

Leaving No Trace in the Irish Countryside: Effecting Behavioural Change of Recreationists

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Introduction

Currently in the process of completing PhD research Submission April (2019) examining the barriers in the development of behavioural interventions from an Irish Perspective.

Active member of Leave No Trace Ireland, which aims to promote responsible recreation throughout the island of Ireland.



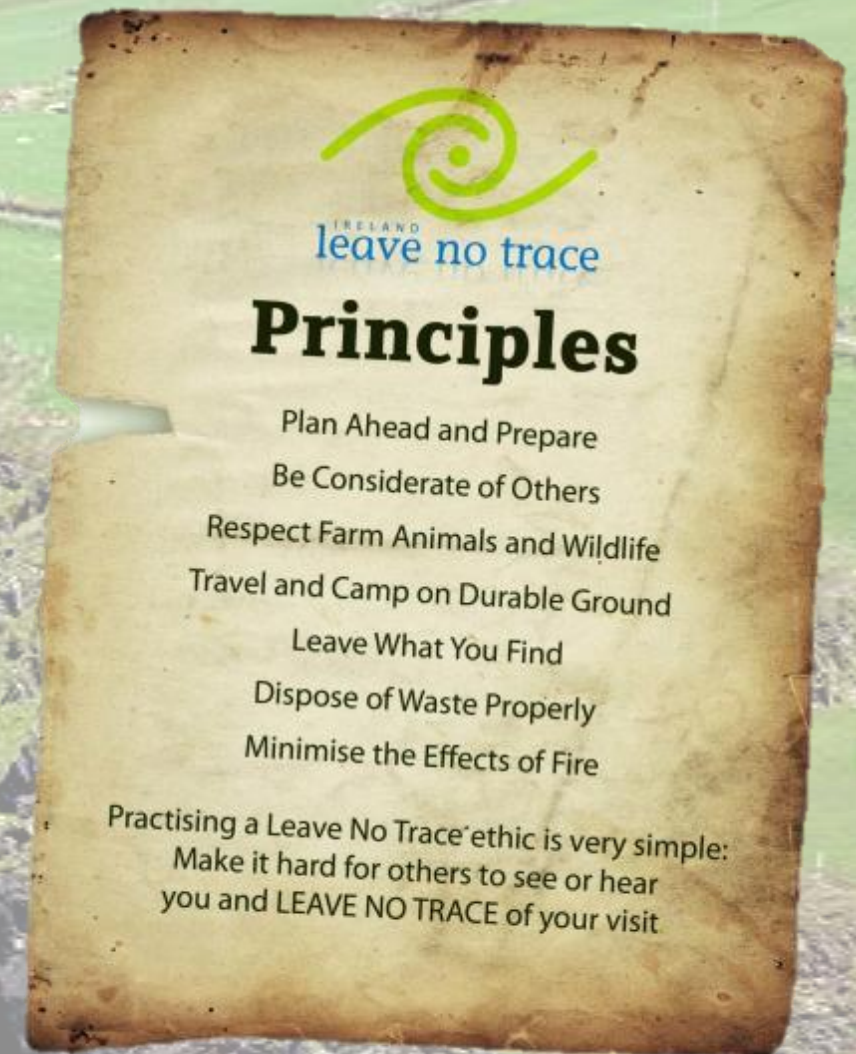
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Leave No Trace Ireland

Leave No Trace Ireland are an environmental education NGO dedicated to promoting responsible recreation throughout the island of Ireland.

Leave No Trace achieves this goal through a system of research, education and partnerships.



Outdoor Recreation and Tourism in Ireland

2017 was a great year for Irish tourism, with a 10% increase on an already impressive tourism season in 2016. There was over 9 million overseas visitors to our shore.

The National Trails Office has noted a significant increase in the range of outdoor activity events being run around the country as well as a growth in participation in these activity's (The National Trails Office, 2012).

Diversification of the tourism market and programs like the Wild Atlantic Way has lead to the strong growth of revenue in tourism.



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Negative impacts on the environment.

“Negative impacts on wilderness are an inevitable consequence of recreation” (Leung and Marion, 2000)

Littering



Conflict



Wildlife Disturbance



How Do You Change Behaviour?

Legislation?

Education?

Infrastructure?

Other?



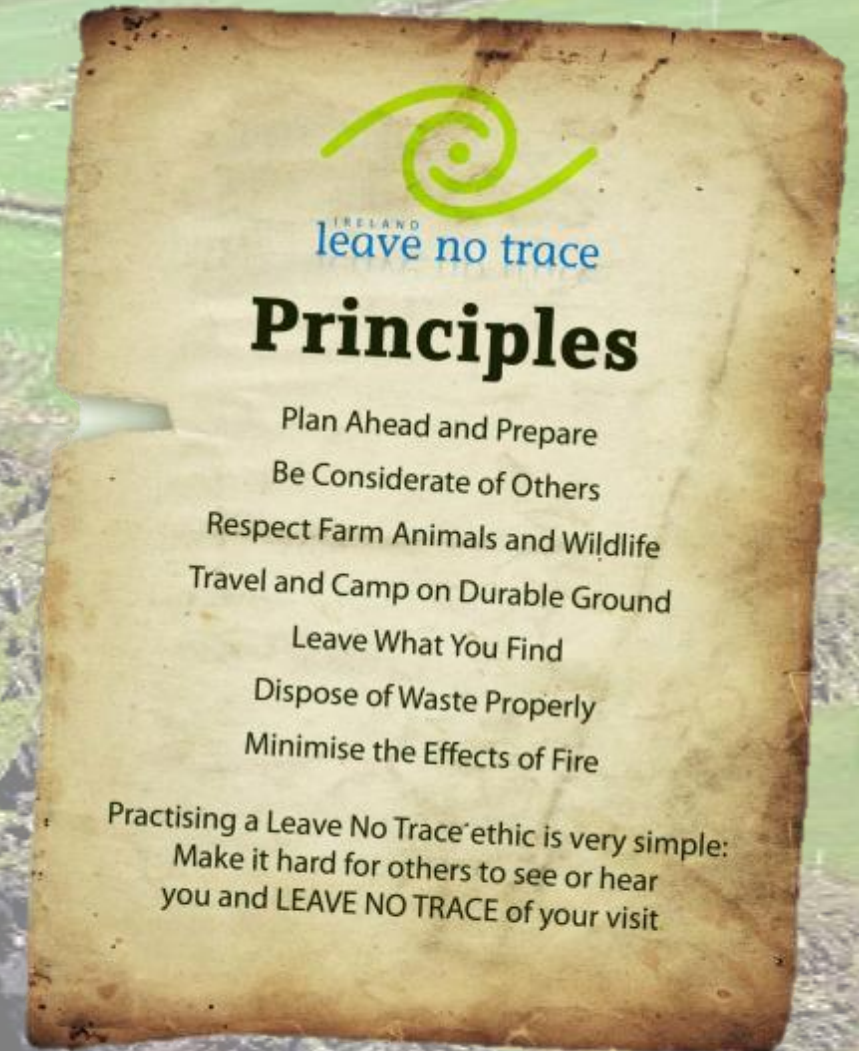
Objectives

Examine the attitudes and behaviours of outdoor recreationists regarding environmentally responsible behaviour.

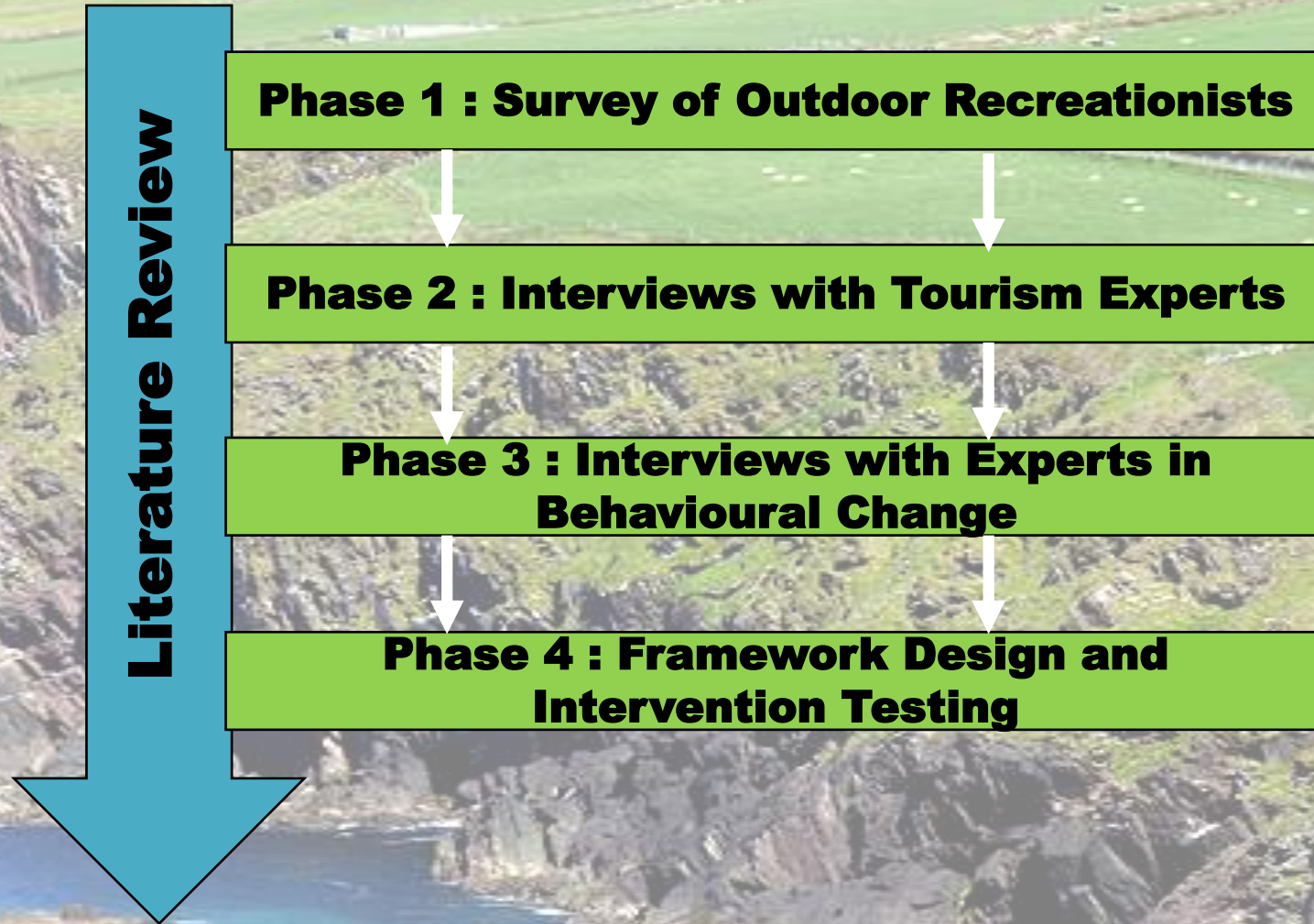
Review and Critique the evolving theories relating to behavioural change.

Investigate and evaluate the efficacy of strategies used to achieve behavioural change in a range of context.

Develop and apply a theoretical framework illustrating the factors required to engender environmentally responsible behaviours in recreationists



Methodology: The Introduction of Pragmatism



Findings: Attitude

“There is a general consensus that we don't do anything wrong in the environment, there's a real gap in the knowledge” (INT02)

The attitude-behaviour gap is debated across numerous studies which, reinforces the opinion that although people in Ireland seem to be highly supportive of environmental initiatives, in theory, their behaviours are not solely based on their attitude towards the practising of ERB.

Previous studies indicate that the efficacy of positive reinforcement is of particular interest from an Irish perspective, as according to INT02, *“I think it is in the Irish DNA, we do not like rules or being told what to do”.*



Social Norms

By understanding group dynamics, a pro-environmental approach using social norms could have a more immediate uptake when compared to the promotion of environmental literature alone.

The power of a motivated community cannot be underestimated.

“When in Rome, Do as the Romans Do”



Findings: Perceived Behavioural Control

“The psychology in Ireland is if you’re not told to do something, or its not a condition, then it never happens”. (INT02)

Skills and training are nothing without the will to act.

People need to feel like they can make a difference in order to induce long term behavioural change.

This can be affected by communication techniques used.



Importance of Communication

“There can be groups who do not feel that they are being listened to, and that is where you start to get negative publicity and push-back to your projects” (INT07)

Communication, networks and communities were a common theme discussed by expert interviewees as a valuable resource for the sustainable development of tourism.

The use of “*networks, through education and awareness*” and the promotion of Leave No Trace Ireland methods as the “*vehicle for the good practice message*” has become standard practice for environmental agencies.

It is crucial that Leave No Trace Ireland and other NGOs aiming to increase participation in Environmentally Responsible Behaviours continue to tailor their communication in a way which is relevant to the user.



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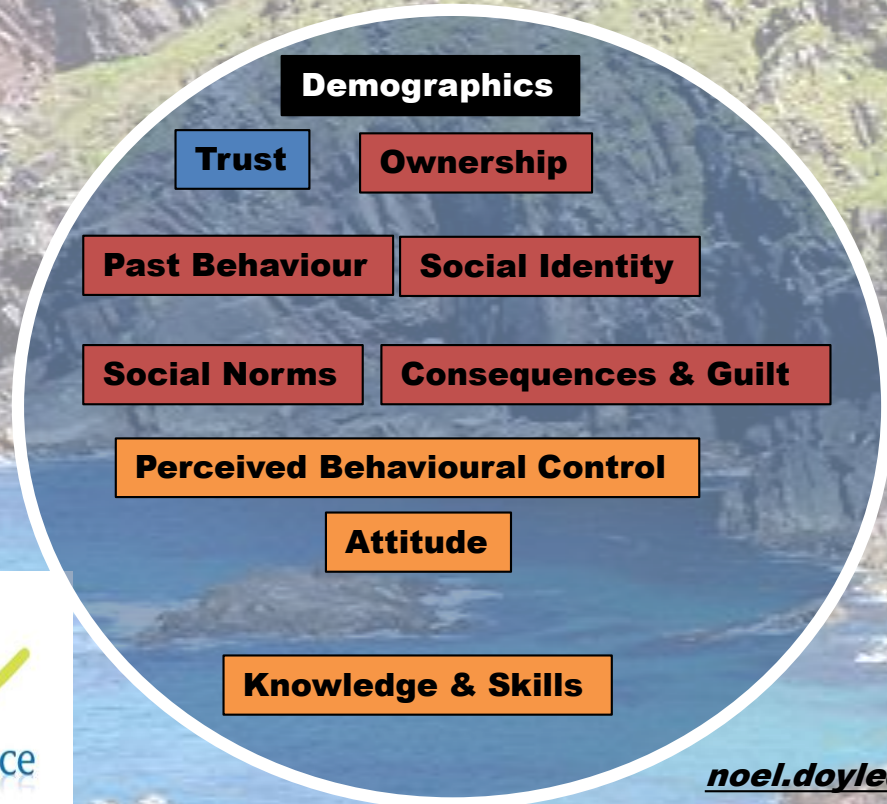


So What!

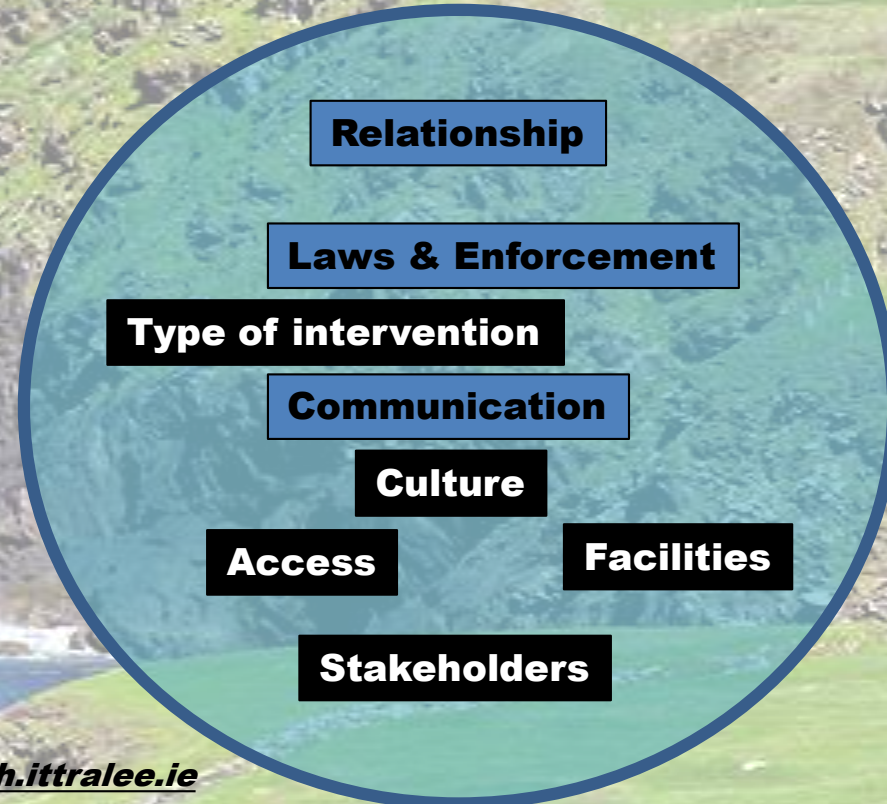
“It Is Not the Strongest of the Species that Survives But the Most Adaptable”

The same can be said for theories of behavioural change. The influencers of human behaviour cannot be quantified into a rigid theory. Behaviour change needs to be approached with adaptability and with a regard to the influence of time.

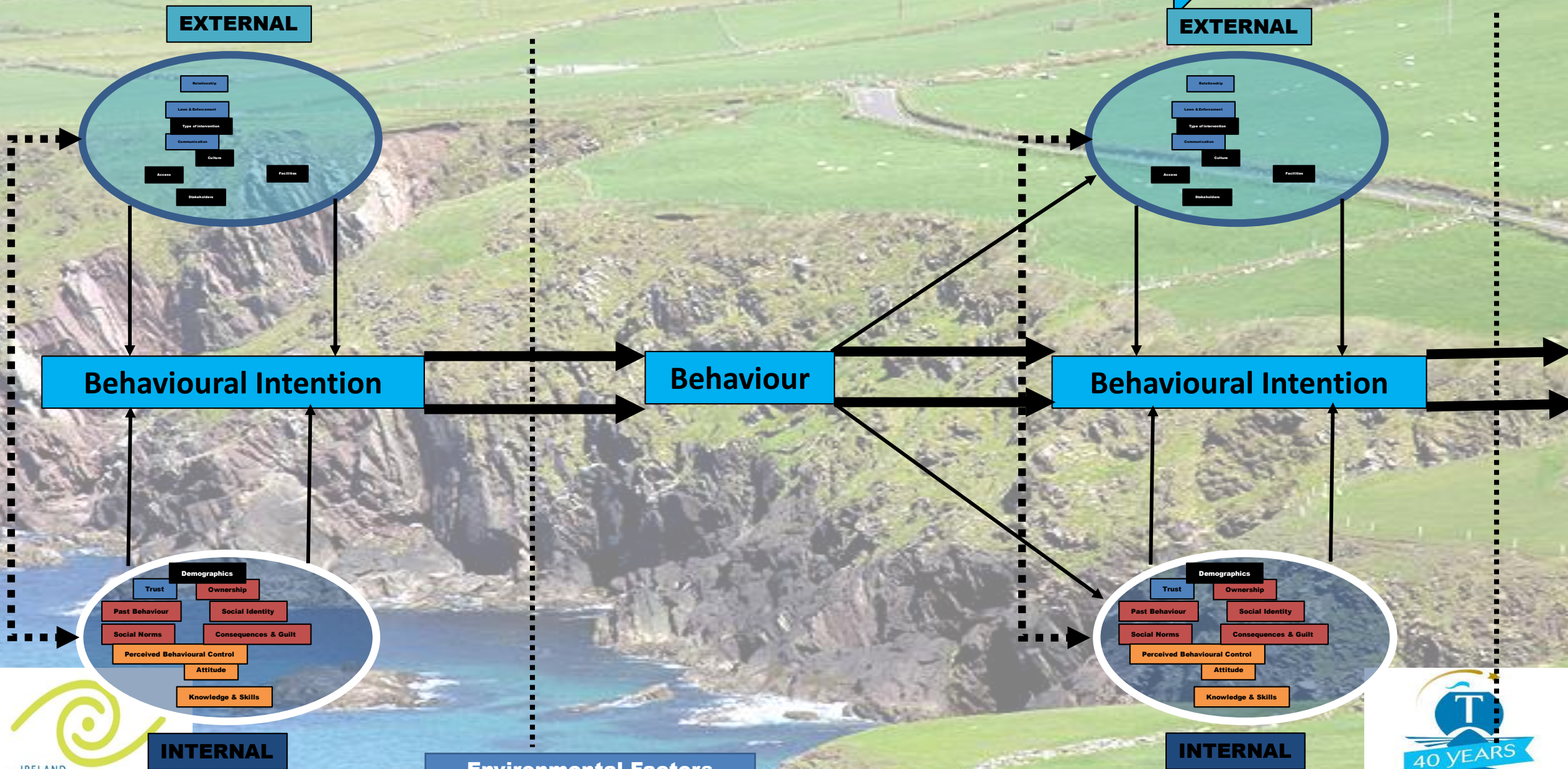
INTERNAL



EXTERNAL



Temporal Component



Thank You
Go Raibh Maith Agaibh



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