Alternative models for thriving economies

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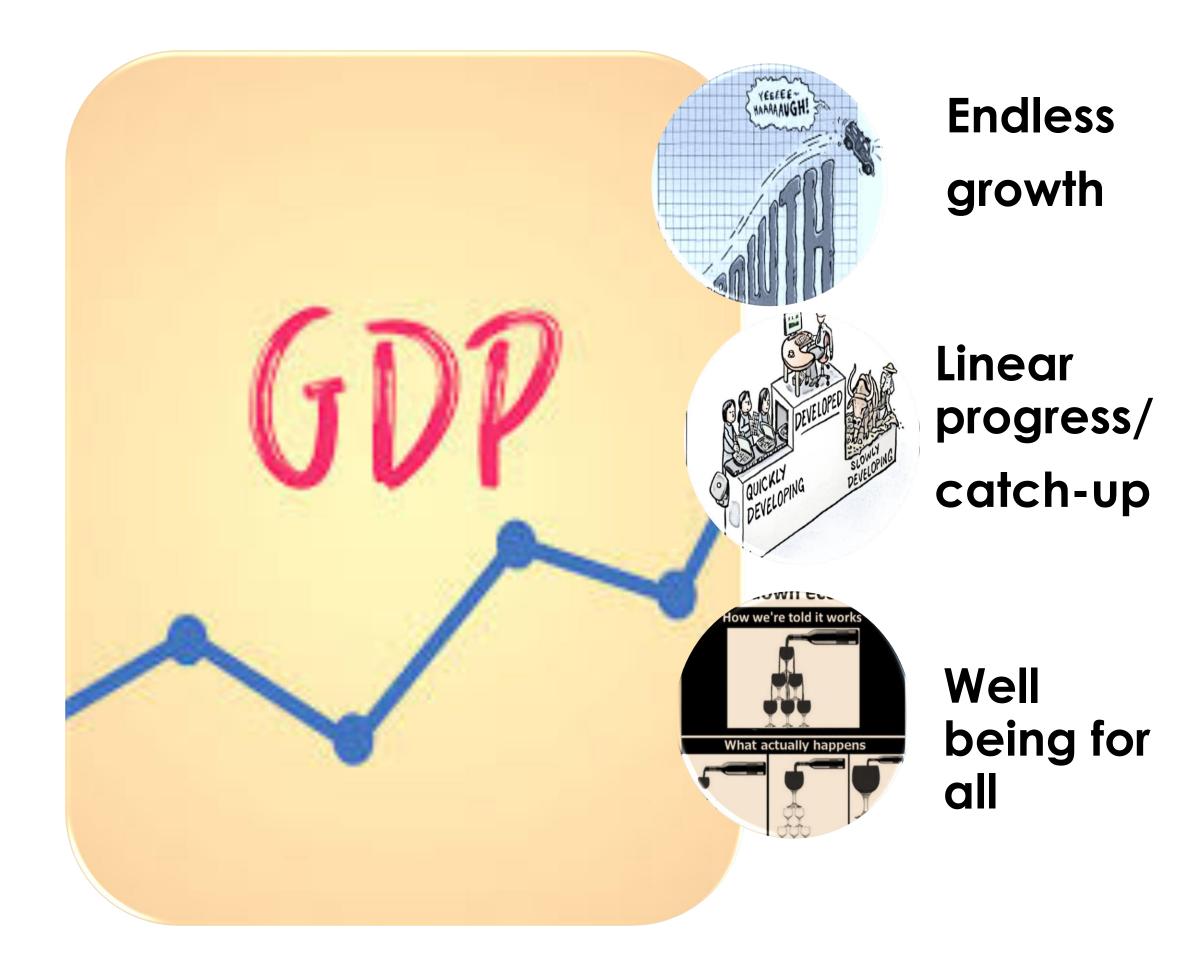


Overview

- Dominant economic models: visions vs reality; twin challenges
- Alternative models for thriving society: A snapshot
- Alternative economic models and their approach to transformation
- How do we understand the rural?
- SE initiatives in rural areas in EU: Challenges and interventions
- Concluding remarks

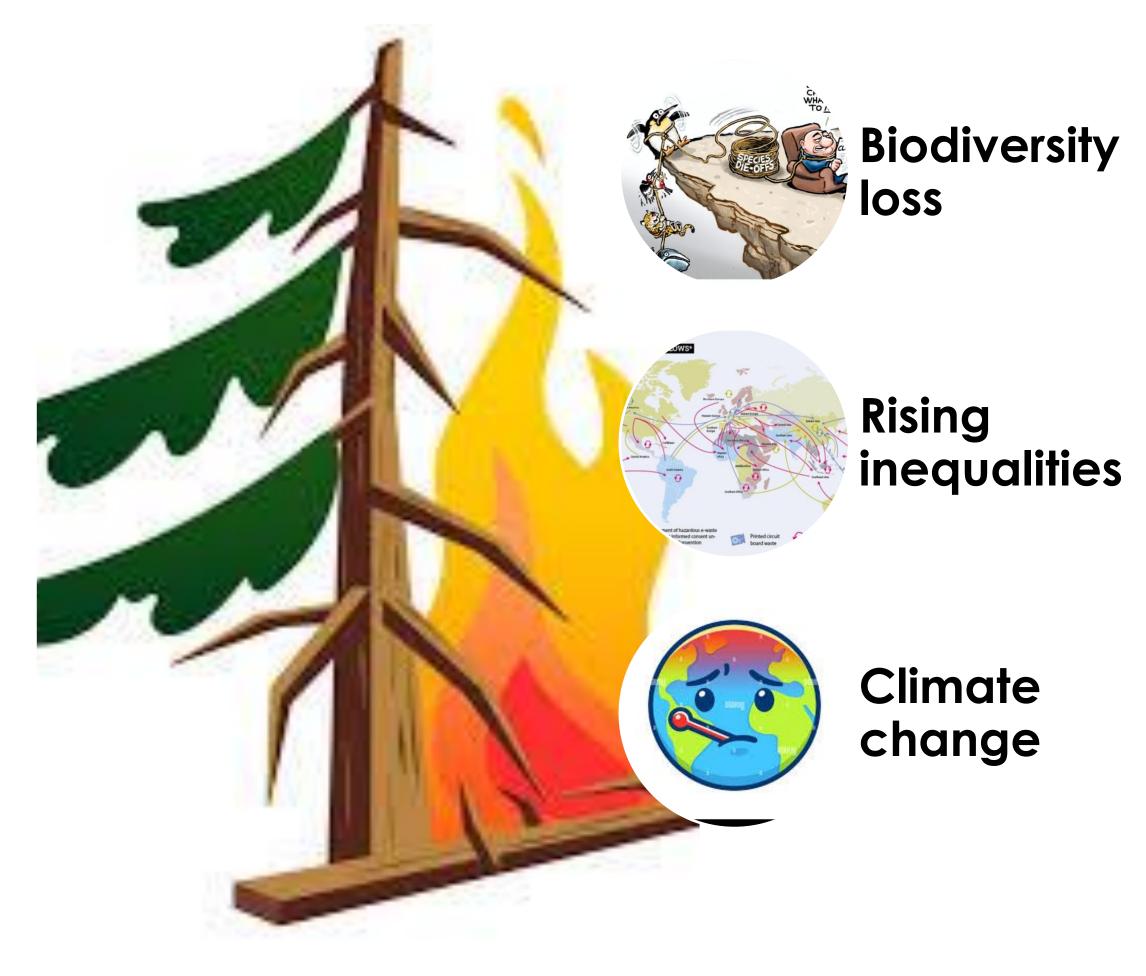


Dominant economic models



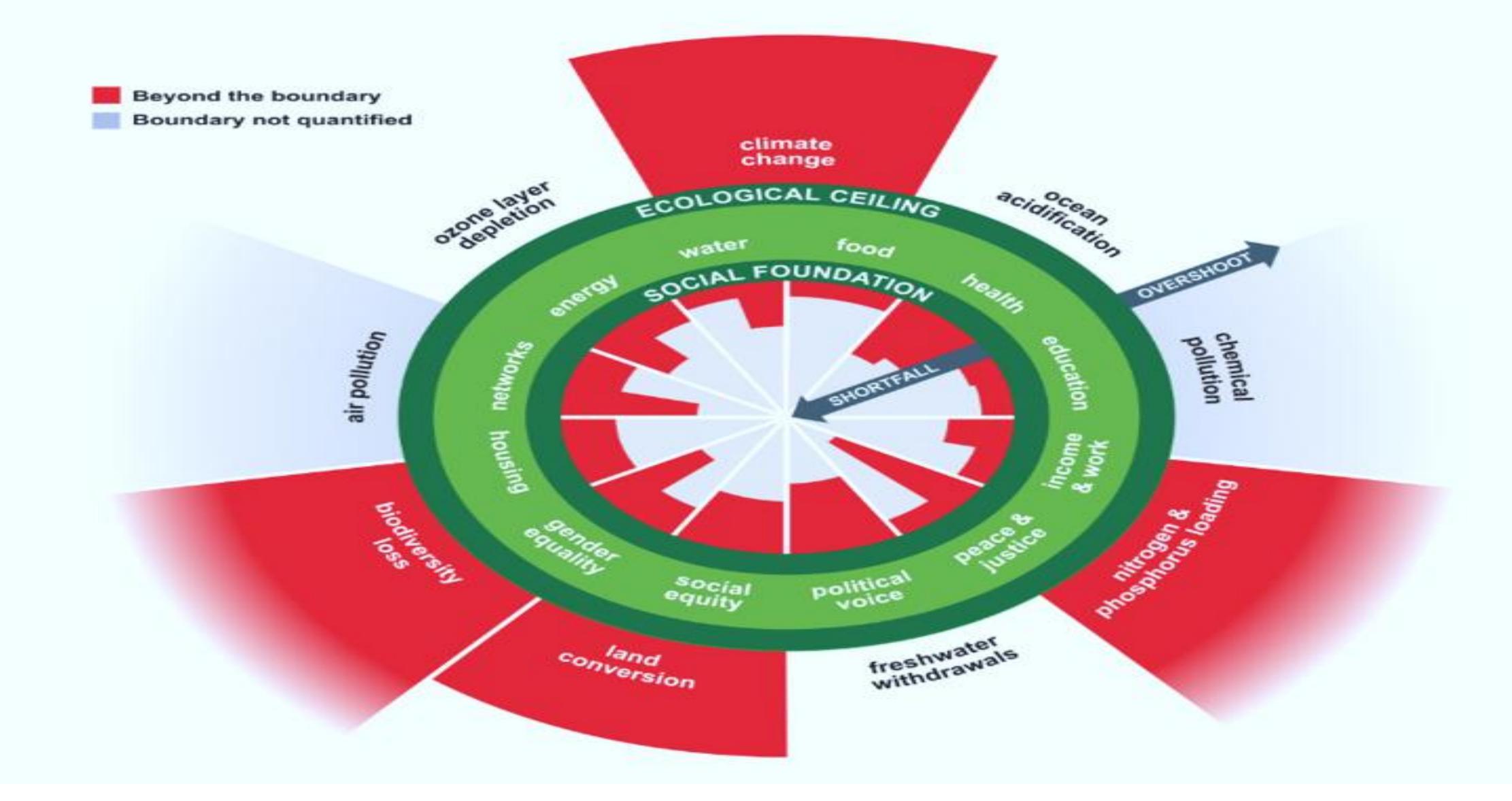
The Vision



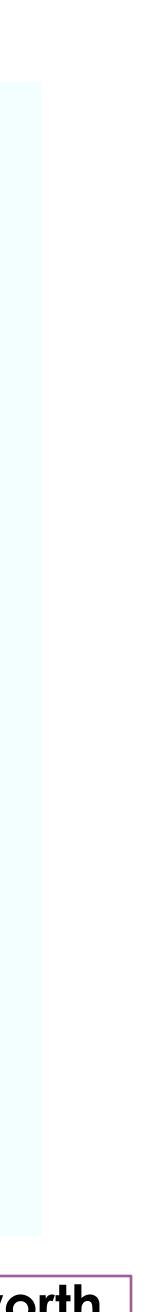


The Reality

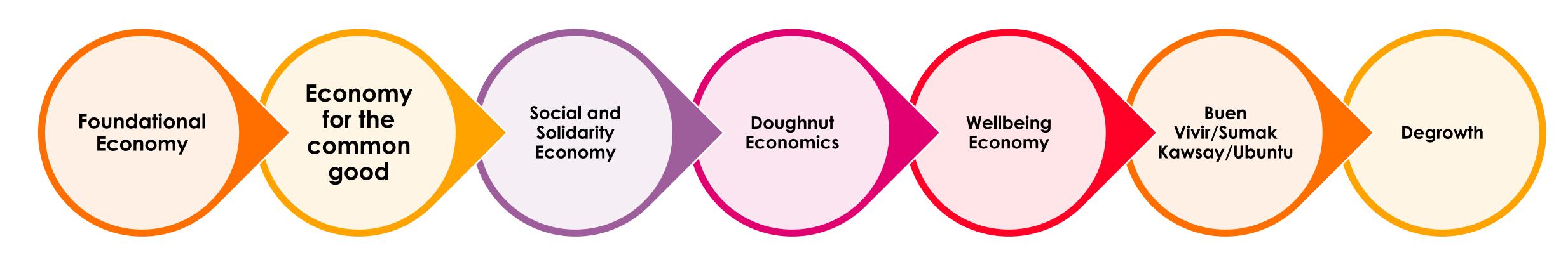
Dominant economic models and our twin challenges



Doughnut economics – Kate Raworth



Alternative models for thriving economies







Focussed on addressing the indirect drivers of unsustainability (Capitalist exploitation of human and natural resources)

Kommandeur et al. 2025



Alternative models for thriving economies 🔊

Degrowth/Post-growth

1970, Europe Planned reduction in energy and resource use to support twin goals Mostly academic

Buen Vivir/Ubuntu/Sumak Kawsay

Indigenous concept

Re-emerged against Extractive practices of industries

Emphasises on solidarity for good life



Twin goals of environmental sustainability and social justice

Social and Solidarity Economy

19th Century, Europe and South America

Industrialization and its social and economic challenges

Worker cooperatives, community organizations

Alternative Economic **Models**

Wellbeing Economy

Wellbeing Economy Alliance (WEALL 2018) Wellbeing (human and Environment) at the heart of policy making. Governments and international organizations



Alternative models and their approach to societal transformation

Ruptural

Direct confrontation and radical break with existing institutions and social structures; rapid change.

Smashing (significant systemic breaks such as destroying industrial chains); Halting (smaller temporary disruptions such as blocking a mine).

Example

Buen Vivir Degrowth Diverse economies

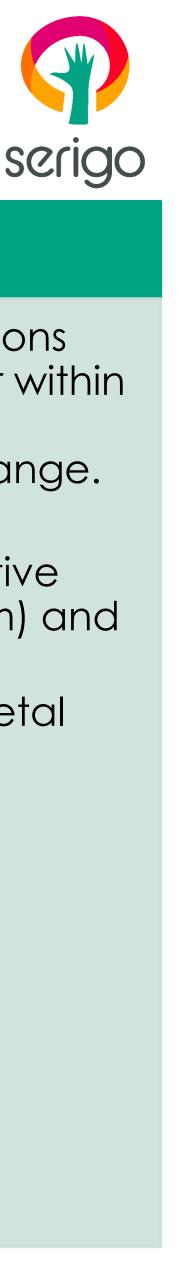
Building new forms of institutions outside spaces dominated by those in power, usually at the margins of the capitalist/dominant social system; gradual change.

Resisting (protest and mobilizations) and advocating (guidelines, toolkits);

Escaping and **building** (cultivating) alternatives to capitalism such as direct producer-consumer links, community owned systems).

Example

Buen Vivir Degrowth Social and Solidarity Economy



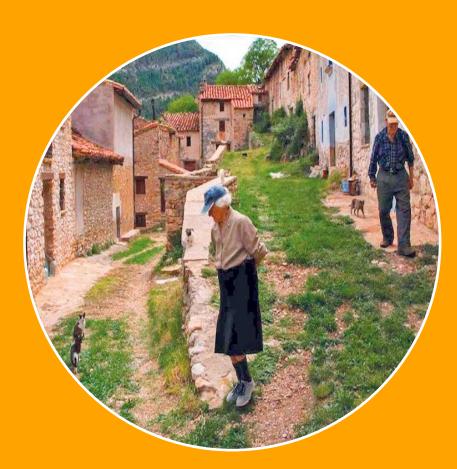
Interstitial

Symbiotic

Changing the existing institutions from within. Growing power within the institutions for ultimate transformation; gradual change.

Taming (mitigating the negative consequences of capitalism) and incentivising **Dismantaling** (changing societal power structures) and restructuring (such as decentralised production, property rights reforms)

Example Wellbeing Economy Social Economy



Site of Crisis

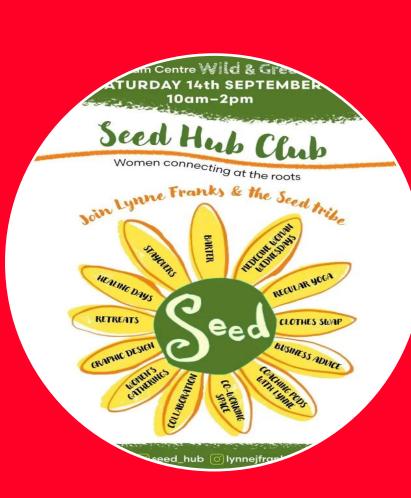
Depopulation Ageing Job opportunities Infrastructure Biodiversity loss Wildfires Deforest Ition



Site of Contestation

Wind turbines and solar farms Extractive tourism Deforestation Fracking Industrial agriculture and plantations

How do we understand the rural?





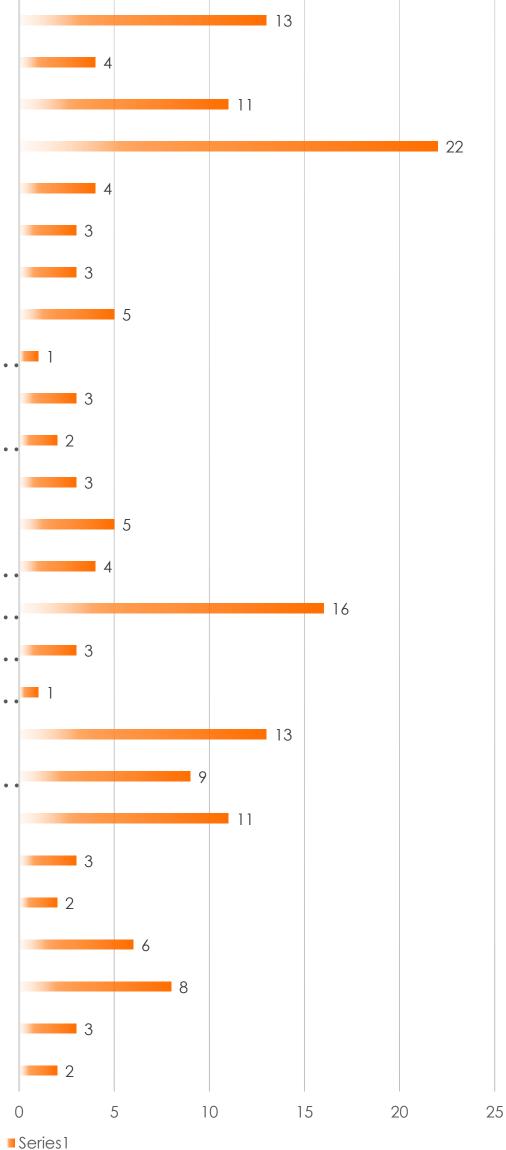
Site of Hope

Caring for human and more-thanhuman relationships Planetary attuned repeasantization Convivality and Solidarity Re-imaginging society and economy

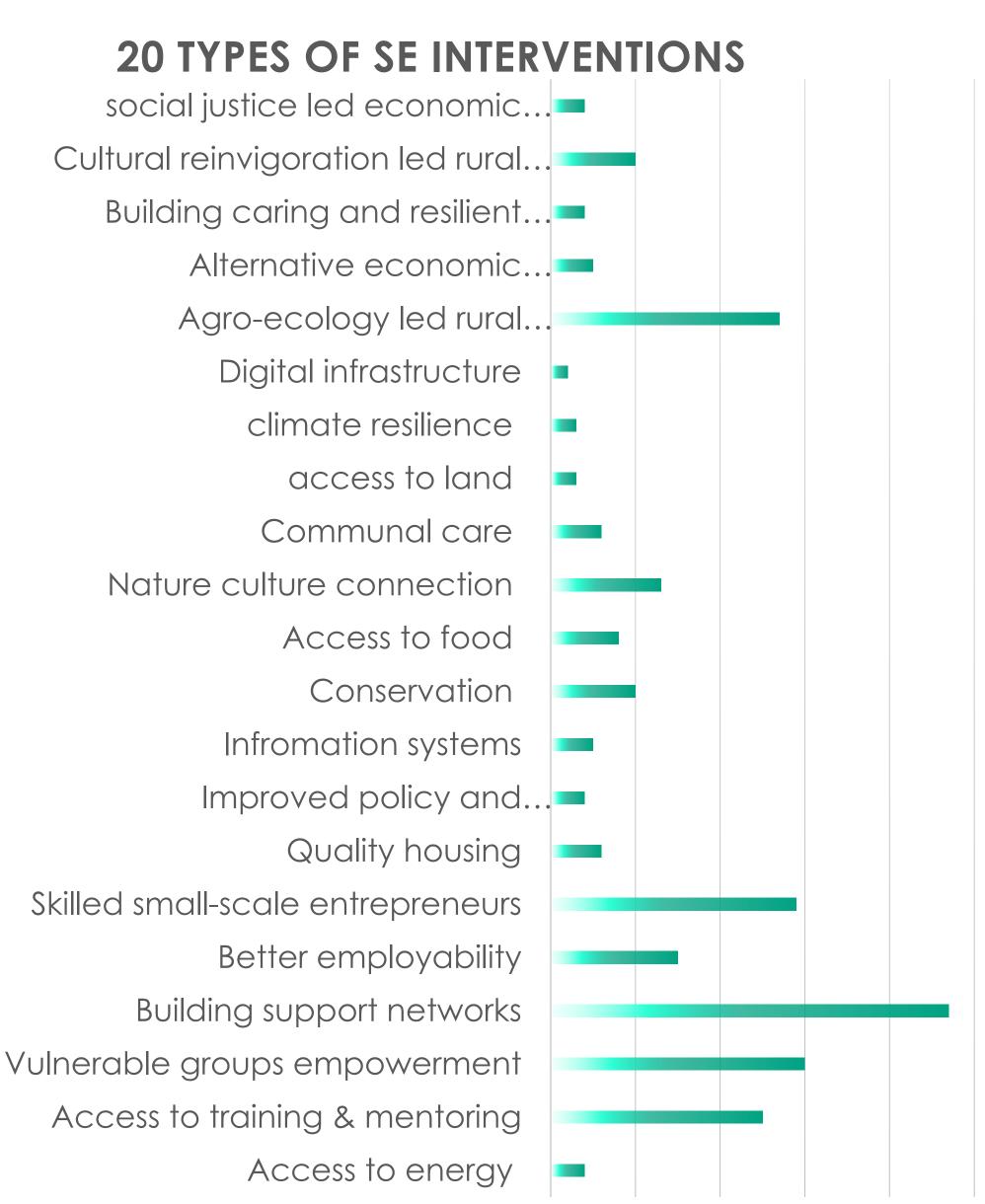
SE initiatives in rural areas in EU: Challenges and interventions

26 TYPES OF RURAL CHALLENGES

Agricultural deskilling Climatic digital technological disparities Economic isolation emergencies financialization of rural land Food insecurity Global crop Commodification Lack of sustainability... Lack of access to housing Lack of care system for elderly... 2 Lack of care systems for children Lack of infrastructure Lack of opportunities for... Lack of opportunities for... Lack of opportunities for elder... Lack of opportunities for... Lack of opportunities for women Lack of opportunities for young... Loss of rural identity Market monopolization Nature culture disconnect Producer consumer disconnect Rural depopulation Unsustainable housing an lifestyle Volatility of agricultural prices







10

0

20

30

50

40



SE initiatives in rural areas in EU: Challenges and interventions

Contestation

Exploitation by dominant agri-food systems

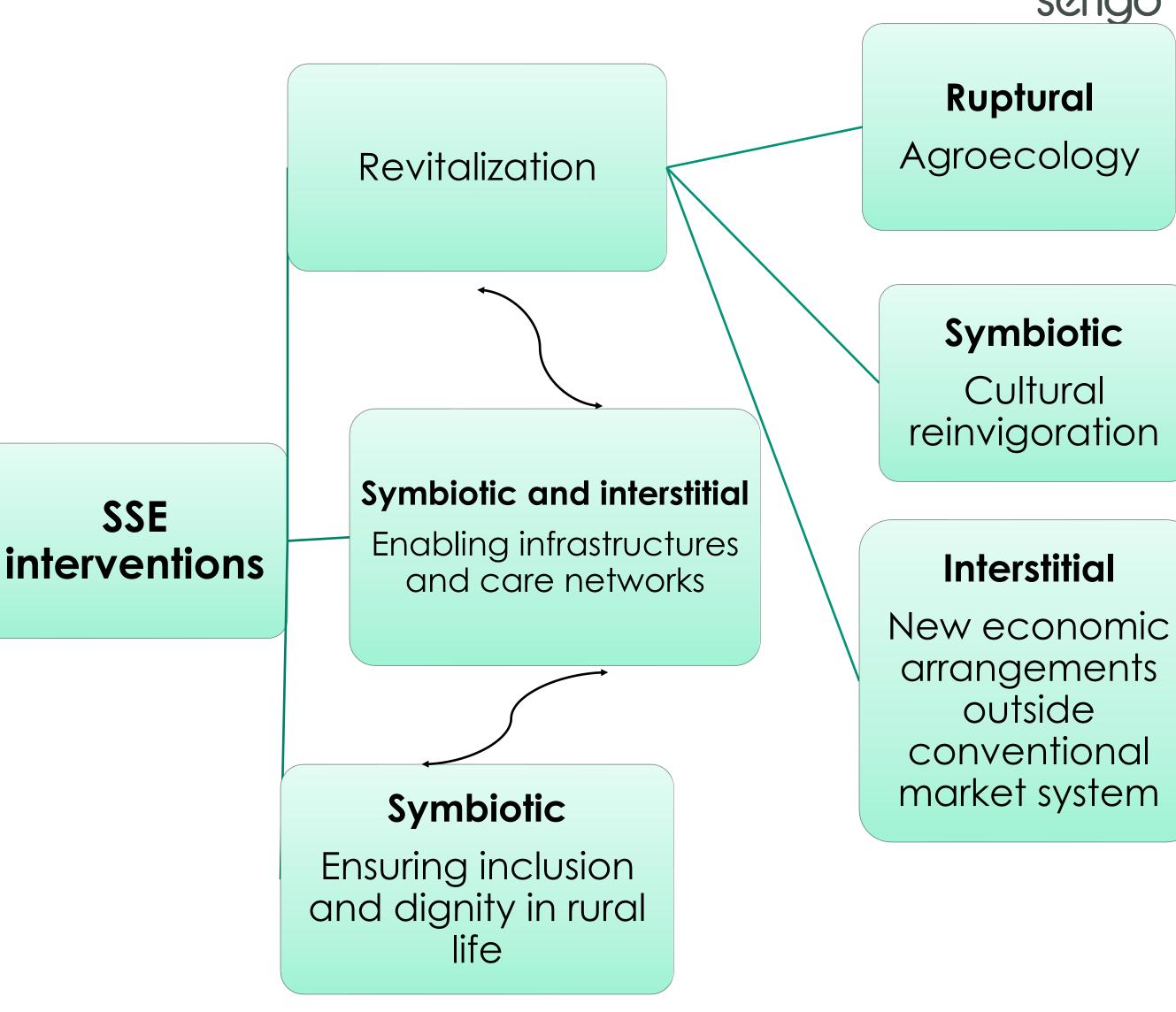
Rural Challenges

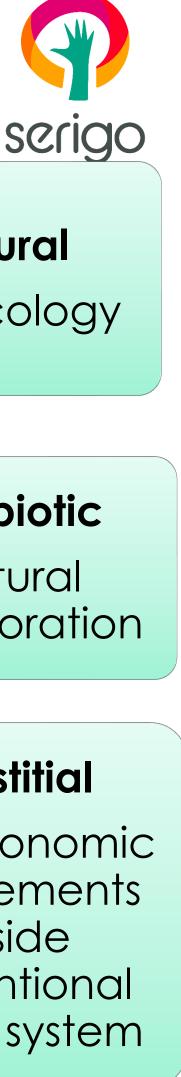
Crisis

Lack of infrastructures, opportunities, and care networks

Crisis & Contestation

Loss of rural identity and dignity





Concluding remarks

- Dominant economic models are inadequate in engaging with the twin challenges (environmental sustainability and social justice), particularly in rural areas.
- It could be useful to explore, support and strengthen alternative models for a thriving economy and society.
- Many examples of alternative economic models are present all over the world.
- Different modes of transformations (ruptural, interstitial, and symbiotic) could be sought with these models, depending on the need.
- Study of SE initiatives in EU showed that rural challenges could be clubbed into crisis (lack of infrastructure, job opportunities) and contestations (over resources, identity, inclusion).
- Examples from SE initiatives showed that different initiatives seek different transformational approach for engaging with rural challenges.
- Further research is needed to understand the impacts of these initiatives in addressing the twin challenges and bringing transformation in rural societies.







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