

Editing Wikipedia as an alternative to traditional civic activism (Europe)

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Civic attitudes – indirect measures:

- membership in organisations
- participation in demonstrations
- volunteering
- trust
- social capital

Western Europe more civic than Eastern Europe

- a few examples

- **Active membership in environmental organisations** FR 6%, NL 4% - BG 0.4%, RU 0.4%
- **Signed petition** IT 54%, NO 69% - UA 7%, PL 24%
- **“Most people can be trusted”** SE 68%, NL 45% - SI 18%, MD 18%

WHY?

Membership in “civic” organisations



Official demonstrations



(and the unofficial ones:)



“Volunteering” - the subotnik



**But are really
the East Europeans
so reluctant
to contribute
to the common good?**

No – look at wikipedia

My indicator

number of wikipedia articles

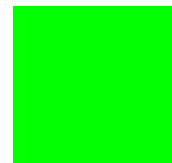
number of speakers of given
language with internet access

And what did I get:

language	Bulgarian	Greek	Norwegian	German	Romanian	Latvian	Italian	Czech	Hungarian	Danish	Slovak	Polish	Dutch	Swedish	Finnish	Lithuanian	Slovenian	Estonian
number of articles per 1000 people with internet access	8	11	13	14	16	19	24	25	27	28	28	32	41	43	54	56	68	78



Western Europe



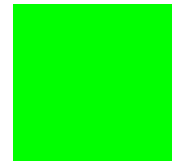
Eastern Europe

Look at this:

language	Bulgarian	Greek	Norwegian	German	Romanian	Latvian	Italian	Czech	Hungarian	Danish	Slovak	Polish	Dutch	Swedish	Finnish	Lithuanian	Slovenian	Estonian
number of articles per 1000 people with internet access	8	11	13	14	16	19	24	25	27	28	28	32	41	45	54	56	68	78
volunteering [% of adult population]	6.0	0.3	52.0	36.0	12.8	27.3	4.0	5.0	3.0	35.0	13.0	12.0	42.0	48.0	37.0	3.0	6.4	27.0



Western Europe



Eastern Europe

Volunteering is the practice of people working on behalf of others or a particular cause without payment for their time and services. (*wikipedia*)



contributing to wikipedia =
volunteering

My explanation

- contributing to wikipedia has a very low threshold for engagement**
- East Europeans dislike formal organisations (remember the photos?)**
- East Europeans like to use wikipedia as a platform for their social contribution**

Caveats

- Lousy data - particularly on volunteering
- “Large” languages (English, French) left out because it's impossible to estimate the number of people online
- This is a blog post than an academic paper

There is need for proper research

Thank you - dziękuję!

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