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Volunteer Retention in Prosocial Venturing: The Role of Emotional Connectivity

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Abstract

This study develops an understanding of the role of emotional connectivity for volunteer retention in prosocial business venturing. By embedding it in organizational ambivalence theory, our analysis of four volunteer-dependent community ventures reveals two mechanisms through which entrepreneurs strengthen volunteers' emotional connectivity. We first identify emotion-focused practices that form volunteers' emotional attachment to the venture, and then demonstrate how duality-focused practices, in the form of managing inherent organizational duality, complement emotion-focused practices to foster volunteers' emotional loyalty to the venture. Theorizing from our findings, we introduce a model of managing volunteers' emotional connectivity, and conclude by discussing its implications for prosocial venture research on volunteerism and affective commitment.

Keywords

emotions, entrepreneurship, prosocial venturing, ambivalence, volunteer retention, management practices

Previous entrepreneurship research has emphasized that the social mission of prosocial ventures is an important means of attracting volunteers (Austin, Stevenson, & Wei-Skillern, 2006; Doherty, Haugh, & Lyon, 2014), whom we define as people who give their time, effort, and talent to a cause without profiting financially (Garner & Garner, 2011; Stirling, Kilpatrick, & Orpin, 2011). At the same time, entrepreneurship scholars have pointed towards the complex challenge of retaining volunteers (Haugh, 2007; Katre & Salipante, 2012) because, unlike paid employees, volunteers are free to withdraw their labor at any time (Doherty et al., 2014; Thompson, Alvy, & Lees, 2000) and tend to serve out of the goodness of their heart instead of financial remuneration by the organization (Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013; Wilson, 2012). To date, a variety of lenses—including identity (e.g., Wry & York, 2017), legitimacy (e.g., O'Neil & Ucbasaran, 2016), and logics (e.g., York, Hargrave, & Pacheco, 2016)—have been

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applied to explain prosocial ventures' practices in reconciling social and economic value orientations so as to win the approval of important stakeholders (Battilana & Lee, 2014; Battilana, Sengul, Pache, & Model, 2015). However, we know surprisingly little about how entrepreneurs' specific practices help to support volunteer retention. This dearth in our knowledge is striking, given that volunteer retention is a priority for the survival and growth of many prosocial ventures (Doherty et al., 2014; Markman, Russo, Lumpkin, Jennings, & Mair, 2016).

Against this backdrop, the current research addresses the question: *how do entrepreneurs manage volunteer retention in prosocial business venturing?* In our search for an answer we theoretically sampled revelatory cases (Neergaard, 2007) on four successful community enterprises operating in cosmopolitan areas in developed economies (France, Germany, Italy and Spain) either in the food or energy industries. Data were collected from 40 interviews, 39 days of participant observation, and a variety of secondary sources. It is our understanding that community enterprises "include democratic governance structures which allow members of the community or constituency they serve to participate in the management of the organisation" (Tracey, Phillips, & Haugh, 2005, p. 328) and, therefore, continuous tensions emerge in positioning a volunteer workforce as both beneficiaries and workers (Boone & Özcan, 2014; Somerville & McElwee, 2011).

Inspired by the theory of organizational ambivalence (Ashforth, Rogers, Pratt, & Pradies, 2014), we conducted an inductive–abductive analysis (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2013; Shepherd & Suddaby, 2017) to understand how entrepreneurs manage organizational duality—comprising conflicting idealistic and pragmatic orientations—inherent in the design of the venture and the volunteer members' experiences of, and responses to, such organizational duality. Recursively working back and forth between theory and data (Gioia et al., 2013; Huy, Corley, & Kraatz, 2014), our analysis discovers three emotion-focused practices that entrepreneurs apply in order to address volunteers' affective responses to organizational dualities, thereby helping them to form and sustain volunteers' emotional attachment to their venture. Further, we identify three duality-focused practices that manage organizational duality inherent in the design of a prosocial venture, and we demonstrate how they complement emotion-focused practices to foster volunteers' emotional loyalty to the venture.

Building on our findings, we generate several contributions to prosocial venturing research. First, we expand theoretical work on prosocial ventures' management of volunteer retention (Austin et al., 2006; Doherty et al., 2014; Markman et al., 2016; Shepherd, 2015) by introducing a double-loop model that presents different sets of practices that entrepreneurs apply so as to strengthen volunteers' emotional connectivity to the prosocial venture. Second, we advance research on affective commitments of venture members (Breugst, Domurath, Patzelt, & Klaukien, 2012; Rauch & Hatak, 2016; Renko, 2013) by explaining how volunteering members' emotional connectivity is determined by two forms of affective commitment: emotional attachment and emotional loyalty. Finally, we expand the practice typology outlined in the theory of organizational ambivalence (Ashforth & Reingen, 2014; Ashforth et al., 2014) by showing that emotion-focused practices complement the duality-focused practices to manage a volunteer workforce.

Theoretical Background

Entrepreneurship research has increasingly emphasized the role of volunteerism in prosocial business venturing (Austin et al., 2006; Borzaga & Defourny, 2001; Doherty et al., 2014), particularly by stressing a venture's social mission as an important source for attracting

volunteers (Haugh, 2007; Thompson et al., 2000). Commonly unable to offer competitive salaries (Di Domenico, Haugh, & Tracey, 2010), prosocial ventures often rely upon unpaid members' volunteering to serve key functions (e.g., fundraising, customer service, roles as board members) and, therefore, strongly depend on preserving their commitment (Markman et al., 2016; Renko, 2013). Since this requires entrepreneurs' skills at offering nonfinancial incentives that help motivate and retain a diverse volunteering membership base (Katre & Salipante, 2012), the managing of volunteer retention can be very challenging indeed for prosocial ventures (Austin et al., 2006; Borzaga & Defourny, 2001); and this is a phenomenon that entrepreneurship researchers have not yet sufficiently scrutinized (Doherty et al., 2014).

The broader management literature on workforce retention has long addressed the retention of workers as a critical, strategic source of venture performance (Allen, Bryant, & Vardaman, 2010; Bidwell, 2011). Successful retention has been commonly subjected to analyses of the role of organizational culture (Sheridan, 1992), financial rewards (Campbell, Ganco, Franco, & Agarwal, 2012), organizational tenure (Chen, Ployhart, Thomas, Anderson, & Bliese, 2011), and the legal enforcement of intellectual property (Agarwal, Ganco, & Ziedonis, 2009). Recent retention studies have complemented these efforts by demonstrating that workers' voluntary engagement in corporate social initiatives helps increase, or maintain, retention rates in business ventures (Bode, Singh, & Rogan, 2015; Carnahan, Kryscynksi, & Olson, 2017). Therefore, management research has begun to highlight the attraction of pro-bono activities across firms (Carnahan et al., 2017) and the need to better understand the relationship between corporate social initiatives and workforce retention (Bode et al., 2015; Grant, 2012).

In the specific context of volunteer workforce retention, a recent review of the volunteerism literature suggests that "volunteers constitute a unique resource (distinctive from paid staff), which requires the organization to make strategic decisions in specifying how to relate to this resource, [and] how to develop it" (Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013, p. 429). In a similar vein, volunteer retention studies point towards the need to carefully manage the trade-offs and conflicts between volunteers and paid staff in order to avoid organizational ambiguity and integrate volunteers into the broader picture of an organization (Garner & Garner, 2011; Kreutzer & Jäger, 2011; Wilson, 2012). This becomes a complex challenge for entrepreneurs because, while paid employees are expected to comply with managerial demands, volunteers are free to abruptly withdraw their labor, for instance when strategic decisions of the organization conflict with their own preferences (Eckstein, 2001; Royce, 2007). Concomitantly, Kulik (2007) shows that organizational ambiguity with regard to work tasks and work requirements can stress volunteers and reduce their commitment. In their reflections upon this management challenge for prosocial ventures in the UK retail sector, Liu and Ko (2012) find that workforce turnover rates are higher when both employees and volunteers are present, instead of cases including only employees.

In managing a venture's volunteer membership base, prior volunteerism research suggests that entrepreneurs are required to apply personalized (instead of formalized) management styles that are protective rather than bureaucratic in nature (Haski-Leventhal & Bargal, 2008; Hustinx & Handy, 2009; Stirling et al., 2011). These studies argue that volunteers tend to expect the core qualification for voluntary work to be an intrinsic, and often idealistic, desire to help, rather than being evaluated on the basis of formal organizational criteria (Haski-Leventhal & Cnaan, 2009; Schlesinger, Egli, & Nagel, 2013). As a consequence, scholars have raised the importance of volunteers' personal experiences by suggesting that organizations which are able to foster feelings of recognition and appreciation are likely to increase their volunteers' commitment (Kreutzer & Jäger, 2011; Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013). Despite these important findings, however, volunteer retention studies have also noted that the

experience of volunteering as such remains rather neglected (Wilson, 2012). We still know little about how entrepreneurs are able to create ''volunteers' attachment to a multipurpose and multi-branch organisation to understand volunteer retention and recruitment in complex organisations'' (Hustinx & Handy, 2009, p. 202), such as in the case of prosocial yet for-profit enterprises (Battilana & Lee, 2014).

In this study, we draw on the theory of organizational ambivalence to emphasize tailored management practices that help mitigate negative experiences of ambivalence (Ashforth & Reingen, 2014; Ashforth et al., 2014; Pratt, 2000). The theory suggests that experiences of ambivalence are manifest in the form of organizational dualities; a term that refers to the oppositional orientations (either pragmatic or idealistic) of a venture's design, mission, vision, strategy, activities, and relationships (Ashforth et al., 2014). These organizational dualities often lead to tensions which emerge from the simultaneous injunction to do both A and its opposite, non-A (Ashforth & Reingen, 2014). However, a simple elimination of ambivalence is often neither possible nor desirable. Sonenshein, Decelles, and Dutton (2014) have noted that individuals usually not only have a strong motivation to resolve ambivalence (e.g., Pratt, 2000) but also use seemingly contradictory beliefs as a foundation for wisdom when they see no need to resolve ambivalence (e.g., Margolis & Walsh, 2003). Following this, different practices are needed that are able to influence volunteers' unintentional and nonconscious defence mechanisms to enable them to cope with ambivalence (Lazarus, 2006). For instance, volunteers who have a simultaneous orientation on both duality poles may require a compromise that maintains ambivalence, rather than privileging one orientation over another in order to tackle and eradicate ambivalence (Ashforth et al., 2014). It follows that a prosocial venture's management of organizational duality reflects a critical, yet underexplored, challenge in the context of volunteerism.

Methodology

Research Design and Theoretical Sampling

The study of managing volunteerism in prosocial ventures is still in its infancy. Therefore, we chose an inductive grounded-theory design to permit the data itself to guide us towards the most salient themes and to generate a deep understanding of the phenomenon at hand (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Gioia et al., 2013; Langley & Abdallah, 2011; Shepherd & Suddaby, 2017). Specifically, we selected multiple enterprises to investigate how entrepreneurs achieve volunteer retention through the management of organizational dualities (Ashforth & Reingen, 2014; Ashforth et al., 2014; Battilana et al., 2015) and members' emotional reactions to them (Breugst & Shepherd, 2017; Jasper, 2011).

Our theoretical sampling of organizations was based on four specific criteria that serve to ascertain the presence of volunteerism and a prosocial nature, as well as the presence of organizational dualities. First, each enterprise had to create economic and social/ecological value to ensure the presence of organizational duality by design. Second, the prosocial venture had to offer a radical alternative in the form of a product or service challenging current market structures. Third, it had to have operated successfully for at least 3 years (but not longer than 10 years) in order to enable an examination of sustained venture success and survival. Fourth, the prosocial venture was to be heavily dependent on a large volunteering community membership base. These criteria restricted the population of prosocial ventures to those that emphasize an integrated organizational design and culture (Battilana & Lee, 2014; Doherty et al., 2014), most strongly present in cooperatives and community enterprises (Boone & Özcan, 2014; Muñoz, Cacciotti, & Cohen, 2018;

Somerville & McElwee, 2011), which therefore represent a fruitful context for investigating the potential challenges involved in the management of a diverse volunteering membership base (Ashforth & Reingen, 2014).

Following these theoretical sampling criteria, we selected four community enterprises from two different industries: food and energy. Each venture operates in an urban region in a developed economy in Europe. In the food industry, community enterprises follow an organizational design that seeks to reinvigorate the established cooperative model for the purposes of the 21st century. In the energy industry, community enterprises challenge the common enterprise model and offer an alternative organizational form, particularly in terms of their governance mode. By including those two industries in our study, we created a heterogeneous set of cases that proffers a firm foundation for theory building (Santos & Eisenhardt, 2009). To protect anonymity and access to sensitive information, we use the following representative names for each venture: Enerclean, Enersol, Foodage, and Foody (see Table 1, for case descriptions).

Data Collection

The entire database for the current study was created between January 2013 and December 2016[1] as part of an EU-FP7 project. Table 1 provides an overview of the data for each venture case, comprising a description of the ventures' activities and mission. Interviews and ethnographic field data form the bedrock for our empirical analysis. One author collected data for two venture cases (Enersol, Foody), while data on the Enerclean and Foodage cases were each collected by a different researcher. Each of the authors also collected secondary data from multiple sources (e.g., project documents, email correspondence, government reports, media coverage, and the venture's social media activity) to triangulate our primary data from each case and thus reduce recall bias.

Primary Data. We conducted a total of 40 interviews. We interviewed all founders of the four enterprises, as they are the key actors in the management of organizational duality. Hence, we interviewed between two and five entrepreneurs per venture case. The Italian case Enerclean follows the traditional cooperative structure and therefore has five founding members. In contrast, the German, Spanish, and French cases were each initiated and are currently steered by two entrepreneurs, all of whom we interviewed. In the German and Italian cases, we succeeded in joining the enterprise for an extensive period of time, which enabled several informal conversations with the entrepreneurs, in addition to the semistructured 90-min interviews we conducted with all entrepreneurs for the project.

The second important group of informants was volunteer members of the venture who are engaged in its development. Volunteers constitute the backbone of operations in all four enterprises. For instance, Enersol's founders initially pitched their idea in a university course, and afterwards asked students to develop the business plan and desk research models implemented in other countries, and eventually pay EUR 100 to become members. This would provide motivated members with an opportunity to implement sustainability ideas by volunteering for Enersol. In the German case, by signing up for Foodage's shift system we were given the chance to spend several hours jointly gardening and harvesting with individual volunteers and conduct situational interviews. In this particular case, volunteers would sometimes receive a compensation of up to around EUR 400 per month, often taking on key responsibilities that demanded a weekly commitment (Garner & Garner, 2011). This still qualifies them as volunteers for our purposes, because the remuneration remains significantly below subsistence level.

Table 1. Description of Cases and Data Collection.

	Enerclean	Enersol	Foodage	Foody
Industry	Energy	Energy	Food	Food
Main location	Northern Italy	Catalonia, Spain	Bavaria, Germany	France
Founding year	2008	2010	2012	2010
Legal form	Italian Cooperative	Spanish Cooperative	German GBR	French SAS
Description of business	Enerclean promotes and implements the democratic and shared production and consumption of green energy from renewable sources. All plants are built and owned by its members. Alongside selling energy to its approximately 1,000 members, it offers services such as energy audits and guidance on switching energy providers. Enerclean makes a prosocial difference by offering an alternative model to that of conventional energy providers, which integrates stakeholders to make a positive impact on the environment and public health.	Enersol aims to meet all the electricity needs of its members via its own energy production. Initiated by a group of professors and students from a Spanish university, in just 4 years the cooperative has attracted over 22,000 members, each contributing a one-off amount of 100 Euro into a social capital fund. Enersol makes a prosocial difference by producing and commercializing renewable energy and offering origin guarantee certificates.	Foodage offers an alternative to pre-packaged and processed food in supermarkets. It is the biggest community-supported agriculture (CSA) project in Germany, and in 2015 acquired an organic farm near Munich to expand its operations. Members pay 43 or 68 Euro per month and in return receive a small or large vegetable box every week. Foodage makes a prosocial difference by paying farmers an upfront contribution for the expected produce to reduce market pressure and to encourage sustainable production methods.	Foody aims at changing what and how society consumes through its robust online platform. Local producers sell directly to communities of consumers through organized and regular pop-up markets organized via the platform. The products are sold directly by the producers, who pay a service charge. Through an equitable and transparent model, producers fix their prices at what they consider to be a fair price. The Foody model connects producers, community members and community hosts.
Value Orientation — Economic value	Seven PV plants with a value of EUR 1.3 million, 455 kWh installed and a	Efficient business model financed by co-op members. Combined investment of over EUR 3.5	Fostering local supply structures by providing vegetable boxes at an affordable price.	Producers are paid fair prices; community hosts are compensated and

Table 1. Continued

	Enerclean	Enersol	Foodage	Foody
	share capital of EUR 540,000.	million into eight photovoltaic schemes, a 500-kW biogas plant and an 80-kW biomass heater.		platform costs are covered within prices.
Social value	Energy democratization and collectively owned renewable energy plants. Cooperative's plants produce 290,317 kWh annually, and save 148,062 kg of CO_2.	Members participate in commissions, local groups, and the assembly. The outcome is improved awareness for over 22,000 members of responsible consumption that transforms the current energy model.	Building an independent community-based local food supply for Munich households while promoting small firms around Munich.	Jobs created in farms and community groups developed. Local and (mostly) organic production lowers carbon footprint.
Data				
Interviews	10	9	13	8
Internal informants (role)	Entrepreneur 1 (E1) … Entrepreneur 5 (E5) Volunteer 1 (V1) … Volunteer 5 (V5)	Entrepreneur 1 (E1) Entrepreneur 2 (E2) Volunteer 1 (V1) … Volunteer 7 (V7)	Entrepreneur 1 (E1) Entrepreneur 2 (E2) Volunteer 1 (V1) … Volunteer 10 (V10)	Entrepreneur 1 (E1) Entrepreneur 2 (E2) Volunteer 1 (V1) … Volunteer 6 (V6)
Type of archival data	Minutes, financial plans, technical assessments (PV, wind, and hydro-power plants), media reports, co-founders' and members' videos, press articles, Twitter	Audit reports, balance sheets, annual reports, project proposals, press articles, Twitter	Press articles, forum entries, video stories, social media content (Facebook, Twitter)	Press articles, company reports, video presentations and interviews, social media content (Facebook, Twitter)
Participant observation	11 days	3 days	22 days	3 days

Furthermore, the current study reports ethnographic insight into operational activities, tensions, and member engagement across the enterprises. In total, we spent 39 days in the field. Our privileged access for Enerclean and Foodage resulted in joining both enterprises for several months, leading us to spend, respectively, 11 days and 22 days in the field. Like this we were able to participate in a wide range of different activities, from working with other volunteers in the gardens, harvesting produce, packaging and delivering vegetable crates, to regular volunteer meetings, the annual enterprise party and board meetings. While all these meetings helped us to build a trusting relationship with the volunteers to such a degree that they would be willing to share personal insight with outsiders, they also demonstrated organizational inefficiencies and the concomitant frustrations of being a volunteer. Therefore, the emotional insights captured through individual narratives from the interviews (Lazarus, 2006) were substantiated and triangulated through recording emotional expressions during our field observations (Massa, Helms, Voronov, & Wang, 2017), sometimes by reflecting on our own expectations and feelings during field work.

Secondary Data. We further triangulated the information gathered in the interviews and during the fieldwork with organizational documents, published articles, reports, and multimedia material. Social media and internal fora facilitate a significant amount of communication between members. Hence, we extracted the entire Twitter history from each venture (1,625, 3,264, 2,215, and 4,105 individual tweets, respectively). The secondary data material was important to further contextualize and verify the reliability of the recorded material gathered from informants. On average, we analyzed about 200 single-spaced A4 pages per case (e.g., for Foodage: 69p. interview transcripts, 27p. field notes, 78p. internal correspondence/ documentation, 105 p. (social) media articles). The type of data and the descriptive information on the secondary data are collated in Table 1.

Data Analysis

In this study, we present a qualitative data analysis as an alternative to the dominant survey-based studies of emotions in entrepreneurship (Cardon, Foo, Shepherd, & Wiklund, 2012; Jennings, Edwards, Devereaux Jennings, & Delbridge, 2015). Our data analysis followed procedures for inductive–abductive theory-building research, going back and forth between the data and emerging theoretical accounts (Gioia et al., 2013; Huy et al., 2014; Williams & Shepherd, 2016). Initially, we developed a descriptive narrative of approximately 20 pages per case. Those narratives served to establish a logical sequence of major events and the chronological development of the venture and its mission. Subsequently, we applied a three-step systematic analysis of the data to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings. Building on the grounded theory of Corbin and Strauss (2008), our analysis worked recursively between emerging themes and data, in that we separated first-order codes, second-order themes, and third-order theoretical categories (Gioia et al., 2013). By establishing a research framework, thorough pattern-matching, and data and theory triangulation, we further substantially reduced the risk of internal validity issues (Gibbert, Ruigrok, & Wicki, 2008; Langley & Abdallah, 2011).

Step 1: Identifying Organizational Dualities. First, we focused on examining organizational dualities. We inductively identified first-order codes and unearthed recurring topics, such as for instance collective decision making and the protection of natural resources, which were part of the prosocial ventures' duality. This was done separately for each case and resulted in a set of individual codes. Aggregating these into second-order categories (Gioia et al., 2013) and

discussing them within the research team succeeded to highlight several organizational dualities relating to the management of the ventures' volunteering membership base.

We realized that Battilana and Lee's (2014) dimensions on governance, workforce composition, and organizational activities warrant greater attention, particularly because those categories are linked to (volunteer) member engagement—the main thrust of this study. Loosely following the authors' hybrid organizing framework, we then looked for organizational dualities in the data which showed the greatest internal harmony, and we discarded those with internal inconsistencies, as they seemed idiosyncratic and tied to the specific context of a particular case. In this way we identified four distinct organizational dualities (second-order themes) emerging from our data: work compensation, recruitment, decision making, and outsourcing duality. The work compensation duality refers to the establishment of a fair-reward system for entrepreneurs and volunteer members. For instance, one of the co-founders of Foodage notes that this duality creates a recurrent tension: "What is more important, 100% of our salary or a team assistant? You would not think like that in a conventional company as a manager." The recruitment duality describes the need for professional skills and simultaneously the nondiscriminatory acceptance of volunteers. For instance, the acceptance of every single application from volunteers to a prosocial venture can dilute the active engagement of other members, as the entrepreneur at Enersol confirms: "We have grown in terms of members; but I would say the level of active participants is the same." The decision-making duality captures an inclusive yet efficient form of decision making, exemplified by the second co-founder of Foodage: "We could be voted out by you at any time…we decided to take that risk, hoping it will not happen." Finally, the outsourcing duality refers to the performance of in-house activities versus collaboration with, and sometimes outsourcing to, suitable partners: "[At Enersol] we have intense debates among volunteer members that do not all go in the right direction…. We still buy together with other companies and we have now switched to a buying group of cooperatives."

Repeated comparison with the literature (e.g., Ashforth & Reingen, 2014; Battilana & Lee, 2014) helped us to refine and attribute the codes to second-order themes and aggregate them into theoretical subcategories. As a result, two subcategories encompassing *HR management* and *organizational governance dualities* emerged from the data that seemed to be highly relevant to the exploration of volunteers' responses to those dualities and, in turn, to how entrepreneurs address them in order to manage volunteer retention. Table 2 provides illustrative examples of each of the organizational dualities identified in our study.

Step 2: Tracing Experiences of Organizational Duality. In the second analytical step, we first inductively coded for volunteers' experiences of the integration of complementary, and sometimes conflicting, organizational duality orientations (Ashforth et al., 2014). We separately applied open and axial coding to identify first-order codes and second-order themes on a case-by-case basis. These were then discussed internally and compared to the literature (e.g., Breugst & Shepherd, 2017) to find similarities across the data and attribute the volunteers' experiences we had identified. This analytical process revealed that volunteers' affective responses are the most relevant theoretical subcategory for understanding volunteers' experiences of organizational duality.

Affective responses describe a cognitive process that occurs so as to interpret and give meaning to an emotional experience of pleasure or displeasure (Russell & Feldman Barrett, 1999). Positive affective responses can spur individuals to engage with their environment and take action; in contrast, negative ones signal slower progress towards a certain goal (Breugst & Shepherd, 2017; Shepherd, 2015). We identified volunteers' positive affective responses in our fieldwork through observations or by hearing them expressed directly in conversations. In our analysis, we identified expressions such as, "when you are part of this start-up, everything

Table 2. Illustrative Data for Organizational Dualities.

Theoretical subcategory	Theme	Illustrative data example with first-order code
Human resource management duality	Work compensation duality	*"The concept of mini-jobs optimally fits the people who are doing this right now. They would not want to be hired permanently since they are still at university or just finished their studies and find themselves in a period of transition in life [. . .] in our opinion it is not morally wrong."* **(Minimum compensation)**
		"I have to work to earn money, but at the same time I have strong values and want to have a positive impact with what I am doing" **(Founder needs)**
		"At first we started with commissions. So far, the ones working are the ones that have survived. But we must find ways of how to structure so that they continue working" (**Paying commissions**)
		"The cooperative would pay a competitive interest rate to the members between 3-5% annually depending on the type of investment" **(Ethical finance)**
	Recruitment duality	*"We focused on getting people involved"* **(Active membership)**
		"They decided that rather than getting a job (because finding an interesting job at the time was nearly impossible), they'd rather work here and let's see' " **(Idealistic engagement)**
		"Being a cooperative, made it possible for everyone to join" **(Nondiscriminatory acceptance)**
		"We tell people: 'we have no product, we have nothing to sell, we do not have customers, we are a community – if you like it, you can be part of this community and get involved; we are only as good as you are – then people say, oh that's interesting' " **(Integrity)**
Operational governance duality	Decision-making duality	*"This is one of my concerns: In the long term will these members continue to be involved in local groups?"* **(Member ownership)**
		"Each region that has more members, has a regional representative, who is the leader of the project and he has to manage the stimuli we receive from the members of that area" **(Local project ownership)**
		"They want to find a balance between moving forward and having everyone participating and included" **(Collective decision making)**
		"You decide the prices of annual fees which are voted together. Projects are decided together. it gives you the possibility to learn and not just be a passive consumer of electricity but to learn, to participate in local groups or technical committees." **(Encourage participation)**
	Outsourcing duality	*"You have to be aware of where you get your raw materials from, how you organize your production, and then you need a good label, decent marketing and then it works. That's a discussion we had internally with our comrades and gardeners last year in the spring."* **(Responsible sourcing)**
		"Now the government have given the cooperatives a great opportunity, they can now produce and sell energy. The problem is with the numbers, they need 10,000 members and large plants" **(Efficiency needs in operations)**
		"Since we want to grow bigger in the future it was clear for us that a cooperative would provide us with the necessary tools and instruments of transparency and member participation" **(Cooperative structure beneficial)**
		"The question of moving a part of these savings from finance to productive activity means offering value for money and creating jobs" **(Job creation)**

Table 3. Illustrative Data for Volunteering Experiences.

Theoretical subcategory	Theme	Illustrative data example with first-order code
Affective response	Positive affective experience	"There were also always several volunteers who had some issues, often something psychological, for whom [Foody] was an oasis. I think it is also the intention to create a place where everybody feels comfortable" **(Compassionate)**
		"After the test phase, the people said 'So, how about next week no veggie crate?' and we: yes, because we have to make the concept first. They: do your concept, but we want our veggie crate next week" **(Satisfied)**
		"When you say, 'eating from the farms close to you' it's clear, it's easier, it's like: ah, the farms close to me, I want to support them" **(Interested)**
		"There were many people in the industry at that time who were waiting for something like this to emerge. And when they saw the initiative it was easy to join the cause." **(Inspired)**
	Negative affective experience	A family, members of the cooperative, complained about the squishy salad they received in the last veggie box because some other members' must have decided to pack them differently. *Field note* **(Angry)**
		"She [former chairman] didn't manage to fulfil their tasks due to private and professional reasons even though her tasks were not particularly time-consuming." **(Distressed)**
		"Even when we talk on our website, everywhere, we try not to use vocabulary that is too complex. In French we have a word, a locavore, which means I'm eating only local. But it can be stressful for people." **(Stressed)**
		Andrea mentioned that she was very upset when one of the co-founders told her that he must be involved when decisions of general principle are to be made, such as whether to wrap the produce in plastic or not. *Field note* **(Upset)**

else seems trivial" and, "this is one of the best projects ever" to be evidence of an emotional reaction reflecting pleasure (Foo, Uy, & Baron, 2009). Expressions such as, "you still live in the old structures, but they no longer fit the big picture" and, "personally I am just very unhappy" were coded as evidence of affective responses indicating displeasure (Russell & Feldman Barrett, 1999).

As a result, our second-order codes were summarized as *affective responses* to a positive affective experience, such as being joyful or happy, or a negative affective experience, such as being afraid or scared. Table 3 provides evidence of the identified volunteers' negative and positive affective responses to organizational dualities.

Step 3: Identifying Practices to Manage Organizational Dualities and Experiences of Them. In the third analytical step, we explored which practices entrepreneurs employ to manage both organizational dualities, revealed in the first analytical step, and experiences of organizational dualities, revealed in the second analytical step. The work of Ashforth et al. (2014) informed this phase of the analysis by providing a set of specific practices applied to manage organizational ambivalence. Hence, we deductively coded for avoidance, compromise, domination, and holism. In our analysis we realized that holism and compromise differ in their intensity level yet tend to refer to the same practice, in that they balance a medium-to-high orientation towards both duality poles. Because these were difficult to distinguish empirically, we decided

to unite them under the more intuitive label of *compromise*. We call this first type *duality-focused practices*, that is, entrepreneurs' practices which focus on resolving inherent organizational duality problems that cause negative experiences for volunteers.

Additionally, we abductively elicited the emotion-focused practices of perspective-taking, energizing, and dissociating. These are the practices adopted by entrepreneurs to alleviate volunteers' negative experiences without resolving the actual venture's duality problem that caused the volunteers to have that experience in the first place. While Ashforth et al. (2014) explicate the differences between duality-focused practices, their theorization is not explicitly about practices which directly address the affective experience of organizational ambivalence. Our analysis revealed that it is crucial to examine the practice types separately, due to the fact that they fulfil different functions. For instance, prosocial enterprises which hope to maintain their organizational duality and, at the same time, manage the nature of the response to duality, serve as both an inspiration and as a source of conflict for volunteer retention. The practice labels we assign can be found in similar terms in the literature ("perspective-taking" in Graziano, Habashi, Sheese, & Tobin, 2007; Todd, Galinsky, & Bodenhausen, 2012; "emotional energy" in Elfenbein, 2007; Jasper, 2011; "dissociation" in Lazarus, 2006; Russell, 2003), but to date, no connection has been made to managing volunteers in prosocial venturing. Table 4 provides illustrative examples of the practices that entrepreneurs employ to manage both organizational dualities and volunteers' experiences of them.

The three analytical steps resulted in the coding structure illustrated in Figure 1, enabling empirical-based theorizing on managing volunteer retention in prosocial venturing. Utilizing computer-based qualitative analysis software (NVivo 11), we organized the data around emerging codes and second-order themes, which we aggregated into distinct theoretical subcategories and categories, treating the enterprises as one stylized, generic case in order to build the analytical framework (Gioia et al., 2013; Langley & Abdallah, 2011; Williams & Shepherd, 2016). The inductive–abductive analytical process permitted the researchers to reduce the number of codes to a manageable amount ($n = 95$). It was after two rounds of coding and repeated comparison that our theoretical orientation shifted towards the theory of organizational ambivalence. In total, we re-coded the data in their entirety three times, before we could theorize on the relationship between the core theoretical constructs we had identified: organizational dualities inherent in the venture, volunteers' experiences of such organizational dualities, and the entrepreneurs' duality-management practices.

Building on our analysis, the following section on our findings shows *how* entrepreneurs apply practices in order to manage volunteers' experiences of organizational duality and subsequently build and maintain volunteers' emotional connectivity to the venture. We add two ethnographic vignettes (Jennings et al., 2015; Van Maanen, 2011) to substantiate our main findings, suggesting that entrepreneurs' practices that are able to increase the emotional connectivity of volunteers do in fact foster their ventures' volunteer retention.

Findings

Our findings suggest that building the emotional connectivity of volunteers to a prosocial venture is decisive for achieving volunteer retention. Our analysis demonstrates that emotional connectivity depends on the practices entrepreneurs undertake to manage conflicting organizational duality orientations and volunteers' experiences thereof. A first set of practices identified in our analysis refers to *emotion-focused practices*. Emotion-focused practices address affective responses to conflicting duality poles and are intended to alleviate negative experiences in order to support the development and maintenance of an individual volunteer's basic emotional connectivity to a venture. In contrast, the second set of practices focuses on

Table 4. Illustrative Data for Duality-Management Practices.

Theoretical subcategory	Theme	Illustrative data example with first-order code
Duality-focused practice	Avoidance	"Moreover, we also had to give up the building of photovoltaic plants, because after the fifth energy bill, the incentives changed and now it is no longer convenient to use our facilities as we did." **(Distraction)**
		When one member noticed tensions between the nursery owner and the entrepreneurs regarding the venture-development course, she asked for a personal clarification meeting, but they calmed her down and postponed the topic until the next general meeting. *Field note* **(Postponing)**
		When the nursery owner started communicating his idea of a legal collaboration with the cooperative, the entrepreneurs were not seen for several days, as they worked privately on a future plan. The team responsible for packing the veggie boxes noticed the absence of the entrepreneurs, but continued their work as usual. *Field note* **(Suppressing action)**
		Regarding the conflict between post-growth approach that many members fancy and the fast-growth approach of the entrepreneurs, a volunteer explains that "*the growth has to be viewed differently at Foodage, only until a certain economic saturation has been reached, not for the sake of it.*" I notice that escaping a decision on defining the type of 'growth' satisfies all different opinions. *Field note* **(Escape a decision)**
	Compromise	"*The cooperative wants to promote and respect ethical values but we must stay in the market*" **(Integrating both duality poles)**
		"*If our needs are not met, then we cannot even start to do it. It starts off with a certain financial situation, so I simply have to make some money. I cannot say - I'm altruistic and I want to save the world and that's why I do it - then I will be starving and cannot afford a place to live or clothes to wear and so on - so I must therefore make money. In addition, it must be feasible with regard to time, because such a project quickly takes up to 80-100 hours a week if you don't pay attention. And that doesn't work.*" **(Balancing poles)**
		"*Many people out of my business environment said: you have to think of it like a start-up! Now you must be really entrepreneurial and do just as a start-up would do: go and get you some investors. . .. [No] this thing has to work in such a way that it records numbers in black right from the beginning. With the restriction that we [the entrepreneurs] have worked for a year on a voluntary basis.*" **(Temporal trade-off)**
		"*We could improve by having more employees with permanent contracts and fewer mini-jobbers. However, the concept of mini-jobs fits ideally with the people who are doing this right now. They would not want to be hired permanently since they are still at university or just finished their studies and find themselves in a period of transition in life. So, from our point of view, that fits very, very perfectly and in our opinion, it's not morally wrong. But in the long run it's our claim to create regular jobs.*" **(Considering strength of each pole)**
	Dominance	"*We have established strict thresholds about how to work and about which technology to utilise, developing an ethical code*" **(Prioritizing)**
		"*Lately we also focused on small wind turbines [<60kW], we have three sites developing in the province of Trapani, there the winds are faster. We must overcome a number of difficulties that have occurred, related to municipal permits and some requirements that the municipality has not asked at the first time.*" **(Leaning towards one duality pole)**

(continued)

Table 4. Continued

Theoretical subcategory	Theme	Illustrative data example with first-order code
Emotion-focused practice	Energizing	The conflict to grow with the partner nursery would have resulted in changing the operational principles. The entrepreneurs decided to switch their operational site in order to continue accepting as many volunteers as wanted and to conduct activities in-house. *Field note* **(Temporarily excluding one pole)**
		"It's trivial at first glance, you say: come on, you get a veggie crate from us, but you deeply intervene with people's course of life, with familial processes, with personal preferences, with education with regard to parents and children – so you have to be careful." **(Light patronising)**
		"If we manage to convince a conventional farm to switch to organic farming, that would be impact!" **(Convincing)**
		Simon thanks one of the members for the case report she had written for his conference presentation in Bulgaria. He gave the keynote speech and Foodage was the only CSA project present at the conference. He praises the 3-day event as having been fantastic. He sensed an atmosphere of departure regarding the Foodage project. *Field note* **(Sharing exciting feedback)**
		Due to the complicated proposed cooperation with a partner nursery, the entrepreneurs organized a trip to another nursery to motivate volunteers to stay engaged and envision a better future for Foodage. *Field note* **(Stimulating positive attitude)**
		"We get a lot of attention and consideration from all possible directions. A tiny example, the interview we are doing now, so we are in this European study. But something like that happens all the time and we are invited to dozens of events and are in very, very many reference works." **(Communicate external validation)**
	Dissociating	Anna, a volunteer, explains that the founders are very different personalities with different priorities, but they work well as a team as long as they project their tensions towards an external enemy. *Field note* **(Scapegoat)**
		"We do it to provide a large number of households with meaningful, reasonable, regional and organic supply structure." **(Creating meaning)**
		The entrepreneurs share their own frustration in collaborating with one partner organization, which provides the members with the opportunity to project their own emotions towards the external 'enemy'. *Field note* **(Creating an external enemy)**
		When members complain about the tensions arising from the large intake of new volunteers, the entrepreneur shares his experience that *"in such projects and cooperative ventures, 90% are passive, 9% active and 1% hardcore active. That's the case everywhere."* **(Defining what's normal)**
	Perspective-taking	When a member explains that both the Facebook page and the official blog of the cooperative are too political, during a member meeting they let her explain her frustration as long as she wants to. *Field note* **(Letting everybody speak)**
		Simi tells that one of the entrepreneurs has sent her a private message responding to her online forum post, questioning why she would be so

(continued)

Table 4. Continued

| Theoretical subcategory	Theme	Illustrative data example with first-order code
		upset and operate against the cause of the venture. *Field note* **(Direct confrontation)**
		The entrepreneurs invited a small group of core members to a private meeting, where everybody could share their negative experiences from the last few weeks. This opportunity was appreciated by most of the members present, who shared in detail their frustrations. *Field note* **(Hearing people out)**
		"The motivation or the image changed as I said before. In the beginning, it was more out of this perspective of crisis. How do you deal with future crisis, this longing for land, to understand how works a tomato? And now we are market participant. We are doing great. And basically, we are as Niko Paech says: So I am feeling quite comfortable right now. It's not any more about, I am frightened of an upcoming crisis" **(Less stress)**
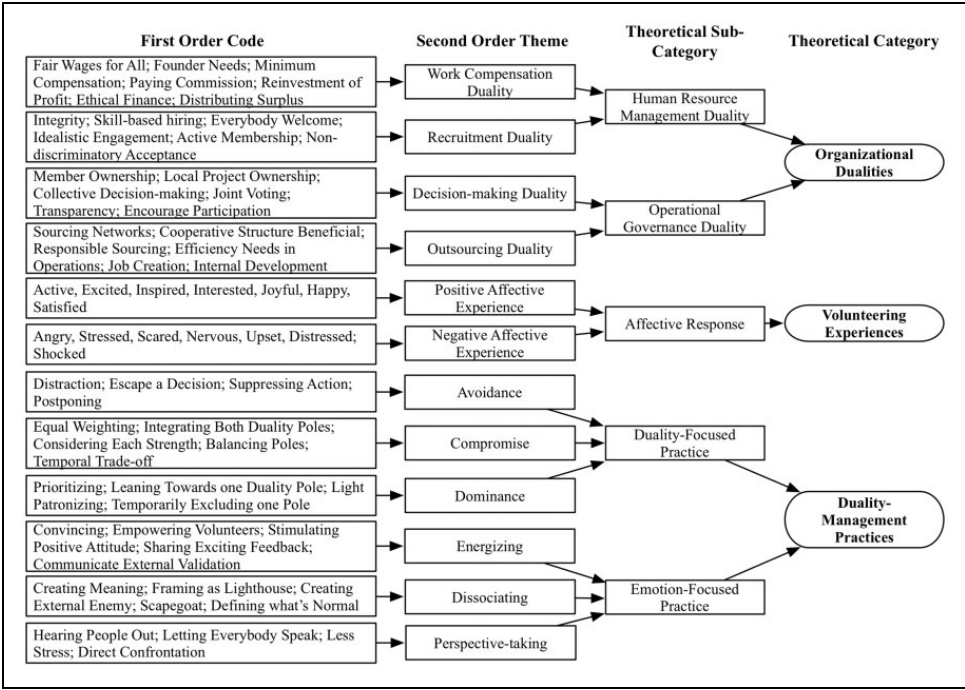
Figure 1. Data structure.

resolving a conflict or problem inherent in opposing duality orientations, which we refer to as *duality-focused practices*. These practices aim to resolve tensions and conflicts as they arise in order to develop complementarities and create positive volunteering experiences. Duality-focused practices have the potential to foster a stronger emotional connectivity between

volunteers and the venture, because such practices align personal motivations with the venture's mission, thus turning personal issues into collective, shared concerns.

Emotion-Focused Practices Strengthening Volunteers' Attachment

Our analysis identifies three emotion-focused practices to be highly relevant for the management of volunteer experiences: energizing, dissociating and perspective-taking. All four prosocial enterprises in our study demonstrated organizational ambivalence—that is, the simultaneous pursuit of economic, social, and ecological value creation—to be desirable to the extent that opposing orientations are complementary rather than contradictory. However, our findings show also that it is challenging for prosocial ventures to implement their operational governance and human resource management processes in a complementary manner, as for instance illustrated by one of Foodage's co-founders when explaining tensions that emerge from the initial volunteer demographic:

> We have 30- to 40-year-old university graduates with good jobs. This is our main audience in [Foodage], but we do not have any migrants yet. But they should be there as we want a cross section of the population to have a healthy community and not for it to be an elitist thing. (Foodage-Entrepreneur #1 [henceforth E1])

Against this backdrop, our analysis suggests that entrepreneurs required three emotion-focused practices to help address volunteers' negative affective responses stemming from the difficulty of implementing a duality-prone prosocial venturing design. In particular, an *energizing* practice refers to inducing excitement and enthusiasm (Jasper, 2011) for the aversive feelings which arise from experiencing organizational duality. Energizing contains elements of visualization as well as ritualized interaction that play an important role in fostering venture engagement among volunteers, as one entrepreneur emphasized:

> You have to motivate core volunteer members of the community because they are going to help the community a lot, they are going to support it, they are going to participate in community activities, and once the community is there, there are more and more activities together, like visits to farms, special events, and special produce tastings. So, it's starting to be like a community place in a neighbourhood but an easy one without too many constraints. (Foody-E2)

The entrepreneurs in our study commonly applied energizing to foster volunteers' positive sentiments for the prosocial venture by visualizing the novelty and meaningfulness of sustainable production and consumption. For example, when Enerclean faced the governance challenge of implementing a greater number of decentralized, ecologically more responsible photovoltaic plants on roofs instead of the large-scale systems on farming ground that would generate higher economic returns, the entrepreneurs visualized the venture's long-term goal as follows:

> Clearly we were intrigued by the idea of starting something totally new... we wanted more than just a photovoltaic plant, and instead a new energy management system. This decision represented a step forward from the idea of simply producing energy from renewable sources... always trying to use methods respecting things, people and the environment, with an ethical approach. (Enerclean-E1)

Furthermore, energizing often occurred face-to-face through ritualized interactions, such as joint harvesting, monthly membership meetings, and democratic voting. For instance,

entrepreneurs at Foodage persuaded volunteers to bring their families to educational days on sustainable consumption as well as to organized workshops on sustainable gardening techniques. Likewise, the entrepreneurs at Foody stressed that energizing volunteers can be more important than resolving the challenge of duality: "Sometimes we were not focusing on what was going to work, we were not giving as much importance to that. Instead you had to have really efficient people, and really motivated people" (Foody-E2). As a result, they stimulated volunteers to join and support community hosts to organize visits to farms and special produce tastings, as appreciated by this volunteer: "Joining a cooperative is a great opportunity to play a part in change for a better world...and then I also have the feeling to achieve something, when you are in a group you can naturally infect each other with the euphoria of improving" (Foody-V2).

In turn, *dissociating* refers to practices that transfer conflicting attributes or feelings into a repository of aversive feelings (Lazarus, 2006) which arise from experiencing organizational duality. Owing to venture goal plurality, a member experiencing displeasure is a recurrent threat, for instance, when a democratic vote overrules a volunteer's opinion. For example, Foodage's inability to source all produce from one particular local farmer—that is, a situation reflecting an outsourcing duality—caused severe displeasure among volunteers. "The initial euphoria had faded... I noticed for myself that I simply felt that responsible sourcing is such a huge challenge, and perhaps it would be better for Foodage and myself to take different routes, because it feels so energy-sapping" (Foodage-V7). This required the entrepreneurs to dissociate the negative feelings of some of the volunteers by creating greater social meaning:

> You have to look out where you get your raw materials from, how you organise your production ... That's a discussion we had internally with our comrades [volunteers] and gardeners last year in spring. They said: 'hey guys, the way you are doing it, that's not really good because, from the gardeners' perspective, you don't cover 100 per cent of their needs'. And then we said: 'yes, that's correct, we don't do that in order to have community-supported agriculture and to have a nursery. We do it to provide a large number of households with a meaningful, regional, organic supply structure, and we start with vegetables!' (Foodage-E1)

Dissociation facilitates members' future identification with the greater prosocial cause by portraying the negative experience as merely a small loss or possibly a necessary evil. At the same time, practising dissociation creates an alternative, positive identification space into which to project feelings, such as the venture-as-lighthouse example that inspires other initiatives (cf. Table 4). Dissociating works as long as it helps to defend core principles, as one of Enerclean's co-founders clarifies with regard to its members, who are also shareholders of the company:

> Having a bottom-up model in which all members have the right to vote helps a lot. We have taken a niche of extremely demanding shareholders who have no problem if you tell them 'look this year we will give you very low interest rates' or 'this year we do not have the option to remunerate the capital'. But if you promote projects that are not up to their standards they don't forgive you and you seriously risk losing them. (Enerclean-V2)

Perspective-taking is a practice that places an individual in another person's position (Graziano et al., 2007), and thereby engages in the individual's aversive feelings that arise from experiencing organizational duality. The negative affective experience, which occurs in response to conflicting duality orientations, potentially jeopardizes the overall volunteering experience. For instance, "it is [the entrepreneurs] who absolutely want this...and the

idealistic members are really frustrated about it getting bigger, and because their ideas could not be implemented" (Foodage-V2). Thus, to alleviate tensions, the entrepreneurs at Foodage organized an extraordinary general meeting in order to understand the situation from their memberships' point of view, and to convey that a new partner nursery would be even more in line with the enterprise's communal spirit as it belonged to an association that worked with disabled people. Likewise, at Foody, Enersol, and Enerclean, the entrepreneurs organize frequent member meetings to provide a setting in which volunteers could share conflict experiences and release their feelings of stress:

> I am quite angry because sometimes our entrepreneurs have a mind-set like 'I give the money to the cooperative and then I will eventually get a return of capital', but to me it is important that my savings are used for ethical activities, that's why I joined the enterprise. Just recently, we had an internal discussion and afterwards I felt that they do listen and are willing to take account of our voices; so that's good. (Enerclean-V3)

In sum, our findings show that prosocial entrepreneurs apply emotion-focused practices of energizing, dissociating, and perspective-taking in order to secure volunteers' emotional attachment to the venture's mission. Hence, without directly altering the organization's design, entrepreneurs' emotion-focused practices emphasize the amelioration of negative volunteering experiences, which is crucial for forming and maintaining a basic emotional connectivity between volunteers and the existing structures of a prosocial enterprise. We label such basic emotional connectivity *emotional attachment* (Kibler, Fink, Lang, & Muñoz, 2015). To present an empirical illustration of how emotional attachment is formed and maintained, the following Enerclean vignette portrays the emotion-focused practice of dissociating, in response to volunteers' negative affective experiences which result from decision-making duality.

Vignette I: Perspective-Taking and Dissociating Practice to Manage Affective Experiences at Enerclean. Marco, one of the co-founders of Enerclean, invites me to a member's meeting that he expects to be tense. The meeting is about a proposal to build a 260-kW photovoltaic (PV) plant that is cost-effective and easy to deploy, something he believes would be a good investment. "If one person alone cannot build his own plant, maybe creating a group of people interested in producing energy from PV systems enables each one to hit the target," he says. This was the philosophy that had initially led him to co-found the Enerclean cooperative in 2007. At that time, the cooperative established democratic decision-making principles, which require Marco to present convincing arguments in order to collect member votes on any proposal. As I enter the meeting, I can feel the emotional energy and tension provoked by this topic.

Many members are upset about building the PV plant directly on the designated land, "especially in their area where the soil is virgin and very fertile." A member gets up and expresses his anger: "This is not what I signed up for when joining Enerclean!" Some members argue that the cooperative's philosophy involves only the construction of small plants (on roofs), because large plants compete with food production. The proponents argue that an installation capable of producing 260 kW is a medium-sized plant, a situation which is consistent with the philosophy of the cooperative: "this system would allow the cooperative more breathing space in terms of financial sustainability."

Marco is concerned about the negative atmosphere developing in the room and shifts the attention towards members' emotions. He allows everybody to speak up, which serves to release some of the emotional tension. Aware that a plant can be developed in several different ways, and more or less in alignment with members' ethical considerations, he emphasizes Enerclean's values. By the time that the discussion with the cooperative's members ends,

Enerclean has committed to a Code of Ethics that states, among other principles, that "Enerclean does not believe in photovoltaic systems placed on the ground because they deprive the soil of trees or other crops" (Paragraph 3) and, "Enerclean does not believe in big renewable-energy installations that foster the concentration of energy and that are potentially the most impactful on the environment" (Paragraph 5).

Marco's emotion-focused practices have resulted in a Code of Ethics charter, which strengthens members' emotional attachment to the cooperative. Simultaneously, it works as a projection screen for hopes and dreams, and in tense situations it helps volunteers to dissociate from the actual problem and direct their anger and frustration towards a scapegoat. For instance, Elena, who favors preserving the environment, mentions that she feels relieved and happy to be part of such an ethical, democratic organization. Nevertheless, the tension arising from the decision-making duality—that of a few expert members versus all members deciding—has not been addressed. In fact, the same tension reappears later, when the opportunity to build a wind energy plant in Puglia arises. Again, some members are in favor, for financial reasons, and others are against the plant because "in that area there's already been too much speculation and the impact on the environment would be too high."

Duality-Focused Practices Strengthening Volunteers' Loyalty

Regarding the management of conflicting orientations of organizational duality, our analysis provides evidence for three duality-focused practices: avoidance, compromise, and dominance. *Avoidance* refers to practices that move away from a particular duality, equating to a reduced focus on each duality orientation (Ashforth et al., 2014). A volunteer at Foodage mentions that she only became aware of a conflict in the decision-making process over the proposal to change the enterprise's partner nursery after she became an employee, because the founders had avoided to clearly state their opinion on the matter: "I was shocked, because I did not know the entire story before.... These issues are not discussed and communicated in the online forum. In my opinion, they perhaps should be, so that everyone is informed, because you do not want to scare off people when they find that there are so many conflicts in the process to take-over another nursery" (Foodage-V7). The founders chose to entirely avoid addressing the decision-making duality and, as a result, a revolt by volunteers was pre-empted, as noted later by a volunteer herself, because "most volunteers trust them [the entrepreneurs] blindly, and don't question anything" (Foodage-V4). Under such circumstances, avoidance helps to prevent an escalation.

The second duality-focused practice is that of *compromise*, which refers to practices that combine and integrate a particular duality, resembling equally moderate or strong focus on each duality orientation (Ashforth et al., 2014). Compromise appears to be the most common practice, and often chosen in order to avoid losing volunteers. An entrepreneur explains: "The cooperative wants to promote and respect ethical values but we must stay in the market" (Enerclean-E2). Another says: "We do have to remain market participants, we must operate economically for our cooperative households; but also we want to somehow be a movement that makes things different and that has the potential to think of things that are radically different" (Foody-E2). It follows that for reasons of productivity, Foody cannot easily outsource activities to partners. In sum, compromising offers a socially acceptable middle-ground approach to resolving organizational duality tensions.

The most deliberate and decisive duality practice is *dominance*. Dominance refers to practices that prioritize one duality orientation over another, and therefore resembles instigating a different approach to each duality orientation (Ashforth et al., 2014). Our findings reveal the presence of dominance when the entrepreneurs of Foodage chose to prioritize strengthening the enterprise's prosocial mission over its economic returns:

> Last year we failed and somehow missed the opportunity to create a common image and a common picture of the Foodage project. That led to conflicts here and there. We recaptured the ground lost by running through a very structured professional mission statement process with the help of our chairman, who contributes his incredible knowledge on a voluntary basis. And everybody was involved in this process and now we adopted this common image. (Foodage-E2)

His co-founder concurs:

> This mission-statement process we conducted internally last year was not quite free from conflict. It was very difficult and consumed very, very much energy. Out of that there arose some sensitivities and consequences that don't make it easier. I can feel a change among the dedicated members right now, but this is something typical that can be observed in many projects. (Foodage-E1)

Foody could have chosen to avoid the duality tension or to seek a compromise with the various interest groups, but instead it wanted to be absolutely clear about its mission and working principles. Hence, the entrepreneurs chose to reinforce one of the duality poles—the participatory decision-making mode of the enterprise. In sum, successful duality-focused practices form and develop a strong emotional connectivity between volunteers and the pro-social enterprise mission and vision; and this is what we label *emotional loyalty*. To present an empirical illustration of strengthening emotional loyalty, the following Enersol vignette describes a duality-focused practice—that of compromise—in response to grassroots volunteers' experiences of tensions over the sourcing of expert knowledge.

Vignette II: Compromise Practice Helps Resolve HR-Duality Tension at Enersol. "@Enersol and activism for renewables" was a tweet that caught our attention. In my first Enersol meeting, I immediately feel that I am surrounded by energy activists: from homemade patchwork t-shirts and the design of the cooperative's logo, to members defining themselves as part of a movement of civil disobedience. People even tell me that every member is frustrated with the energy system in Spain and feel that by joining Enersol they can actively contribute to societal change. "The relationship between government and big business is too cosy, which leads to decisions that are not in the interests of the country but in the interest of some of the big businesses, and we want this to stop," Gijsbert, the founder, explains to me. Nuri, the other co-founder, adds that "we are past 15,000 members; our social capital is around EUR 1.5 million"; but despite the large volunteering base, Enersol relies on contracts with experts in producing electricity and trading with the national grid.

The same meeting also sees a small team in charge of operations, all members of which receive a moderate salary, launch into debate with members of the large, unpaid volunteer base on how to add members without taking a large financial risk. When I quiz a volunteer standing nearby on his experiences, he says: "I'd rather work here…and let's see if my volunteer work can be turned into a paid job after a while." This particular volunteer enthusiastically explains that when unemployed he enjoys spending his time on doing something worthwhile. Dolor, a member of the governing council, tells me that the cooperative feels they are exploiting the formula for volunteer work to its utmost: "Members are eager to participate and learn…space needs to be made for each person to pursue their capacities and that space needs to be flexible. As the cooperative and the groups grow we'll need to start strengthening the structure but not impeding it."

In response to managing the organizational duality of hiring experts and integrating volunteers regardless of their skills, Enersol has developed a system where projects are initiated and managed in local groups. The entrepreneurs compromise in order to "focus on getting people involved" (Nuri) while occasionally hiring volunteers, which happened to the recently

employed volunteer I had just talked to, "getting an interesting job at the time was nearly impossible...in the end we were able to hire [him]" (Gijsbert). The compromise of having local, autonomous groups, from which volunteering members are occasionally hired to join the expert team, became part of the organizational structure.

The local-group system allows members to feel that they are part of a community of like-minded individuals, one in which every person contributes whatever they can. It is a system that strengthens the members' emotional loyalty to their peers, as well as to the organization as a whole. This is exemplified by a group of empowered volunteers who have built a portable solar panel with outlet plugs. The group attends concerts, festivals, and outdoor activities that offer free power to anyone who needs to charge their electronic devices; at the same time it raises awareness of Enersol. A volunteer explains: "The idea of collaboration of local groups, volunteers and committees was a thing that many people in the industry with a great deal of knowledge had never successfully implemented before."

Discussion

Our study clarifies the role of emotional connectivity for developing an understanding of volunteer retention in prosocial business venturing. Our analysis shows that entrepreneurs strengthen the emotional connectivity of volunteers by managing both the organizational dualities inherent in a prosocial venture's design and the volunteering members' experiences of the tensions that emerge from those dualities. In particular, we demonstrate how three emotion-focused practices—energizing, dissociating, and perspective-taking—help entrepreneurs to foster an emotional attachment to the venture among volunteers. Further, we provide novel evidence on how Ashforth et al.'s (2014) three duality-focused practices—avoidance, compromise, and domination—complement emotion-focused practices in sustaining volunteers' deeper emotional loyalty to a prosocial venture. Theorizing from our findings, we propose a *double-loop model* that explains entrepreneurs' emotion- and duality-focused practices that help to establish and enhance the emotional connectivity necessary to sustain volunteer retention (Figure 2).

Our first proposed loop rationalizes those practices of an entrepreneur that are intended to address the affective responses of volunteers, and thus to alleviate the tension they experience. In this loop, entrepreneurs do not yet address the situational problem which emerges from the
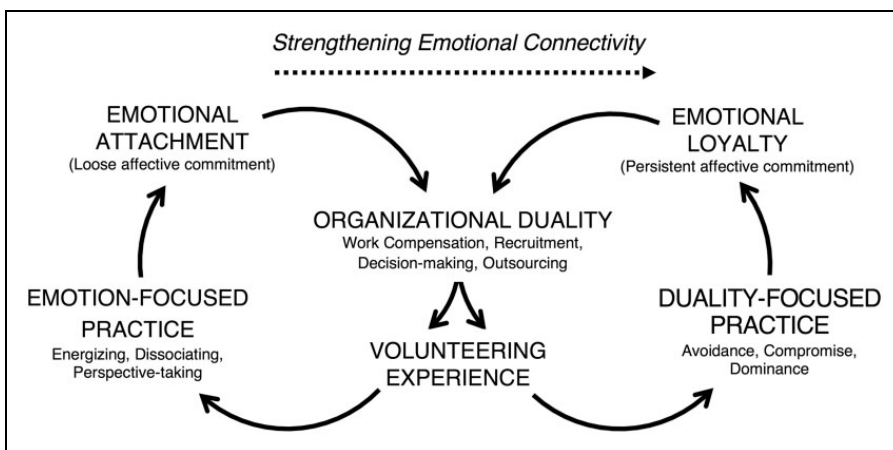

Figure 2. Double-loop model of managing volunteers' emotional connectivity in prosocial venturing.

conflicting organizational dualities inherent in prosocial ventures. Instead, through energizing, dissociating, and perspective-taking, the entrepreneurs emphasize a feel-good atmosphere, that in turn develops and maintains the volunteers' emotional attachment to the venture and its existing organizational structures and operations. The importance of members' positive affective experiences is accentuated in previous research which suggests that displeasure signals slow progress and thereby endangers the implementation of a joint mission (Breugst & Shepherd, 2017; Foo et al., 2009). In contrast, members who experience a pleasurable emotion are more likely to engage in or sustain collective action (Gooty, Gavin, & Ashkanasy, 2009; Russell & Feldman Barrett, 1999). *Emotional attachment* implies a basic emotional connectivity between volunteering members and the venture, reflecting a loose affective commitment that minimizes the risk that volunteers withdraw their labor. Through the application of emotion-focused practices, the initial excitement that motivates volunteer engagement is turned into a loose affective commitment (Jasper, 2011) describing volunteers' feelings of belonging to a prosocial venture (Jones & Massa, 2013) in such a way that "people simply trust that it will work sooner or later" (Enersol-E1). Hence, our study concludes that emotional attachment constitutes an important reason for volunteering members to remain committed to, and to actively engage with, the venture.

Our findings further demonstrate that forming an emotional attachment, that is, an attachment resulting from the active management of the volunteering experience, enables entrepreneurs to successfully apply duality-focused practices to induce a deeper emotional connectivity between volunteers and the enterprise. We suggest that emotional attachment fosters a loose affective commitment required to make a subsequent application of duality-focused practices more effective. This is because volunteers feel a sense of belonging in relation to the venture, which encourages them to have fewer reservations about fundamental adjustments to the venture's design and operations, and not to be more demanding. Therefore, the second proposed loop explains an entrepreneur's practices which are adopted with the intention of solving the actual problem that emerges from combining opposing orientations in the organizational design (Ashforth et al., 2014).

Duality-focused practices, in the form of balancing conflicting organizational dualities, complement emotion-focused practices to help develop volunteers' emotional loyalty to the enterprise. *Emotional loyalty* implies a deeper emotional connectivity based on a more persistent affective commitment with a prosocial venture, its practices and its members. Emotional loyalty has been defined as "relatively stable feelings, positive or negative, about others or about objects, such as love and hate, liking and disliking" (Jasper, 2011, p. 287). In the case of volunteer management in prosocial venturing, we propose that emotional loyalty builds on a long-term synchronization of personal and enterprise development plans, resulting in a strong identification with, and willingness to continue, volunteering for the venture: "after you have been part of a project where so many have put their heart and soul into it. You simply realise that you won't find this elsewhere" (Foodage-V8). The strength of such identification becomes most evident when "volunteering members speak of 'we' when they talk about the cooperative" (Enersol-E1). Hence, we suggest that emotional loyalty is a persistent affective commitment that serves as the connective tissue of members' strong identification with a prosocial enterprise. This study concludes that building up emotional loyalty is desirable and ultimately necessary in order to secure volunteer retention over a longer period of time.

Implications

To the best of our knowledge, the current research is the first empirical study of prosocial business venturing to draw on the theory of organizational ambivalence (Ashforth et al.,

2014) in order to advance our understanding of how prosocial entrepreneurs manage volunteer retention. The theory has been used to conceptualize duality-focused practices as representing an organization's management of organizational dualities, which are inherent in a venture's design, so as to minimize a workforce's negative experience arising from conflicting organizational dualities (Ashforth & Reingen, 2014). The main rationale is that duality-focused practices differ in terms of whether they constitute a low focus on each organizational duality orientation (*avoidance*), an equal or moderate (*compromise*) or a high focus (*holism*) on each duality orientation, or whether they prioritize one duality orientation over another (*dominance*). Accordingly, duality-focused practices offer important clues to grasping how organizations manage experiences of ambivalence by addressing organizational duality orientations inherent in the design of the venture. However, duality-practices do not tell us how situational affective experiences of ambivalence are addressed prior to the ability of an organization to implement an adjustment of opposing structures in their design and operations. Our findings clarify the role of relevant emotion-focused practices designed purely to manage individuals' negative affective responses to conflicting organizational dualities, and they demonstrate how duality- and emotion-focused practices complement each other even while differing in the outcomes that are produced. While emotion-focused practices are important for maintaining emotional attachment among members, duality-focused practices build on that emotional attachment and are crucial in prolonging the type of member engagement that is characterized by a strong emotional loyalty to the organization. Building on our findings, we generate implications for at least two important research domains in the prosocial venture literature, as explained in the following.

Implications for Research on Volunteerism in Prosocial Venturing

A key contribution of the prosocial venturing literature is to illustrate ventures' dual pursuit of social and economic orientations (O'Neil & Ucbasaran, 2016) and their management of the challenges stemming from stakeholder groups' prioritization of one goal, logic or value orientation (Battilana & Lee, 2014; Wry & York, 2017). Situated within this literature, our study focused on developing our understanding of an important yet under-explored stakeholder group: a prosocial venture's volunteering members (Austin et al., 2006; Doherty et al., 2014). It is commonly true that prosocial ventures cannot offer competitive salaries and therefore often require volunteers in order to compete in the social economy (Battilana & Dorado, 2010; Di Domenico et al., 2010). So far, however, entrepreneurship research has solely addressed the role of a venture's social mission in attracting volunteers (Austin et al., 2006; Haugh, 2007; Katre & Salipante, 2012; Markman et al., 2016) and falls short in explaining entrepreneurs' management of nonfinancial incentives which help to retain a diverse volunteering membership base (Doherty et al., 2014).

Against this backdrop, our study moves the focus from volunteer attraction to practices that support volunteer retention by offering novel evidence of how prosocial ventures manage both a hybrid venture design and volunteering experiences for the development of volunteers' emotional connectivity to the venture. In particular, we introduce a double-loop model comprising two sets of entrepreneurs' practices that strengthen the emotional connectivity of volunteers. First, we identify emotion-focused practices—*energizing, dissociating* and *perspective-taking*—that form volunteers' emotional attachment to the venture by addressing volunteers' negative affective responses to organizational duality. Second, we identify duality-focused practices, in the form of managing inherent organizational duality, which complement emotion-focused practices to foster volunteers' emotional loyalty to the venture. Accordingly, our study emphasizes the importance of commitment-enhancing practices (Rauch & Hatak, 2016) to support volunteer retention.

Moreover, our study informs the broader volunteer retention literature (Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013; Wilson, 2012) by developing the understanding of informal management practices that help address volunteer experiences in multi-purpose organizations (Hustinx & Handy, 2009; Schlesinger et al., 2013). Prior volunteer retention research has suggested that volunteers usually expect the core qualification for voluntary work to be their intrinsic desire to help (Haski-Leventhal & Cnaan, 2009; Kreutzer & Jäger, 2011) and that organizations therefore require skilful actors to manage personal experiences of a diverse volunteer membership base (Garner & Garner, 2011; Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013; Wilson, 2012). Our study expands that knowledge by defining different emotion-focused practices that entrepreneurs can apply to manage volunteers' affective responses and, through that, foster their emotional attachment to a prosocial venture. We suggest that these emotion-focused practices are important yet under-explored personalized management practices in the context of volunteer retention (Haski-Leventhal & Bargal, 2008; Stirling et al., 2011). They help to create an emotional attachment of volunteers, which serves as the foundation for effective, formalized management practices to foster volunteers' emotional loyalty to the organization. In conclusion, our study emphasizes the complex managerial challenges faced by prosocial businesses, which stem from the fact that unpaid volunteers have high ethical demands that must be met in order for such businesses to deserve their sustained engagement (Eckstein, 2001; Royce, 2007).

Nevertheless, we are aware that our study is but a first step towards developing the understanding of volunteer retention in prosocial business ventures. One way to expand our knowledge of the effectiveness of management practices would be to undertake a comparative analysis of practices addressing the plurality of perceptions and different emphases of social and economic value orientations among volunteer members. Such research could draw on the findings of O'Neil and Ucbasaran (2016) and proceed to examine how prosocial entrepreneurs succeed but also fail in acquiring and maintaining internal legitimacy, and what role the building of emotional connectivity plays in this process. It might well be that as members develop their emotional connectivity to the venture, they increasingly appreciate what it is that matters to the core entrepreneurial group. In the context of practices that enhance members' emotional loyalty, we would argue that entrepreneurs and their endeavors are increasingly taken for granted and, thereby, gradually acquire stronger internal legitimacy in the eyes of emotionally loyal members. In a similar vein, we suggest that combining our findings with insights from identity research (Fauchart & Gruber, 2011; Wry & York, 2017; York, O'Neil, & Sarasvathy, 2016) proffers another productive way to explore prosocial entrepreneurs' dominant identity type (e.g., Communitarians, Darwinians, or Missionaries) and its impact on the effectiveness of practices underpinning members' emotional connectivity. A further, intriguing line of inquiry lies in learning how entrepreneurs' practices motivate some volunteers more than others, and whether certain volunteering experiences can encourage (or discourage) volunteers to develop a strong entrepreneurial identity and, eventually, lead them to start (or, conversely, prevent them from starting) their own venture. In the course of the current research, we encountered numerous volunteers who considered taking the route to entrepreneurship themselves.

Implications for Researching Affective Commitment in Prosocial Venturing

Our study introduces the notion of emotional connectivity among members who voluntarily contribute to a prosocial venturing pursuit. We explain emotional connectivity based on two forms of affective commitment, which reflect volunteering members' emotional attachment—a form of *loose* affective commitment—and emotional loyalty—a form of persistent affective

commitment to the venture. Affective commitment is commonly defined as feelings of belonging to an organization (e.g., love, pride, and admiration) (Bogaert, Boone, & van Witteloostuijn, 2012; Grant, 2007; Jasper, 2011) and therefore emphasized as an important source of venture engagement for both entrepreneurs and employees (Breugst et al., 2012; Cardon, Post, & Forster, 2017; Shepherd, Patzelt, & Wolfe, 2011). To date, research on prosocial ventures has largely focused on entrepreneurs' affective commitment to their venture without specifying the role of affective commitment among venture members (Renko, 2013). Hence, we expand the investigative focus to include the affective commitment of a venture's members by showing how volunteers become affectively committed through direct exposure to the practices of prosocial entrepreneurs. In particular, our findings suggest that emotionally attached volunteer members are likely to critically evaluate the prosocial venture's activities in light of their own intrinsic ethical motives for engagement. In contrast, volunteers who exhibit emotional loyalty question the venture's practices to a lesser extent, because they are already emotionally vested and, thus, no longer search for reasons that could legitimize their unpaid engagement. Following from this significant insight, we conclude that members with loose affective commitment more readily withdraw their labor than do members with persistent affective commitment, even when cases arise in which personal and venture objectives begin to deviate.

Building on our insights, we see several ways in which to advance the emerging line of research on members' affective commitment to a prosocial venture. First, we identify a need to complement our current understanding of emotional connectivity as a positive emotional construct with an investigation of negative affective commitments. Such negative affective commitments might include ''shame'' as a feeling of a general, moral inadequacy (e.g., poverty or hunger) and not just as a reflex emotion in response to, for instance, physical intimidation in a venturing situation. Another fruitful avenue of exploration involves studying members' emotional loyalty to a subgroup in a prosocial venture; and how various group climates strengthen or clash with other members' emotional connectivity. A friendship that may motivate a person's sustained engagement could at the same time hinder initiatives designed to broaden participation (Jasper, 2011) and decrease the effectiveness of general commitment-enhancing practices (Rauch & Hatak, 2016). Finally, insight could be gleaned from knowing more about the intersection of a persistent affective commitment and the collective identification processes of members with an organization. In social movements, the emergence of a collective identification has been attributed to members' acquisition of emotional loyalty to a particular group (Polletta & Jasper, 2001)—a dynamic that may or may not occur similarly in a venturing context.

Concluding Remarks

Prior entrepreneurship research emphasizes the importance of attracting volunteers for prosocial ventures. Despite some existing conceptual work on volunteer attraction, we know very little about how prosocial ventures manage volunteer retention. By embedding the current research in the theory of organizational ambivalence, we tackle this dearth by examining entrepreneurs' practices in managing relationships with volunteering members. Our analysis identifies critical organizational dualities—competing orientations that arise from venture design—and demonstrates how those duality challenges require both duality-focused practices that address inherent organizational duality as well as emotion-focused practices that involve addressing volunteering experiences in strengthening the emotional connectivity of volunteers to the venture. Building on our findings, we introduce a double-loop model which suggests that emotion-focused practices

foster members' emotional attachment; and, moreover, that duality-focused practices help transform emotional attachment into a persistent affective commitment, thereby resulting in the development of members' emotional loyalty to the venture. In conclusion, we believe that this work will prompt further scholarly scrutiny of the role of emotional connectivity in the context of prosocial ventures and, more generally, of how entrepreneurs sustain active participation among volunteer members in prosocial ventures.

Note

1. The research project consisted of examining six prosocial venture cases. Originally, we excluded one venture case because its industry context (housing) was not comparable with the other cases' industry contexts (two energy cases, three food cases). In order to create a heterogeneous sample for the analysis (Santos & Eisenhardt, 2009), we then selected two cases from the energy industry and two cases from the food industry. Following changes in our analytical focus, we replaced one food case because it offered insufficient data on volunteering members.

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