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An Examination of the Role of Placemaking in Tourism on the Entrepreneurial Eco System

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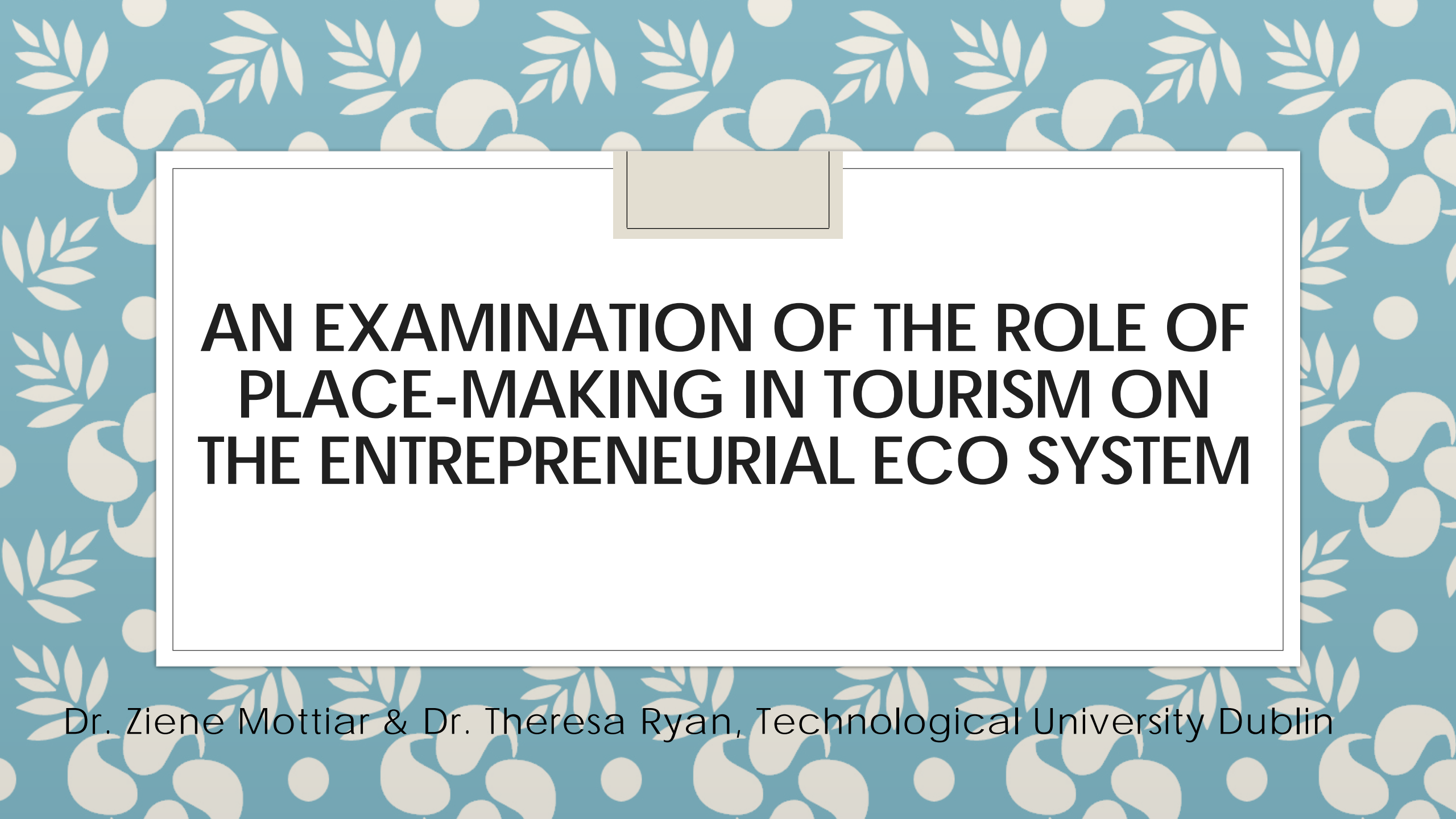
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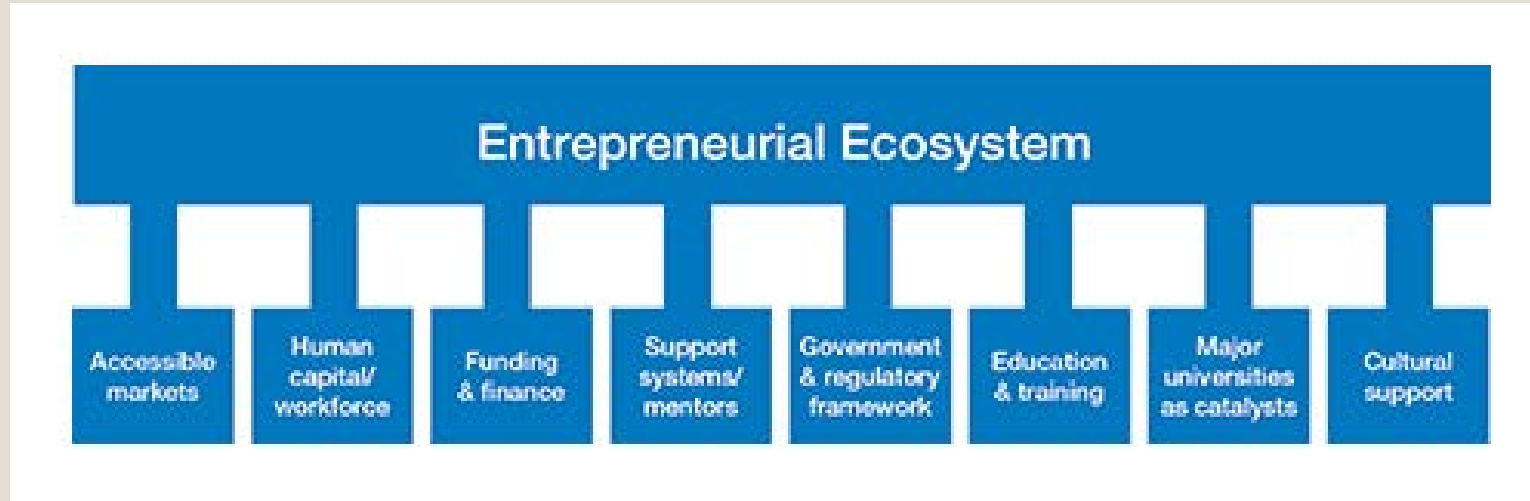


AN EXAMINATION OF THE ROLE OF PLACE-MAKING IN TOURISM ON THE ENTREPRENEURIAL ECO SYSTEM

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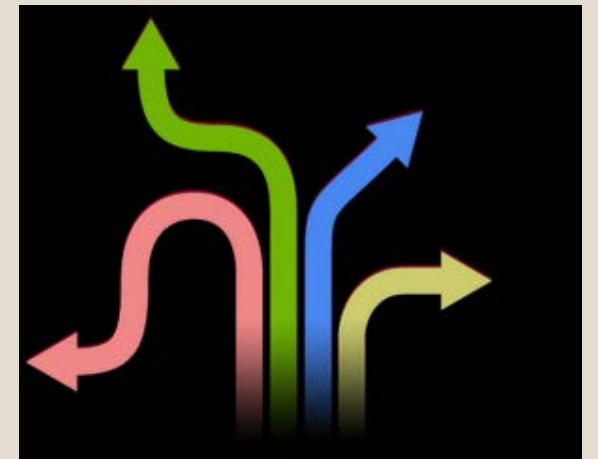
The importance of place for innovation and entrepreneurship

An entrepreneurial ecosystem is a 'set of interdependent actors and factors coordinated in such a way that they enable productive entrepreneurship within a particular territory' (Stam and Spigel, 2016)



[World Economic Forum <http://reports.weforum.org/entrepreneurial-ecosystems-around-the-globe-and-early-stage-company-growth-dynamics/section-2-entrepreneurial-ecosystems-similarities-and-differences-around-the-globe/#read>](http://reports.weforum.org/entrepreneurial-ecosystems-around-the-globe-and-early-stage-company-growth-dynamics/section-2-entrepreneurial-ecosystems-similarities-and-differences-around-the-globe/#read)

- This facilitates the explanation of differing entrepreneurial and innovation rates in different areas/countries
- It also embodies the shift away from the focus on the individual and a recognition of entrepreneurship as a social process embedded in broader contexts
 - 'the place that entrepreneurship takes within is seen as having a crucial impact over the entire entrepreneurship process' (Stam and Spigel, 2016)
- Industrial districts and industrial clusters



Place is key for tourism



- The Consumption and production space
 - The context
 - The identity and brand
 - The experience and provision is 'bound' by the place
 - Often the providers are 'embedded' in the place
-
- Local Place can have different meanings and boundaries for community, tourists and businesses

What is place-making?

- The term Place making denotes 'multi-faceted interventions for the planning, design and management of public places to improve the urban environment and quality of life of communities [and] was only coined in the 1970s in the United States (Solfield, 2017, p.3)
- Pancholi et al (2015) show how place making can facilitate knowledge and innovation spaces while Markusen and Gadwa (2010, p.6) show how 'through creative placemaking arts and culture make substantial contributions to local economic development, livability, and cultural industry competitiveness'
- Solfield (2017, p.2) note that 'tourism has co-opted the concept of placemaking...[as] placemaking in its most striking form creates an identity, an image, a difference from other places'
- In tourism destinations planning and marketing are fundamentally place making actions intended to shape the image of a place (Lew, 2017)

- The key objective from a tourism perspective is to increase place attachment for tourists. This Place attachment affects the intention to revisit a destination (Stylos et al 2017, Hosany et al, 2016).
- Also important is the place attachment and sense of place of communities in tourism areas (Kajan, 2014, Amsden et al, 2010, Gu and Ryan, 2008)
- The place-making can be driven by the local community, the DMO or local government, or a combination of both (Solfeld, 2017)
- So the focus in the tourism literature is on marketing and tourists, and to a lesser extent communities
- **But what about the entrepreneurs and the entrepreneurial eco system?**



So the question is...

- Does place making affect tourism entrepreneurs and the entrepreneurial eco system?

- How?



Study area: The Wild Atlantic Way Ireland

- **The Wild Atlantic Way**, a 2,500 KM coastal route along the Irish Western seaboard

‘The Wild Atlantic Way was devised as a new ‘experience’ and ‘destination’ by Fáilte Ireland to present the West Coast of Ireland as a compelling international tourism product of scale and singularity. It is an over-arching brand which individual destinations and businesses can trade collectively with much greater potential visibility and clarity of message in the international marketplace’ (Fáilte Ireland, 2015: 7)

- The route was developed to address the following challenges:
 - The fragmented nature of the West coast as a destination
 - The low level of co-operation between west coast destinations, beyond county boundaries (Fáilte Ireland, 2015)



Source: <http://www.failteireland.ie>

How is this place-making?

- New place concept Wild Atlantic Way was developed by the national tourism authority and marketed to tourists (domestic and international).
- Google search returns more than 1m mentions and 94% of Irish people have viewed a WAW advertisement and there were 2.9m social media engagements re. WAW during 2018. (Failte Ireland, 2019). Pre 2015 the term and concept of WAW did not exist.
- The WAW is made up of existing towns and villages which all have their own independent identities

Methodology

- Inductive Research
- Along the Wild Atlantic Way a 2,500 coastline route that has been developed and marketed since 2014
- Qualitative approach in depth interviews with key informants and entrepreneurs
- Stage 1: 3 villages, 20 interviews: Kilkee, Westport and Mulranny
- Stage 2 will involve netnographic research plus further interviews



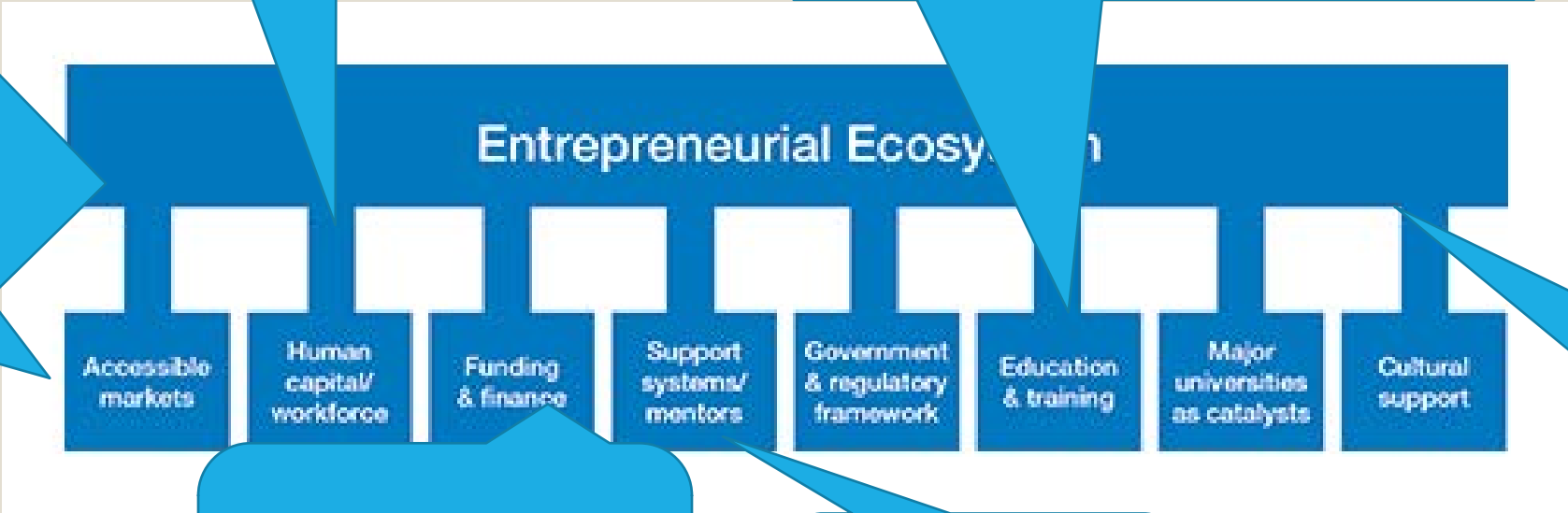
Has the place making affected the entrepreneurial eco system?



'It's given us a marketing tool to go to the market with'

Service excellence programmes and local experts training

'125 workshops including programmes on Developing Saleable Experiences, Service Excellence and Social Media across the region for 1,945 members of the tourism industry from 530 businesses'



c. €8bm funding of tourism attractions. €1m on domestic marketing campaign

One on one mentoring (25)

Mattering, success stories, attention to tourism businesses

Has it changed entrepreneurial activity?

- New businesses have emerged especially activities, bus tours, walking guides.
- 'We open much earlier in the season... it has lengthened our business';
- 'It has definitely brought more of the foreign tourists into the area that have never been here before'
- 'Now we are on the map'
- 'We didn't get recognition before but now we've been recognized and we're on the route and its fantastic'
- 'It gave people a boost to try and do a little more' e.g. food in pub in Mulranny, ice cream producer in Kilkee talking about tourist experience,

But...



- 'I suppose the problem I see now with the Wild Atlantic Way is everybody is jumping on board, every town you go in to, it's Wild Atlantic Way cafes... it's almost turned into McDonalds, everything is the Wild Atlantic Way'
- WAW 'can be in the background, you could dilute yourself... everyone is going to be having the Wild Atlantic way, it is 2,500km, the Wild Atlantic Way is very long and we want to be distinct'

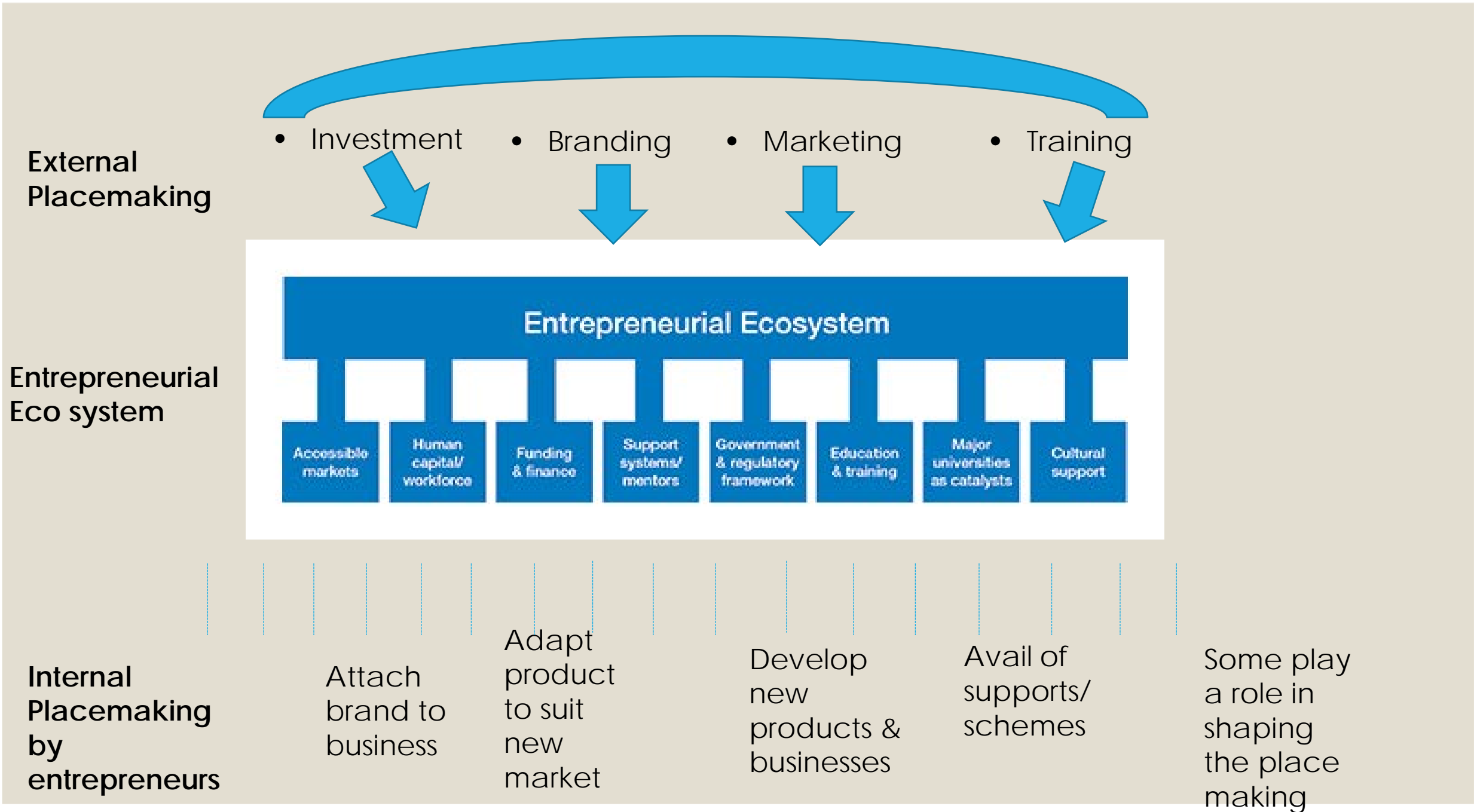
- As others become more involved in activities to serve the WAW market this can have a negative impact on original providers:
- People who previously would have travelled to Kilkee to rent a bike now rent from other places along the WAW so 'I am losing out... it had a negative impact on the part of the business that would have benefited most from the wild Atlantic Way'



What has the effect been?



- 1. More tourists, more investment, more advertising, more attention, more competition...
- 2. Local entrepreneur and community attitudes have changed: mattering, belonging, being part of something, pride.
- 3. Local entrepreneurs have harnessed the changes in the entrepreneurial eco system brought about by national strategy to maximise the local impact



Roles that entrepreneurs play in terms of place making

Role	Description	Activity/Engagement
Adopter	Adopt the concept and use it for their own purposes	Mentions WAW on website primarily in terms of things to do while at the destination.
Adapter	Adapt their products/ services/activities in reaction to WAW	Branding of their product New adventure products Providing bundled products
Contributor	Participates in determining what the identity will be	Attends focus groups and meetings organized by Failte Ireland. On local committees.
Creator	Creates new identity	Creators of Greenway and Loop Head. They work with others (contributors) then to make the idea a reality.

Conclusions

- Place-making can directly effect the entrepreneurial eco system
- Individual entrepreneurs then choose the role they play in place-making
- The final impact of the changed entrepreneurial eco system depends on how local entrepreneurs harness the changes.
 - So although the externally effected changes may be consistent across lots of local entrepreneurial eco systems, the effects may be different (e.g. developed versus developing areas, different types of entrepreneurs)



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