Performing a myth to make a market:

The construction of the 'magical world' of Santa

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Abstract

If you believe in Santa, do not read this paper. Through an in-depth, qualitative, empirical study, we follow the Santa myth to a remote northern location in Lapland, Finland where, for 1 month a year, multiple actors come together to create a tourist market offering: the chance to visit Santa in his 'magical world'. We explore how the myth is transformed into reality through performative, organisational speech acts, whereby felicitous conditions for the performance of visits to Santa are embedded in a complex socio-material network. We develop the performative turn (Gond et al., 2016) in organisational studies by introducing a new category of speech act, 'translocution', a compendium of imagining, discussing, proposing, negotiating, and contracting that transforms the myth into a model of an imaginary-real world. Through translocutionary acts, actors calculate, organise the socio-material networks of the market, and manage the considerable uncertainty inherent in its operation. Details of the myth become market facts, while commercial constructs fade into the imaginary. The result, when felicitous conditions are achieved, is a 'Merry Christmas' of magical, performative power.

Keywords Myth, performativity, speech act, market, Santa Claus, imaginary-real, translocution

Introduction

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, a myth is 'a traditional story, typically involving supernatural beings or forces, which embodies and provides an explanation, aetiology, or justification for something such as the early history of a society, a religious belief or ritual, or a natural phenomenon'. Such stories (Boje, Fedor, & Rowland, 1982; Gabriel, 2004; Hopkinson & Hogarth-Scott, 2001) have important functions, not only in societies, but also in organisational life (Bowles, 1989, 1997). 'Myths and fairy tales are retold and reused in popular culture, including the culture of management. What is more, popular culture shapes and influences everyday practices, including practices of organizing' (Czarniawska, 2004a, p.viii). Organisations have folkloristic and mythological qualities, including recipes, rituals, ceremonies, and legends (Gabriel, 2004); myths have the power to give meaning to and legitimise organisational activities, relations, and roles (e.g. Boje et al., 1982; Bowles, 1989, 1997; Brown, 1994; Filby & Willmott, 1988).

We explore the myth of Santa Claus, which, believed or not, has clear organisational import (Cluley, 2011; Hancock & Rehn, 2011) as shops across the Western world use the Santa myth to create an annual festival of shopping during the Christmas period to promote a range of products (Thompson & Hickey, 1989; Miller, 1993). The myth describes a portly, joyous, white-bearded man who wears a red suit with a white collar and cuffs and a black leather belt and boots; on Christmas Eve, he flies around the globe on a magic sleigh pulled by reindeer with a sack of gifts that he secretly delivers to

good children. Our purpose is to inquire into the performative power of this myth as it sustains and organises a market in which British tourists travel to visit Santa at his 'home' in Finland for a single day, flying an eight-hour return trip. The myth of Santa provides the 'frame' required to structure and organise the market, which is active for just 1 month each year, and enables actors to cope with the very considerable organisational complexities of dealing with large numbers of visitors, tight timescales, and many uncertainties, particularly weather. Our contributions are twofold: we empirically link a myth (conceptualised as a locution created through a second-order semiological system; Barthes, 1972) to a market, and offer 'translocution' as a new analytic category to account for the laborious organisational process of talking myth into a series of 'magical' performatives. Doing so reveals how accounts of performativity may shed critical light on late capitalism's capacity to create value out of the most ephemeral of resource, myth.

In previous research, organisation theorists have highlighted the subjective, emotional and imaginary content of myths in organisational work. Levi-Strauss (1968) argued that myths must be told to be known, their substance lying in their stories; myths incorporate a collective nature of sharing and telling of events, but do not correspond directly to an external reality (Hopkinson & Hogarth-Scott, 2001). Despite their lack of evidence (Starbuck, 2007), myths retain the power to influence our actions and thoughts (Fraher & Gabriel, 2014). Filby and Willmott (1988) rejected a restrictive conceptualisation which distinguishes the concrete and rational non-mythical from the

abstract and emotive mythical. Drawing on Campbell (1988, p.3), Kostera (2008) emphasised how myth may be 'true' for human experience and consciousness and 'untrue' in terms of empirical history. Myth 'organizes a world which is without contradictions because it is a world without depth, a world wide open and wallowing in the evident, it establishes a blissful clarity: things appear to mean something by themselves' (Barthes, 1972, p.143). Often, people realise that 'the myth is unreal, yet play along with it' (Thompson & Hickey, 1989, p. 372); actors act as if the 'myth is a reality in order for the ideology of the market to function' (Fleming & Spicer, 2005, p.191).

Myths can provide informal guidelines for action in uncertain conditions with ambiguous and contradictory information, thus structuring the actions and intentions of individuals (Brown, 1994). Cultural myths act as tools of institutional work, purifying and rendering specific versions of reality 'innocent' and 'natural' (see Barthes, 1972; Brown et al., 2012). Myths permeate organisational life; real fiction dramas such as *The Wire* (Holt & Zundel, 2014), animated films such as *Antz* (Islam, 2009), and mythic narratives such as *Harry Potter* resonate in people's lives and augment understandings of management and leadership (Moxnes & Moxnes, 2016), where 'the imaginative effort of storytelling is able to create abstractions whose power lies not with their general applicability but their capacity to crystalize and accentuate meaningful experience' (Holt & Zundel, 2014, p. 580).

Myths, it seems, appear in organisation studies as ideological frameworks or discursive imaginaries; they may be considered self-fulfilling only to a point, defeated by mundane existence and empirical history. Yet Islam (2009, p. 834) suggested that myths may be used 'as models of reality':

> if social realities are in large part the outcomes of collectively held beliefs, and thus if social myths recursively act to create the realities that created them (cf. Searle, 1995), then there may be more to such myths than illusion and ideology.

We consider how, as a model of reality (see Islam, 2009), myth becomes materialised, organised, and performed into markets.

Following the 'performative turn' in organisation studies (Gond, Cabantous, Harding, & Learmonth, 2016), we examine how a myth is performed in the socio-material networks constituting a market; we understand the market, like any organization, as comprising a sustained choreography that spans speech, sociality, and the robustly material (Çalışkan & Callon, 2010). At its most successful, the experience is entirely 'magical', and the real work of organisation fades into the background. Following Austin's (1978) account of performative speech developed by Callon (1998) and others, we suggest that Santa bellowing 'Merry Christmas' is an illocutionary speech act (bringing a world into being as it is said), but that its 'magic' depends upon a network of perlocutionary acts, each embedded in the socio-material network of the market. Where Callon (1998) and others have described market assemblies as 'socio-technical assemblages' or 'actor networks', we find the simple descriptor 'material' better describes

the solid artefacts that confront Santa's organizers. Above all, we suggest that the translation of the myth into market calculations requires a constant, year-round, historically contingent process involving what we call 'translocutionary' speech acts. These translocutions, essential to market performation, are a compendium of imagining, discussing, proposing, negotiating, and contracting, that model the imaginary-real-world socio-materiality and in so doing, put the myth into action. Barthes (1972) understood mythology as a derivative, 'second-order' semiological system: myth serves as a reservoir of meaning and signs—a 'tamed richness'—that can be simultaneously embraced and ignored. This theory helps explain the magic of performativity in this particular tourist market, which is much more than the sum of its parts. In this magical expansion comes opportunity for profit, a moment of arbitrage for local entrepreneurs.

Yet these careful performances sometimes misfire and overflow: the weather is atypical, a family is lost, or Santa is disappointing. The materiality of the network may prove simply too intransigent, but material actors, constantly in flux, offer certain courses of action, just as they preclude others. Guided by the myth, agents can adjust or even rebuild socio-material networks, thereby reframing misfires and enabling additional opportunities for profit to emerge. Our study therefore contributes to the expanding literature on the organisation of markets (Ahrne, Aspers, & Brunsson, 2015), with a focus on the role of myth as a performative device. We critically engage with performativity research in organization studies, by drawing attention to the creation of economic value

(i.e., capitalisation; Muniesa et al., 2017) from the raw materials of myth and story, which enables us to trace the genealogy of economisation (Boldyrev & Svetlova, 2016) by unmasking taken-for-granted assumptions about how entrepreneurial actors realise value in a new market.

First, we use the analytic lens of performativity (Callon, 1998) to consider the role of myth in the organisation of markets. Then, we describe the empirical case and our data collection and analysis techniques. In our empirical analysis, we explore the processes of performation that have facilitated the myth's imbrication into a complex, physical marketplace in northern Finland. We examine the contingency, context, and historicity in the situating of Santa; and investigate misfires and overflows related to meeting Santa. We discuss the importance of myth as a performative device for organisation studies before offering some concluding remarks.

The organisation of markets, performativity, and myth

Organisational scholars have become increasingly interested in markets, both as organised and organising devices (see recent contributions in this journal, e.g. Ahrne et al., 2015; McKague, Zietsma, & Oliver, 2015). Ahrne et al. (2015, p. 9) noted that 'markets do not emerge out of a vacuum', highlighting the organisational work that must take place before they can function. Markets, like organisations, are structured by rules, membership, monitoring, sanctions, and hierarchy. These characteristics have long been

recognised by sociologists of markets (Fligstein & Dauter, 2007), manifested, for example, in the various social codes and market practices of financial market pit traders (Baker, 1984; MacKenzie, 2009) and garment manufacturers (Uzzi, 1996). Such findings anticipate McKague et al.'s (2015, p.1066) claim that, contrary to the assumptions of economic theory, 'creating the social structure of the market preceded and enabled a more efficient economic market'. McKague et al.'s assertion that empirical studies of markets are 'scant', at least in the context of organisation studies, serves as a rallying cry for researchers to engage the flourishing literature of the 'social studies of markets' (Mason, Kjellberg, & Hagberg, 2015; McFall & Ossandon, 2014).

Theoretically, we draw on performativity (Callon, 1998), which offers organisational studies great 'heuristic reach and generative properties' (Gond et al., 2016, p.453). Empirically, we derive analytic power from 'Barnesian' performativity (MacKenzie, 2006, p.66), the phenomenon by which theories or models begin to shape the world in their own images. For scholars following this 'performative turn' (Gond et al., 2016, p.440) in organisation and management theory, organisations are performed into being; they come to be through recursive and citational discursive and socio-material practices that blur boundaries between human and nonhuman agency. Performativity scholarship contests the hegemony of pure discourse in organisational analysis, seeking instead to understand construction of organisations as a performance, an 'ongoing journey' (Garud, Gehman, & Tharchen, 2017, p.1). For Callon (2007, p.330) this ongoing

journey or 'performation', in which sociotechnical enactment constitutes 'an ecological niche within and between which statements and models circulate and are true or at least enjoy a high degree of verisimilitude,' determines performativity. Yet this process is far from straightforward. Some performances succeed, while others overflow and misfire (Callon, 2010): human actors, decentred from the account, wrestle with the constraints of materiality and their own agency, now 'perceived as a technically framed and performed interaction' (Vosselman, 2014, p.183).

Organisational scholars examine the messiness and unpredictability of the organisational work involved in market-making. For example, D'Adderio and Pollock (2014) showed how the management theory of 'modularity' is translated into socio-material networks and thus performs a particular kind of 'modular organisation'. Cabantous, Gond, and Johnson-Cramer (2010) explored how rational choice theory is performed in organisations, drawing attention to the socio-technical architecture and bricolage required to make rational choices emerge in practice. Roscoe and Chillas (2014) viewed economised conceptions of relationships inscribed in questionnaires, databases, and algorithmic matching protocols as structuring the matchmaking of online dating sites. Performativity theory also has offered insights into the organisation of industrial marketplaces, via two-by-two matrices (Pollock & D'Adderio, 2012) or the circulation of business models (Doganova & Eyquem-Renault, 2009; Mason & Spring, 2011). Most recently, scholars have focused on the performative nature of strategy, as managers or

entrepreneurs engage with the rituals and journeys of organising (van den Ende & van Marrewijk, 2017; Garud et al., 2017). Performativity therefore concerns both the 'routine reproduction of social phenomena and creation of new social facts' (Boldyrev & Svetlova, 2016, p.15). As such, it presents opportunities to explore the role of narratives and myths in shaping the organisation of markets, and explain the calculation of collaborations, value or offerings that constitute them.

Barthes (1972) considered the study of mythology to be an exercise in the study of speech, emphasising that 'language needs special conditions in order to become myth' (p.131); first and foremost, 'myth is a system of communication' (p. 131) that can take many forms, for 'any material can arbitrarily be endowed with meaning' (p. 110). A myth is not an object, a concept, or an idea (signified), but a form and a mode of signification; mythology is the study of ideas-in-form. 'Myth is not defined by the object of its message, but by the way in which it utters this message: there are formal limits to myth, there are no "substantial" ones' (Barthes, 1972, p.131). We use Barthes' notion of myth as ideas-in-form to unpack the work involved in building a market out of a myth. Understanding the role of myth illuminates the performative construction of new social facts via the simultaneous production and consumption of a myth-discourse in form. Our interest should not be tied to 'speaking under given, already institutionalized conditions of felicity, but about the creation of those conditions through persuasion and making believe' (Boldyrev & Svetlova, 2016, p.15). Performativity is often a site of boundary

work: contests between narratives depend both on the material accountability of claims presented, and on how they enrol supporting actors and their own narratives (Geiger & Finch, 2015).

Performativity scholarship can help us further understand organizations as the product of contested and uncertain socio-material processes, as continually becoming, enacted semiological systems (Barley, 1983; Boje, 1991). This requires focussing on the messy complexities involved in working out a 'performation'. What are the framings, overflows and reframings (Callon, 1998) needed to make the market function, and how might these provide additional opportunities for action (Garud et al., 2017)? Discussing the performative use of stories and storytelling as strategic interventions in organizations, Gabriel (2004) argued that good stories have much more potential to 'resonate' compared to bullet lists, opinions, exhortations, or theories. We focus on how myths are translated and integrated into the stories and 'worlds' of others, and become performative by 'emplotting such uncertainties, relating them to existing and future market agencements, juxtaposing and opening them up to the possibility of misfires' (Geiger & Finch, 2015, p.18). Finally, we seek to show that myth enables a particular magical moment of performativity, and that the power and persuasion of the performative greatly exceeds the sum of its parts.

'Translocutionary' speech acts

Austin (1978) and Butler (1997, 2010) showed how illocutionary speech acts bring about certain realities. Our data show that a 'Me-r-r-y Christmas!' bellowed by Santa is one such speech act that is powerful enough to bring adults to tears. A perlocutionary act, on the other hand, brings a state into being indirectly or with assistance, given 'the (material and institutional) conditions required for its success are met…[and] the active presence of an appropriate socio-technical agencement' (Callon, 2010, p.164). Both types of speech acts thus depend on the existence of appropriate language and material infrastructure. Yet our data demand further explanation: we must bridge the chasm between myth and market to account for the spectacular, magical power of the performance in Lapland. While accounts of performativity may detail at length the organizational work involved in a performance (e.g. MacKenzie, 2009 or Pollock & D'Adderio, 2012) there has been little attention to the work involved in transplanting the theory into a socio-material network – the framing, overflowing and reframing – as a class of speech act in its own right.

We gained new insight by paying attention to the etymology of these words: locution is defined as a word or phrase that adopts a particular style or idiom and that is regarded in terms of its intrinsic meaning (Oxford Dictionary). Locution is closer to understandings of myths as stable, shared stories that narrate the imaginary world. The prefix 'il' used in (illegal, illogical and illocution) means 'not'. The il-locution is no

longer intrinsic but takes its meaning from its situated practice (or from the contextualised speech act). The prefix 'per' means 'through' and so a perlocution is the speech act through which a new reality can be brought about e.g. 'the authentic Christmas experience'. During data analysis, we identified an additional class of act, 'translocution', which means 'talking across'. 'Translocutionary' speech acts are involved in the citational process of narrating a myth into model for the socio-material arrangements required for the performation of a complex, functioning marketplace. Translocutionary speech acts transform myth into a reality embedded in the socio-material complexities of an organised market, and offer a framework for coping with the many uncertainties inherent in the practicalities of visiting Santa. Routines, rituals and conventions through which the market may be enacted are constructed through a compendium of translocutionary speech acts: imagining, discussing, proposing, negotiating, and contracting. Through such acts, which can be chaotic and create misfires and overflows, a myth is anchored and instantiated in the shape of a market. Our concept complements existing understandings of organising as process, highlighting the ongoing work related to the organisational construction of markets. Most importantly, it contributes to the ongoing critical development of performativity theory (Boldyrev & Svetlova, 2016; Learmonth, Harding, Gond, & Cabantous, 2016), for translocutionary speech acts enable opportunities for profit to emerge: the novel social facts created are not innocent, but power filled appropriations of a shared myth.

The authentic Santa experience

Our empirical case is based on a Christmas tourism market for an 'authentic Santa experience' where customers from the UK travel to meet Santa in Lapland, Finland. Enontekiö, the main site of our empirical inquiry, is a small municipality located in north-western Finland (see Figure 1). In 2016, 22 572 passengers were expected to arrive at Enontekiö airport from 18 airports in the UK and one in Ireland.

[Figure 1 about here]

Excursions to meet Santa run from the end of November until Christmas. Two competing UK-based travel agencies organise charter flights to Enontekiö, and work with a multitude of local subcontractors. We focussed on one of these agencies, 'TravX', and its main subcontractor, 'N-Safaris', which provides services to visitors in Lapland.[1] We have constructed Figure 2 based on our data (interviews and documentation) to show the various businesses and their commercial relationships. TravX has operated in Enontekiö since charter flights began in 1996. N-Safaris employs approximately 40 people in Enontekiö, where it organises operations in cooperation with its own subcontractors (i.e. reindeer and husky tour operators, snowmobile transport providers, bus operators, etc.), as well as SantaHotel, which provides facilities for the marketplace, including the restaurant and souvenir shop. TravX recruits Santa Claus(es) in the UK, and flies them to Finland for the season. The airport plays a key role in not only enabling the arrival and

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[1] All company names are pseudonyms in this paper.

departure of tourists, but also providing changing, storage, and staging facilities. Figure 2 shows how tourists have multiple service encounters with market actors, but pay TravX for a single, 'all-inclusive' package (i.e. flights and transfers, food and drinks, winter gear rentals, onsite activities, meeting with Santa, and presents), which costs approximately £560 for adults, and £490 for children.

[Figure 2 about here]

Data collection

Our research combines a range of qualitative methods, including narrative interviews, participant observations, and analysis of archival and documentation data (e.g. websites) about market actors, market offerings (e.g. advertising materials, brochures), consumer reviews (e.g. blog posts, TripAdvisor reviews, news articles), and historical accounts of the market (e.g. interview transcripts, airport and tourism statistics, market research reports, news articles). The researcher responsible for conducting the field work is originally from Enontekiö, and worked as an elf in the Santa excursion industry for 3 years, from 2001–2003 (thereby, as an additional contribution, adding *elfnography* to the already rich lexicon of fieldwork, inspired by Santaland diaries of Sedaris, 1999).

We followed actors' written and oral stories of how the myth of Santa Claus was narrated to construct the market. Our main source of data is interviews with 17 key individuals operating in the market (see Figure 2, Table 1). Despite the limited number

of actors in this network, many interviewees played multiple roles in the market for several years. The field researcher digitally recorded and transcribed all interviews, which lasted between 30 and 110 minutes. Interviews followed a narrative approach (e.g. Boje, 2001; Riessman, 1993), in which interviewees 'produced', 'sold', and 'consumed' stories while the interviewer 'listened', 'remembered' and 're-counted' (Czarniawska, 2004b, p.45). Essentially, interviewees were encouraged to tell stories of their experiences in constructing and working in the market, performances of the market offering (authentic meetings with Santa), and potential misfires or tensions associated with these performances. In addition to formal interviews, the researcher created detailed field notes to document informal conversations with locals who worked in the market. Historical data concerning the origins of the market come from transcripts of interviews conducted by two other researchers in 2005–2006, and are used with permission (see Table 2).

[Tables 1 and 2 about here]

The researcher also observed the activities of various actors and customers (e.g. the head of operations for N-Safaris coordinating the actions of different market actors before, during, and after a charter flight). Photographs of the marketplace during operations in December and during the offseason in September revealed the transformation and the necessary conditions that had to be put in place for the performance of the myth. Reflecting on her own experiences in the market also helped the field researcher understand the context and historical meaning embedded in the stories (Boje, 1995).

Data analysis

In tracing the myth of Santa Claus and its associations with the stories of different market actors, we focussed on how myths are translated and integrated into the stories and 'worlds' of others (Gabriel, 2004)—that is, how myth becomes performative (Geiger & Finch, 2015). We analysed the data in three main steps. First, we engaged in content analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) by following key elements in the plot (Czarniawska, 2004b): the act of situating Santa in the magical location of Lapland, and the act of meeting Santa as the performance of the market offering. These elements represented the performative elements of the myth. We paid particular attention to the calculations, negotiations, and roles of different market actors; similarities with the myth, and how differences were accommodated in the performance; overflows and misfires, and their management in service delivery.

Next, we linked these elements with the literature on performativity. We traced the speech acts that instantiated key realities of the Santa myth, establishing a distinction between illocutionary acts (e.g. the UK-based travel agency's advertising material describing the destination) and the perlocutionary conditions that enable speech acts to produce effects (e.g. cold and snowy weather) (Austin, 1978). Doing this revealed how felicitous conditions are constructed for the performance of this magical market. However, at this stage of the analysis, we noticed two additional types of acts preceding illocution and perlocution—locution and translocution, which transformed the general

Santa myth into a frame for action—and integrated them into our analytical framework (see Table 3). We also paid particular attention to disruptions in routine market practices when key market actors identified infelicitous conditions (Austin, 1978; Butler, 2010) or misfires (Callon, 2010). Such overflows reframed the 'blissful clarity' of the myth (Barthes, 1972, p. 143), thus reshaping its performative content.

Finally, we shifted from identifying key elements of the myth's plot to structuring and defining the performance of the market based on the myth. First, we focused on the roles of contingency, context and historicity in creating felicitous conditions to perform a market; and second, we traced misfires and the infelicitous performatives of the myth. Table 3 summarises our analytical framework with the data sources.

[Table 3 about here]

Situating Santa: contingency, context and historicity

The sign reads: 'Welcome to the True Lapland. Welcome to Santa's home' - a performative speech act, perhaps, but one grounded in all kinds of felicitous conditions (Butler, 2010). A myth does not, by itself, cause a world to exist: other agencies and interests must generate and maintain socio-material agencement to bring such a magical Christmas world - 'Santa's home' - into being.

First, Santa had to relocate. In 1927, Santa's good friend Markus, the host of a Finnish radio children's program,[2] had revealed that Santa lived on Korvatunturi, a hill on the Finnish-Russian border (Pretes, 1995). Although the story, which had become well-known, located Santa in Finland, the wilderness of a border hill was ill-suited for mass-market tourism. To protect his hiding place, Santa started to meet his visitors in Rovaniemi, the capital of Finnish Lapland situated in the Arctic Circle. In 1950 an Arctic Circle Cabin, was built to host an international, prestigious guest, Mrs Eleanor Roosevelt. This was an important step in the building of an infrastructure for the Christmas tourism markets in Finland.

In 1972, a British sales representative working for Finnair (a Finnish airline), visited Lapland for a few days and was left with 'a lasting impression', making him wonder if Lapland could become a Christmas vacation destination for UK tourists:

> If you walked down the street in any town in the UK, London or anywhere else, and asked, 'Where does Santa Claus come from?' you would have heard Greenland, you would have heard the North Pole, most definitely you would not have heard anything to do with Finland, and certainly not Lapland. (Finnair sales representative, 2006)

The sales representative began working with the media to make the Finnish Santa known in Britain. Meanwhile, the founder of TravX flew conference delegates to Rovaniemi,

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[2] The radio program, 'Children's Hour', aired from 1926–1956 (Yle News, 2015).

giving each a farewell gift from Santa. He was amazed at how much his delegates enjoyed the Christmas experience and began to imagine the opportunities this presented.

On Christmas Day, 1984, the first Concorde flight from the UK landed with 100 British tourists for a day trip to meet Santa in Rovaniemi, Lapland (see Figure 1), solidifying its status as Santa's home in the UK tourism market (Market research report, 2007). The trip was organised by the owner of LuxTrav, a UK-based travel agency, who had previously arranged Concorde flights to Monaco to watch the Grand Prix, and partnered with a Finnish friend to arrange the Christmas flight to Rovaniemi. Ten years later, in 1996, TravX booked the first flights to Enontekiö (300 km north of Rovaniemi) for vacations 'in search of Santa Claus' (TravX brochure). Enontekiö airport was rarely used at the time, and the charter flights 'finally shifted the airport into an international aviation era' (*Kaleva* newspaper, 8 December 1996):

> Enontekiö demonstrated there were needs to bring about a project to promote the airport and Christmas tourism and charter flights…and we got funding. The project was called Christmas/Winter Village...The key aim was to arrange direct charter flights to Enontekiö from abroad, and secondly, as we had an airport, to secure, maintain, and develop its operations…This is such a small populated municipality, we needed everyone who could help. It was a collective project. (Marketing planner, Municipality)

Developing the offering in Enontekiö required materialising, transforming and reassembling elements of the myth. Santa had to conform to British expectations - a stout

man wearing a red suit with white cuffs and black boots, and sporting white hair and a beard. The myth of Santa encompasses a winter scene in which he flies around the globe in a present-laden sleigh pulled by magical flying reindeer. Some elements of the myth were easier to materialise than others: Santa's 'costume' was commissioned, and the flying reindeer were replaced with ordinary reindeer, native to Finland. Although materialising a snow-covered landscape is more difficult in southern destinations, Enontekiö is in north-westernmost Lapland where snow is expected by the end of November, offering a strategic advantage as a site for Santa's home:

> I can't remember the year but…there wasn't enough snow in Rovaniemi, or Luosto in Sodankyla. So they redirected the planes from Rovaniemi to us here, resulting in 27 flights—the best year. (Head of snowmobile transportation)

To transform the Santa myth into reality, actors created a tradeable market offering (cf. Çalışkan & Callon, 2010), a travel package for an 'authentic Santa experience' (TravX brochure). Concordant with Cochoy (2015, p. 130) we see felicitous conditions as the 'external prerequisites needed for a speech act to be performed'. Powerful socio-material agencements are required before an illocutionary act can bring about a new reality (i.e. an 'authentic Santa experience'). To this end, our data suggest the need for two additional types of locutionary acts: narrating the myth, and transforming this narrative into a frame for performing an imaginary or idealised world. The myth is transformed into a model (Morgan, 2012) of an imaginary-real world that moves beyond the myth and situates

Santa in Lapland. We refer to the act of creating an imaginary-real world as a translocutionary speech act, because it models Lapland as 'the place where Santa lives' (Children's Hour, Roosevelt Cabin, Finnair sales representative) before it is materialised or made real.

Our data suggest that translocutionary speech acts initiate the process of socio-material organisation and create the epistemic object(s) (Knorr Cetina, 1999) that guide the annual performance of the market. Epistemic objects are knowledge or research objects that remain relatively undefined, and as such represent part of historically evolved experimental systems and practices. From Knorr Cetina's (1999) perspective, epistemic objects frame the realm of possibility. In this sense, understanding the representation or model of a market as an epistemic object is valuable in explaining how translocutionary speech acts involve moving between imagining, representing and narrating the story of Santa and negotiating more practical concerns: creating Santa's home, recruiting a man who looks and acts like Santa, and helping visitors experience an 'amazing winter wonderland' (TravX brochure). Through this iterative process of imagining, representing and experimenting with organisation and action, Lapland became Santa's home (see Figure 3).

[Figure 3 about here]

As shown in Figure 2, TravX worked with Lapland-based subcontractors to develop shared understandings of both the 'authentic Santa experience' and their roles in

performing the market. The myth was foregrounded as real, while the socio-material apparatus of the market faded into the imaginary. Subcontractors used a shared vocabulary to describe the 'magical world' of 'True Lapland'. The head of the airport souvenir shop said: '…reindeers, huskies, and Santa. Those are the absolute requirements. Then there are the sleds and so on, it is unbelievable to see adults and grandmums and - dads toboggan but they love it. And snow, the snow alone'. A Santa explained: 'There's something quite unique about the setting…[it] is magical... All the components are there for the right atmosphere for a child, to make them believable.'

UK travel agencies adopted this lexicon when marketing their packages to British customers: 'Deep in the Arctic, on snow-covered planes, lies and enchanting land, where magic remains. With breath-taking beauty, and fresh snow anew, this is True Lapland, known by just a few'. Agencies promised: 'Our resorts are in the far north of Finland, where the polluted, overcrowded landscapes of modern Britain seem a whole world away'. Moreover, the destination name 'Enontekiö' was not used in any advertising materials: 'They do not sell the journey to Enontekiö. They sell a journey to Lapland' (Head of airport souvenir shop).

Through translocutionary speech acts, actors link people, places, spaces, technical, and epistemic objects to turn myth into reality. TravX and the other market actors actively linked the myth, model and material/institutional conditions to generate an imaginary-real world. We argue that actors established commercial relationships (see

Figure 2) through locutionary and translocutionary speech acts as they imagined and conceptualised the actions necessary to transform the myth into reality (i.e. by identifying a place with 'guaranteed snow', obtaining access to a rural forested setting in a sparsely populated 'wilderness', recruiting people who embody the Santa myth). The iterative forging and articulation of connections among the myth, the imagined model of a possible reality, and reality is important.

In our case, the myth shaped how actors imagined possibilities to reassemble the social-material in places and spaces to create felicitous conditions for perlocutions and illocutions. In this sense, translocutions signal the creation of conceptual equipment designed to shape and coordinate market action. Mackenzie (2009, p.15) argued that 'the availability of conceptual equipment can matter even if the theory underpinning the equipment is not understood'. In locutions of the Santa myth, reindeer fly and eat carrots. In the translocution, reindeer stay on the ground and are fed by tourists. Since 'reindeer don't actually eat carrots, but the tourists always want to feed them carrots' (Reindeer handler, personal communication, 21 September 2016), reindeer handlers have developed a narrative for use during service encounters with tourists that reindeer should not eat while working, and the tourists should leave carrots for the reindeer to 'enjoy later'. Thus, value is created through acts of performance, as overflows and misfires are reframed into a new version of the myth.

Meeting Santa: misfires, overflows and the reframing of market action

Our analysis foregrounds several narratives that describe how actors reframed and re-organised action when things did not go as expected - what Callon (2010, p.164) called 'misfires'. Transporting many people while preserving the illusion of small numbers requires careful organisation. Because the airport is small and 'unusual', tourists sometimes 'wander off' (Head of customer service team, airport). As depicted in Figure 2, N-Safari work with airport ground crew to address this problem by scheduling tourist bus arrivals:

> To a large extent, it is about playing around with the space, requiring a lot of planning...now if we lose a family, we know that they must be at the airport and nowhere else. That's why it is important things work with the tour operator. And if we do have a family missing, that hasn't arrived at the gate, the guides usually help in searching for them as they have spent the day with them and recognise them. (Head of customer service team, airport)

Sometimes distant changes in conditions affect local practices. For instance, prior to 9/11, guides could board planes to welcome tourists:

> Security checks have changed so much during the years, becoming much stricter. The first year when I was the lead guide we just stood by the door and let them enter the plane. There were no X-rays…we only looked at the passport - 'right it's you'. (Head of airport souvenir shop)

Weather causes misfires as well. For example, N-Safaris originally had taken visitors on a snowmobile ride over a frozen lake to reach Santa's cottage. One year, the lake did not

freeze; the material elements of the network disentangled themselves and obdurately refused cooperation. This misfire led to a reframing of the translocutionary version of the 'myth'. In desperation, actors acquired and decorated a large shipping container from a nearby construction site as Santa's temporary home: 'It is quite crazy for Santa to live in a container…we looked through the [customer] reviews…they liked Santa but thought he shouldn't live like this' (Head of operations, N-Safaris). After this incident, market actors built a new grotto for Santa: 'The cabin stays on this side of the lake so we can get there without us having to worry about whether we will drown or not!' (Head of airport souvenir shop).

The myth guides reactions to misfires by providing certainties - how Santa should look, where the hut should be sited, that reindeer eat carrots - to help actors manage uncertainties inherent in organising the market. However, some certainties, such as the timing of Christmas in December, are not helpful: 'Christmas should be rescheduled at end of January making everything much easier!' (Husky tour operator). Snow would be more guaranteed a month later, reducing potential misfires such as the freezing of the lake or building the snow castle.

The meeting with Santa is another carefully choreographed routine. The head of operations for N-Safaris explained:

> I am responsible for that, it is the most demanding responsibility I have. Santa Claus and the makeup artist come from England, I provide the elves and the rest who run the Santa circle. And

that's the thing, when people are happy with that, they are happy…for a small moment you feel you are doing miracles when they come out [of Santa's cottage] and they believe it was real and there have been tears in the eyes of the parents.

On days with two flights, two Santa circles are in operation. Passengers from one flight are given blue tags to wear, while others wear red ones to ensure they are allocated to the correct Santa. The existence of multiple Santas in the marketplace is a carefully guarded secret to avoid misfires. Surprisingly, the existence of multiple Santas in different sites in Lapland fades into the background and does not interfere with the creation of felicitous conditions (i.e. children suspecting the multiple homes of Santa); instead, the carefully choreographed 4-minute encounter with Santa is the critical point in the market performation, along with the role that each Santa performs. The customers meet Santa privately, one family or group at a time, in a cottage in the forest. Queue numbers are assigned based on Santa's paper-based 'checklist', since digital devices might fail in the cold weather (Figure 4). While waiting, the customers are encouraged to explore other activities in the marketplace. At the appropriate time, a snowmobile pulls them on a sleigh through the forest to a reception area where they are welcomed by additional guides. All the guides and the elves communicate via walkie-talkies to track which families are on their way to see Santa.

Customers walk along a candlelit path to Santa's cottage, where two elves work: one welcomes the families outside, and one assists Santa inside the cottage. Once a family

enters the cottage, the elf outside calls reception and asks for the next family. As the previous family exits, the elf whispers the name of the next family to the elf inside, who collects the correct presents for the children and informs Santa. Illocutions come into play as Santa wishes the children 'Merry Christmas' and calls them by name; yet their performative force comes from the careful creation of felicitous conditions, dependent upon complex, carefully monitored organisational perlocutions.

[Figure 4 about here]

When the conditions are truly felicitous, the performation is so successful that customers narrate their experiences in terms of magic and myth, thus strengthening the translocutionary process:

> An 'appointment' was made for our family group to see Santa - so we could relax knowing what time we would be off to meet Santa! That part was particularly magical. We were taken by sleigh across a frozen lake and through woodland to a different area where some houses had traditional 'welcome candles' shining in their windows. There were candles lighting our way along the route that we were pulled along. The sleigh went quite fast and it was really exhilarating winding in between the snowy trees on our way to see Santa. MAGIC! MAGIC! MAGIC! (Customer blog post, 9 December 2011)

Santa Clauses must possess a high degree of performative competence to imbue intimate interactions with authenticity and emotion (Hancock, 2013; Hancock et al., 2015). TravX is responsible for 'contracting the Santas' who then work with N-Safaris in Finland (see

Figure 2). Using native English speakers to play Santa performs a certain UK-centric narrative of Santa Claus: he is expected to know every detail of current trends in the UK market (e.g. toys, brands, and characters) that children may discuss.

Despite these careful recruitment procedures, misfires still occur. In 2012, the UK media reported: 'Kids left sobbing after Lapland trip to meet rubbish Santa "with posh English accent, false beard and no presents"' (*Daily Record*, 8 December 2012). The head of operations from N-Safaris avoids such misfires by drawing even more closely on the myth:

> I have the real Santa from England. He needs no makeup or anything…Yesterday as there was only one flight—him being the only Santa on duty—he came to the main building and restaurant to see the customers for another hour. He was there, took his cap off and had a different coat. People said, 'He is actually real!', and so he is. (Head of operations, N-Safaris)

The truly magic, authentic meeting with Santa invokes specific illocutionary utterances. These speech acts (e.g. addressing children by name, wishing 'Merry Christmas') embedded in a complex socio-material arrangement of perlocutionary performatives make Santa 'real', and create magic strong enough to move adults to tears. When misfires occur, translocutionary acts of sensemaking and meaningful, practical articulation enable actors to collectively and individually recalculate their actions.

Discussion

Santa Claus is a sacred figure (Hagstrom, 1968) whose myth has been shared and reproduced worldwide (Pretes, 1995). The locution of the Santa myth has travelled as far as its imaginary protagonist, undergoing many translations along the way. Aspects of the Germanic 'Winter Hunt' festival transformed the myth of a gift-giving saint of the 4th century into the flying Santa with a magical sleigh (Siefker, 1997). The red suit and black boots are a 19th century addition as drawn by a political cartoonist Thomas Nast in 1863 (American Santa Claus, Hagstrom, 1968). Like Barthes (1972), we see no substantive limits to myth; the form myth takes in practice is produced through connections with the material world.

In this paper, we have explored how ideas-in-form (Barthes, 1972) instantiate a myth through what we call translocutionary speech acts, which create a model of an imaginary-real world that frames actions within a dense socio-material network. It is irrelevant whether the myth is 'true' or 'false' (Kostera, 2008); through translocutionary acts, the myth legitimises market actions and roles (Bowles, 1997; Brown, 1994; Filby & Willmott, 1988), enabling actors to calculate which practices are 'valuable' and 'doable' in the mythical market as they seek to frame and stabilise it (Callon & Muniesa, 2005).

In our case, the magic stems from the myth-writing that is an essential part of translocutionary speech. What might arbitrarily endow mundane materials such as red suits, reindeer and sleighs with magical meaning (Barthes, 1972)? As a second-order

semiological system, myths are constructed based on a first-order semiological system with situated relationships between signifiers (mental images) and the signified (concepts) (Barthes, 1972). Early narratives of St. Nicholas's work in 13th-century Greece (signifier) are linked to the concept of Christian generosity, which produces a sign (signification): a celebration of Christianity through St. Nicholas' generosity (signified). But myth is a second-order semiological system; the sign in the first semiological system is a mere signifier in the second. In the myth of Santa Claus, the particularities of the signifier disappear, yet the celebration remains in the form of gifts. In other words, 'this history which drains out of the form will be wholly absorbed by the concept' (Barthes, 1972, p.118), situating the form in 'a whole new history which is implanted in the myth' (p.142). We argue that in Lapland, this myth is resituated in a first-order semiological system through translocutionary acts; the locution of the myth gradually transforms, through the coordinated economic action involved in the practical performance of Christmas. This resituating of the myth is dependent on the semantic fit of the sign in a new system of signification (Brannen, 2004), and is more than simply drawing on established stories to shape a business; it is, in Barthes' words, a 'robbery of language' that makes possible an entirely new market in make-believe.

In Figure 5, we propose a model of performative organisational speech acts (see Table 3 for examples from our case). The first category involves simple locution, whereby the myth is narrated (e.g. the North Pole, elves, a flying sleigh drawn by reindeer).

Locution is followed by translocution, as actors transform the myth and imagine a real-world model of Santa's home in Lapland. This compendium of speech acts - imagining, discussing, proposing, negotiating, and contracting - embeds the myth into the material market apparatus and sustains it throughout the year, even though it functions for just a few weeks each year.

[Figure 5 about here]

Clarke (2012, p.268) argued that for a theory to become true, it must be situated within an appropriate epistemological paradigm: that a specific performation depends upon a more general citational performativity (Butler, 1997) in language and thinking. For example, the remarkable success of options pricing theory (MacKenzie, 2006) could only occur against a backdrop of intellectual commitments towards a particular way of understanding risk management. The notion of translocution focuses our attention first on how intellectual commitments are translated from academia to the world of practice (MacKenzie, 2006) before investigating how specific performations are enacted in practice, the everyday mechanisms such as the pricing calculations worn on traders' sleeves. Or, considering fish quotas (Holm & Nielsen, 2007) or strawberry markets (Garcia-Parpet, 2007), we might take account of the intellectual histories of economic organisation as well as the material architectures through which these organisational journeys are made. Translocution focuses our attention on the organisational work of making the market: the messiness, unpredictability, overflows and reframing. As an

analytical category, translocution considers the construction of novel value (economic and otherwise) through felicitous performatives, and can be applied to empirical accounts of other commercial markets based on myths, such as Disney (Brannen, 2004; Boje, 1995; Van Maanen, 1991).

These performatives take the shape of perlocutions and illocutions, our final two categories. Perlocutions are speech acts that are followed by effects only when certain felicitous conditions are in place (Callon, 2010) (i.e. the carefully choreographed materiality of the 'authentic Christmas experience'). Illocutions are the purest of performative acts, capable of bringing about certain situated realities of their own accord (e.g. 'Merry Christmas' bellowed by Santa). As MacKenzie (2009) showed, a mechanism that prices the imaginary reveals vast possibilities for the construction of new value. The visit to Santa centres around a moment of magical performance, when a choreographed visit to an actor in a hut in the Lapland forest is transformed into a performative of unique force. It is this moment of magic that constitutes value for those visiting Santa (at least those for whom the performances hang together). Cluley (2011, p.779) claimed that people 'organize a world based on an image they wish were true as if it were true'. We show that the process is based on more than wishes; myth is the raw material, via its performance through socio-material networks of the market, for producing spectacular value. The value of our case market is spectacular: Finnish Lapland is the second most popular area for tourists in Finland (23 % of all overnight stays). In Enontekiö, tourism is

the main source of economic activity (nearly 50%). During the winter season this year (12-02/2017), 53.7% (9568 out of 17818) of all foreign overnight visitors were from the UK (Visit Finland Statistics, 2017).

The concept of translocution can be usefully compared with what Morgan (2012, p. 30) referred to as 'a world in a model', which in this instance takes the form of 'strictly defined verbal portraits' representing both speculation and 'features we already know'. In the model, facts are elements of the Santa myth (red suit, white beard, flying reindeer, snow), and speculations are ambiguous understandings of the 'authentic Santa experience' in practice. These uncertainties and ambiguities, held against the known elements of the myth, determine what needs to be calculated. In this way, the translocution becomes the epistemic object (Knorr Cetina, 1999), the focus of inquiry into the world, enabling actors who are trying to put a translocution into practice to combine questions, experimental demonstrations, and narrative answers that iteratively work to unfold a powerful socio-material agencement. Thus, the translocution begins to performatively organise the felicitous conditions for an 'authentic Santa experience' and a 'Merry Christmas'.

Not all performatives operate according to plan (e.g. transport misfires, an unfrozen lake), challenging actors' agency within the network; yet as Garud et al. (2017) highlighted, such overflows may constitute opportunities. Actors make use of the model provided by the translocutionary framework to reorganise the network and solve

problems. The resulting reframings feed back into the framework, further strengthening its authenticity and functioning. Overflows and misfires are a central part of market functioning, and reframing is an important job of market actors (Callon, 1998; McFall & Ossandon, 2014). We have explored how actors deal with misfires and overflows resulting from unexpected weather or misconceptions about what reindeer eat. In each case, practical solutions emerged from the translocution of Santa, the imaginary-real myth-model that structures and guides market action. Our notion of translocution complements Garud et al.'s (2017) understanding of the entrepreneurial journey as the product of 'a performative mindset' that:

> embraces an ontological position that is relational and intertemporal, wherein the worlds we navigate are always being constituted, de-constituted and reconstituted through the sayings and doings of the multiple actors who become entangled with one another over multiple issues, thereby generating overflows. (p. 5)

Garud et al. emphasised how overflows become the raw material for opportunity; we have shown how incorporating them into a model's narrative stabilises an organisational setting and opens up new possibilities for valorisation.

Finally, we return to the matter of economic value. It is well recognised within organisation studies that entrepreneurs and managers use narratives to organise or promote their firms. The distinctiveness of our account comes from the construction of economic value from a mere fairy tale. Muniesa et al. (2017) highlighted how the process of capitalisation – of constituting economic value – lies at the heart of capitalism, while

others have highlighted new modes of value, such as mobility and projects (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2005). This should not seem too radical a theoretical departure: Muniesa (2017) pointed out that Lyotard's original formulation of performativity as an efficient, managerialist mind-set is not far removed from Austin's (1978) neat and efficient speech acts; performativity is a 'cultural condition' characterised as 'a tension between...stabilization (performing measuredly and steadily), elevation (performing excessively and excellently) and demotion (performing critically and disturbingly)' (p.2). Stabilisation, elevation and demotion are crucial elements in the valorisation of the Lapland market: reliability and routine, magic, and a critical departure from the everyday. Our case illustrates the genealogies of economisation and the construction of social facts (Boldyrev & Svetlova, 2016; Learmonth et al., 2016), two emergent areas of performativity scholarship.

Conclusion

We have examined how multiple market actors collectively perform a myth by providing opportunities to visit Santa in his 'magical world'. This myth is realised through performative, organisational speech acts, where felicitous conditions for the performance are embedded in a complex socio-material network in which actors use the myth to structure and stabilise the market. Where 'actor-network' type studies have often emphasised the technical nature of calculative agencies, we have highlighted the robust

materiality of weather and geography, tourists and reindeer. These material actors, constantly in flux, may preclude certain courses of action, at the same time offering others, shaping and reshaping the socio-material network. We have developed the performative turn (Gond et al., 2016) in organisational studies by first foregrounding how locution, as an abstract, semiological system, can reveal new economic opportunities as it becomes resituated to create a market for the 'authentic Santa experience'.

Second, we introduced translocution as a compendium of imagining, discussing, proposing, negotiating, and contracting, to explain the work involved in 'talking across' the different types of speech acts (locution, perlocution, and illocution) to structure a socio-material world as a mythical market. The translocutional act signals the creation of the conceptual equipment designed to shape and coordinate market action, and thus transforms the myth into a model of an imaginary-real world. It enables actors to calculate, organise the market's socio-material networks, and manage the considerable uncertainty inherent in its operation when overflows and misfires occur. Translocutionary acts transform details of the myth into market facts, while commercial constructs fade to the imaginary. When felicitous conditions exist, the result is a 'Merry Christmas' of magical, performative power.

By investigating the myth of Santa as a performative, we have addressed a persistent criticism of performativity theory: that by (typically) taking social scientific knowledge at face value it is complicit in the political relations that surround such

knowledge (Christophers, 2014); we have shown how a myth that is clearly imaginary (e.g. flying reindeer) can be narrated into being and serve as a model for action. While ours is an unusual case, we suggest that our concept of translocutionary speech acts may be of value in future research by helping to explain how other social scientific theories acquire the power to bring about performative effects. We suggest that there may be a productive link here between the concerns of organisational researchers who investigate markets and those who investigate political economy. Similarly, researchers could explore how the 'communicative constitution of organisations' shape everyday thinking and practices (Craig, 1999) and enable abstract mythologies to be talked into reality (Cooren, 2012). Further attention also could be given to the broader network of mythologies that extend beyond Finland, the UK and Europe to other parts of the world, such as China. This would help illuminate additional connections that enable myths to be situated through shared meanings and language (i.e. in rendering Lapland the universally recognised home of Santa). Our ambition in this paper is more modest: to show how an extraordinary myth can organise an equally extraordinary market.

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Author biographies

Teea Palo is a lecturer at Lancaster University Management School, Department of Marketing. She is interested in the devices and practices in organising and coordinating collective action in networks and markets, such as business models and storytelling. A native of the Finnish home of Christmas, Lapland, Palo's current research on Christmas tourism is inspired by her homeland. She earned her doctoral degree in marketing at Oulu Business School, Finland in 2014.

Katy Mason is Professor of Markets, Marketing and Management at Lancaster University Management School. Her work focuses on understanding performativity and market-making practices developed through the representation and circulation of epistemic devices. Her research shows how business models are assembled disassembled and reassembled in an innovative process of management learning, enrolling and mobilising collective market-making action. Her work has been published in leading management and marketing journals including *Journal of Management Studies*, *Long Range Planning*, *Marketing Theory*, *Journal of Marketing Management*, and *Industrial Marketing Management*.

Philip Roscoe is Reader in Management at the School of Management, University of St Andrews. He is interested in markets and organising. He holds a PhD in management from Lancaster University, an MPhil in medieval Arabic thought from the University of Oxford, and a BA in theology from the University of Leeds. He has published in leading sociology and management journals and is also committed to broader intellectual engagement. He was one of 10 winners of the inaugural *AHRC BBC Radio 3 'New Generation Thinkers'* scheme, launched in 2011, and he was shortlisted for the *2014 Deutscher Wirtschaftsbuchpreis*.

Table 1. Interviewees.

Position	Organisation and role
Manager Head of operations Head of clothing	N-Safaris, safari organiser and the main subcontractor of TravX as a destination management partner
Owner #1 Owner #2 Head of airport souvenir shop	SantaHotel, hotel and a subcontractor of N-Safaris as a facility provider
Santa Claus	TravX, UK travel agency
Owner	Reindeer tour operator, subcontractor of N-Safaris
Owner	Husky tour operator, subcontractor of N-Safaris
Customer service team leader	Airport, ground service provider
Head of snowmobile transportation	Snowmobile transportation provider, subcontractor of N-Safaris
Driver	Snowmobile transportation provider, subcontractor of N-Safaris
Marketing planner	Municipality
Commercial director	ArcticTrip, competing UK travel agency
Owner	Lodge, subcontractor of ArcticTrip as an accommodation provider
Owner	Lodge, subcontractor of ArcticTrip as a facility provider
Market researcher	University, tourism research centre which has conducted research on the lifecycle of Christmas charter flights

Table 2. Secondary interviews conducted by Finnish tourism market researchers.

Interviewee	Organisation and role	Date
Owner	LuxTrav, UK travel agency (1981–2003), organiser of first Concorde flights to Rovaniemi	May 2005
Former director and former administrative director	Finnish tourism development centre	January 2006
Former owner and a former employee	N-Safaris, involved in organising the first Concorde flights to Rovaniemi	February 2006
Office manager and product manager	Finnish tourism development centre, London office	April 2006
Former sales representative	Finnair UK/Ireland	April 2006
Former director	TravX	April 2006

Table 3. Santa-myth to Santa-market: taxonomy of performatives.

Happening	Locution	Translocution[a]	Perlocution[b]	Illocution[c]	Overflows and reframing[d]
Performing an element of the myth	Referencing shared 'facts' of the myth	Narrating the myth into an organised market	Ensuring felicitous conditions	Creating certain realities through speech acts	Reshaping the 'blissful clarity' of the myth (Barthes, 1972, p. 143)
Situating Santa in a remote, snowy place	Home at the North Pole, in the forest, with lots of snow and cold weather	The transformation of the myth of Santa into an imagined magical marketplace in Enontekiö, Lapland, Finland	The authentic Christmas experience; Santa; nature, snow; no streetlights; reindeer; a lakeside hut in the forest	Advertising slogans: 'True Lapland'; 'Enchanting Lapland'; Santa's 'secret hideaway in the forest'	From the 'North Pole' to 'Lapland' – a long journey but 'safe' and 'authentic', 'doable in a day' and 'welcoming'
Meeting Santa: 1-day trip and the 4-minute encounter	White-bearded man, wearing a red coat and trousers, with a white collar and cuffs; elves; gifts for children; flying, carrot-eating reindeer	Santa is authentically English, with a 'home-grown' beard and a good understanding of toy trends in the UK market, even though one has to travel abroad to meet him. He understands multiple English accents and is able to speak with English children. XTrav employs multiple Santas in busy periods.	Airport and ground crews coordinate their activities with N-Safari; appropriate weather; choreographed Santa visit; paper checklist; husky sleigh; feeding reindeer carrots; queuing system to find Santa in his grotto in the middle of the forest; coloured badges ensure customers visit the correct Santa	'It takes 3.5 hours to fly to Lapland and on arrival at Enontekiö…it's time to head to a beautiful location set beside a frozen lakeshore by snowmobile and sleigh'; 'Santa's checklist'; 'finding Santa'; 'Santa's grotto'; 'M-e-r-r-y Christmas!'	*Misfire:* Unfrozen lake *Reframing:* Santa's grotto needs to be set up on 'this side of the lake' *Misfire:* Santa seems fake *Reframing:* Hire 'authentic' Santa actors who need no makeup *Misfire:* Reindeer do not eat carrots *Reframing:* Reindeer are not able to eat while working; carrots from tourists 'saved for later'

[a] Data sources: Interviews; field notes from participant observation in the marketplace; historical accounts: market reports, statistics, news article archives, interview transcripts
[b] Data sources: Interviews; field notes, photographs from participant observation in the marketplace
[c] Data sources: Public documentation (e.g., advertising brochures, websites, market research reports); field notes from participant observation
[d] Data sources: Interviews; public documentation (e.g., customer reviews, news articles); field notes from participant observation in the marketplace
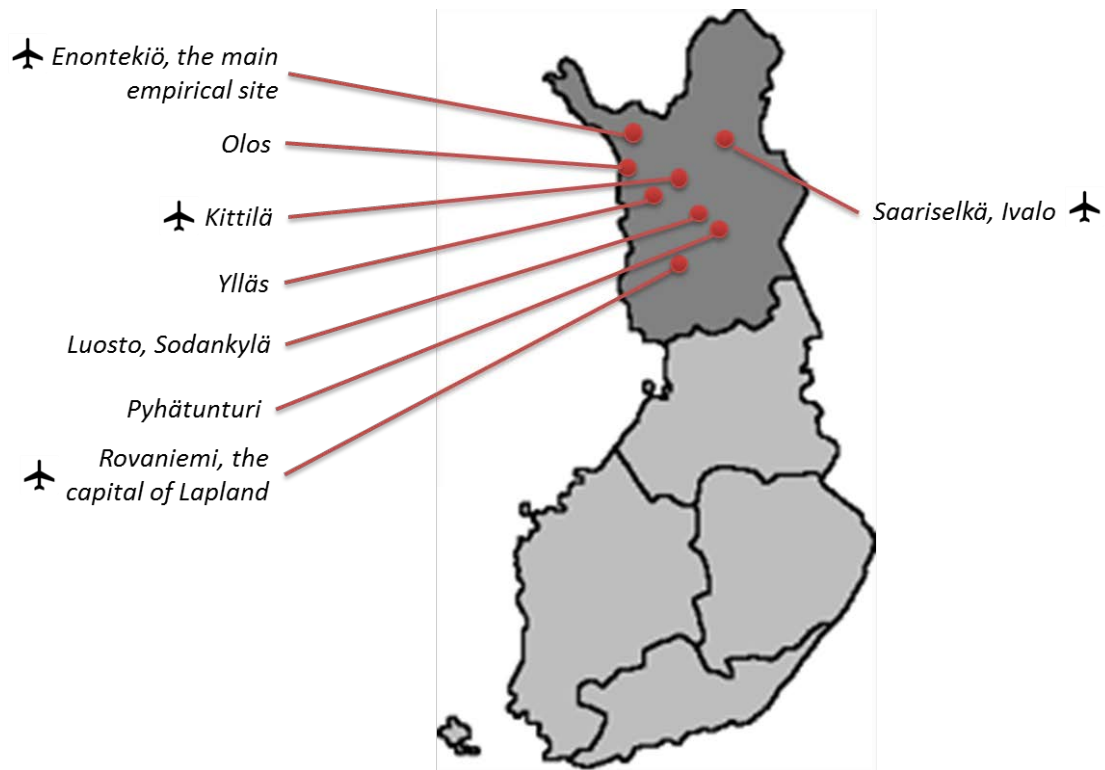
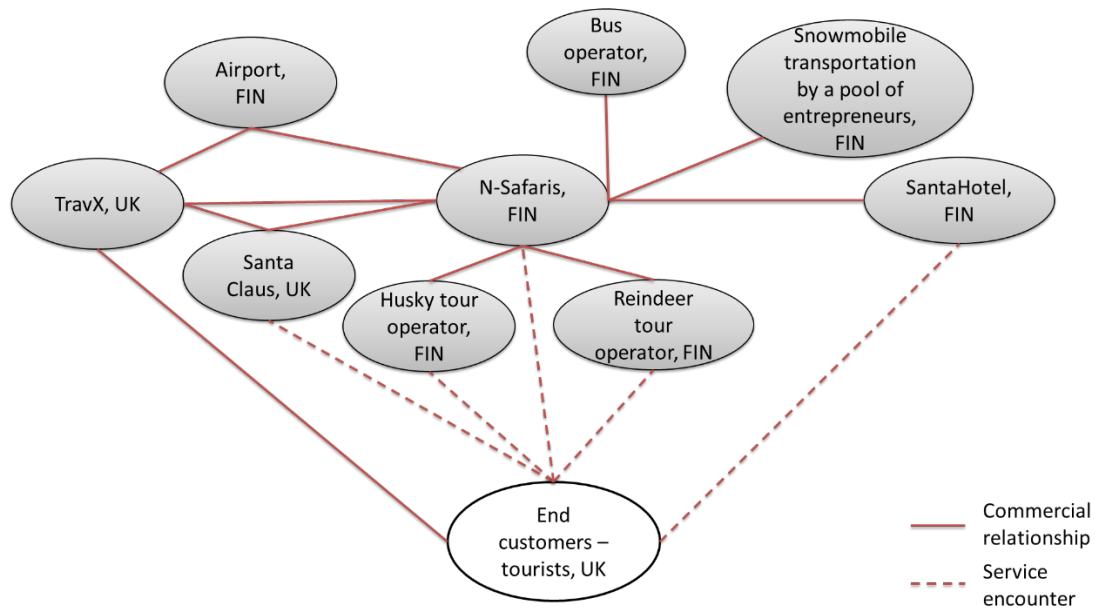Figure 1. Map of Lapland with key Christmas tourism destinations.

Figure 2. Network of businesses in the 'authentic Santa experience' market in Enontekiö.

Figure 3. Materialising the Santa myth: from the airport, through the 'rough snowy terrain' to Santa's grotto.
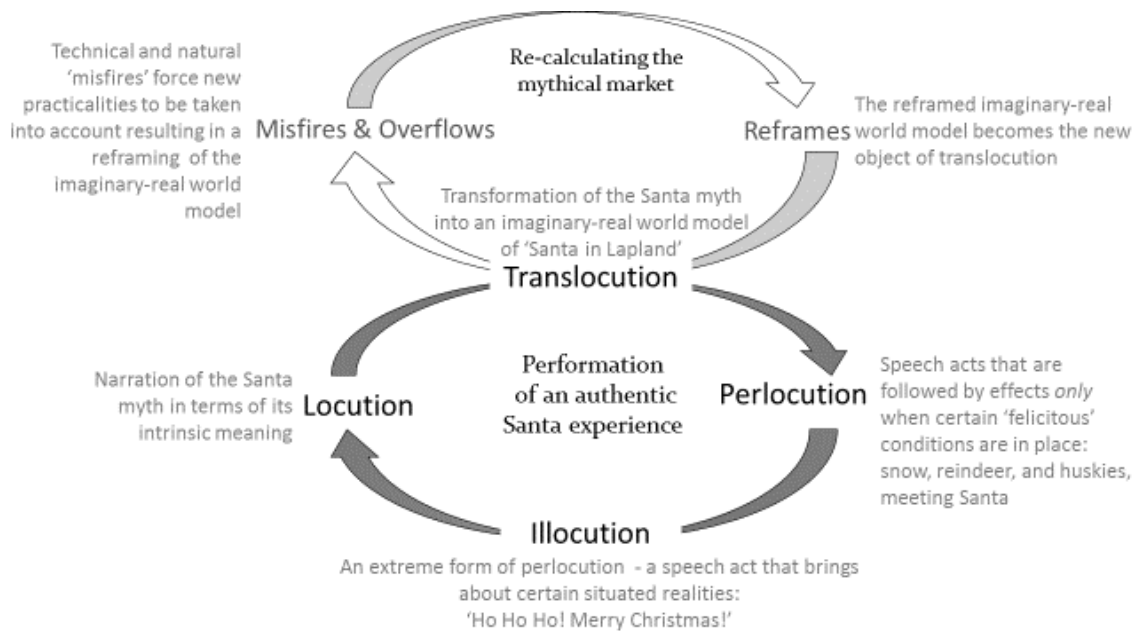
Figure 4. Queuing system to meet Santa.

Figure 5. Process of performative organisational speech acts.