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AN EXPLORATION OF FLEMISH YOUTH VOLUNTEERING

The case of the Leuven student population.

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 - B. Volunteer typology: classical and new styles of volunteering
 - C. Young people and volunteering: FLEXIVOL
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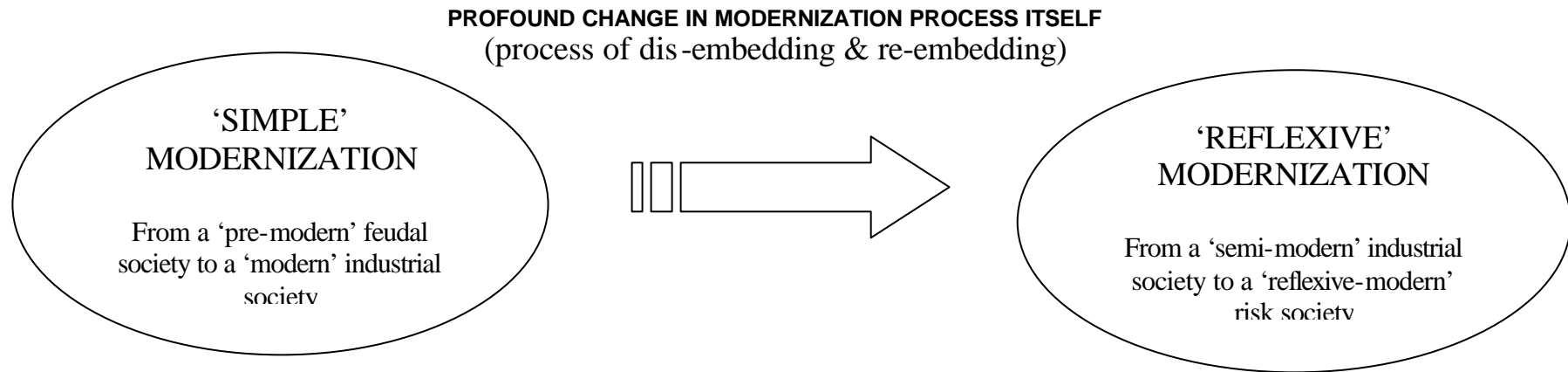
1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK & RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Voluntary organisations often point a finger at today's young people. They share the wide-spread negative picture of present-day youth. After generations X and Y, nowadays the generation Zzzzz... (the sleepy generation) or generation M (Me, myself and I) seem to be emerging. Anonymous, individualistic, apolitical, egocentric, indifferent, materialistic and held captives by a television or computer screen. Today's 'switched off generation' avoids getting involved.

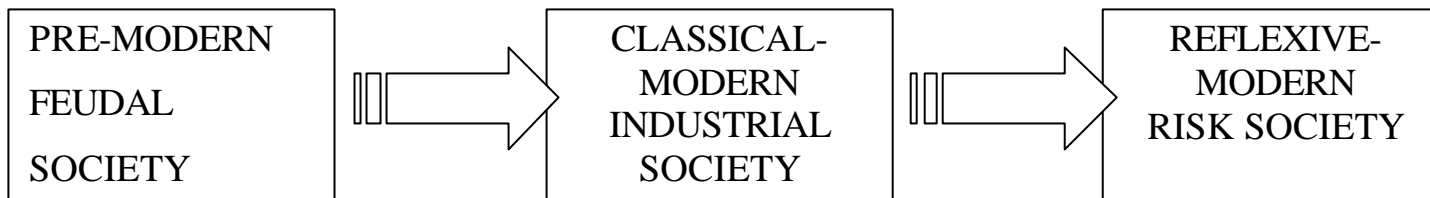
Is the level of volunteering among young people decreasing? Are young people averse to solidarity and volunteer work? Do young people no longer want to commit themselves or enter into any kind of obligation any more? Is volunteering coming to a 'dead end' with the arrival of this 'apathetic generation'?

If not, in which way do young people express their solidarity today? Why and how are young people engaged? Is their style of volunteering different from the volunteering of previous generations?

A. REFLEXIVE MODERNIZATION (Ulrich Beck)



INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES



➔ **Contemporary lifeworld as an incomplete, unpredictable and uncertain condition between past and future**

LIFE IN SOCIETY

'SIMPLE MODERN' INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY

- TECHNO-ECONOMIC PROGRESS
- WORK IN FACTORIES
- FORDISM / STANDARDIZATION
- ECONOMIES OF SCALE
- LIFETIME, FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT
- DIVISION IN SOCIAL CLASSES
- NATION-STATE

- LIFE EXPECTANCY: 60+
- MARRIAGE & NUCLEAR FAMILY
- 'GENDER FATUM'
(male breadwinner, female housewife)
- HIERARCHICAL & PATRIARCHICAL
RELATIONSHIPS

- TRADITIONAL COLLECTIVE IDENTITIES
- STANDARD BIOGRAPHY



'REFLEXIVE MODERN' RISK SOCIETY

('The age of side effects')

- INFORMATION-TECHNOLOGY
- WORK IN COTTAGE INDUSTRY / MOBILITY
- POST-FORDISM / FLEXIBILIZATION
- ECONOMIES OF SCOPE
- LIFETIME, FLEXIBLE EMPLOYABILITY
- INSTABLE OCCUPATIONAL BIOGRAPHY
- GLOBALIZATION / 'GLOBAL VILLAGE'

- LIFE EXPECTANCY: 85+ ('OPALS')
- DIVORCES / NEW LIVING ARRANGEMENTS
- DOUBLE INCOME HOUSEHOLDS
(Radicalization individual female biography)
- PARTNERSHIP / DEMOCRATIZATION FAMILY

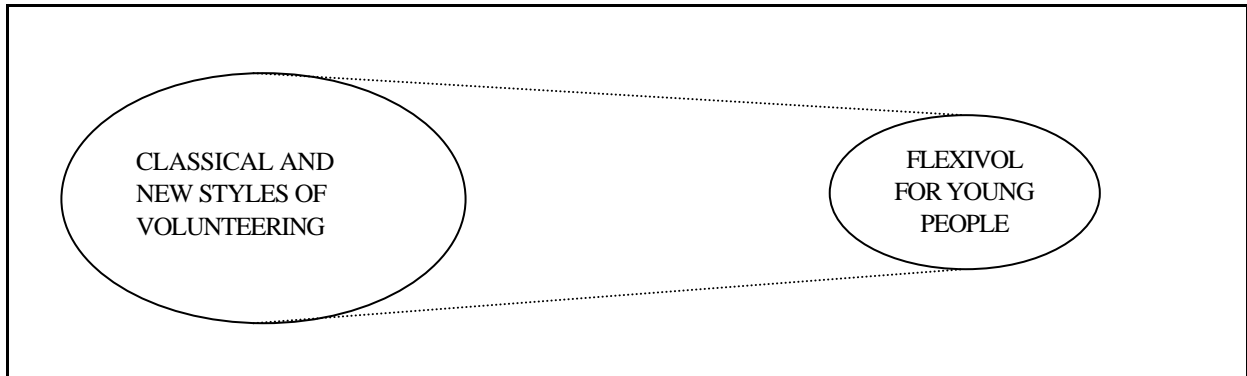
- INDIVIDUALIZATION AND PLURALIZATION
- DO-IT-YOURSELF BIOGRAPHY

B. STYLES OF VOLUNTEERING: A TYPOLOGY

	CLASSICAL VOLUNTEERISM	NEW VOLUNTEERISM
CULTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional cultural identification schemes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individualisation • Post-materialism • Reflexive consciousness
CHOICE OF ORGANIZATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the basis of the culture with which one identifies • Great loyalty • Delegated leadership • Solid structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal interest • Weak ties (unattached) • Democracy • Loose networks
CHOICE OF FIELD OF ACTIVITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the basis of the culture with which one identifies • Inclusion and exclusion • Abstract 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New commonalties • Dialectic between local and global • Concrete • Following topical matters
CHOICE OF ACTIVITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the basis of the culture with which one identifies • Organisation's needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balance between personal point of view and the organisation's needs • 'Cost/benefit' analysis
CONTINUITY OF THE COMMITMENT (DURATION)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long term (unlimited in time) • Regular • Unconditional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short term (limited in time) • Irregular, erratic • Conditional
RELATIONSHIP WITH THE BENEFICIARY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unilateral, 'altruistic', 'selfless' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reciprocal

- This outline is adapted from the analytical framework designed by Rommel, Opdebeeck and Lammertyn (1997: 55)

C. YOUNG PEOPLE AND VOLUNTEERING: FLEXIVOL



'WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE WANT FROM VOLUNTEERING' (Gaskin, 1998)

Gaskin states that, although young people are aware of the potential benefits of volunteering, they feel it has an 'image problem'. It is boring, badly organised and something that older people tend to do. Young people experience serious obstructions that stand in the way of volunteer commitment. On the one hand, internal barriers within organisations can block young people's route to volunteering (lack of information, lack of key-people or gatekeepers, a bureaucratic context ...). On the other hand, a lot of external pressures from the immediate surroundings are exerted on young people (a shortage of time due to education, other youth activities, parents, peers, the need to work for money, the negative image held by their peer group, ...). Nevertheless, young people recognise the potential benefits of volunteering (broadening experience on life, learning new skills, role in future job-search, the training benefits and qualifications, the chance to enjoy oneself, to have fun, ...). Moreover, they still are interested in voluntary work and still are prepared to help other people and good causes.

The solution Gaskin suggests, is to reshape volunteering to accommodate young people. 'FLEXIVOL' presents a wish-list with a set of requirements that make volunteering highly appealing to young people.

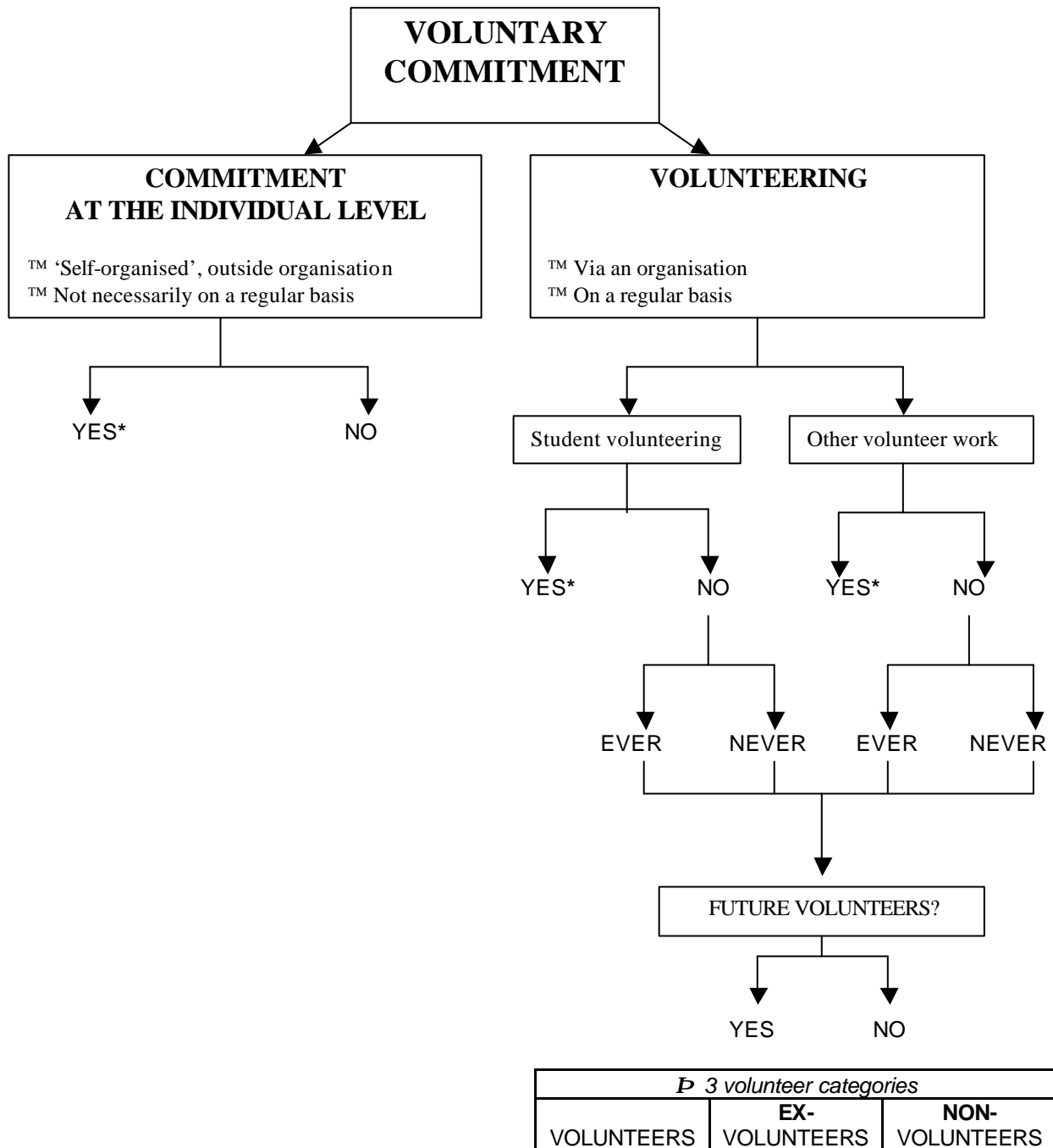
FLEXIVOL

FLEXIBILITY	Flexible work and working times
LEGITIMACY	Promotion of a more positive image, education in full range of voluntary work and its significance
EASE OF ACCES	More information, more encouragement, easy access points
'XPERIENCE	Volunteering related to personal and career development
INCENTIVES	Tangible outcomes in the form of references / qualifications, full payment of the expenses
VARIETY	In type of work, in amount of commitment, in level of responsibility
ORGANISATION	Efficient but informal, not 'over-organised' or supervised but right kind of advise and support
LAUGHS	Volunteering has to be enjoyable, satisfying and fun

D. DEFINITION: MAPPING STUDENT'S VOLUNTARY COMMITMENT

In the questionnaire, 'voluntary commitment' is defined an activity with the following characteristics:

- Non-compulsory (free will)
- Unpaid (no pay beyond the reimbursement of expenses)
- Oriented towards other people or society as a whole (external orientation)
- Whether or not within an organisational context
- Whether or not limited in time and/or kind of activities
- Inside and outside the student environment

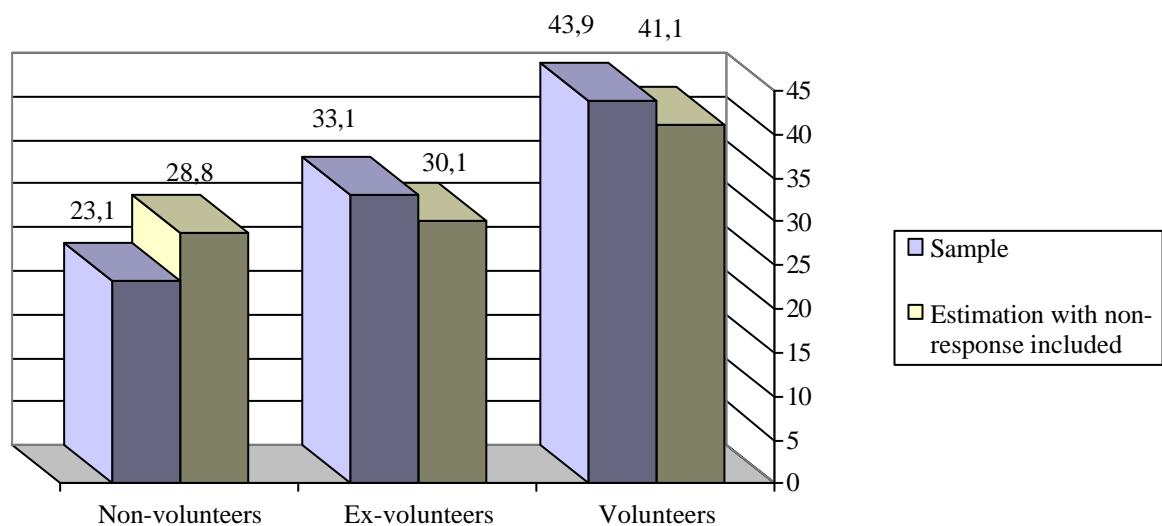


* Positive correlation between commitments at the individual level and volunteering

E. RESEARCH DESIGN

Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring the sub-field of youth volunteering as a part of a broader research project on 'reflexive modernisation and styles of volunteering' • Dissertation of 2 Sociology students: Ines Verhalle and Katrien Lauwerysen (supervision: Prof. Frans Lammertyn and Lesley Hustinx) • On the authority of the Department of Student Services of the K.U.L..
Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Third year university students of the Catholic University Leuven • 1998-1999: 3.915 students
Sample	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25.5% of population = 1000 units • Simple Random Sample: every unit has an equal chance to be selected
Method of data-gathering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • postal survey • Dillman's Total Design Method (guarantees a significant increase in response-rate by a personal approach, a little personal reward, a polished design, a fixed time scheme for sending the questionnaire and a number of recalls)
Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N=744 (Response-rate: 74.4%)
A representative sample?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-volunteers are slightly under-represented, volunteers are slightly over-represented (on the basis of a control of the non-response) • Faculty distribution (the different disciplines) no significant differences between sample and total population • Study group distribution (humanities, biomedical and exact sciences) no significant differences between sample and total population • Gender distribution no significant differences between sample and total population

Graph 1. Third year university students by volunteer categories (%)



2. HYPOTHESES

Variables of interest:

- **SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS**

- ✓ Students from the lower social class are under-represented in volunteering within the student environment. However, these students are strongly present in student initiatives that promote their interests.

- **GENDER**

- ✓ In volunteer work, the traditional gender roles are reproduced. Men and women are engaged in different fields of activity. Women prefer the field of care and assistance. Men take up tasks which require a high level of responsibility, competition and achievement

- **FAMILY'S VOLUNTEER TRADITION**

- ✓ There's a 'tradition of voluntary engagements' in the family of the 'engaged student'
- ✓ The parents of students who volunteer, are themselves involved in volunteer work or volunteered in the past
- ✓ Brothers / sisters of students who volunteer, are themselves involved in volunteer work or volunteered in the past
- ✓ Student who volunteer, live in big families

- **VOLUNTEER BIOGRAPHY**

- ✓ Students who volunteer within the student environment, already have been involved in volunteering before starting their university study
- ✓ In different volunteer initiatives, the same group of students can often be found

- **UNIVERSITY CAREER**

- ✓ Students who volunteer, are more likely to re-sit examinations than students who don't volunteer
- ✓ A high level of study pressure prevents students from volunteering
- ✓ Within Humanities, a lot of students volunteer; within the Biomedical sciences, only few students volunteer. Students in the Exact sciences take an 'in between' position.
- ✓ Depending on the branch of study, students are involved in different fields of volunteering. Humanities students are engaged in socio-cultural activities. Students from the Biomedical sciences are more represented in Third World initiatives and in the medical sector. Students from the Exact sciences are committed to sports and the environment.

- **STYLES OF VOLUNTEERING**

- ✓ Volunteering is undergoing a transformation from a 'classical' to a 'new' style
- ✓ Young people are more likely to represent the 'new style of volunteering'
- ✓ There is an important distinction between unlimited, broad volunteer commitments ('classical style') and limited, clearly defined and concrete commitments ('new style')

- **MOTIVATION**

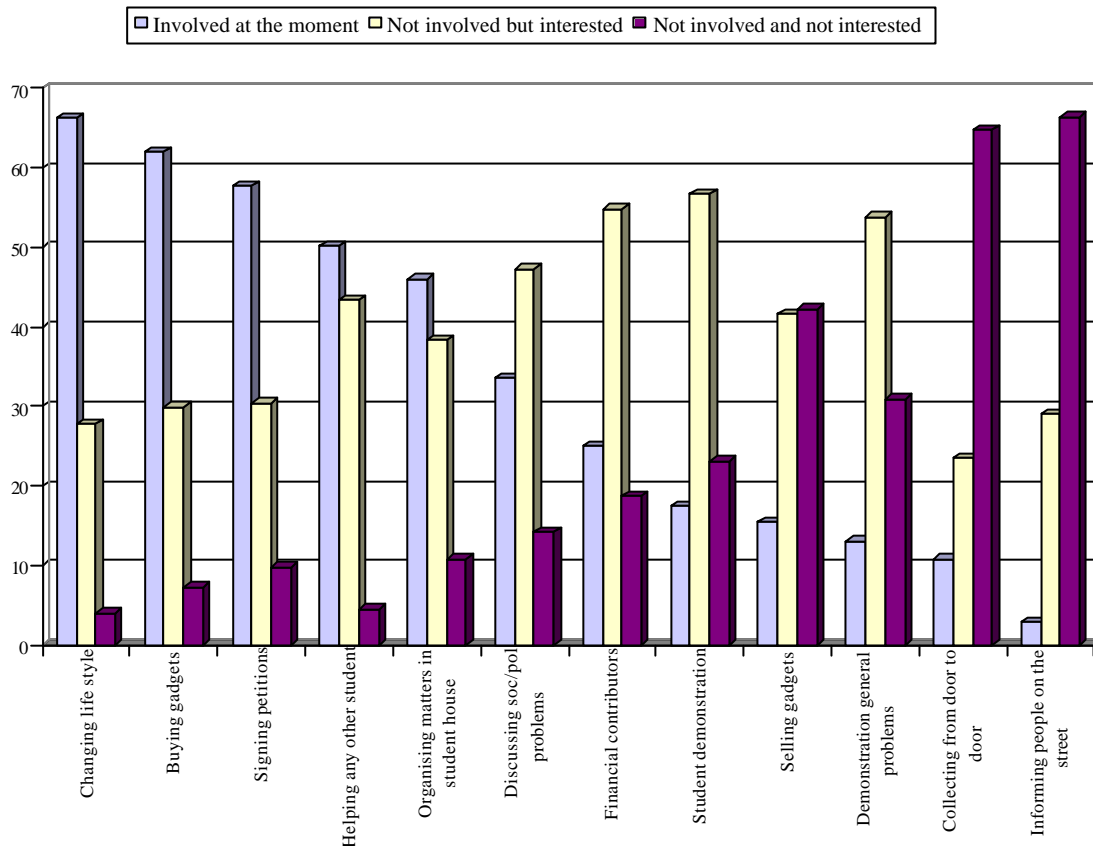
- ✓ Dependent on the kind of commitment, different motives play a significant role. E.g. the head of the Faculty Circle is oriented towards a 'post-university career'.
- ✓ Students who volunteer, will combine motives based on solidarity and self-interest.

3. OUTCOMES

I. VOLUNTARY COMMITMENTS OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

A. Commitments on an individual basis

Graph 2. Third year university students and their voluntary commitments at the individual level (%)

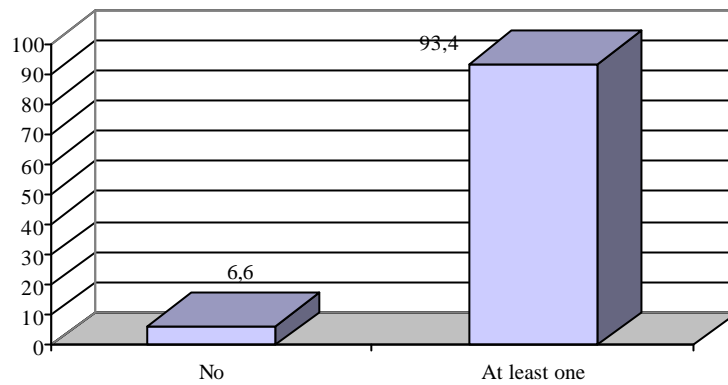


A number of commitments at the individual level clearly have found their way into the student's life-world. 1 out of 3 students already have changed their life style consciously (66.2%). More than one half of the students buy gadgets for a good cause (61.9%), sign petitions (57.7%) and give further explanation or extra lessons to whichever other student (50.2%). 46% of the students takes the initiative to organise common matters in their student house.

It strikes that students have a hesitating attitude towards informing people on the street and collecting money from door to door. More than 2 out of 3 students are not involved and not interested in this kind of activities (66.3% and 64.7%). Selling gadgets for a good cause (42.2%) and taking part in a demonstration for general problems (30.9%) are also very unpopular commitments for these university students.

In general, the overall majority of the third year university students is engaged at the individual level. 93.4% of the students declare to be involved in at least one of the presented commitments on an individual basis.

Graph 3. Distribution of third year university students by voluntary commitment on an individual level (N=740)

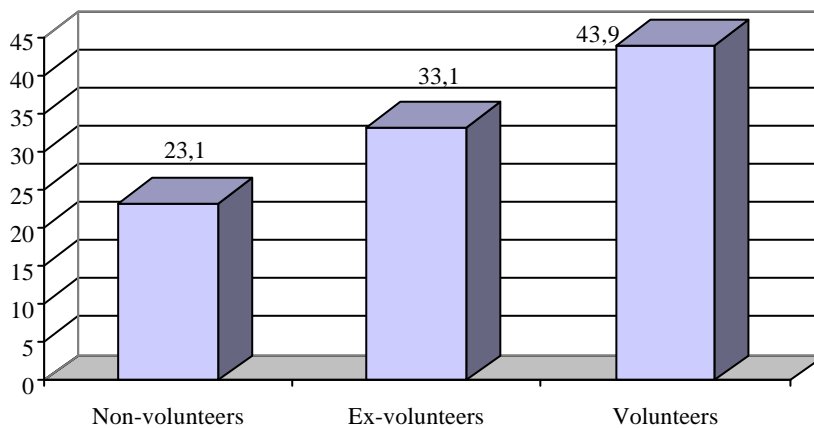


B. Volunteering

1. Distribution of students among volunteer categories

Approximately one fourth (23.1%) of all third year university students never volunteered. The ex-volunteers represent one third (33.1%) of the sample. The major part of the interviewed students are volunteers. Roughly one half of the students (43.9) volunteers within an organisational context.

Graph 4. Distribution of third year students among volunteer categories



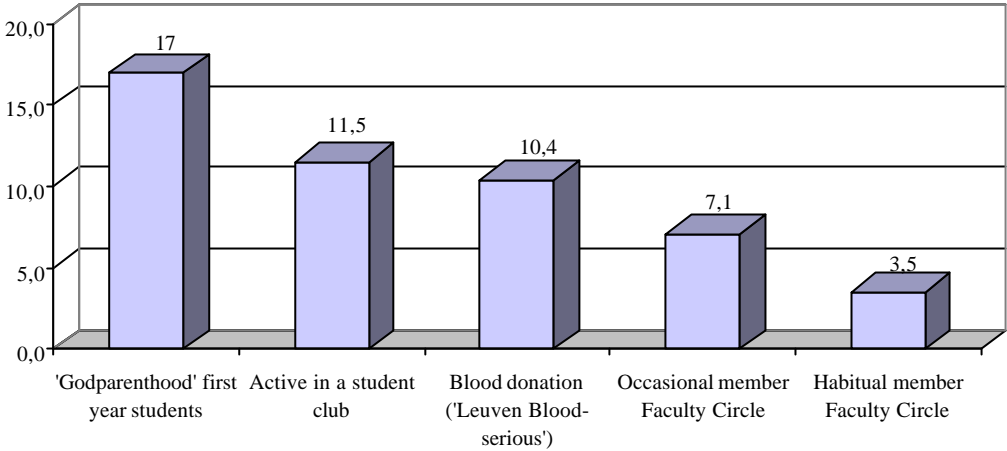
2. Volunteering *within* student environment

Table 1. Volunteering within student environment

Volunteering within student environment	First year	Second year	Third year	Fourth year	Fifth year	Sum 5 years	Mean score 5 years	Mean % over 5 years	Unknown
Godparenthood' first year students	44	381	166	31	6	628	126	17,0	2
Active in a student club	121	124	131	40	9	425	85	11,5	1
Blood donation ('Leuven Blood-serious')	90	128	131	28	6	383	77	10,4	2
Occasional member Faculty Circle	69	83	84	21	5	262	52	7,1	11
Habitual member Faculty Circle	9	27	57	26	10	129	26	3,5	12
Active in a faculty pub	16	25	38	21	7	107	21	2,9	0
Responsible for housing matters in a university residence	14	30	36	11	5	96	19	2,6	8
Others	17	23	38	11	3	92	18	2,5	0
Active in an university ensemble	8	15	17	3	1	44	9	1,2	0
Active in university's parish	21	14	7	1	1	44	9	1,2	2
Faculty Circles Council	4	11	17	7	1	40	8	1,1	7
President of Faculty Circle	5	12	13	6	3	39	8	1,1	0
Active in Student Aid (Third World Issues)	10	15	9	1	0	35	7	0,9	2
Sport Council	5	7	10	6	0	28	6	0,8	4
Active in support group for disables students	5	7	10	4	1	27	5	0,7	6
Culture Council	2	3	7	2	0	14	3	0,4	4
Living in an 'engaged' student house	0	2	6	2	2	12	2	0,3	31
Member Editorial Board Student Newspapers	0	5	3	2	0	10	2	0,3	1
Social Council	1	2	5	1	0	9	2	0,2	4
Active in Pangaea (University's socio-cultural centre for foreign students)	2	0	4	0	0	6	1	0,2	40
Portulaca (foreign students council)	1	0	2	0	0	3	1	0,1	86

In general, the most frequently done student volunteering can be typified as 'limited volunteer activities'. 'Godparenthood' of first year students, donating blood, being an occasional member of the Faculty Circle, volunteering in the Faculty Pub are good examples of concrete, clearly limited and short-time activities. 'Unlimited volunteer work', like being an habitual member or the President of the faculty circle, is very ill defined in terms of time-investment and job description.

Graph 5. Top 5 most frequent volunteer activities within the student environment (Mean % over 5 study years)



3. Volunteering *outside* student environment

Table 2. Volunteering outside student environment

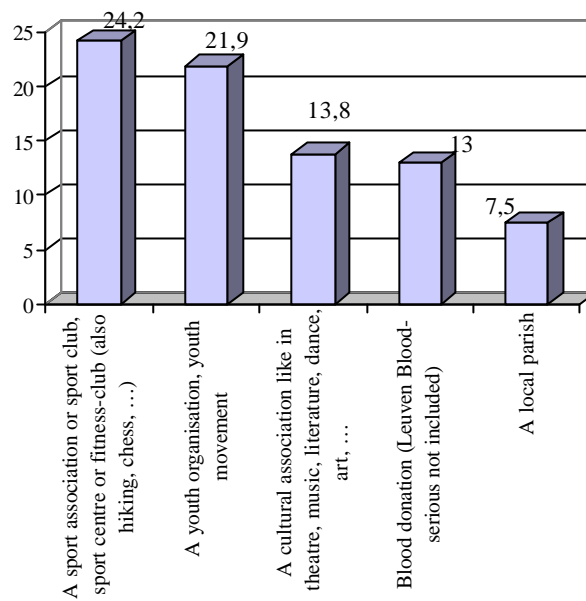
	Before student, still involved (1)	Since student involved (2)	Involved (1 + 2)	Before student, no longer involved (3)	Never involved (4)	Not involved (3 + 4)	Total (100%)
A sport association or sport club, sport centre or fitness-club (also hiking, chess, ...)	22,3	1,9	24,2	40,7	35,0	75,7	734
A youth organisation, youth movement	20,1	1,8	21,9	43,6	34,5	78,1	736
A cultural association like in theatre, music, literature, dance, art, ...	11,3	2,5	13,8	24,7	61,5	86,2	732
Blood donation (Leuven Blood-serious not included)	4,8	8,2	13,0	2,6	84,4	87,0	731
A local parish	6,5	1,0	7,5	15,1	77,4	92,5	734
Others	4,9	2,5	7,4	3,8	88,8	92,6	734
An association or movement for the well being of the sick, elderly, disabled	4,2	3,1	7,3	5,7	86,9	92,6	731
A playground	5,7	0,5	6,2	19,7	74,0	93,7	736
A youth house, a youth club	4,0	1,0	5,0	10,9	84,2	95,1	734
An editorial board of a local magazine or newspaper	3,0	1,2	4,2	7,3	88,4	95,7	735
A political movement or party	2,0	1,9	3,9	1,6	94,4	96,0	733
A fair-trade shop	2,7	1,1	3,8	3,1	93,0	96,1	732
Third World Movement	2,2	1,0	3,2	4,2	92,6	96,8	734
The Red Cross, Flemish Cross, volunteer fire brigade	1,2	1,9	3,1	4,4	92,5	96,9	731
An anti-poverty movement	1,5	1,0	2,5	2,9	94,7	97,6	734
Peace movement	1,1	0,8	1,9	4,8	93,3	98,1	733
A social-cultural organisation	1,4	0,3	1,7	1,5	96,9	98,4	734
An anti-racism movement	1,6	0	1,6	3,4	94,0	97,4	730
A district or community committee, a local action group	0,7	0,1	0,8	1,4	97,8	99,2	731
A Carnival movement	0,4	0	0,4	1,4	98,2	99,6	734

Only one third of the student sample never volunteered in a youth movement or a sport association.

In general, the largest part of the students who ever volunteered or still do, are those who volunteered before they became a university student and are no longer involved. Students who volunteered before they came to university and are still involved, constitute the second largest group. Nothing but a small minority got involved in volunteering outside the student environment since they started their university study.

Apparently, voluntary organisations outside the student environment recruit very few new volunteers from within the student population. It is rather exceptionally that university students get involved in new volunteer activities outside the student environment once they started their university career. Only the blood donation increases after becoming a university student.

Graph 6. Top 5 of most frequent volunteer activities outside the student environment (%)

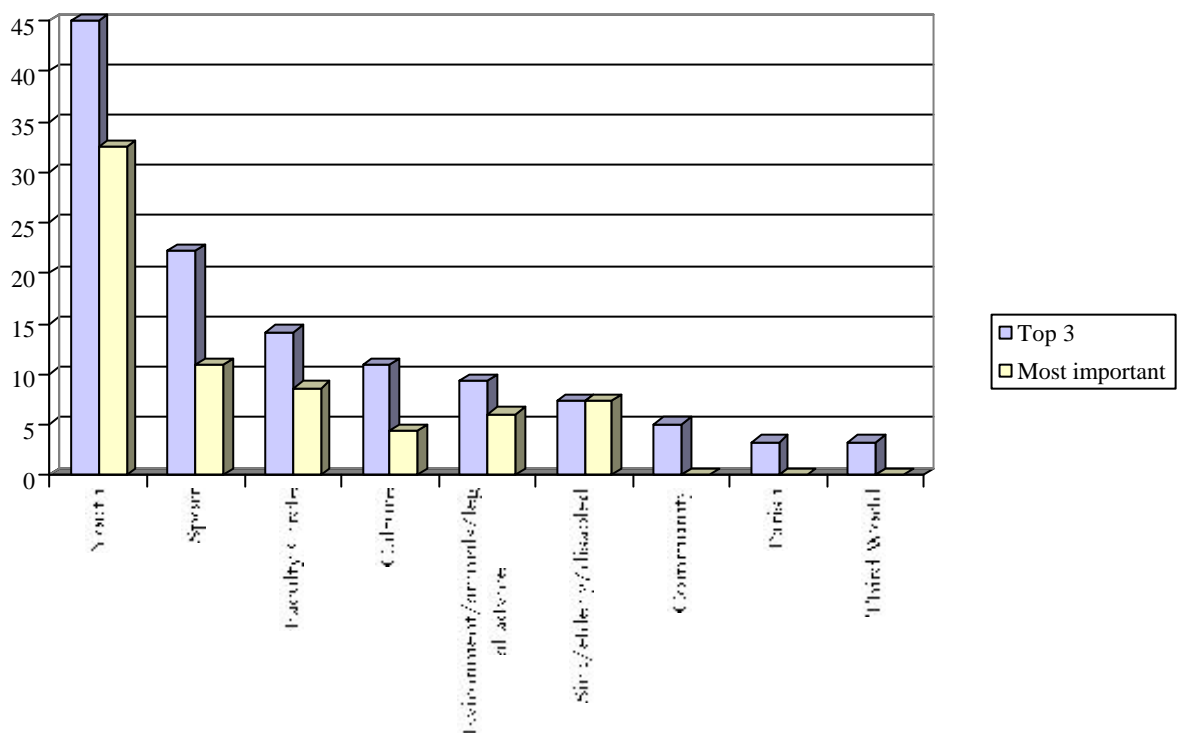


To conclude, two important observations can be made. Firstly, most university students volunteer(ed) in a youth movement or a sport association. Secondly, once students start their university study, they rarely get involved in new volunteer commitments outside the student environment. In the next paragraph, we will identify study pressure as the most important impediment to university students' volunteering.

4. Favourite volunteer activities

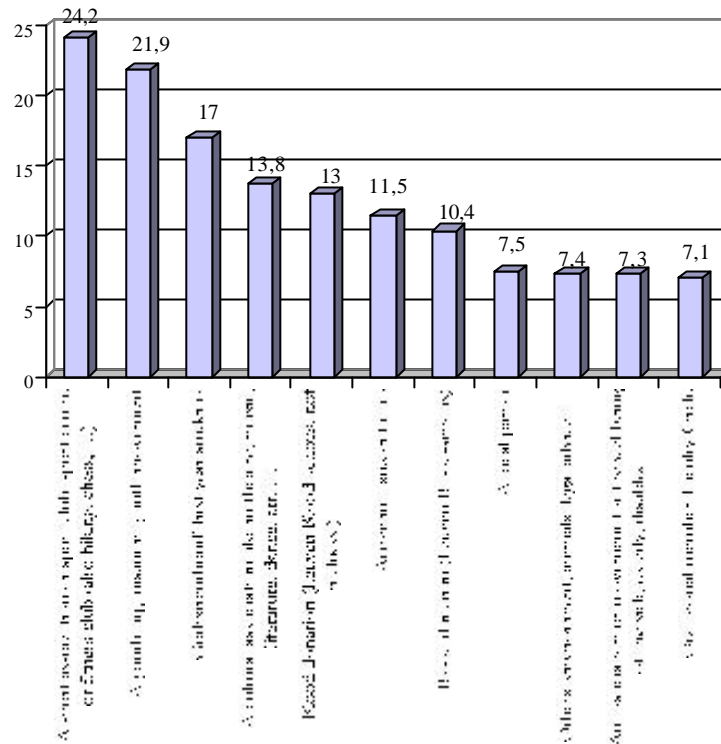
To compile their personal top 3 of most important volunteer activities (within and outside student environment), students listed 9 different kinds of volunteering: a youth organisation (45.0%), a sport association (22.2%), being an habitual member of the Faculty circle (14.2%), a cultural association (10.9%), an environmental / animal organisation (9.3%), an organisation for the well-being of sick, elderly or disabled people (7.3), a local action group or community committee (5.0%), a local parish (3.3%) and a third world movement (3.3%). As the most important volunteer activity, involvement in a youth movement (32.5%), a sport association (10.9%) and a faculty circle (8.6%) were most frequently recited. Volunteering in a local action group or community committee, a local parish and a third world movement never appeared as the most important volunteer activity.

Graph 7. Top 3 of most important volunteer activities



When comparing graph 7 and 8, some of the most frequently done volunteer activities (Godparenthood of first year students, Blood donations, involvement in a student club and being an occasional member of the Faculty circle) are not valued as the most important volunteer activities. This can be an indication for the presence of a new style of volunteering within the student population. University students are very frequently involved in rather limited volunteer activities that are of minor importance.

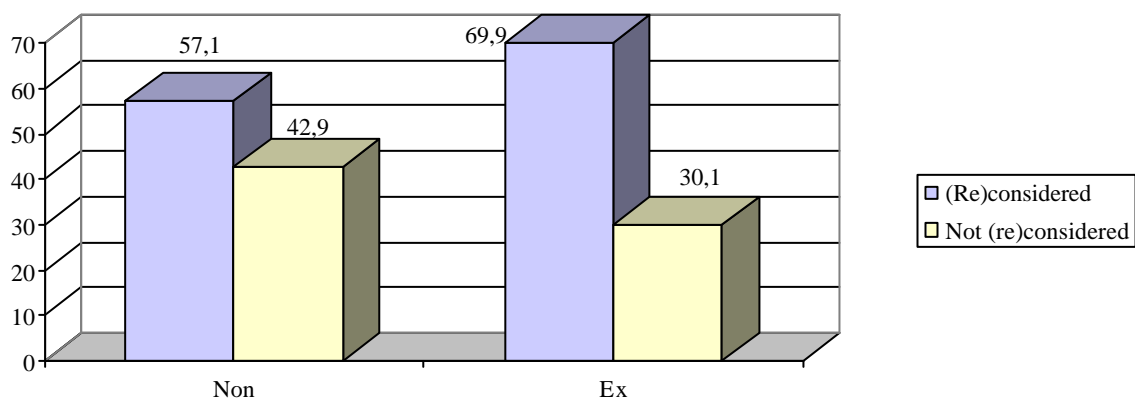
Graph 8. Top 10 most frequent volunteer activities of third year university students



C. Potential volunteers

Students have many reasons for not getting involved. Graph 9. shows that although students do not volunteer, this does not imply that they are not willing to participate. The majority of non- and ex-volunteers indicate that they have (re)considered to enter into a volunteer commitment (57.1% and 69.9%). Moreover, ex-volunteers are significantly more likely than non-volunteers to think about re-entering the volunteer field. Past volunteering thus increases the chance of getting involved (again).

Graph 9. Distribution of ex- and non-volunteers by having (re)considered volunteering



D. Multiple commitments

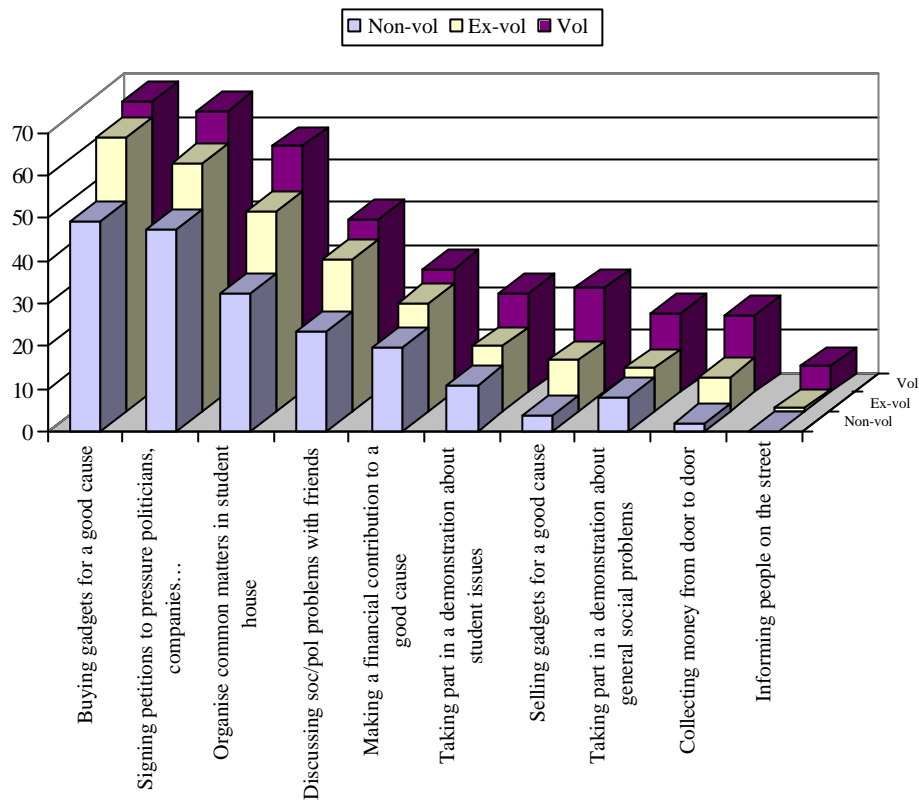
We observe a significant relationship between voluntary commitments at the individual level and involvement in volunteer work. Volunteers are more likely to take up individual commitments than ex-volunteers, which in their turn are more likely than non-volunteers.

Table 3. Multiple commitments

	Non-volunteers	Ex-volunteers	Volunteers	
Consciously changing your life style (i.e. buying honest products, being tolerant...)	59,6	68,7	70,8	ns
Buying gadgets for a good cause	49,4	64,4	68,2	***
Signing petitions to pressure politicians, companies, ...	47,5	58,3	66	***
Helping any other student	47,9	49,1	54,3	ns
Organise common matters in student house	32,2	46,9	57,7	***
Discussing soc/pol problems with friends	23,4	35,6	40,4	**
Making a financial contribution to a good cause	19,6	25,3	28,8	**
Taking part in a demonstration about student issues	10,7	15,3	23,1	**
Selling gadgets for a good cause	3,6	12,1	24,4	***
Taking part in a demonstration about general social problems	7,8	10,1	18,4	***
Collecting money from door to door	1,7	7,9	17,9	***
Informing people on the street	0	0,8	6,1	***

(ns = not significant, ** = significant at .01 level, *** = significant at .001 level)

Graph 10. Significant differences between volunteer groups with respect to their voluntary commitment at the individual level (%)



Only two commitments at the individual level are equally done over all volunteer categories. We assume that the high level of participation among all students can be explained by the relatively low degree of involvement required. In the questionnaire, ‘consciously changing your life-style’ was illustrated with the example ‘recycling your litter’. Since everyone in the university city Leuven is strongly encouraged to select their waste-disposal, most university students are used to do it. It does not require an extra effort. Hence more than one half of the students indicate they have changed their life-style. Also the commitment ‘giving further explanation or extra lessons to whichever students’ is very easily done. Every student occasionally explains something to another student, often during the break or between lessons. On the contrary, the commitments on which the volunteer categories differ, demand additional efforts. The student has to choose and act consciously. Another explanation can be that the enumerated commitments are often linked with the organisations in which students volunteer.

E. Conclusion

Third year university student do not fit into the broader negative picture of today’s uninterested and passive youth generation. They are ‘engaged students’, both at the individual and the volunteer (organisational) level. However, not all voluntary commitments are equally popular within the student population. On the one hand, volunteer commitments inside the student environment can be characterised as ‘limited’ in time-investment and level of involvement. These volunteer activities tend towards the ‘new style of volunteering’. On the other hand, since becoming a university student, these youngsters seldom get involved in new volunteer activities outside the student environment. Moreover, a lot of students quit their non-university related volunteer jobs during their university career. Volunteering outside the student environment is situated in rather ‘classical’ fields of activity: youth, sports, culture, assistance to sick/elderly/disabled persons, ...

If students get involved in new volunteer activities, the likelihood of taking up volunteer commitments inside the student environment is far greater than that of starting non-university related volunteering.

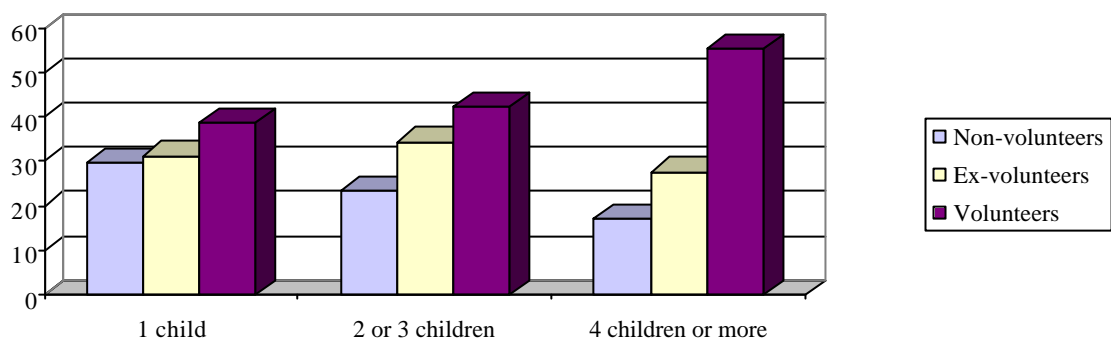
The overall majority of third year university students is engaged at the individual level. Students who volunteer are most likely to be individually committed.

II. PROFILE OF THE ENGAGED STUDENT

A. Cultural, affective and economic embeddedness

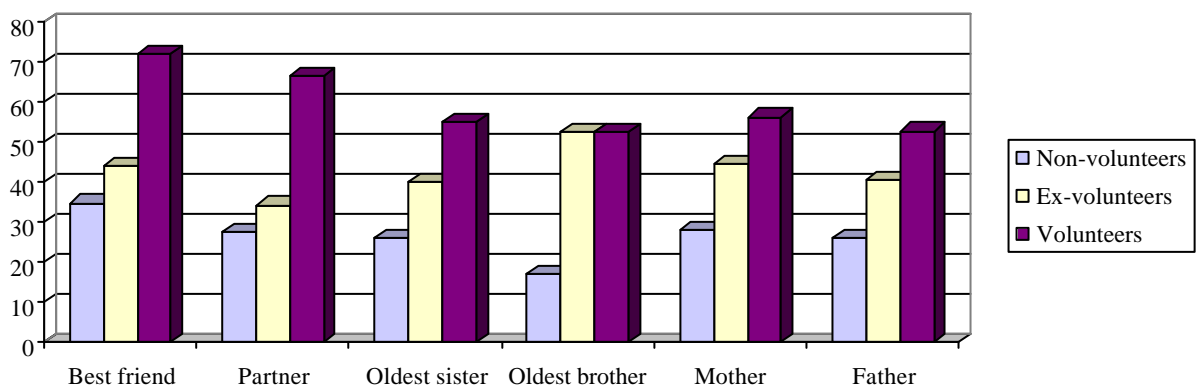
1. Family's volunteer tradition

Graph 11. Distribution of volunteer categories according to number of children in family



Graph 11 shows that the largest part of volunteers are situated in the group of students that belong to a family with 4 or more children. Although students of big families are more likely to be involved in volunteer work, this relation is not significant. On the contrary, the family's volunteering is of overriding importance. The level of volunteering in the nearest surroundings of the student, increases the likelihood of being a volunteer his- or herself.

Graph 12. Distribution of volunteer categories according to closest relations doing volunteer work



1 out of 3 volunteers, 1 out of 4 ex-volunteers and 1 out of 10 non-volunteers is stimulated by a close relative or friend to become involved in volunteer work.

Table 4. Distribution of volunteer categories by closest relations having stimulated volunteering

Stimulated by... (%)	Non-volunteers	Ex-volunteers	Volunteers	Total (in descending order)
Both parents	15,7	28,3	33,6	30,1
Mother	26,3	20	18,1	19,5
Best friend	10,5	11,6	13,6	12,7
Father	0	18,3	10,9	12,1
Partner	36,8	5	8,1	10,0
Oldest sister	0	6,6	5,4	5,2
Oldest brother	0	6,6	0,9	2,6
Total	11,3	24,8	34,3	/

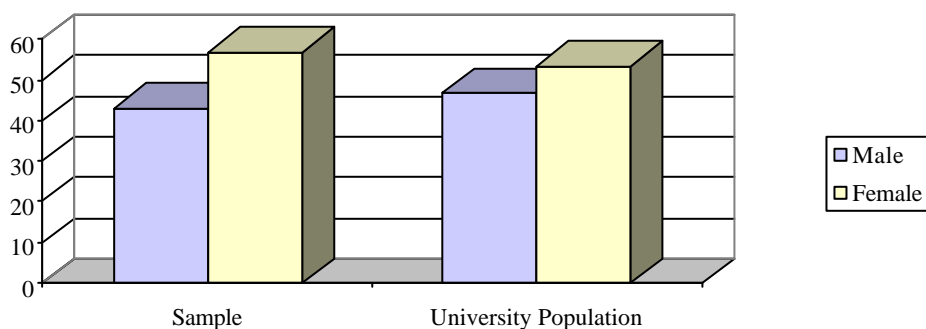
2. Parents' socio-economic status

Neither occupational status, nor educational level of the parents determine the level of volunteering of the students.

3. Students and gender differences

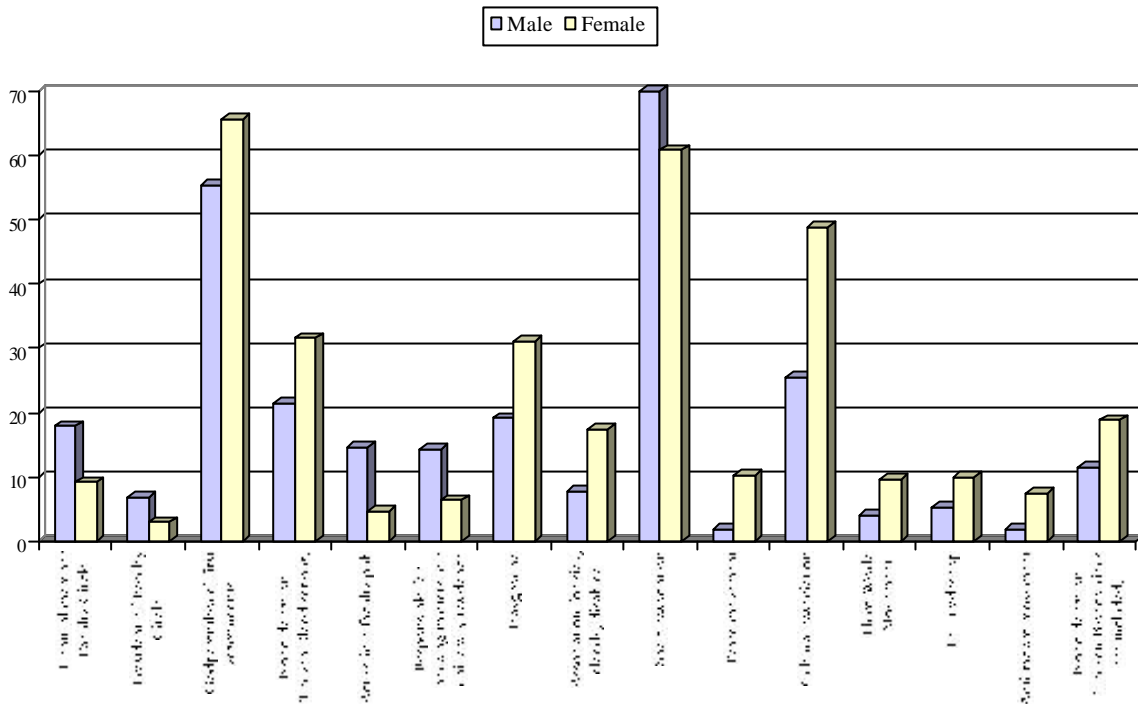
In the population of third year university students, women are better represented than men. In our student sample, women are slightly over-represented, but the difference is not significant.

Graph 13. Gender distribution of third year university students (%)



Both male and female third year university students are equally represented in the field of volunteerism. However, the traditional gender-roles are still being reproduced in their volunteer work. Male and female student are involved in different volunteer activities. Male volunteers are significantly more committed to achievement-oriented tasks with a high level of responsibility. Female volunteers are much more likely to be caretakers.

Graph 14. Significant gender differences in volunteer activities of third year university students (%)



4. Students and collective identities

The third year university students feel strongly connected with their family (77.8%), with friends in their hometown (43.6%) and with friends in their university city (56.1%). Furthermore, they identify with people with the same lifestyle and interests and with people with the same philosophy of life.

Collective identities based on the same political or religious conviction are weakening. There is a decreasing group identification with people of the same social background as well.

These results refer to individualisation theories. The collectivity to which one belongs, is no pre-given guiding principle any more to the individualised life design. Traditional, local groups loose their significance for the individual biography construction. People organise their lives on the basis of individual preferences and identifications.

- Volunteers feel more strongly connected with the group of friends in their hometown, with people with the same religious conviction and the same social background.
- Weakening collective (ideological) identities do not necessarily imply an attitude of indifference or disapproval. ‘Individualised’ practices based on personal political or religious beliefs are replacing the old collective bodies of thought and action.

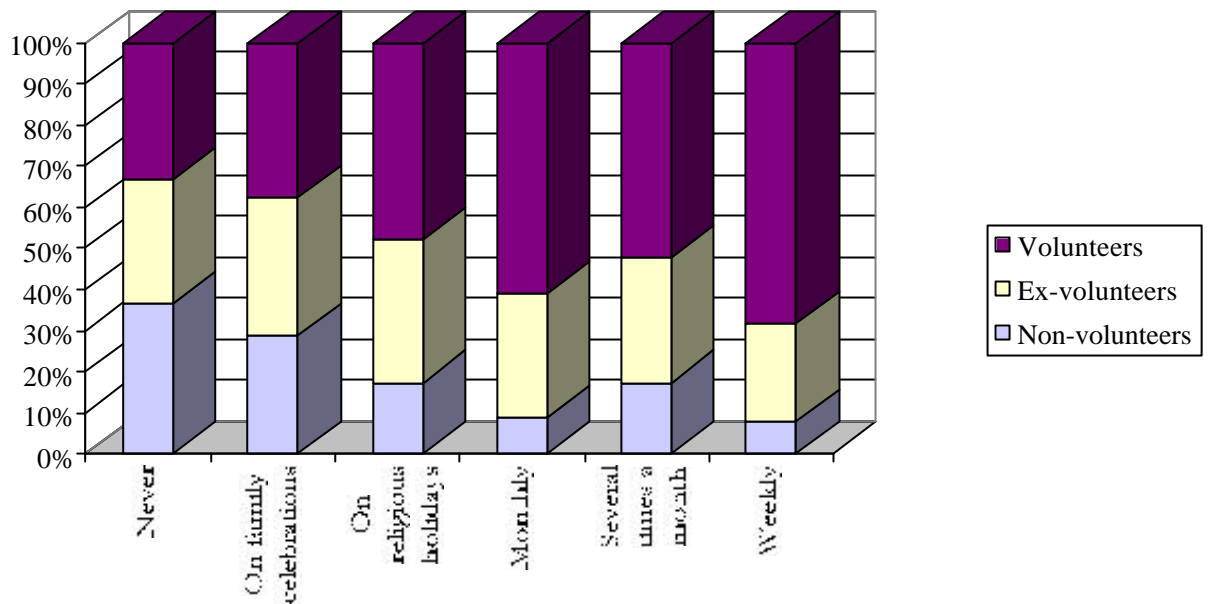
5. Students and their religious conviction

Although ‘only’ 60% of the third year university students consider themselves of Christian or Catholic belief, 95% attend worship (from which 52% only occasional).

No relation can be found between religious belief and volunteering. Nevertheless, church attendance is significantly influencing volunteer commitment. Third year university students that volunteer participate significantly more in religious services than ex-volunteers and non-volunteers. Not religious belief but church

attendance is a strong indicator for volunteering. This is also true for the Flemish population in general. Churchgoing people are more involved in community life and in volunteering.

Graph 15. Third year university students by church practice and volunteer category



6. Students and their political opinion

Volunteers and ex-volunteers give preference to the green and the socialist party. Non-volunteers rather prefer the liberal party. Non-volunteers show the greatest tolerance towards extreme-right.

B. Student career

Some of the (supposed) determining variables formulated in the hypothesis with respect to student career, turn out to be not significantly affecting the level of volunteer commitment among university students: study group, re-sitting examinations and re-sitting a university years are not influencing the rate of participation in volunteer work.

However, significant differences in the amount of volunteering are found between levels of study pressure that students experience and between faculties (disciplines studied).

1. Study pressure

Table 5. Study pressure

Volunteer categories	Mean study pressure
Non-volunteers	6,88
Ex-volunteers	6,86
Volunteers	6,49

The study pressure is experienced significantly different between volunteer categories. On average, volunteers estimate their study pressure lower than ex-volunteers and non-volunteers do.

2. Faculties

The greatest number of volunteers can be found in the Social Sciences Faculty (66.7%). Psychology and Educational Sciences comes second (63.6%), Agricultural and Applied Biological Sciences comes third (56.3%). In this 'top 3 of faculties', more than one half of the students are involved in volunteering.

The 'bottom 3' with the lowest number of volunteers is composed of the faculties of Philosophy (28.6%), Economics and Applied Economics (31.7%) and Medicine (33.9%). The greatest number of non-volunteers is counted in the group of Medicine students (32.3%). Furthermore, more than 1 out of 4 students of the faculties of Science, Economics and Applied Economics, Pharmaceutical Sciences, Engineering, Philosophy and Agricultural and Applied Biological Sciences have never been involved in volunteering.

Although the group of volunteers generally experience the lowest study pressure, a high study pressure is not by definition an obstruction to volunteer commitment. While students of the faculty of Agricultural and Applied Biological Sciences report the highest study pressure, this group has the third highest rate of volunteering. To a lesser degree, this is also true for the students of the faculty of Physical Education and Physiotherapy and the Science Faculty. Moreover, a low level of study pressure is neither a direct predictor of a high rate of volunteering. Students of the faculties of Philosophy, Economics and Applied and Medicine have among the lowest levels of experienced study pressure but they score very low on volunteer involvement as well.

Table 6. Distribution of volunteer categories over the different faculties

Faculties	Non-volunteers	Ex-volunteers	Volunteers	Mean study pressure	Total (100%)
Agricultural & applied biological sciences	25	18,8	56,3	7,6	32
Science	31	25,9	43,1	7,4	58
Pharmaceutical sciences	28,6	33,3	38,1	7,2	21
Physical education & physiotherapy	15,9	38,6	45,5	7,2	44
Medicine	32,3	33,8	33,9	7,2	65
Theology	0	62,5	37,5	6,9	8
Engineering	28,6	35,1	36,4	6,8	77
Social sciences	7,4	25,9	66,7	6,7	27
Psychology & educational sciences	21,2	15,2	63,6	6,6	66
Philosophy	28,6	42,9	28,6	6,4	7
Law	15,3	37,8	46,9	6,4	98
Arts	18,7	36,6	44,7	6,3	123
Economics & applied economics	28,8	39,4	31,7	6,2	104
Total	168	242	321	6,7	732

III. STUDENT'S STYLE OF VOLUNTARY COMMITMENT

A. Field of activity

Volunteering covers a broad spectrum of fields of activity. The literature on new styles of volunteering suggests that the willingness to participate in whatever kind of volunteer work is more and more dependent on personal interests and experiences. New volunteers have become very 'choosy', they tend to opt for 'trendy' fields of activity. 'Traditional' volunteer work for the elderly, the sick and those with a disability is far less popular than 'hot issues', such as the 'buddy projects' for Aids patients, tele-services, palliative care, et cetera. Nowadays, classical target groups and causes have to compete with new ones.

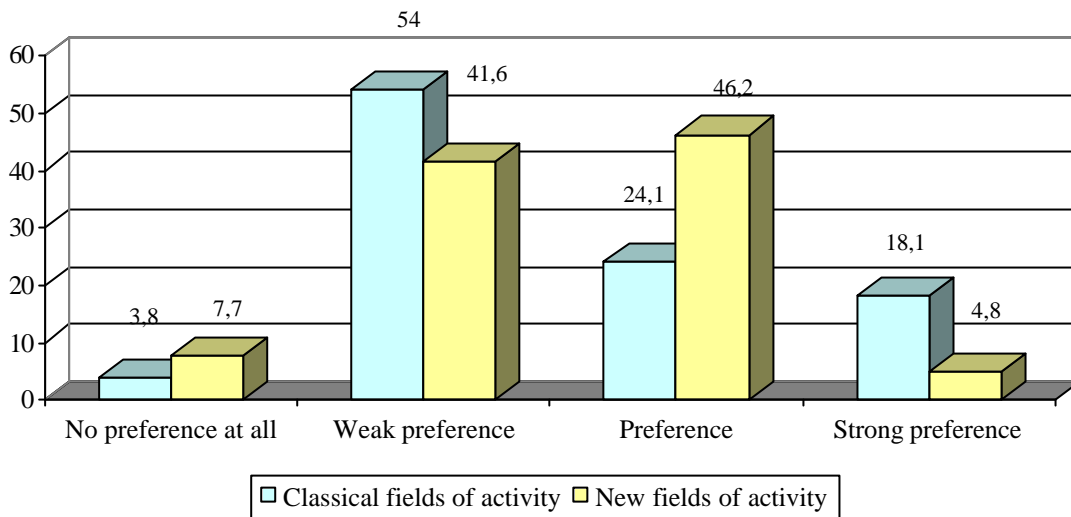
To which fields of action do young people commit themselves? Which target groups and causes are most popular among today's youngsters? Is it possible to distinguish between 'classical' and 'new' fields of activity?

On the basis of a confirmatory factor analysis, 2 dimensions of action fields are extracted from a range of volunteer sectors. They correspond with the supposed difference between 'classical' and 'new' target groups and causes. The former are mainly situated in the sphere of care-giving, the latter are rather embedded in the sphere of the new social movements.

Classical fields of activity (N = 662, a = .82)	New fields of activity (N = 576, a = .82)
1. elderly	1. refugees
2. people with mental disabilities	2. cultural minorities
3. people with physical disabilities	3. gender
4. sick people	4. ex-prisoners
	5. third world
	6. human rights

Graph 16 shows that students still prefer the classical fields of activity above the new fields. Nevertheless, a strong correlation between both groups exists ($r=.41$).

Graph 16. University students and their preferences towards classical and new target groups and themes (%)



B. Preference towards style of voluntary commitment

The interviewed students had to score a range of characteristics typical to different styles of volunteering. They had to value out of which features their ideal style of volunteering would be composed (a value between 1 and 7).

The answers of all students tend to be centred around the average score (4, with a minimum mean score of 2.4 and a maximum mean score of 5.2). Therefore, the results must be carefully interpreted as trends or indications. The evaluation of all volunteer categories go in the same direction. The mean scores of the volunteers are compared with the mean scores of the ex- and non-volunteers. Sometimes, the volunteer group is more pronounced, sometimes the ex- and non-volunteers groups are, for some features no differences between volunteer categories exist.

Volunteers tend to prefer working outside, work with a lot of responsibility, that is strenuous, that is carried out in a team, through an organisation, that is rather unpredictable and gives the opportunity to have personal contact with the beneficiary. Non- and ex-volunteers tend to prefer brainwork, work for a definite period, with immediate results, with the possibility to decide themselves where and when to volunteer, with few obligations or which is easy to call of, which is an extension of their own personal interests and where there is no share in the costs. Over all volunteer categories, the scores tend to point at a general preference for flexible hours, concrete issues, in the extent of the volunteers own experiences, with variation in the tasks, solving local problems, work which is realistic and a neutral course of action.

Volunteers still seem to be more 'classical' with respect to their style preferences than non- or ex-volunteers. In general, the preferences of these young people give some indication for the emergence of a new style of volunteering (at least at the level of their attitudes towards volunteering).

Table 7. Preferences towards style of voluntary commitment

	Non+Ex	Vol	Overall mean		
Manual work (action)	4,3	3,9	4,1	Brainwork (thinking)	***
Inside	4,3	4,6	4,4	Outside	**
A lot of responsibility	3,5	3,2	3,4	Few responsibility	*
Flexible hours	3,5	3,6	3,5	Regular hours	ns
For a definite period	3,2	3,8	3,5	For an indefinite period	***
A concrete issue	2,3	2,4	2,4	An abstract ideal	ns
Strenuous	4,0	3,8	3,9	Relaxing	**
Immediate results	3,8	4,1	3,9	Long term results	**
Deciding myself where and when	3,2	3,7	3,4	Scheduling ahead	***
In a team	2,7	2,2	2,5	Individually	***
In extent to my own experience	3,3	3,3	3,3	Different from my own experience	ns
Variation in tasks	3,1	3,1	3,1	Same tasks	ns
Through an organisation	3,2	2,9	3,1	On my own	**
Few obligations, easy to call it of	3,3	3,8	3,6	A lot of obligations, getting involved in something	***
Local problems	3,9	3,8	3,8	Global, world-wide problems	ns
Idealistic	5,3	5,1	5,2	Realistic	ns
As an extension to your personal interests	3,1	3,3	3,2	In extension to the need of the organisation, committing myself where necessary	*
Unpredictable, improvising on the spot	4,2	3,9	4,1	Predictable, knowing where you're standing	*
Not prepared to share in the costs	3,7	4,2	3,9	Prepared to share in the costs	***
Neutral course of action	3,3	3,4	3,3	Ideologically influenced course of action	ns
Personal contact with the beneficiary	3,1	2,6	2,9	Anonymous contact with the beneficiary	***

C. Intensity volunteering

Third year university students spend significantly more time to their most important volunteer activity

Table 8. Number of hours of volunteering by importance of volunteer activity

	Mean monthly hours	Mean weekly hours
Most important volunteer activity	25,87	6,5
Second important volunteer activity	14,64	3,7
Third important volunteer activity	10,01	2,5
General mean	16,84	4,2

In general, the largest part of university students' volunteer work is done several times a week, but not daily (27,4%). 1 out of 5 volunteer activities happen several times a year. Volunteering once a week is the third most popular frequency.

Table 9. Frequency of volunteering by importance of volunteer activity (%)

	Most important	Second important	Third important	Total
5 times a week or more	9,9	5,7	4,5	7,5
Several times a week	39,9	16,7	13,4	27,4
Once a week	13,5	21,0	13,4	16,0
Several times a month	12,5	17,1	13,4	14,2
Once a month	4,6	8,6	3,4	7,5
Several times a year	14,9	23,8	29,5	20,5
Once a year	4,6	7,1	12,5	6,9
Total	303	210	112	625

The intensity of the volunteer commitment can be considered as the multiplication of the number of hours and the frequency of volunteering. There exists a positive correlation between the number of hours and the frequency: the more often students volunteer, the more hours they devote to their volunteer commitment.

IV. STUDENT'S MOTIVES FOR VOLUNTEERING

A. Volunteers

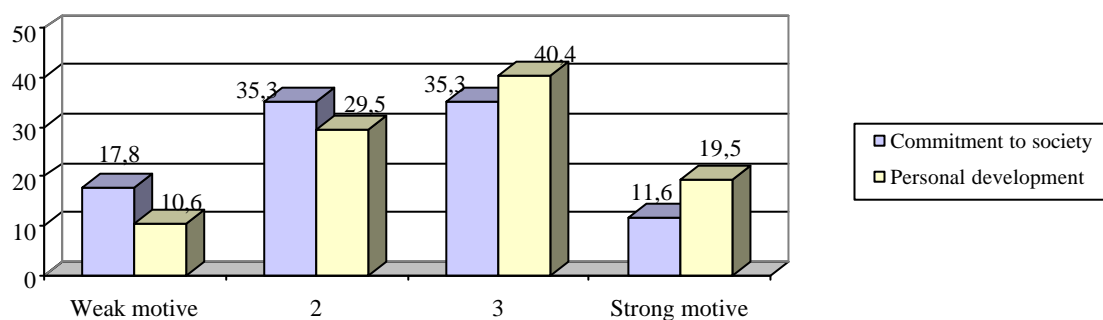
Third year university students who volunteer, appear to combine solidarity with more 'self-oriented' and instrumental motives. This seems to follow from the individualisation process and the emergence of new styles of volunteering. The opportunity to develop oneself through volunteering is valued as important as the chance to help other people. Through a confirmatory factor analysis, 2 major dimensions were traced in students'

motivation for volunteering: a commitment to society on the one hand and the search for personal development on the other hand.

Commitment to society (N = 292, a = .84)	Personal development (N = 302, a = .81)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To make my contribution to changes in society To be involved with society By doing something for others, my life gets more value To contribute to the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doing work that is a challenge to me Because this way I get to know my capabilities and limits To challenge myself and to test my skills To get some experience

Graph 18 shows students' score on both groups of motives. It becomes very clear that the inquired group of young people do not volunteer out of purely altruistic motives. They want to get something out of their voluntary efforts themselves. They want to broaden their life experience, to learn new skills, to challenge themselves ... In short, they search for personal development in their volunteer work (a significant motive for 60% of these volunteers). Young people thus are aware of the potential benefits of volunteering. Nevertheless, these youngsters are not 'born egoists'. They are also oriented towards more altruistic goals and still declare their solidarity with the broader society. Students who volunteer, want to express their commitment to society through their volunteer work (a significant motive for almost one half of these volunteers). These young volunteers are 'self-seeking' and 'self-less' at the same time. This is a strong indication for a new style of volunteering.

Graph 18. Motives of university students who volunteer



Other important motives for volunteering are: social contact, enjoying oneself, having a good feeling while volunteering and helping other people. Of little importance are the role for a future job, pursuing family's volunteer tradition, following a religious conviction or moral duty or getting a feeling of belonging.

B. Ex- and non-volunteers

1. Reasons for quitting (ex-volunteers)

The reasons that ex-volunteers mention for quitting their volunteering, match with Gaskin's 'pressures and barriers to volunteering'. As 'external pressures', ex-volunteers mention a lack of time due to their study (time management problem) and the fact that they moved from their hometown to a student house in Leuven (proximity / mobility problem). As 'internal barriers', the bad atmosphere (Gaskin's 'laugh'-dimension) and the too compulsory and burdening character of the commitment (Gaskin's 'flexibility'-dimension) were quoted.

Valued as not important: lack of appreciation, no results of efforts, financial considerations, negative image in peer group, too much training programs, no voice in organisation, inefficient organisation.

2. (Re)considering volunteering (ex- and non-volunteers)

The reasons of 'potential volunteers' (ex- and non-volunteers that have (re)considered volunteering) for not getting involved once more correspond with Gaskin's FLEXIVOL-list. The major external pressure that restrains these 'potential volunteers' from getting involved is a serious lack of time. Internal barriers like lack of information and lack of key people or gatekeepers also prevent 'potential volunteers' from an actual volunteer commitment.

Valued as not important: image-problem, financial considerations, too much obligations / responsibility

Some arguments for not getting involved play a significantly more important role for the non-volunteers:

- Financial constraints
- Lack of information and gate-keepers
- Parents do not stimulate volunteer work
- Lack of flexibility (too much responsibilities & obligations, inefficient organisation, difficult to schedule)

'Enabling' conditions under which one would get involved are:

- Less time pressure (study pressure, less other leisure activities): this is more true for ex-volunteers
- More information, introduction by gate-keepers
- More flexibility (free in deciding when and where to get involved)

4. CONCLUSION

The research findings do not support the 'doom and gloom' about today's 'lost' generation. In the sample of third year university students, high levels of voluntary commitment are found. These youngsters are not 'immovable' or 'uninterested' as suggested, but they still combine their study, their leisure time and social activities with a broad range of volunteer activities. 1 out of 10 students places volunteering in his/her personal top 5 of favourite leisure activities.

With respect to student's style of volunteering, an ambiguous picture emerges. Classical and new features are combined in a personal mix of attitudes towards volunteering and volunteer behaviour. It seems that the 'new style of volunteering' is particularly present in student's preferences and attitudes towards the kind of volunteer commitment. New characteristics can be detected in their choice of the action field and the volunteer activities, in their identification with certain target groups, in their combination of 'self-less' and 'self-seeking' motives ... Volunteers tend to prefer working outside, work with a lot of responsibility, that is strenuous, that is carried out in a team, through an organisation, that is rather unpredictable and gives the opportunity to have personal contact with the beneficiary. Non- and ex-volunteers tend to prefer brainwork, work for a definite period, with immediate results, with the possibility to decide themselves where and when to volunteer, with few obligations or which is easy to call of, which is an extension of their own personnel interests and where there is no share in the costs. Over all volunteer categories, the scores tend to point at a general preference for flexible hours, concrete issues, in the extent of the volunteers own experiences, with variation in the tasks, solving local problems, work which is realistic and a neutral course of action. Volunteers still seem to be more 'classical' with respect to their style preferences than non- or ex-volunteers. In general, the preferences of these young people give some indication for the emergence of a new style of volunteering (at least at the level of their attitudes towards volunteering).

Nevertheless, this 'new volunteer consciousness' is not directly expressed as a 'new style of volunteering' in reality. Actual volunteering still appears to be inspired by traditional guidelines. Family's volunteer tradition, the

reproduction of gender differences in volunteer activities, the strong interconnection between church practices and volunteering, ... point at a rather 'classical' volunteer background. Moreover, students' most important volunteering is still very frequently done. In general, the largest part of student's volunteer work is done several times a week, but not daily. Their volunteering is also very likely to happen once a week. And the more often students volunteer, the more hours they devote to their volunteering. Student's most important volunteer commitments are still of a very reliable, rather classical nature. Volunteering outside the student environment is also situated in rather 'classical' fields of activity: youth, sports, culture, assistance to sick/elderly/disabled persons, ...

If students get involved in new volunteer activities, the likelihood of taking up volunteer commitment inside the university environment is considerably greater than that of starting non-university related volunteering. The most frequently done student volunteering can be typified as 'limited volunteer activities': concrete, clearly limited and short-time activities that are of minor importance to the volunteers themselves. These volunteer activities tend towards the 'new style of volunteering'.

The overall majority of third year university students is engaged at the individual level. Students who volunteer are most likely to be individually committed.

The majority of the non- and ex-volunteers have (re)considered a volunteer commitment. A lack of time (mainly due to a high study pressure) is the most important reason for not getting involved. If these students could commit themselves in highly flexible ways, they would be much more likely to volunteer.

This research thus reveals a very ambiguous picture of third year university students and their style of volunteering. Classical and new features are combined in very complex ways.

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