

Most youths in the Basque Country are unbelievers

Basque youths are much less religious than their Spanish counterparts.

In 2012, one third of Basque youths aged 15 to 29 (34%) were Catholic, but only 4% defined themselves as practising Catholics.

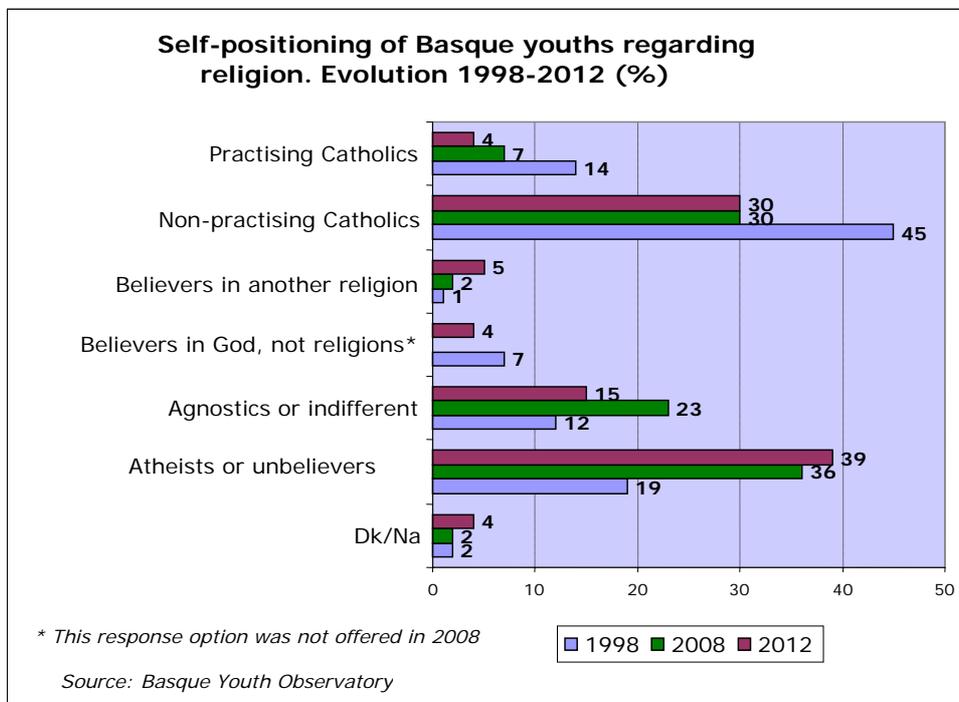
The percentage of young people who define themselves as Catholic has dropped significantly in recent years: in 1998, 59% of Basque youths aged 15 to 29 claimed to be Catholic, in 2008 this had fallen to 37% and in 2012 it was hardly 34%.

The same is true if we consider young people who define themselves as practising Catholics; these have fallen from 14% in 1998 to 7% in 2008 and then to 4% in 2012.

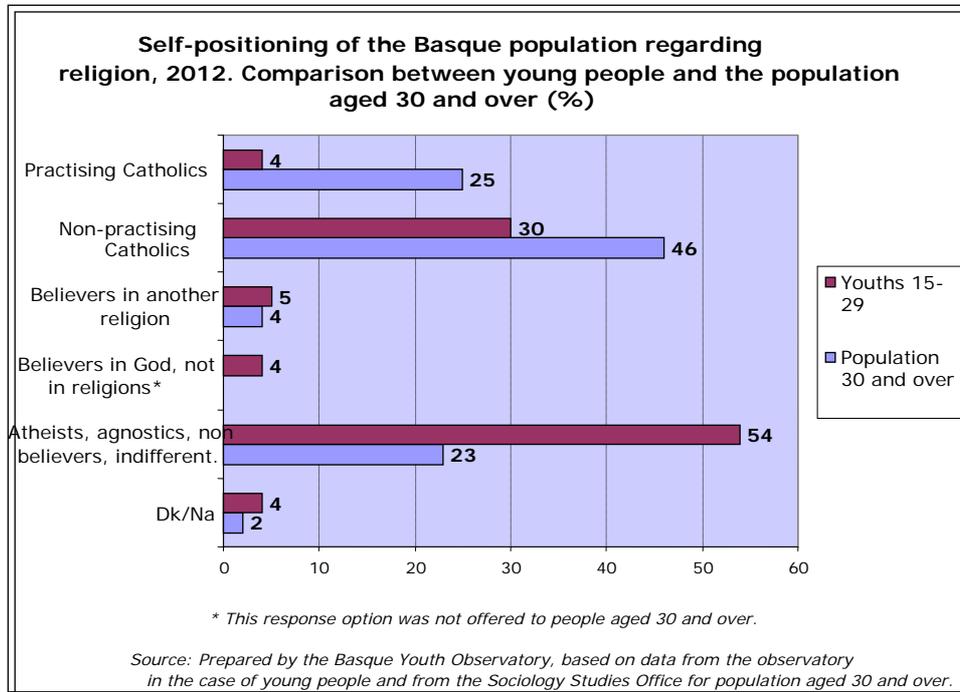
The other side to the decline in the number of Catholic youths is the increasing number of young people who are atheists, agnostics or indifferent to religion. These increased from 31% in 1998 to 59% in 2008 and 54% in 2012.

Moreover, the percentage of young people who say they adhere to other religions has been increasing steadily from 1% in 1998 to 2% in 2008 and 5% in 2012. This increase in the percentage of young people who believe in other religions matches the increase in immigration: young immigrants accounted for 2.4% of the young population in the Basque Country in 2001 while that figure rose to 11.2% in 2008 and 14.4% in 2012.

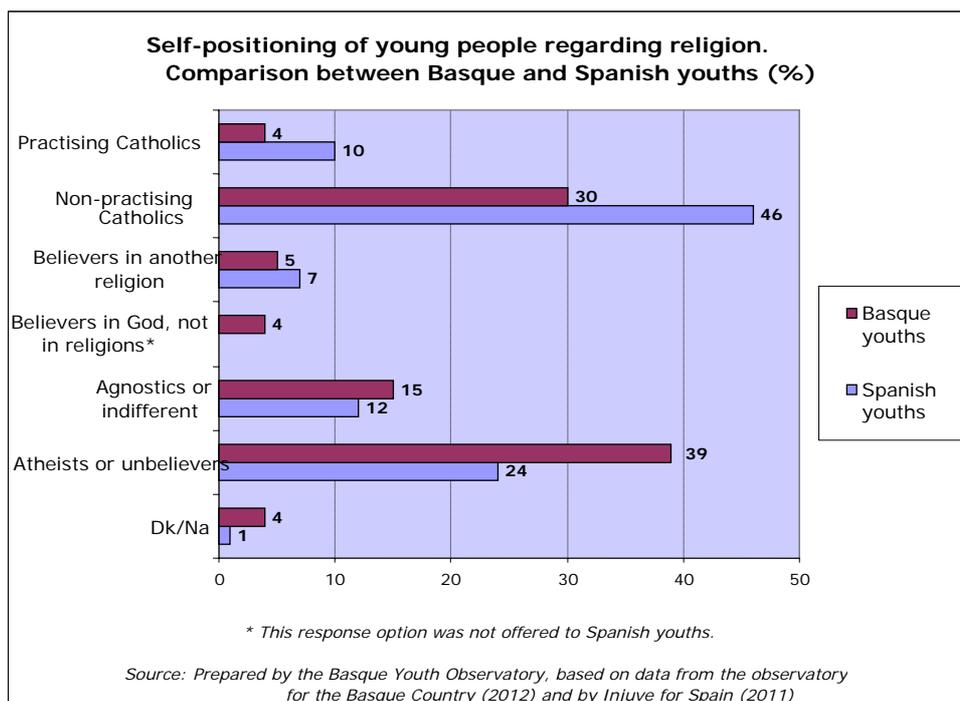
Finally, those who state they believe in God but not in religions have declined slightly from 7% in 1998 to 4% in 2012.



Comparing the data on Basque youths from 2012 with those for people aged 30 and over in the same period, we can see that the percentage of those who consider themselves Catholic among people aged 30 and over double the figure for young people (71% and 34%, respectively). By contrast, the percentage of atheists or agnostics among young people (54%) doubles the percentage among older people (23%).



The comparison with Spanish youths also leads us to emphasize the further secularization of Basque youths. 56% of Spanish youths define themselves as Catholic and 36% as atheist, agnostic, non-believers or indifferent. Among Basque youths, the figures are practically reversed: 34% claim to be Catholic compared with 54% who define themselves as non-believers, atheist, agnostic or indifferent.



On the other hand, when analysing data from Basque youths based on the various age groups, we find a higher percentage of those who define themselves as Catholics (41%) among those under 20 years of age than among older groups (29% among those aged 20-24 years and 33% for those aged 25 to 29).

The number of girls who state they are Catholic is also higher than that of boys (37% and 31%, respectively).

And by province of residence, we find that the highest number of youths who state they are Catholic (38%) are from Bizkaia, followed by Álava (36%), while Gipuzkoa presents the lowest figures (26%).

These data have been analysed by the [Basque Youth Observatory](#) and based on research conducted on surveys involving Basque youths aged 15 to 29: [Youth Portraits 3](#), from 1998, [Beliefs and religiosity of young people in the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country](#), from 2008, and *Basque Youth 2012* (the latter still in publication phase). The comparison with the Basque population aged 30 and over has been possible thanks to the data provided by the [Sociological Studies Office](#) of the Basque Government. Finally, data regarding Spanish youths came from the study titled [Youths, participation and political culture](#), prepared by the Spanish Youth Institute (INJUVE) in 2011.

Follow us on the social networks!

