

**The Creative Food Economy and Culinary Tourism through Place Branding:
*'TERROIR' into a Creative and Environmentally Friendly Taste of a Place***

by

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A thesis

presented to the University of Waterloo

in fulfillment of the

thesis requirement for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in Geography

Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, 2012

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions as accepted by my examiners. I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Anne H.J. Lee

ABSTRACT

Culinary tourism can contribute to the economic development of many rural communities. Creating competitive advantage for a rural community by establishing a culinary cluster requires a strategy designed to leverage the economic, cultural and environmental qualities of a place in an attractive setting and within reach of interested markets. Accordingly, culinary tourism development occurs in places with a ‘local milieu’ that possesses a concentration (spatial agglomeration) of local culinary-related products and services produced by their clustered production of a number of inter-connected firms and service providers. This can attract visitors, new residents and investments and lead to more sustainable economic outcomes that increase the quality of life of residents. To take full advantage of such possibilities, a strategy for partnership and collaboration among various stakeholders involved in culinary tourism is required.

This study provides a conceptual foundation for culinary tourism as a part of the creative food economy through place branding. It analyzes the formation of culinary clusters in place-based rural community development. A culinary cluster results from innovation in the production and consumption of local food. The research began with a review and assessment of literature on culinary tourism, economic geography and business/management that led to the definition of concepts that were combined in the creation of a conceptual model based on modification of Porter’s (1990) clustering model. The model consists of ‘four interdependent determinants’ and ‘four facilitators’ that influence the creation of a culinary cluster, and that require attention in building a creative food economy and an environmentally friendly taste of a place as a brand. A ‘*terroir*’ contributes to the formation of a successful culinary cluster. Tourism and agriculture are leading sectors in this process. Four broad elements specified in the model (‘environmentally friendly movement’, ‘leadership’, ‘stakeholder collaboration’ and ‘communication & information flows’) are the challenges that must be met for the successful transformation of a ‘*terroir*’ into a creative and environmentally friendly tourism destination that provides the taste of a place and, eventually, contributes to the global green movement. The creation of the model is an important conceptual contribution of the study.

The model is used in a variety of ways. First, it was used to guide the collection of information in field investigations of two selected case study sites in the province of Ontario, Canada (Savour Stratford and SAVOUR Muskoka). Second, it was used to structure the qualitative analyses in each case study. Third, it guided comparison of the case studies where it was also used as an evaluative tool to suggest what is working well and less well in the study clusters. It was also used prescriptively to suggest what elements require further attention to strengthen the performance of the clusters.

The study focuses on the relatively new concepts of a creative food economy, environmentally friendly culinary tourism and place branding in the formation of a culinary cluster in place-based rural community development. These themes are obviously interrelated, but have not been explored together previously; and thus, the study provides conceptual coherence for addressing their relationships. The findings of the comparative case study suggest that the transformation of a ‘*terroir*’ into a taste of a place through place branding is based upon the identification of the strengths of a place through inventory of the culinary-related core resources, and the leading and supporting assets (e.g., hard factors of natural environment and soft factors of cultural heritage). Since these will be different from place to place, one should expect different outcomes as the comparative case study demonstrates. Success will depend upon the use of culinary-related resources, based on local things and knowledge, leadership, and stakeholder involvement through collaboration and partnership, to create a uniquely appealing

identity and image (place brand). Thus, a synergistic relationship can be established between the primary sector (agriculture) and service sector (tourism) through innovative entrepreneurial activities.

The study makes important contributions both conceptually and empirically by creating a model that addresses the conversion of '*terroir*' into a creative and environmentally friendly tourism place, by demonstrating the utility of the model through application to two cases in a comparative format; and practically, by directing attention to items that need careful consideration if synergistic relationships are to be established between agriculture and tourism through the development of culinary clusters as part of place-based rural community development.

Keywords: creative food economy; *terroir*; culinary cluster; comparative advantage; competitive advantage; place branding; place-based economic development

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am delighted to have this great opportunity to express my sincere thanks to my supervisor Dr. Geoff Wall upon completion of my PhD. Professor Geoff Wall helped me greatly in the very beginning of my research in the Department of Geography. I was trained in business schools and had difficulties in adopting a social science research approach that was a requirement for my thesis.

This is evidence and gives an idea about Professor Wall's attentive approach to me when I was in need of his help. In fact, his exceptional professionalism gave me a great impression of the Department of Geography and the University of Waterloo in general. Dr. Wall informed me in person of the department's offer of admission and I have since been very happy with my decision to come to the Geography Department. I can attribute much of my feeling about this big decision to Professor Wall's outstanding leadership as PhD supervisor. Here, I would like to quote a part of one of my favorite poems –The Road Not Taken – that suggests that the road (my decision) I took has led to a positive outcome.

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood, and I —
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference

- Robert Frost -

What truly makes Dr. Wall stand out is his commitment to the intellectual development of his students. On many occasions, I have had the delightful pleasure of discussing many other topics, including my study area, with him. Our communications on not only intellectually challenging books in particular but also arts, which we both have a strong appreciation for, have left me thinking about the things in academic life in many different ways. For instance, he introduced me to many authors' works and how their complex works should be appreciated by us not only for their creativity but also because of the challenge that they present to engage academically inclined individuals. Similarly, Professor Wall challenged me with new ideas and inspired me to learn more and grow as an intellectual individual. I feel very fortunate to have had Dr. Wall as my PhD supervisor. I genuinely appreciate his challenges to my intellectual development. He is truly a scholar of refinement and inspiration, a professor who, I strongly believe, deserves to be recognized as a distinguished professor.

My sincere thanks from the bottom of my heart go to my committee members, Dr. Clare Mitchell, Dr. Robert Shipley, and Dr. Sanjay Nepal. Your endless help and support provided great insights into my research in many different ways. I would also like to acknowledge the great support I have received from the interviewees in the study sites who participated enthusiastically in my study. I thank you very much for all of your inputs and time. In addition, I would like to thank to Dr. Steve Smith, Dr. Mark Havitz and Dr. Ron McCarville as well as Dr. Jean Andrey for their generous support and help for my study. I will not forget your support. I would also like to thank to my friends and colleagues at Waterloo for their discussions and encouragement. My special thanks go to my special friends, Janice, Miok, Lingyun, and Engineering Professor Keith Hipel, my MBA Professor Joan Flaherty at Guelph, and Shyam Ranganathan, Dean at Centennial College for the genuinely warm emotional support that they provided over the course of my PhD study.

Finally, I would like to dedicate my thesis to my mother, my best friend, who is in heaven and to my loving father and my brother and sisters for their endless love.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Author's Declaration	ii
Abstract	iii
Acknowledgement	iv
Table of Contents	v
List of Tables	ix
List of Figures	x
1.0. CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Purpose of the Research	1
1.2. Research Goals and Objectives	3
1.3. Structure of the Study	5
2.0. CHAPTER TWO: SETTING THE CONTEXT	8
2.1. Issues in Rural Community Development	8
2.2. Issues in Rural Communities in Southern Ontario	9
2.2.1. Defining the Concept of 'Rural'	11
2.3. Culinary Clusters as an Alternative Strategy in Place-based Development	13
2.4. The Phenomenon of Culinary Movement	14
2.4.1. <i>Culinary Tourism Defined</i>	16
2.4.2. <i>Creative Food Economy and Slow Food Movement</i>	17
2.4.3. <i>The Emergence of Culinary Phenomenon as Central Aspect of Place Branding</i>	25
2.4.4. <i>Creation of a New and/or Additional Taste of a Place</i>	28
2.4.5. <i>Cultural Places as a Distinctive Place Identity and Image</i>	30
2.5. The Culinary Movement in Canada	32
2.5.1. <i>The Culinary Movement in Ontario</i>	32
3.0. CHAPTER THREE: CREATION OF A CONCEPTUAL MODEL	35
3.1. Transformation of a 'TERROIR' into a Creative & Environmentally Friendly Place	
3.1.1. <i>The Concept of 'Terroir'</i>	35
3.1.2. <i>Place-based Development through Place Branding in the Geographical Context</i>	38
3.1.3. <i>Defining the Relevant Concepts of Place Branding</i>	38
3.1.3.1. <i>Space and Place</i>	39
3.1.3.2. <i>Regional Synthesis</i>	40
3.1.3.3. <i>Place Identity</i>	42
3.1.3.4. <i>Place Branding in the Management Approach</i>	44
3.1.4. <i>Clustering: Spatial Agglomeration and Local Milieu</i>	47
3.1.5. <i>Environmentally Friendly Movement</i>	50
3.1.6. <i>Stakeholder Collaboration</i>	51
3.1.7. <i>Development</i>	
3.2. The Model: 'TERROIR' into a Creative and Environmentally Friendly Taste of a Place	

4.0. CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	66
4.1. Case Study Research	66
4.1.1. Case Study Site Selection	67
4.1.1.1. The Cases of Savour Stratford and SAVOUR Muskoka	68
4.2. Data Collection Methods	69
4.2.1. In-depth Interview	69
4.2.2. Document Analysis	71
4.2.3. Participant Observation	71
4.3. The Process of Data/Information Collection	72
4.4. Analysis of the Collected Data/Information	79
4.5. Study Limitations and Opportunities	81
5.0. CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS FOR SAVOUR STRATFORD CULINARY CLUSTER	85
5.1. Background Information on Stratford Perth County	85
5.1.1. Demographic Profiles	90
5.1.2. Economic Indicators	90
5.2. The Savour Stratford Culinary Cluster	92
5.3. Interdependent Determinants	97
5.3.1. Factor conditions	97
5.3.2. Demand conditions	110
5.3.3. Market structure	112
5.3.4. Related/supporting industries	115
5.4. Facilitators as Creative Process	119
5.4.1. Environmentally friendly movement	119
5.4.2. Leadership	121
5.4.3. Stakeholder collaboration	125
5.4.4. Communication & information flows	126
6.0. CHAPTER SIX: FINDINGS FOR SAVOUR MUSKOKA CULINARY CLUSTER	
6.1. Background Information on District Municipality of Muskoka	130
6.1.1. Demographic Profiles	133
6.1.2. Economic Indicators	136
6.2. The SAVOUR Muskoka Culinary Cluster	137
6.3. Interdependent Determinants	142
6.3.1. Factor conditions	142
6.3.2. Demand conditions	152
6.3.3. Market structure	154
6.3.4. Related/supporting industries	160
6.4. Facilitators as Creative Process	164
6.4.1. Environmentally friendly movement	164
6.4.2. Leadership	166
6.4.3. Stakeholder collaboration	172
6.4.4. Communication & information flows	173

7.0. CHAPTER SEVEN: COMPARATIVE STUDY AND DISCUSSION	179
7.1. The Process of Culinary Products/Programs Development	179
<i>7.1.1. Pleasing Artistic Form of Savour Stratford VS. Pleasantly Surprised SAVOUR Muskoka</i>	179
7.2. Leadership in Place Branding Practices	188
<i>7.2.1. Organizational Approaches</i>	188
<i>7.2.2. Marketing Media</i>	195
7.3. Stakeholder Collaboration	199
7.4. Communication & Information flows	201
7.5. Major Challenges	205
7.6. Discussion	210
<i>7.6.1. Empirical Implications</i>	210
<i>7.6.2. Conceptual Implications</i>	213
8.0. CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSIONS	225
8.1. Review of the Research Goals	225
8.2. Contributions	227
<i>8.2.1. Empirical Contributions</i>	227
<i>8.2.2. Conceptual Contributions</i>	228
8.3. Recommendations for Future Research	230
8.4. Concluding Remarks on the Conceptual Model	231
REFERENCES	232 - 241
APPENDICES	242 - 243
Appendix I: In-depth Interview Guide for Data/Information Collection & Analysis	242
Appendix II: In-depth Interview Questions for Key Informants	243

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: 13 New Industry-led & Not-for-Profit Regional Tourism Organizations	28
Table 2: Equilibrium between Tourism and Environment (Positive and Negative Impacts)	49
Table 3: Environmentally Friendly Tourism Practices in Culinary Clusters	49
Table 4: Interdependent Determinants & Facilitators of a Culinary Cluster	59
Table 5: Types of Data/Information and Source(s)	83
Table 6: Distance Chart from Stratford	87
Table 7: Major Employers (Stratford)	90
Table 8: Economic Indicators (Stratford)	91
Table 9: Savour Perth County Producers & Agricultural Products Retailers	93
Table 10: Savour Stratford Member Restaurants	95
Table 11: Accommodation (B & B Sector only)	95
Table 12: Major Field Crops & Farms by Industry Group	98
Table 13: Schedules for 2011 Savour Stratford Perth County Culinary Festival	106
Table 14: Savour Stratford Culinary Products/Programs Development	109
Table 15: Savour Stratford Culinary Products/Programs by Themes	110
Table 16: Stratford Shakespearean Festival: Attendance and Revenue (2000 – 2006)	118
Table 17: Communication Activities: Articles about Stratford Perth County	127
Table 18: Press Release (Savour Stratford)	128
Table 19: Interdependent Determinants & Facilitators (Savour Stratford)	129
Table 20: Muskoka's Permanent Population (2006)	134
Table 21: Muskoka's Seasonal Population (2006)	134
Table 22: SAVOUR Muskoka Culinary Products/Programs by its Members	139
Table 23: 40 Farmers	139
Table 24: 24 Culinary Artisans	140
Table 25: 51 Restaurants & Caters	141
Table 26: Types of Farms in Muskoka (1961 – 2001)	142
Table 27: Farms by Industry Group (2001)	145
Table 28: Agricultural Products Selling Patterns & Marketing Preferences	145
Table 29: Purchasing Patterns by Local Chefs (SE Parry Sound/Muskoka)	160
Table 30: SAVOUR Muskoka Workshops/Events as Culinary Products/Programs	160
Table 31: Communication Activities in SAVOUR Muskoka	175
Table 32: Interdependent Determinants & Facilitators (SAVOUR Muskoka)	175
Table 33: Comparison of Core/Leading/Supporting Assets in Product Development	177
Table 34: Comparison of Organizational Approaches in the Process of Branding	181
Table 35: Comparison of Marketing Media used to Create Culinary Brands	191
Table 36: Comparison of Public/Private Partnership and Funding Programs	197
Table 37: Comparison of the Process of Stakeholder Collaboration	201
Table 38: Comparison of Communications Strategy and Information Flows	201
Table 39: Development of a Culinary Cluster	204

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: The Stratford Perth County Slow Food Movement Convivia	21
Figure 2: Travel Explosion (UNWTO)	25
Figure 3: Map of 13 New Regional Tourism Organizations	27
Figure 4: Clustering Model (Diamond Model)	47
Figure 5: Pleasant and Friendly Environment (Muskoka)	50
Figure 6: The Model: <i>TERROIR</i> into a Creative and Environmentally Friendly Taste of a Place	
Figure 7: <i>Terroir</i> as Production and Consumption Nexus	62
Figure 8: Creation of Culinary Place Identity & Image	63
Figure 9: Economic, Cultural and Environmental Well-being of Culinary Cluster	64
Figure 10: Port Carling Farmer's Market	65
Figure 11: Green Seedlings grown by SAVOUR Muskoka Member	74
Figure 12: The Town of Port Carling (Place Branding Tool)	75
Figure 13: Map of Stratford	85
Figure 14: Demographic Profile (Stratford)	88
Figure 15: Population by Age and Gender (Stratford)	89
Figure 16: Map of Stratford Perth County	89
Figure 17: Savour Stratford Culinary Guide	96
Figure 18: Example of Culinary Place Branding Tools (Savour Stratford)	104
Figure 19: The Signage of Tourism Stratford	104
Figure 20: 2011 Savour Stratford Perth County Culinary Festival Poster	107
Figure 21: Perth Arts Connect	117
Figure 22: Map of District Municipality of Muskoka	132
Figure 23: Muskoka's Population by Age and Gender	135
Figure 24: 2011 Culinary Trail Map of SAVOUR Muskoka	147
Figure 25: SAVOUR Muskoka Culinary Trail Guide	148
Figure 26: SAVOUR Muskoka Specialty Products	151
Figure 27: 2011 'Field-to-Fork' Tasting Event Poster	152
Figure 28: SAVOUR Muskoka Logo featured on a Menu	156
Figure 29: Menu for G8 Leaders	157
Figure 30: Sample of SAVOUR Muskoka Culinary Place Branding Tools	159
Figure 31: Arts & Crafts in Muskoka	161
Figure 32: Arts Festivals in Muskoka	162
Figure 33: Ontario Trillium Foundation and Industry Canada, FedNor Funding Programs	169
Figure 34: Muskoka Community Futures Development Corporation	171
Figure 35: SAVOUR Muskoka Artisan's Product	186
Figure 36: <i>Terroir</i> as Culinary Production and Consumption Nexus	216
Figure 37: Creation of Culinary Place Identity & Image	217
Figure 38: Economic, Cultural and Environmental Well-being of Culinary Clusters	221



1.0. CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In the face of a changing global economy, many governments around the world have identified culinary tourism as a means of fostering rural community economic development. As Hjalager and Richards (2002) and Hall et al. (2003) have argued, culinary tourism is widely seen as being a positive force for problem solving, offering economic and cultural development possibilities in many rural communities around the world. Culinary tourism development in rural communities is a relatively new phenomenon; however, culinary tourism is far from being merely 'niche' in the local and global markets for it has emerged as an aspect of tourism through strategic place branding. The economic process has emerged as an example of a creative economy, much of which is related to tourism development. In this economic activity, place branding has become a conscious tool (Kotler et al., 1999) to create place identity and image, and to prompt the creation and expansion of new and/or additional economic and cultural places in rural communities, which have strong links to the local environment.

In place-based rural community development, the experience of distinctive geographical settings and cultural atmosphere has become an important element (Stolarick et al., 2010) to both residents and visitors. Knowledge-based economic globalization in conjunction with service-based industry has caused leaders to become more conscious about the authenticity (Stolarick et al., 2010; and Knox and Mayer, 2009) of their place identity and image, and in the way they are perceived by visitors. In accordance with this trend, a 'sense of place' has become a valuable item to be marketed to potential visitors as a place characteristic (Lew et al., 2008). This place branding strategy in place-based rural development is heavily dependent on promoting the soft factors of local traditions, arts and stories of places (Morgan et al., 2010), as well as the quality of life that is deeply rooted in the locality of the places.

It is suggested that a creative food economy emphasized on the formation of culinary clusters can benefit the place-based economic development of many rural communities. Creating competitive advantages for rural communities by establishing culinary clusters require a strategy designed to leverage the economic, cultural and environmental well-being of a quality place in an attractive setting (Stolarick et al., 2010). This will attract not only visitors but also new residents and investments to the places and lead to more balanced economic outcomes (Knox and Mayer, 2009).

However, culinary clusters may not be able to support the economic, cultural and environmental well-being of rural communities when there is no strategy for partnership and collaboration among various stakeholders involved in the development and delivery processes. As many researchers have suggested (e.g., Aas et al., 2005; Selin 1999; Selin and Myers, 1998; Selin and Chavez 1995; and Timothy 1999), shared decision-making among various stakeholders is a critical factor in establishing an environment that is able to promote such economic activity successfully, leading to more vigorous economic development. Therefore, evaluation of stakeholder collaboration and associated communication and information flows in relation to leadership is required to better understand the creation and operation of culinary clusters in place-based rural development.

Although a substantial body of literature exists that addresses ‘clustering’, there has been little research assessing ‘clustering’ for place-based rural development from a creative food economy perspective. This is mainly because it is a relatively new phenomenon. Much of the existing literature reports studies of clusters from a business/management context (e.g., high-tech industry), but does not specifically emphasize the creative food economy. In fact, literature on service-led clusters, as opposed to manufacturing, has been slow to emerge. Hence, there is too

little known about how culinary clusters operate in rural development. For these reasons, there is a need to undertake empirical research on culinary clusters guided by appropriate concepts and conceptual frameworks to learn more about the various organizational forms that exist (e.g., top-down approach vs. bottom-up approach).

For this study, a conceptual framework for a ‘culinary cluster’ is created, based on the modification of Porter’s ‘clustering model’ (1990). The modification of Porter’s model has been formulated based upon the extensive literature review both in economic geography, culinary tourism and business/management. The conceptual model identifies facilitators requiring attention for the creative process (innovation) in the formation of, and as an outcome of a culinary cluster (an environmentally friendly taste of a place as a brand). The conceptual model will be used to guide data/information collection, analysis and interpretation for the study in the selected case study sites.

1.1. Purpose of the Research

It is argued that collaboration among stakeholders is one of the most important factors if culinary clusters are to be successful. In place-based rural development, the idea of collaboration among stakeholders from an inter-organizational perspective is widely acknowledged as a key to success in the process of clustering (Selin, 1999; Selin and Chavez, 1995; Aas et al., 2005; Timothy, 1999; and OCTA, 2011). Thus, it is vital that the organizational leadership communicates effectively and that information flows among stakeholders within the cluster.

Culinary tourism is a ‘composite product’ and it needs to be organized and managed to create a uniquely appealing place identity and image as a place brand. However, given all of the aspects of culinary clusters, it is impossible for an organization, such as a DMO (Destination Marketing Organization), to have direct control over all players involved in the clustering

process. Consequently, there is a need for collaboration among all players involved in the cluster. Thus, the assessment of connectivity among players, that is facilitated by organizational leadership, their communication strategies and information flows, is required to better understand the process of stakeholder collaboration in the creation of culinary clusters. Therefore, the principal purpose for this study is to examine the practices and issues of stakeholder collaboration (leadership and communications strategy and information flows) in the formation of culinary clusters in selected case study sites.

1.2. Research Goals and Objectives

The goal of this study is to examine the ‘determinants’ and ‘facilitators’ in the creative process that is the formation of a culinary cluster. The creation of such a cluster is a means of contribution to economic development. A conceptual model will be created that will identify and display how interdependent determinants and facilitating factors influence the development of a creative food economy by forming a culinary cluster in place-based rural development. To explore the research goals, four research objectives are identified.

The study focuses on the concepts of a creative food economy, environmentally friendly culinary tourism through place branding in the formation of a culinary cluster in place-based rural development. These themes, while obviously interrelated, have not been explored together previously and, consequently, there is a lack of conceptual coherence and limited empirical research that addresses these relationships. Thus, the research objectives are organized in chronological order from the identification of relevant concepts and the creation of the conceptual model to the empirical component that involves the assessment of the applicability of the model in the selected study sites. Accordingly, detailed research questions aimed at fulfilling the research objectives will be examined in the selected study sites.

1. To provide a conceptual foundation for a culinary cluster as part of a creative food economy through place branding in the context of place-based rural development. This will be done by developing a conceptual model through a modification of the clustering model created by Porter (1990):
 - a. A thorough review of academic literature both in economic geography and business/management were conducted, which identified relevant concepts, leading to the construction of a conceptual model. The creation of the conceptual model is an important objective of the research. The definition of the relevant concepts, discussion of their relationships and their placement in the model is an important conceptual contribution of the study
2. To assess the applicability of the conceptual model to culinary clusters in selected study sites:
 - a. How do the interdependent determinants interact in the formation of a culinary cluster?
 - b. How do the facilitators of the creative process in the model support the development of a culinary cluster?
3. To describe the evolution of the creative food economy and culinary clusters in Savour Stratford and SAVOUR Muskoka; and to determine if different organizational approaches give rise to different outcomes:
 - a. How do the organizations in the selected study sites develop culinary products/programs as a place brand in the creation of the clusters? (i.e., the specialization and diversification of production, as well as the inventory of the contents and scope of the culinary resources, including soft factors of cultural heritage and hard factors of natural environment)
 - b. How do the different organizational approaches implement place branding practices; what kinds of branding strategies and marketing media have been employed?
4. To evaluate critically the conceptual model in light of the findings of the study as a tool for place-based rural development by providing a comparative study of two cases:
 - a. What are the issues of stakeholder collaboration in relation to leadership, and communications and information flows?
 - b. What are the major challenges in the formation of the culinary clusters?

1.3. Structure of the Study

Chapter 2 defines relevant concepts and interrelated themes of culinary phenomenon as part of a creative food economy by critically reviewing culinary tourism, management and economic geography literatures. This critical review of the literatures was undertaken to situate the subsequent review of core concepts that are used to create the conceptual model for the comparative case study. Chapter 3 discusses how place branding is conceptualized in the geographical context and creates a conceptual model (*Terroir* into a Creative and Environmentally Friendly Taste of a Place): ‘four interdependent determinants’ and ‘four facilitators’ of a cluster are proposed in the model and the discussions of the model are focused on transformation of a ‘*terrior*’ into an environmentally friendly taste of a place through strategic place branding in the formation of a culinary cluster in place-based rural development. The model is created through a modification of Porter’s clustering model (1990). Themes of the study identified in the conceptual model include: the scope of culinary products and program development through place branding (e.g., the hard factors of natural environment and soft factors of cultural heritage); environmentally friendly strategy, leadership; stakeholder collaboration; and communications and information flows, and major challenges in the formation of a culinary cluster as an integrated place brand.

Chapter 4 discusses the case study methodology, including data/information collection methods such as in-depth interview, document analysis, and participant observation. It also discusses the validity and generalizability of the study, as well as the selection of the case study sites. In addition, it describes the creation of the ‘interview guide’ along with interview questions for the in-depth interview, which is used as a major tool to collect and analyze data/information. The interview questions were created based upon the core concepts of the

‘interdependent determinants’ and ‘facilitators’ indicated in the model. Detailed procedures of data/information collection in the study sites, as well as analysis of the collected data/information are also presented. Also, limitations of the study and opportunities for the future study are discussed.

Chapter 5 presents the analysis and findings of empirical data/information collected in the Savour Stratford culinary cluster, along with a general description of Stratford and Perth County that summarizes the region’s geographic, economic and demographic features. The analysis of empirical data/information is undertaken to determine the role played by the ‘interdependent determinants’ and ‘facilitators’ of a culinary cluster. Chapter 6 presents a similar analysis, the findings of empirical data/information collected in the SAVOUR Muskoka culinary cluster, along with general information on the District Municipality of Muskoka that summarizes the region’s geographic, economic and demographic features. Also, the analysis of empirical data/information is undertaken to determine the role played by the ‘interdependent determinants’ and ‘facilitators’ of a culinary cluster.

Chapter 7 provides a comparative study between the two cases based upon the findings presented in Chapters five and six. The comparative study is focused on the interrelated themes of the conceptual model created for the study (the creative process of culinary products/programs development and place branding, involving stakeholder collaboration, and communications strategy and information flows in relation to leadership as identified in the model). Major challenges are identified in the creation of the clusters. Finally, conceptual and empirical implications of the findings are discussed. In this way, the comparative analysis is focused on answering the principal research purpose as well as research questions in fulfillment of the research objectives, which address issues of stakeholder collaboration in the formation of a

culinary cluster. Chapter 8 concludes the thesis by reviewing the research goals and objectives, and considering both academic and empirical contributions of the study. It also makes recommendations for future research directions. Finally, concluding remarks are made, concerning the conceptual model created for the study.

2.0. CHAPTER TWO: SETTING THE CONTEXT

2.1. Issues in Rural Community Development

It is argued that rural communities in North America face significant challenges in promoting economic development (Stolarick et al., 2010; and Knox and Mayer, 2009). The challenges rural communities face in promoting economic development come from two main factors:

‘disconnectedness’ and ‘relatively small scale’ (Stolarick et al., 2010; Halseth et al., 2010; and Knox and Mayer, 2009). These are underpinnings of the rural economies that are often stagnant when compared to urban economies.

Since the early 1990s, the economic landscape of rural communities in North America has started to change (Stolarick et al., 2010; Knox and Mayer, 2009; and Woods, 2005). Stolarick et al. (2010) and Knox and Mayer (2009) argue that knowledge-based economic globalization has led to a significant decline in small-scale, local businesses in such places with subsequent degradation of local characteristics and a sense of place. This has also undermined the individuality of many rural communities including their economic and cultural well-being (Knox and Mayer, 2009). Further, Stolarick et al. (2010) and Woods (2005) argue that the process of restructuring of the global economic system resulted in declining economic activities in rural communities, especially due to the restructuring and/or reconstructing of the agricultural sector, the loss of manufacturing and out-migration involving the exodus of educated, talented young people in particular to urban centers (Knox and Mayer, 2009). This has left ageing populations in rural communities that have been lacking in leadership to address the changed future (Stolarick et al., 2010; Woods, 2005; and Knox and Mayer, 2009).

2.2. Issues in Rural Communities in Southern Ontario

Southern Ontario is experiencing a process of rapid economic adjustment although it is still relatively competitive and diversified (Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, Statistics Canada, 2010 - 2011). According to the study conducted by the 'Federal Economic Development Agency' for southern Ontario, many of the region's traditionally strong industries such as the manufacturing sector are facing significant challenges after a period of economic growth from the mid-1990s to 2004. In particular, in the face of the economic recession, the result of the financial crisis and weakening U.S. demand for goods and services produced in southern Ontario have intensified the need for economic systems (Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, Statistics Canada, 2010-2011). Evidently, this situation has brought significant increase in job loss and economic distress. Statistical evidence confirmed that many communities in southern Ontario, particularly in the south-western area, have very high unemployment records:

Windsor, 14.4%; St. Catherine-Niagara, 10.9%; London, 10.4%; and Kitchener, 9.9% at a time when Ontario's unemployment rate reached 9.6% in the summer of 2009 and the national average was 8.6%. Statistics Canada reported that employment levels in Ontario had fallen by 232,000 since October 2008. Over half of these job losses were in the manufacturing sector. Southern Ontario's manufacturing sector has seen a steady structural decline since 2004 (Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, Statistics Canada, 2010-2011).

Nevertheless, in the meantime as southern Ontario's economy is still relatively diversified, some rural communities are attracting both capital investment and population. Mitchell (2004) and Mitchell et al. (2001) argue that the phenomenon of 'counterurbanization' has occurred since the 1970s: i.e., "the movement of population from urban to rural areas" (Woods, 2005: 74). This has been, in part, a consequence of improvements that have been made to the infrastructure of rural communities and enhanced communication networks – 'connectivity'

(Knox and Mayer, 2009; and Halseth et al., 2010). These have made some small towns and rural areas more attractive to both investors and other individuals (i.e., through improved accessibility and relatively inexpensive land) (Knox and Mayer, 2009). For example, according to Mitchell et al. (2001), entrepreneurs in particular have responded to this phenomenon of counterurbanization by focusing on the commercialization of the soft assets of cultural heritage, such as local arts and local tradition; an innovation activity that leads to the replacement of an 'old' to a 'new' sector (creative destruction). As a result of such economic activities, 'heritage shopping villages' are becoming increasingly commonplace (Mitchell et al., 2001) in rural communities in southern Ontario (e.g., Stratford, St. Jacobs, Elora and Fergus, and Niagara-On-The Lake).

In addition, there has been an increasing perceptible movement of jobs away from urban centres to rural communities (Knox and Mayer, 2009). Bunting and Mitchell (2001) state that "the period 1971 to 1991 saw a significant increase in the proportion of Canadians employed in the 'arts'" (e.g., creative industry) in particular. While this is still concentrated to a large extent in urban centres, many artists seek out rural areas and small towns for alternative lifestyles and pursue their artistic profession (Bunting and Mitchell, 2001). Likewise, as Knox and Mayer (2009) stress, many baby boomers have retired to rural communities in search for a high quality of life for their holistic well-being: with increased financial security, they have been enabled to move out of urban centres in search of the modified lifestyle (Knox and Mayer, 2009; and Woods, 2005).

Thus, rural communities that had previously been considered as monotonous and restrictive are now seen by many individuals, who value the rural atmosphere, as charming and scenic places. These images are associated with high quality local leisure and recreation facilities, such as cafes and restaurants, shops and attractive ambiances (Knox and Mayer, 2009; and

Woods, 2005). This phenomenon of the counterurbanization has played an important role in current rural area and small town economic development and has brought considerable increases in the overall prosperity of some communities (Knox and Mayer, 2009), especially those in propinquity to major cities.

In summary, there are many challenges and opportunities that affect the economic, cultural and environmental well-being of rural communities (Knox and Mayer, 2009). These issues and opportunities are associated with the knowledge-based global economy. The challenges of declining economic activities that many rural communities face have become further augmented by the rise of the knowledge-based economy that are associated with service-based industries (Stolarick et al., 2010; Knox and Mayer, 2009; and Woods, 2005). However, there are differences in the rural and small town economies; these communities in dissimilar geographical settings have different challenges and opportunities (Knox and Mayer, 2009). Thus, to overcome disadvantages of relatively small scale and lack of connectedness, these communities should search for alternative opportunities to maintain their economic and cultural well-being (Stolarick et al., 2010). This can be achieved through innovative and collaborative network and partnership approaches (Knox and Mayer, 2009; Halseth et al., 2010; and Hague and Jenkins, 2005).

2.2.1. Defining the Concept of 'Rural'

In rural studies, as argued by Woods (2005), there was a broader debate within geography in the late 1980s that “had explored how far local structures could shape the outcomes of social and economic process” (p. 10). In economic geography the analyses focused on rural development and the process of economic, cultural and environmental restructuring are conducted in line with the political economy framework (Woods 2005) (i.e., it is mainly focused on the production and

consumption nexus determined by economic efficiency and effectiveness with political arrangements).

However, the concept of ‘rural’ is elusive and it is difficult to define precisely. Thus, there is no single best accepted definition of the concept (Woods, 2005; and du Plessis et al., 2002). As argued by Woods (2005), and du Plessis et al. (2002), many definitions of ‘rural’ are available for rural development studies as it is an interdisciplinary field with similar kinds of investigations being made by social scientists, including geographers (Woods, 2005). For example, the definition, which emphasizes hard data with “associated thresholds, such as ‘population size’, ‘density’, ‘land use’, ‘labour market’ and ‘proximity’, tends to identify the size of the rural territories (e.g., “building blocks”) that are measured by statistical indicators (du Plessis et al., 2002; and Woods, 2005). Although the definitions have limitations and should go beyond the statistical indicators, “this is the approach adopted in most official definitions of rural studies” (Woods, 2005: 5). The definitions constructed can vary within the statistical categories; “the level of each characteristic differs for each definition of rural” (du Plessis et al., 2002).

However, as suggested by du Plessis et al. (2002), “the appropriate definition should be determined by the research question being addressed”. Hence, it is necessary to define the concept of ‘rural’ for this study in which the emphasis is given to the Canadian context, “as a starting-point for understanding Canada’s rural population” (du Plessis et al., 2002). For this study the definition of ‘rural community’, as defined by OMAFRA, will be adopted: i.e., a municipality that has fewer than 100,000 people. This includes both nucleated municipalities such as Stratford and dispersed municipalities (e.g., Muskoka) (<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/food/industry/red-program.htm>).

2.3. Culinary Clusters as an Alternative Strategy in Place-based Development

According to Knox and Mayer (2009), for rural and small town communities economic, cultural and environmental well-being means developing the capacity to manage changes in the face of the knowledge-based global economy. Thus, a priority is given to economic development possibilities and it often takes the form of seeking to attract various resources investment (Knox and Mayer, 2009) such as human, organizational, technological and financial resources.

However, defining the concept of a knowledge-based economy (KBE) is challenging. According to the 'Eastern Ontario Economic Summit' (2010), KBE can be defined as:

The key characteristics are creativity, application and generation of knowledge, and use of technology. The knowledge-based economy is closely linked to entrepreneurship, R&D, innovation and commercialization services. Digital media, clean technology and transformation of "old" to "new" jobs (even within the same sector) are expected to be focal points of the KBE [...] Assuming that supporting technology infrastructure is in place, rural areas are viewed as being able to compete with urban centres (2010).

Woods (2005), and Knox and Mayer (2009) argue that without having adequate financial, organizational, technological and human resources to attract and/or employ a wide range of skilled workers, rural communities can find themselves at a serious disadvantage as the economic activities are increasingly based on the knowledge-based economy in conjunction with the service industry (Stolarick et al., 2010). Thus, to pool the resources, many rural communities have a strong focus on innovation activities – partnerships and networks through a strategic alliance (e.g., cluster) that give special emphasis to rural community development (Stolarick et al., 2010; Knox and Mayer, 2009). Such emerging initiatives as an alternative strategy in place-based rural development can be achieved by establishing a value chain of a creative food economy leveraging the primary sector of agriculture and the service sector of tourism.

Hjalager and Richards (2002) argue that to prevent the stagnation of economic activities, rural communities have turned to culinary cluster development as an alternative strategy.

Hjalager and Richards (2002) suggest that culinary cluster development in rural communities can be identified as a strategy for creating a more diversified economy, usually in areas that are small-scale, well-defined, and have unique natural and cultural resources in concentrated localities (Croce and Perri 2010). Culinary cluster development occurs in geographically concentrated areas where primary production is related to agriculture (Hall et al., 2003; Hjalager and Richards, 2002; and Hall and Page, 2006).

Rooted in agricultural production (Hall and Page, 2006), development of culinary clusters in rural communities can benefit both farmers and residents economically and culturally in the creation of many different kinds of culinary-related, small-scale local businesses, jobs and income generation. Moreover, culinary cluster development can provide benefits to rural communities as tourism places by bringing visitors to the places; by increasing awareness of the identity and image of the places; and by promoting local agricultural products to domestic and international visitors. Consequently, the formation of culinary clusters as a strategy in place-based rural development can provide not only an important foundation of creative activities (innovation) but also increase opportunities for the economic, cultural and environmental well-being of residents.

2.4. The Phenomenon of Culinary Movement

It is argued that ‘food’ was important only as an aspect of bigger discussions such as politics and medicine (Kurlansky, 2002; and Allhoff and Monroe, 2007), and that gastronomic concepts were applied to denote class relations and identity (Fernandez-Armesto, 2004; and Kurlansky, 2002) and “certain classes of value judgments, most notably in aesthetics and philosophy of art”

(Allhoff and Monroe, 2007: 2; and Symons, 2007). However, Allhoff and Monroe (2007: 2) stress that more than ever, many academics and researchers have argued that “this underappreciated aspect of human life cannot be a proper food discussion, and this is a recent phenomenon that there has been a growing number of scholarly-writing”. That is, it will be about ‘food’ and food ought to be an appropriate subject to study on its own right (Hjalager and Richards, 2002; Petrini, 2005; Pollan, 2006, 2008; Hall et al., 2003; Allhoff and Monroe, 2007; Freedman, 2007; Kurlansky, 2002; Pitte, 2002; and Fernandez-Armesto, 2004). Nevertheless, “food studies are far-reaching, crossing into virtually every territory” (Symons, 2007: 26; and Fernandez-Armesto, 2004; Scarpato, 2002; and Kurlansky, 2002). Food has been used as a tool to scholarly-writing for broader subjects. For example,

Economic historians see food as a commodity; social historians see it as an index of differentiation and changing class relations; cultural historians are interested in how food feeds identities and defines group; political historians see food as power and concerned with its distribution and management; and environmental historians see food as linkage in the chain of being (Fernandez-Armesto, 2004: preface).

As a consequence, there is “no consensus about how to approach it and most academic institutions still neglect it although food has a good claim to consider being the world most important subject” (Fernandez-Armesto, 2004: preface). However, researchers (e.g., Hjalager, 2002) in tourism studies argue that ‘food’ should be studied along with other aspects of sustainable tourism such as economic, cultural and environmental sustainability. After all, tourism plays an important role and visitors are also primary consumers of food products (Richards, 2002).

Food is one of the fundamental elements of the tourist experience (Long, 2004; Hjalager and Richards, 2002; Fields, 2002; Jones and Jenkins, 2002; and Boyne et al., 2002; and Hall et al., 2003). Although food has long been associated with travel and leisure (Pitte, 2002), culinary

tourism as part of a creative economy has only been given attention in recent years. However, the development of culinary clusters as part of a creative economy has become not only an important foundation of regional, national economic and cultural development but also local culinary products have become a source of export in many countries around the world (Hjalager and Richards, 2002).

2.4.1. Culinary Tourism Defined

There is no single accepted definition of culinary tourism. However, the concept has been defined in various ways in the very limited culinary tourism literature. According to Hall and Sharples (2003), the definition of ‘food tourism’ is worthy of consideration. Hall and Sharples (2003: 10) suggest that when defining food tourism, there is a need to make a distinction “between tourists who consume food as a part of the travel experience, and those tourists whose activities, behaviours and even destination selection are influenced by an interest in food”. Hall and Mitchell (2001a: 308) define ‘food tourism’ as:

Visitation to primary and secondary food producers, food festivals, restaurants and specific locations for which food tasting and/or experiencing the attributes of a specialist food production region are the primary motivating factor for travel (quoted in Hall et al., 2003: 9-10).

In addition, according to the Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance (OCTA), culinary tourism can be defined as: “tourism experiences in which one learns about, appreciates, and/or consumes food and drink that reflects regional or national cuisine, heritage, culture, tradition or culinary techniques” (OCTA official website, 2011). The definitions quoted above emphasize the tourists’ experience of local food.

However, there is a widely accepted notion that food is considered to be “the world’s most important subject” (Fernandez-Armesto, 2002: preface; and Kurlansky, 2002). “It is what matters most to most people [and tourists] for most of the time” (Fernandez-Armesto, 2002:

preface): i.e., “meals: when eaten, it intersects with tourism – the point where the most intimate contact [transpires] with nature when we eat” (Cohen, 2003); and “a restaurant: is a destination in itself as a place to eat and traveler’s refuge that also offers food” (Shore, 2007: 301). “Food is a necessity of the tourists’ trip” (Shore, 2007: 301; and Cohen 2003); the food has to be consumed by someone (tourist) from outside the destination/community and thus, it is: “the nature of the encounter that is what defines a food experience” (Long, 2004); and, therefore, culinary tourism.

2.4.2. Creative Food Economy and Slow Food Movement

In recent years, drawing from Florida’s (2002) idea of the ‘creative class’, ‘creativity’ is increasingly being promoted as being a fundamental driver of vibrant economies (Stolarick et al., 2010; and Shyllit and Spencer, 2011). However, most of this discourse has focused on cities and there is a need to extend these ideas and evaluate their relevance in other settings. In this thesis, culinary clusters are viewed as being a form of creative economy that is particularly well-suited to development in rural areas and small towns, although not all such places have the same potential, and culinary clusters need not be restricted to such places. In fact, culinary clusters are playing a vital role in place-based creative economies because a culinary cluster, itself, is a product within the creative economy.

Since the early 1970s, many communities around the world have been affected by the new economic development driven by the changing political economy. In relation to this situation, many rural communities have sought to broaden their economic base by moving away from their agricultural practices toward the development of more value-added industries. Consequently, culinary cluster development as an alternative strategy - defining the niche market possibilities, food services, and value chain to identify and utilize culinary market intelligence -

puts into practice place-based rural community development, particularly because of the potential leverage between the primary and service sectors of agriculture and tourism. As such, the driving forces stimulating the culinary phenomenon can be described in a number of ways.

In developed countries such as Canada, for instance, food is not just a necessity for survival; it can be a central aspect of an individual's holistic well-being. As individuals' quality of life improves, they are conscious about the pleasure of eating good quality food (Croce and Perri, 2010; and Hall et al., 2003). Pitte (2002) argues that in France, for example, 'eating-well' is one of the major driving forces of tourism. Culinary tourism as part of the creative economy promotes not only food-related local business opportunities but also individuals' healthy lifestyles. Food is considered to be one of the most important subjects in the discussion of an individual's holistic well-being: individuals can do nothing with DNA in that regard. Hall et al. (2003) argue that with diet and health concerns, there is a tendency that many individuals search on their trips for good quality, local food provided by responsible agricultural practices. Accordingly, like '*gastronome*' in French, '*gourmet*' in Greek connotes the informed consumer: that is, "one who takes an interest in what he eats and drinks, judging the quality of everything" (Pitte, 2002: 6). This awareness, in accordance with 'The Slow Food Movement' that originated in Italy, has led many individuals to seek locally-grown, good quality food.

Knox and Mayer (2009: 36) state that "the best practice of 'The Slow Movement' strategy has been 'The Slow Food Movement'". In particular, the creative food economy led by "The Slow Food Movement touches on important aspects that keep [rural area and small town] economies vital" (Knox and Mayer, 2009: 36). It is argued that the Slow Food Movement is not merely a tendency, but it is a fundamental change in the collective, global movement of many communities around the world (Petrini, 2005), including Ontario, Canada. Osborne (2009)

suggests that the “slow food strategy has been to forge equilibrium between the modern and the traditional life”.

Montanari (2006) and Levi-Strauss (1968) argue that ‘food is culture’ and “a society’s cuisine is a language in which it unconsciously expresses its structure, unless without knowing better, it resigns itself to revealing its constructions there” (quoted in Pitte, 2002: 150). The Slow Food Movement – “a political, social [and ecological] consciousness and taste” (Donald, 2009; Pollan, 2006, 2008; and Petrini, 2005) - has caught on in Canada. For example, there are 38 Canadian Convivia (community chapters) such as Slow Food Toronto, Slow Food Ottawa, Slow Food Stratford (as seen in Figure 1) and Slow Food Guelph in Ontario to name a few among 1,003 chapters of the International Convivium of The Slow Food Movement (Donald, 2009; and Slow Food International, 2009). Osborne (2009) points out that the movement celebrates the localities and cultural landscapes, and that places are creating unique identities and images and marketing themselves as a particular taste of a place, targeting gastronomically minded visitors.

This “eco-gastronomic locavore movement”, as Donald (2009) suggests, is seen as being an alternative to a fast-paced, fast-food oriented lifestyle”. It is an alternative strategy for supporting local food production as an essential constituent of the creative food economy, which reflects the global culinary movement, ever-increasing demand for local, authentic, and traditional food experiences - a creative food economy focused on local, small-scale culinary related businesses to protect from the corporate concentrations in food and agri-businesses that penetrate the markets, thereby out-competing smaller local businesses (Petrini, 2007). This alternative food strategy “brings together local producers and consumers in arrangements that cuts the corporate middle-man” (Woods, 2005: 39): the political movement of the slow food strategy aims at resisting the global standardization and/or homogenization of North American

style fast food, as well as promoting authentic and traditional cuisine (Petrini, 2007; and Woods, 2005).

Consequently, the organic food market in response to this shift is increasing rapidly in Canada, as well as in many other communities around the world. Statistical evidence in the recent studies about the organic food sector indicated that the organic food industry in Canada, for example, has been growing “at a constant rate of 15 to 20 percent per annum over the past decade” (University of Guelph press release, May 30, 2008; and Donald, 2009).

2006 data suggest that while less than 1% of the \$46.5 billion spent by Canadians on grocery sales in 2006 was for organically-grown food, there was an impressive 28% jump in sales from the previous year. Similarly, 2008 Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada notes that ethnic foods comprise a significant share of the market - 12% of annual retail sales - with 5% annual growth. Similarly, they suggest that the Canadian organic industry is worth \$1 billion with average annual retail sales growth of 20% (Donald, 2009).

Indeed, it is not surprising to note that, as the University of Guelph researchers in the department of Food, Agricultural and Resource Economics found, “in the eyes of the consumer, organic products are most appealing when they are locally grown” (University of Guelph press release, May 30, 2008). Donald (2009), a Queen’s University Geographer, further argues that Ontario, for instance, needs a ‘Ministry of Food’. This ministry should not simply focus on agricultural commodities from a strictly regional economic development perspective, but should address ‘food’ from all-encompassing aspects of economic, cultural and ecological systems. A ministry that considers the entire ‘food chain’ can put into practice the benefits of good quality food. Donald (2009) suggests that the province of Ontario has the opportunity to be at the forefront of food economy innovations.

Ontario’s food sector has grown by about 2–3% a year, but the creative food economy sub-sector (defined here as local, organic, specialty, and/or ethnic foods) has grown at a much faster rate - estimated to be anywhere between 15% and 25% per year. Traditional mainstream players also seem to be on board - from new

government programs that support the conversion of transition-farming into organic farming, to large industrial food processors that are now marketing healthier, organic or lighter options (2009).

Figure 1: Stratford Perth County Slow Food Convivia



Source: photo taken by author (2011)

2.4.3. The Emergence of Culinary Phenomenon as Central Aspect of Place Branding

As discussed, the development of culinary clusters as part of a creative economy is a relatively new phenomenon. However, the culinary phenomenon is far from merely ‘niche’ in the local and global markets (Hjalager and Richards, 2002), it has emerged as a central aspect of ‘place branding’ in place-based rural development. A vital characteristic of the development of culinary clusters through the creative process of place branding is that today “the serving and consumption of local food has become a global industry” (Hjalager and Richards, 2002). In this

process, the service sector of tourism has become a crucial element and the value chain of the industry has been emerged as a creative economy, which many of activities are related to tourism.

Murphy and S. Smith (2008) argue that “local foods are turned into marketable attractions”. “More than being simply about eating, the protection of the cultivated countryside and associated communities of the [small town] and rural area” also creates a taste of a place (Osborne, 2009) and attracts gastronomically minded visitors. Thus, there is a great potential for certain places to develop culinary clusters as part of the creative food economy, and provide value as experiences. Food is gaining increasing place branding activities, which contributes to the factors of attracting visitors to certain places (Hall and Sharples, 2003; and Ignatov, 2003). Accordingly, food has become a powerful tool for place branding to prompt the creation and expansion of a taste of a place (Hall et al., 2003).

Statistical evidence indicates that tourism spending on food and dining out in South Africa, by international visitors, for example, “averages 8 percent of total spending while the domestic tourist spends on average 24 percent” (du Rand, Heath and Albert, 2002 quoted in Hall et al., 2003). Furthermore,

In Australia, international visitors spent on average of (A\$ 4066) on each trip in 1999 – 2000. Visitors from China spent the most, averaging (A\$ 6070), followed by the USA (\$ 5899), other Europe (A\$ 5411) and Indonesia (A\$ 5279). The lowest average expenditure (A\$ 1808) per visitor was by visitors from New Zealand... People visiting for other reasons (e.g., education, employment and health) spent 26 percent of their total expenditure on food, drink, and accommodation. The largest expenditure items of business visitors were prepaid international airfares and food, drink and accommodation (42 percent and 27 percent of total expenditure respectively) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2000 quoted in Hall et al., 2003).

Recently, the government of Thailand, for example, has initiated its nation branding project (‘bid to build Thai cuisine as a branding and tourism promotion initiative’) to make connections globally and promote its country as a culinary place. The nation branding project is

designed to capitalize on, increase global recognition of Thai cuisine, and boost exports of Thai culinary related products (bangkok-market.com: Sep 30th, 2009).

About 400 overseas participants, including operators and owners of Thai restaurants overseas, are expected to join the five-day project called “Amazing Tastes of Thailand” being organized between September 22 - 27, 2009 at Central World Bangkok and major provinces in Thailand (Sep 30th, 2009).

According to Thailand’s Ministry of Commerce, the government plans to grow “the number of Thai restaurants overseas from 13,000 locations in 2009 to 15,000 locations in 2010 as part of the second phase of Thailand’s ‘Kitchen of the World’ project”, aimed at heightening Thai culinary product exports (bangkok-market.com: Sep 30th, 2009). When considering the fact that numerous visitors come to Thailand for Thai cuisine, the culinary related product consumption is a vital element of visitor expenditure in Thailand (Sep 30th, 2009).

In 2007, visitors to Thailand spent an average of 4,120.95 baht per person per day, of which 17.74 percent was on food and beverage. The participants will also include restaurant managers, chefs specializing in Thai and other cuisines, as well as food critics and writers. Geographically, they hail from East Asian countries (158); ASEAN and South Asia and South Pacific (89); Europe, Africa, and Middle East (134); and America (42) (Sep 30th, 2009).

That said, although food has increasingly been an important theme in many countries’ branding strategy both in domestic and global markets, this kind of holistic branding practice is still relatively uncommon. However, Henderson (2007) suggests that there is an appreciation that tourism is a useful channel for holistic place branding communications and that “the tourism industry has always been involved in branding [places] and nations” led by DMOs and NTOs (National Tourism Organizations), which represent their places and countries in the world (Henderson, 2007). Thus, more and more DMOs and NTOs are adopting place branding as a strategy for a nation or city marketing. Although place branding schemes to coordinate this kind of creative initiative exist in Ontario, Canada, these are regional initiatives, not national ones.

Regional initiatives have also been developed in many European countries such as France (Frochot, 2003), Italy (Risitano, 2005), Spain (Gilmore, 2002a), and England (Hjalager and Richards, 2002). Examples of these kind of place branding initiatives can also be found in the US (Wolf, 2011), Australia, and New Zealand (Hall et al., 2003).

As seen in many cases of regional and national culinary movements aiming at promoting a region's and/or nation's image as a culinary place, the creative food economy development associated with special food events has been organized domestically and globally by some of the leading countries in this field in East Asia such as Korea, Japan, and Singapore. Recently, the government of Korea, as one of its nation branding strategies such as the 'Global Korean Restaurant' project and 'Amazing Korean Cuisine to the World', has launched a number of successful special Korean food events both domestically and internationally, such as in the US, UK and France, and has received great attention from potential international culinary tourists, media, and food writers. As part of these initiatives and to promote greater effort on the exporting of Korean culinary products, the nation branding strategy related to food is emphasized on the most crucial part of Korean cuisine that is the idea of food traditionally focused not only on eating-well but also for medical/health purposes. In addition, the government of Japan has started its project called 'Try Japan's Good Food' as part of its nation-branding strategies of Japanese cuisine to the world (Eyes on South Korea, Oct 16th 2009).

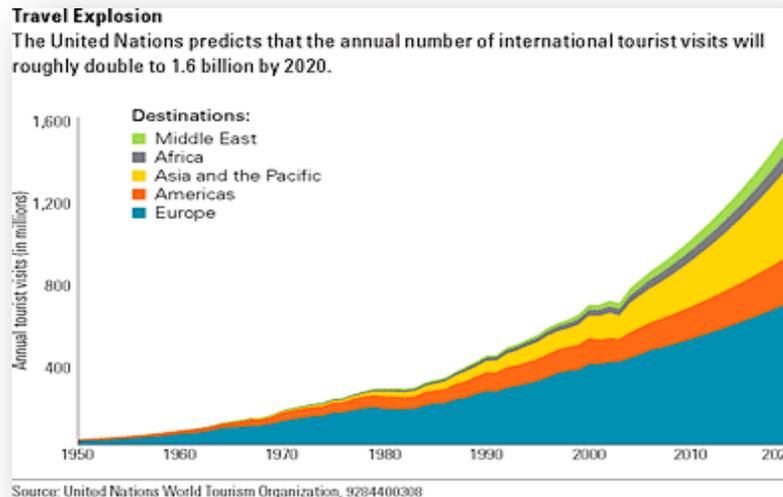
As detailed in the cases, and the related issues of regional and national culinary movement identified in other countries, food has played a significant role in place branding and has great potential to enhance the identity of certain places. In this respect, Porter (1998) argues that the enduring competitive advantages in a global economy lie ever more in local things (e.g., local knowledge, relationships, and motivation) that outlying competitors cannot match (i.e.,

think globally, act locally). Therefore, policy makers have become concerned with maximizing the returns available from the creative food economy, and both private and public players will need to work in partnership and seek opportunities for strategic alliances.

2.4.4. Creation of a New and/or Additional Taste of a Place

According to *The Economist* article, ‘The Tourism Time Bomb’ (April 14th 2008), the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) predicts that “international tourist visits are expected to double soon, from nearly 800 million in 2008 to 1.6 billion by 2020” (as shown in Figure 2). As a result, because only so many individuals can visit particular tourism places in a given year or given time, this demand for travel will lead to a ‘scarcity of place’ (i.e., in the sense that most well-known places around the world, which have unique place identity and image, will be packed by visitors) (*The Economist* April 14th 2008).

Figure 2: Travel Explosion (UNWTO)



Source: The Economist (April 14th 2008)

The Economist article states that many new middle-income people around the world - especially in the emerging economy - will not only want to buy the 'things' but also the 'experience' (i.e., tourism industry is considered as an experience industry). These economic indicators and cultural trends in the emerging economy have fundamentally changed the tourism industry; and thus, it is apparent that places should make the necessary adjustments to respond and adapt to those economic and cultural changes (Eastern Ontario Economic Summit, 2010).

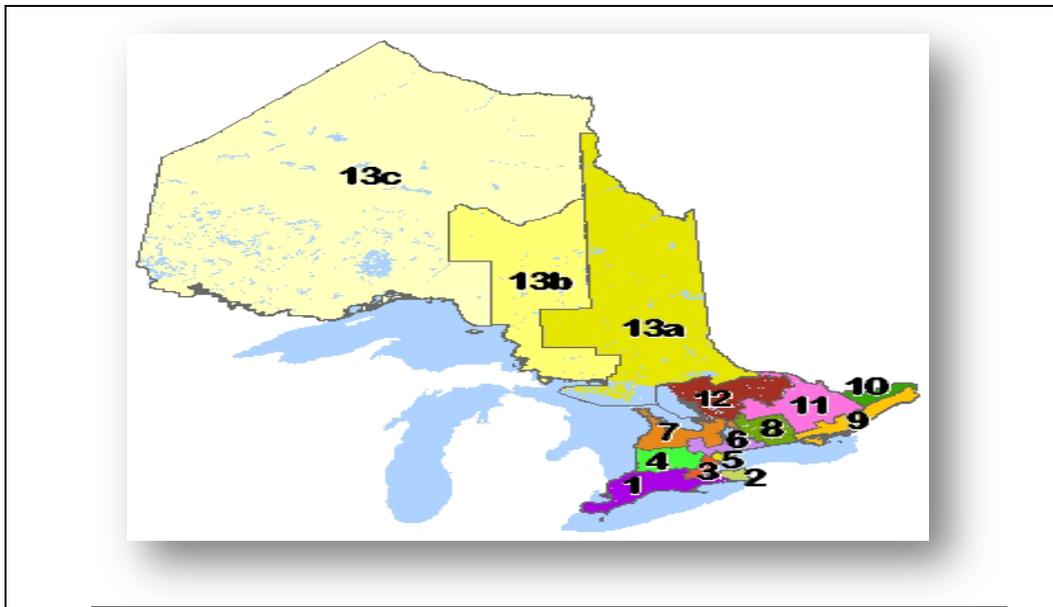
Accordingly, *The Economist* (April 14th 2008) has predicted the following tourism market responses. First, 'prices' related to the tourism industry in most well-known tourism places, such as for restaurants, air travel, accommodations, museums and attraction admissions, sport and entertainment events, and transportation will continue to rise as demand exceeds supply. In addition, *The Economist* also has predicted that many governments may respond to this demand by imposing additional charges on travel to the most trendy places to control demand, concerned about the impact of increasing mass tourism on certain places and thus, also restricting the number of visitors to the places (*The Economist* April 14th 2008).

Second, 'rationing' – the situation discussed above will lead to longer waiting lists. As the longer waiting lists or restricted access becomes more common, this situation will paradoxically stimulate demand. As a result, the value of 'place' will give rise to a multiplicity of small scale tourism-related business opportunities and this will prompt the creation of new and/or additional places, particularly in many rural areas and small towns (*The Economist* April 14th 2008) around the world, including Canada. Thus, many places in rural communities will find opportunities to benefit by meeting the specific wants and needs of their local and international visitors. However, these places should develop the prerequisite of tourism infrastructure that is determined to promote environmentally friendly tourism to meet the

equilibrium between environment and tourism; and both private and public sectors will need to work in partnership and seek opportunities for strategic alliances (*The Economist* April 14th 2008).

In line with the above discussion, it is important to note as an example that the province of Ontario, Canada is in the process of implementing 13 new regional organizations that are mandated by the Ministry of Tourism and Culture to do not only new product development and human resource development but also place marketing and branding. This is a crucial building block that will dramatically reshape place-based rural development through the creative process of place branding. A detailed map and geographical areas of 13 New Regional Tourism Organizations can be seen in Figure 3 and Table 1.

Figure 3: Map of 13 New Regional Tourism Organizations



Source: The Ministry of Tourism official website (2011)

Table 1: 13 New Industry-led & Not-for-Profit Regional Tourism Organizations

1	Southwest Ontario Region
2	Niagara Falls and Wine Country Region
3	Hamilton, Halton and Brant Region
4	Huron, Perth, Waterloo and Wellington Region
5	Greater Toronto Area Region
6	York, Durham and Hills of Headwaters Region
7	Bruce Peninsula, Southern Georgian Bay and Lake Simcoe Region
8	Kawartha and Northumberland Region
9	South Eastern Ontario Region
10	Ottawa and Countryside Region
11	Haliburton Highlands to the Ottawa Valley Region
12	Muskoka, Parry Sound and Algonquin Park Region
13a	North East Ontario Region
13b	North Central Ontario Region
13c	North West Ontario Region

Source: The Ministry of Tourism official website (2011)

2.4.5. Cultural Places as a Distinctive Place Identity and Image: ‘Maison de Van Gogh’

There are many specific places where well-defined small areas (*terroir*) with distinctive cultural characteristics and associated products have been transformed into a taste of a place. In the development of a creative food economy, the concept of a ‘sense of place’, which poses an artistic atmosphere, is central: visitors are attracted to a specific place that has established a ‘sense of place’ that promises to offer unique cultural experiences.

The place of *Van Gogh’s* last home, as an example, is widely considered to be one of France’s most beautifully developed cultural places, which is focused on arts and local, authentic cuisine. “The Auberge Ravoux, a café/inn of its day, is located in Auvers-sur-Oise, a small artists’ colony, twenty-two miles northwest of Paris” (Leaf and Leeman, 2001: 1). It was “one of few places in the world where its essential geographical environment embodies all of the emotions of an epoch”: it was the village for the 19th Century painters and artists (Leaf and Leeman, 2001: 2). The café/inn traditionally had had a restaurant, as well as an art gallery, and the gallery had exhibited the work of local artists (Leaf and Leeman, 2001).

In 1993, the development project of ‘Maison de Van Gogh’ was completed. It opened its door with the vision of bringing back to life, an arctic atmosphere that *Van Gogh* had once enjoyed. The caférestaurant has created what Leaf and Leeman (2001) see as a spiritual refuge (sense of place) where people can connect on an emotional level with his art and feelings, memories and experiences. The café is now thriving as in *Van Gogh’s* day, and popular travel guides commend the virtues of the cultural place as well as the local French cuisine of the Auberge Ravoux.

Dining in the very room where *Van Gogh* took his meals in 1890 in the charming village of Auvers-sur-Oise is a moving experience: Ravoux’s kitchen evokes the flavors and cooking style of *Van Gogh’s* time by revisiting classic French dishes such as *gigot de sept heures*, *blanquette de veau*, *boeuf Bourgignon*... (2001: 92).

Many visitors from all over the world have enjoyed the Maison de Van Gogh, having the dreams that *Van Gogh* once wrote to his brother about: *Theo*, “*I feel that I am always a traveler, going somewhere to a destination; some day or other, I believe I will find a way of having an exhibition of my own in a café*” (Leaf and Leeman, 2001). However, the organizers of the café restaurant have come to the realization that it is environmentally unfriendly. Thus, in an effort to preserve and sustain the beautifully developed artistic taste of place that is characterized by “simplicity, aesthetics and harmony” (Leaf and Leeman, 2001: 3), the organizers have controlled the high demand and restricted the number of visitors to the place: the Maison de Van Gogh only attracts or caters to 100,000 visitors a year (Leaf and Leeman, 2001: 3).

In summary, as seen in the case of Maison de Van Gogh, development of a place-based creative food economy tends to occur in special places, in geographically concentrated areas, and development policies are emphasized that draw upon and, ideally, enhance cultural and artistic heritage and natural attractions. To be successful, uniquely creative place identities and images must be created that are rooted in the hard factors of natural environment and soft factors of

artistic heritage to promote gastronomic learning experiences (Croce and Perri, 2010). As a result, the development of a place-based creative food economy through the process of place branding aims at increasing the quality and attractiveness of a place; creating a unique identity for a place; and, thus, making connections between the visitors and place, thereby stimulating flows of visitors and capital from multiple origins to that places.

2.5. The Culinary Movement in Canada

Canadian geographers are interested in promoting the culinary movement as part of a creative food economy. The Canadian Association of Geographers suggests that “a plate piled high with Atlantic shrimp or BC salmon, for example, is the definition of eating pleasure for some gastronomically-minded visitors, but it could also be a learning experience” (Fuhrmann: Canadian Press, October 13th 2009). Fuhrmann (Canadian Press, October 13th 2009) states that the Canadian Association of Geographers encourages the culinary movement in Canada: “dining out on good local food while on holiday in Canada has received the stamp of approval” from the association, which has named 10 websites that highlight specialties across the country.

The list - covering everything from Nova Scotia fiddleheads to B.C. wines to Yukon Arctic char - is being offered as part of the association’s annual promotional effort, Geography Awareness Week (Nov.16-20), and to point out the benefits of culinary movement (Canadian Press, October 13th 2009).

In addition, Kenneally (2009: 167) argues that “there is a Canadian cuisine, which distinctively crafts Canadian food culture and it is unique in all the world”. For example, in 1967, Canada held its centennial celebration of Montreal Expo 67 - “the international exhibition attended by some 50 million visitors”. Accordingly, Kenneally (2009: 167) points out that “at 32 of the pavilions” many restaurants and chefs represented the distinctive mosaic culture of Canada as a whole. “The Canada pavilion was not simply architecture at the exhibition, it was the host country’s carefully presented repository of architecture, material culture, ideology and aspiration”

(Kenneally, 2009: 168), as well as an international invitation to the uniquely Canadian culinary experiences.

According to Ferguson (1995), Canadian cuisine is represented by the mosaic cultural identity, which reflects the region's *'terroir'*. Canada is renowned for having many personality chefs exploring their regional origins (Ignatov, 2003) and creating the mosaic culture of Canadian cuisine, using local and seasonal ingredients: i.e., the internationally acclaimed chef, John Higgins who used to be the executive chef in the Cafe Victoria restaurant at The King Edward Hotel Toronto and now became a dean of the Culinary Management program at George Brown College; and Michael Smith; Rob Feenien; and Anna Olsen/Michael Olsen who frequently appear on star TV shows.

In addition to the list of 10 websites approved by the Canadian Association of Geographers, there are many websites regarding culinary clusters provided by the destination marketing organizations in each province. For instance, Hidden Wineries of BC (winegrowers.bc.ca) and the Okanagan Valley Cultural Corridor offer an example of how the two sectors of tourism and agriculture have clustered to promote local food and wine along with other cultural heritage such as local people, stories of place and arts (Ignatov, 2003). In Quebec, the Quebec's Gourmet Route (La Route des Saveurs) in the region of Quebec's Charlevoix celebrates the beauty of French cuisine, linking the agriculture and tourism sectors, offering uniquely French gastronomic experiences (parcours gourmand.com/eng/tour.asp). The Select Nova Scotia brings together Atlantic Canada's food experiences, showcasing Nova Scotia's cultural heritage (www.selectnovascotia.ca) (Ignatov, 2003). As the creative food economy and culinary movement has emerged in Canada, these examples of a distinctive mosaic culture of

Canadian gastronomic invitations to domestic and international culinary visitors will grow, and there will be more offerings of uniquely mosaic culture of Canadian culinary experiences.

2.5.1. The Culinary Movement in Ontario: 'The Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance'

Although lacking a global reputation as a culinary place, the most populous province, Ontario is well positioned both domestically and globally to attract culinary visitors. Being acquainted with the uniqueness of the mosaic culture and geographical characteristics of '*terroir*', the government of Ontario is devoted to establishing a value chain of culinary clusters as part of a creative food economy in many rural communities in Ontario. According to the OCTA website (2011), in April 2006, the '10-year Ontario Culinary Tourism Strategy and Action Plan' was announced by Ontario Minister of Tourism. The 10-year strategy and action plan led by the Ministry of Tourism worked with "5 regions (Ottawa, Greater Toronto, Niagara, Greater Ottawa and Muskoka/Parry Sound), which were identified to help with the initial phase of implementation in these regions" (OCTA official website, 2011). It is now attracting many regions across the province invested in developing the creative food economy based on local, authentic cuisine.

In 2008 the 'Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance' (OCTA), which has come to play an important role in current creative food economy and culinary tourism development, is transitioned from ministry to industry lead (OCTA official website, 2011). Located in Prince Edward County, the not-for-profit, industry-oriented leading organization was established to facilitate the culinary movement in Ontario, which aims at promoting the creative food economy in conjunction with The Slow Food Movement. Thus, local governments, the OCTA and many small-scale culinary-related businesses are actively initiating the culinary movement in Ontario. The OCTA stated that "culinary tourism in Ontario will help build and sustain regional identities

and agricultural resources and food supplies; present opportunities to develop new quality tourism products and experiences; and become a way in which we share our story and tell it with pride” (OTCA official website, 2011).

In particular, the OCTA “helps build capacity for the Ontario culinary tourism supply chains” by networking and partnering growers, producers, processors, tourism operators and other associations involved in the culinary clusters. The OCTA is currently “made up of over 30 organizations and 25 regions representing more than 10,000 businesses across the province” (OCTA official website, 2011). In response to the rapidly growing interest in the creative food economy regionally, nationally and globally, various industries, stakeholders, businesses in the two sectors of tourism and agriculture are coming together in the new value chain of the creative food production and consumption nexus.

In summary, in recent years there has been increasing creative economic initiatives in place-based rural community development. It follows that the creative food economy in rural community development depends on promoting region’s agricultural sector along with the slow food strategy, which is contributing factors to the quality of life and lifestyle of local individuals and tourists alike. Culinary tourism development as part of a creative food economy in rural communities should emphasize local factors – building on local competitive advantages, local resources, local products and local distinctiveness. Such creative economic activities can best be achieved through making connections of local players that can have access to shared information and knowledge, ideas and best practices, such as local business leaders, those involved in either tourism or agriculture or both, local interest groups and local government.



Source: photo taken by author at dinner table in Savour Stratford member restaurant (2011)

3.0. CHAPTER THREE: CREATION OF A CONCEPTUAL MODEL

Based upon elaboration of the extensive literature review presented in the previous chapter, this chapter creates a conceptual model for the study through the modification of Porter's clustering model (known as 'diamond model') (1990). To create the conceptual model, interrelated themes and relevant concepts in the formation of a culinary cluster as part of a creative food economy in place-based rural development are discussed. Finally, detailed discussions of the 'clustering model' originated by Porter (1990) are presented. 'Four interdependent determinants' and 'four facilitators' of the creative process (innovation) are proposed in the foundation of the conceptual model: *'Terroir into a Creative and Environmentally Friendly Taste of a Place'*. The model is substantially modified to apply to a culinary cluster, and it will be used as a tool to organize the collection of data/information from the two case study sites, and to guide the analysis of that collected data/information.

3.1. A 'TERROIR' into a Creative and Environmentally Friendly Taste of a Place

3.1.1. The Concept of a 'Terroir'

As noted, Pitte (2002) argues that in France, for instance, the formation of a culinary cluster is pursued in particular cultural places and is associated with specific geographical characteristics of French *'terroir'*. These characteristics draw upon the local environment, as well as human interactions often in the form of agricultural products: i.e., wine and cheese, and white asparagus: "prior to the first quarter of the 19th Century, the asparagus that were popularly grown in France were green" (Leaf and Leeman, 2001: 138). Thus, *'terroir'* has become a concept recognizing the 'sense of place' in the taste of local food: the concept *'terroir'* brings together the geographic, economic and cultural aspects of place-based development that creates a particular taste of a place (Croce and Perri, 2010). The geographical characteristics of *'terroir'* and

associated human interaction together construct the cultural landscape of the locality (place or region) - a set of conditions for producing high-quality culinary products with creative and artistic characteristics of the place (place identity and image), which reflect their place of origin (Croce and Perri, 2010).

Hence, in development of a culinary cluster the concept of '*terroir*' is central: residents and visitors are attracted to a specific place that has established a unique cultural and artistic landscape, which can be used to create a distinctive place identity and image. A '*terroir*', well-defined and highly specialized place with distinctive cultural characteristics and associated products (Croce and Perri, 2010), can be converted into a creative and environmentally friendly taste of a place. According to Knox and Mayer (2009: 36), "the concept of '*terroir*' has a long history".

It was first codified in France in 1855 when Napoleon III established the Grand Cru wine areas of Bordeaux. Subsequently, other wine regions were recognized as areas of traditional food production, such as Parma (for prosciutto), and Modena (for balsamic vinegar). In 1993, the EU introduced regulations to protect these so-called designations of origin; by 2008 the EU had identified almost 750 place-based foods (Knox and Mayer, 2009: 36).

[...] rooted in French, '*terroir*' encapsulates the idea that a particular interplay of geography, history and human factors imbues foods with a particular taste that cannot be recreated elsewhere. The term is usually closely associated with European wine; however, today, it is used in the popular press to describe artisanal foods from different continents. French has long used the idea of *terroir* to instill pride and promote its own culinary authenticity among citizens and tourists alike (Musgrave, 2009: 158).

3.1.2. Place-based Development through Place Branding in the Geographical Context

Hague and Jenkins (2005) state that strategic alliances among local businesses, developers and governments have been formed to respond to the changing global economy and they have introduced place branding practices in place-based rural community development to create or

enhance place identities. At the end of the 20th Century, the restructuring of the global economic system occurred at a rapid rate. In relation to the changes, the restructuring of place identities has been occurring at multiple scales (Hague and Jenkins, 2005). For example, the process of economic diversification, such as culinary cluster development, has been introduced to many rural communities around the world. Although much of the reconstruction of place identities has been associated with urban development, it has also occurred in other places, including rural communities (Hague and Jenkins, 2005). Such development strategies are frequently adopted to improve the qualities and attractiveness of a place with the objective of improving local well-being through the attraction of visitors and investments.

In consideration of place branding approaches to place-based community development, Oppermann (1997) suggests that there is a significant role of geography in place branding (quoted in Lew and Timothy, 2008). Arguably, Oppermann (1997) states that ‘geography’ is the most important variable in place branding as it is emphasized on the key concept of ‘place’ (place-based branding) (quoted in Lew and Timothy, 2008). More specifically, Lew et al. (2008: 21) argue that “geography is important to the development of tourism because tourism is geographical in its nature”. Tourism occurs in places; it involves movement and activities across ‘space’ – between places; and includes activities in which place identity and image are created through the relationships established among places, landscapes and people (Lew and Timothy, 2008).

Thus, it is important to note that “place studies [in tourism perspective give emphasis to the creation of the characteristics] that make one location distinct from another while ‘space’ studies focus on the relationship between and among places” (Lew and Timothy, 2008: 21). Hence, the geographical settings provide the crucial background in relation to which tourism

places are created with distinctive identity and image (sense of place) (Lew et al., 2008). As a result, there is a growing body of literature, and the practice of place branding in the geographical context that has developed based in large part on these ideas (e.g., Oppermann, 1997; and Hall, 1997; Hague and Jenkins, 2005; and Lew and Timothy, 2008). Therefore, it is important to define the relevant concepts of place branding in the geographical context.

3.1.3. Defining the Relevant Concepts of Place Branding

3.1.3.1. 'Space' and 'Place'

Lew et al. (2008) argue that geography deals with the two basic concepts of 'space' and 'place', which are closely linked to one another. The concept of 'space' is central in geography and geographers seek to determine the reasons that places are located where they are, and why they develop the identity and image that they possess. Thus, Lew et al. (2008) suggest that the understanding of aspects of space and spatial relationships is fundamental to geography, and geographers study how places relate to one another over space. For example, the concept of 'space' is usually used to connote absolute location as it may be specified by latitude and longitude, and dimensions such as size and shape. These attributes also underpin the concept of 'place'.

According to Lew et al. (2008), Davenport and Anderson (2005), and Manzo and Perkins (2006), 'space' is organized into places in which human interactions and social identities are constructed. They further argue that such places are complex geographical entities that are concerned with meanings and shared memories. Davenport and Anderson (2005) argue that places are usually defined as socially constructed complex entities created by human activities and experiences where meanings are attached to specific geographic locations over time. These academics suggest that humans live not only in a 'space' (e.g., the geometric charter of

associations), but also they live in a 'place' where meanings are attached. The 'place' is created and maintained as a result of individuals' and groups' emotional attachments to a physical 'space'. According to Manzo and Perkins (2006), because 'place' is a socially constructed entity, it is the context in which human interactions and cultural relationships occur. Thus, a place can both create and reflect individual and cultural identities.

Lew et al. (2008) state that in many academic disciplines, 'space' and 'place' are often used as synonymous with related concepts such as region, area, location and landscape. However, in a geographical context, "places are a point of presence – a place exists and has a location"; and thus, "geographic places exist in a geographical space" (Lew et al., 2008: 11). As a consequence, geographers attempt to develop an awareness of the qualities of a place that makes it distinctive; and the qualities and attractiveness of a place may give rise to a strong 'sense of place'. As such, a place can have distinctively appealing place identity and image. Thus, the emphasis in the geographical context is given to such interconnected phenomena of 'space' and 'place' and it is important for geographers to depict precisely the characteristics of places: "a place location is fundamental to understanding a place's characteristics; place description is part of the art of geography" (Lew et al., 2008: 11).

In line with the 'place', 'space', 'region' and 'location' discussions, it is important to note that according to Martin Prosperity Institute ¹, which focuses on development of a creative economy, 'location', 'place', 'city-regions' can be defined as 'sub-national factors' in global economic prosperity: the institute as world leading think-tank on the role of sub-national factors takes an integrated view of global economic prosperity "looking beyond the economic measures to include the importance of quality of place and the development of people's creative potential".

¹ Martin Prosperity Institute at University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management:
<http://martinprosperity.org/>

3.1.3.2. Regional Synthesis

The various components of geography are brought together in the study of ‘place’, particularly place-based branding focused on regional amalgamation. In the study of regional geography, it is important to note that the special or distinctive place identity and image of a region – a sense of place – constitute a major theme (Lew et al., 2008). According to Lew et al. (2008), a region, as an area with some common attributes, should have cultural and natural characteristics that make it different from other places. These characteristics will influence the attractiveness of a place, and involve connections between humans and places (i.e., tourism development is directed to specific geographical places with distinctive cultural and environmental attributes).

Many geographers (e.g., Norton, 2007; Davenport and Anderson, 2005; Manzo and Perkins, 2006; and Lew et al., 2008) argue that a place comes into being when humans give meanings to a space. Hence, according to Norton (2007), geographers are interested in why some particular places have special meanings to particular individuals. Places that have powerful attributes (e.g., sense of place) can possess characteristically built place identities and images (Lew et al., 2008; Davenport and Anderson, 2005; and Manzo and Perkins, 2006), which are perceived by both residents and visitors. This unique place identity and image is created in individuals’ perceptions that are associated with experiences, emotions, feelings and memories. These perceptions are derived from the soft factors of cultural heritage, such as local people, local arts and stories of the place as well as hard factors of geographical settings, such as attractions. Hence, a ‘space’ can be divided into regions based on such criteria (e.g., economic and cultural regions). As such, places can also be differentiated and specialized according to their distinctive identity and image. Therefore, the individuality and unique attributes of particular places, the creation of place identity, as well as the improvement of the quality (e.g.

economy) and attractiveness of a place are major themes used in the study of regional geography that have a direct relation to the development of a place-based creative food economy through place branding.

3.1.3.3. *Place Identity*

The concept of place identity is used widely in the geographical context of place branding. Indeed, the concept of ‘characteristic’ in relation to the concept of place identity is most commonly used by geographers especially in respect to the impact of new regional development on existing townscapes (Hague and Jenkins, 2005). Hague and Jenkins argue that “the concept of ‘place identity’ that most frequently underpins planning and design [research] is the ‘*genius loci*’ view of place” (2005: 5). There are vital cultural and natural characteristics that identify a place. Hague and Jenkins (2005) stress that there are objective physical realities in a place as well as personal and highly individual reactions to any place, and the latter are triggered not only by tangible constituents but also by intangible meanings, feelings, memories and experiences because a place is relational, and conveys syntactic relations (Hague and Jenkins, 2005). Therefore, Hague and Jenkins argue that the process of reconstructing a narrative that constitutes an identity transforms a ‘space’ into a ‘place’: “places are places and not just spaces because they have unique place identities; and thus, place identities are shaped through feelings, meanings, memories and experiences” (2005: 5).

As discussions revealed, geography can help to provide an understanding of the environmental, economic and cultural characteristics that are combined to shape place identities and tourism activities, as well as the particular uniqueness and meanings that are attached to them through human interactions. In this process, as argued by Lew et al. (2008), a ‘sense of place’ becomes a driving force in the creation of place identities and images. Therefore, place

branding in the geographical context of place-based development can be identified as a process that involves humans (precisely human behaviors) and the relations between humans and places (i.e., tourism has a direct link to specific places). Hence, the ultimate goal of place branding in place-based development is to identify and create the characteristics of a place; to improve the quality and attractiveness of a place; and to make connections between humans and place (regional synthesis).

3.1.3.4. Place Branding in the Management Approach

In an examination of place branding practices, such as the transformation of the Town of Cobalt, Ontario, Canada into a mining heritage tourism place, Stern and Hall (2010) argue that place branding based on the industry-oriented approach focuses greatly on attracting investors and satisfying visitors. As a result, it has limiting impacts and consequences for place-based rural community development by narrowing possibilities in the transformation of rural communities into a tourism place rather than opening up new possibilities for improving the economic, cultural and environmental well-being of residents.

Place branding in the industry-oriented, management approach by and large refers to tourism place brand management as represented by a functionally structured organization such as a destination marketing organization (DMO), and the tourism place as a brand should be created and managed by the DMO (Morgan et al., 2010). Morgan et al. (2010) argue that, in spite of the fundamental role of the DMO as a place brand management organization, there is a lack of understanding about its role in tourism place branding. That is, the absence of control by the DMO over the constituent of the excellence of 'service' and tourist 'experience', among other things, can lead to an inconsistent coordination of the place branding process (Morgan et al., 2010).

In this respect, there is a consensus in tourism place branding about the possibility of effectively using the service branding techniques to the development of a place brand (Kotler et al., 1993; Morgan et al., 2010; and Moilanen and Rainisto, 2009). However, as acknowledged by these researchers, for a firm conventional service branding is a management process that has clearly identified objectives to disseminate the messages to clearly segmented customers (Moilanen and Rainisto, 2009). The objectives in conventional branding are, by and large, related to ‘sales’ and ‘promotion’ in concert with an economic performance (Moilanen and Rainisto, 2009). In other words, it is traditionally focused on ‘segmentation’ – categorization of customers; ‘targeting’ – selection of groups; and ‘positioning’ – distribution of products/services to the categorized customers and selected groups. Thus, researchers argue that “it is impossible to brand [tourism places] exactly in the same way by using the conventional branding techniques” (Moilanen and Rainisto, 2009).

For example, culinary tourism places are not simply tangible products or intangible services of a particular firm, but they are a composite product – a combination of tourism products/services, tourists, the tourism industry and the host community that occur in and tie together the complex economic, cultural, political and environmental situations. There is a group of public and private sectors, and various service providers who play a vital role in the tourism place branding process (Moilanen and Rainisto, 2009). Because the tourism place is a composite product, firms and suppliers involved in the place branding process may have different ideas about place brands, which may be difficult to bring together within the integrated concept of a place brand (Henderson, 2007; and Moilanen and Rainisto, 2009). Therefore, these dissimilarities in the branding process logically ground the distinctions in tourism place branding. The emphasis in this approach is on place brand management leadership and coordination of an

organization. Key individuals who are responsible for place brand management should lead the various firms and organizations involved in the branding process to create the consistent characteristics of a tourism place as a brand (Morgan et al., 2010; and Moilanen and Rainisto, 2009).

In summary, the success of place-based development through place branding depends, by and large, on the combination of the cultural atmosphere and natural environment as it exists in a locality. Place-based development through place branding is aimed at increasing the quality and attractiveness of a place, creating a unique identity and image for a place; and thus, making connections between humans and the place, thereby stimulating flows of visitors and capital from multiple origins to that place. Thus, these factors should be incorporated into the creation of place identities and images. For these reasons, creation of uniquely appealing place characteristics, as well as connections between visitors and the place should be central in the place-based development strategy.

3.1.4. Clustering: Spatial Agglomeration and Local Milieu

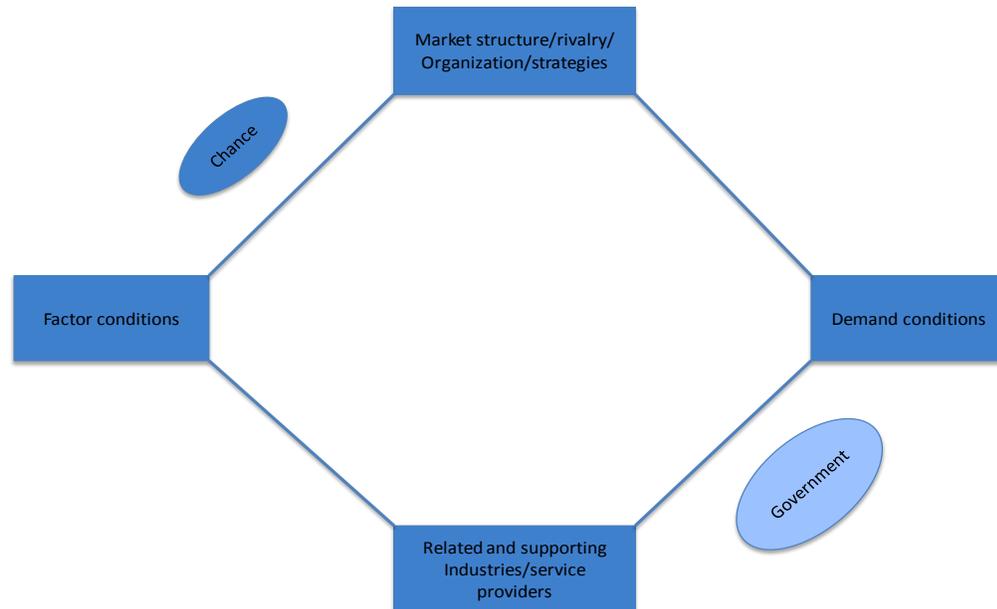
Clustering involves geographical concentration usually within a well-defined geographical area. It commonly involves both vertical and horizontal linkages among interconnected firms and suppliers within an area. Thus, clustering is inherently scale-specific (i.e., a distribution that is clustered at the global scale might be dispersed at the local scale). In economic geography the concept of clustering is used in general terms of ‘spatial agglomeration’ and ‘local milieu’ as a vehicle of innovation systems – a set of relationships among interconnected enterprises, related suppliers and service providers that strengthen network activities and stimulate the transformation of such activities into innovation processes for economic development at various scales (e.g., local or regional and national) (Echeverri-Carroll and Brennan, 1999; Cassiolato et

al., 2003; Camagni, 1991; Camagni and Capello, 1999; and Fischer et al., 1999).

Porter (1990) defines 'clustering' as: groups of interconnected firms, specialized suppliers, service providers, and institutions (e.g., universities and colleges) that occur in geographically concentrated areas; a group of complementary, competing, and interdependent firms that are significant forces in economic development and competitive advantages through the clustered production (quoted in Woodward, 2005). Hence, organizations and service providers involved in clustering can be synergistic and leverage economic development from shared access to marketing intelligence, supply chains, and knowledge and information flows (Woodward, 2005).

Many academics (Echeverri-Carroll and Brennan, 1999; Carayannis et al., 2008; Lagnevik et al., 2003; Vanhove, 2005; and Woodward, 2005) argue that clustering has become central to an economic development policy in the early 21st Century: clustering has become a new way of thinking in economic development for both private and public sectors, focused on measuring and evaluating the competitive advantages of geographical locations as well as setting regional economic development policies. In economic development clustering is forefront both in developed and developing countries (OECD, 1999; and Woodward, 2005). The clustering strategy, an approach to economic development, stresses the innovation process that occurs in response to the restructuring of the knowledge-based global economy, and serves as the basis for development policy (Carayannis et al., 2008; Lagnevik et al., 2003; and OECD, 1999).

Figure 4: Clustering Model (Diamond Model)



Source: Porter (1990)

The central idea of clustering is that the key factors of production are not only inherited but also are created by innovation activities. According to Woodward (2005), in the traditional economic theory the emphasis is given to the factors such as land, location, natural resources, labour and the size of local population that are the key factors underpinning the competitive advantage for regions. Factor-driven economies, as Porter (1990) argues, embody an opening and/or early stage of development; however, ‘competitive advantage’ is the result of four determinants that are interdependent (as seen in Figure 4): ‘factor conditions’; ‘demand conditions’; ‘market structure/rivalry/organizations/strategies’; and ‘related, supporting industries/service providers’ (Woodward, 2005; and Vanhove, 2005). Clusters are created and

achieved by the private sector with government adopting the role of a facilitator (Woodward, 2005; and Vanhove, 2005).

As a result, clustering, which focuses on innovation activities, emphasizes the establishment of regional capacity and it has reshaped economic development policy thinking (OECD, 1999). A clustering strategy can allow the economic structure to continue to be dynamic in the face of the restructuring of the knowledge-based global economy (Hill and Jones, 2007): i.e., clusters provide ‘connectivity’ in pooling a scarcity of resources (e.g., financial, organizational and human resources), and developing place marketing intelligence and customer relations. Thus, clusters will increase productivity, local competitiveness, and new entrepreneurial activities (e.g., diversification of industrial structure) through the innovation process, leading to a virtuous cycle of economic systems (Hill and Jones, 2007; Jackson and Murphy, 2006; Echeverri-Carroll and Brennan, 1999; Woodward, 2005; and OECD, 1999).

3.1.5. Environmentally Friendly Movement

Tourism development is directed to specific geographical places with distinctive environmental and cultural attributes. Traditionally, in addition to the natural environment, tourism development has focused commonly on human-made attractions such as golf clubs, resorts, casinos and other entertainment and shopping facilities, which require huge investments and are labour intensive tourism-related businesses. They can create positive economic benefits through income generation and job creation.

However, it is important to note that research that evaluates tourism impacts and consequences has stressed the fact that the traditional way of developing tourism is often environmentally unfriendly (Croce and Perri, 2010): tourism is also frequently blamed as being a major contributor to the creation of unequal income distribution and/or costs sharing. Tourism

is often criticized for the excessive exploitation of resources (e.g., natural, financial and organizational resources) that are mainly used to promote immediate transactions to generate economic benefits in places.

However, development policies, which are motivated by The Slow Food Movement, are often emphasized that draw upon and, ideally, enhance local ecosystems (e.g., reduction of food miles). This strategy should be incorporated into the environmentally friendly movement. Croce and Perri (2010) argue that human factors such as cultural atmosphere are an essential component in the creation of a 'sense of place'. Both residents and visitors can be attracted to a place that has a unique identity to convert a '*terroir*' into a creative and environmentally friendly taste of a place. To be successful, the focus should be based on achieving balanced relationships among all players involved in the clustering of production to meet the needs of residents and wants of visitors, providing improvement of the quality of life and memorable experiences that contribute to economic, cultural and environmental well-being (Croce and Perri, 2010). Thus, it is necessary to adopt an environmentally friendly strategy, which often requires higher costs, and, hence, the emphasis of initial investments should be given to initiatives with a good chance of achieving long-run success.

These can be of particular value in culinary tourism when the development policies are focused on promoting equilibrium between tourism and environment. This requires awareness of all of economic, cultural and environmental aspects that underpin the environmentally friendly taste of a place. Culinary tourism development as part of the creative food economy that is focused on environment quality will address the needs of various stakeholders within culinary clusters and enable them to join forces to protect the beauty of the locality and cultural landscape - '*terroir*' (Croce and Perri, 2010). This strategy will eventually lead to significant changes of

tourism patterns in conjunction with the global green movement. Tables 2 and 3, and Figure 5 below summarize the positive and negative impacts of tourism, concerning environmentally friendly tourism practices, which will help to meet the equilibrium between tourism and environment (Croce and Perri, 2010) in the formation of culinary clusters in place-based development.

Table 2: Equilibrium between Tourism and Environment (Positive and Negative Impacts)

	<u>Economy</u>	<u>Society</u>	<u>Environment</u>
Positive Impacts	Tourism activities Stimulate entrepreneurial activities; create small, local tourism-related jobs and income generation Attract direct/indirect investment Drive for creativity and innovation; creative economy activities; and create skilled/knowledge workers	Create unique place identity/image Sustainability of the soft assets of cultural heritage Increase recreation/leisure activities Higher living standards, quality, alternative/modified lifestyle	Sustainability of hard factors of natural attractions Protection, prevention Enhancement, attractiveness, friendliness, cleanness
Negative Impacts	Higher initial investment Overdependence Excessive exploitation of resources Overvalued property	Loss of cultural identity Unequal income distribution/cost sharing Political/social tension Lower living standards (not always successful)	Pollution Impoverishment Congestion Damage wear and tear

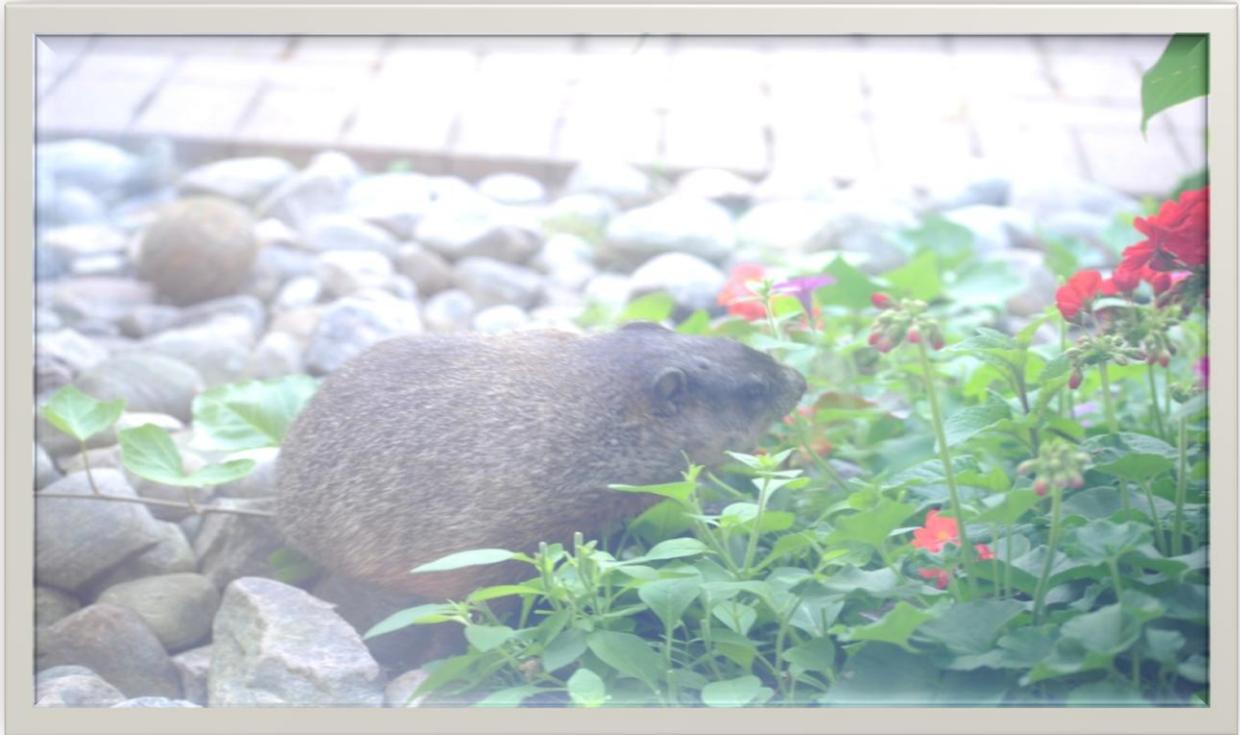
Source: modified from Croce and Perri (2010)

Table 3: Environmentally Friendly Tourism Practices in Culinary Clusters

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting the balance of ecosystems: assurance of biodiversity and production in terms of energy, flows, food chains and interactions between biotic and abiotic components, and etc (carrying capacity: the capacity of an ecosystem to renew itself) • Social well-being: everyone should have equal access to environmental equity; the hard factors of environment and soft factors of cultural heritage should be protected and preserved • Economic effectiveness and efficiency: to develop new production & consumption nexus to create environmentally friendly culinary tourism places, and maintain equilibrium between environment and tourism beyond the principle of striving for economic growth; creation of environmental and social capital that constitutes rich resources for collective well-being: i.e., investment into reducing consumption and waste, renewable resources, wealth creation/distribution, living standards, technological innovation, product development and diversification, development of economic potential at local level)

Source: modified from Croce and Perri (2010)

Figure 5: Pleasant and Friendly Environment



Source: photo taken by author in the town of Huntsville (2011)

3.1.6. Stakeholder Collaboration

The concepts of stakeholder and collaboration are frequently used to examine the process of networking/partnership activities among various stakeholders involved in community development in tourism perspectives as the fragmented tourism industry needs to emphasize collaboration in the development process (Aas et al., 2005). Although it depends on the scale of networking, usually a large number of stakeholders are involved in the development process; and thus, the concept of collaboration becomes a critical issue in rural tourism development (Aas et al., 2005; Selin, 1999; Selin and Chavez, 1995; and Timothy, 1999).

In general, stakeholder can be defined as “a person who has the right and capacity to participate in a process” in the inter-organizational perspective (Gray, 1989; and Aas et al., 2005). In rural community development, “stakeholders [can] refer to anyone impacted by a specific

tourism development either positively or negatively” (Aas et al., 2005). Thus, stakeholders are those who are involved in the development process or who are impacted by it: i.e., a wide range of players involved in the collaboration process, such as inter-connected firms, service providers, residents, governments at different scale and voluntary actors (NGOs). These groups should work together in a variety of roles in the collaboration process.

In addition, a frequently-used definition of the concept of collaboration has been offered by Gray (1989) from an inter-organizational perspective (i.e., different ideas among stakeholders should be recognized as a constructive process in order to move towards consensus and/or provide solutions to problems). Jamal and Getz (1995) adopted Gray’s definition and the concept of collaboration in community-based tourism development. According to Jamal and Getz (1995), the basic idea of stakeholder collaboration in tourism development is to establish involvement from all those affected by the development process within a region. Timothy (1998) stresses that to build effective stakeholder collaboration, various interests should be brought in to the development process as “the aim of stakeholder collaboration is to build a consensus among stakeholders” (Aas et al., 2005). As a result, ‘stakeholder collaboration’ can be defined as a process of shared decision-making among key stakeholders of interconnected organizations and firms and interested/affected groups and individuals to enhance shared ideas and/or manage collectively issues related to the process of clustering in rural community development (i.e., to manage collectively the concerns of economic, cultural and environmental well-being of a place).

3.1.7. Development

Academics (e.g., Reid, 2003) argue that there is a lack of implementation of stakeholder collaboration in tourism development although it is a serious concern. Reid (2003) argues that tourism development in rural communities is oriented toward economic growth measured by

economic efficiency and effectiveness. Thus, it puts heavy emphasis on market supply and demand, and focuses exclusively on assisting the tourism industry to fulfill tourists' experience rather than empowering the residents/host community. As a result, these factors cause the situations in marginalized rural communities to deteriorate and polarization to increase between urban and rural areas (Reid, 2003). In this view, stakeholder collaboration can be identified as a process of empowering the host community/residents by providing opportunities to participate in the process of development.

However, Wall (1997) suggests that it is a recent phenomenon that tourism development focused largely on the economic growth is replaced by one, which incorporates a wide range of variables. Thus, "there are varying perspectives in both objectives and processes on how it should be done" (Wall, 1997). As Wall (1997) states, the concept of 'development' often is ideologically driven, depending on political stance, which has led to paradoxical views on the issues of development. However, recent trends have seen endeavors to develop a wide range of economic, cultural and environmental well-being (i.e., 'development as freedom': concentration on expanding human freedom – the process of decision-making and achievement of valued outcomes) (Sen, 1999). Importantly, Wall (1996) argues that rural communities support tourism development simply because they see positive changes in tourism development, such as the benefits of employment opportunities and income generation that tourism development can create. In these cases, they may not see the inevitable cultural and environmental changes as a consequence of tourism development.

Above all, "development' implies change - a progression from an existing situation to a new, ideally superior state" (Wall, 1997). Thus, development can be seen as "a process of expanding the real freedom that people enjoy" (Sen, 1999: 5). For this reason, as Peet (1999)

argues, ‘development’ is in essence an economic progression and all theories of ‘development’ have crucial economic dimensions - the effective and efficient allocation of the scarce resources in producing the substance basis life - improving the conditions of life (Peet, 1999). Therefore, economic development, as Stiglitz (2002) and Chang (2007) argue, can be achieved when policies are implemented with a flexible vision, concerning economic, cultural, and environmental well-being, as well as with balanced relationship between private and public sectors.

3.2. The Model: ‘*TERROIR*’ into a Creative and Environmentally Friendly Taste of a Place

As discussions revealed, it has been well-documented that the occurrence of clusters can help organizations (e.g., DMO) to overcome a scarcity of financial, organizational, human and other resources by enhancing mutual support among firms and service providers, by stimulating local creativity, by increasing the capacity for new product development and/or product specialization and diversification, and by increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of branding process through collaboration. According to Camagni and Capello (1999: 205), “the local milieu and the specialized local labour market provide the economic background and constituent of continuity on which the collaborative and innovative process and information transfer become accumulated over time”. Thus, the formation of a cluster can make their jurisdiction more competitive (Jackson and Murphy, 2006). Therefore, in creative economy and culinary tourism development, clustering can be an important strategy to pool and leverage scarce financial, organizational and human resources, as well as to satisfy the needs of residents and wants of visitors’ experiences. It can lead to the development, promulgation and recognition of a culinary place brand.

Not all geographical places have the locational advantages and possess suitable factor conditions (Jackson and Murphy, 2006) to become a taste of a place and attract visitors.

However, for those well-defined and highly specialized places with distinctive culinary characteristics, including soft factors of cultural heritage and hard factors of natural environment, the question is how to convert a '*terroir*' into a creative and environmentally friendly taste of a place: i.e., the transformation of 'comparative advantage' into 'competitive advantage' (Ritchie and Crouch, 2003; and Jackson and Murphy, 2006). Jackson and Murphy (2006) suggest that the creation of clusters can help to facilitate this conversion. In addition, Jackson and Murphy (2006) state that "a clustering strategy can provide a means of fostering the creation of an organizational structure" in place-based development within which local culinary-related and supporting firms and service providers can interact both collaboratively and competitively where competition is based on development of products and/or product diversification and specialization rather than "on anti-competitive activity or price or cost cutting" (Jackson and Murphy, 2006).

It is important to note, however, that Porter's clustering model does not include either an environmentally friendly strategy or focus on the importance of leadership in relation to stakeholder collaboration in the formation of a cluster. It has been widely used as a research framework for economic development, but it has also been criticized, as the model is focused exclusively on entrepreneurial activities based on 'competition' led by the private sector although the role of 'government' is acknowledged. Lagnevik et al. (2003) provide a comparative case study of 'The Dynamics of Innovation Clusters: A Study of the Food Industry'. The study, by and large, is focused on economic efficiency of the corporate food industry, drawing upon three cases from the Swedish food industry (e.g., ProViva, Oatly, and Mona Carota). More specifically, the emphasis of the study is given to changes in 'food-processing technology', such as "cooling, freezing and heating", as well as "the role of food-processing

technologies that will create bases for innovation in the catering sector” (Lagnevik et al., 2003: 47).

In addition, many other researchers have used the clustering strategy to underpin their research framework, especially with regard to high-tech industry (e.g., “technological venture formation and growth”) (Carayannis et al., 2008: preface). Examples of the case studies focused on the high-tech industry can be found in Carayannis and Wang (2008): ‘the role of a firm in innovation networks’; in Provance and Gregorio (2008): ‘buyer discourse perspective on market entry’; in Cooke (2008): ‘digital knowledge platforms and regional innovation systems’; in Dimitriadis (2008): ‘information flow and global competitiveness of industrial districts’; and in Choi (2008): ‘from bureaucratic mode of technological entrepreneurship to clustering mode of technological entrepreneurship’.

However, as seen in the above cases, it is rare to find case studies conducted by using the clustering model as a framework in place-based community development, particularly concerning the creative food economy and culinary clusters. The aim of this thesis is to create a systematic model that outlines the formation of a culinary cluster. Therefore, Porter’s model has been modified substantially to describe the combination of an environmentally friendly strategy and the slow food strategy, which highlights the culinary-related resources that are required, and the creative process (innovation) that should be taken to create a culinary cluster. Emphasis is given to the role of partnership between public and private sectors in recognition of the importance of indirect/direct leadership of governments (e.g., the great influence and leadership of the local and provincial governments in Ontario’s culinary movement). For instance, ‘leadership’ is central in facilitating stakeholder collaboration and ensuring that communication occurs between them. Also, leadership can come from a variety of sources, including

government departments at various levels, place management organizations and active individuals (e.g., chefs).

The conceptual model proposes ‘four facilitators’ as an innovation process that is required to transform a *terroir* into a creative and environmentally friendly taste of a place with an enhanced attractiveness and quality of life. This will require and lead to a change in tourism patterns to achieve equilibrium between environmental quality and tourism. This will also reflect and contribute to the global green movement in support of environmentally friendly tourism through the establishment of an innovative economic system (cluster), comprised of the creative food economy, of which culinary tourism is a part. The formation of a culinary cluster will require the promotion of entrepreneurial activities through the process of stakeholder collaboration leading to the establishment of a place brand (identity and image).

For this to occur, initiatives should be facilitated by governments that will result in public and private partnerships in the creation of a new production and consumption nexus. The facilitation process involves creativity in the initiation and management of diverse relationships among various stakeholders resulting in the offering of new products, programs and services leading to the formation of a culinary cluster as a place brand. The conceptual model has been created to describe the development process and, in doing so, acts as a guide for those interested in pursuing such a contribution to place-based economic development.

Figure 6: 'TERROIR' into a Creative and Environmentally Friendly Taste of a Place

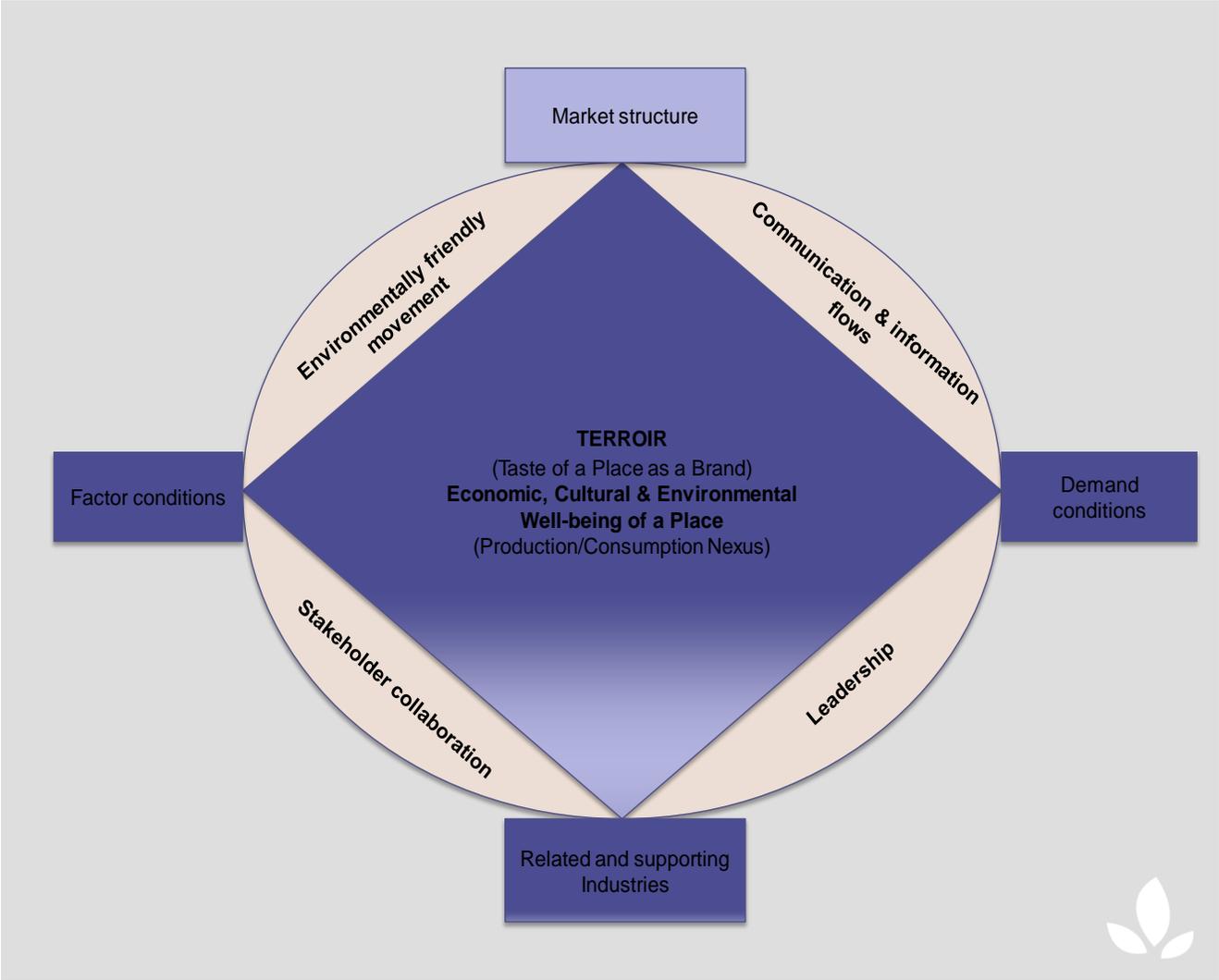


Table 4: Interdependent Determinants & Facilitators of a Culinary Cluster

Interdependent Determinants

Factor Conditions: the place's position regarding factors of production necessary in the culinary tourism market; the factor endowments and their permanent upgrading; without factor endowments and attractions (natural and cultural landscapes), tourism activity will be limited; and the factors are not only inherited but also created through the application of natural, cultural, historical, organizational, and human resources

Demand Conditions: concerned with availability of a market for culinary tourism products and services; the existence of sufficiently large number of sophisticated tourists within a reasonable market area is of the utmost importance; such quality-conscious tourists exert constant quality control, moving suppliers towards high-quality market segments; and such sophisticated tourists are able to recognize new trends and have sufficient disposable income to buy into them

Related and Supporting Industries: firms or producers in the region that provides inputs that support the establishment and operation of a culinary cluster: the diversity and the quality of supporting industries (e.g., accessibility to the site; parking facilities; high quality service facilities; health care; and security, etc.)

Market Structure: a term that encapsulates the conditions in a place that govern how firms/organizations are created and managed, as well as the nature of local rivalry; institutional and organizational infrastructure; and cluster plan & place marketing/branding strategy

Source: modified from Vanhove (2005)

Facilitators as Innovation Process

Environmentally friendly movement (equilibrium b/w environment & tourism): environment strategy focused on reducing food miles (e.g., Slow Food Movement); change in tourism patterns; initial investment into improvement of quality and creation of the attractiveness of a place by reducing consumption and waste; and improvement of economic conditions within the culinary cluster

Leadership: strong leadership is among the most critical factors for the successful development of a creative food economy and culinary cluster as there are usually a large number of stakeholders involved in such clusters; and there are various aspects of leadership: government (at various levels), the local organization (DMO or culinary organization), and the leadership of such organizations); and a successful policy depends on strategic partnership between private and public sectors and thus, "tourism policy without involvement of the local government is often unrealistic and unsustainable" (Vanhove, 2005)

Stakeholder collaboration: cooperation among various stakeholders to create sustainable food production & consumption nexus (culinary cluster); stakeholders: chamber of commerce; economic development office; DMOs; NGOs; travel operators; restaurants; farmers; cooking schools; chefs; artisans; retailers; creative arts industry; and others

Communication & information flows: communications strategy to bring in new ideas, and make consensus, and share accumulated knowledge and know-how

The conceptual model consists of interdependent determinants and facilitators of a culinary cluster that are divided into three parts (Figure 6 and Table 4). The outer part originated in the work of Porter (1990). It has four interdependent determinants: ‘factor conditions’, ‘demand conditions’, ‘market structure’ and ‘related/supporting industries’. These are not only inherited but also are created by innovation activities. The four facilitators of the innovation process (‘environmentally friendly movement’, ‘leadership’, ‘stakeholder collaboration’, and ‘communication and information flows’) are the challenges that must be met and the process that must be undergone to convert a *terroir* into a creative and environmentally friendly taste of a place. Finally, the innermost part is a *terroir* (sense of place as a brand), which is the outcome of the formation of a culinary cluster (innovative economic system). A *terroir* has been transformed into a taste of a place by the four determinants and four facilitators that support the innovation process in the creation of a sense of place as a brand.

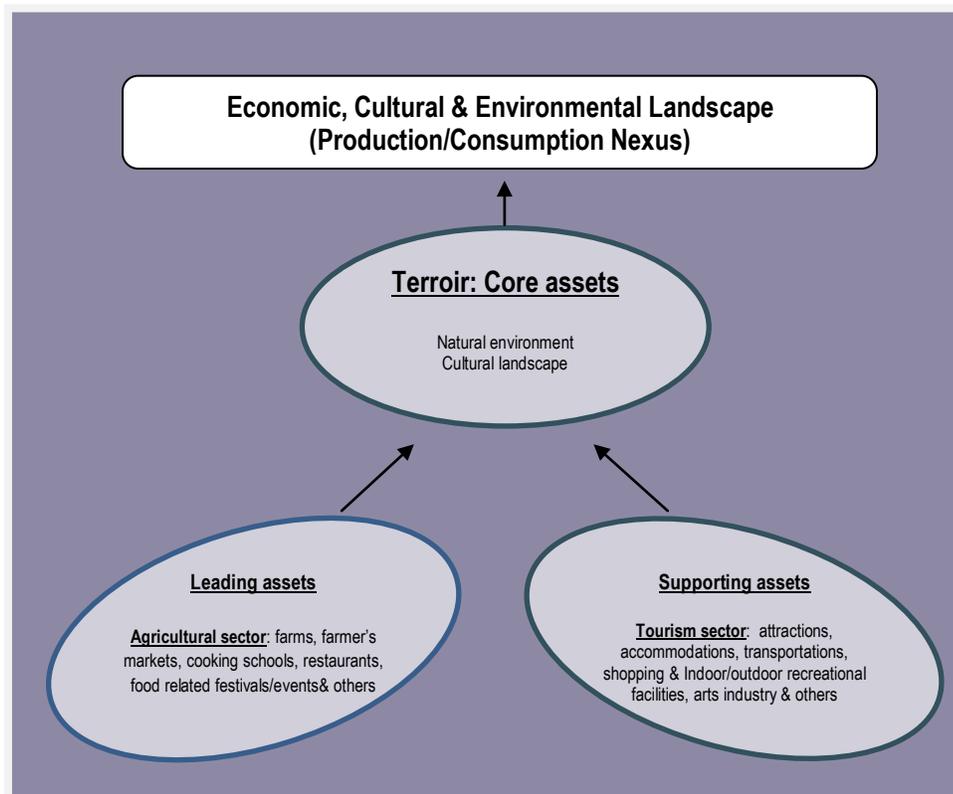
Table 4 is a detailed description of each component (four determinants and four facilitators) of the conceptual model created to inform an economic planning and development policy from a creative food economy and culinary tourism perspective, and to represent both private and public players who must come together for the delivery of the innovation activities in the formation of culinary clusters. It is a revision in line with Vanhove (2005) who suggests that the competitive advantages of the interdependent determinants originated by Porter (1990) are relevant and applicable to tourism places.

In summary, the development of place-based creative food economy occurs in places which are geographical concentrations: i.e., spatial agglomerations and local milieu that offer local culinary products and services produced by a clustered production involving a number of interconnected firms and service providers. This transformation of a *terroir* into a taste of a

place is based on the identification of the strengths of a place and the inventory of the culinary-related assets (e.g., hard factors of natural attractions and soft factors of artistic heritage) with innovative entrepreneurial activities building on those strengths and assets. This may require thematic mapping of all culinary-related resources, based on local things and knowledge, to create a uniquely appealing place identity and image.

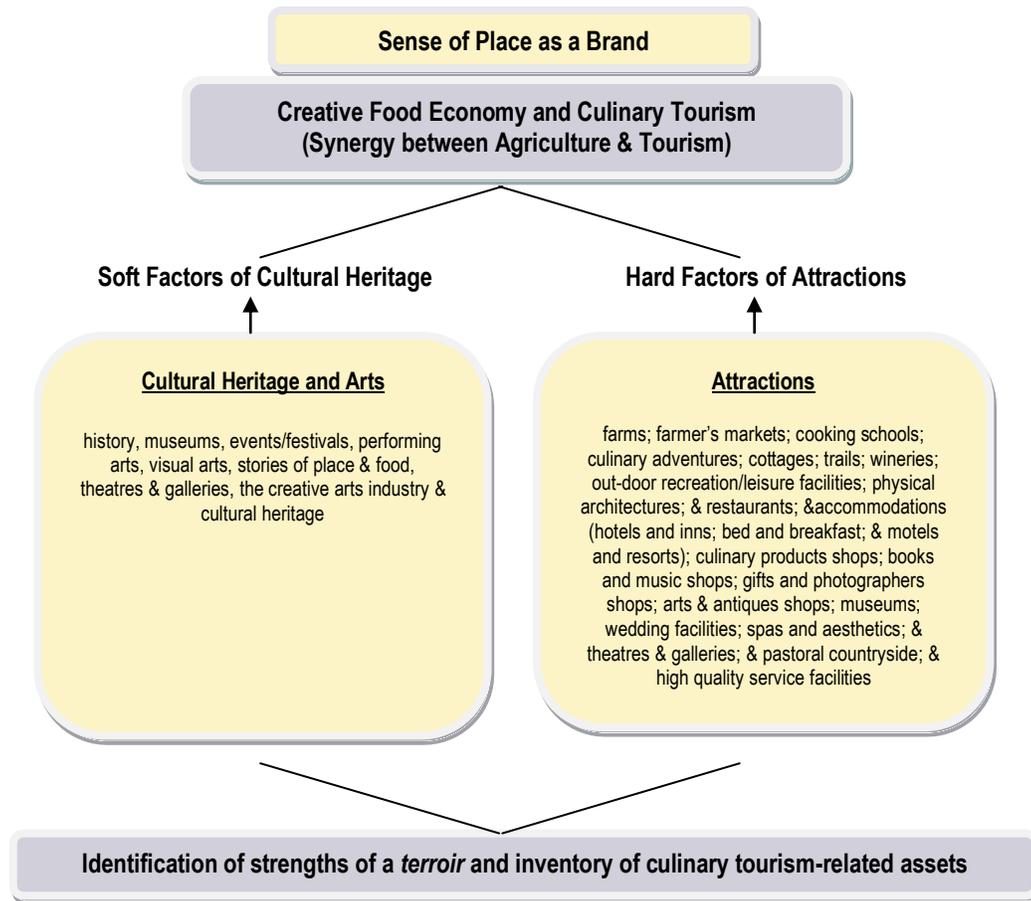
Porter's model has been used as a point of departure to create a new conceptual model and, as a result of the modifications, it is now significantly different from it. The juxtaposition of food production does not guarantee the creation of a successful culinary cluster. Rather, initiatives have to be taken to create the synergistic relationships that are desired. The four 'facilitators' identified in the model underpin the creation of culinary clusters. Together, they contribute to the institutional arrangements that drive the development of culinary clusters. The formation of these relationships and the initiatives that result from them constitute the creativity that stimulates the generation of new linkages, ideas and, ultimately, products. The result is a new chain of supply and production – creative food economy.

Figure 7: *Terroir* as Production and Consumption Nexus



More and more consumers are interested in eating food that is locally grown, of high quality and is produced in ways that respect the environment. The Slow Food Movement and growing interest in organic food confirm this. Also, visitors are attracted to high environmental quality. Thus, environmental friendliness in line with current trends unites the interests of certain types of consumers and producers, including producers such as farmers and those in animal husbandry, as well as service providers such as restaurateurs and hoteliers. Communication and information flows among stakeholders can take many forms, for example, meetings, forums, websites, facebook, newsletters and training sessions. Hence, culinary clusters can be developed by stakeholders working together to create new products, often as part of a branding strategy under energetic leadership that may differ in form from place to place.

Figure 8: Creation of Culinary Place Identity & Image



To conclude, Figures 7, 8 and 9 provide detailed descriptions of the innermost part (*terroir*) of the conceptual model that has been changed and augmented to portray the constituents of a creative food economy and environmentally friendly taste of a place. The conceptual model along with the detailed diagrams will be used to identify the information that is needed to examine case studies of culinary clusters. It can also be used to inform the planning and development policies from a creative food economy perspective, and encourage the partnership and collaboration of both private and public stakeholders for the delivery of the innovation activities that are required to form culinary clusters. Such innovations include the creation of new institutional and organizational arrangements.

Figure 9: Positive Impacts of Economic, Cultural and Environmental Well-being of Culinary Cluster

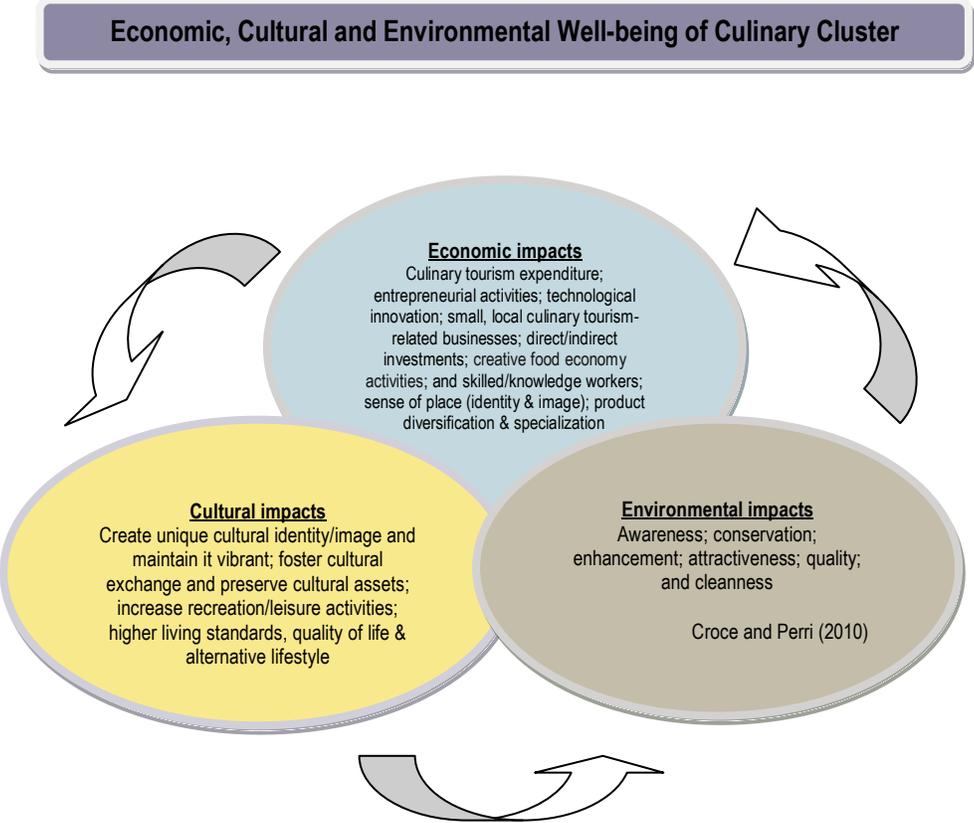


Figure 10: Port Carling Farmer's Market



Source: photo taken by author in the town of Port Carling (2011)

4.0. CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1. Case Study Research

Yin (2009), Stake (1994) and Clardy (2002) state that case study is an appropriate method for a researcher when a holistic, in-depth examination is needed. Clardy (2002) suggests that case studies are designed to bring out the details of the phenomenon studied from the participant's viewpoint by using multiple sources of information. The advantage of the case study is its applicability to existing human life and its public accessibility through written reports (Yin, 2009; Stake, 1994; and Clardy, 2002). For example, as in this study, case study findings can facilitate an enhanced understanding of complex issues of stakeholder collaboration in the formation of clusters.

Further, as Yin (2009), Clardy (2002) and Stake (1994) argue, the vital part of case study research is an ability to use multiple data/information sources in the collection and analysis process and to compare within the case and across sources to increase the validity of the research findings (e.g., triangulation). Many case studies have gone beyond the use of statistical data, and explore processes and patterns from the perspective of study participants (Clardy, 2002; and Stake, 1994). Thus, case study evaluations can cover both process and outcomes because they can include both quantitative, empirical data and qualitative, subjective information (Clardy, 2002; and Stake, 1994). This study focuses on the process of the development of a culinary cluster as part of a creative food economy (e.g., environmentally friendly strategy, leadership, stakeholder collaboration and communication and information flows).

Case study methods, however, have limitations (Patton, 2002; and Stake, 1994). Case studies are focused on specific contexts that are often subjective and idiosyncratic, and thus, generalization of the research findings is often difficult. Nevertheless, generalization, as in this

study, can be obtained by invoking conceptual models or systematic induction through comparative case analysis although the degree to which findings can be extended with validity to other situations and contexts remains debatable: case studies are constrained by the fact that they are intrinsically subjective in the sense that they depend on the researcher's interpretation or understanding of interviews and documents. However, indeed, all research has the limitations that findings are open to varied interpretations.

4.1.1. Case Study Site Selection

The selection of appropriate study sites is determined by research questions being addressed: two case study sites were selected located in Ontario, Canada based on the appropriateness of the research topic, the availability of data/information (to assess the applicability of the interdependent determinants and facilitators indicated in the conceptual model), and the willingness of key players to participate in the study as interviewees (Yin, 2009). Savour Stratford Perth County and SAVOUR Muskoka culinary clusters were selected for this comparative case study as they exemplify dissimilar organizational approaches in the formation of the clusters (the former as 'industry-oriented approach'; the latter as 'livelihood approach'). It is observed that there is insufficient evidence in academic research to corroborate which approach can be more efficient and effective in place-based rural development. Moreover, a consensus on which conceptual frameworks (industry-oriented approach vs. livelihood approach) are more precise has not yet emerged although it may or may not be necessary to make a consensus. Thus, there is a need for empirical research on this area.

Therefore, these sites are well-suited for this study to examine research objectives with the following specific reasons. First, the study sites clearly express themselves as a culinary tourism place by creating the unique identity and image of the places (e.g., 'Savour Stratford'

and ‘SAVOUR Muskoka’): i.e., the places’ names and logos create a significant image of the human-made landscapes as they convey meanings of the places (Norton, 2009). Second, the clusters are emerging, as well as growing, but they are at very different stages. Finally, a wide range of interdependent firms, supporting organizations and service providers are involved in the production of clustering as well as the process of place branding. The value chain of the creative food economy in these clusters is emphasized on local artistic characteristics that are tied into local agriculture with a combination of the hard factors of natural environment and soft factors of cultural heritage.

4.1.1.1. The Cases of Savour Stratford Perth County and SAVOUR Muskoka Clusters

Savour Stratford Perth County and SAVOUR Muskoka are member regions of the OCTA. They have come to play a vital role in the place-based development of a creative food economy and culinary tourism and are now seen as an important contributor to such creative economic initiatives in place-based rural community development. The economic initiatives are focused on promoting not only specific local characteristics that are tied into local agriculture but also geographical settings, shopping and leisure and recreational facilities and environmental quality as well as the soft factors of cultural heritage and creative industry. In searching for alternative economic opportunities in which these places can use their local resources to increase their regional capacity, new markets is created by the innovative, entrepreneurial activities (Stolarick et al., 2010) (e.g., new products/services development and/or diversification/specialization). This is focused on the benefits realized by economic, cultural and environmental well-being of their places (Stolarick et al., 2010).

Recently, ‘SAVOUR Muskoka’ was invited to participate - as a model of culinary tourism development - in the ‘2010 G20 Summit’ held in Toronto, as part of its profiling of the

creative food economy. SAVOUR Muskoka is a unique clustering model: it is based on the bottom-up organizational approach and decentralized local groups are on route to be self-sustaining, and approaching DMOs and municipalities to get involved rather than the other way around (Email interview with GM, 2008; Chair of the board of directors, 2011; and Executive chef, 2011). ‘Savour Stratford’ is an industry-oriented, not-for-profit organization and has also been invited to various local and provincial culinary tourism symposia to present as a best practice (Savour Stratford official website, 2011). Thus, these sites have merit for the study and are appropriate for the research questions being addressed. Accordingly, detailed data/information collection methods will be discussed in the following sections.

4.2. Data Collection Methods

4.2.1. In-depth Interview

Veal (1997), and Creswell (2003) state that the most commonly used method in qualitative research is in-depth interviews. Patton (2002), Veal (1997), and Creswell (2003) suggest that in-depth interviews provide the flexibility for the researcher to manage and organize the interview process. In-depth interviews are suitable for probing questions to acquire in-depth information from the interviewees. In the process of in-depth interview, an undisturbed atmosphere for conversations created by personal contacts can encourage the participants being interviewed. According to Patton (2002), in-depth interviews can also be used to verify the research findings from document analysis, which is also an important data collection method for this study. As Veal (1997) suggests, in-depth interviews are collaborative and are an appropriate information collection method, particularly for this comparative study, because the principal research purpose is to examine the subjective issues of stakeholder collaboration in the creation of culinary clusters.

Veal (1997) states that in-depth interviews are usually conducted with a relatively small number of subjects, and interviews are recorded and transcribed. Patton (2002) and Veal (1997) suggest an open-ended approach to collecting data/information using a general interview guide. In the open-ended approach, the interviewer makes lists of the interview questions to be explored in the in-depth interview, but it is free to explore topics in more or less detail and in no particular order (Patton, 2002). This flexible process allows the researcher to be able to follow up on information raised by the interviewees. However, the researcher should ensure that there is certain degree of structure for the in-depth interviews (Patton, 2002; and Veal, 1997).

Creswell (2003) suggests that identification of key informants in the study sites is an important task in the in-depth interview method. Key informants should hold pertinent positions and have appropriate expertise and knowledge about the research areas. This is a crucial constituent for success in in-depth interviews (Creswell, 2003). However, Creswell (2003) notes disadvantages that are apparently unavoidable in the in-depth interview method: i.e., the researcher's interpretation of the collected information from the interviewees and the interviewees' personal differences in articulation of the study area are also inevitable. As well, not only the researcher's presence may conceivably bias the interviewees' responses but also the information provided by informants may be filtered by investigators' own view (Creswell, 2003). In particular, as Patton (2002) and Veal (1997) suggest, a small sample size can be selected purposefully in the case study to gain an in-depth understanding of phenomena. Nevertheless, the smaller sample size that the in-depth interview method tends to have is a significant disadvantage in terms of generalizability of research findings (Creswell, 2003).

4.2.2. Document Analysis

As noted, Yin (2009) suggests the principles in data/information collection and analysis: i.e., the use of multiple sources of data/information; maintaining ample evidence to support research findings; and the creation of a case study data base. According to Patton (2002), documents analyses are valuable not only because of what can be learned directly from them but also as stimulus for paths of inquiry that can be pursued only through direct observation and interviewing. For this study the documents analyses can provide corroborative, historical and/or factual contents in accord with in-depth interviews (Patton, 2002).

However, Creswell (2003) argues that there are questions about the accuracy of secondary data due to the accessibility and relevance of the data/information. A significant constraint in the analysis of documents can be that they are often not only out-dated but also biased. Nevertheless, sometimes, as in this study, the nature of any such biases may be pertinent research information. For this study, the documents are important data/information sources obtained through analyzing official websites, archives, newsletters, forums, and media releases, as well as YouTube and blogs, which are focused on place branding processes (e.g., products/programs development, communications, and place marketing/branding strategy).

4.2.3. Participant Observation

Creswell (2003) suggests that participant observation is a valuable method that can reflect the first-hand experience gained in the research area from the researcher's perspective. It can be an effective method that complements empirical methods. However, Creswell (2003) notes that it is not free from limitations due to the constraint of reliability and generalizability. It is unavoidably restricted by the particular case study sites of the observation, and the observation occurs in specific time, as well as subject to interpretations of the investigator (Creswell, 2003).

Participant direct observation in this study for the most part was focused on some of the culinary products/programs available in the selected study sites: i.e., natural attractions (hard factors) and the culinary-related products/services (soft factors of the cultural heritage) were observed. In addition, observation of the member establishments (e.g., farms, eating facilities and farmer's markets) was made by participating actively in local food tasting. This process helped the researcher to have a better understanding of key stakeholders' manner towards the communication process: i.e., how the dissimilar organizational approaches (industry-oriented approach vs. livelihood approach) are implemented in the process of stakeholder collaboration.

4.3. The Process of Data/Information Collection

The goal of this study was to create a conceptual model, concerning the formation of a culinary cluster as part of a creative food economy in place-based rural community development. The creation of the model was based on an extensive review of literatures. Then, case studies were undertaken to gain empirical data/information to assess the applicability of the model. Thus, a comprehensive review of literature and empirical evidence was combined as sources of knowledge to create the conceptual model and to bridge the gap between the concepts and practices. As Yin (2009) suggests, the conceptual model was used to create an interview schedule that was used to guide the empirical information, which was collected in the selected two case study sites. Detailed interview questions were created for the in-depth interviews based on the research themes identified in the conceptual model (as seen in Appendices).

Fieldwork was carried out in both study sites (Muskoka and Stratford) during July and August 2011 to better understand the formation of the culinary clusters as part of a creative food economy in these places. Prior to entering the field, ethics approval was sought and received from the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Waterloo. Consent letters approved by

the Ethics Office were sent out to the selected informants through email correspondence.

Detailed research questions created for the interviews were sent to the informants who agreed to participate in the study. This process enabled them to become familiar with the questions before the in-depth interviews were conducted in person. However, their identities will not be revealed and much information will be presented anonymously to protect the confidentiality of the informants.

Seventeen informants (e.g., executive marketing director, general manager, chair of the board, and culinary product/program developer, chefs, administrative staff, farmers, artisans, restaurant owners/managers, coffee/tea shop owners/employees, and culinary products retailers such as the ‘chocolate trail’) were interviewed using a semi-structured in-depth interview method. Two responses were obtained by email interviews. Because it was the busiest season for tourism, concern was initially expressed by interviewees regarding their time availability.

Nevertheless, the executive marketing director, and culinary products/programs developer in Savour Stratford as well as the chair of the board of SAVOUR Muskoka, one of the founders of SAVOUR Muskoka, and the administrative staff responsible for the official website and daily operation of the organization were able to conduct interviews of two hours or more in duration. All of them were very supportive of the study and enthusiastic about their interviews. For instance, the first in-depth interview took place at the biggest resort located in the town of Huntsville where the recent ‘2010 G8 Summit’ was held: the executive chef, one of the founders of SAVOUR Muskoka, was very passionate about the culinary initiatives in Muskoka. He met with the researcher for approximately three hours, including the provision of a tour of the restaurant. During the tour, in the kitchen he also showed the researcher locally-grown special

green seedlings and finished products purchased from the members of SAVOUR Muskoka as seen in Figure 11.

Figure 11: Green Seedlings grown by SAVOUR Muskoka Member

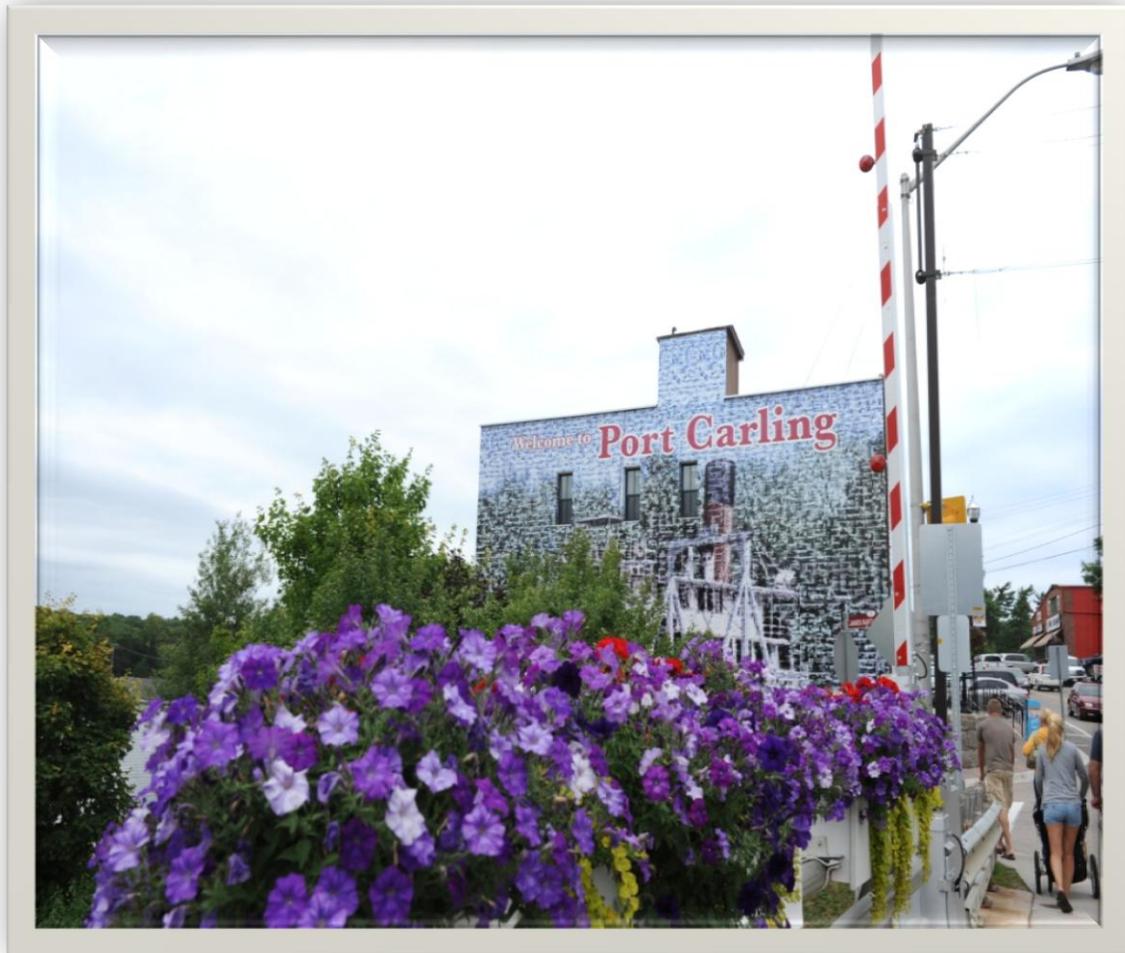


Source: photo taken by author (2011)

In Muskoka the researcher visited the ‘Town of Huntsville’, the ‘Town of Port Carling’ and the ‘Town of Bracebridge’. In Huntsville, the researcher had a meeting with the executive chef (mentioned above); in Bracebridge interviews were conducted with the current chair of the board of SAVOUR Muskoka and the administrative staff of the organization. These interviews were conducted in the office of SAVOUR Muskoka. In Port Carling, the researcher had the opportunity to participate in the out-door farmer’s market and meet three SAVOUR Muskoka member farmers (a honey producer, four seasons seedlings grower and specialty mushroom grower), and one SAVOUR Muskoka artisan, as well as farmers who are not members of SAVOUR Muskoka. The Port Carling Farmer’s Market takes place every Tuesday and Thursday

throughout the summer. Considering the constraints of time and financial situation, the Port Carling Farmer's Market was a good place to meet the SAVOUR Muskoka members.

Figure 12: The Town of Port Carling (place branding tool)



Source: photo taken by author (2011)

In Stratford, the researcher was able to meet the executive marketing director and culinary products/programs developer in the office of Stratford Tourism Alliance. These two professionals with other administrative staff run Savour Stratford and have prominent knowledge, expertise and work experiences in their profession. In Stratford, unlike in Muskoka, it was much

easier for the researcher to meet with the members of Savour Stratford as many of the eating establishments for the culinary cluster, in particular, were members of Savour Stratford. Also, the researcher had better opportunities to observe and participate in culinary experiences as most of the culinary programs/products are offered within the city of Stratford and Perth County (i.e., dissimilarly, facilities in the region of Muskoka are widely spread out within the large geographical area).

In-depth interviews with farmers and managers/owners of restaurants were challenging to undertake and did not thoroughly follow the detailed interview questions created for them due to their different levels of expertise, understanding, and time constraints: a 20 – 30 minute interview was conducted, depending on their time limitations. The busiest season for tourism was a good situation from the researcher's perspective because it gave opportunities to observe many activities taking place in both study sites. These interviews were less formal and the interviewees were able to express their comments freely on the issues, such as the benefits they received after becoming a member of SAVOUR Muskoka or Savour Stratford, as well as the partnership and collaboration process between chefs and farmers, which appeared to be an interesting subject matter for them. To this point, it is important to note that the main purpose of this study was to assess the issues of stakeholder collaboration in the creation of the clusters. Thus, although farmers and restaurateurs, for example, were not considered to be key informants in the sense that they were not expected to possess insider knowledge of the operation of the cluster, they were included purposefully to understand better the communication process, which is a critical factor for the stakeholder collaboration in the formation of such clusters.

Although the interviewer had some minor challenges in conducting interviews, the in-depth interviews provided great insights into the practices and issues in the formation of the

culinary clusters as part of the creative food economy in practical settings. This also allowed the researcher to make necessary adjustment into to the conceptual model created for the most part based on the review of academic literature. Other important data/information for the study were acquired in both study sites through the collection of newsletters, tour guide pamphlets, brochures, and event/festival posters, which were sources that could increase the researcher's understanding of the development of the creative food economy through place branding.

Official websites, as suggested by some of the key informants in both organizations, were also as important sources of information as the interviews. For example, a spokesperson for SAVOUR Muskoka said that no written documents are kept in the office and, thus, all of the important information can be found on the official website. E-mail communications with some of the key informants both before and after conducting the interviews appeared to be an effective and efficient means of acquiring insights as they could provide the most up-to-date information. Immediately after the interviews were conducted, both organizations included the researcher's email address in their email correspondence so that the researcher can receive the newest information regarding culinary tourism events and festivals, such as Savour Stratford Perth County Culinary Festival and SAVOUR Muskoka Field-to-Fork Tasting Event, which are major culinary activities held annually in August or September.

Direct observation and participation also helped in understanding the importance of promoting locally-grown agricultural products, and the processes of culinary products/programs development and place branding, which include both the soft factors of cultural heritage (e.g., culinary events and arts/music festivals, such as 'epicurean treks' in Straftord; 'field-to-fork' tasting event in Muskoka) and hard factors of attractions (culinary trails, cooking schools, outdoor farmers' markets, architecture, summer cottages, walking trails, gardens, patios, and out-

door recreation and leisure activities such as cooking, swimming, walking, boating, canoeing, cycling and golfing), as well as the atmosphere of the places (sense of place, such as a friendly, pleasant and clean environment). In addition, the researcher tried to visit many membership establishments (e.g., restaurants/café, farms, farmers' market and artisans' market) in both study sites to conduct interviews, to observe activities, and to participate in tasting the local food and drinks, and to take photographs of the culinary products available in the establishments.

In this process there were opportunities for communications with visitors by chance as they showed their curiosity about the interviews taking place in the establishments that they were visiting. The researcher was able to act as if she was a visitor and to enjoy the multiplicity of culinary experiences in both study sites (e.g., tasting local food and drinks). By taking advantage of this opportunity, the researcher was able to hear about the level of visitors' satisfactions and experiences regarding some of the culinary products/programs offered by both Savour Stratford and SAVOUR Muskoka. However, this process did not provide significant information on visitors and their reactions, and the demand-side perspective was not the main focus of this research. It follows that opportunities for future research regarding the demand-side perspective may be developed by adopting a questionnaire survey of visitors to generate statistical data on culinary experiences including culinary tourists' profiles.

Photographs were taken of the unique physical landscapes (e.g., rocks, trees, gardens, and lakes) in Muskoka and attractions (museums, theatres and galleries) in Stratford. Thus, as is required in case study research (Yin, 2009; and Patton, 2002), the data/information presented in this study were collected by multiple means from multiple sources such as in-depth interviews, review of academic literature, and other documents such as websites, archives, forums, press releases, and workshops, as well as email communications, direct observation and participation.

The process of the empirical data/information collection was quite similar at the two case study sites and this helped the researcher to have a better understanding of the practices and issues in the development of the creative of food economy based on the formation of culinary clusters through place branding in these places. The interviews were recorded on an iPhone and downloaded onto the researcher's computer so that the collected interviews could be analyzed by carefully listening to the vivid voices of the interviewees as many as times and whenever was required. Five of the recorded interviews were transcribed and two other interviews were conducted through email correspondences. In this process the researcher had opportunities to communicate with some of the interviewees to clarify some of the collected information from them.

4.4. Analysis of the Collected Data/Information

As discussed, the case study approach provides an opportunity to use mixed methods (Clardy, 2002; and Stake, 1994): i.e., it gives an opportunity for the researcher to observe a phenomenon (e.g., the development of culinary products/programs and the physical settings of a place) from multiple perspectives (Clardy, 2002; Stake, 1994; and Patton, 2002). Clardy (2002) notes that the outcome of the mixed methods can be synergistic: “while systematic data creates the foundation for our theories, it is the subjective data that enable us to do the building” (Mintzberg, 1979 quoted in Clardy, 2002). Mintzberg (1979) further suggests that the creation of conceptual models requires rich description: “we uncover all kinds of relationships in our hard data, but it is only through the use of soft data that we are able to explain them” (quoted in Clardy, 2002). Thus, case studies are used “to convey a balanced, multidimensional depiction of the context, participants, and reality of the event or situation” (Clardy, 2002).

This comparative case study involves a ‘multiple case design’ of two culinary clusters. In multiple case design approach, the logic of replication is applied and each case study is designed to treat as a separate entity (Yin, 2009). The underlying principle for the multiple case design approach is that it makes possible the process of ‘theory building’ through the comparative case analysis (Yin, 2009). Subsequently, common and/or divergent processes and patterns can be identified for each case study through comparative analysis. As Yin (2009) and Stake (1995) and Patten (2002) suggest, this study uses a narrative strategy as groundwork in collecting data/information and analyzing the collected data/information. In particular, the subjective information obtained through the qualitative research approach is useful for understanding the relationships among the indicators of the conceptual model created for the study.

Yin (2009) stresses that ‘theory building’ is based on the classification of data/information, and case study evidences can be used to prove or disprove a ‘theory’. As Patton (2002), Stake (1994) and Yin (2009) suggest, the consequential ‘theory’ is generally narrative, which has an empirical validity and applicability, and the consequential ‘theory’ will likely be consistent with the participant observation because the process of ‘theory building’ is directly linked to the empirical corroboration. For this reason, the most important thing in the multiple case design approach, as Yin (2009) suggests, is to look at each case as an independent study, and then, to identify common and/or divergent patterns and processes.

4.5. Study Limitations and Opportunities

To summarize the data/information collection and analysis process, this section discusses the study limitations, which provide opportunities for future research. This study has created, applied and assessed the utility of the conceptual model using qualitative research methods. The

findings of the study will attest to the appropriateness and utility of the model. However, all studies have limitations and this is the case with this investigation. Due to the subjective nature of the research approach, generalization beyond the specific cases is not possible in the sense of establishing statistical confidence in the results and extending the findings to other cases.

However, in this study, generalization is achieved through creating and applying the conceptual model and by adopting a comparative case design to depict and compare processes and patterns between the two cases. Clearly, there is an opportunity to apply the model to other cases in the search for more similarities and differences.

Although multiple data sources have been used to corroborate the findings (as seen in Table 5), interviewees' comments reflect their own articulations and the investigator's interpretation can also be biased. Nevertheless, the in-depth interviews provide invaluable insights into the operation of the culinary clusters. Such rich descriptions are required to understand fully the clusters from multiple perspectives.

It was not an easy task to create a conceptual model with both academic rigor and practical implications for future study of the creative food economy based on forming a culinary cluster, which is still in its infancy in place-based economic development. Such activities are difficult to measure statistically and many stakeholders, as seen in both cases, who have different ideas and views, are involved in the development of the culinary clusters. As a result, this process takes place in a complex context where decisions are often made on the basis of incomplete information by people with different values.

In line with the study limitations, opportunities exist to conduct a questionnaire survey of members of the culinary organizations to understand their level of participation and satisfaction in the process of collaboration. The rich descriptions obtained through the qualitative research

approach can be complemented by a quantitative approach based on questionnaire surveys. However, as discussed earlier, “while systematic data creates the foundation for our theories, it is the subjective data that enable us to do the building” (Mintzberg, 1979 quoted in Clardy, 2002).

Also, there is an opportunity to conduct in-depth interviews with government officials, particularly at the provincial level, as well as with visitors and residents regarding their perspectives on the creation of the culinary clusters. In addition, a large amount of media coverage is displayed on the websites as part of the communication process in both Savour Stratford and SAVOUR Muskoka organizations. Thus, it may be appropriate to do content analysis regarding the media manifestation: i.e., do the stakeholders “read” things in the same way covered in the various media sources (e.g., websites, press releases, newsletters, YouTubes and blogs)?

In summary, according to Veal (1997 and Yin (2009), creation of the research questions can lead to the identification of research purpose and research goals as well as research objectives in fulfillment of the research questions. This important process guides the construction of strategies for data/information collection and analysis. The conceptual model created for the study informed the preparation of the interview guide and the creation of detailed questions for in-depth interviews with the key informants in the selected study sites.

In case study research, as noted, the process of data/information collection overlaps with the analysis of the collected data/information: this process can provide considerable flexibility for a researcher to make adjustments where necessary (Veal, 1997; and Yin, 2009). As it is required, processes and patterns were found through the careful listening to the recorded interviews and summarizing them in chronological order based upon the ‘interdependent determinants’ and ‘facilitators’ of the conceptual model, which also led to the comparative

analysis between the two cases: interlinked themes of the creative food economy and culinary tourism, and place branding in place-based economic development. Table 5 is a summary of types of data/information used and the sources of that data/information, the process of data/information collection, interpretation and analysis employed in this study.

Table 5: Types of Data/Information and Source(s)

Types of Data/Information needed	Data/Information Source(s)
History and Structure of the Organizations (industry-oriented vs. bottom-up approaches)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-depth interviews • Documents: organizations' websites/newsletters/workshops/events/archivals/forums/press releases
Development of Creative Food Economy & Culinary Clusters (culinary products/programs development)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-depth interviews • Documents: organizations' websites/governments' websites and newsletters/events/workshops/forums/ archivals /press releases • Direct participation (tour of a restaurant, farmer's markets and artisan's markets; tasting of local food and drinks) • Direct observation (culinary products/services available in the sites)
Place Branding Strategies (all marketing media used to create place identity & image)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-depth interviews • Documents: organizations' websites/newsletters/facebook/blogs/brochures/pamphlets/events posters/archivals/forums/workshops/press releases • Culinary events/festivals/slogans/promotion packages • Direct observation (e.g., signage, food events)
Leadership: role of governments; communication strategies; major challenges (stakeholders & stakeholder collaboration)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-depth interviews • Documents: governments' websites/organizations' websites/newsletters/workshops/events/ archivals/forums



Source: photo taken by author in the town of Port Carling (2011)

5.0. CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS FOR STRATFORD CULINARY CLUSTER

This chapter presents the findings for the Savour Stratford culinary cluster to see if the four interdependent determinants and four facilitators identified as innovation process fit the Stratford case. It begins with general background information on Stratford Perth County, which summarizes the regions' geographic, demographic features as well as economic indicators, and then, moves to the findings for the Savour Stratford culinary cluster. Each of the interdependent determinants and facilitators presented and discussed in Chapter 3 is used as a tool to organize and analyze the empirical data/information collected in the case study site.

5.1. Background Information on Stratford Perth County

Stratford Perth County is an “industrial, agricultural and cultural centre in southwestern Ontario, Canada” (City of Stratford official website, 2011). Southwestern Ontario possesses Canada's largest concentration of manufacturing sector, and Stratford is geographically and technologically well-situated and is proximate to central Canada's most advanced intellectual assets (City of Stratford official website, 2011). Stratford has a moderate climate: “the region is located on the same latitude as Boston, Massachusetts, the Nebraska heartland and Northern California. With apparent four seasons rotating through the year, the region offers a wide variety of [tourism and] leisure activities” (City of Stratford official website, 2011).

The map of Stratford and the distance chart seen in Table 6 and Figure 13 detail the geographical features of the region. In terms of accessibility, Stratford is well connected to major North American markets through an established regional and provincial highways: “Stratford has access routes to Canada's key transportation artery, Highway 401, to the south; east and west by Highways 7 and 7/8, and by Perth Road 113/County Road 6” (City of Stratford official website, 2011). With the geographical and technological advantages, Stratford has become one of Canada's main transportation and leading technology hubs: i.e., “it is close to Highway 401,

Canada's main ground transportation artery; located within a 2.5-hour drive of 5 border crossings; on mainline passenger and freight rail service to Detroit, Chicago and Buffalo; within an hour-drive of three regional international airports; and progressive Business Park and commercial development" (The City of Stratford official website, 2011).

These connections to major transportation provide local economic activities to have just-in-time delivery systems in place. According to the city website, the manufacturing sector, one of the leading sectors of the region's economy has just-in-time delivery systems in place (2011).

The MacDonald-Cartier Freeway (Highway 401) offers express, toll-free delivery of products throughout southern Ontario, with links into the northeastern and mid-west United States, Highway 7/8 offers a four-lane connection to Highway 401 and the easterly markets of Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge, while Highway 7 connects Stratford to London and locations to the west. Other major highways servicing Stratford and area include provincial Highways 8 and 59, plus County Roads 113 and 119 (The City of Stratford official website, 2011).

Table 6: Distance Chart from Stratford

Distance Chart: From Stratford

City	Market Size	Distance (km/miles)	Drive Time (hours)
Stratford's Countryside		2/1	.3
Kitchener	210,000	50/31	0.5
Woodstock	36,000	45/27	0.5
Cambridge	80,000	61/38	0.75
London	377,000	65/40	0.75
Brantford	94,000	80/50	0.75
Hamilton	610,000	100/62	1.0
Toronto	3,900,000	155/97	1.5
Montreal	1,100,000	686/429	6.5
Cleveland, USA	506,000	505/316	5.0
Pittsburg, USA	370,000	560/350	5.5
Chicago, USA	2,783,000	689/431	7.0
Boston, USA	574,000	940/588	9.5
New York, USA	7,322,000	931/582	9.5
Border Crossings			
Niagara Falls		184/115	2.0
Samia		150/94	1.5
Fort Erie		206/129	2.0
Buffalo		206/129	2.0
Windsor/Detroit		243/152	2.5

Source: City of Stratford official website (2011)

Figure 13: Map of Stratford's Location



Source: City of Stratford official website (2011)

5.1.1. Demographic Profiles

Stratford has over 32,000 total population and it provides urban sophistication with rural and small town atmospheres (City of Stratford official website, 2011). The statistical evidence of Stratford age groupings shown in Figures 14 and 15 indicates a percentage of the population participates in the workforce; and a moderate population growth rate of 4.1 percent can support the quality of urban life with small town environment for the residents (City of Stratford official website, 2011).

Figure 14: Demographic Profile

Demographic Profile

Total Population

2001	29,676
2003	31,271
2006	30,461
2008	32,444
2013	33,430

Source: Stats Canada & Stratford's Official Plan

Figures in thousands

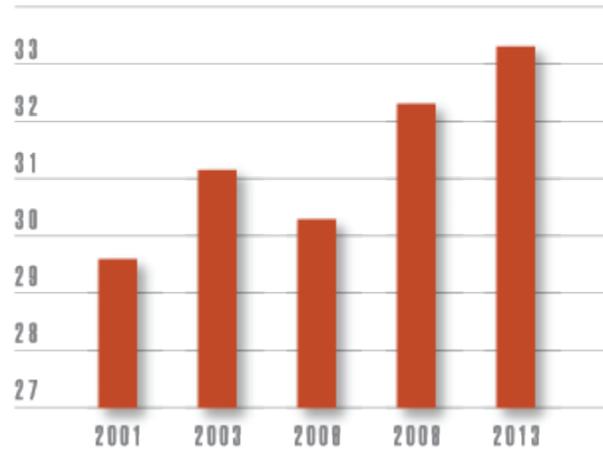


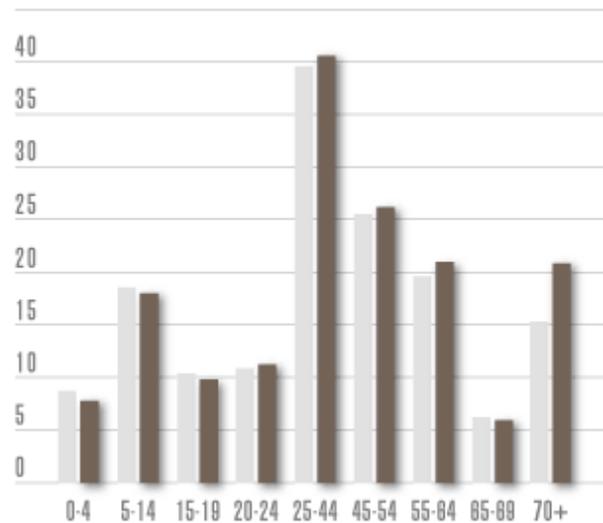
Figure 15: Population by Age and Gender

Population by Age and Sex (FP Markets Canadian Demographics, 2010)

Age	Males	Females
0-4	855	826
5-14	1,814	1,729
15-19	1,040	949
20-24	1,072	1,137
25-44	3,914	4,062
45-54	2,547	2,637
55-64	1,957	2,177
65-69	659	637
70+	1,519	2,274

■ Males ■ Females

Figures in hundreds



Source: City of Stratford official website (2011)

5.1.2. *Economic Indicators*

The Stratford economy is relatively diversified and it is based on manufacturing, tourism, and agricultural sectors, which create a relatively stable economy (City of Stratford official website, 2011). According to the city of Stratford official website (2011), the top two sectors of the growing economy are upscale tourism and manufacturing. Statistical evidence for 2010 (Table 7 and Table 8) indicates that the local unemployment rate continued to be less than both the national and provincial unemployment levels. The unemployment rate provides a vigorous community outlook and it implies that there are industries in Stratford with a pool of knowledge-based, skilled employees, and that there is not a large percentage of the population outside of the workforce. The statistical evidence also indicates that Stratford has a consistently low local unemployment rate, which is a reflection of its dynamic local economy (City of Stratford official website, 2011). Tables 7 and 8 detail the economic indicators of Stratford.

Table 7: Major Employers

Major Employers	Number of Employees
Stratford Festival of Canada	1773
Cooper-Standard	890
Stratford General Hospital	830
Schaeffler Canada	816
Honeywell Consumer	700
Dresden Industrial	600
FAG Aerospace	400
Stackpole	350
Hendrickson Springs	297
Dyna-mig Mfg. Of Stratford Inc.	270
Clemmer Steelcraft Technologies	220

Source: City of Stratford official website (2011)

Table 8: Economic Indicators

Economic Indicators at a Glance						
Indicators	2009	2008	2007	2006*	2005	2004
Population	31,953	31,953	31,641	30,461	31,026	30,630
Number of new businesses	25	20	29	35	36	58
City-owned industrial land sales (acres)	79	4.0	0.0	40.0	0.0	2.1
Value of land sales (\$CDN)	3,968,000	152,000	0	1,520,000	0	99,500
Value of construction activity (\$1000's CDN)	33,548	64,504	77,133	34,511	47,844	28,594
Housing starts	60	75	108	172	146	88
Unemployment rate	7.9	8.4	4.0	4.8	4.2	4.5
New industrial space constructed (sq. ft.)	3	6	509,416	55,584	62,819	65,080
New commercial space constructed (sq. ft.)	1	4	68,374	9,705	36,506	333
Total city assessment (\$1000's CDN)	2,579,741	2,444,532	2,413,662	2,380,028	2,086,788	1,933,858
Commercial/industrial assessment (\$1000's CDN)	395,239	371,345	369,377	367,822	342,573	327,987
Residential assessment (\$1000's CDN)	2,065,666	1,956,266	1,927,364	1,895,286	1,644,993	1,605,871
Rate of assessment growth (%)	5.6	1.27	1.41	14.05	7.91	4.20
Retail sales (\$1000's CDN)	279,390	487,620	345,048	548,050	304,407	292,160
Festival Theatre revenue (\$1000's CDN)	59,002	39,905	40,596	41,070	34,122	33,538
Festival Theatre annual budget (\$1000's CDN)	58,829	60,012	53,923	52,980	52,075	51,900
Festival Theatre attendance (tickets sold) (\$1000's CDN)	509,195	600,012	528,000	550,000	539,397	568,715

* INDICATES A CENSUS YEAR

Source: City of Stratford official website (2011)

5.2. The Savour Stratford Perth County Culinary Cluster



Clustering involves geographical concentration usually within a well-defined geographical area. Porter (1990) defines ‘clustering’ as: groups of inter-connected firms, specialized suppliers, service providers, and institutions that occur in geographically concentrated places; a group of complementary, competing, and interdependent firms that are significant forces in economic development and competitive advantages through the clustered production. Therefore, culinary producers and service providers involved in clustering can be synergistic and leverage economic development from shared access to marketing intelligence, supply chains, and knowledge and information flows.

Savour Stratford has been named by the Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance (OCTA) as a best practice of a creative food economy and culinary development. Thus, it has been invited to various local and provincial culinary symposiums to share its expertise (Savour Stratford official website, 2011). For this comparative case study, this site is selected as one of a few leading examples of the creative food economy and culinary movement in Ontario (others include Prince Edward County and Niagara-On-The-Lake) and because of its easy accessibility to the researcher. It has leveraged the agriculture and tourism sectors by promoting its natural resources and cultural heritage with a focus on culinary product development and economic diversification in the formation of a culinary cluster as a place brand to stimulate the creative food economy in place-based rural development.

In Savour Stratford a large number of stakeholders (currently, 253 interrelated firms and service providers: 42 restaurants, 16 producers, 71 accommodation providers, 62 retail and services, 57 events and attractions, and 5 associations) have been involved in the culinary cluster. Tables 9, 10, and 11 indicate the producers and agricultural products retailers, restaurant sector and B&B sector, which are a major constituent of the cluster (Programs developer, 2011; and Savour Stratford official website, 2011). The number of culinary-related businesses and the links that exist between them, as revealed in the existence of institutions such as Savour Stratford clearly indicate that this is a culinary cluster; and therefore, worthy of examination in this thesis. Figure 16 indicates the map of Stratford Perth County.

Table 9: Savour Perth County Producers & Agricultural Products Retailers

Producers/Retailers	Locations
Abner & Emma Martin	5115 Line 78 RR 1, Atwood N0G 1B0
Ann Clayburn	3979 Road 108 RR 4, Stratford N5A 6S5
Ann Slater	157030 15th Line Zorra, RR 1, Lakeside, N0M 2G0
Mel & Marlene Herrfort	4060 Perth Line 72, Millbank N0K 1L0
Abner & Martha Bauman	6927 Nicklin St. Box 73, Millbank N0K 1L0
Karin and Robert McDougall	4858 Line 34, RR 5, Stratford N5A 6S6
Bruce and Shirley Mills	5679 Line 4, RR 6, St Marys N4X 1C8
Brenda Schade	240 Graff Ave, Stratford N5A 6Y2
Bruce Williams & Bob Coleman	5531 Perth Line 86, RR 3, Listowel N4W 3G8
George Taylor	4675 Line 3, RR 3 St. Marys N4X 1C6
Jacqueline Barr	136 Ontario Street, Stratford N5A 7Y4
Christena Kuepfer/Cindy Streicher	6A Main Street South, Box 89, Milverton N0K 1M0
Brad Royce	Box 81, 8585 Hwy 23 N, Listowel N4W 3H2
Ralph and Bernice Gerber	5420 Streicher Line, RR 1, Millbank N0K 1L0
Richard and Terry De Wetering	4115 Perth Road 140, RR 5, Stratford N5A 6S6
Dianna Weimier	3197 Perth Rd 163, Fullarton N0K 1H0
Tim or Luann Erb	3907 Road 134, RR 3, Stratford N5A 6S4
Stewart and Bev Slater	157030 15th Line Zorra, RR 1, Lakeside N0M 2G0
Bruce and Nancy Hunter	3776 Rd 145, RR 2, Mitchell N0K 1N0
Bernadine Wolfe	6455 Line 42, RR 5, Mitchell N0K 1N0
Eric Eberhardt	30 Rebecca St, Stratford N5A 3P1
Joanne Foster	2549 Road 164, RR 1, St Marys N4X 1C4
Greg & Helma Luyten	5216 Line 49, RR 2, Gadshill N0K 1J0
Greg and Doug Guenther	39 Main Street N, Milverton N0K 1M0
Terry & Diane Hoover	5896 Line 78, RR 1, Atwood N0G 1B0
Jerry and Sandra DeGroot	4983 Perth Line 44 RR 2, Gadshill N0K 1J0
Sara Bradford	4074 Line 9, RR 2, St. Marys N4X 1C5

Jesse and Naomi Bowman	7523 Road 136, RR 4, Listowel N4W 3G9
Andy & Pam Megens	2877 Perth Rd 119, RR 7, St. Marys N4X 1C9
Linda MacDonald	72 Church St., Millbank N4X 1C9
Dave Koert	43652 Bridge Rd RR 5 Seaforth N0K 1W0
Marlene O'Brien	77697 Orchard Line, RR 1, Bayfield N0M 1G0
Scott Austin	47 Fisherman's Wharf, Box 538, Bayfield N0M 1G0
David & Karen Griffiths	42933 St. Michaels Road, Brussels N0G 1H0
Carolyn Porter MacDonald	166 Courthouse Sq., Goderich N7A 1N1
Will Stafford	43721 Howick-Turnberry Rd., RR 1, Wroxeter N0G 2X0
Drudges Maple Syrup	43269 Amberley Road RR 2, Wroxeter N0G 2X0
Lynda McNee	37 Albert St., Dungannon N0M 1R0
Paul & Rose Hill	4608 Perth Road 164 RR 5, Mitchell N0K 1N0
John & Julie Koch	4859 Road 104 RR 1, Gadshill N0K 1J0
Ron and Martin VanBakel	4580 Road 140, RR 1, Sebringville N0K 1X0
Gary or Maria Urquhart	5604 Perth Line 8, RR 1, St. Marys N4X 1C4
Karen Haverkamp	105 Elizabeth St W, Listowel N4W 1C8
Christine Pasztor	131 Albert St., Stratford N5A 3K5
Bruce & Diane Hahn	5657 Line 55, RR 3, Monkton N0K 1P0
Rick Frank	26 Wellington Street, Stratford N5A 2L2
Linda Knechtel	2146 Perth Line 34, Shakespeare N0B 2P0
Karen Hartwick	433 Erie Street, Stratford N5A 2N3
John Gerber	2468 Lichty Road, Millbank N0K 1L0
Melvin and Joanna Steckle	5857 Hwy 89 RR 1, Harriston N0G 1Z0
Stratford Agriplex	353 McCarthy Rd. W., Stratford N5A 6W3
Ann Slater	c/o Ann Slater, RR 1, Lakeside
Andy Pearson	3809 Road 108, RR 4, Stratford N5A 6S5
Antony John	4129 Rd. 130, Sebringville N0K 1X0 Tel: 519-393-6497
Ray Sheldon	3 Lakeside N0M 2G0
Deb Griffey	5128 Line 90, RR 2, Palmerston N0G 2P0
Gerry & Susie Wagler	2264 Line 34, RR 1, Shakespeare N0B 2P0
Kristene Steed	55 Albert Street, Stratford N5A 3K2
Lyle or Teresa Renecker	4941 Line 36, RR 5, Stratford N5A 6S6
Larry and Yvonne Pletsch	4004 Line 34 RR 4, Stratford N5A 6S586
Suzanne Turnbull	51 Louise Street, Stratford N5A 2E3
Fred and Ingrid de Martines	4538 Line 38, RR 1, Sebringville N0K 1X0
Kathy Hundt	127 Albert Street, Stratford N5A 3K5
Jessie Young	2301 Perth Line 43, RR 1, Stratford N5A 6S2
Tom Bickle	596633 Oxford County Rd. 59, RR 6
Laurie Neubrand	6584 Line 49, RR 2, Monkton N0K 1P0
Jamie and Katrina Kerr	6626 Line 75, RR 1, Atwood N0G 1B0
Ruth Klahsen	49 Griffith Rd., Stratford N5A 6S4

Table 10: Savour Stratford Member Restaurants

Bentley's Bar and Restaurant	Bijou Restaurant
Café Ten	The Church Restaurant and Belfry
Coffee Culture Café and Eatery	Crabby Joe's Tap and Grill
Demetre's Family Eatery	Distinctly Tea
Down the Street Bar and Restaurant	Fellini's Italian Mediterranean
Foster's Inn	Gene's Restaurant
Harry Ten Shilling	Let Them Eat Cake Restaurant and Dessert Cafe
Madelyn's Diner	Molly Bloom's Irish Pub
The Old Prune	Othello's Bar and Restaurant
Pan Tapas & Grill	The Parlour
Pass da Pasta Specialty Food Shoppe	Pazzo Ristorante Bar and Pizzeria
Pearl Sushi Japanese Restaurant	Queen's Inn at Stratford
Raja Fine Indian Cuisine	Rene's Bistro
Rundles Restaurant Sophisto-Bistro	Simple.Fish and Chips
Swiss Chalet Restaurant	Tango Café & Grill
Tea Leaves Tea Tasting Bar	Trattoria Fabrizio Ristorante and Cooking School
The Waterlot Restaurant	Wildstone Bar and Grill
Woolfy's at Wildwood	

Table 11: Accommodation (B & B Sector only)

B&B on Bay	All's Well B&B
Ariel's B&B	Avery House B&B
Avon & John B&B	Avonview Manor
Backstage B&B	The B&B
Birchrún B&B	Birmingham Manor B&B
The Caversham House	The Chisholms in Stratford
D & K Shady Nook B&B	Glenwood B&B
HAL & BARB's Guest House	Hughson Hall
The Lily PAD B&B	Riverwalk Guest House
Rosewood Manor	Stewart Guest House

Source: Email correspondence with the program developer (2011)

Figure 16: Map of Stratford Perth County



Source: photo taken by author (2011)

5.3. Interdependent Determinants

This section examines each of the determinants in the conceptual model and how each has contributed to the development of the Savour Stratford cluster. Each of the determinants is defined, and then, is used to present aspects of the case study findings.

5.3.1. *Factor conditions* are the position of a place with respect to the factors of production necessary for participation in the culinary tourism market (the factor endowments and their permanent upgrading): without factor endowments and attractions (e.g., natural and cultural landscapes), tourism activity will be limited. The factors are not only inherited but also created through the application of natural, cultural, historical, and organizational and human resources (Vanhove, 2005).

When we did consumer research and the analysis of data, we discovered that cultural tourists were certainly interested in performing arts, very interested in heritage and very interested in fine food... interested in history and stories of a place, interested in the character of a place. With that information, we looked at what Stratford has to offer in terms of products. We discovered that we had three things: 'character', 'culture' and 'cuisine' (Executive marketer, 2011).

In Stratford tourism, agriculture and manufacturing are leading the region's economy. Stratford Perth County has strong agricultural resources: Perth County is "Ontario's richest agricultural heritage and is one of the most agriculturally productive counties in all of Ontario" (The City of Stratford official website, 2011). With the 'Slow Food Movement' thriving around the world and "Stratford Perth County being surrounded by abundance during the growing season", it is becoming one of Ontario's popular culinary places (The City of Stratford official website, 2011). For example, "there are many local food celebrations to name a few: strawberries, sweet local preserves, heritage breeds and cheeses all year round" (The City of Stratford official website, 2011). In September, Stratford celebrates two of the unique food festivals, a celebration of local

food: ‘The Stratford Garlic Festival’ and ‘Savour Stratford Perth County Culinary Festival’ (Savour Stratford official website, 2011).

Stratford Perth County is also a leader in the area of agricultural technology and is known for mixed farming, dairying and hog production: i.e., it is home to “2,438 census farms and 498,159 acres of farmland: in 2006, farm cash receipts for main commodities totaled \$558.5 Million. Dairy receipts led the way at \$159 Million and pork producers were second highest in farm receipts with \$142.7 Million” (The City of Stratford official website, 2011). The factor conditions of the core and leading assets contribute to the creation of a competitive advantage of the Savour Stratford culinary cluster. Table 12 provides information on agricultural production, which is a leading asset of a creative food economy and culinary tourism reflecting the region’s rich *terroir* (core asset). It is important to note, however, that the Savour Stratford culinary cluster is formed by relatively small farms and producers and industrial farms are not involved. Table 12 deals with the farm producers, including large corporate farms, to provide the overall picture of the agricultural sector in Stratford Perth County.

Table 12: Major Field Crops & Farms by Industry Group

<u>Major Field Crops: 2006 Census (hectares)</u>		<u>Farms by Industry Group: 2006 Census (# of farms)</u>	
Winter wheat	26,054	Dairy cattle and milk production	431
Oats and grain	1,051	Beef cattle ranching and farming	319
Barley and grain	3,741	Hog and pig farming	379
Mixed grains	5,055	Sheep and goat farming	53
Corn for grain	44,061	Poultry and egg production	121
Hay	28,283	Other animal production	199
Soy beans	39,552	Oilseed and grain farming	757
Dry white beans	4,111	Other crop farming	126
Other dry beans	4,008		

Source: The City of Stratford official website (2011)

The region's leading asset of food production has been complemented and enhanced by a combination of culinary artisans, the renowned Stratford Chefs School and a variety of restaurants "whose offerings range from gastro-pub fare to haute cuisine" (Savour Stratford official website, 2011). "Perth County's rich agricultural sector includes one of the longest-running farmer's markets in Ontario, the Stratford Farmer's Market, which was established in 1855" (Savour Stratford official website, 2011; and The City of Stratford official website, 2011).

In addition, Stratford has a significant factor conditions in terms of human, organizational, institutional and technological resources. For example, Stratford is the home of southwestern Ontario's University Triangle: the University of Waterloo; Wilfrid Laurier University; the University of Guelph and University of Western Ontario (City of Stratford official website, 2011). The "recently-established University of Waterloo Stratford Campus is a forward-looking education centre" that will drive the research in digital media in the region and draw leading researchers and entrepreneurs to establish future opportunities in the digital media economy (City of Stratford official website, 2011).

- ***Culinary Products/Programs Development: Two Products as an Example***

It was too obvious... we have the internationally well-known Chefs School here in Stratford and so many farms and farmers and restaurants...we have already had the authentic culinary assets and we knew the market trends that food economy and culinary tourism were growing (Program developer, 2011).

Product development is an important part of place marketing and branding. Thus, identification of the strengths of a *terroir*, and inventory of the culinary-related assets (both hard factors and soft factors), mapping of culinary resources, based on local things and knowledge (e.g., core, leading and supporting assets) are necessary to establish the creative food economy production and consumption as a taste of a place.

You know the people who can excite ahead of curve...they are the ones who refine some general idea that's going to be looking at six months down the road... the vision that strives to make this happen. We also work closely with OCTA... we are a member region and the OCTA is very instrumental in working with us in developing products. We work with them and we also give them some of our intellectual capital for that purposes and we share that back and forth. We have a standard and we met the organization's standard. If you have a good strategy, it's good, but you must also have a team that actually can make it go ahead and understand so well to develop everything exactly by following the principle (Executive director, 2011).

In Savour Stratford, place marketing/branding strategy is well developed to create and sustain the culinary place brand through the use of a wide range of marketing/branding media (e.g., websites, facebook, twitters, blogs, brochures, magazines and newspapers). The destination marketing organization (DMO) as it is leading the formation of the cluster is a significant player for the Savour Stratford culinary cluster in that it can concentrate on developing one holistic approach and put resources together to create and promote the culinary cluster. A wide range of stakeholders (currently, 253 members: 42 restaurants, 16 producers, 71 accommodation providers, 62 retail and services, 57 events and attractions, and 5 associations) in the local community is participating in the process of place branding in the formation of the culinary cluster as part of a creative food economy (Executive director; and Program developer, 2011).

The organization's goal in creating a place identity with a specific focus on a creative food economy and culinary tourism is to diversify the regional tourism products and services to attract visitors, particularly in the off-season (Executive director; and Program developer, 2011). In the beginning of the development of the Savour Stratford culinary program, the logo was created as a branding tool with the identification of Stratford Perth County as a culinary place brand. The following statement made by one of the key informants is a clear expression, which

indicates the projected culinary identity (objective) of Savour Stratford to be perceived by tourists as an image (subjective) of a culinary place brand.

Savour Stratford Perth County wanted to present itself to be unique from others... we did not want to have a harvest festival like the 'October Fest' or the American, country western kind... Because Stratford is a very sophisticated place, we believe that it is always going to be an European garden party style of a culinary program (Executive director, 2011).

Story about the 'Chocolate Trail'

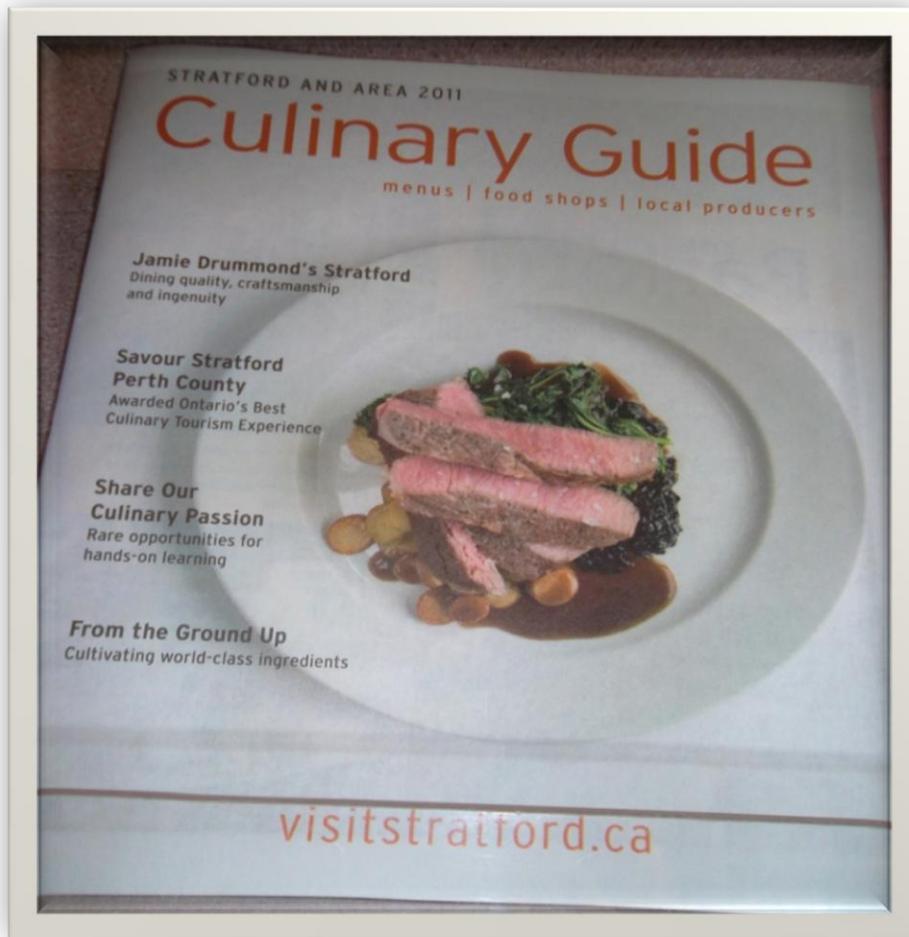
It is really about getting out into the community and working to bring different members together and get them to think about how we create products/programs and expand to grow. It is doing an inventory about what we have here so that we know what we have and how can we build on the assets and strengths we have here... I work with partners - people who are identified as community. I work with them to grow their businesses through culinary tourism, and connect them to Savour Stratford as an organization to market that product (Program developer, 2011).

When the executive marketing director of Stratford Tourism Alliance arrived in Stratford, he started looking around seeing what is available in Stratford. What really struck him was that within two blocks in the downtown core, there were four chocolate shops making their own chocolates: i.e. hand-made gourmet chocolates. Soon after, he created a slogan: 'Come for the Chocolate, Stay for the Plays'. It seems that one thing could lead to another. By creating the slogan, the Savour Stratford marketing team decided to do something with the local small business chocolate stores (Executive director, 2011). The marketing and product/program development team had brain-storming sessions and came up with the idea of developing the 'Chocolate Trail'. They invited Savour Stratford member retailers to participate in this new culinary product development. There were 20-25 businesses that wanted to participate in the program and that they are now located on a designated that chocolate trail route, which appears in much of Savour Stratford marketing media (Program developer; and Executive director, 2011).

For this particular culinary program, visitors pay \$20 if they want to visit the trail. By purchasing a \$20 ticket for a tour of the chocolate trail, they can choose up to 20 stores on the trail and do variety activities (e.g., chocolate-making and tasting). When visitors are on the trail, they will get small gifts such as chocolate soap, chocolate coffee, hot chocolate or chocolate ice cream – a series of chocolate experiences (Executive director, 2011). However, to get the culinary retailers to come on board, the marketing team had to generate a minimum value for sampling or a small gift that would be provided to the visitors on the trail. The marketing team decided that the cost of a small gift or sample should be \$5 and Savour Stratford would pay \$2 and retailers would pay \$3 for that sample (Executive director, 2011).

This idea has generated much revenue for both Savour Stratford and the retailers who are now running their businesses on the chocolate trail route as a culinary product of Savour Stratford. It has become one of the most popular culinary programs of Savour Stratford. The small local businesses that have participated in this particular product development are happy to see the growth of their entrepreneurial activities and the creative food economy and culinary tourism in the region as a whole (Executive director, 2011). The product/program developer has led to the development of the Chocolate Trail and also created the most popular culinary product, which has become one of the best culinary brands in Ontario: ‘Savour Stratford Perth County Culinary Festival’. Detailed examples of marketing and branding tools can be seen in Figures 17, 18 and 19. Since 2009, this event has involved community volunteers in various associations, such as the associations that are responsible for the farmer’s market, entertainment, and cooking school and others to create the successful food event (Executive director; and Program developer, 2011).

Figure 17: Savour Stratford Culinary Guide



Source: photo taken by author (2011)

Figure 18: Example of Branding Tools



Source: photo taken by author (2011)

Figure 19: The Signage of Tourism Stratford as a Branding Tool



Source: photo taken by author (2011)

In 2011, Savour Stratford Perth County Culinary Festival (Table 14 and Figure 20) expanded into Stratford's downtown core in a partnership with the City Centre Committee on behalf of the Businesses of Downtown Stratford (Executive director; and Program developer, 2011). The event has doubled the programming by creating a new culinary stage that hosts free cooking demonstrations and tastings with celebrity chefs (e.g., Chuck Hughes and Connie DeSousa). Volunteers from a variety of associations in the community help make it a success by donating 4 hours of their time during the Savour Stratford Perth County Festival weekend (Executive director, 2011; Program developer, 2011; and Savour Stratford newsletter, 2011).

There is also a training session that all volunteers should attend to meet their team leaders and receive a Savour Stratford Perth Culinary Festival volunteer information kit. The training program includes social gatherings, such as a fun night of food, beverage and entertainment to gear up for the main event: volunteers help as greeters, traffic attendants, set-up and take-down assistants, merchandise, food and beverage personnel and in other key roles; volunteers register by signing up on an on-line registration form (Savour Stratford newsletter, 2011).

Table 13: Schedules for 2011 Savour Stratford Perth County Culinary Festival

Programs/Products	Contents
Kids Play Perth - Savour Stratford Perth County Culinary Festival	Kids Play Perth: It shares activities and opportunities that are available to kids, families and parents. Cost: Free
Fun with Fondant	Pastry Chef Wendy Farkas Cost: Free
Hooked on Sustainable Seafood	Dan Donovan: sustainable seafood from Lake Huron. Cost: Donation
Preserve and Enjoy Your Harvest All Year Long	Ellie Topp: preserving seasonal fruits and vegetables so as to eat local throughout the year. Cost: Donation
Chef Chuck Hughes	Montreal chef Chuck Hughes shares his passion for food, friends and fun in his popular Food Network show Cost: Free
Chef Connie DeSousa	Chef Connie DeSousa, co-executive Chef in Calgary joins Stratford Food festival to share her expertise Cost: Free
Chef Denis Cotter	Chef Denis Cotter: dishes that can be made with seasonal and locally grown vegetables. Cost: Free
Raw Food	Nancy Telfer teams up with Sara Bradford: demonstrate how easy the Raw Living Food Lifestyle can be; more Raw Foods into their diets, while explaining its many benefits (including protein sources, cultured foods and delicious recipes). Cost: Donation
Monforte Dairy	Ruth will be extending the ice cream classes Cost: Free
Raising Your Foodie Baby	A hands-on workshop with Sara Bradford for baby food through herbs, seasonal cooking and local flavours. Admission includes a take home gift. Cost: \$10/A HST
Bogle the Clown	The Magic Clown's zany antics with magic, juggling, stilt walking and balloon sculptures. Cost: Free
Power Puppets	Savour Stratford's Kids Tent, a cast of handmade characters: learning opportunity about local and seasonal foods. Cost: Free
It's a Peanut Butter Jam	A Brand New Beat (Music and Movement Classes for the Early Years) is inviting children ages 0 - 4 and their families to come and join us for a musical jam session. Cost: Free
Sourcing and Cooking Foraged Foods That are Safe to Eat	Wild edible plants and mushrooms as well as the many health benefits they bring to our bodies; sample assorted dishes (e.g., shittake mushrooms) Cost: By donation
Savour Stratford Tasting	The Savour Stratford Tasting event: under tents along the Avon River, guests will enjoy the culinary garden party and dine on over 30 local crafted by over 30 acclaimed chefs and their partnered farmer, watered with Ontario VQA vintages and craft brews accompanied by a range of jazz and contemporary music. Cost: \$115/VIP plus HST, \$75/General plus HS
The Saints or Sinners Guided Walking Tour	Guides: explore Stratford's history along with the heritage architecture Cost: Free

Source: The City of Stratford official website (2011); Savour Stratford Perth County official website (2011)

Figure 20: 2011 Savour Stratford Perth County Culinary Festival Poster



Source: Savour Stratford official website (2011)

Story about ‘Savour Stratford Perth County Culinary Festival’

There were a lot of things we had here that were already ready to develop culinary products. We looked at our products... it is very important to see where the gaps are, and then identify strengths and opportunities, and talk about the opportunities to the community so that people can create businesses together on those strengths... it is just more about bringing people together and keep bringing people together...and ideas come about...it is almost like a perfect storm (Program developer, 2011).

With the support of community volunteers from the various associations, the marketing team looked at setting up the culinary festival (annual culinary event). The team wanted to create a unique food event that takes place along the river, which is a heritage district. The food festival started with the Stratford farmer’s market and, every year, the food event has attracted more and more farmers to participate in the two-day culinary festival. The marketing team decided to

create ticket events for the festival so that it encourages visitors to buy culinary products at the event (Executive director, 2011).

Eventually, the product/program developer came up with the idea of ‘pair partnership’ between chefs and farmers: the famous chefs from the local Chefs School in Stratford and producers from Perth County were put together so that chefs could create small samples of a variety food items only using the participating producers’ ingredients (Executive director, 2011). 30 chefs and 30 farmers were paired together under a tent with music, Ontario wine and brewers and they provided a Sunday afternoon European-style garden party. The guests could sample as many as thirty food items that were local and created at the food event. This was the start of the ‘Savour Stratford Perth County Culinary Festival’ that has become one of the best culinary experiences in Ontario’s creative food economy and culinary movement (Savour Stratford official website, 2011; Executive director; and Program developer, 2011).

As knowledge and skills have been accumulated, the marketing team also decided to do a free music concert with young artists (i.e., musicians, dancers and singers who work in Stratford) performing at the all-day garden party-style food festival (Executive director, 2011). The team wanted to attract relatively younger customers to the festival, who would not necessarily come to the place for theatres, by offering both good quality food and entertainment, thereby demonstrating what Stratford has to offer. It was also viewed as being an opportunity to invite people in other communities to come to experience and share Savour Stratford’s offerings (Executive marketer; and Program developer, 2011). Tables 14 and 15 indicate a variety of culinary products and programs available in Savour Stratford culinary cluster. They have been created by the marketing organization in partnership with a wide range of Savour Stratford members.

Table 14: Savour Stratford Culinary Products/Programs Development

Culinary Products/Programs	Contents
Savour Stratford Culinary Packages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Savour Stratford Two Night Culinary Festival Package at The River Garden Inn • Caversham House Two Night Culinary Getaway • Stone Willow Inn Culinary Package • The Great Dine & Dash Road Trip
Culinary Walking Tours of Stratford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit several food shops and sample products with an emphasis on locally-made foods whenever possible
Culinary Getaways and Culinary Trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make chocolate and then spend a few hours matching with a variety of teas with Canada's pre-eminent tea sommelier • Enjoy a few hours with a master baker creating gluten-free breads, cookies and energy bars (take home the recipes) • Visit Anthony John, The Manic Organic, on his organic vegetable farm and be entertained by his philosophy of responsible, environmental farming • Spend the afternoon with Ruth Klahsen, artisanal cheese maker, at her Monforte Dairy • Learn the art of making that perfect candy • Learn the tricks of the trade with the Stratford Chefs School
Culinary Packages and Promotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tea and Chocolate in Stratford; Monforte Artisanal Cheese Making; Candy Making at Chocolate Barr's Candies; Cooking with the Seasons and the Stratford Chefs School; A Fresh Approach to Healthy Baking; and Cultivate Your Palate With the Manic Organic
Culinary Attractions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birtch Farms and Estate Winery; The Best Little Pork Shoppe; Lyndon Fish Hatcheries; McCully's Hill Farm; Megens Family Farm; Son Risen Farm; and Perth County Welcome Centre and Artisan Market; Perth Pork Products Ltd; Shakespeare Pies; and Soiled Reputation
Epicurean Trek	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buy Local Buy Fresh
Food Festivals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Stratford Garlic Festival; and Savour Stratford Perth County Culinary Festival
Savour Stratford Farmers and Producers	<p><u>Three Ways to Search:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • by Season - find seasonally available products, and who has them • by Product - find who produces selected products • by Producer - find a producer by name, or name of farm
Culinary Adventures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gourmet Grazing; Funky, Fun Bistros; Relax, We're Casual; Café Society; Sushi to Samosas; and In the County
From Field to Chef	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stratford restaurants celebrate local food program with the logo, Savour Stratford
Culinary Event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Savour Stratford Perth County Annual Culinary Festival

Source: Savour Stratford official website (2011)

Table 15: Savour Stratford Culinary Products/Programs by Themes

Themes	Contents
Culinary Stratford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Culinary getaways; Culinary attractions; Epicurean treks & Culinary adventures; Culinary festivals; Stratford chef school; Culinary walking tours; Savour Stratford farmers and producers; Buy local buy fresh; Restaurants & dining; York Street Tasting; Culinary week; Garlic festival; Chocolate trail; Special events; and Bed and Breakfast
Romantic Stratford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weddings
Arts & Theater & Festivals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performing arts; fine arts (galleries); music; Stratford Shakespeare Festival; and Blyth Festival
Attractions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural attractions; historical attractions; eco and nature attractions; and family attractions
Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stratford history; landmarks; antique shops; historic Stratford and Perth County; and the pastoral countryside of Perth County
Parks and Gardens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Swans on Avon; Shakespeare garden; and hiking
Stratford Shopping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Culinary products shops; books and music shops; gifts and photographers shops; arts & antiques shops; fashions; spas and esthetics; and other
Accommodations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hotels and inns; bed and breakfast; and motels and resorts
Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Savour Stratford Perth County Culinary Festival; Garlic Festival; Stratford Shakespeare Festival; and Blyth Festival

Source: Savour Stratford official website (2011)

5.3.2. Demand conditions are concerned with the availability of a market for culinary products and services. The existence of sufficiently large number of sophisticated visitors within a reasonable market area (such as a one-day drive) is of the utmost importance. Quality-conscious individuals exert constant quality control, moving suppliers towards high-quality market segments. Such sophisticated individuals are able to recognize new trends and have sufficient disposable income to buy into them (Vanhove, 2005).

Our primary market is well-educated, well-travelled, and well-read... they have at least \$100,000 income per year...spending disposable income on cultural, culinary or travel for food is important...spending disposable income for self-actualization is important for them. The primary market profile was identified by the Ministry of Tourism research (Executive marketer, 2011).

In Stratford the culinary cluster has developed due to the local and international culinary movement, responding to domestic and international visitors' curiosity to experience region's artistic heritage through local cuisine (Savour Stratford official website, 2011; and the city of

Stratford official website, 2011). Savour Stratford targets both local residents and visitors (Savour Stratford official website, 2011).

The primary target market is 'empty-nester' urban couples and singles; on average over thirty years old; well-educated, upper-income and sophisticated Canadian and American travelers seeking a quality cultural tourism experience. The target market profiles were identified by the Ministry of Tourism's segmentation analysis as 'Upscale Adventurers' and 'Young Go-Gos'. The secondary target market is 'Provincial Families'. The catchment area includes the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), London, Kitchener-Waterloo, Ottawa, Michigan, Buffalo, and New York (Savour Stratford official website, 2011).

In 2008, with a limited culinary program and promotion, according to the Executive marketer (2011) and Program developer (2011), the 'Savour Stratford Tasting' event exceeded the organization's objectives by almost 200 percent (Executive director, 2011). Key players in culinary tourism, including high profile Toronto chefs, spread the word about the culinary event. As a result, the place marketing organization, 'Stratford Tourism Alliance', has been invited to participate at local and provincial culinary symposia and 'Savour Stratford Perth County', a culinary place brand, is frequently presented as a best practice by the OCTA (Savour Stratford official website, 2011).

Stratford is a rapidly growing culinary place. In 2009, Savour Stratford established an annual food event to showcase firms and service providers of the culinary cluster community, such as farmers, chefs, artisans and restaurants (Executive director; and Program developer, 2011). This festival is designed to portray the region's unique culinary characters and to further its reputation as a creative economy and culinary place. "In 2009, Savour Stratford experienced double the attendance expected for the inaugural food event" (Executive director, 2011). With enhanced culinary products and programs, including all-day live music concerts, demonstrations presented by celebrity chefs, farmers, farmer's and artisan's markets, as well as a silent auction,

sidewalk sales, and cafes, the Savour Stratford anticipated more than 10,000 visitors per day for the 2011 food event (Executive director; and Program developer, 2011).

5.3.3. Market structure is a term that encapsulates the conditions in a place that govern how firms/organizations are created, organized and managed, as well as the nature of local rivalry among firms and the institutional and organizational infrastructure to support a marketing and branding strategy (Vanhove, 2005).

I am responsible for 'Stratford Tourism Alliance' and 'Savour Stratford Perth County' is one of our marketing programs... and we found that the cuisine was one that it had the greatest opportunity to develop as product...so we started focusing on culinary experience and started developing and programming those opportunities... We looked at the farmers, restaurants and Chefs School, and because of all of these things, we felt we had enough assets to put together and create something focused on culinary experience (Executive marketer, 2011).

The Stratford Tourism Alliance (STA), which is a destination marketing organization, was established in 2007. Research findings of 'A Study of the Tourism Sector in Stratford' (Blake Communications, 2005) suggest that the region should focus on tourism marketing. STA is a private sector, non-profit incorporated body with industry membership and the city of Stratford representation (Visit Stratford official website 2011). It is a membership-driven place-marketing/branding organization directed by a board of directors made up of private and public sector representatives and associations. Currently, the organization is managed by four full-time and six part-time staff (Visit Stratford official website 2011; Executive marketer; and Program developer, 2011). Board members consist of representatives of the Stratford Perth County: the city of Stratford's deputy mayor, a representative of the Ministry of Tourism (who does not have a vote), the General Manager of Stratford Summer Music Festival, the General Manager of the Shakespeare Festival, the General Manager of the City Centre Committee (Business Development Association), a representative of restaurants, a representative of producers, a

representative of B&Bs (Bed and Breakfast sector), a member of the Chamber of Commerce, two business consultants, a representative of retail sector, and a representative of each of the hotel and motel associations (Executive marketer, 2011).

The board members defined the fact that the majority of investment should be in marketing so that we can proceed developing certain programs, and the culinary strategy was a long-term opportunity that would attract additional or new visitors to the place especially in the off-season... The board also defined that we should concentrate on marketing between the end of September and the beginning of June with very little investment to promote the summer (the summer festivals). Therefore, our goal is to attract more visitors in the off-season than during the high season. In that process, to attract individuals to the off-season, we develop the culinary program to be able to interest those people to come to Stratford (Executive marketer, 2011).

As the above citation implies, Savour Stratford culinary cluster within the marketing organization of the STA is run by the executive marketing director, marketing coordinator, membership and advertising coordinator, culinary coordinator, and full-time/part-time administrative staff. The STA is funded by membership fees, partnership funds, the city of Stratford and the destination marketing fund (3 percent of tax included in visitors' accommodation fees). The purpose of the STA is to act as a member and industry-driven not-for-profit organization to manage, develop, and promote Stratford as a national and international cultural place (Executive marketer, 2011; and Visit Stratford official website, 2011).

The goal of the organization is to strengthen the local economy and enrich the quality of life in Stratford, such as its distinctive attractions and events, the natural and artistic characteristics of the place, innovative cuisine, accommodations, and shopping experience. At the start of 2009, the STA had 220 members (currently, 253 members) from the various associations of accommodation, culinary, retail, creative industries and many not-for-profit organizations (Executive marketer, 2011; and Visit Stratford official website, 2011).

When STA formed in 2007, there was a mandate for how we determine to attract people outside of the theater experience... when we did consumer research, things came about... the definition of cultural tourism... cultural tourists are defined as very interested in traditional theatre and performing arts. As we analyzed the information in a greater depth, we discovered that cultural tourists were certainly interested in fine food. Soon after, we also discovered that the best way of doing it was to create some form of festival or event in which we could bring not only visitors but also harness all of the people and community around with an idea, something that they can feel and touch (Executive marketer, 2011).

The above citation clearly articulates that Savour Stratford has adopted service branding techniques. They are focused more on the demand-side and how a culinary brand image can be articulated by the marketing organization. The emphasis in this approach is on organizational leadership: key individuals who are employed by and responsible to the organization should lead the stakeholders to create the interconnected identity and image of the place as a brand (Morgan et al., 2010).

The executive marketer of Savour Stratford stressed that Prince Edward County is a competitor of Savour Stratford as it has established a high quality culinary place brand and there is a growing wine industry, something that does not exist in Stratford. Prince Edward County has been able to combine many local producers, natural beauty and local wines. It has established a creative economy through creation of local food products and their promotion (Executive marketer, 2011). However, it does not have a prominent professional artistic experience that is available in Stratford.

Every place needs to find an identity and focuses on that identity... you cannot be all things to all people... you need to find the best asset... what you need to do is to make it better... how do you refine it to make it more attractive and how do you reach to people and how do you make sure the quality experience here is going to be good one? We are fortunate because people who own restaurants and shops, B&Bs and hotels have a great deal of status for visitors who come here. That's perhaps because, over the years, the cultural festivals attracted the people -

better educated and a better-behaved kind of market, and remember that we do not call them visitors... we call them guests... that unsaid mentality flows through the way people provide the service here (Executive marketer, 2011).

5.3.4. Related and supporting industries are firms or producers in the region that provide inputs that support the establishment and operation of a culinary cluster (e.g., creative industry). The diversity and the quality of supporting industries (e.g., accessibility to the site, parking facilities, high quality service facilities, health care, and security) are important to the success of a culinary cluster (Vanhove, 2005).

Not only has Stratford the significant advantages of the agricultural sector (the factor conditions of core assets) in developing a creative food economy, it also has a wide range of supporting industries (e.g., creative industry). For example, “Stratford boasts the largest park area per capita of any city in Canada: there are more than 1,000 acres of groomed parkland with thousands of annuals planted in approximately 100 flowerbeds throughout the city”: i.e., in the downtown core, “the Avon River and surrounding parks and the award-winning public gardens extend across the centre of the city” (The City of Stratford official website, 2011). There are also a well-organized sports centre including the wide variety of in-door and out-door recreational facilities (The City of Stratford official website, 2011).

Stratford supports more than 400 sports teams involving more than 8,000 athletes; Stratford’s minor hockey program has produced several top athletes for the National Hockey League; and it is home to current and prior Olympians and the newly founded Stratford Sports wall of Fame acknowledging its part in the Canadian forum of sport (The City of Stratford official website, 2011)

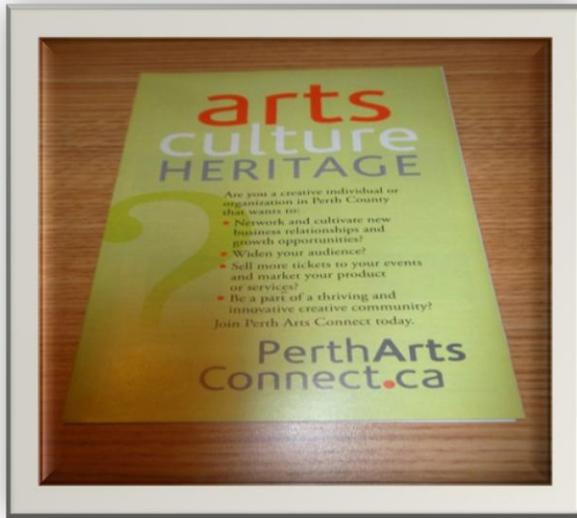
Stratford offers a combination of a small town atmosphere, suitable public amenities, as well as an urban lifestyle – internationally renowned artistic characteristics. Stratford has well-conserved architectural heritage: “it has been maintained and preserved 177 years of history and the Victorian architectures” (The City of Stratford official website, 2011). Specifically, the

creative and artistic atmosphere including a wide range of restaurants increasingly attract Canadian and international visitors and media outlets (The City of Stratford official website, 2011).

Stratford has been a creative cluster since the 1960s according to the executive marketer (2011). The whole economy of Stratford was based on manufacturing, but when the theaters were established in 1952 and 1953, Stratford could have many cultural organizations and this sector is still growing (Executive marketer, 2011). As a consequence, “*Stratford always has been creative: there always has been a creative industry that is well ahead of anywhere else in Ontario*” (Executive marketer, 2011). Such creative and artistic organizations are considered to be a vast resource as building blocks of the creative food economy and culinary cluster development (Executive marketer, 2011). This great supporting industry as an asset for the creative food economy and culinary tourism can attract many visitors who come to Stratford because of the theatre, which is emblematic of the region as being a cultural and creative place.

The internationally well-known artistic characteristics of Stratford have been a great strength in developing a new culinary identity and image by specialization and diversification of the product, and through making connections to existing and new visitors. Stratford’s artistic characteristics, for it has long been widely viewed as being a creative cultural place, is a great supporting asset because “*Stratford has had visitors coming already for the cultural experience, and the tourist profiles overlap between cultural and culinary tourism*” (Executive marketer, 2011) (i.e., many cultural tourists like fine dining experiences and have high disposable income as discussed earlier).

Figure 21: Perth Arts Connect



Source: photo taken by author (2011)

As indicated, Stratford is known for creative industries of “all sorts filled with the sights and sounds of performing artists, cooking school chefs, painters and writers with their artistic passion” (The City of Stratford official website, 2011). ‘Perth Arts Connect’ as seen in Figure 21 is “an art association, which is composed of artists and organizations and those who support and appreciate the arts and cultural heritage in the Stratford” (The City of Stratford official website, 2011).

The County offers a multiplicity of cultural facilities such as many cultural festivals including food festivals. ‘Gallery Stratford’, located close to the main theatre offers over 1,000 pieces in the permanent collection by Canadian artists such as ‘The Group of Seven’. There are several other galleries in the city including studios where artists welcome visitors into their creative environment. Thus, Stratford has a dynamic cultural scene with events being staged all year round. Rich local history of Stratford is displayed at the recently relocated and expanded Stratford-Perth Museum and the Stratford-Perth Archives (The City of Stratford official website, 2011).

Table 16: Stratford Shakespearean Festival: Attendance and Revenue (2000 – 2006)

Stratford Shakespearean Festival: Attendance & Revenue			
Year	Gross Revenue	Attendance	Performances
2006	\$41,070,000	550,000	700
2005	34,122,000	539,397	704
2004	33,538,000	568,715	704
2003	34,138,000	606,134	750
2002	30,225,000	672,924	709
2001	30,127,000	614,226	668
2000	25,975,000	639,000	656

Source: The City of Stratford official website (2011)

Stratford is also renowned internationally as the home of the ‘Stratford Shakespeare Festival’, one of the most well-known theatrical festivals in the world. According to the city website, “it began in 1953 and has since grown substantially in number of performances and attendance” (Table 16).

The original season, which lasted for 6 weeks, has been extended to 27 weeks. Currently, more than 500,000 visitors a year witness the repertory theatre. In addition, to attending performances, visitors can attend seminars, workshops and behind-the-scenes tours of the festival. There are also opportunities to meet members of the acting company, production and administrative staff. The theatre draws visitors of many types, from school parties to celebrities (The City of Stratford official website, 2011).

Stratford hosts many annual festivals and celebrations including: “the Stratford Swan Parade, Summer Music Festival, Garlic Festival, Doc Fest, Savour Stratford Perth County Culinary Festival, Kiwanis Music Festival and Winter-fest” (The City of Stratford official website, 2011). These attract more visitors that also may partake of local cuisine. Most of these visitors need to eat while in Stratford and many possess the demographic characteristics of culinary tourists (mature, well-educated and comfortable economically). Thus, there is a good match between the characteristics of theatre-goers and culinary tourists who may often be the

same people in Stratford; and enjoyment of cuisine and a theatrical performance are activities that fit well together.

5.4. Facilitators as Creative Process

The conceptual model created for the study consists of interdependent determinants and facilitators as innovation process that support the development of a culinary cluster. They are divided into three parts (as discussed in Chapter 3). The innermost part is a '*terroir*' (sense of place as a brand) that is transformed into a taste of a place by forming a successful culinary cluster. To convert a *terroir* into a creative and environmentally friendly culinary cluster, four facilitators of the necessary innovation process are identified in the model ('environmentally friendly movement'; 'leadership'; 'stakeholder collaboration'; and 'communication and information flows'). These are also the challenges that must be met and the creative process that must be facilitated for the successful creation of a taste of a place. Thus, this section examines the innovation process that was facilitated to support the formation of the Savour Stratford cluster.

5.4.1. *Environmentally friendly movement* should be adopted to facilitate the innovation process in achieving equilibrium between environment and tourism: an environment strategy should be in place, which focuses on reducing food miles (e.g., Slow Food Movement), that will change the paradigm of tourism development (i.e., initial investment into improvement of quality and creation of the attractiveness of a place by reducing consumption and waste; and development of economic potential within the culinary cluster).

In Savour Stratford it is believed that culinary clusters require the presence of an environmental movement. According to the culinary program developer, the 'Slow Food Movement' (as opposed to the fast food movement) has made the community, both residents and

business owners, aware of the global green movement. There is a 'Slow Food Convivia' (community chapter) in the Stratford Perth County region. One of the interviewees was a former chair of the Slow Food Convivia of the region and the interviewee believed that the Slow Food Movement has helped to bring the entire food community together and made them think about the sustainability of a food economy and culinary movement in the region (i.e., reduction of food miles based upon the slogan of the Slow Food Movement originated in Italy: 'Good, Clean and Fair Food'). In addition, the City of Stratford, which is represented on the board of directors of the marketing organization (Stratford Tourism Alliance), is strongly supportive of the establishment of a quality environment, as well as the sustainability of the food economy and culinary movement (Executive marketer; and Program developer, 2011).

As an example in relation to the food mile reduction strategy, an important culinary program - a certified Savour Stratford restaurant program - is created to advocate member establishments to use more locally-grown agricultural products. On the official website, 23 restaurants have been featured. They have signed an agreement with Savour Stratford. If a restaurant includes items from at least 5 member farmers and growers, and purchases locally grown ingredients from them, it is certified as a Savour Stratford restaurant and can use the logo, Savour Stratford, and be featured on the special section of the official website that identifies it as a Savour Stratford certified restaurant. Also, these 23 restaurants are distinguished from others and get significant benefits by having advertised not only on the official website of Savour Stratford but also in other marketing/branding media: i.e., the 23 certified restaurants are separately grouped and appeared on the website as a kind of a premium establishment. All of these newly-created products/programs are monitored by the organization as the program developer stated.

Every year I visit the restaurants and see what's on their menus because they must use local ingredients. The ingredients must be purchased from 5 member farmers at least... they must use them and must be on the menus with Savour Stratford logo (Program developer, 2011).

According to the executive director, in Savour Stratford many restaurants use locally-grown ingredients in about 70 percent of their products. The marketing organization believes that local businesses appreciate this designation because the organization has invested intensely in marketing and branding this program: i.e., the organization frequently invites food writers and journalists to show them culinary products/services and take them on farm trips) to support these establishments in their use of locally-grown agricultural products (Executive marketer, 2011).

5.4.2. Leadership is among the most critical factors for the successful development of a creative food economy and culinary cluster: strong organizational leadership is required in the process of stakeholder collaboration. There are usually a large number of key stakeholders involved in such clusters and a successful policy depends on the creation of strategic alliances and partnerships between the private and public sectors although some specific public actions can stimulate or impede economic development. Thus, “tourism policy without involvement of government is often unrealistic and unsustainable” (Vanhove, 2005).

When we began our culinary strategy, we made a conscious effort that we did not look for quantity, but we looked for the quality of products and integrity of production that fit within our vision of the culinary strategy. So, in cultivating relationships, we have gone to individuals (called an early adopter) - the producers who have already been direct-selling products to local restaurants... we use them as the champion, the example, the proof that this can happen... we also put them in touch with the young farmers to attract those who wish to farm and produce so that they can learn and mentor from each other (Executive marketer, 2011).

Currently, a large number of members are involved in the cluster as discussed earlier. However, despite the involvement of many local producers, key informants believe that Savour

Stratford, as a culinary cluster, needs more artisans and hand-made local and authentic culinary products to meet the highly demanding locals and visitors. This means the offering of extremely high quality culinary products to both locals and visitors so that the experiences in the restaurants, for example, are equivalent in quality to sitting in the performing arts theaters (Executive marketer; and Program developer, 2011).

In Savour Stratford partnership in the development of the creative food economy and culinary movement is well-realized in various ways. In particular, both the local and provincial governments sit on the board of directors of the destination marketing organization with representatives of the local business associations. Also, the marketing team has a great deal of understanding of the importance of strategic alliances between the private and public sectors (e.g., financial support through funding programs). This situation has helped the place marketing team to get increased critical mass into place marketing and branding activities (i.e., the significant financial support provided by the both provincial and local governments for the culinary branding proposals) (Executive director, 2011). Thus, the public and private partnership in the process of place marketing and branding has strong impacts on the formation of the culinary cluster as a brand. Obviously, this also has led to a clear focus and commitment to the issues of communication among various stakeholders involved in the formation of such a culinary cluster through place branding strategies.

The place marketing organization receives a total of \$1.3 million operating budget per year and about \$80,000 - 90,000 is spent for marketing and branding activities. About a quarter percent of total funding is provided by the city of Stratford and another major funding source is the visitors' overnight stay tax (i.e., 3 percent of tax charged for guests' accommodation fees go directly to the destination marketing organization (Executive marketer, 2011). In tourism

marketing, this is often perceived as the best way to fund a destination marketing organization (DMO) through users. For instance, visitors' tax cannot be done in the same way on restaurant sales even though it is known that more than 90 percent of visitors who stay in a hotel, for example, eat outside the hotel (Executive marketer, 2011). This is because many residents go to the restaurants and they cannot be separated from the visitors.

In addition, membership fees are charged and vary depending on business types: i.e., \$125 for B&B association, \$175 for various other associations and \$50 for non-member social organizations (such as the Lions Club) for participating in events to showcase their products (Executive marketer, 2011). This is also one of the biggest funding sources. One of the key informants said that the membership fees are reasonably priced and this can happen because of the visitors' overnight stay tax. Many activities of the organization are also based upon community volunteer programs and sponsorship through the place marketing/branding activities.

Savour Stratford appears to be among a few best place marketing and branding practices as it is named by Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance (Savour Stratford official website, 2011). Thus, it can be said that the strong organizational leadership, which is seen in the complex process among various members in the creation of the Savour Stratford culinary cluster, can be considered as one of the most critical factors. For example, the awareness of the culinary brand identity, as revealed in its use as an example of a best practice by the OCTA, has been achieved in a short period of time: i.e., it is only a three-year-old culinary brand. Thus, it can also be said that the marketing organization has built strong partnerships not only with its members but also with the local and provincial governments by receiving strong financial support for the marketing and branding activities. This could not be achieved in the absence of strong organizational leadership with a vision and sound strategy.

It is all about based on fact and data/information... too many people in the tourism industry do not really use the facts, data/information. In all of North America, the Ontario Ministry of Tourism probably provides the most significant statistical research data bases... not only local, but also international - the fundamental consumers' behavior of what they like to do and see (Executive marketer, 2011).

Savour Stratford cluster is an early adopter and the development of the creative food economy has made effective use of the strategy and action plan provided by the Ontario government, which has learned from other provinces' culinary movements. According to the study of 'Culinary Tourism in Ontario: Strategy and Action Plan 2005 – 2015 (Ministry of Tourism, 2005), the culinary movements in British Columbia, Quebec and Nova Scotia are well ahead of the province of Ontario's movement. In addition, the international creative food economy and culinary movement has made Savour Stratford a possible benchmark as one of the few best practices of culinary clusters in Ontario, Canada.

The Economic Development office is at the forefront in the region's economic initiatives. In 2007, the city of Stratford 'Economic Development', 'Province of Ontario' and 'Perth Community Futures' partnered to create the 'Stratford Perth Centre for Business'. The Stratford Perth Centre for Business is operating as a division of Economic Development (The City of Stratford official website, 2011).

It is a resource for one-on-one business planning, coaching and financing. It provides information and identifies solutions to problems to enhance local businesses. It also offers expertise and advice to help local small business ventures, such as the making of a business plan and the provision of advice to start-up businesses and for business expansion. A significant amount of commercial development has taken place outside the downtown core along the major corridors into the city: Ontario Street (east of Romeo), Huron Street (west of Forman Avenue) and Erie Street (south of Cambria Street). The City imposes a development charge for commercial development: the rate has been established at \$2.08 per square foot (The City of Stratford official website, 2011).

The following is a summary of the regional economic development initiatives in Stratford and this will support the development of a creative food economy and culinary movement.

- Promotion of new business and investment opportunities within Stratford
- Publishing business-related data, promotional literature and business directories
- Assisting realtors and developers in site location matters
- Researching information for specific business inquiries
- Acting as a liaison between City departments, provincial and federal government offices, and various agencies
- Marketing the City of Stratford in national and international business publications and tradeshow
- Assisting new and existing Stratford businesses with expansion plans and other business-related matters
- Managing the development and growth of the Lorne Avenue East and Wright Business parks (The City of Stratford official website, 2011).

5.4.3. Stakeholder collaboration involves cooperation among various stakeholders to create a sustainable food production and consumption nexus (a culinary cluster). The perspective is often taken that tourism is a fragmented set of activities and that collaboration should be emphasized in the development process. Thus, the concept of collaboration is a critical issue in the formation of a culinary cluster.

Partnership and collaboration is very important. If you do not have partners, you cannot achieve your goals. Absolutely! The story about quality dining experience would not be told only by the fact that a restaurant has a creative chef. Our story of what is unique to this particular culinary strategy is the fact that the individuals that belong to Savour Stratford actually met the certain criteria that the majority of produce and products they use come from less than 100 miles. That's exactly what should happen... it needs to be more grassroots-oriented and everyone has to be involved (Executive marketer, 2011).

As the citation above clearly indicates, a large number of local stakeholders (currently, 253 members: 42 restaurants, 16 producers, 71 accommodation providers, 62 retail and services, 57 events and attractions and 5 associations) have been involved in the Savour Stratford culinary cluster. Also, Savour Stratford itself is a stakeholder within the Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance (OCTA) and it is involved as a member region. In Savour Stratford the creative food

economy and culinary cluster is established based on the involvement of a large number of the stakeholders and the process of collaboration is occurred between the stakeholders in the creation of production and consumption nexus. It has come to play a vital role in the creative food economy and culinary movement in Ontario, Canada. It is now seen by the OCTA as an important contributor to such creative economic initiatives in place-based community development.

5.4.4. *Communication and information flows* are required to bring in new ideas and make consensus and to share accumulated knowledge and know-how. The volume and quality of communication is often a reflection of leadership and coordination which influences information flows in stakeholder collaboration in the formation of a culinary cluster.

In Savour Stratford, the annual food summit has become the most important communication tool in sharing the accumulated information and knowledge with members of Savour Stratford as well as the general public. The second annual ‘Perth County Regional Food Summit’ took place in March, 2010 in Stratford. “Farmers and producers learned the importance of adding value to their business by becoming or aligning themselves with culinary attractions” (Press release, 2011). The latest creative food economy and culinary trends and the influence of grassroots-focused social marketing were highlights at the summit: farmers, producers, chefs, restaurateurs, artisans, and accommodators from across the region were invited to participate in networking forums, presenting new business opportunities (Program developer, 2011; and Press release, 2011). In 2011, Savour Stratford held the 3rd regional Food Summit with the theme of “Bridging the Gap between Producers, Chefs and Buyers” (Program developer, 2011; and Press release, 2011). Tables 17 and 18 indicate the communication activities and information flows in Savour Stratford.

Table 17: Communication Activities: Articles about Stratford Perth County

-
- [Events: Savour Stratford this weekend!](#) Bonnie Munday Best Health Blog September 20, 2011
 - [Pick of the crop](#) The Globe and Mail September 16, 2011
 - [Community Calendar - September 2011](#) Ivy Knight fiesta farms Food matters. September 16, 2011
 - [Perfect Weekend: 2 days, 2 nights in Stratford](#) Richard Ouzounian thestar.com September 16, 2011
 - [New iPhone app for chocolate lovers](#) video Scott Wishart The Beacon Herald September 9, 2011
 - [Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner: Stratford, Ontario](#) Waheeda Harris Where.ca September 7, 2011
 - [iPhone introduces sweet new app Find your fave chocolate store](#) Rita DeMontis Toronto Sun September 6, 2011
 - [Stratford: Canada's Hottest Food Destination](#) Ilona Biro Aol Travel . CANADA
 - [Go wild when you're tired of burgers](#) Jill Ellis vancouver.24hrs
 - [Visit STRATFORD - Canada's Premier Arts Town, a StarBuzz Presentation](#) July 2011
 - [From Bieber to the Bard, Stratford has it all](#) Mike Fischer JSOnline Milwaukee - Wisconsin Journal Sentinel July 15, 2011
 - [Stratford A Culinary Tourism Hotspot](#) Bryan Lavery ethicalgourmet blog July 9, 2011
 - [Stratford: theater • food • farm • lake](#) Joseph Cillo and Mary Buttaro for all Events WondersFull Canada July 2011
 - [Ontario's Perth County a bountiful place](#) Elizabeth Baird Toronto Sun June 22, 2011
 - [A Day in Perth County](#) Valerie Howes Reader's Digest Open Kitchen June 18, 2011
 - [Stratford Festival: The plays are not the only fun tourists can find](#) Ellen Creager McClatchy-Tribune News Service July 2011
 - [Rebecca Leheup Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance talks with Mary Ito](#) CBC Fresh Air July 2, 2011
 - [Six Meals in Stratford: Raising the curtain on new cuisine choices](#) Richard Ouzounian thestar.com July 1, 2011
 - [Slow ride There's more to Stratford than Shakespeare, Justin Bieber](#) Lynn Ogryzlo Niagara This Week June 30, 2011
 - [A Maple Syrup Tour in Stratford](#) Stella Yu Food Junkie Chronicles April 29, 2011
 - [Annual Swan Parade Welcomes Spring in Stratford, ON](#) Deanna Keffer tripatlas April 4, 2011
 - [Eager Bieber fans can see where it began](#) Jennifer Merrick buffalonews.com March 6, 2011
 - [Valentine's Day, 5 Canadian hot spots to keep the romance burning](#) Heather Greenwood Davis muchmor magazine January 2011
 - [Creemore Springs Meets The Milky Whey](#) Andrew Coppolino Waterloo Region Eats December 7, 2010
 - [Made for the holidays](#) Stratford Style Waterloo Region Record November 2010
 - [Happy Christmas trails in Stratford](#) Jim Fox London Free Press/Toronto Sun November 23, 2010
 - [STA kicks off its first Victorian Christmas Trail](#) Tori Sutton Stratford Gazette November 18, 2010
 - [Culinary Fest awarded top experience in Ont](#) Jeff Heuchert Stratford Gazette November 18, 2010
 - [Stratford Pride Weekend](#) Michael Pihach IN Toronto November 2010
 - [Stratford is a jewel of a city](#) GEORGE BAILEY, QMI Agency November 5, 2010
 - [WARNING CHOCOLATE LOVERS](#) Margaret Swaine TravelIndustryToday.com
 - [2010's Survivor's Guide to Stratford](#) Michael Vaughan TimeOutToronto
 - [Savour Stratford: September 25 and 26](#) Heather Greenwood Davis globetrottingmama.com
 - [Stratford no place for a kid? Think again.](#) Heather Greenwood Davis Special to thestar.com August 30, 2010
 - [Arts meets high-tech in the new Stratford](#) Emily Mathieu TheStar.com June 19, 2010
 - [Stratford first for "The Local Food Revolution"](#) Susan M. Gardner May 10, 2010
 - [A thespian shows the way in Stratford](#) Rod Charles May 7, 2010
 - [Stratford Delicious Debut 2010](#) Shabnam Weber May 4, 2010
-

Source: Savour Stratford official website (2011)

Table 18: Press Release (Savour Stratford)

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- Perth County's Third Annual Regional Food Summit, Savouring Success: Culinary Tourism & You February 7, 2011! - POSTED ON 01/11/11
 - Stratford Tourism Alliance launches Victorian Christmas Trail - POSTED ON 11/14/10
 - Savour Stratford Perth County Culinary Festival: Things to know before you go - POSTED ON 09/21/10
 - Serving-up laughs at Savour Stratford Culinary Week's "Feast of Comedy" - POSTED ON 09/17/10
 - Savour Stratford Perth County Culinary Festival Invites Local Partnerships - POSTED ON 07/19/10
 - Savour Stratford Perth County Culinary Festival Introduces Food Photography Exhibit - POSTED ON 07/19/10
 - Guided Historic Stratford Tours Now Available - POSTED ON 07/15/10
 - Tickets now on sale for Stratford's Signature Culinary Event, Savour Stratford Tasting, September 26 - POSTED ON 06/17/10
 - Stratford Tourism Alliance Launches new Railway Heritage Tour at Stratford Railway Heritage Show - POSTED ON 05/28/10
 - STRATFORD FIRST FOR "THE LOCAL FOOD REVOLUTION" - POSTED ON 04/23/10

 - Stratford's Heritage comes alive October 15-17, 2010!
 - Stratford's First Gay Pride Weekend October 22-24, 2010!
 - Stratford Spring Heritage Festival June 3-5, 2011
 - Stratford Ontario – www.visitstratford.ca Canada's Premier Arts Town Goes Mobile
 - Spring Savour Stratford Tastings every Saturday in May
 - Stratford's Delicious Debut! Savour Stratford Perth County Presents a Delicious Stratford Stroll on Sunday, May 1st
 - Spring Savour Stratford Tastings every Saturday in April
 - Stratford City Centre Introduces Spring Swan Quest in partnership with Stratford Tourism Alliance April 1-3, 2011
 - Push Winter Out with Savour Stratford Tastings every Saturday in March

Source: Savour Stratford official website (2011)

In summary, this chapter provided regional profiles of Stratford, such as the geographic, economic and cultural features of the place. It also presented information on the Savour Stratford culinary cluster through application of the various components in the study framework. The findings of the case study demonstrate that 'the interdependent determinants' have strongly influenced the formation of the cluster, and the 'four facilitators' are required to support the innovation process in the transformation of a *terroir* into a taste of a place. Table 19 provides a summary of the findings of the Savour Stratford culinary cluster, which is organized in terms of the 'interdependent determinants' and 'facilitators' of a culinary cluster identified in the conceptual model that was created for the study.

Table 19: Interdependent Determinants & Facilitators: Savour Stratford Cluster

Interdependent Determinants & Facilitators	Contents
Factor conditions	<p><u>Strong core, leading and supporting assets</u> (agricultural sector is one of top three leading economic sectors; tourism has already been well developed)</p> <p><u>Natural, cultural, institutional, organizational & human resources</u></p> <p><u>Examples:</u> The pastoral countryside; Culinary attractions; Epicurean trek; Food festivals/events; Farmer's markets; Cooking schools/chefs; Culinary adventures; Slow Food Convivia; Creative arts industry; Museums; Culinary/walking trails; Gardens; Physical architectures; and Restaurants; and Accommodations</p> <p><u>Well-developed culinary products/programs</u> integrated with the hard factors and soft factors (e.g., core, leading and supporting assets)</p> <p>Examples: culinary getaways; culinary attractions; culinary adventures; culinary festivals/events; cooking schools/chefs; <u>culinary walking tours</u> (trails); farmer's market (<u>buy local buy fresh</u>); farms; chocolate trail; <u>restaurants</u>; dining and tasting events; and the creative arts industry; and special garden party (annual food festival)</p>
Demand conditions	<p><u>Both local residents and visitors:</u> the primary target market: 'empty-nester' urban couples, and singles; on average over thirty years old, well-educated, upper-income and sophisticated Canadian and international travelers seeking a quality food and cultural experiences (e.g., 'Upscale Adventurers' and 'Young Go-Gos')</p> <p><u>The secondary target market:</u> 'Provincial Families'</p>
Related & supporting industries	<p>Creative industry as strong supporting assets for creative food economy and culinary movement.</p> <p><u>Suppliers and related firms:</u> hotels and inns; bed and breakfast; and motels and resorts; culinary products shops; books and music shops; gifts and photographers shops; arts & antiques shops; fashions; wedding facilities; spas and aesthetics; recreational facilities; and the creative arts industry (theatres and galleries)</p> <p><u>High quality service facilities:</u> all day free parking; tourism information centre; health care; public recreation centre and security</p>
Market structure	<p><u>Unified marketing organization</u> (mixture of top-down and bottom-up structure)</p> <p>Well-established institutional and organizational infrastructure</p> <p>Well-developed place marketing/branding plan/strategy/budget</p>
Environmentally friendly movement	<p>Strong understanding of the concept of environmental well-being of the community Sustainability of local food and agricultural products; and clean and pleasant environmental quality</p> <p>Slow Food Convivia (community chapter): reduction of food miles</p> <p>Certified restaurant program to advocate members to use local food products; to reduce food miles (e.g., buy within 100 miles)</p>
Leadership	<p>Strong leadership led by Stratford Tourism Alliance (unified marketing organization)</p> <p>Strong partnership with local and provincial governments through funding programs</p> <p><u>Strong financial support by both provincial and local governments</u></p> <p><u>Funding programs:</u> membership fees, partnership funds, the City of Stratford fund and the destination marketing fund (3% of tax included in visitors' accommodation fees)</p>
Stakeholder collaboration	<p>Stakeholders: chamber of commerce; economic development office; DMOs; NGOs (slow food convivia); restaurants; farmers; chefs; caterers; retailers; creative arts industry; and other associations</p>
Communication & information flows	<p>Communications strategy to bring in new ideas and make consensus: (e.g., annual food summit, training & communication strategy for chefs and farmers sub-committee, newsletter and press release for members and general public)</p>

6.0. CHAPTER SIX: FINDINGS FOR SAVOUR MUSKOKA CULINARY CLUSTER

This chapter presents the findings for the SAVOUR Muskoka culinary cluster and applies the interdependent determinants and facilitators identified in the model to the SAVOUR Muskoka case. It begins with general background information on the District Municipality of Muskoka, summarizing the area's geographic, demographic features as well as economic indicators. Then, findings for the SAVOUR Muskoka culinary cluster are presented. Each of the interdependent determinants and facilitators presented and discussed in Chapter 3 is used as a tool to organize and interpret the empirical data/information collected in the case study site.

6.1. Background Information on the District Municipality of Muskoka

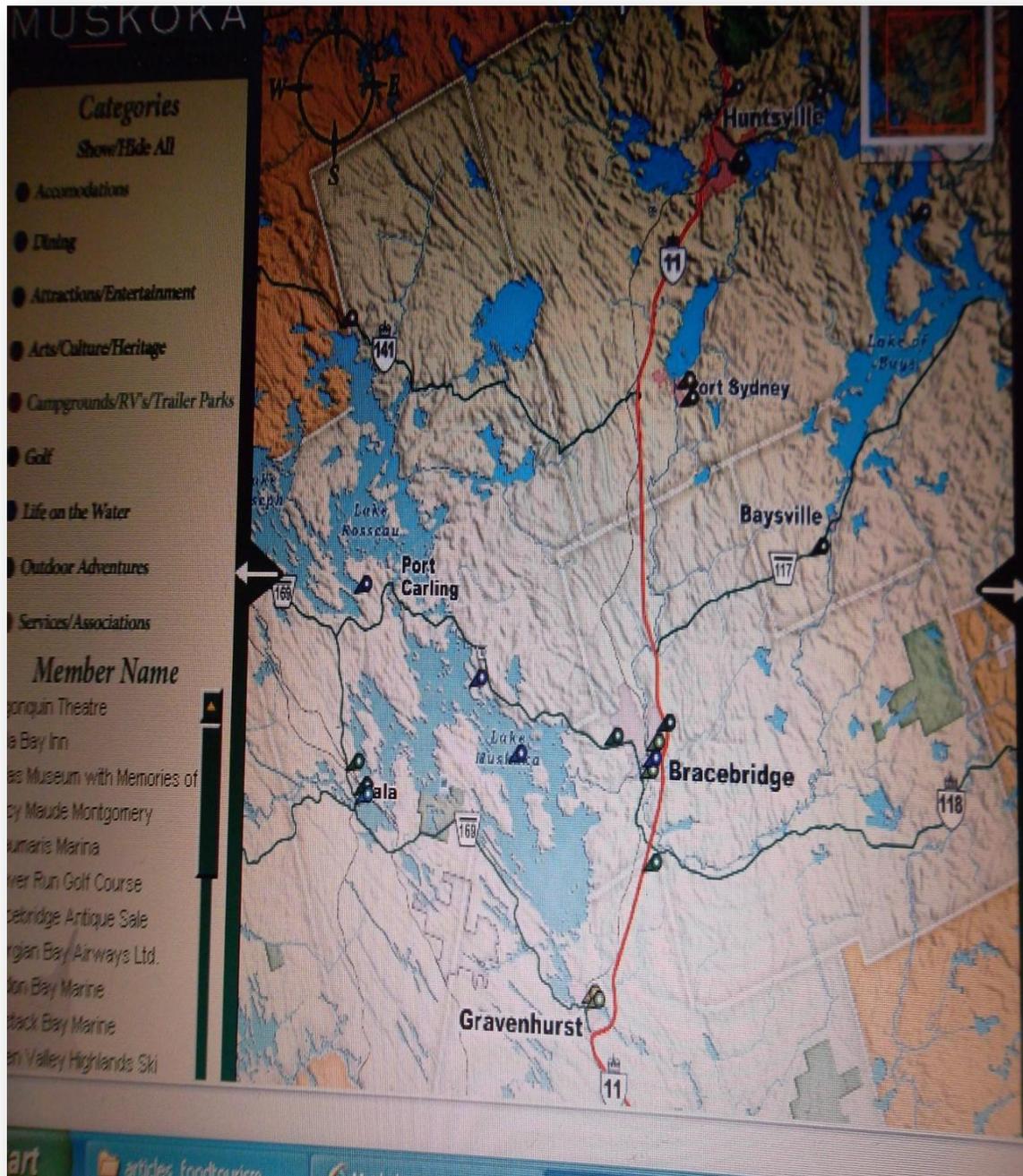
Located on the Canadian Shield, the geographical features of the District Municipality of Muskoka play a big role in its character. With abundant lakes, trees and rocks, the physical and cultural landscapes have long offered recreation and leisure activities, including canoeing and boating, for example, but it is less favorably situated for farming and agricultural practices (Shyllit and Spencer, 2011). The District Municipality of Muskoka is well-known for the natural beauty of its environment and it has been a popular place for Torontonians to visit for outdoor recreational and leisure activities for approximately a century (District Municipality of Muskoka official website, 2011).

Historically, the District Municipality of Muskoka's resorts and cottages, together with Algonquin Park, have provided Torontonians with a slow-paced release from the city and augmented their quality of life (Shyllit and Spencer, 2011). "Geographically, [the District Municipality of Muskoka] is the most northwestern district included in southern Ontario bound by Parry Sound, Haliburton, Simcoe County, and Kawartha Lakes, and located 160 – 210 kilometers north of Toronto" (Shyllit and Spencer, 2011; and District Municipality of Muskoka official website, 2011). Situated with the provincial Algonquin Park, The District of Muskoka

boasts more than 400 lakes (Shyllit and Spencer, 2011; and Muskoka Tourism, 2011). In terms of accessibility, Muskoka is well-connected “by air and rail, and has good access to Ontario’s major provincial highway’s connecting to Toronto, Barrie, Sudbury, and North Bay” (Shyllit and Spencer, 2011; and District Municipality of Muskoka official website, 2011). However, The District Municipality of Muskoka is divided into a two-tier municipality located in the provincial riding of Parry Sound/Muskoka.

Within this structure, the upper-tier [District of Muskoka] is responsible for services such as arterial roads, transit, policing, sewer and water systems, waste disposal, region-wide land use planning and development, as well as health and social services. The lower tier municipalities are responsible for local roads, fire protection, garbage collection, economic development, recreation and local land use planning needs (Shyllit and Spencer, 2011).

Figure 22: Map of the District Municipality of Muskoka



The map indicates towns, the culinary trail of SAVOUR Muskoka is located

Source: photo taken by author (2011)

6.1.1. Demographic Profiles

Statistical evidence indicates that “between 2001 and 2006 Muskoka’s population grew faster than the provincial rate” (Shyllit and Spencer, 2011). However, as indicated in Figure 23, the young population under 20 years of age has decreased proportionately and the proportion of the population aged between 20 and 39 is also small (Shyllit and Spencer, 2011).

Muskoka placed 10 percent behind the provincial average for university-educated residents, suggesting additional investment is needed to gain youth and entrepreneurial capacity. Low concentrations of youth and educated residents have economic implications with reduced human capital, talent pools; and thus, energy for entrepreneurial ventures (Shyllit and Spencer, 2011).

Nevertheless, seasonal residents are vital contributors to regional population growth and comprise a significant proportion of the total population in Muskoka. Muskoka has long been a popular summer place for cottage owners. In fact, the 2004 Second Home Study (The District Municipality of Muskoka Planning & Economic Development Department, 2005) found that “the influence of the seasonal population in shoulder seasons is becoming more pronounced” (2004 Second Home Study: The District Municipality of Muskoka Planning & Economic Development Department, 2005). It is, therefore, important for regional organizations and local businesses, including SAVOUR Muskoka to estimate Muskoka’s seasonal population accurately and to plan for their economic activities. Tables 20 and 21, and Figure 23 summarize demographic profiles of Muskoka by permanent population, seasonal population, and age and gender.

Table 20: Muskoka's Permanent Population (2006)

	1996 (a)	2001 (a)	2006 (a)
Bracebridge	13,223	13,751	15,652
Georgian Bay (b)	3,230	2,176	2,340
Gravenhurst	10,030	10,899	11,046
Huntsville	15,918	17,338	18,280
Lake of Bays	2,850	2,900	3,570
Muskoka Lakes	6,061	6,042	6,467
Muskoka	50,312	53,106	57,563

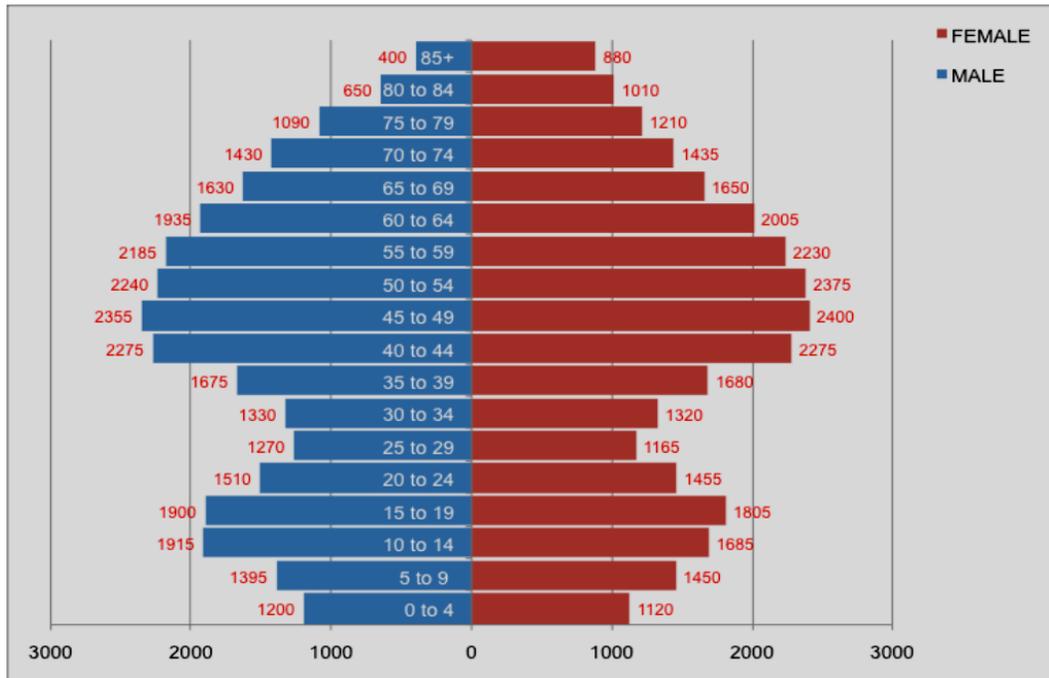
Source: District Municipality of Muskoka official website (2011)
Statistics Canada (2006); (b) includes 'Moose Deer Point First Nation'

Table 21: Muskoka's Seasonal Population (2006)

	Total # of Seasonal Dwellings	Average # Persons Per Household	Estimated Seasonal Population	Estimated Total Population
Bracebridge	1,962	3.59	7,045	22,697
Georgian Bay	4,045	3.65	14,766	17,106
Gravenhurst	3,066	3.60	11,036	22,082
Huntsville	1,659	3.72	6,171	24,451
Lake of Bays	3,171	3.62	11,480	15,050
Muskoka Lakes	6,755	3.72	25,129	31,596
Muskoka	20,658	3.66	75,626	133,189

Source: District Municipality of Muskoka official website (2011)
Muskoka Growth Strategy Phase 2 Report (Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. (2008))

Figure 23: Muskoka's Population by Age and Gender



Source: Community Profile: Statistics Canada 2006 in Shyllit and Spencer (2011)

In addition, according to Brownlee (Cottage Country Now.ca, Aug 17, 2011), the District Municipality of Muskoka has begun preparing for potential population increase based upon the district's growth strategy.

By 2031, Muskoka's population is projected to increase by 35 percent. Muskoka's population is about 135,060, including permanent and seasonal residents. A 35 percent increase would mean an additional 47,271 residents within the next 20 years, or about 2,364 annually. And in following with previous trends, that means Muskoka's population will increase at a greater rate than that of the province in general (Brownlee: Cottage Country Now.ca, Aug 17, 2011).

The district's growth strategy indicates that much of the population growth would be directed at the urban centres of Huntsville, Gravenhurst, Bracebridge, Port Carling, Bala, Port Severn and MacTier (Brownlee: Cottage Country Now.ca, Aug 17, 2011). The district's official plan focuses on facilitating growth in these areas with existing services. There is a plenty of land

within the existing urban boundaries which can accommodate growth. The district growth strategy was developed with public input into a visioning process, so it reflects what residents consider most significant in Muskoka (Brownlee: Cottage Country Now.ca, Aug 17, 2011).

Approximately 57,000 surveys were distributed and just over 2,100 came back. The feedback outlined a vision for the region that focused on a healthy environment, a strong and diverse economy, small-town character, sustainable growth, health and active lifestyles, opportunities for youth, transportation options and a variety of housing options (Brownlee: Cottage Country Now.ca, Aug 17, 2011).

This public input will provide the planning and development team in the District Municipality of Muskoka with feedback to evaluate the vision, which will guide the economic planning and development policy for the region of Muskoka in accordance with the population growth projection that will also be taken into account in the economic development strategy (Brownlee: Cottage Country Now.ca, Aug 17, 2011).

6.1.2. *Economic Indicators*

Tourism is a leading sector in Muskoka's economy. "Historically, [Muskoka] was a logging community, today, however, forestry represents only 2 percent of the Muskoka employment base, and in 2008, 57percent of Muskoka residents were employed in service industries" meeting the needs and wants of visitors and second home, seasonal residents (District of Muskoka, 2010; and Shyllit and Spencer, 2011). According to Shyllit and Spencer (2011), in Muskoka "the service sector continued to increase its total share of employment".

Similar to the province, manufacturing and primary sectors in Muskoka are expected to continue to decline while tourism, construction, retail, service, real estate and public sectors are expected to grow. Recently, 2010 G8 Summit was held in Huntsville bringing international attention, as well as provincial and federal investment in local infrastructure (Shyllit and Spencer, 2011).

Such challenges caused by declining economic activities in rural communities require a response by searching for alternative opportunities (Stolarick et al., 2010) such as the creative food economy and culinary movement. In an examination of the creative economy possibilities in the region of Muskoka, Shyllit and Spencer's study (2011) identified major challenges, which include inconsistent tourism place branding, lack of cultural diversity and inconsistent access to IT, as well as competition between municipalities. Additionally, seasonality, knowledge and skill deficiencies, and the high cost of living are identified as disadvantages in the development of the creative economy although advantages in developing economic sustainability and prosperity also exist (Shyllit and Spencer, 2011).

6.2. The SAVOUR Muskoka Culinary Cluster



It's all about using local food...that's really the reason for developing SAVOUR Muskoka...we have seen the growth in local food interests... By using local ingredients... (when I say local), it includes products not just grown in Muskoka, but in Ontario as well... Culinary tourism starts with the farmers and if there is no link to local food, culinary tourism can't really exist (Executive chef, 2011).

SAVOUR Muskoka is distinctive as a culinary organization because it is operated by a group of local farmers, chefs, artisans and restaurant owners as they seek to sustain their livelihoods within the region. It is a unique culinary organization based upon a bottom-up organizational approach. Decentralized local groups have approached DMOs, municipalities and other economic development organizations to get them involved rather than the other way around (Email interview with General Manager, 2008; Chair of the board of directors and Executive chef, 2011).

According to the informants (Email interview with General Manager, 2008; Executive chef; and Chair of the board of directors, 2011), culinary experiences need to be diverse and not just grapes and winery tours as is the case in many other culinary places in Canada and around the world. SAVOUR Muskoka is a different culinary place brand model that has been developed in a place without a rich agricultural sector and wineries. Many other culinary places that have taste trails include wineries on their taste trails and now wineries are usually built with tourism infrastructure in place (Email interview with GM, 2008; and Executive chef, 2011). This is not the case in areas with small farms and, while small farms are increasingly involved in farm-gate sales and pick-your-own activities, they are slow at building tourism-specific infrastructure. Recently, SAVOUR Muskoka had been invited to participate in the '2010 G20 Summit' held in Toronto, as part of its profiling of the creative food economy and as an example of culinary movement in Ontario (Executive chef; and Chair of the board of directors, 2011).

As Tables 22, 23, 24 and 25 detail, at the time of the field investigation the SAVOUR Muskoka culinary cluster had 143 members (28 chefs, 40 farmers, 51 restaurants and caterers, and 24 culinary artisans) who hoped to self-sustain their livelihoods (Chair of the board of directors; and Administrative staff, 2011). Thus, SAVOUR Muskoka is a culinary cluster, albeit one with somewhat different characteristics than that focused on Stratford (a bottom-up approach and a less rich agricultural background base).

Table 22: SAVOUR Muskoka Culinary Products/Services by its Members

28 Chefs

- Alain Irvine - *Executive Chef and Caterer with Irvine and Sons Fine Food*
- Andrew Dymond - *Executive Chef Andrew Dymond*
- Becky Lennerton - *Caterer and Chef - Black River Food Company*
- Christine Bib - *Caterer and Chef - Christine Bib Catering*
- Daniel Joel Thorne - *Executive Chef with Bartlett Lodge*
- Darren Hehir - *Executive Chef, Regatta - Steak and Seafood Grille*
- Dave Kealey
- Dave Manson - *Chef of The Carriage Room at Inn at the Falls*
- David Cooke - *Executive Chef at the Arowhon Pine Resort*
- David Friesen - *Executive Chef of Riverwalk Fine Dining*
- David Scoffield - *Chef of Twigs at Christies Mill*
- Executive Chef Uday - *Executive Chef Mill on Main*
- Guy Bedard –
- Jason MacArthur - *Executive Chef, Waters Edge Wine Bar & Grill*
- Jeff Suddaby - *Executive Chef and Owner, 3 Guys and a Stove*
- Jeremy Blencowe - *Executive Chef, Trillium Resort and Spa*
- Ken Bol - *Executive Chef, Moon River Lookout*
- Ken Schulz - *Executive Chef at Delta Grandview*
- Mark Marchment - *Executive Chef : The Rosseau: A JW Marriott Resort and Spa*
- Michael Rickard - *Executive Chef and Owner One Fifty Five*
- Patrick Louch - *Executive Chef at Delta Rocky Crest Resort*
- Philip Anthony Leach - *Executive Chef at Bigwin Island Golf Club*
- Randy Spencer - *Executive Chef and Owner of Spencer's Tall Trees*
- Richard LaLonde - *Executive Chef at Cross Roads Restaurant*
- Rory Golden - *Executive Chef at Deerhurst Resort*
- Sandra Morandin - *Caterer, Morandin Fine Foods*
- Scott Cribb - *Executive Chef Hidden Valley*
- Steve Somerset -

Table 23: 40 Farmers

Farmers	Regions
• Ballmer Farm –	<i>Bracebridge</i>
• Big Ass Garlic –	<i>Baysville</i>
• Bliss Family Farm –	<i>Utterson</i>
• Board's Honey Farm -	<i>Muskoka Region</i>
• Brooklands Farm –	<i>Milford Bay</i>
• Edible Fungi -	<i>Huntsville</i>
• Four Season Greens -	<i>Port Sydney</i>
• From the Forest Floor -	<i>Bracebridge</i>
• Grenville Farms -	<i>RR#1 Severn Bridge</i>
• Gypsy Whole Foods –	<i>Burks Falls</i>
• Hopkins Farm -	<i>Barkway</i>
• Hubbert's Maple Products -	<i>RR#1 Sundridge</i>
• Iroquois Cranberry Growers -	<i>Bala</i>
• Ivanita Farm & Meats -	<i>Huntsville</i>
• Johnston's Cranberry Marsh -	<i>Bala</i>
• Mandanoodin Farm -	<i>Burks Falls</i>
• Maple View Farm -	<i>Huntsville</i>
• Marks Muskoka Maple -	<i>Huntsville</i>
• Milford Bay Trout Farm -	<i>RR#6 Bracebridge</i>
• Moon Bay Shiitake -	<i>Mactier</i>
• Muskoka Garlic -	<i>Bracebridge</i>
• Muskoka Herb Farm -	<i>Port Sydney</i>
• Muskoka Mushroom Farms -	<i>Huntsville</i>
	<i>Milford Bay</i>

• Muskoka Shiitake -	<i>Bracebridge</i>
• Nichols Farm -	<i>Bracebridge</i>
• Oke-Cook Farm Market and Tail Gate -	<i>Muskoka Region</i>
• Over the River Orchards -	<i>RR#2 Utterson</i>
• Poppa Jim's Honey -	<i>Utterson</i>
• Ravenbrook Farm -	<i>Muskoka Region</i>
• Roads End Farm Bed and Breakfast -	<i>Burks Falls</i>
• Rockhill Farm -	<i>Muskoka Region</i>
• Severn Sunset Eco-Farm -	<i>Muskoka Region</i>
• Sprucedale Quality Meats -	<i>Rosseau</i>
• Sweetgrass Farm -	<i>Windermere</i>
• Taylor Strawberry Farm -	<i>Parry Sound</i>
• That Potted Lady -	<i>Gravenhurst</i>
• The Donkey's Shack and Feed Store -	<i>RR#1 Utterson</i>
• Walking's Farm -	<i>Utterson</i>
• Windy Acres Farm -	

Table 24: 24 Culinary Artisans

Culinary Artisans	Regions
• Beat the Wheat -	<i>Huntsville</i>
• Belly Ice Cream Company -	<i>Huntsville</i>
• Big Ass Garlic -	<i>Baysville</i>
• Board's Honey Farm -	<i>Muskoka Region</i>
• Diesel House Coffee Roasters -	<i>Bracebridge</i>
• Don's Bakery -	<i>Bala</i>
• Donna's Homestead Bakery -	<i>Rosseau</i>
• Fern Glen Inn Bed and Breakfast -	<i>Muskoka Region</i>
• Four Season Greens -	<i>Port Sydney</i>
• Grandma's Summer Kitchen -	<i>Huntsville</i>
• Lake of Bays Brewing Company -	<i>Baysville</i>
• Lavender Hills Farm -	<i>Muskoka Region</i>
• Milford Bay Trout Farm -	<i>RR#6 Bracebridge</i>
• Miss Nelle's Cafe -	<i>Baysville</i>
• Muskoka Cottage Brewery -	<i>Bracebridge</i>
• Muskoka Meats -	<i>Gravenhurst</i>
• Muskoka Roastery Coffee -	<i>Hunstville</i>
• Muskoka Roastery Coffee -	<i>Gravenhurst</i>
• Old English Cookie and Fudge Company -	<i>Huntsville</i>
• Springhill Freshwater Co. -	<i>Bala</i>
• The Cottage Butcher -	<i>Huntsville</i>
• The Windmill Bakery -	<i>Muskoka Region</i>
• Tredki Acres Mobile Farmer's Market -	<i>Huntsville</i>
• Wheat Free Delights -	<i>Baysville</i>
• Yummies in a Jar -	

Table 25: 51 Restaurants & Caters

Restaurants & Caters	Regions
• 3 Guys and a Stove –	Huntsville
• Ali Hunter Cuisine –	Muskoka Region
• Arowhon Pines, Algonquin Park Canada –	Muskoka Region
• Bartlett Lodge Dining Room –	Huntsville
• Bearfoot Gourmet –	Huntsville
• Better Living –	Baysville
• Bigwin Isand Golf Club –	Huntsville
• Black River Food Co –	Muskoka Region
• Blackburns Steakhouse –	Huntsville
• Cedar Grove Lodge -	Huntsville
• Christine Bib Catering –	Muskoka Region
• Cross Roads Pub and Grill –	Rosseau
• Eclipse Restaurant - Deerhurst Resort –	Huntsville
• Fern Glen Inn Bed and Breakfast –	Muskoka Region
• Fiery Grill –	Dorset
• Fine Thymes Restaurant and Tea Room –	Bracebridge
• Glenn Burney Lodge –	Parry Sound
• Greene Stone Lodge –	Bala
• Hidden Valley Resort - The Birches Restaurant –	Huntsville
• Inn at Christies Mill -	Port Severn
• Twigs at Christies Mill –	Bracebridge
• Inn at the Falls - The Carriage Room & Fox & Hounds Pub –	Port Carling
• Kai Restaurant and Lounge –	Parry Sound
• Lake Joseph Dining Room - Delta Rocky Crest –	Bracebridge
• Morandin Fine Foods & Catering –	Gravenhurst
• North Restaurant and Lounge –	Bracebridge
• One Fifty Five –	Muskoka Region
• Opulence Catering and Event Management - Rebecca's Casual Fine Dining Inc.	Port Carling
• Rebecca's Casual Fine Dining Inc. –	Gravenhurst
• Regatta Steak & Seafood Grille –	Bracebridge
• Riverwalk Fine Dining –	Huntsville
• Rosewood Inn-Delta Grandview Resort –	Huntsville
• Seven Main Cafe –	Port Carling
• Sherwood Dining Room - Delta Sherwood Inn –	Gravenhurst
• Soul Sista's –	Huntsville
• Spencer's Tall Trees –	Bracebridge
• Taboo Resort, Golf & Spa - Elements –	Huntsville
• Taste Restaurant at Touchstone –	Bracebridge
• The Farmer's Daughter –	Huntsville
• The Griffin Gastropub –	Bala
• The Mill on Main –	Huntsville
• The Moon River Lookout –	Bracebridg
• The Norseman Restaurant and Walkers Lake Resort –	Gravenhurst
• The Old Station Restaurant –	Minett
• The Real Muskoka Experience –Boat & Heritage Centre –	Port Sydney
• The Rosseau, A JW Marriott Resort and Spa –	Port Carling
• The Trillium Resort and Spa –	Port Carling
• Water's Edge Wine Bar and Grill, The Lake Joseph Club –	Huntsville
• Wheat Free Delights –	Huntsville
• Windermere House –	Windermere

Source: SAVOUR Muskoka official website (2011)

6.3. Interdependent Determinants

This section examines each of the interdependent determinants of the conceptual model created for the study in the context of Muskoka and how each contributed to the development of the SAVOUR Muskoka cluster.

6.3.1. *Factor conditions* are the position of a place regarding the factors of production that are necessary to compete successfully in the culinary tourism market (the factor endowments and their permanent upgrading). Without factor endowments and attractions (e.g., natural and cultural landscapes), there will be limited tourism activity. Furthermore, the factors are not only inherited but are also created and are comprised of a variety of natural, cultural, historical, organizational, and human resources (Vanhove, 2005).

What we have is what we have... we cannot change the geographical nature... because we are not abundant for agricultural products, it is a matter of creating unique culinary products... we do not have many ingredients, but we use what we have and celebrate what we have here (Executive chef, 2011).

As the above citation implies, SAVOUR Muskoka has great challenges in developing a culinary cluster as part of a creative food economy. According to the 'SE Parry Sound/Muskoka Agricultural Initiative 2002 Report, in Canada "the number of farms nationally, provincially and locally has been steadily decreasing over the past 40 years": the District of Muskoka reported 391 farms in 1961; only 201 farms in 2001, which a reduction of 48 percent (Muskoka Community Co-operatives Inc., 2002).

Nevertheless, the key interviewees (Executive chef; and Chair of the board of directors, 2011) suggested that the Muskoka region has untapped farming potential for niche culinary products that can be extended by responsible farming to identify and specialize the region's creative food economy and culinary tourism (Shyllit and Spencer, 2011). Thus, SAVOUR Muskoka exists to enhance the factor conditions of the niche farming potential in the region to

create a culinary identity for Muskoka: the local food identity of Muskoka features maple syrup, honey based on wild flowers and specialty mushrooms (Chair of the board of directors; Executive chef, 2011; and SAVOUR Muskoka official website, 2011). To ensure the unique identity of the culinary products either processed or grown locally, the ‘SAVOUR Muskoka’ logo featured above has been created and used by member farmers, chefs and restaurants for “the signature items that are highlighted with the logo, indicating that they have been made with local ingredients” (SAVOUR Muskoka official website, 2011; Chair of the board of directors; and Executive chef, 2011).

The factor conditions of SAVOUR Muskoka are distinctive for the following reasons. First, the creative food economy and culinary tourism initiative is an example of how such an economic venture can work in the absence of a rich agricultural sector. Secondly, these entrepreneurial activities in the region are being achieved through a dynamic collaboration process among local groups to overcome the disadvantages of the environment (factor conditions), which is less favorable to agriculture (as seen in Tables 27 and 28), but it is, nevertheless, an attractive setting for tourism. Culinary cluster development as part of the creative food economy is an emerging activity in Muskoka that is still in its infancy. As suggested above, the creative food economy and culinary movement in Muskoka is led, in particular, by groups of dedicated local chefs and farmers and it is geographically concentrated within the region to support the small local farms. The initiative aims at creating the region’s ‘*terroir*’ that is tied into specific aspects of local agriculture and landscape (e.g., wilderness/countryside) as it plans the future of its culinary place identity. Tables 26 and 27 provide statistical evidence concerning agriculture (leading asset) by types of farms and by industry groups operating in Muskoka that support in developing the culinary products/programs.

Table 26: Types of Farms in Muskoka (1961 – 2001)

	1961	1966	2001	1961-2001 (% change)
Total	155	167	147	-5.2
Dairy Cattle (Beef)	7	3	1	- 85.8
Hog	65	45	45	- 30.8
Poultry & Egg	3	3	0	-100.0
Field crop (except grain & wheat)	2	3	3	50.0
Fruits, Misc.	10	26	2	-160.0
Specialty	6	6	5	-16.7
Livestock	50	65	50	0
Combination	7	7	12	71.5
Vegetables	1	3	2	100.0

Table 27: Farms by Industry Group (2001)

Total	147
Cattle ranching and farming	38
Hog and pig farming	0
Poultry and egg production	3
Sheep and goat farming	5
Other animal production	36
Oilseed and grain farming	0
Vegetable and melon farming	2
Fruit and tree nut farming	5
Greenhouse, nursery and floriculture production	16
Other crop farming	42

Note that Tables 26 and 27 deal with farm producers, including industry groups to indicate the overall picture of the agricultural sector in Muskoka/Parry Sound

Source: SE Parry Sound/Muskoka Agriculture Initiative Report (2002)

- ***Culinary Products/Programs Development: ‘Field-to-Fork’ Tasting Event***

According to the SAVOUR Muskoka official website (2011), “culinary tourism in the region has a long history, but its most recent chapter began in the 1800s with the arrival of tourists on steamship and train” to resorts and cottages for the summer months.

Indeed, many of the first resorts evolved from farming operations started by settlers. At one time, much of the agricultural products consumed by visitors were grown locally and to this day Butter & Egg Road near Milford Bay serves as a reminder of the many farms that used to supply dairy products to tourists. Through SAVOUR Muskoka, [visitors] have the opportunity to experience the uniqueness of Muskoka (SAVOUR Muskoka official website, 2011).

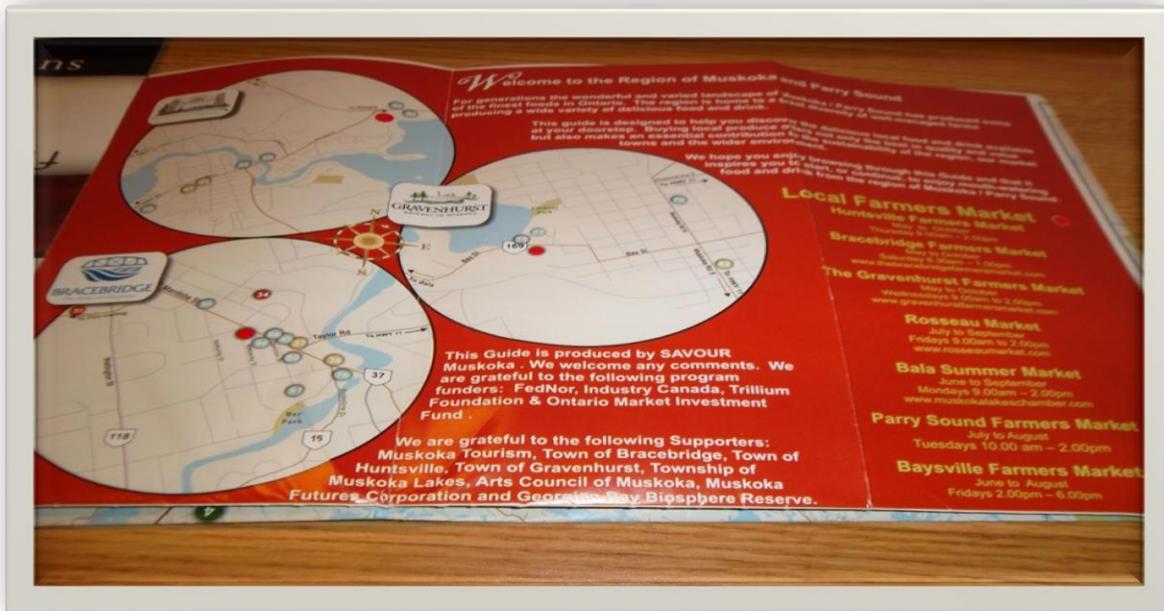
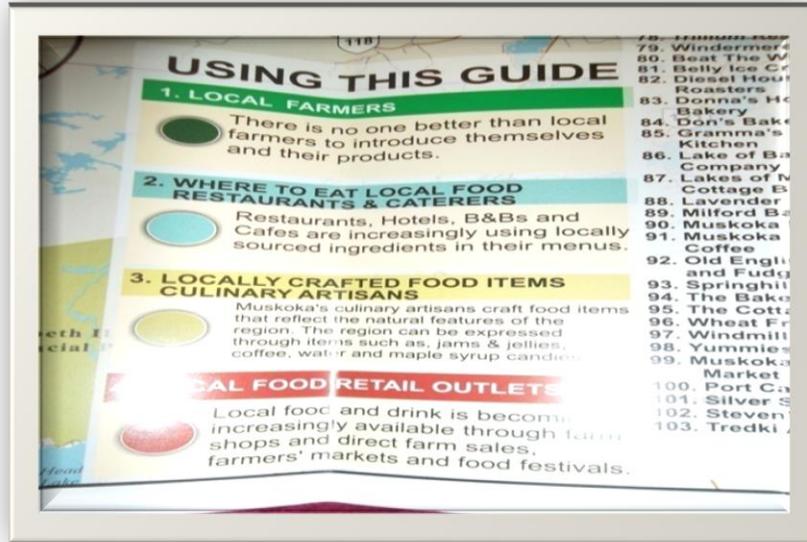
SAVOUR Muskoka has created its own culinary trail map (as indicated in Figures 24 and 25) as a culinary attraction with the involvement of local farmers, restaurants, culinary artisans, and culinary retailers. Locals and visitors can purchase a membership to buy locally grown products. By doing so, they can not only reward local small farmers located on the culinary trail but also support the grassroots-based culinary organization, emphasizing sustainability of the local food economy.

Figure 24: 2011 Culinary Trail Map of SAVOUR Muskoka



Source: photo taken by author (2011)

Figure 25: SAVOUR Muskoka Culinary Trail Guide



Source: photo taken by author (2011)

Locals and cottagers from Toronto are primary customers of SAVOUR Muskoka's culinary products, and in recent years, it has seen an increasing number of Asian visitors coming to Muskoka, especially in autumn season for maple syrup and cranberry festivals (Chair of the board of directors; and Administrative staff, 2011): i.e., the 'Bala's Cranberry Festival' as a specific culinary product in the region has started in 1985 with the uniqueness of the 'Wahta First Nation' identity that has generated enormous economic and cultural prosperity to the region of Muskoka (Shyllit and Spencer, 2011; and Chair of the board of directors; and Administrative staff, 2011). SAVOUR Muskoka has made connections to this cranberry festival as a unique culinary product to showcase itself, and has had opportunities to participate in this long lasting and leading culinary event in the region with many member establishments, and benefited by displaying their products with the SAVOUR Muskoka logo and selling their products at the venue (Chair of the board of directors; Administrative staff, 2011).

In addition, every year, SAVOUR Muskoka provides small and large workshop series as culinary products/programs for its members and general public, especially in the off-seasons. Workshop topics include growing four seasons' greens and producing specialty shiitake mushrooms and honey products. In particular, in the off-seasons, SAVOUR Muskoka offers one of the largest workshops called 'Winter Gardening', which attracts many local people. Some of the members of SAVOUR Muskoka share skills and knowledge, as they became experts, with others at the workshop and teach them to grow their own green seedlings, for example, during the winter season (Chair of the board of directors; Administrative staff, 2011).

In particular, now in its fourth year, the Field-to-Fork Tasting Event' takes place every year in August and it was initiated by Muskoka's dedicated chefs as well as local farmers and artisans "who pride themselves in sourcing locally grown products" (SAVOUR Muskoka press

release, August 8, 2011). Visitors and local people can buy a ticket at the tasting event to experience and “taste local food, beverages, and [culinary] products from around the region”. They also can “chat with local chefs, farmers and food and beverage producers, and engage in a culinary experience” (SAVOUR Muskoka press release, August 8, 2011). Ticket prices are set for adults at \$65. Children’s tickets can be purchased at \$30 (for those aged between 10-18) and free for those under 10 years of age (SAVOUR Muskoka press release, August 8, 2011).

The 4-year-old Taste of SAVOUR Muskoka food festival is organized in partnership and collaboration between members with government financial support, such as Industry Canada FedNor, The Ontario Trillium Foundation, and The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) (SAVOUR Muskoka press release, August 8, 2011). The festival is a celebration of the culinary organization of SAVOUR Muskoka and “its members are united in their efforts to celebrate and share in Muskoka’s agricultural and culinary heritage as these activities support healthy environments and economic growth” (SAVOUR Muskoka press release, August 8, 2011). Figures 26 and 27 detail the culinary products and programs created by SAVOUR Muskoka with its members, which stress the unique organizational approach in the process of products/programs development.

Figure 26: SAVOUR Muskoka Specialty Products



Source: photo taken by author at the Port Carling farmer's market (2011)

Figure 27: 2011 'Field-to-Fork' Tasting Event Poster



Source: photo taken by author (2011)

6.3.2. Demand conditions are concerned with the availability of a market for culinary products and services. The existence of sufficiently large number of sophisticated visitors within a reasonable market area (such as a one-day drive) is of the utmost importance. Quality-conscious individuals exert constant quality control, moving suppliers towards high-quality market segments. Such sophisticated individuals are able to recognize new trends and have sufficient disposable income to buy into them (Vanhove, 2005).

Having a cottage country here in Muskoka is a great advantage and the cottage country is known as a relaxing environment... we can strategize it to our culinary advantage and that's what we are trying to do here in Muskoka... you go to a

restaurant and you do not just grab food here in Muskoka, but you can explore the good quality local food... we are lucky. Most of our businesses are based on customers from Toronto... a very busy place and there is good food in Toronto as well, but you come here and you can have the same experience of good local food at a much slower pace and you can enjoy the local food, sitting in a restaurant much closer to the place where the food comes from (Executive chef, 2011).

SAVOUR Muskoka also uses the primary and secondary target market profiles identified by the Ministry of Tourism's segmentation analysis: i.e., well educated, well travelled and interested in fine food and culture. Muskoka also is interested in high-end primary and secondary markets. However, the key interviewees pointed out the weaknesses posed by the inconsistency, including seasonality, of good quality agricultural products (Executive chef, 2011; and Shyllit and Spencer, 2011). This factor condition creates significant disadvantages in the development of a culinary cluster. Moreover, there are many dining choices unavailable during the off-season and this is considered to be the greatest difficulty that the organization is facing in developing a culinary cluster as part of the creative food economy (Executive chef, 2011; and Shyllit and Spencer, 2011).

Nevertheless, SAVOUR Muskoka has a great geographical advantage in terms of its primary market: the key informants stressed that over 90 percent of the local businesses are created based upon Torontonians and seasonal residents. In other words, this means that the core market for SAVOUR Muskoka is already present. One of the key informants suggested this by making the following statement:

If you do not have market, you can't sell your products... so, basically, we have two markets here... we have many cottagers who go to restaurants and they want to have local experience... they want to see local products... they want to eat local food and they want to take something back with them, such as locally produced honey and maple syrup... Also, we have here a local component... local community people also want to eat local food... so, it's a combination of two components... without the balance of the market, we would not have enough customers (Chair of the board of directors, 2011).

In particular, the Second Home Study (2004) measures of the region's tourism sector by incorporating the important contributions of part-time seasonal cottage owners into tourism. According to the classification by the 'Municipal Property Assessment Corporation' (MPAC), "there are over 20,567 seasonal dwellings in Muskoka, which account for almost 50 percent of all dwellings in Muskoka. There are 20,601 permanent dwellings in Muskoka for a combined total of approximately 41,168 dwellings" (Final Report: 2004 Second Home Study: The District Municipality of Muskoka Planning & Economic Development Department, 2005). In addition, a review of information from MPAC revealed that,

Each area municipality exhibits unique characteristics with respect to the proportion of seasonal homes to total homes, ranging from approximately 82 percent in the Township of Georgian Bay to 23 percent in the Town of Huntsville. Seasonal dwellings exceed the number of dwellings for the permanent resident population in the townships of Muskoka Lakes, Georgian Bay and Lake of Bays (Final Report: 2004 Second Home Study: The District Municipality of Muskoka Planning & Economic Development Department, 2005).

6.3.3. Market structure is a term that encapsulates the conditions in a place that govern how firms are created, organized and managed, as well as the nature of local rivalry among firms and the institutional and organizational infrastructure and place to support a marketing and branding strategy (Vanhove, 2005).

In 2004, the stakeholders came together and created a plan to promote the Muskoka region as a culinary place. SAVOUR Muskoka started initially with the interests of local people who wanted to have better connections between chefs and farmers. In 2007, it became a formal entity and established the not-for-profit organization that basically has run since then on government grants and membership fees (Chair of the board of directors; Administrative staff, 2011).

SAVOUR Muskoka is a strategic alliance; it is set up as a not-for-profit organization with a board of directors (13 board members and 4 executive members: chair, vice chair, treasurer, secretary and 9 board members and two administrative staff). The board reflects the website (chefs, restaurants/caterers, farmers, artisans and business owners) that currently includes 28 chefs, 51 restaurants and caterers, 40 farmers, and 24 culinary artisans. Financially, the organization is initially supported with a grant by the 'Ontario Trillium Foundation' for \$15,000. This grant covers marketing material, website design, promotion and advertising. Membership fees are used to cover operating costs such as wages, overhead, travel expenses and capitol expenses such as computer, fax, and photocopier. The organization also rises funding through events and community initiatives. 'FedNor', a subsidiary of Industry Canada, covers certain parts of the SAVOUR Muskoka's programs: FedNor essentially pays for certain projects within the organization and the bulk of the organization's budget (Email interview with GM, 2008; Chair of the board of directors, 2011; and Administrative staff, 2011).

'Taste of the Nation': [...] is proud to celebrate foods that are produced on the growing, SAVOUR Muskoka culinary trail, across our province, and around our country. The locally inspired dishes on the menu, some of which were served to world leaders during the recent 2010 G8 Summit, reflect both the diversity of Canada's table and the finest backyard and regional Ontario farm-raised harvests, plus pure maple syrup, wildflower, honey and herb produced right in [Muskoka] (A menu of a SAVOUR Muskoka member restaurant, 2011).

As the above citation indicates, SAVOUR Muskoka was one of the major contributors to the sized event (2010 G8 Summit) recently held in Muskoka. One of the founders of SAVOUR Muskoka – an executive chef, who is devoted to the creation of the organization, had served the G8 leaders at the resort restaurant as indicated in Figure 28, and the researcher had the opportunity to see directly the logo of 'SAVOUR Muskoka' featured on the executive chef's hat when the in-depth interview took place at the resort. The logo was also displayed proudly on the

cover page of the menu of the restaurant with the slogan (as seen in Figure 29): “a proud founding partner of SAVOUR Muskoka; Celebrating the farmers, produces, and harvests of Muskoka” (A menu of a SAVOUR Muskoka member restaurant, 2011). This is an example of ways that each member of the organization promotes SAVOUR Muskoka brand.

Figure 28: Menu for G8 Leaders



Source: photo taken by author (2011)

Figure 29: SAVOUR Muskoka Logo featured on a Menu



Source: photo taken by author (2011)

In terms of marketing and branding, as SAVOUR Muskoka is not a marketing organization, it has no particular branding strategy and budget according to the chair of the board of directors and executive chef (2011). In SAVOUR Muskoka a simple way to promote its brand is to put the logo on menus that only used local ingredients by highlighting it on the menus as local so that customers would recognize it. Also, in member establishments the SAVOUR Muskoka map as a culinary trail is distributed to guide the customers who are interested in making a trip to the culinary trail (Chair of the board of directors; and Executive chef, 2011).

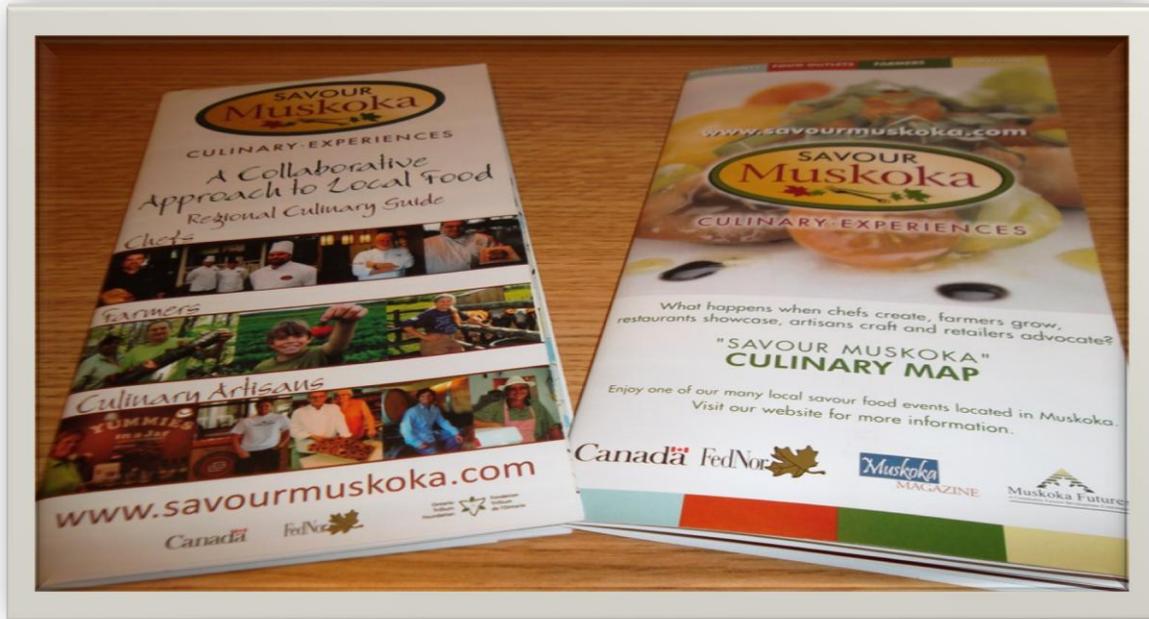
In SAVOUR Muskoka, the food economy initiative was started by local farmers and chefs, realizing that direct selling gives the greatest return on investment for local farmers (the largest profit margin) (Email interview with GM, 2008; Chair of the board of directors; and Executive chef, 2011). Traditionally, this has taken place at the farmers' markets. However, over the last several years, farmers' markets have gone from grassroots local small farms highlighting the land to 'flea markets' (this is used loosely) (Email interview with GM, 2008).

The farmers' markets also started to let in re-sellers: i.e., companies that bring agricultural products from the Toronto food terminal sell them at the farmers' markets and, thus, creating a market place that the local farmers could not compete with financially (Email interview with GM, 2008; Chair of the board of directors, 2011; and Administrative staff, 2011).

Another form of direct-selling is to local restaurant chefs. The farmers wanted to market directly to chefs because the farmers can set up with chefs in the off-season their relationship and commitment to buying and selling products throughout the summer season. In this way, both farmers and chefs can minimize the disadvantages of geographical conditions: the farmers fill orders ahead of time and deliver them in time (e.g., a just-in-time delivery system) (Chair of the board of directors; Executive chef, 2011). Ideally, when the farmers and chefs started putting into practice the idea of a small farm product to a restaurant sale, the idea of menu-branding and place-branding also started to emerge as a creative food economy and culinary tourism practice. It took two years for the board of directors to reach decisions on goals, vision, mission statement and stakeholders to create the culinary place brand (Email interview with GM, 2008; and Executive chef, 2011).

By looking at the number of culinary programs provided by SAVOUR Muskoka for its members and the general public (e.g., workshop series) during the off-season in particular, it can be said that the contribution of SAVOUR Muskoka has significant impacts on the local food economy. SAVOUR Muskoka uses the organizational slogan 'Eat Local, Think Global' as a promotional tool to move forward the local food economy (Administrative staff, 2011). Figure 30 indicates the sample of a marketing and branding tool.

Figure 30: Sample of SAVOUR Muskoka Culinary Branding Tools



Source: photo taken by author (2011)

In relation to SAVOUR Muskoka marketing activities, the statistical evidence in Tables 28 and 29 shows the sale of agricultural products as well as marketing preferences in the region of Muskoka Southeast Parry Sound, which helps to understand better the big picture of food marketing practices in the region of Muskoka (SE Parry Sound/Muskoka Agricultural Initiative, 2002). According to the study, 70 farmers, among 135 farmers reported in the Muskoka Southeast Parry Sound region, participated in the survey (SE Parry Sound/Muskoka Agricultural Initiative, 2002). Also, the chefs at local high-end resorts and restaurants were surveyed by telephone or personal interviews as part of the same study.

Table 28: Agricultural Products Selling Patterns & Marketing Preferences

Agricultural Products Selling Patterns (%)		Agricultural Marketing Preferences (%)
Sell wholesale & retail	33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 53 would like to be included in the upcoming brochures • 86 interested in marketing their product under a Muskoka brand name • 78 suggesting a representative of the Muskoka brand would help lessen their workload in dealing with individual retailers • 58 are members of an agricultural association
Sell wholesale only	23	
Sell retail only	44	
Sell from farms/roadside	51	
Sell to resorts, restaurants, and stores	32	
Sell at farmers' markets	28	
Include products not self-grown	23	
Interest in expanding products	17	

Table 29: Purchasing Patterns by Local Chefs (SE Parry Sound/Muskoka)

Purchasing Patterns by Local Chefs (%)	
Purchase locally	80
Purchase organic produce	13
Would use term 'Muskoka grown'	85
Would Increase local purchases if issues resolved (e.g., health)	95
Prefer to purchase from specific producer	81
Agree wholesaler for Muskoka product would lighten workload	60
Willing to pay on delivery	65

Source: SE Parry Sound/Muskoka Agricultural Initiative (2002)

6.3.4. Related & supporting industries are firms or producers in the region that provide inputs that support the establishment and operation of a culinary cluster (e.g., creative industry). The diversity and the quality of supporting industries (e.g., accessibility to the site, parking facilities, high quality service facilities, health care, and security) are important to the success of a culinary cluster (Vanhove, 2005).

SAVOUR Muskoka has a significant competitive advantage in terms of related and supporting industries as an asset. A wide range of good quality supporting and related industries and service organizations are available in Muskoka and it includes: artists and galleries, attractions, entertainment, recreation and activities, heritage, boat tours, First Nations

experiences, skiing, fishing, golfing, parks and beaches, trails, festivals, horseback riding, marinas, museums, off-road tours, outfitters/outdoor trips, photography, photography tours, recreational vehicles, spas and esthetics, train ride and travel agency/tour operator, tourist Information centre, and public health care, public and private club, fitness facility and shopping. Figures 31 and 32 detail the region's arts, crafts, as well as cultural festivals.

Figure 31: Muskoka Arts & Crafts



Source: photo taken by author (2001)

Figure 32: Arts Festivals in Muskoka



Source: photo taken by author (2011)

In 2008, the District Municipality of Muskoka declared Muskoka to be Designated Arts Community (District of Muskoka official website, 2011). According to the study about 'The Creative Economy in Muskoka' (Shyllit and Spencer, 2011), Muskoka has a great advantage in developing an immensely rich creative economy because of the beauty of its natural environment as well as the potential niche food economy and culinary tourism. The importance of a creative economy is increasingly recognized in the region of Muskoka although "many of the creative businesses and industries are still relatively young, but they are at a crucial stage of development" (Shyllit and Spencer, 2011). Shyllit and Spencer (2011) state that:

Muskoka has a strong and diverse artistic community, however, statistics showcased few artistic registered businesses and [as a result, there are] misconceptions regarding the value and economic reach of local artists. With

recognition of Muskoka as a Designated Arts Community, potential exists for arts based community economic development (Shyllit and Spencer, 2011).

In accordance with the 'Creative Muskoka' development program, which has started to build a creative economy, taking into account the artists in the region, SAVOUR Muskoka is playing a vital role because SAVOUR Muskoka itself is a product within the creative economy. One of the key informants made the following statement, regarding the organization's role in the development of the regional creative economy.

We work with this group... the whole process is taking consideration of our chefs and artisans... back in fall, the creative economy organization had an event at the local high school, and in order to show how we fit into the creative economy, we did presentations... we also did cooking demonstrations with the kids to show how food fits into the creative food economy and why it is important... (Administrative staff, 2011).

In addition, Muskoka has recently become an internationally recognized events tourism place. New infrastructure (e.g., the G8 Summit Centre) provided by the 'G8 Legacy Fund' will boost the Muskoka's events tourism industry. It allows Muskoka to position itself to bid on larger tourism events "which were out of reach in the past due to lack of such large facilities" (Begin your Adventure, 2011-2012). According to the study done by the Ministry of Tourism about Muskoka's regional tourism profile (2008), tourism is a leading sector of the regional economy. About 60 percent of the regional economic base and entrepreneurial activities in Muskoka are focused on meeting the needs and wants of visitors as well as the seasonal cottage owners (Second Home Study 2004: District Municipality of Muskoka, 2005; and Shyllit and Spencer, 2011).

The impacts of tourism are a combination of culture, environment, visitors, and seasonal residents. In 2004 Muskoka had 1,993,792 person visits, which generated over \$234,000,000 in [tourism] expenditures, benefiting the local economy. Of all visitors, 1,880,773 were from Canada, 27,391 from the United States, and 37,628 were from other countries (Shyllit and Spencer, 2011; and Muskoka Tourism: Regional Tourism Profile, 2008).

Furthermore, the Ministry of Tourism has put in place 13 new Regional Tourism Organizations across the province of Ontario to do product development and place marketing and branding: the Muskoka region is the largest such organization as discussed in Chapter 2. With increased funding through the Ministry of Tourism, this situation will significantly restructure the tourism place marketing and branding practice in conjunction with the project to develop the 'Creative Muskoka' economy that has been in place since 2009: i.e., the town of Bracebridge has started a feasibility study to create a 'Muskoka School for Arts' (Shyllit and Spencer, 2011; Chair of the board of directors, 2011; and Administrative staff, 2011).

6.4. Facilitators as Creative Process

The conceptual framework created for the study consists of four interdependent determinants and four facilitators of a culinary cluster as discussed in Chapter 3. In this section these facilitators of the creative process (innovation) are examined as they apply to the SAVOUR Muskoka cluster.

6.4.1. *Environmentally friendly movement* should be adopted to facilitate the innovation process in achieving equilibrium between environment and tourism: an environment strategy should be in place, which focuses on reducing food miles (e.g., Slow Food Movement), that will change the paradigm of tourism development (i.e., initial investment into improvement of quality and creation of the attractiveness of a place by reducing consumption and waste; and development of economic potential within the culinary cluster).

The challenge with organic food is that it is very, very expensive... I have two farmers that I buy from ... the farms have been owned by the same families for over 100 years... the soil is virgin and they have never done anything bad, but they are not certified organic farms because they have not followed the procedures... So, sometimes I say that it does not make any difference but maybe in some cases it does [regarding sustainability of environment] (Executive chef, 2011).

SAVOUR Muskoka board members are well aware of the importance of an environmentally friendly movement. The key informants said that the whole purpose of the development of the culinary cluster as part of a creative food economy is to promote locally grown agricultural products and related local small businesses. They are well aware of the concept of ‘locally grown food’, which obviously has a direct association with the environmentally friendly movement in accordance with the Slow Food Movement (e.g., reduction of food miles). When asked, one of the interviewees stated that:

Each farm and each restaurant does their own things that meet the environmentally friendly movement... every farm we work with is basically a sustainable farm because they produce products without using [commercial fertilizers] and/or pesticides and these farms have been around for generation to generation here in the Muskoka region (Chair of the board of directors, 2011).

In SAVOUR Muskoka, the organizational strategic plan for the promotion of locally grown agricultural products in relation to sustainability of environment was in place. For example, the key informants said that when fresh vegetables grown in Muskoka are not available for menu planning that the chefs desire to create, they try to get them produced in Ontario first, and then, Canada; and, if not all available, they get them from elsewhere (Executive chef; and Chair of the board of directors, 2011). Nevertheless, the informants noted that SAVOUR Muskoka is well aware of the problematic situation that could happen if the organization would push strongly its members to become strictly environmentally friendly at this point. The informants mentioned that sometimes, members misinform their guests by telling them that they are using local products even when they are not. Thus, it is apparent that the awareness of the environmentally friendly movement is associated with the recognition of the Slow Food Movement, which helped the local food community to think about sustainability of a food

economy and culinary movement in the region of Muskoka (Executive chef; Chair of the board of directors; and Administrative staff, 2011).

Additionally, the University of Waterloo Summit Centre (environmental research facility) located near the ‘G8 Summit Centre’ opened its door in January 2011. It “boats a number of sustainable and green initiatives, including radiant solar heat, a living wall of plants, geothermal heating and cooling, Muskoka granite stone and Hardie cement siding” (Begin your Adventure, 2011-2012). This could also allow Muskoka to become a centre of environment research in the future, linking it to the international green movement. SAVOUR Muskoka can have an opportunity to collaborate with the research centre in its economic activities.

6.4.2. Leadership is among the most critical factors for the successful development of a creative food economy and culinary cluster: strong organizational leadership is required in the process of stakeholder collaboration as there are usually a large number of key stakeholders involved in such clusters (OCTA, 2011; and Ministry of Tourism (2005): Culinary Tourism in Ontario: Strategy and Action Plan 2005 – 2015). A successful culinary cluster depends on strategic alliances and partnership between the private and public sectors although some specific public actions can stimulate or impede economic development. Thus, “tourism policy without involvement of the government is often unrealistic and unsustainable” (Vanhove, 2005).

Culinary tourism does not happen from one restaurant or from one event... it takes many different pieces to make that whole movement happen... partnership and collaboration between members is absolutely the key in SAVOUR Muskoka... Absolutely, it is the key... the biggest aspect of everything here... Coming to Muskoka 5 years ago, for example, no one really thought about food as an important part of tourism, but the world is changing and at the same time, we are changing... So, we have to have that partnership to drive the whole culinary movement (Executive chef, 2011).

In December 2004, representatives of the region from the agricultural sector and restaurants, retail and micro-processing industries came together and created an organization

with a vision to promote “a wide selection of regional culinary products, experiences and packages that are distinctive to Muskoka, which will be marketed successfully to the visitor market” as a culinary place (SAVOUR Muskoka official website, 2011). The organization’s activities include: marketing; financials; newsletter (monthly newsletter updating the organization); membership (actively recruiting and assisting new members; and providing one-on-one member meetings); events (participating in as many community events as possible); and organizing a database (Email interview with GM, 2008; Chair of the board of directors; and Administrative assistance, 2011). The general manager (GM) is responsible for day-to-day operations: once a month the GM meets with the board of directors, and reviews what has taken place the month prior, and what will take place in the following month (Email interview with GM, 2008). However, the organization is in a transition period as it is now managed by two administrative staff since the GM recently left SAVOUR Muskoka for the new regional development organization (Chair of the board of directors; and Administrative staff, 2011). The detailed information about the 13 new development organizations and geographical areas were discussed in Chapter 2 (i.e., the region of Muskoka is #12 organization among the new 13 Regional Tourism Development Organizations in Ontario).

In 2010, SAVOUR Muskoka hosted a brainstorming session to make a strategic direction for the culinary movement. This was a group exercise, which has no prepared agenda. It began with a question: “what are the issues and opportunities facing Muskoka/Parry Sound region as we look for ways to expand production, distribution and consumption of local food?” (SAVOUR Muskoka press release, 2011; Chair of the board of directors, 2011; and Administrative staff, 2011). As a result of this activity, 5 task groups were established to work strategically with members and move forward the culinary movement in the region. The 5 task groups are:

“Production Task Group, Delivery Task Group, Education Task Group, Culinary Trail Task Group and Northern Ontario Task Group” (SAVOUR Muskoka press release, 2011). SAVOUR Muskoka strives to achieve the organization’s goals highlighted below.

- To increase revenue for all stakeholders, particularly in the off-season through the development of recognizable culinary products
- To improve cross-promotion of regional culinary offerings
- To market products and services from the Muskoka/Parry Sound region both locally and to the visitor market
- To provide culinary tourism educational support and services to the partners of SAVOUR Muskoka
- To improve communications between growers, micro-processors, accommodation stakeholders, restaurants, chefs and the retail sector
- To be a self-sustaining, non-governmental organization (NGO)
- To have a current ongoing inventory of locally-grown/made products (SAVOUR Muskoka official website, 2011).

According to the Ministry of Tourism’s ‘Best Practice and Ontario Competitiveness Study Research Paper Review’ (2009), the role of government in tourism is recognized as an important factor in regional development. The government of Ontario is “determined on how to best deploy resources to ensure the tourism industry grows and remains as an important pillar of Ontario’s economy” (Best Practice and Ontario Competitiveness Study Research Paper Review, 2009).

The government has played a significant role in the region of Muskoka as, for example, by putting better IT technology infrastructure in Muskoka (Chair of the board of directors; and Executive chef, 2011). The key informants stressed the importance of high-speed internet access, the infrastructure for communications, as a great strength in Muskoka. The recently improved IT technology infrastructure (Shyllit and Spencer, 2011) has allowed SAVOUR Muskoka to position itself better and has facilitated the creation of an effective and efficient communication process. Many of SAVOUR Muskoka members previously had limited access to IT technology. However, in SAVOUR Muskoka, 90 percent of communications are now made through email

correspondence; 10 percent are made through phone calls and in other ways because some of the members still do not have access to IT technology (Chair of the board of directors; and Executive chef, 2011).

This convenient and effective organizational network would not have been achieved without having the indirect involvement of government: i.e., the significant IT infrastructure investment in the region provided by Industry Canada ‘FedNor’ financial sources (Shyllit and Spencer, 2011). The key informants pointed out that the high-speed IT technology has made considerable connectivity among SAVOUR Muskoka members, and enabled SAVOUR Muskoka to attract more members who are interested in the regional creative food economy and culinary movement (Chair of the board of directors; and Executive chef, 2011). This is particularly important because membership fees are the greatest financial source for the organization. The organization’s major activities (e.g., workshop series) are also based upon funding sources provided by provincial and federal governments (i.e., the Ontario Trillium Foundation and Industry Canada, FedNor, which can be seen in Figure 33).

Figure 33: Ontario Trillium Foundation and Industry Canada, FedNor Funding Programs



Source: photo taken by author in the SAVOUR Muskoka office (2011)

Muskoka’s Community Futures Development Corporation is another funding source for SAVOUR Muskoka and it has received maximum funding from the organization (Chair of the board of directors; and Administrative staff, 2011). Muskoka’s Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC) incorporated “in 1987 as a community-based not-for-profit organization partnering with municipalities, businesses and individuals” (Muskoka Futures brochure, 2011).

It supports “community economic development by assisting in Ontario’s rural and northern communities to diversify these regions’ economies. Industry Canada and the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario (FedNor) provide funding for the CFDC (as indicated in Figure 34). A maximum of \$15,000 is available for qualified organizations to help business start-ups and expansions that create jobs in the Muskoka region (Muskoka Futures brochure, 2011).

Adding together, the ‘Muskoka Community Initiative’ program within CFDC offers a “maximum of \$5,000 to organizations in pursuit of creative community-based projects that promote economic independence and self-sufficiency” (Muskoka Futures brochure, 2011).

Examples of economic development projects include:

- Development of infrastructure to support economic development
- Sponsorship of business management and entrepreneurial training courses and seminars
- Promotion of the community for tourism or business development
- Initiatives to support entrepreneurship
- Initiatives focused on increasing economic opportunity for youth in Muskoka and their role in the community (Muskoka Futures brochure, 2011)

Figure 34: Muskoka Community Futures Development Corporation



Source: photo taken by author (2011)

However, in Muskoka, there are many economic development organizations, which are fragmented and involved directly or indirectly in SAVOUR Muskoka culinary initiatives (e.g., Economic Development Office, New Regional Tourism Organization, Ontario Tourism, Muskoka Tourism (DMO), Muskoka Creative Economy and OCTA (Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance). A number of development projects are being undertaken with many of the regional development organizations in Muskoka to improve its economic, cultural and environmental well-being of the place.

We try to align ourselves as many ways as we can. As well, on any publications and press releases, we try to send them our stuff because they cover a lot of publicity and that's the way we align ourselves with them. However, we do not

join their meetings and we do not have a formal say on how they operate. We are totally independent and we do our own things... we talk to them and they also talk to us on many occasions. For example, for the G8 Summit, 'Ontario Tourism' came to us and said that they have to promote Ontario; and 'Muskoka Tourism' came to us and said that they have to promote Muskoka. So, I took all of them... I used all Muskoka products for one of the events and all Ontario products for another event and it is good for SAVOUR Muskoka to expose itself on the press by doing it (Executive chef, 2011).

SAVOUR Muskoka, as the above statement indicates, however, is an independent organization. One of the informants noted that 'Muskoka Tourism' (DMO) promotes SAVOUR Muskoka adequately, but that is not what Muskoka Tourism has focused on - regional marketing/branding as a destination marketing organization. According to the interviewees, the Economic Development Office and Muskoka Tourism recognize SAVOUR Muskoka as an important contributor to the tourism sector in Muskoka. However, these organizations are more focused on other entrepreneurial activities located in the downtown cores to attract more investors and visitors to the urban centre. The dilemma with this economic development strategy is that the office recognizes tourism as a great part of Muskoka economy, but agriculture and farms are often forgotten. The informants hope to collaborate strongly with the District of Muskoka in the future as the following statement implies:

We are working on better collaboration with the District of Muskoka to increase more awareness of local farms and products out there, and our farmers committee has done presentations to the District of Muskoka. [By doing it], we wanted them to know that [SAVOUR Muskoka] is here, the farmers are here and agricultural land is here... so now they are interested in it, but they do not realize it is a big part of tourism. They do not see culinary tourism as a big component of tourism in this region... we receive funding from two other government organizations, but the funding is too little and that's why [it is hard] for us to make a move... and this is one of our challenges we are working on. We are going to make a strategic planning goal in the fall for the next three years... we try to self-sustain ourselves (Chair of the board of directors; and Administrative staff, 2011).

6.4.3. Stakeholder collaboration involves cooperation among various stakeholders to create a sustainable food production and consumption nexus (a culinary cluster). The perspective is often taken that tourism is a fragmented set of activities and it follows that collaboration should be emphasized in the development process. Thus, the concept of collaboration is a critical issue in the formation of a culinary cluster.

Stakeholder collaboration exists for local groups that are empowered to self-sustain the stakeholders' livelihoods. There is no doubt that collaboration between SAVOUR Muskoka stakeholders is very strong as the organization is made up by 4 local culinary-related groups to support their livelihoods. In SAVOUR Muskoka the stakeholders are restricted particularly to 4 local groups of farmers, chefs, restaurants and artisans with no public sector direct involvement. Thus, the organization depends greatly on insufficient membership fees and currently, relatively a small number of stakeholders (only 143 members) are involved in the SAVOUR Muskoka cluster.

SAVOUR Muskoka is a membership based organization, and, thus, stakeholders share their skills and knowledge by actively participating in the workshop series to meet the organization's ultimate goal of promoting and sustaining local livelihoods. In SAVOUR Muskoka, each stakeholder is considered to be a major player of the organization: i.e., stakeholders are welcome to attend the board meetings and share general information gathered in the meetings (Chair of the board of directors, 2011). Detailed discussions, regarding stakeholder collaboration can be seen in Chapter 7: comparative case study and discussion.

6.4.4. Communication and Information flows are required to bring in new ideas and make consensus and to share accumulated knowledge and know-how. The volume and quality of

communication is often a reflection of leadership and coordination which influences information flows in stakeholder collaboration in the formation of a culinary cluster

Communication and connectivity is recognized as being vital to the formation of a culinary cluster in rural community development. In terms of communication and information flows, SAVOUR Muskoka holds a full general membership meeting as a whole group once a year. As indicated in the citation below, SAVOUR Muskoka also has created two different sub-committees: ‘chefs sub-committee’ and ‘farmers sub-committee’ (Chair of the board of directors; and Executive chef, 2011). Each sub-committee has a meeting six times a year to make better connections within the two groups. They meet as a group and discuss challenges they are facing in creating and maintaining the culinary cluster of SAVOUR Muskoka: the discussions are gathered from both sub-committees and shared with the board of directors. Member restaurants and artisans are not active in this way (Chair of the board of directors; and Executive chef, 2011).

There are chefs committee and farmers committee... It's really important because, for example, the growing period [of agricultural products] is too short in Muskoka. So, actually, the farmers need to have an outlet for their products and chefs want the local products to work with... so, the more we work together, the better is... one of our farmers is 60 years old, for example, and grows the best vegetables and she hopes that she can do it another 20 years... (Chair of the board of directors; and Administrative staff, 2011).

SAVOUR Muskoka has a good communication strategy as stakeholders are strongly tied to each other (detailed discussion regarding communications strategy can be seen in Chapter 7). Based upon provincial and federal governments’ financial supports, the organization provides workshop series throughout the year, and as indicated in Table 31, in 2010 it had 6 workshops (Basic Canning and Preserving Workshop, Advanced Canning and Preserving Workshop, Introduction to Working with Draft Horses, Muskoka Meats Workshop Series, Winter Gardening and SAVOUR Muskoka Farm Workshop). These are provided not just for members but also for

the general public (Executive chef; Chair of the board of directors; and Administrative staff, 2011). This creates more connections among local people, as well as awareness of the culinary cluster, SAVOUR Muskoka. The following Tables 30 and 31 indicate the detailed communication process in the formation of the SAVOUR Muskoka cluster.

Table 30: SAVOUR Muskoka Workshops/Events as Communication Tools

Workshops/Events	Contents/Activities	Cost
Basic Canning and Preserving Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A four hour <i>introductory</i> workshop about canning and preserving locally grown foods. Canning and preserving are great ways to enjoy locally grown foods all year-round 	\$30 per person, limit 20 people
Advanced Canning and Preserving Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A four hour <i>advanced</i> workshop about canning and preserving locally grown foods. This workshop shows individuals <i>advanced</i> techniques and skills with canning and preserving food to be able to enjoy throughout any season 	\$30 per person, limit 20 people
Introduction to Working with Draft Horses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A four hour <i>introductory</i> workshop about working with draft horses. Take a farm tour, learn about handling horses, watch logging demonstrations, and enjoy Oke-Cook fresh produce made into a delicious sample meal after an exciting workshop 	
Local Farmers' Markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BALA, BAYSVILLE, BRACEBRIDGE, GRAVENHURST, PORT CARLING, and ROSSEAU 	
SAVOUR Muskoka Farm Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every year SAVOUR Muskoka offers farm workshop series with the support of its members: Spring/Summer workshop series; Fall series and Winter Gardening series 	

Source: SAVOUR Muskoka official website (2011)

Table 31: Communication Activities in SAVOUR Muskoka

Year	Communications/Activities	Source(s)
2008		SAVOUR Newsletter Volume 1 Issue 1 SAVOUR Newsletter Volume 1 Issue 2
2009		SAVOUR Newsletter Volume 1 Issue 3 SAVOUR Newsletter Volume 2 Issue 1 SAVOUR Newsletter Volume 2 Issue 2
2010		SAVOUR Newsletter Volume 2 Issue 3 SAVOUR Newsletter Volume 2 Issue 4 SAVOUR Newsletter Volume 3 Issue 1 SAVOUR Newsletter Volume 3 Issue 2 SAVOUR Newsletter Volume 3 Issue 3 SAVOUR Newsletter Volume 3 Issue 4 SAVOUR Newsletter Volume 3 Issue 5 SAVOUR Newsletter Volume 3 Issue 6 SAVOUR Newsletter Volume 3 Issue 7
2011	Local Food Development Brainstorming Session (Production Task Group; Delivery; Task Group; Education Task Group; Culinary Trail Task Group; Northern Ontario Task Group) SAVOUR Muskoka Farm Committee to Stimulate Local Food Ontario Trillium Foundation & SAVOUR Muskoka executing farm workshops SAVOUR Muskoka 2011 Annual General Meeting Royal Agriculture Fair Cooking Stage Feedback (coming soon) SAVOUR Muskoka Community Culinary Map Feedback Farmers' Market Strategy Spring 09 Report Regional Food Cluster Review	SAVOUR Newsletter Volume 4 Issue 1 SAVOUR Newsletter Volume 4 Issue 2 SAVOUR Newsletter Volume 4 Issue 3 SAVOUR Newsletter Volume 4 Issue 4 SAVOUR Newsletter Volume 4 Issue 5 SAVOUR Newsletter Volume 4 Issue 6 SAVOUR Newsletter Volume 4 Issue 7 SAVOUR Newsletter Volume 4 Issue 8 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership Culinary Artisans 2011 • Membership Farmers 2011 • Membership Restaurants, Caterers, Chefs, Bakers 2011 • Membership Retail 2011 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press Releases 2011

Source: SAVOUR Muskoka official website (2011)

In summary, this chapter provided general background information on the District Municipality of Muskoka in terms of geographic, demographic and economic indicators. Findings concerning the SAVOUR Muskoka culinary cluster were presented based on empirical data/information collected in the study site. As the findings of the study showed, the ‘interdependent determinants’ significantly influenced the creation of the cluster, and the ‘facilitators’ of the innovation process were required to create the culinary cluster. Table 32 is a

summary of the findings for the SAVOUR Muskoka culinary cluster. It is organized in terms of the ‘interdependent determinants’ and ‘facilitators’ of a culinary cluster identified in the conceptual model created for the study.

Table 32: Interdependent Determinants & Facilitators: SAVOUR Muskoka Culinary Cluster

Interdependent Determinants & Facilitators	Contents
Factor conditions	<p><u>Significant disadvantage: less favorable factor conditions of agricultural sector (core and leading assets)</u> <u>Significant advantage in supporting asset:</u> Creative arts industry; cottages; trails; out-door recreation/leisure; and physical architectures; and accommodations and beauty of natural environment</p>
Demand conditions	<p><u>Local residents, Torontonians and cottage owners:</u> the primary target market: ‘empty-nester’ urban couples, and singles; on average over thirty years old, well-educated, upper-income and sophisticated Canadian and international travelers seeking a quality food and cultural experiences (<u>source:</u> ministry of tourism research)</p>
Related and supporting industries	<p><u>Significant advantage: tourism the top leading sector</u> <u>High quality supporting industries:</u> (Movies I Theatre Shows; Art/Studio Tours; Concerts; Special Events/ Festivals; Museums & Historic Sites; Fishing; Canoeing/Kayaking ; Public Parks & Beaches; Hunting; Boating; Fall Fairs; Hiking; Walking; Jogging; Golfing; XC-Skiing; Alpine Skiing/Snowboarding; Boating Regattas; Snowmobiling; Boat Cruises /Tours); Community Centers; Public Swimming Pools; Public Libraries; Public Rinks and Arenas <u>High quality service facilities:</u> parking; tourism information centre; health care; and security</p>
Market structure	<p><u>Fragmented & less developed institutional and organizational infrastructure:</u> significant disadvantages (economic development office; DMO; new Muskoka 12 regional tourism development office; Creative Muskoka and SAVOUR Muskoka need to be strongly integrated) <u>Lack of partnership</u> with the destination marketing organization and local government (District of Muskoka) <u>Lack of place marketing/branding strategy</u> (no significant marketing/branding plan and budget) <u>Lack of research</u></p>
Environmentally friendly movement	<p>Strong awareness of environmentally friendly movement in accordance with the Slow Food Movement originated in Italy Focused on sustainability of local food economy (e.g., reduction of food miles) SAVOUR Muskoka logo created to advocate members to use local food products Clean & pleasant environmental quality</p>
Leadership	<p>Strong partnership & organizational commitment among stakeholders, particularly between chefs and farmers Lack of leadership: currently, the organization has no general manager Lack of strong partnership with local government (e.g., District of Muskoka and DMO) Dependent on limited public funding programs (e.g., Ontario Trillium Foundation, Industry Canada, FedNor and Muskoka Community Development and membership fees)</p>
Stakeholder collaboration	<p>Bottom-up approach led by the local players to self-sustain their livelihoods Stakeholders: narrowly defined within 4 major local groups (farmers; chefs; artisans/restaurants/caters; and retailers)</p>
Communication & information flows	<p>Strong communications strategy among stakeholders to bring in new ideas and make consensus and self-sustain stakeholders’ livelihoods (e.g., workshop series; and chefs and farmers sub-committee; newsletter; and press release)</p>



Out-door patio restaurant

Source: photo taken by author in the town of Huntsville (2011)

7.0. CHAPTER SEVEN: COMPARATIVE STUDY AND DISCUSSION

This chapter compares the Savour Stratford and SAVOUR Muskoka culinary clusters based upon the findings of the study presented in the previous chapters. The comparative study is structured by the interrelated themes of the conceptual model: culinary products/programs development and place branding practices to examine their relationships. In this way, issues of stakeholder collaboration in relation to leadership, and communication and information flows are addressed by identifying major challenges in the formation of a culinary cluster in place-based rural community development. Finally, in the second half of the chapter, the utility of the conceptual model is discussed and the discussion is focused on the academic and practical implications of the model.

7.1. Culinary Products/Programs Development

The empirical data/information analysis showed that differences exist between the two case study sites in the process of culinary products/programs development as they have adopted dissimilar organizational approaches, resulting in different types of organizational and institutional structures. In addition, the geographical nature of the places provides significantly divergent factor conditions, particularly in the agricultural sector, which is a leading asset. However, both study sites also have considerable similarities in the process of products/programs development that support the creation of the clusters. Both are proximate to substantial urban markets in southern Ontario and both places are well-developed tourism places with designated arts communities. The comparative study will explicate such differences, as well as similarities, in the process of culinary products/programs development.

7.1.1. *Pleasing Artistic Form of Savour Stratford vs. Pleasantly Surprised SAVOUR Muskoka*

When you arrived here, it immediately put you much closer to the nature and the farm... it's almost like an entrance gateway... you see all of heritage in the downtown core... a kind of little, beautiful garden city and that's really what we are positioning that people can't find anywhere else. There are many communities in Ontario and Canada, as well as in North America where there are sections of cities that have been preserved and conserved heritage buildings for usually one or two blocks, but in Stratford it extends miles... the whole landscape is very unique and it is something that you don't find. This is very important ... you want to come to a place where it is romantic... this is a lover's place... Stratford has pleasing artistic forms...costumes, make-up, lights, stages and the stories... Stratford is surrounded by these romantic things (Executive marketer of Savour Stratford, 2011).

In my guess, 10 percent of our customers come to the hotel for local food and in general less than 1 percent comes to Muskoka for local food. However, coming to Muskoka from Toronto, you enjoy outdoor activities and all of a sudden, you realize there is good local food... It's an extra and pleasant surprise... you are pleasantly surprised here in Muskoka (Executive chef in SAVOUR Muskoka, 2011).

The above statements made by the interviewees both in Savour Stratford and SAVOUR Muskoka clearly articulate the organizations' positioning strategies in the development of the culinary clusters. In both cases there is a desire to showcase themselves as being unique culinary places. In both the Savour Stratford and SAVOUR Muskoka clusters, development of culinary products/programs is achieved through place branding practices although different branding processes have been employed. However, as the findings of the study demonstrate, the products/programs development process and place branding practice are fundamental in the transformation of a *terroir* into a creative and environmentally friendly culinary cluster.

Historically, Muskoka has had a longer history of tourism development than Stratford, but in both cases, tourism, albeit of different kinds, preceded the development of culinary clusters. In Stratford tourism is an important sector, along with manufacturing followed by agriculture. The tourism sector in Stratford has been concentrated on the busy summer season

focused on cultural festivals. However, by establishing an incorporated destination marketing organization in 2007, the emphasis in the tourism sector is being given to expansion of the products/programs into the off-seasons (Executive director, 2011). Hence, the first priority of the marketing organization is to generate visitors during May and June; the second priority is to attract visitors during November and December period; and the third priority is to draw visitors in the February to April time period (Executive director; and Program developer, 2011).

On the other hand, the process of culinary products/programs development in SAVOUR Muskoka is focused on self-sustaining small-scale farms and businesses through developing a culinary cluster. As one of the founders (e.g., Executive chef) of SAVOUR Muskoka pointed out, culinary products are the expression of a place and the people of a place. SAVOUR Muskoka has been initiated by the local groups of chefs and farmers. Thus, the organization emphasizes the supply-side rather than demand-side of culinary tourism although, of course, both must exist for such initiatives. As a result of the different organizational approaches between the clusters, the process of culinary products/programs development has been somewhat different (as indicated in Table 33).

Table 33: Comparison of Core/Leading/Supporting Assets in Product Development

Culinary Products Development	Savour Stratford	SAVOUR Muskoka
<p>Core asset (<i>terroir</i>: natural and cultural landscapes, including leading agricultural sector)</p>	<p><u>Well-defined small area</u> natural attractions; cultural attractions; & historical attractions <u>Well-developed culinary products/programs</u> integrated with the hard factors and soft factors of core, leading and supporting assets <u>Integrated & various culinary products/programs:</u> culinary getaways; culinary attractions; culinary adventures; culinary festivals/events; cooking schools/chefs; culinary walking tours (trails); farmer's market (buy local, buy fresh); farms; chocolate trail; 23 certified restaurants; dining and tasting events; and special garden party (annual food festival) <u>253 members as products/programs</u> 42 restaurants 16 producers 71 accommodation providers 62 retail & services 57 events & attractions 5 associations</p>	<p><u>Spread out over the large geographic area</u> compelling beauty of natural & cultural landscapes <u>Lacking strong agricultural sector</u> <u>Fragmented culinary product/program development:</u> depends heavily on each individual chef, farmer, and artisan <u>Products/programs:</u> annual culinary event and culinary trail, series of workshops on culinary program, and stakeholders as culinary product <u>143 members as products/programs</u> 28 chefs 40 farmers 24 culinary artisans 51 restaurants and caterers <u>Smaller and less diversified membership than Stratford</u></p>
<p>Leading asset (agricultural sector)</p>	<p><u>Agricultural sector</u> is one of top leading economic sectors: diversified farms, the longest farmer's market in Ontario, internationally renowned cooking school, diversified restaurants including 23 certified Savour Stratford restaurants, food related festivals/events, artisans, culinary retailers & others</p>	<p><u>Less favorable geographical conditions of agricultural sector:</u> a small number of farms and farmers, farmer's markets, restaurants/caterers, food events and culinary artisans/retailers</p>
<p>Supporting asset (tourism sector & arts sector) attractions, accommodations, transportations, shopping & Indoor/outdoor recreational facilities, creative industry & others</p>	<p><u>Tourism one of the top leading sectors</u> <u>High quality supporting assets:</u> the creative industry (theatres and galleries); hotels and inns; B&B sector; culinary products shops; books and music shops; gifts and photographers shops; arts & antiques shops; fashions; wedding facilities; spas and aesthetics; & recreational facilities <u>High quality service facilities:</u> all day free parking; tourism information centre; health care; public recreation centre and security</p>	<p><u>Tourism, top leading sector</u> <u>High quality supporting assets:</u> The creative industry; cottages; resorts/motels and B&B sector; movies / theatre shows; art/studio tours; concerts; special events/ festivals; museums & historic sites; fishing; canoeing/kayaking ; public parks & beaches; hunting; boating; fall fairs; hiking; walking; jogging; golfing; XC-skiing; alpine skiing/snowboarding; boating regattas; snowmobiling; boat cruises /tours <u>High quality service facilities:</u> parking; tourism information centre; health care; and security; community centers; public rinks and arenas</p>

In Savour Stratford, following the emphasis of the positioning strategy, production development, and diversification/specialization are being carried out through elaboration of the inventory of culinary related resources (core, leading and supporting assets). Based on these assets and strengths, one of the main culinary products, Savour Stratford Culinary Festival (an

annual event) has been created and is being used as a promotional tool for the Savour Stratford culinary cluster. In the first year, Savour Stratford developed a culinary trail product/program based upon the belief that culinary tourists are interested in learning through hands-on experiences. Thus, the self-directed culinary trail can be visited by either walking or driving. On the culinary trail, visitors can taste many local products, learn and sample in each outlet (e.g., farms, farmers, cheese making, tea tasting and chocolate/candy making) (Executive marketer; and Program developer, 2011).

To develop unique culinary products/programs, which reflect and identify the region's artistic characteristics, everything must be local and authentic that is related to the place and people. Hence, the product development team has had to engage with local people who are passionate about the creative food economy and culinary movement. The team provided workshops and trained those who would be on the culinary trail and they actually tasted products to ensure that the experiences of visitors would be both authentic and of high quality (Program developer, 2011). In the end, a map of the trail was created and used as a culinary guide for visitors. The unified marketing organization has been able to bring in renowned food writers and media to showcase the culinary products/programs (Executive marketer; Program developer, 2011; and Savour Stratford official website, 2011). This whole process of products/programs development has been achieved through an inventory of the contents and scope of the core, leading and supporting assets, including soft factors of cultural landscape and hard factors of natural environment as well as thematic mapping of the culinary resources. This is considered to be one of the most important strategies in marketing and branding so that a creative food production and consumption nexus can be established based on local things and knowledge. Thus, it can be argued that the culinary product diversification/specialization in the formation of

the Savour Stratford culinary cluster has been established through the place branding practice (i.e., leverage between the agricultural and tourism sectors) focused on the well-defined and existing core asset of a *terroir* with such leading and supporting assets (creative industry).

In addition, unlike in SAVOUR Muskoka, the partnership between the private and public sectors is well-established in the development of products/programs in Savour Stratford. The industry-oriented, marketing-driven organization has the ability to write persuasive proposals for development projects and benefit by receiving matching funds from the Ontario's Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) in addition to the City of Stratford, and Ministry of Tourism funding programs that offer grants to develop such culinary programs in rural community development. Thus, the marketing organization embarked on a three-year program with the assistance of OMAFRA in particular to help itself define and create culinary programs/products and market Stratford as a culinary place (Executive director, 2011). Therefore, in 2008, Savour Stratford was able to introduce the 'Stratford Perth County Culinary Festival', which has become one of the examples of best practice in Ontario's culinary movement (Executive director; Program developer, 2011; and Savour Stratford official website, 2011).

Nevertheless, although the informants believe that many people now come to Stratford for fine food, it has no quantitative data on specific culinary products/programs or a profile of culinary tourists (i.e., the organization, as the program developer mentioned, learns indirectly what visitors say about the culinary experience from partners, especially from the B&B operators). This means that in Savour Stratford, a great number of its visitors are older people who come to Stratford for cultural festivals (e.g., plays and performing arts) and, at the same time, enjoy local, fine cuisine. This situation makes it difficult for the organization to measure and separate the culinary tourists profile from other cultural tourists as they overlap. However,

Savour Stratford has significant advantages in developing culinary products/programs to expand its market, specifically for younger visitors who are not necessarily coming for plays and the performing arts. The organization needs to collaborate and work more closely with the internationally-renowned cooking school, which has many younger students who want to be a chef to create products/ programs that are more appealing to younger populations (e.g., product differentiation).

By contrast, in SAVOUR Muskoka, as it is not a marketing-driven organization, simply members of the organization and a series of workshops provided by the organization throughout the year are considered as major culinary products/programs (SAVOUR Muskoka official website, 2011). In SAVOUR Muskoka, individual chefs, artisans and farmers create their unique culinary products/programs independently from the organization, identifying the countryside and wildness that is featured in SAVOUR Muskoka's culinary products/programs image. For instance, the interviewed executive chef mentioned a former chef who runs an ice cream company as an example of SAVOUR Muskoka's unique culinary products. The company makes ice cream by using some local ingredients. Most ingredients used may come from other areas than Muskoka or Canada, or even from elsewhere in the world, but the culinary products are all made locally in a unique way, creating special Muskoka culinary flavours (Executive chef, 2011). As seen in Figure 35, the researcher also had the opportunity to meet one of the culinary artisans at Port Carling farmer's market and saw some of the high quality culinary products created by the small company to match and meet local residents' demands in line with international market trends (e.g., eating-well).

Figure 35: SAVOUR Muskoka Artisan's Product



Source: photo taken by the author at Port Carling farmer's market (2011)

However, the organization is facing substantial difficulties in the development of culinary products/programs because the region is spread out over a large geographic area and resulting in challenging supply chain logistics: i.e., inconstancy of products; unavailability of products; and timely delivery of products (just-in-time delivery systems need to be in place). In addition, the organization is still struggling with how to encourage its members to use the brand 'SAVOUR Muskoka', which signifies the culinary products/programs (Email interview with GM, 2008; Executive chef; and Chair of the board of directors, 2011).

In spite of the various challenges faced due to the less favourable geographical nature of the agricultural sector (leading asset), all of the interviewed informants stated that awareness of the SAVOUR Muskoka identity as a culinary brand is steadily growing. They believe that the region's creative food economy by forming a culinary cluster is receiving increasing recognition,

and that it has made important impacts on the local food economy, particularly for the small local farms and farmers, as is indicated in the following comment made by the executive chef who is one of the founders of SAVOUR Muskoka.

From a farmer's stand point... they have connections to chefs or they have different connections - direct selling. For example, last year, we put fresh strawberries on menus for the G8 leaders and I was able to drive down to the farm where the strawberries were growing and was able to see them growing and make sure that the quality and everything was exactly what I wanted... it is about a personal touch and you can trust and there is more trust in this way (Executive chef, 2011).

As the comparative study showed, it is difficult to make direct comparisons between the clusters in the process of products/programs development, which is built on the places' divergent core, leading and supporting assets. However, both places suffer from seasonality in both tourism and agriculture. When viewed positively, there is some overlap between peak tourism and the production of food products for culinary tourism. On the other hand, such synchronicity makes it more challenging to use culinary products to extend the tourism season. While Savour Stratford has competitive advantages as it is a better-defined small area (*terroir*) with a richer agricultural hinterland, SAVOUR Muskoka has significant disadvantages in developing the culinary cluster because of a more widely dispersed and less productive agricultural sector (leading asset). In addition, the institutions have adopted different organizational approaches in the formation of the culinary clusters (i.e., industry-oriented vs. self-sustaining livelihood approaches). Stratford is guided by an industry-led destination management with hired professional leadership organization whereas Muskoka's initiative has grown from the ground up. These dissimilar organizational approaches have contributed to the divergent outcomes of the contents and scope of culinary products/programs development in the respective clusters as detailed in Chapters 5 and 6.

7.2. Leadership in the Process of Place Branding

According to OCTA (2011), and Ministry of Tourism (2005): Culinary Tourism in Ontario: Strategy and Action Plan 2005 – 2015, strong leadership and partnership in the process of stakeholder collaboration are among the most critical factors for the development of a creative food economy and culinary cluster as there are usually a large number of key stakeholders involved in such clusters.

There are differences in the organizational leadership and partnership approaches in the formation of the culinary clusters in Savour Stratford and SAVOUR Muskoka. This indicates that there is more than one way to put together a place branding strategy in the formation of a culinary cluster in place-based rural community development. Preliminary investigations indicated that Savour Stratford and SAVOUR Muskoka have different organizational arrangements, which require different organizational leadership for the development of the culinary clusters and branding practices. As such, they were selected purposefully for this comparative case study: the former is an industry-oriented approach and the latter is a self-sustaining livelihood approach in their organizational structure. These approaches will be examined further in the sub-sections that follow.

7.2.1. Organizational Approaches (industry-oriented vs. self-sustaining livelihood)

In the province of Ontario, the government is, in fact, boosting grassroots, social marketing and branding efforts with specific slogans, such as ‘Buy within 100 km’, in accordance with the 10-year strategy and action plan for the creative food economy and culinary movement. This marketing campaign strengthens the local food economy and culinary movement both in Savour Stratford and SAVOUR Muskoka by “encouraging residents, visitors and businesses to buy locally-produced agricultural products, including those made by local artisans and organic

specialty products that ‘appear in media reports, on store shelves and on restaurant menus across the regions’ (The City of Stratford official website, 2011).

It has been argued that place branding in place-based rural community development is still in its infancy (Cai et al., 2009). Moreover, tourism place branding activities and studies have been focused, for the most part, on image-creation activities and/or promotional efforts (Kotler et al., 1993; and Cai et al., 2009). Thus, they view place marketing and branding as an image-creation exercise (Kotler et al., 1993). Place ‘image-formation’ encapsulated in slogans is an operational approach to ‘place promotion’, which heavily emphasizes a wide range of advertising (Moilanen and Rainisto, 2009). However, ‘place branding’ is more than this: it is a strategic place management process that should encompass product development as well as promotion.

Kotler et al. (1993) and Kotler and Gertner (2004) point out that place ‘image-building’ activities and ‘place promotion’, which are common in rural development and urban planning, no longer work in the changing local and global economy. Importantly, Kotler et al. (1993: 73-74) argue that place “promotion is one of the least important marketing tasks” in holistic place branding practices because “it cannot address the issues of how to make a place economically” (Kotler et al., 1993: 73-74), culturally and environmentally sustainable. The concept of ‘promotion’ can be defined as “the use of short-term incentives to encourage [visitors] to purchase a product/service” (Kotler et al., 1993: 168-169). However, place branding practices are better viewed as a management process that should encompass a wider range of activities that are needed to achieve long-term success.

A community-based, bottom-up organizational approach to tourism place branding consists of various stakeholders involving in a decentralized organizational structure where

players and organizations have no significant authority over what will be done. This is clearly seen in the case of SAVOUR Muskoka. In SAVOUR Muskoka, 4 types of local stakeholders (farmers, chefs, restaurants and artisans) are involved in the branding practice and they are promoted as major players within the organization. In this case, organizational leadership in culinary tourism branding has arisen from local residents although they are dependant more on the public sector (government) through funding programs. For instance, SAVOUR Muskoka, to a great extent, has insufficient membership fees and public financial resources to take major initiatives in place branding practices. Thus, it is not able to make specific marketing plan and branding budget.

Conversely, the industry-oriented approach refers to tourism place branding practice as undertaken by a functionally structured organization such as a DMO (e.g., Stratford Tourism Alliance), which acts to promote tourism in the interest of local groups of the tourism industry. In such a case, the tourism place brand is created and managed by the DMO (Morgan et al., 2010). Apparently, Savour Stratford represents this model, as since the beginning of the culinary cluster, the process of place branding has been managed by the destination marketing organization (Stratford Tourism Alliance) under the leadership of hired professional marketer.

Thus, basic differences exist between Savour Stratford and SAVOUR Muskoka in place branding practices, which are rooted in the organizational structures and approaches (industry-oriented vs. self-sustaining livelihood) that have been adopted. The branding practices differ in their approaches to the creation of the culinary clusters. Savour Stratford, with more resources and a professional approach, has become one of few culinary places in Ontario that is used as an example of best practice in culinary place branding by the culinary tourism movement (OCTA). SAVOUR Muskoka has fewer resources, and is still striving to develop efficient and effective

methods for expanding its brand awareness. These differences between the Savour Stratford and SAVOUR Muskoka organizations are summarized in Table 34.

Table 34: Comparison of Organizational Approaches in the Process of Place Branding

Savour Stratford (industry-oriented approach)	SAVOUR Muskoka (self-sustaining livelihood approach)
<p><u>Strong leadership led by the unified marketing organization:</u> well developed place marketing/branding plan and separate branding budget</p> <p><u>Funding sources:</u> private and public funding sources (1.3 million operating budget per year)</p> <p><u>Strong partnership with governments & other organizations:</u> economic development office; city of Stratford; Ministry of Tourism; NGOs, creative arts associations; and others</p> <p><u>Ability to do market research and write marketing proposals</u></p>	<p><u>Lack of leadership:</u> currently, no general manager</p> <p><u>Fragmented among organizations in the region:</u> economic development office; DMO; new Muskoka 12 regional tourism development office; Creative Muskoka and SAVOUR Muskoka</p> <p><u>Lack of partnership</u> with the destination marketing organization and local government (District of Muskoka)</p> <p><u>No isolated marketing/branding plan and budget</u></p> <p><u>Lack of market research</u></p>

The comparisons based on the findings of the study support the contention that a destination marketing organization (DMO) emphasized on an industry-oriented approach is generally more effective and efficient than a slower-paced community-based approach. In ‘Destination Branding: Creating the Unique Destination Proposition’, a study about place branding, Morgan et al. (2010) created strategic decision-making frameworks for destination marketing organizations (DMOs) and national tourism organizations (NTOs) from a place brand management perspective. The emphasis of the frameworks in the industry-oriented approach is given to the challenges tourism place marketers facing in place branding practices (Lee, 2011). Savour Stratford, as a destination marketing organization for the region, supports as a good example of such an approach.

On the other hand, in ‘Tourism Branding: Communities in Action’ (Cai et al., 2009), tourism branding frameworks are conceptualized based on a local group (community) perspective. SAVOUR Muskoka exemplifies this model in its branding practice in the formation of the cluster. For example, Cai et al. (2009) argue that the community-based approach

elaborates the branding concepts from a sociological perspective by adopting ‘social exchange theory’. The community-based branding framework originated with the inward-looking idea of community ‘participation’ and ‘empowerment’ within a peer-group-directed community circle (Kotler et al., 1993). In SAVOUR Muskoka, ‘participation’ and ‘empowerment’ are important aspects of place branding practices because the organization strives to be self-sustaining and it also has been established to enhance its stakeholders’ livelihoods in accordance with the sustainability of the region’s natural environment.

However, Kotler et al. (1993: 73) argue that “[tourism place branding] in the community-based approach cannot address the real issues and provide comprehensive solutions for improving a community’s capability”. Kotler et al. (1993: 73) point out that [organizations] may lack the required resources to make the necessary level of investment and move forward the development. This comparative study, specifically the Muskoka case, provides evidence that this may, indeed, be a challenge in such a bottom-up organizational approach. The interviewed key informants in SAVOUR Muskoka frequently expressed their frustration with the fact that it has insufficient financial resources to make a strategic move; and thus, the progress is too slow. Consequently, as Kotler et al. point out, “it amounts to planning [the organization’s] future without paying attention to the reshaping [local] and global economy” (1993: 73).

Nevertheless, the local group-based approach of SAVOUR Muskoka, when viewed narrowly from a stakeholder’s perspective, draws particular attention to the complexity of the economic and environmental dimensions of place well-being, suggesting that a ‘one size fits all’ approach may not be appropriate. The livelihood approach has contributed to the slow progression of the SAVOUR Muskoka cluster. Even so, SAVOUR Muskoka’s livelihood approach is more democratic in that the organizational culture and communication process in

stakeholder collaboration have been established organically. This may be a positive attribute of the community-based livelihood approach that will change over time when sufficient financial and organizational resources can be put in place, which will improve the sustainability of the local groups' livelihoods in the long-run.

Adding together, Cai et al. (2009) argue that the conventional service branding techniques used in tourism place branding lead to supporting the 'status quo'. However, this appears to be an exaggeration because in Savour Stratford, the organizational leadership and approach used for culinary tourism branding is associated with a more comprehensive decision-making framework and a wide range of stakeholder involvement, encompassing the economic, cultural, and environmental well-being of the place as the findings of the study showed.

As such, Savour Stratford, with strong private and public sectors partnerships through funding programs, is positioning itself more adequately in its place branding practice to carry out the organizational objectives and achieve wider goals from both the industry's and community's perspectives (Lee, 2011). In Savour Stratford, the business-oriented marketing team believes that stakeholders should pay fees to be members. In other words, they invest to the organization's strategy, believe in what the organization is pursuing and take ownership over it. When asked, both the executive director and the program developer made the following comments that contradict the idea that an industry-oriented organizational approach tends to maintain.

Savour Stratford is not the case... most restaurants are owned by local people and we do not have a lot of big franchise restaurants. Most of the small business owners live in the community. So, it is huge community involvement. Most benefits are going directly to the community.... And you know what the whole story of food economy and culinary tourism is... it's all about supporting local food and local small businesses (Program developer, 2011).

In the beginning for any region it is important to gather potential partners and stakeholders and brain-storm about how we can become a culinary tourism place...you should know what you have in the region so that you can break to market...I think continuing that dialog [is important], just checking in, to make sure that we are creating culinary programs and tell the story to local business...
(Program developer, 2011)

In Savour Stratford and SAVOUR Muskoka, not surprisingly, all of the interviewed managers and owners or farmers, and artisans indicated that their primary expectation in becoming a member of the culinary cluster was to gain greater exposure for their own activities, and to imprint their own identity and image in the visitors' minds as part of the culinary place brand. Most individual operations in both case study sites, except for the large restaurants and resorts, have no marketing/branding budget, a situation that has already been reported in the literature as being a significant difficulty for small culinary operators (Hjalager and Richards, 2002).

Nevertheless, the comparative case study reveals that Savour Stratford and SAVOUR Muskoka do not simply rely on promotional tools, such as annual food events, to create their culinary identity and image. Savour Stratford used a clearly articulated branding strategy with a vision to create unique culinary products and programs in strong partnership with stakeholders and governments, and market them to its highly demanding residents and tourists. SAVOUR Muskoka created an annual food event as a promotional tool, and focused on self-sustaining its stakeholders' livelihoods by creating a culinary identity and image to attract locals and tourists. However, it possesses fewer financial and organizational resources to reach out efficiently and effectively.

7.2.2. Marketing Media

To create a culinary identity and image in the mind of both residents and visitors, it is important to communicate with them by using marketing media effectively and efficiently. This section compares the two cases in this regard.

I am very much in control... if I have a vision, I am quite sure about that vision. I have done a lot of scientific analyses in my study and research. I have a lot of experience in advertizing and communication and worked for Air Canada and was responsible for marketing in Canadian, European and Asian markets and other advertizing agencies for years and years. I am very familiar with market research and focus groups, and what works and what does not. And I am able to take all of that information and knowledge so that I can create something and share it with the half-dozen people in the organization to get their feedback and then, finally, I fine-tune it. I am a sensitive and visionary-thinking personality that gives me a holistic understanding of marketing and branding (Executive marketer, 2011).

In Savour Stratford, the executive marketing director creates its official website based upon the organization's vision and strategy. The key informant stated that most people use internet nowadays and most tourism organizations use websites to market and brand their products (Executive marketer, 2011). Thus, as it is the essence of the creative process, having artistic skills and knowledge are competitive advantages in developing an appealing website as marketing and branding tool in a service-based economy such as culinary tourism. In Savour Stratford, 20 percent of the operating budget was used to create the website in the first year, 2007. In 2010, it was about 75 percent. The marketing team learned that creating an appealing website is a very important, efficient and effective approach to promotion (Executive marketer, 2011).

By monitoring the traffic of the website, the marketing team can find what products attract visitors most and why visitors like some particular products. Thus, the organization is able to make a strategy concerning where to invest more or less and how to improve the official website (Executive marketer, 2011). Savour Stratford also uses direct mail marketing and

promotion and the culinary brand is also advertized on CBC, CTV, The Global & Mail, and The New York Times (Table 35) (Executive marketer, 2011). Notably, Facebook, Youtube and Twitter have become important means of marketing media because they are electronic versions of ‘word of mouth’ (“*interesting... all of the research I read stated that regardless of how much advertizing you do, it’s still ‘word of mouth’*”) (Executive marketer, 2011). As a result of the strong branding focus, the number of visitors increased substantially over three years: in 2007, the marketing organization started with about 300,000 visitors, but at the end of 2011, it is anticipated to have over one million annual visitors (Executive marketer; and Program developer, 2011).

Table 35: Comparison of Marketing Media used to Create Culinary Brands

Savour Stratford	SAVOUR Muskoka
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct mail marketing; website; advertisement on CBC, CTV, The Global & Mail, and The New York Times • Social media as an electric version of ‘word-of-mouth’: Facebook, YouTube, Blogs and Twitter • 20 percent of marketing budget used to create the website in the first year of 2007; in 2010, about 75 percent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seasonal magazines; website • Word-of-Mouth • Social media: Facebook, YouTube and Twitter • No designated marketing budget • Participation in various food events with the logo of SAVOUR Muskoka to increase awareness of its brand

By contrast, in SAVOUR Muskoka the administrative staff created and manages the official website. In addition, SAVOUR Muskoka has no particular branding strategy, but it uses its own branding technique focused on the sustainability of members’ livelihoods. Table 35 compares marketing media used to create the culinary brands. The culinary brand is disseminated among and by SAVOUR Muskoka members who are strongly tied together by common interests. For the organization, the most difficult situation is the geographical nature of Muskoka that is less favourable to the diversification of agriculture and also for branding practice (i.e., products/programs development is a part of branding). Muskoka, itself, means different things to

different people and the dispersed settlement pattern creates difficulties for the organization. In this situation, the ‘word-of-mouth’ technique that is used wisely by the organization can be a good strategy in its branding practice, especially given its limited financial resources. Table 36 details the comparison of public/private partnership and funding programs.

Table 36: Comparison of Public/Private Partnership & Funding Programs

Savour Stratford	SAVOUR Muskoka
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong partnership with local and provincial governments through financial support (city of Stratford; Ministry of Tourism) • Funding programs: 1.3 million operating budget per year (\$80,000 - 90,000 used for marketing/branding): the city of Stratford fund, the destination marketing fund (3% of tax included in visitors’ accommodation fees), matching fund for marketing proposals (Ministry of Tourism & OMAFRA) • Membership fees (253 members) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of strong partnership with local government (District of Muskoka and DMO) • Depends on insufficient public funding: Ontario Trillium Foundation, Industry Canada, FedNor and Muskoka Community Development • Membership fees (143 members)

SAVOUR Muskoka relies heavily on ‘word-of-mouth’ technique as a major marketing/branding tool and relies heavily on its stakeholders to get the word out. For paper advertizing, the organization uses seasonal magazines that are distributed in the Toronto and Muskoka areas. It also uses social media such as websites, Facebook, YouTube and Twitter (Administrative staff, 2011).

We use our website as a major marketing tool, and SAVOUR Muskoka has marketing plans for attending as many different events to present our culinary products...we attend a lot of events to market SAVOUR Muskoka, but we have no isolated marketing budget. Muskoka Tourism is a destination marketing organization for the region, but it has a different focus... so our administrative staff does marketing for SAVOUR Muskoka...I think that [in this regard] we are still in infancy (Executive chef, 2011).

Every one of our members is a marketer because they take the pride of our brand... if you have a product people believe in, it will market itself... we have nothing to hide... this is what we have... this is what we do...and we just bring

people together here in SAVOUR Muskoka... (Chair of the board of directors, 2011).

The board of directors and administrative staff hoped that SAVOUR Muskoka would be seen as one of the pillars of regional economic development in the future as the above citations imply. One of the informants stressed that, financially, the organization is not able to hire a general manager or professional marketer at the present time, but marketing is something that SAVOUR Muskoka should focus on in the future. In SAVOUR Muskoka, many devoted members of the organization are wholehearted behind and optimistic about the future of the culinary brand as the following statement exemplifies.

The creation of the brand took two years and five years to be recognized. I think it is about our pride... when we have the SAVOUR Muskoka weekend here, for example, I am very proud of having it here [in my work place]... it is bringing in business to [my work place], and it is also allowing me to speak to what I am passionate about. So, I think if the idea of having SAVOUR Muskoka is to die, I'll keep it alive here [in my work place] at least...I think positively for the future of SAVOUR Muskoka (Executive chef, 2011).

In summary, as the executive marketer in Savour Stratford stressed, *“the biggest problem in any business, whether it is a tourism industry or a company selling a tangible product, marketers do not usually focus on how to attract customers”* (Executive marketer, 2011). The informant pointed out that: *“you may have the best product in the world and people invest all of their money into creating that best product, but if you do not attract the world, how can all people ever find your product”* (Executive marketer, 2011). Therefore, it can be argued that it is a marketer's role to work with stakeholders and to present the vision to gain interest and investments from the local people; and actually, to market and position a place as possessing a year-round culinary product/program. To sustain such an identity and image of a culinary place brand, a strongly integrated branding process is required in the creation of a creative food economy and culinary cluster in place-based community development.

7.3. Stakeholder Collaboration

Stakeholder collaboration depends upon communication, which reflects leadership, coordination and information flows. This section compares Savour Stratford and SAVOUR Muskoka in these respects. The concepts of stakeholder and collaboration are frequently used to examine the process of networking and partnership activities among various stakeholders involved in place-based rural development. In tourism, the perspective is often taken that tourism is a fragmented set of activities and that collaboration should be emphasized in the development process. Thus, the concept of collaboration is a critical issue in the formation of a culinary cluster.

According to Jamal and Getz (1995), the basic idea of stakeholder collaboration in tourism development is to establish involvement from all those affected by the development process. Thus, stakeholders are those who are involved in the development process or who are impacted by it (i.e., a wide range of players is involved in the collaboration process, such as interconnected firms/service providers, host communities, governments at different scale and voluntary actors (NGOs). These groups should work together in varying roles so that each, as a partner, can contribute to the collaboration process.

Although it is a common concern, it is also frequently argued that there is insufficient stakeholder collaboration in tourism development. Reid (2003) argues that tourism development in rural communities is usually oriented towards economic growth. Thus, the emphasis has been on market supply and demand, and has focused almost exclusively on assisting the tourism industry to fulfill tourists' desires for experiences rather than empowering local residents. From the latter perspective, stakeholder collaboration can be seen as a process of empowering local groups by providing them with opportunities to participate in development.

However, the distinction between the two is not clear-cut. For instance, both in Savour Stratford and SAVOUR Muskoka, the concept of stakeholder collaboration is understood as being fundamental to their operations because the clusters are established based upon strong partnerships among groups of local representatives and associations. Stakeholder collaboration exists for local groups that are empowered whether the emphasis is on an industry-oriented approach or a self-sustaining livelihood approach as seen in Table 37. Savour Stratford’s organizational approach is a mixture of top-down and bottom-up approaches and it seems to be more effective and efficient in the process of stakeholder collaboration as the marketing organization has the capacity to lead the various stakeholders involved in the development process.

Table 37: Comparison of the Process of Stakeholder Collaboration

	Savour Stratford (mixture of top-down and bottom-up)	SAVOUR Muskoka (bottom-up)
Stakeholder collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Much greater partnership & collaboration: marketing organization with well-established institutional and organizational structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong organizational commitment among members, particularly between chefs and farmers
Board of Directors & Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board of Directors: the City of Stratford’s deputy mayor, a representative of the Ministry of Tourism (does not have a vote), the GM of Stratford Summer Music Festival, the GM of the Shakespeare Festival, the GM of the City Centre Committee (Business Development Association), a representative of restaurants, a representative of producers, a representative of B&B, the Chamber of Commerce, two business consultants, a representative of retail sector, and a representative of each of the hotel and motel associations • 253 stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 board members and 4 executive members: chair, vice chair, treasurer, secretary, and two administrative staff • Stakeholders: 4 major local groups (farmers; chefs; artisans; restaurants/caters; and retailers) • 143 stakeholders

Conversely, Muskoka's dispersed settlement pattern challenges SAVOUR Muskoka's organizational capabilities. Regardless, lack of partnerships with the District Municipality of Muskoka and Muskoka Tourism (DMO) are of more serious concern in the collaboration process. It would seem to be important for SAVOUR Muskoka to build strong partnerships and collaboration with the economic development office of the District of Muskoka and Muskoka Tourism (DMO). This will also likely increase networking and knowledge-sharing with other development organizations in the region organizations (Shyllit and Spencer, 2011). By doing so, SAVOUR Muskoka can benefit from increased connectivity with municipalities, other entrepreneurs and other organizations (Shyllit and Spencer, 2011), which will allow it to have a strong institutional and organizational structure. In this way district economic development officers and representatives from region's various associations can embrace (Shyllit and Spencer, 2011) the SAVOUR Muskoka organization. SAVOUR Muskoka should work closely with the economic development office in the District of Muskoka and Muskoka Tourism (DMO) to get support for its endeavors. In this way, a strong partnership and collaboration with a wider range of stakeholders may be put in place as is the case of Savour Stratford.

Table 37 identifies the wide range of stakeholders that are involved in the Savour Stratford culinary cluster whereas in SAVOUR Muskoka the stakeholders are restricted to 4 local groups of farmers, chefs, restaurants and artisans with no direct public sector involvement. In addition, although SAVOUR Muskoka depends greatly on membership fees, the organization is likely failing to attract possible members to join the cluster. Currently, only 143 members are involved in the SAVOUR Muskoka cluster while 253 members are involved in the Savour Stratford cluster. Thus, Stratford is in a better position to encourage wider stakeholder collaboration.

7.4. Communication and Information Flows

Communication clearly reflects leadership, coordination and information flows in stakeholder collaboration in the formation of a culinary cluster. Communication and connectivity is recognized as being vital to the formation of a culinary cluster in rural community development.

As the above comparisons reveal, the great strength of Savour Stratford is the organizational structure that is focused on diversification/specialization of production and consumption nexus in the creation of the cluster. The Savour Stratford culinary cluster, which is run by the marketing organization (Stratford Tourism Alliance) for the region, provides a competitive advantage for the region's creative food economy and culinary tourism because it emphasizes and involves partnering with the well-developed cultural sector in the region (the major supporting asset), which is already strong. This means that the marketing team has made efforts to bring together a wide variety of stakeholders in its process of communication and information flows.

The board of directors combines the region's business representatives as well as two local and provincial government officials. Regarding the role of the marketing organization in stakeholder collaboration, it has a well-developed communication strategy, partnering with the members of the culinary cluster in sub-committees: farmers and chefs who are seen as speaking different languages (Program developer 2011), and also with for the entire membership (e.g., annual local food summit). Table 38 details the comparison of the communications strategy and information flows of Savour Stratford and SAVOUR Muskoka.

Table 38: Comparison of the Communications Strategy and Information Flows

Savour Stratford	SAVOUR Muskoka
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual local food summit • Training program for chefs and farmers sub-committee • Press release • Monthly newsletter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A variety of workshop series • Chefs & farmers sub-committee • Press release • Monthly newsletter

In Savour Stratford, most communications have made though email correspondence. However, it also provides an open door policy. Thus, if members have concerns and issues and need assistance in marketing, program/product development and/or business development, the marketing team works with them to assist and to develop their culinary products/programs. Usually, the organization communicates with members once a month with a member newsletter. In addition, the marketing team is frequently invited to members’ functions and meetings (Executive marketer, 2011).

Further, each year in the off-season (in February or March), Savour Stratford holds a local food summit and invites farmers, restaurateurs, retailers, producers and city mayors, city counselors and others to a one-day culinary tourism forum (Executive marketer; and Program developer, 2011). The summit has become an important communication tool for sharing accumulated knowledge and information with the members of Savour Stratford, as well as with the general public interested in the formation of a culinary cluster. The forum’s approach is used to educate members and the general public, to communicate the organization’s goals and strategy with the community and to bring more people into the culinary cluster (Executive marketer; and Program developer, 2011).

In particular, the summit provides networking opportunities between farmers and restaurateurs, helping them to meet one another and learn about their businesses. Many chefs

and restaurant owners do not know the local farmers and/or do not know what kinds of products are available from the local farms (Executive marketer; and Program developer, 2011). As it is the product of the marketing organization, the forum is focused on particular workshops that provide marketing knowledge and know-how (i.e., how members can invite travel and food writers to their operations so that they can write about their products; how to use the internet effectively to sell and distribute products; how to sell products grown on the farms; and what kinds of culinary experiences need to be created for tours) (Executive marketer; and Program developer, 2011).

Similarly, as the statement below from the interviewed executive chef expresses, there is no doubt that collaboration between SAVOUR Muskoka stakeholders is very strong as the organization is made up by 4 local culinary- related groups to support their livelihoods. The organization helps the local food economy by keeping as much as possible within the community (e.g., direct selling between farmers and local chefs). In this process, 90 percent of communications are made through email correspondence.

Three things: unavailability of products, inconsistency of products and getting products in time... you have to do your best. We always adapt our menus to what's available... and [that is why] collaboration and partnership is a big part with farmers (Executive chef, 2011).

However, SAVOUR Muskoka also has other communication strategies to meet the stakeholders' needs, in particular holding various workshop series. Nevertheless, no workshops are provided in the busy summer season because farmers and chefs are too busy (Chair of the board of directors; Executive chef; Administrative staff, 2011). Some of the workshops are offered in the spring and many more workshops are offered in the off-season. Garlic growing, maple syrup making, mushroom growing, and canning and preserving are examples of such workshops and anyone in the region who would like to get skills to grow these agricultural

products can attend such workshops (Chair of the board of directors; Executive chef; Administrative staff, 2011; and SAVOUR Muskoka official website, 2011).

SAVOUR Muskoka is a membership based organization; and thus, members share their skills and knowledge by actively participating in the workshop series to meet the organization's ultimate goal of promoting and sustaining their livelihoods. In SAVOUR Muskoka, when members have issues and concerns regarding partnership, it is put onto the board agenda (Chair of the board of directors, 2011). Members can contact the office through emails and by phone. They are also welcome to attend the board meetings. General information is also shared with members through a monthly newsletter and/or press releases (Chair of the board of directors, 2011; and SAVOUR Muskoka official website, 2011).

In SAVOUR Muskoka, the main funding is generated by its membership and the local groups are promoted as major players of the organization. The great strength of such a bottom-up approach in communication and information flows is that it can emphasize the strong commitment of collaborative organizational culture. This is precisely what SAVOUR Muskoka is all about and how the organization hopes to build a self-sustaining local food economy (Executive chef; Chair of the board of directors; and Administrative staff, 2011). However, the organization is in a transition period and, at the time of research, it was being run temporarily by one full-time and one part-time administrative staff since the general manager had left for another regional tourism organization.

7.5. Major Challenges

The board of directors has sophisticated customers. Thus, the marketing/branding strategy has to be sophisticated... you are not promoting a water park for children or family, but you are promoting for well-educated people who have high income and they can be very critical and, sometimes, even cynical with their experience. And the board and we have to understand that (Executive marketer, 2011).

As a result of the different organizational approaches taken, Savour Stratford and SAVOUR Muskoka have somewhat dissimilar challenges in the formation of the clusters. This section compares major challenges between the two cases.

In Savour Stratford, according to the informants, the marketing team makes an effort to visit the culinary community often to speak to the business partners and members to ensure that the organization is not neglecting any opportunities, to check if it is overlooking anything or if the partners may have a unique idea that the organization is not yet implementing (Program developer, 2011). In the beginning, the organization found that it was not an easy task to engage partners as the citation below indicates.

Regardless of whether you are farmers or business owners, most people are not visionaries... people need examples... people need to touch, see and hear something that is real... once they see something that is real, it becomes a model for them, and then they will realize that's what you do and how you do (Executive marketer, 2011).

Many of partners did not really understand the goal and strategy for developing a culinary program in the region (Program developer, 2011). For instance, collaboration with the B&B sector was challenging and, unlike in SAVOUR Muskoka, it is a big part of the culinary products/programs. According to the executive marketer, most B&B operators have run their business long enough and they are now in retirement. Many of them have not become involved in the culinary cluster. Also, this group has a significantly less interest in the creation of a website, which is the most important marketing/branding communication tool for the organization. Moreover, their businesses rely exclusively on the busy season only (from June to September) (Executive marketer, 2011). This means that they do not have the year-round products available and, thus, they do not have year-round tourists. This is a significant challenge for the organization in the development of culinary tourism products/programs. The key

informant noted, for example, that these businesses are closed during the Christmas season. Hence, Savour Stratford has fewer products available then (Executive marketer, 2011). However, at the present time, the organization has no plan to improve this problematic situation. Perhaps, it cannot be done by the organization alone because the problem is associated with the demographic characteristics of the B&B sector. Simply, the organization hopes that the B&B operators will stay longer and/or younger operators will enter the business so that Savour Stratford can learn about them and create new products/programs with them as partners.

Another challenge the marketing team is facing is a time restriction. Many members of Savour Stratford expect to have one-on-one approach (Program developer, 2011). In Savour Stratford it has been a challenge to engage members, specifically farmers and chefs, as they do not have the same language. Thus, the organization developed a resource guide for chefs and farmers as an organizational strategy to educate them on how to communicate with each other (Program developer, 2011). In line with this discussion, it is important to note that SAVOUR Muskoka also has formed a sub-committee particularly for chefs and farmers while other members have no activities of this type. This may reflect power relationship, which inevitably exist between the two groups in both organizations, and affect the communication process between these groups.

In addition to the time restriction, informants stressed the lack of financial resources as a challenge. The organization does not have unlimited budget and it is a not-for-profit, government-funded organization. Nevertheless, the marketing team is positive regarding the future of Savour Stratford. Savour Stratford is one of only a few early adopters, which is leading Ontario's creative food economy and culinary tourism movement. The organization has members who lead, set the example and show others how it can be done. Thus, Savour Stratford can be a

good example of a culinary cluster that other OCTA member regions can learn from: it has distinctive organizational and institutional infrastructure so that it can offer its knowledge and know-how to help and coach, and that others could replicate.

In contrast, SAVOUR Muskoka takes a bottom-up organizational approach. It is complementary to other things that are happening in Muskoka rather than a central part of them. The organization is facing the significant challenge that farmers have competitors at the farmers' markets. The products selling at the 6 farmers' markets across the Muskoka region are not all locally-grown (Chair of the board of directors; Administrative staff; and Executive chef, 2011). Because SAVOUR Muskoka does not have enough growers or a variety of products growing in Muskoka, it is difficult for SAVOUR Muskoka not to let non-members into the farmers' markets and these people may sell products grown elsewhere (Chair of the board of directors; and Executive chef, 2011). Many SAVOUR Muskoka member farmers see this competition as a big threat (Administrative staff, 2011). Because of this situation, the administrative staff receives phone calls on a daily base from the member farmers regarding their concerns about the competition. This challenge is associated with the geographical nature of Muskoka, as reflected in its limited agricultural resource base.

Another challenge to the organization is that the corporate hotel chain restaurants within the region are reluctant to use locally grown products because they are concerned with quality and health issues in serving on their customers (Chair of the board of directors, 2011). This challenge puts the chefs in a difficult situation who are willing to use local ingredients in their menu planning. It also increases their workload, which is already intense (Chair of the board of directors, 2011). For example, the informants noted that chefs should go to corporate offices and explain why they want to buy local agricultural products for their menu planning. Obviously, this

requires more work by the chefs. The corporate offices want to see the track ‘from seed to plate’ because of the health issues and consistent quality in serving their customers. Thus, chefs should make follow-ups by going to the track and making sure everything is fine (Chair of the board of directors, 2011).

Above all, the biggest challenge for SAVOUR Muskoka is to communicate how to get and/or deliver the products at the time needed by each individual establishment (just-in-time delivery system). This logistical problem is associated with attributes of the region. Muskoka is spread out across a large geographical area and this is challenging the organization seriously (Chair of the board of directors; Executive chef, 2011). According to all of the interviewed informants, this is a major challenge where the food items come from different farmers. The resolution for this problem maybe for the organization to have a middle-man who is interested in taking on the role of collecting and delivering of the agricultural products as the informants pointed out (Chair of the board of directors; Executive chef, 2011). However, it is not an easy task, for it is almost impossible and economically unsustainable to put numerous different items into one vehicle and to deliver them within a day to the member establishments spread out all over the region (Chair of the board of directors; and Executive chef, 2011).

According to the chair of the board of directors, when SAVOUR Muskoka first started to develop culinary tourism as part of the creative food economy, the community looked at it as the provision of catering services. Although the organization has such considerable disadvantages, it is relatively well-positioned in the culinary tourism marketplace (Shyllit and Spencer, 2011). SAVOUR Muskoka is contributing to sustaining its members’ livelihoods, but it is very difficult to create strategic direction to move forward the organization and its commitments. Muskoka’s

geographic nature significantly challenges and limits the organizational availability of SAVOUR Muskoka (Shyllit and Spencer, 2011).

In summary, the comparative study of the two culinary clusters (Savour Stratford and SAVOUR Muskoka) has been presented in terms of the interrelated themes of the conceptual model created for the study (culinary products/programs development and place branding practices), and it is discussed based on the comparisons made between the two cases and identified the issues of stakeholder collaboration in relation to organizational leadership and communication strategies. As the comparative study has demonstrated, Savour Stratford and SAVOUR Muskoka are at different stages of the creative food economy development as they have adopted different organizational approaches in the creation of the culinary clusters. Consequently, they are facing different opportunities and challenges in the formation of the culinary clusters. To conclude the comparative study, the following section will discuss the findings of the research in terms of its empirical and conceptual implications.

7.6. Discussion

7.6.1. Empirical Implications

Hjalager and Richards (2002) argue that individual culinary providers often have marked marketing and branding difficulties. Thus, the development of a creative food economy production and consumption nexus can be helpful to them. This is certainly the case both in Savour Stratford and SAVOUR Muskoka (i.e., all of the interviewees said that the primary reason for being a member of these organizations is to market their products). Many of culinary related small businesses do not have sufficient financial, organizational, and human resources to undertake these tasks (Hjalager and Richards, 2002). Thus, the rationale for the development of such clusters is related to local resource pooling, economies of scale, and sharing information and marketing intelligence among members within the clusters (Hjalager and Richards, 2002).

In the absence of a formal cluster organization, many firms and service providers in culinary tourism are isolated small in scale, and have little knowledge of place marketing, and have significant constraints in budgeting for branding (Hjalager and Richards, 2002). There may also be weaknesses in communications skills due to poor coordination resulting from lack of an institutional and organizational infrastructure (Jones and Jenkins, 2002).

Thus, in the formation of culinary clusters, there is a need for stakeholder collaboration among a wide range of players. Also, organizations must have organizational capabilities (leadership) and should work with what the places have to offer (core, leading and supporting assets). The very bottom line is that culinary organizations must have a foundation (core, leading and supporting assets) that is real on which they can build a taste of a place. While this may involve substantial challenges where the assets are limited, the result should be a place-specific, authentic product. The coordinating organization will need to work with local groups and individuals to make sure that the culinary products/programs are locally-based and authentic.

In Savour Stratford, a higher level of provincial and local governments is directly involved in the initiative by sitting on the board of directors of the marketing organization, and by providing significant financial supports. The organizational structure of Savour Stratford is more centralized, but with a wide range of stakeholders involved in the development in comparison to SAVOUR Muskoka. Therefore, the challenges in stakeholder collaboration are much greater in Savour Stratford. Community participation is also much greater in Savour Stratford: many more residents have acquired economic benefits through participation in various types of culinary-related small-scale businesses within the cluster.

However, SAVOUR Muskoka is made up of and run by a more narrowly-defined range of stakeholders (chefs, farmers, artisans and restaurants) to self-sustain the members' livelihoods

and the involvement and support of local and provincial governments is more limited. This approach to stakeholder collaboration and partnership has put SAVOUR Muskoka in a difficult situation and has led to the creation of insufficient organizational and institutional infrastructure. Nevertheless, positive impacts on sustaining its members' livelihoods are observed at the current 'Pleasantly Surprised' stage. Thus, SAVOUR Muskoka still has the potential to further stimulate culinary movement. The initiatives of SAVOUR Muskoka are aimed at promoting the potential of regional niche culinary tourism development (Shyllit and Spencer, 2011). In essence, the purpose of the clustering is to promote the direct selling, marketing and consumption of local agricultural products in the tourism marketplace (Telfer, 2000, 2001) in the belief that this will better sustain members' livelihoods. The aim is to produce high quality local culinary products through an innovation process, which can also promote the use of local agricultural products within the tourism industry (Telfer, 2000, 2001). As a result, this particular initiative promotes strong cooperation among a relatively small number of stakeholders to stimulate local connectivity – the clustering – from the agricultural producers to buyers (such as local chefs and artisans). More importantly, the aim of such partnership is to encourage the development of employment opportunities and income generation among these particular groups.

Overall, there are strengths and weaknesses observed in both the Savour Stratford and SAVOUR Muskoka clusters. Both clusters offer significant benefits in supporting responsible farming in harnessing high-quality local culinary products, and in conserving cultural heritage and natural landscape as place brands - the creative and environmentally friendly taste of a place as a whole (sense of place). Thus, the use of high quality local culinary products greatly promotes the places' identity and image as a brand (Jones and Jenkins, 2002).

Major weaknesses of the clusters, however, are weaknesses in organizational and institutional infrastructure, particularly in the case of SAVOUR Muskoka: stakeholders are confined to 4 local groups in SAVOUR Muskoka. Thus, the relationship between interconnected firms, service providers and other organizations, specifically public and private partnerships, is not fully developed: the weak channels of connectivity (communication and information flows) among them result from the lack of institutional and organizational infrastructure. Consequently, the organizational strategic objectives are not fully reflected in the organizational approach (Jones and Jenkins, 2002). For instance, SAVOUR Muskoka's strategic plan is compromised because it is focused exclusively on fundraising activities by participants at culinary related events in the Muskoka region and elsewhere in Ontario. To this point, SAVOUR Muskoka has less supportive geographical and factor conditions (the leading asset of agricultural sector) to develop a culinary place although it has substantial supporting assets (well-developed tourism infrastructure, the compelling beauty of the natural environment). Therefore, a much stronger institutional and organizational approach is required (Jones and Jenkins, 2002) to create the greater stakeholder collaboration to meet members' livelihood desires and also the greater goals of economic, cultural and environmental well-being of the place.

Stratford Perth County has certainly become a culinary place. As the key informants insisted, many of the members may see positive benefits from developing culinary tourism as it contributes many economic opportunities to the community. It also likely has high positive impacts on the overall local economy and standard of living of the place. Thus, locals may also be happy to see visitors coming to the region and, obviously, business owners are pleased about this (Program developer, 2011). Nevertheless, there are many people who are not involved in tourism-related businesses and who work at factories in lower paying jobs, for manufacturing is

another leading sector of the region's economy. Their voices are not heard in Savour Stratford although it has well-built institutional and organizational infrastructure as part of the tourism marketing organization for the entire region.

7.6.2. Conceptual Implications

The innermost part is an outcome of the formation of a culinary cluster as indicated in the conceptual model. It is the result of the creative process in the production and consumption of local food. The model created for the study is focused on the transformation of a *terroir* into a creative and environmentally friendly taste of a place through improving the attractiveness of a place, and changing tourism patterns to achieve synergy between the environment, particularly food production and associated landscapes, and tourism. Tourism is seen as being a leading sector in this process, eventually contributing to the global green movement.

The four facilitators identified in the model ('environmentally friendly movement'; 'leadership'; 'stakeholder collaboration'; and 'communication and information flows') are the innovation facilitation process that must be undergone to support the transformation of a *terroir* into a taste of a place. The four interdependent determinants ('factor conditions'; 'demand conditions'; 'market structure'; and 'related and supporting industries') derived from Porter (1990) are not only inherited but also are created by innovative entrepreneurial processes. This has been shown in both case studies. Even in the case of SAVOUR Muskoka, which has less favourable factor conditions (leading asset), the culinary cluster has been created although it apparently takes a longer process. This is not surprising, for it takes time to establish favourable factor conditions where their existence is less obvious. Governments, as an important facilitator, have significant roles to play as seen in the formation of private and public sector partnerships in both cases. For instance, Ontario's Ministry of Tourism is actively leading the culinary

movement in the province, participating in an indirect manner through the establishment of various funding programs.

As the comparative study illustrates, culinary clusters can be developed in places where geographical concentrations of a number of inter-connected firms and service providers can be established that offer local culinary products/programs. The conceptual model was created through the modification of Porter (1990) and its application have been applied directly to a service sector, particularly tourism and, indeed, to the clear links between primary sector (agriculture) and service sector (tourism). Therefore, it is innovative and creative in this respect.

The transformation of a *terroir* into a taste of a place by forming a cluster through place branding is based upon the identification of the strengths of a place (*terroir*), the inventory of the culinary-related core resources, and the leading and supporting assets (e.g., hard factors and soft factors). Since these will be different from place to place, one should expect different outcomes; and, as the comparative case studies have demonstrated through their similarities and differences, this is the case. Development of a cluster will depend upon the thematic mapping of all culinary-related resources, based on local things and knowledge in order to use them to create a uniquely appealing identity and image (Croce and Perri, 2010). In this way, a synergistic relationship can be established between agriculture and tourism through the creative process - entrepreneurial activities that build upon strengths and assets.

Furthermore, the 'interdependent determinants' identified in the model should all be present for the creation of a culinary cluster. Thus, for example, it is necessary to have agricultural products within reach of an interested market of sufficient size to be successful. If there is absence of either of these, it is difficult to establish a culinary cluster. These are necessary, but not sufficient, for it is also necessary to have a facilitating organization that can

use communication strategies to establish collaboration and partnerships and, eventually, to market and brand the *terroir*. This is certainly a creative process.

The conceptual model was developed primarily from an assessment of relevant literature as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 and has a variety of roles, as demonstrated in this thesis. First, it was used to guide the collection of information in the field investigations. Second, it was used to structure the qualitative analyses in each case study. Third, although, to avoid repetition, the details of each of the components were not re-iterated, it formed the basis of the comparison that was presented in the preceding section where it was also used as an evaluative tool to suggest what is working well and less well in the study clusters. Thus, it can also assist prescriptively by suggesting what elements require further attention to strengthen the performance of the clusters.

Upon the elaboration of the conceptual model, detailed diagrams of a '*terroir*' (as seen in Figures 36 and 37) were created and discussed in Chapter 3 (e.g., '*Terroir* as Production and Consumption Nexus', and 'Creation of Culinary Place Identity and Image'). They have been augmented to portray the constituents of a successful creative food economy by creating a culinary cluster.

Figure 36: *Terroir* as Production and Consumption Nexus

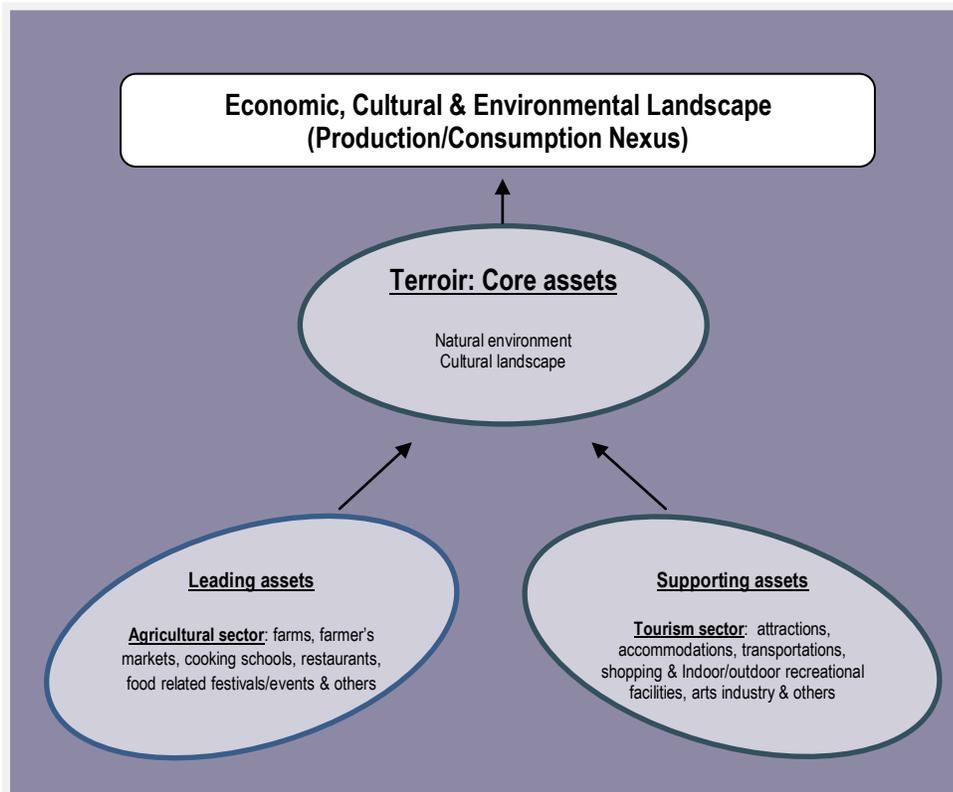
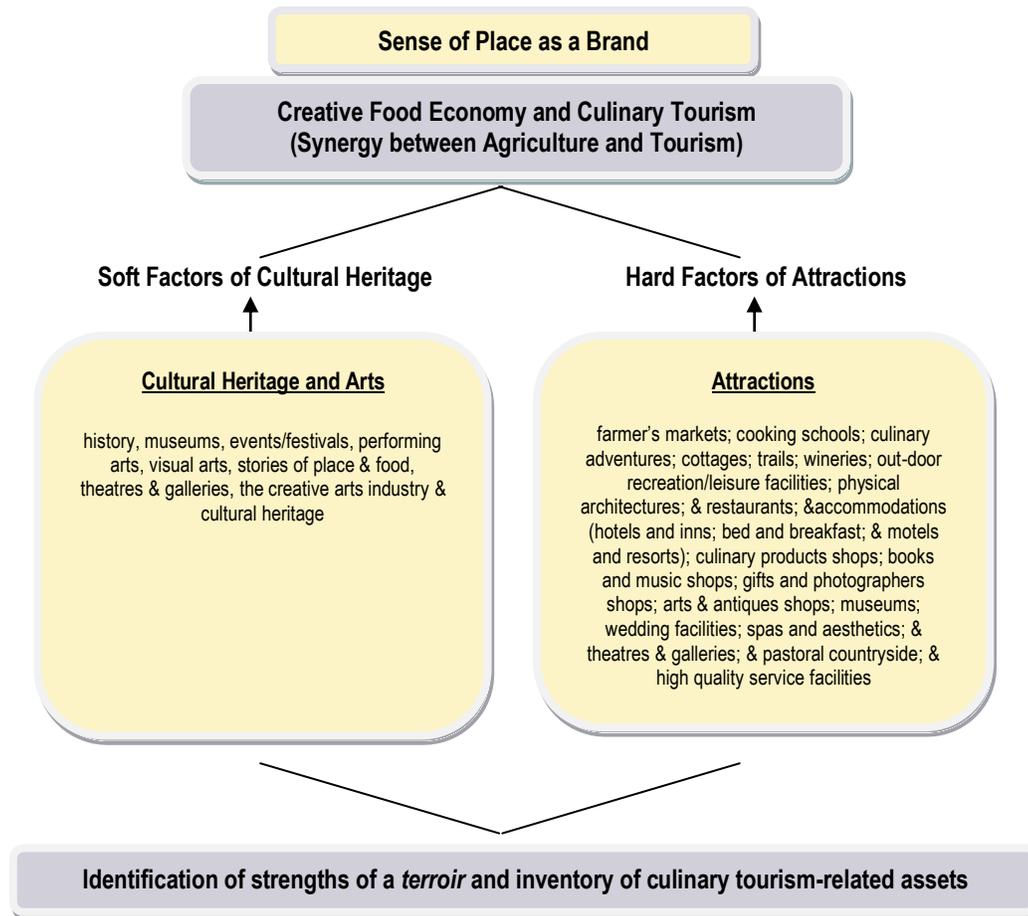


Figure 37: Creation of Culinary Place Identity & Image



The establishment of a marketing and branding strategy in support of a creative food economy does not necessarily require direct investment in agriculture or tourism. For example, Stratford has already had both of these. In the case of Savour Stratford, a well-defined small place (*terroir*) has had a significant ‘comparative advantage’ (e.g., core, leading and supporting assets as illustrated in Figures 36 and 37) that is being converted into a ‘competitive advantage’ through place branding (Ritchie and Crouch, 2003; and Jackson and Murphy, 2006). Thus, place branding here is viewed as involving product development, institutional and organizational innovation, new forms of communication and partnership, and not merely creating a catchy slogan for promotion. Some of these things require financial support, but others are more about

novel ways of thinking, the essence of a creative process (the management process of marketing and branding).

The diversification and specialization of production to attracting new and/or different types of visitors should be part of a holistic marketing and branding strategy. Those attracted by Savour Stratford may not necessarily be passionate theatre-goers, but they may be interested in authentic cultural experiences, including local cuisine. However, Stratford is known for cultural place in the form of the performing arts and it is one of the most well-known arts communities in Canada. Consequently, the marketing organization is trying to diversify cultural production by adding the culinary cluster based upon the region's core and leading assets (agricultural and tourism) and supporting assets (cultural characteristics and creative industry) – the hard factors of the natural environment and soft factors of cultural landscape and performance as illustrated in Figures 36 and 37.

The study findings indicate that the diagrams created in accordance with the conceptual model are pertinent for rural communities interested in building competitive advantages through establishing culinary clusters. It is suggested that the creation of a culinary cluster requires a branding strategy to create synergistic relationships between agriculture and tourism (core and leading assets), as well as strong supporting assets (e.g., creative industry) based upon the economic, cultural and environmental well-being of a place. In this way, tourists, new residents and new investments may be attracted, leading to more sustainable economic outcomes. However, culinary clusters may not be successful in achieving the wider goals of the economic, cultural and environmental well-being of rural communities in the absence of a strategy to foster a wide range of collaboration and partnerships, particularly between various private and public sector representatives, as is the case in the SAVOUR Muskoka cluster.

The findings of the research suggest that although the conceptual model and the resulting conceptual framework were useful in guiding most elements of the research, including data/information collection and analysis and the case study comparison, it may be useful to reformulate the innovation process that is involved in the creation of a culinary cluster. This has been done and it has resulted in the diagram that is presented in Table 39.

Table 39: Development of a Culinary Cluster

<u>Inputs</u> →	<u>Facilitation</u> →	<u>Outputs I</u> →	<u>Outputs II</u> →	<u>Outcomes</u>
Agricultural sector Tourism sector	Environmentally friendly strategy Leadership Stakeholder collaboration Communication	Culinary tourism products Other tourism products	Development of a culinary cluster Place marketing and branding based on a creative food economy	Rural development Enhanced place identity

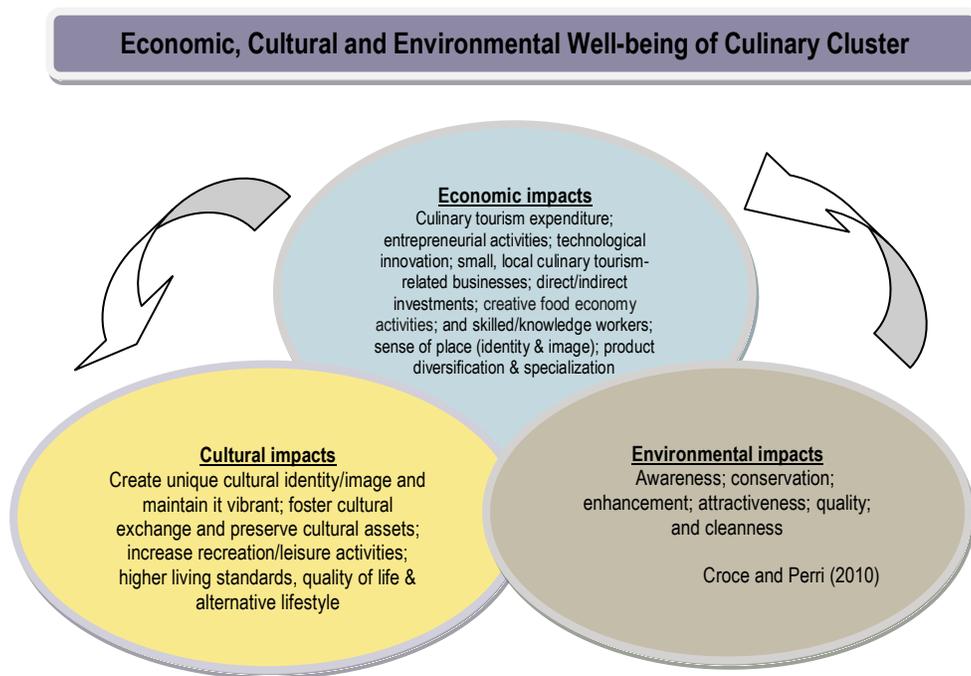
In summary, this chapter compared the two cases and discussed the findings of the comparative study based upon the empirical data/information obtained mainly through the in-depth interviews with the key informants from the two case sites (Savour Stratford and SAVOUR Muskoka). Practical implications have been discussed through consideration of how the interrelated themes identified in the conceptual model can be used in the formation of cultural clusters. Also, conceptual implications have been discussed based on the diagrams created in accordance with the model. The diagrams indicate what needs to be done to make a *terroir* into a culinary cluster to achieve the economic, cultural and environmental well-being of a tourism place.

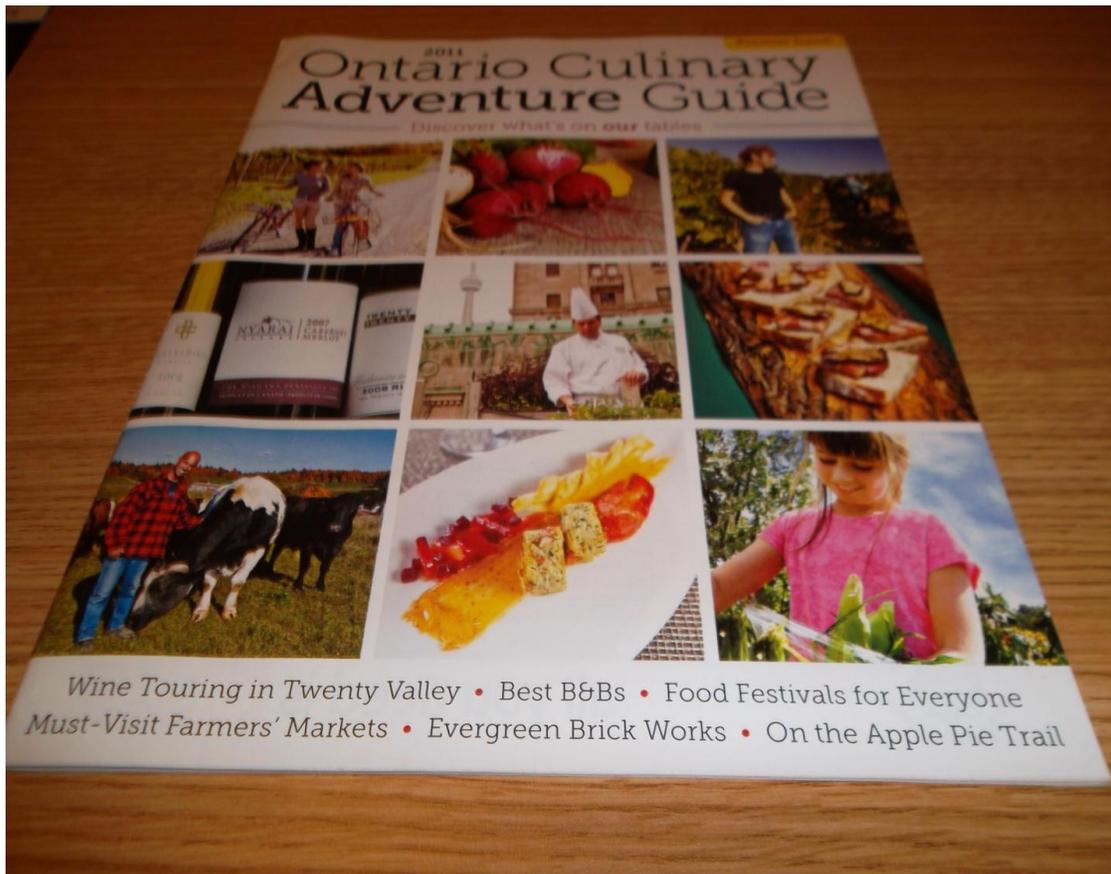
In particular, the discussion of empirical implications focused particularly on the interrelated themes of products/programs development and place branding practices. Details of

the branding strategies of the culinary organizations in the study sites, including their organizational leadership, and communications strategies and information flows were compared and discussed. Major challenges in the process of stakeholder collaboration were examined, and the strengths and weaknesses of the clusters were also identified.

Taken together both the empirical and conceptual implications, Figure 38 summarizes the above discussions in terms of a successfully created culinary cluster, success being indicated in achievement of the economic, cultural and environmental well-being of a place in place-based rural community development. The diagram represents the successful formation of a creative and environmentally friendly taste of a place in the context of place-based rural development.

Figure 38: Positive Impacts of Economic, Cultural & Environmental Well-being of Culinary Cluster





Source: photo taken by author (2011)

8.0. CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSIONS

This chapter reviews the goals and objectives that were established for this thesis in Chapter 1 and examines the extent to which they have been achieved. The research questions were addressed through the undertaking of a literature review, the creation of a conceptual model of factors influencing the creation of culinary clusters based on the model originally created by Porter (1990), and the use of the substantially modified model to guide the undertaking of a comparative case study of Savour Stratford and SAVOUR Muskoka. This final chapter makes concluding remarks on the conceptual model created for the study. It also restates the empirical and conceptual contributions. Future research needs and possibilities will also be indicated briefly.

8.1. Review of the Research Goals

The goal of this study was to examine the applicability of the conceptual model created for the study by applying to the selected case study sites (the formation of culinary clusters as part of a creative food economy in place-based development). To explore the research goal, four research objectives were identified in Chapter 1. These objectives were organized in a chronological order from the identification of relevant concepts and the creation of the conceptual model to the empirical component that applied the conceptual model to the selected study sites. This led to conclusions about the formation of the culinary clusters and the relevance of the model to understanding the creative process (innovation) that underpins them. Detailed research objectives were established as follows:

1. To provide a conceptual foundation for a culinary cluster as part of a creative food economy through place branding in the context of place-based rural development. This will be done by developing a conceptual model through modification of a model created by Porter (1990):

- a. A thorough review of academic literature both in economic geography and business/management were conducted, which indentified relevant concepts, leading to the construction of a conceptual model. The creation of the conceptual model is an important objective of the research. The definition of the relevant concepts, discussion of their relationships and their placement in a model is an important conceptual contribution of the study
2. To assess the applicability of the conceptual model to culinary clusters in selected study sites:
 - a. How do the interdependent determinants interact in the formation of a culinary cluster?
 - b. How do the facilitators of the creative process in the model support the development of a culinary cluster?
3. To describe the evolution of the creative food economy and culinary clusters in Savour Stratford and SAVOUR Muskoka; and to determine if different organizational approaches give rise to different outcomes:
 - a. How do the organizations in the selected study sites develop culinary products/programs as a culinary place brand in the creation of the clusters? (i.e., the specialization and diversification of production, as well as the inventory of the contents and scope of the culinary resources, including soft factors of cultural heritage and hard factors of natural environment)
 - b. How do the different organizational approaches implement place branding practices; what kinds of branding strategies and marketing media have been employed?
4. To evaluate critically the conceptual model in light of the findings of the study as a tool for place-based rural development by providing comparative study between the two cases:
 - a. What are the issues of stakeholder collaboration in relation to leadership, and communications and information flows?
 - b. What are the major challenges in the formation of the culinary clusters?

The first research objective, which is the conceptual component of the study, was achieved by defining relevant concepts and interrelated themes of a creative food economy and culinary clusters by critically reviewing culinary tourism, management and economic geography literatures. This review was undertaken to identify key concepts to create a model to depict the operation of culinary clusters. The conceptual model modified substantially to make it

applicable to culinary clusters as part of a creative food economy. The model consisted of four interdependent determinants and four facilitators, which support the innovation process that was deemed to be important in the development of culinary clusters. The model was developed and discussed in the context of the transformation of a *terrior* into a creative and environmentally friendly taste of a place through creative place branding process in place-based development. The model addresses the scope of culinary products/programs development through place branding: i.e., the hard factors of physical infrastructure and soft factors of cultural heritage; and the need for an environmentally friendly strategy, leadership, and communication and information flows in the process of stakeholder collaboration.

The model became the conceptual framework for the comparative case study of two culinary clusters in southern Ontario, and was used to guide information collection, analysis and the case study comparison. This demonstrated the utility of the model and assisted in the identification of the strengths, weaknesses and challenges that exist in the formation of a culinary cluster as a place brand. In these ways, the other three study objectives were met and the model was a major tool that guided the researcher in bridging the gap between conceptual and practical components of the study.

8.2. Contributions

This comparative study has made important contributions both empirically and conceptually by creating a conceptual model that addresses the conversion of a *terroir* into a creative and environmentally friendly taste of a place, leading to the development of diagrams that portray the attributes of a successful culinary cluster; and by assessing the applicability of the model through application to two cases in a comparative format, and by generating empirical information on the

case study sites. Thus, the following section will summarize the empirical and conceptual contributions of the thesis.

8.2.1. Empirical Contributions

A great deal of information has been generated on two somewhat different culinary clusters in Ontario, Canada. Practically, the study contributes to the anticipated innovations and advances of culinary clusters by providing a holistic approach to the phenomenon, thereby directing attention to items that need careful consideration if synergistic relationships are to be established between agriculture and tourism sectors through the development of culinary clusters as a part of a creative economy in place-based development.

In the face of the changing global economy, the government of Ontario has identified culinary tourism as a potential strategy for fostering rural economic development. As seen in the two cases, creation of the culinary clusters as part of the creative food economy is seen as being a positive force that offers economic and cultural development possibilities in the rural places. Although visitors have long enjoyed meals of local food in rural areas, the promotion and adoption of the culinary clusters as an alternative strategy for place-based development is a relatively new phenomenon, especially in Ontario, Canada. However, culinary movement based on creative food economy is not merely 'niche' in local and global markets. It has emerged as a vital aspect of local food movements through creative place branding process as is evident in the two cases that have been explored. The innovative entrepreneurial activities (e.g., diversification and specialization of production and consumption nexus) based on primary sector (agriculture) contribute to the formation of a creative food economy, much of which is related to service sector (tourism) as seen in both Savour Stratford and SAVOUR Muskoka. In this economic activity, place branding has become the essence of the creative process that is used to establish

place identity and image and to prompt the creation and/or expansion of new and additional economic and cultural places in rural communities.

In the development of a creative food economy, as many places have strong links to a high quality and artistic local environment, the experience of the cultural and artistic atmosphere of rural ambience has become important elements to both residents and visitors as knowledge-based economic globalization has promoted the leaders of many rural communities to become more conscious about their place identity and image, and the way they are perceived by visitors (Stolarick et al., 2010; and Knox and Mayer, 2009). In accordance with this trend, a 'sense of place' that reflects '*terroir*' has become a valuable item to be marketed to potential visitors as place characteristics (Lew et al., 2008). Such a place branding strategy through the development of culinary clusters depends heavily on promoting the soft factors of local traditions, arts and stories of places (Morgan et al, 2010), as well as the environment and the quality of life that are deeply-rooted in such localities.

In response to the process of economic globalization, those in many culinary tourism places have apprehended that the most effective way to be dynamic to compete effectively with other culinary related places is to produce high quality authentic products and services (Aylward and Glynn, 2006). Aylward and Glynn (2006) argue that this requires a collaborative approach and the formation of strategic alliances. In other words, this requires enhancement of supply chains through clustering, the improvement of infrastructure, the incorporation of marketing knowledge and know-how into decision-making to enhance the links between the primary and service sectors. 'Clustering' is being widely adopted in culinary cluster development (Hjalager and Richards, 2002) and it is increasingly understood that a fundamental determinant of competitive advantage in such an innovation process is the local environment although this may

be both dynamic and challenging to harness (Vanhove, 2005). Stakeholders can use and enhance their advantages by drawing upon the place's unique history and cultural and physical landscapes, in part through the development and promotion of a culinary cluster.

As the case studies have demonstrated, culinary clusters are fundamentally, but not exclusively, natural resource-based and, hence, culinary clusters are ideally and extensively connected to small-scale local supply chains, such as core and leading assets (agricultural and tourism sectors) and supporting assets (other related industries, particularly cultural and arts industry). There is a great deal of vertical integration within the clusters (Aylward and Glynn, 2006), such as between farmers, chefs, artisans, cooking schools, suppliers, food producers and farmers' markets. Also, horizontal integration occurs among a concentration of firms that provide somewhat similar products or services (e.g., 23 certified restaurants in Savour Stratford), as well as with interconnected firms that are part of the cultural industries. As well, research funding provided by national, provincial and local governments, other government inputs, and educational institutions can all help to support the formation of such clusters (Aylward and Glynn, 2006).

Accordingly, culinary cluster development occurs in places with a 'local milieu' that possesses a geographical concentration (spatial agglomeration) of local culinary related products and services produced by a clustered production of a number of interconnected firms and service providers. This transformation of a *terroir* into a taste of a place is based on the identification of the strengths of a place and the inventory of the culinary related assets (e.g., hard factors and soft factors) and innovative entrepreneurial activities that build on these assets. This involves taking stock of all culinary-related resources, based on local things and knowledge in order to create a uniquely appealing identity and image – a sense of place (Croce and Perri, 2010). In addition,

organizational leadership and shared decision-making among various stakeholders are important to the establishment of an operating environment that can promote such creative activities successfully in the pursuit of more balanced economic development. Thus, public and private sectors partnership should be considered as a fundamental element in place-based economic development.

8.2.2. *Conceptual Contributions*

A principle aim of the study was to provide a conceptual foundation for a culinary cluster as a part of the creative food economy. Thus, the definitions of the interrelated themes identified in the creation of the conceptual model are important conceptual contributions of the study. An extensive review and assessment of academic literature both in economic geography and business/management, was undertaken to identify the relevant concepts, leading to the construction of the conceptual model. This also involved analysis of the formation of the culinary clusters in the practical settings.

This study was focused on the concepts of a creative food economy, environmentally friendly culinary tourism and place branding in the formation of a culinary cluster in place-based development. These themes are obviously interrelated, but have not been explored together previously; and thus, this study has demonstrated and provided conceptual coherences for addressing these relationships. Indeed, these interlinked themes are represented in the interdependent determinants and facilitators that support the innovation process in the formation of a culinary cluster. In particular, the four facilitators specified in the model ('environmentally friendly movement', 'leadership', 'stakeholder collaboration' and 'communication and information flows') are the innovation process that must be undergone for the successful

transformation of a '*terroir*' into a creative and environmentally friendly tourism destination that provides the taste of a place.

The conceptual model can be and has been used to guide a situational analysis leading to the identification of a place's strengths and weaknesses as a culinary cluster. Based on the findings of the study, it can be argued that the model addresses a '*terroir*' - a place's unique identity, cultural landscape and natural environment (sense of place) - shaped by the places' economic, cultural and environmental situations, encompassing aspects of tangible and intangible assets (e.g., food, arts, local traditions, stories and the beauty of the landscape).

Therefore, conceptually, the outcomes of this study are an understanding of how culinary clusters can be established and evolve in different organizational approaches in place-based development. Also, the research findings fill a gap in the economic geography literature on the topics of place branding and clustering in the creative food economy perspective. The concept of stakeholder collaboration is frequently used to examine such network activities in place-based development, but has hitherto received only limited attention in the context of a creative food economy, which involves networking between primary sector (agriculture) and tertiary sector (tourism).

8.3. Recommendations for Future Research

This study was conducted with the two case study sites located in Ontario, Canada, both of which are well-developed tourism places. Thus, there is a possibility that the findings may not apply directly to other places, such as other countries with different circumstances (e.g., developed vs. developing countries). For example, it is likely that the role of governments may vary in different political systems.

However, future studies could be built upon the issues of stakeholder collaboration and partnership to understand in greater depth: i.e., how to better incorporate stakeholders' expectations into the decision-making process for the partnership and networking activities among stakeholders as it is fundamental in the creation of a culinary cluster in place-based economic development. It is important to understand the degree of satisfaction of members with such clusters, what influences their satisfaction, and why some potential members are not involved.

Therefore, future research could be developed by expending the findings of the study in accordance with some of the research opportunities discussed earlier in Chapter 4, such as a questionnaire survey of members of the organizations as well as in-depth interviews with government officials, particularly at the provincial level, to understand more deeply the importance of leadership. Also, this thesis has not addressed the question of demand. A series of complementary studies could be undertaken to address aspects of visitor characteristics and satisfactions. However, this is, arguably, at present the most common approach to the exploration of the culinary clusters as part of a creative food economy.

8.4. Concluding Remarks

In this thesis, culinary clusters are viewed as being a form of creative economy that is particularly suited to economic development in rural areas and small towns although not all such places have the same potential, and culinary clusters need not be restricted to such settings. For example, culinary clusters might be developed in coastal areas based in part on the availability of seafood or in cities drawing upon ethnic cuisines. However, in line with the research purpose, this thesis focused on the rural and small town context although it is believed that the conceptual model has a wider applicability.

The findings of the study suggest that the interdependent determinants and facilitators proposed in the conceptual model are relevant to the prevailing practices of culinary clusters in place-based economic development. It also implies that the model is sufficiently flexible to be applied to both marketing-oriented and self-sustaining livelihoods approaches that may exhibit different organizational leadership and strategies. It can also be applied successfully to guide research on places that possess different levels of core, leading and supporting assets (*terroir*) although the different situations may give rise to different outcomes as the study demonstrated.

The conceptual model was created with a focus on the transformation of a *terroir* into a creative and environmentally friendly taste of a place with an enhanced attractiveness and quality of life. The model can be usefully applied in a setting that provides both a collaborative and competitive environment to achieve a win-win situation among a large number of players involved in culinary clusters. In particular, the model can contribute to the promotion of the global green movement through the facilitation of positive outcomes. This contrasts with more pessimistic approach of the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) movement, which many businesses have followed reluctantly in response to social pressures. The conceptual model exemplifies an understanding that all players involved in the cluster should collaborate and work together to create and share in the mutual benefits that the innovation activities will provide.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: In-depth Interview Guide for Data/Information Collection & Analysis

Themes	Overall Research Questions	Informants & Others
Organizational Leadership (stakeholder collaboration/communication/information flows)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the organizational characteristics of the culinary clusters in the selected study sites; how do the clusters operate? (e.g., organizational culture and structure: top-down vs. bottom-up); and who are the stakeholders within the clusters? • What is the role of governments as well as local groups; are local groups promoted as an important player? • How is the process of stakeholder collaboration coordinated to overcome challenges; what kind of communication strategies is used among the various stakeholders involved in the formation of the clusters? 	SAVOUR Muskoka: <u>8 individuals</u> former general manager, two farmers (honey grower and mushroom grower), two executive chefs (current chair of the organization, former chair), one culinary artisan, one special green seedlings grower; and one full-time staff (responsible for daily operation)
Culinary Products/Programs Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do the organizations create culinary products/programs? (i.e., the specialization/diversification of production, as well as the inventory of the contents and scope of the culinary resources, including soft factors of cultural heritage and hard factors of natural environment) 	Savour Stratford: <u>9 individuals</u> executive marketing director, culinary product developer, one farmer, two restaurant owners, two managers of tea/coffee shops, chocolate store staff, and artisans market staff
Place Branding Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do the places create culinary identities and images; what kinds of branding strategies have been employed? (e.g., all marketing media used to create identities) • How do the different organizational approaches (e.g., top-down vs. bottom-up) implement the communication strategies in the process of branding? 	Savour Stratford: <u>9 individuals</u> executive marketing director, culinary product developer, one farmer, two restaurant owners, two managers of tea/coffee shops, chocolate store staff, and artisans market staff
Major Challenges in the Formation of a Culinary Cluster	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the major challenges that the organizations are facing in the creation of the culinary clusters? • Are there strategies to promote and/or enhance environmentally friendly movement (e.g., reduction of food miles; conservation of cultural heritage)? 	Savour Stratford: <u>9 individuals</u> executive marketing director, culinary product developer, one farmer, two restaurant owners, two managers of tea/coffee shops, chocolate store staff, and artisans market staff

Appendix II: In-depth Interview Questions for Informants

Interdependent Determinants/Facilitators	Detailed Interview Questions
Leadership; Communication & Information flows; and Stakeholder collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please tell me about the brief history and organizational structure of Savour Muskoka/Savour Stratford? • Who are the stakeholders? How do you communicate and share information and knowledge with all members involved in Savour Muskoka/Savour Stratford? • Do you think that partnership and collaboration between members is a critical factor in the development of culinary clusters as part of a creative food economy? • What is the relationship between Savour Muskoka/Savour Stratford and the local/provincial governments (e.g., Economic Development Office)?
Factor conditions (agricultural sector, tourism sector and arts sector: core, leading and supporting assets, including organizational, financial, human & other resources)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please tell me about all of the culinary-related products/programs/services available in Savour Muskoka/Savour Stratford (e.g., soft factors of artistic heritage and hard factors of natural attractions)
Demand conditions (profile of primary & secondary culinary markets)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are the customers? (e.g., the profile of primary & secondary culinary markets)
Related and supporting industries (creative arts industry)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the supporting industries and/or related firms within Savour Muskoka/Savour Stratford? • Do you think that the region's creative arts industry is an important factor in the creation of Savour Muskoka/Savour Stratford?
Market structure (place marketing/branding strategy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What kind of marketing/branding strategy has been used (e.g., all marketing media used, including slogans, events and promotions)? • How do you promote the various members to use the culinary place brand, Savour Muskoka/Savour Stratford? • Who is responsible for creating and managing the official websites? • Does Savour Muskoka/Savour Stratford have place marketing/branding plan and budget? • How does Savour Muskoka/Savour Stratford communicate with Economic Development Office? • Do you have done any satisfaction research on visitors/membership/residents?
Place-based creative food economy (local, authentic and organic food production and consumption nexus)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Muskoka/Stratford is known famously for a cottage country/cultural place, and thus, why does Muskoka/Stratford develop culinary clusters; can this factor be an advantage or a disadvantage in the development of the culinary clusters as part of a creative food economy? • Does Savour Muskoka/Savour Stratford have policies/strategies created for the eating establishments to promote locally grown agricultural products? • Tell me about culinary-related events/festivals/programs created by Savour Muskoka/Savour Stratford
Environmentally friendly movement (equilibrium between environment & tourism)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the impacts of the 'Slow Food Movement' and 'Environmentally Friendly Movement' in the formation of the culinary clusters as part of a creative food economy? • Are there strategies to promote or enhance environmentally friendly movement (e.g., reduction of food miles)?
Governments (partnership between private and public sectors)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What kind of direct and indirect partnership has been developed between governments and Savour Muskoka/Savour Stratford? (e.g., funding programs and training programs, regulations, policies, and infrastructure)