchildren singing the same Basque songs they learned as children in the homeland.

Basque language knowledge, usage, and literacy in the United States is comparatively higher than other diaspora communities because of the influence of recent immigration and because of second and third generation Basques participating in study abroad programs in Oñati, Gipuzkoa, and San Sebastian-Donostia, Gipuzkoa. Several other individuals have traveled separately and participated in total immersion language programs in Bizkaia and Gipuzkoa. Survey research data show that in the United States Basque diaspora communities, 59% of respondents can understand a basic conversation, speak with little difficulty, or are fluent in Basque, and 41% "know a few words" or "none" at all. However, 67% stated they "only use Basque for special phrases", or not at all. Those that know Basque but do not utilize it represent the problem in language maintenance. Sociolinguists who study language planning, language shift, and language vitality point to these examples as factors in language death (Fishman 1985, 1989, 1997; Ariztondo, Garmendia, Aizpurua, and Bourhis 1999).

3. BASQUE BANDS

Formed in 1996 with several Basque and non-Basque musicians who have been playing Basque music for years, *Gaupasa* (All Night) has perfor-

med promoting Basque music in Idaho, Oregon, Nevada, California and also the 1997 National Folk Festival in Dayton, Ohio. They entertain at many Basque weddings and cultural events with the *trikitixa* (button accordion), txistu (Basque flute), *pandareta* (tambourine), guitars, mandolin, violin, bass, saxophone, and drums. Typically songs are sung in Basque and both the youthful and elderly crowds gather to sing and dance with the mixture of Basque and English lyrics. *Gaupasa* adds a fundamental element to the Basque community, enticing young people to learn and practice their Basque language in a social setting. They give Basque language and Basque folk music a high status among the viewers and serve as examples for other young musicians. Current musicians Cathy Clarkson, Josie Bilbao, Patty Miller, Dan Ansotegui, Sean Aucutt, Chris Bieter, Morie Berriochoa, and Nick Elguizabal have, between themselves, numerous years of experience living in the Basque Country, and have established many networks with homeland artists. Teenagers in the dancing crowds can sing along with many of the Basque songs while not understanding a single word of the *euskera* they have just vocalized. If they could, they might comprehend the nationalist lyrics and meanings behind them.

Jim Jausoro's Dance Band has been playing together for decades and has served as a fundamental element for Basque festivals, Shepherders' Balls, San Ignacio celebrations, weddings, and other Basque community occasions. Playing a combination of big band music and traditional Basque festival dance music to the enjoyment of all ages, the Jim Jausoro Band has fulfilled the significant role of maintaining a presence of Basque music at all celebrations. At any typical Basque dance today, the Jim Jausoro Dance Band will commence the evening with waltzes and jitterbugs and warm-up the crowd while especially pleasing the senior citizens, and *Gaupasa* will finish the night with the younger people dancing and singing the lyrics to the Basque rock music.

4. SPORTS

There is only one remaining *fronton* of the four that were built in Boise. The Anduiza court was originally constructed in 1914 as a part of a Basque boarding house for shepherders— a place where Basques came in to Boise from the mountains to see the doctor or dentist, to make bank transactions, and to winter in the valley. Rooms were rented by herders and new arrivals from *Euskal Herria*, usually Bizkaia, and the kitchen and dining room were used for helping and educating each other about the new country as well as remembering the homeland.

Basque boarding houses in the United States served as places for room and board (meals), for new immigrants to acculturate to the unfamiliar customs and expectations of society, to meet other Basques, consume authentic Basque style food, and to update local area Basques with regard to the homeland current events. Today there are no functioning Basque boarding houses in Idaho. However, this indoor *fronton* is home for approximately 20



Wood choppers from Euskal Herria performed for the Jai Aldi thousands of cheering crowds.

pala (racketball) and *pelota* (handball) players that are keeping their love of Basque sport alive. They hold regular fundraisers to help pay for maintenance and expenses. However, many are worried about the continuance of the sport. Despite the encouragement from the crowds, the physical hardship of playing by the Basque rules of no hand protection discourages younger *pelota* players from learning when they see the mature players' numb and swollen fingers and hands. During the Jai Aldi 2000 festival the NABO Championships were held for men's and women's *pala* and *pelota*. The small fronton has very limited space for spectators, but the hundreds who were able to squeeze in for a match delightedly invigorated the players and the rivalries between Basque Centers.

Every year at the Boise San Ignacio picnic celebration the last weekend of July, there are competitions of *txinga* (weight carrying), *sokatira* (tug-of-war), and in the past, weight lifting as well. Though it has been difficult to find replacements for first generation weight lifters and wood choppers, Basque Government grants have paid for exhibitions by sportsmen from *Euskal Herria*, and for many festival goers these unique agricultural sports exhibitions are the highlight of the festival. The Mutriku Sokatira Taldea, three weight lifters, and three woodchoppers were brought from the Basque Country to provide this aspect of the Jai Aldi 2000 festival. This ritual of competitive sport symbolizes another variable in a collective past for Basques and serves as an integral part of the diaspora festival.

5. BASQUE CUISINE

When non-Basques speak of Basques they are likely to refer to sport, dancing, music, and food. Boise is served well for Basque food by the premier Oñati Restaurant. Chef and Owner Jesús Alcelay, and sous-chef Miren Foruria Barquin, create dishes of lamb shanks, red bean soups, codfish, squid in black ink sauce, *croquetas*, vegetable stews, and desserts, which



The final evening of Jai Aldi included a western style barbecue for the participants from Euskal Herria.

include *brazo de gitano*, *profiterol au chocolat*, and *flana*. Alcey established the Oñati Restaurant in 1987 and has been selected as Best Chef in the thirteen western states by a western cuisine publication. Quality and quantity make Basque and non-Basque customers return to Boise's longest established full service Basque restaurant. The Oñati is also a favorite place for special business dinners, baptisms, birthday and anniversary dinners. Recently, Alcey has expanded his restaurant to include his own mobile catering business. He drives a commercial truck equipped with a full kitchen to several businesses and contracts to serve specialty breakfasts and lunches to the employees on site. His entrepreneurial skills and quality Basque cuisine keep Alcey and his Oñati Restaurant successful, as well as promote an awareness of Basque culture in the Treasure Valley area.

The Bar Gernika is owned and managed by Dan Ansotegui and is located on the Basque Block with the Euzkaldunak Inc. *euskal etxea*, the Jacobs Uberuaga Basque Boarding House, the Basque Museum and Cultural Center, and the Anduiza Fronton. Opened in 1991, the Bar Gernika serves Basque-style sandwiches, salads, soups, and desserts. Though a very small restaurant and bar, it is a favorite place for young Basques to congregate on Friday and Saturday nights because they know they will see Basque friends and have the opportunity to listen to Basque music. Ansotegui named his bar the "Bar Gernika" in reciprocation of the Bar Boise in Gernika. During the 1970-1990s in Gernika, Bizkaia⁵ there was a "Bar Boise" owned and managed by a person from Gernika who had lived in Boise while working as a shepherd. Ansotegui decided to honor Gernika by naming his new business the Bar Gernika.

Epi's Basque Restaurant, in nearby Meridian, Idaho is owned and operated by Dan Ansotegui's sisters, Gina Ansotegui Urquidi and Chris Ansotegui,

5. "Guernica" is the Spanish spelling and "Gernika" is the Basque language spelling for the same town. The bar's name is in Basque, "Bar Gernika".

and brother-in-law, Alberto Bereziartua is the head cook. Because it is so popular with Basques and non-Basques as well, it is almost impossible to have dinner without a reservation. Although only functioning since January 1999, Epi's has established an excellent reputation for fine authentic dinners, friendly service, and a Basque cultural atmosphere.

6. JAI ALDI 2000

The Boise area Basques' annual Euzkaldunak Incorporated's celebration is the last weekend of July in recognition of Saint Ignatius. Every year this festival includes a members' golf tournament, a dance, a Catholic mass, and a family picnic with music, children's games, dance, and athletic competitions. However, the "Jai Aldi Festival" is a distinct event only celebrated in Boise, and is held only once every five years. Each Basque community around the United States organizes their own annual summer festival with their own local specialties. It could be possible to travel the western United States from May to September and enjoy a Basque ethnic festival almost every weekend. Because Basques from around the United States know that the next Jai Aldi will be 2005 in Boise, many have already planned on returning to duplicate their vacations. In the years when there is no Jai Aldi, the regular San Ignacio festival proceeds with mostly Basques from Idaho and a few that travel from Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and California, but the scale is much smaller and much more familiar.

The first Jai Aldi Festival was celebrated in 1987 under the leadership of Albert Erquiaga and Gerri Achurra and hundreds of volunteers from the Boise Basque Center. Erquiaga and Achurra had met the Basque Autonomous Government's international representative Jokin Intxausti at a North American Basque Organizations meeting in 1985 and he had encouraged them to organize and produce an international event to celebrate and promote Basque culture. The original idea was to highlight local and Basque Country artisans, sportsmen, and dance and music groups. Because of the significant success in numbers of people that attended from all around the United States and Basques from *Euskal Herria*, Mexico and Canada, the festival was again announced for 1990. Jai Aldi 1987 had covered all of its expenses and actually also made a financial profit for the Euzkaldunak Inc.

The Jai Aldi Festival of 1990 experienced such an incremental growth in numbers of people attending that for 1995, the location had to be changed from the Idaho Historical Penitentiary to the Western Idaho Fairgrounds. Every five years the reputation has grown as more and more Basques from around the United States travel to Boise to celebrate with friends from other States. At Jai Aldi 2000, fourteen different Basque dancing troupes participated, fifteen singing or musical instrument groups entertained, and one choir and one combined *klika* welcomed the crowds estimated to be near 30,000 people. Basques traveled from Idaho, Oregon, Washington, California, Nevada, Texas, Utah, Wyoming, Florida, New York, and Maryland to participate and share their festival with friends and family.

The importance of the Jai Aldi festival to Boise area Basques is great because of the opportunity presented to meet new friends and enjoy old ones, and to learn about Basques from other parts of the United States, other diaspora communities, and especially from those in *Euskal Herria*. The festivals have influenced the interconnectedness of the Basques in the various communities and, especially in 2000, highlighted Basques from other countries in the world.

Basque, German Garbizu originally of Donostia and now employed in Lima, traveled from the Lima, Peru *Euskal Etxea* to represent Basques from Peru. Many Basques in the United States who did not know anything about the Basque presence there approached him with questions about the *Euskal Etxea* and its functions and membership and new friendships were established. A group of Basque Australians overcame the twenty hours flying time to meet the Boise Basques for the first time. The Sydney'ko Gure Txoko sent a young representative who had participated in the Basque Autonomous Government's *Gaztemundu* youth program with Geneva Ayarra from Boise. Representing the north Queensland Basques were José Mari, Jennie, and Ana Mari Goicoechea, and José Larrazabal and Dolores Mendiolea Larrazabal. These Australians were surprised to find so many relatives and common friends in Boise. They know that when they return to Bizkaia for a visit, the chances are high that they will see new friends they met at Jai Aldi 2000. The *Gaztemundu* participants are also fortifying bonds between Basques in different countries. Having met in the homeland, they are now visiting in each other's country of residence.

Raquel Bonifazi represented Montevideo, Uruguay's oldest *euskal etxea*, the Euskal Erria (established in 1876), and also participated in the NABO federation meeting with the Australian and Peruvian Basques. Representatives were also present from Canada and Mexico, and these Basques had a chance to see how the United States Basques organized their international festival. The international flavor to the occasion added to the diasporic consciousness of the participants. Basques from all of these different communities around the world met and made new friends and upon conversing stated that they realized their experiences were very similar regardless of the country in which they live.

Sportsmen, musicians, singers, dancers, and visitors from *Euskal Herria*, Peru, Uruguay, Australia, Canada, and Mexico all interchanged with Basques from the United States and new networks of communication have been created. The transnational identity, a feeling of belonging in several different physical places, has taken a strong hold in many people that attended the festival. Hundreds of postal addresses and e-mail addresses were exchanged and the Basque international network of communications was fortified.

6.1 Governmental Representation from Euskal Herria

Heading the Delegation of the *Eusko Jaurlaritza* (Basque Autonomous Government) was the Minister of Culture for Euskadi, Mari Karmen

Garmendia, and representatives from the Department of Culture, José Luís Zubizarreta and Edurne Basoa. Juan Ignacio Mutiloa, who will soon be a part of a permanent commercial delegation in Chicago, represented the Department of Industry. Josu Legarreta, the Director of Relations with Basque Communities, and Benan Oregi from the same office in the *Lehendakaritza* (Office of the Presidency), also attended to experience the Boise festival and complete the delegation from the Basque Government of Euskadi⁶. Basques in the United States were honored to have their presence and especially proud that there are such good relations and open communications with the Basque Government. They have not forgotten the dark years of the Franco dictatorship, or the difficulties of establishing autonomy and the legitimacy of democratic government.

The Basque organizations of the Boise area and the Jai Aldi Festival serve to demonstrate and educate the homeland officials as to how United States diaspora Basques are safeguarding their ethnic identity. The manner is not the same as that of the homeland, but the results are similar. There are many ways of expressing one's "Basqueness". Basques in the United States promote awareness of ethnic identity, culture, and for a few, politics. The majority of the festival goers are not knowledgeable about the intricacies of homeland partisan politics, nor do they participate in the elections in any of the seven provinces. Those who are interested follow news events closely via the Internet, publications, and personal connections. Survey research data showed that 65% of respondents in the United States said they "read newspapers or journals from, or about, *Euskal Herria* at least once a month."

The Basque Government delegation was received by the President of the Euzkaldunak, Bryan Day, the Chairperson of Jai Aldi, David Eiguren, the Governor of the State of Idaho, Dirk Kempthorne, the Secretary of State, Pete Cenarrusa, and the Mayor of the City of Boise, Brent Coles. All mentioned the importance of the Basque emigration to Idaho and the positive reputation and status of Basques as "honest, hard-working, industrious, courteous, loyal people", and that Idaho has "pride in her Basque people" who have enriched it with "unique language, cuisine, sport, music, dancing and cultural events." A proclamation by Governor Kempthorne stated that the Basque people have earned the respect and admiration of their fellow Idahoans while becoming outstanding citizens and preserving the best of their Basque heritage. He called upon all Idahoans to "give recognition to the Basque heritage and culture which play such an important part in our State and to share with our Basque citizens during this week of international significance by joining them in celebrating Jai Aldi 2000– the Basque Cultural festival." The positive reception to the

6. The Directors of the Jai Aldi 2000 did not extend formal invitations to any officials of the Government of Navarre, or to any public institutions in Iparralde. The overwhelming majority of Basques from the Boise area are Bizkaian, which falls under the administration of the Basque Autonomous Government. Organizers assured me that this was an oversight and not to be construed as an intentional negative act. The Euzkaldunak Incorporated has never had any formal relations or communications with the Government of Navarre, nor with any institution of Basque culture in Iparralde mainly because of the emphasis of its Bizkaian membership.



Boise and Gernika strengthened their sister city relationship with a visit from the Gernika City Council.

Basque Government delegation was also extended by the common participants and many waited in reception lines to introduce themselves, to meet the representatives and to welcome them to the United States and to Boise.

Boise's sister city, Gernika-Lumo, was represented by a group of Vice-Mayors and City Councilors. Traveling from Gernika-Lumo were Andoni Arispe representing Gernika Mayor Miguel Angel Aranaz Ibarra, José Mari Gorroño, Begoña Landa, Bittor Agirre, and Josune Ortuzar. Throughout the 1990s Boise and Gernika have scheduled exchanges of politicians, business professionals, students, and artisans. Although the sister city program is only symbolic in the United States, and the City of Boise has no real funding for the exchange programs, the Euzkaldunak Basque Center has organized and funded the Boise side of the projects. The symbolism of twinning with Gernika is significant because of the large population from the Gernika area now living in Boise, and the large number of people living in Gernika that once worked and lived in the Boise area. A Boise Basque who travels to the Basque Country and attends the Monday Market in Gernika is likely to see many familiar faces of past shepherders and Basque Center customers. The network of communications is not superficial, but rather that of strong family, friendship, and now institutional ties.

6.2 Activities of Jai Aldi 2000

The partying for the Jai Aldi Festival actually began informally the week before the scheduled events with the arrivals of dignitaries and guests from around the world and family and friends from the various United States. The Basque Block was alive with *euskera*, and the jukebox music of Oskorri, Ruper Ordorika, and Ganbara. The Basque Museum and Cultural Center was full of people experiencing the photography and historical exhibits displayed, and the Basque Center and the Bar Gernika were packed to the limits and spilling onto the streets, making it impossible for even one more person to

enter. Basques from around the world were meeting for the first time, while others were renewing friendships from the 1995 Jai Aldi. Some found relatives and most made new friends.

The official program began on Thursday, July 27th, with a special Sports Night which had so many spectators that there were no seats remaining, and only standing room in every corner of the large exhibition hall. After approximately eight thousand spectators had entered, ticket-takers decided not to charge incoming spectators because there were no seats remaining and they likely would not be able to see any of the events. Regardless, more people continued to enter. Demonstrations included weight lifting, weight dragging, and weight carrying. Those in the crowds who had never seen these displays of strength were amazed at the quantity lifted by the athletes – “Zelai” Gizazola, Jose Ramon Iruretagoyena, and “Goenatxo” Unanue. Most non-Basque spectators from the United States were also surprised at the cube and granite ball shapes of the weights, and the endurance of the men.

The crowds had to distance themselves from the stages during the wood chopping and children scrambled for pieces of flying wood on which they later requested the autographs of Donato Larretxea Lizardi, Angel Arroside Aurkia, and Floren Nazabel Leiza. The cadence of axes slicing through the air excited



Athletes from Euskal Herria demonstrated their best efforts and broke world records for weightlifting.

the crowds to cheer for their preferred competitor and this event was favored throughout the weekend. Because seating was limited to only several thousand people at this particular venue, others had to stand on chairs, ladders, stage sound systems and anything they could find, in order to give themselves more height to witness the competition.

The Mutriku Soka-Tira Taldea educated the crowds with agricultural and work-based sports and contests such as lifting bales of hay by pulleys, soka-tira, swinging and carrying weights. The originality of their sports also amazed non-Basques and there were several local television and newspaper reports in the media for this first night of the festival. The positive social status of Basques in the Boise area has generally resulted in high media visibility and positive coverage.

Friday brought the official opening of the Basque Block and inauguration of the sculptures of Basque *laiak* by Minister Mari Karmen Garmendia. The all day affair included *pelota* and *pala* championships, live music by accordianists Iker Laucirica and Unai Mezo, Roberto eta Kepa, Tapia eta Leturia, and the Txorimaloak Soinu Taldea. Food and beverage were abundant and the hot weather (41 C/ 105F) encouraged the need for cold beer. Attendees visited the Euzkaldunak Basque Center, the Basque Museum and Cultural Center, the Anduiza fronton, the Bar Gernika, and the several exhibition tents where performers played. The Friday night theatre spectacular included performances by bertsolaris Jon Enbeitia and Irineo Ajuria; the Arkaitz Dantza Taldea of Donostia, the Oinkari Basque Dancers of Boise, and the instrumentals of Txorimaloak Soinu Taldea, Tapia eta Leturia and Arkaitz Minor, and Roberto eta Kepa.

Thoroughly enjoyed by the audience, it was another dose of traditional Basque culture which actually perpetuates the ignorance of the diaspora to contemporary homeland culture. The abundance of accordions, tambourines, and txistus, and the absence of electric guitars, synthesizers, and drums were evident. The bertsolaris sang of missing the homeland, of the old traditional *baserría* (farmstead) lifestyle, and of nationalist themes. Approximately half of the audience did not understand their poetry. Organizers have been criticized in the past also for not portraying a more realistic and representative picture of Basque music. However, if no new people step forward to volunteer to take charge, the festival continues with the same symbolic themes.

Saturday's events commenced with a procession of several hundred participants, which was followed by an all day ethnic production of music, sports, dance, singing, card playing, and eating and drinking. Exhibition booths included the Basque Book Series by the University of Nevada Press in Reno, and information regarding the Center for Basque Studies Internet on-line courses on Basque themes⁷. Photography displays by Linda Dufurrena, and Marianne Uberuaga Schaffeld, and several art and book dis-

7. Information can be sought at: or at the Center for Basque Studies' website: <http://basque.unt.edu>.

plays, Basque gift and souvenir booths were kept busy by thousands of customers and spectators.

An especially significant and educational display for this festival was that of four authentic sheep wagons in which shepherders once lived— complete with live sheep corralled in a landscaped area to duplicate the aspen groves of Idaho and Nevada. Another area displayed a tent used by shepherders. Designed and constructed by Ramon Ysursa Aldamiz and George Toticagüena Lejarcegui (both sons of former shepherders), the shepherd camp was visited with great interest by those who had once lived in such a manner, and equally by those who have only read about or seen their parents' histories in photographs. Former shepherders readily told stories to their families and friends of their memories of the difficult life on the range. It was obvious from the tears shed, that many relatives finally understood for the first time the depth of what those shepherders had suffered. Basques visiting from *Euskal Herria* also were impressed with the rough lifestyle endured, and mentioned that they had had no idea of how their emigrant relatives had suffered. There is still quite a misconception in the Basque Country that emigrants abandoned their homeland to arrive in the Americas and immediately become wealthy. Though there are very few remaining Basque shepherders in the United States, shepherd culture remains an important factor in the collective identity and collective history of United States Basques. It is a significant variable in United States Basque diaspora identity and is used as a defining element by Basques themselves and by non-Basques as well.

For seven hours, over 20 performing groups of dancers, musicians, sportsmen, and singers rotated between three different stages while approximately 20,000 family members, friends, and spectators relaxed and enjoyed the entertainment. The aromas of chorizo, solomo, pimientos, lamb, croquetas, as well as hamburgers and hotdogs, tempted most to try the Basque style recipes. These activities were repeated again all day Sunday for many thousands more.



The Oinkari Basque Dancers of Boise Welcomed the officials of the Basque Government and the Gernika City Council.

Basques in the United States communities highlight the religious aspect to their festivals with Catholic masses. The San Ignacio of Loyola mass, organized by Janice Mainvil, was a celebration of all *Euskal Herria*, and all Basques in the United States, and was evident in the manner in which Boise paid homage to the Basque Patron Saint. The mass was complete with representation from all seven provinces and symbolized the unified Basque population of the United States. Music was provided by the *klika* marches of Iparralde presented by the Basque bands of San Francisco, Chino, and Bakersfield, California. The religious dances of Corpus Christi from Oñati, Gipuzkoa were also performed on the alter of the Cathedral of Saint John, by the *Oinkaris* of Boise, and the Boise *Bihotzetik* choir added Basque choral music from various provinces throughout the mass.

Father Martxel Tillous, assigned by the Bishop of Baiona, serves as the Basque Chaplain for the United States and travels nearly 100,000 miles per year performing marriages, baptisms, funerals, and festival masses. His annual presence was augmented this year by Father Mikel Urresti Esturo (Bilbao) and Monsignor Karmelo Etxenagusia Uribe, the Auxiliary Bishop of Bilbao. The Basques of the United States were especially proud and honored to have these representatives concelebrate the Jai Aldi San Ignacio mass.

A Monday evening farewell dinner for performers and foreign guests ended with all-night dancing and singing, and exchanges of addresses and invitations to visit. The western cowboy-style barbecue officially ended the Jai Aldi 2000 festival.

7. UNITED STATES BASQUE CENTERS LOOK OPTIMISTICALLY TO THE FUTURE

The Boise Jai Aldi Festival is a unique example of Basque ethnic identity maintenance and cultural pride manifest jointly by diaspora Basques descended from all seven provinces and resident in many different countries. Though a bit over-commercialized for some people, and with a definite United States flair for T-shirts, car bumper stickers, and pop culture souvenirs, the future of Basque cultural celebrations points to increased interest and success. The number of Basque associations in the United States has grown to over 40, and many of these existing centers are experiencing increased membership numbers. However, "success" is relative and defined in various ways.

The problem lies in defining and categorizing who and what is "Basque"? Thirty years ago, most Basques in the United States did not know much about each other or communicate with each other, let alone think of each other as "equally Basque". The focus instead was to magnify the differences of being from *Iparralde* (the three northern provinces of the Basque Country) or *Hegoalde* (the four southern provinces of the Basque Country), or speaking *euskera*, or not. Today with the North American Basque Organizations meeting three times a year and inter-Center activities combining people from all Basque associations, there is a unified Basque diaspora identity emerging in

the United States. The once commonly used categories of “Spanish Basque” and “French Basque” are not often heard among the younger generations, though obviously some speak French, others speak Spanish, and yet others speak various forms of *euskera*.

However, neither do those younger generations know much about the history of, or today’s reality in, their ancestral homeland. Many diaspora Basques’ idealization of *Euskal Herria* leads them to define “Basqueness” in an exclusive, conservative, and static manner, and then pass this on to their children. At the 1990 Jai Aldi Festival, it was difficult for some to appreciate the Basque performer Imanol’s blues and jazz music. “That’s not Basque” was the opinion of several older Basques who wanted to hear txistus and accordions playing *jotas*. When Tapia eta Leturia play ‘Tex-Mex’ style of music, even the younger generations are put off by this non-Basque music coming from Basques from the homeland.

It is as though the diaspora Basques expect the homeland Basques to re-charge the batteries of “Basqueness” and perhaps help authenticate the festival. The homeland Basques visiting Boise were astounded at the young people wearing *txapelas*. “NO teenager in *Euskal Herria* would wear a txapela unless it was a part of a costume”, laughed one woman from Bilbao. Others noticed the T-shirts worn by several United States young adults promoting political independence for the seven provinces. “Askatasuna” (Liberty), “Amnistia” (Amnesty), and “Presoak Kalera” (literally prisoners to the streets, understood as freedom for the political prisoners), were read across the fronts of several shirts. When approached, none of these persons was able to explain coherently their political stances regarding the Basque Country, nor did they understand the full implications their advertisements could have on homeland Basques. For the ten to fifteen people wearing these political statements, “I want the seven Basque provinces to have their own country” was a shared sentiment. None had any idea of how that could be accomplished. None understood the idea of a ‘Europe of nationalities’. None could explain the workings of the European Union. None knew exactly what types of powers the Government of Navarre or the Basque Autonomous Government has under their respective statutes of autonomy and economic treaties and agreements with the central government of Spain.

At the NABO meeting of the Basque Centers two representatives from *Udalbiltza* made a short presentation in English and the publication *Gara* presented a special edition in English and Basque. Almost none of the delegates had any comprehension of the political ties connected to either institution. The Basque Autonomous Government presentations and information regarding available grants were well-received as the NABO organizations have been working with Euskadi’s government since the mid-1980s and personally know most of the political actors. The Boise Basque Center does sporadically receive informational bulletins from the leftist nationalist *Euskal Herritarok*, and these publications are either thrown away by the bartenders, or put at the corner of the bar for a few weeks and then discarded.



Goicoechea and Mendiola Larrazabal families traveled from Townsville, Australia to Boise for the Jai Aldi festival. They met distant relatives and friends from Lekeitio and Aulestia who had emigrated to the United States while they had left Euskal Herria for Australia.

Most Euzkaldunak Inc. members do receive a home subscription of ***Euskal Etxeak***, (**Basque Centers**) published and distributed by the Basque Autonomous Government for the diaspora three to four times per year. This extremely popular periodical is received in the United States in English or Spanish and news from the homeland and other diaspora communities in other countries is shared. Interviewees from Boise and around the United States consistently mention this publication as a factor in their increased information about the homeland and the worldwide Basque diaspora. Several decades ago, the continuing migration to the United States from the Basque Country meant that there were readily available news and updates about the issues in the Basque Country, and that many people consistently traveled back and forth to visit family. There are still many who travel often to *Euskal Herria*— 83% of United States respondents have lived in, or visited, one of the seven provinces at least once. However, for those interested in more in-depth understanding of the Basque economy, social issues and culture, the ***Euskal Etxeak*** provides an entertaining and informative link to the homeland and other diaspora communities⁸.

The Jai Aldi Festival, and all Basque Centers' activities around the United States, could be utilized to inform and educate (and update) the diaspora population's understanding of their homeland. It is a model setting for exemplifying the variety of the seven provinces and of the numerous Basque diaspora communities in the United States, and significantly, for celebrating the many ways of 'being Basque'. However, the United States manner of mani-

8. For more on the importance of the ***Euskal Etxeak*** publication on diasporic imagination please see Toticagüena 1999 "Shrinking World"; and Toticagüena 2000 "Downloading Identity".

festing “Basqueness” does not at this time necessarily include an emphasis on being knowledgeable about the homeland itself. One third-generation Basque-American mother asked her daughter in *euskera*:

“We are not going to argue about who is more, or, less Basque are we? If Basques in Euskal Herria don’t think we are Basque because many of us don’t speak *euskera*– they should listen to what is being spoken on the streets of Gasteiz and Bilbo. It’s all Spanish. And if they accept *Catalanes* who live in the Basque Country as Basque, why wouldn’t they accept me living in Reno? I don’t have to be a U.S. historian to be an American, and I don’t have to be a specialist in Basque history to be Basque, do I?”

Indeed, there are various ways to “be Basque” in the homeland, *and* in the diaspora.

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