

# **Spatialities of wine stories: The relationship of storytelling and space in the wine industry on the island of Fogo**

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## **Introduction**

The wine production on Fogo is particularly linked to the recurring volcanic eruptions on the island, which lead to severe destructions. Furthermore, they facilitate and renew the fertile soils which are essential for the growing of grapes. Alongside the two historically grown vineyards on Fogo – the Cha Cooperative in the Caldeira and the Achada Grande in Mosteiros – the vineyard Maria Chaves was founded in 2005. The coexistence between the inhabitants and the volcano, the fertile volcanic soils, and the micro climate create the unique characteristics of Fogo. Using storytelling as a marketing strategy, these characteristics are ascribed to local wines (Overton 2010). Subsequently, this paper examines the construction of the relation between storytelling and space in the wine economy on Fogo.

## **Theory**

In order to develop a new perspective to examine the relations between stories and space, as well as their construction processes, we incorporated ideas from the theoretical foundations of storytelling (Green und Brock 2002; Lundqvist et al. 2013) and *Space/Place* branding (Rainer 2016; Gatrell et al 2017), as well as the reflection of previously used examples of storytelling in the wine economy (Mora & Livat 2013; Lee & Shin 2015). This process of spatial branding' (Gatrell et al. 2017) through stories can therefore be used to mobilize and create an understanding of specific places.

## **Methodology**

The applied methods are structured in three stages: 1) preliminary research 2) data collection 3) data analysis. During the collection of data narrative interviews with different experts were conducted, using a self-created guideline based on our findings in preliminary research. Afterwards, the statements were analyzed qualitatively and structured in a matrix.

## **Findings**

Despite Fogo being a small island, we discovered three different stories the vineyards use to promote their product. Cha is using the incomparable nature of the Caldeira to construct a story, which is based on the coexistence of people and the volcano. Achada Grande addresses the emotional attachment of Cape Verdeans living abroad to sell their product. In contrast to Cha and Achada Grande, Maria Chaves tries to delineate their product from the place of production by focussing its story on the quality of the product and innovative technological ways of producing it. In order to fully understand the wine narratives on Fogo we had to construct three new categories: 1) Community, 2) Geography and Geology and 3) Human-Nature Interactions.

## **Discussion of findings**

### **1. The relationship between place and story**

We discovered three different relations between place and story. At first, place is used by Cha to construct a story comprising local characteristics defining the narrative (Lee & Shin 2015; Gatrell et al. 2017). Secondly, stories can be used to construct a new place (Rainer 2017). Maria Chaves is telling a story of European wine culture to delineate their product from Fogo's traditional wines. Furthermore, place can be constructed in the mind of the consumer. Achade Grande's story utilizes the individual associations with the place and is neither actively constructing nor using place to construct a story.

### **2. The materialization of place within Vinho do Fogo**

We argue that the successful materialization is a two-step process, which necessarily entails the inscription of place into a product via the producer (Overton 2010; Gatrell et al. 2017) as well as the detachment of that place from the product via the consumer. Between those two steps a difference in scales can be an issue, when locally bound narratives are used to promote the product because in order to decouple the place and the product, the consumer needs to understand the place (Overton & Murray 2011). For example, it could be problematic to use the locally bound narrative of the Cha Cooperative to sell their product on an international platform because understanding the story of the community of Cha das Caldeiras requires a certain familiarity with the place.

### **3. The social dimension of Vinho do Fogo**

Especially Cha and Achada Grande emphasize the preservation and the support of the community as the focal point of their narratives. Furthermore, Maria Chaves addresses the category of community indirectly by reinvesting their profits in social projects, but they do not use the community in their story. Certainly, Cha is marketing their product by describing it as a collaborative product. Adding to that they underline their social responsibility for the local community. On the basis of our findings, we argue that community should be used as a superordinate category to describe complex social networks, which could not be understood with the former social categorizations of the family (Mora & Livat 2013) or the individual (Lee & Shin 2015). In conclusion we argue that to fully understand the relationship between place and storytelling in the wine industry, it is necessary to regard that place is constructed via human actions. As of now the concept of terroir often is reduced to environmental conditions (Vaddour 2002). Our research suggests expanding terroir by integrating the concept of place, in order to emphasize human influences on the character of the wines.