

PARTICIPATION IN STRUCTURAL CHANGE – UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL INNOVATIONS IN LUSATIA FROM A LIFE-WORLD PERSPECTIVE

Nadine Jukschat¹; Franz Erhard²; Emilia Socha³

¹ Hochschule Zittau/Görlitz, University of Applied Sciences, Faculty of Social Sciences,
Furtstraße 2, 02826 Görlitz, Germany

² University of Siegen, Faculty of Social Sciences,
Adolf-Reichwein-Str. 2, 57076 Siegen, Germany

³ Hochschule Zittau/Görlitz, University of Applied Sciences,
Institute for Transformation, Housing, and Socio-Spatial Development,
Parkstraße 2, 02826 Görlitz, Germany

e-mail: ¹nadine.jukschat@hszg.de; ²franz.erhard@uni-siegen.de; ³emilia.socha@hszg.de

Abstract

This article focuses on understanding social innovations in Lusatia from a life-world perspective. Ethnographic case studies in two small towns explore people's perspectives on transformation, particularly its impact. The analysis critically assesses the concept of social innovation, revealing implicit, often unreflected assumptions. Drawing on sociological perspectives, the article challenges notions of intentional change management and normative progress, instead emphasizing the complexity of social practices. It suggests that promoting social innovations requires nuanced understanding and context sensitivity for local communities, acknowledging diverse experiences shaping responses to change.

Keywords

Transformation; Social innovation; Ethnographic case studies; Context sensitivity; Lusatia.

Introduction

The concept of “social innovation” has gained increasing prominence in contemporary social sciences and society, particularly in discussions surrounding transformation processes in rural regions (Howaldt & Kaletka, 2023b). It is often linked with aspirations for finding sustainable solutions to societal challenges (Mulgan, 2019).

In our current research project, “*BePart: Participation in Structural Change – Understanding Social Innovations in Lusatia from a Life-World Perspective*”, funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, we empirically work with the concept of social innovation. We shift the view toward the interpretive processes accompanying social innovations by drawing theoretically on a life-world perspective (Schütz & Luckmann, 2003). Therefore, we conduct ethnographically oriented case studies in two small towns in Lusatia (in the states of Brandenburg and Saxony). The project examines perspectives on structural and social transformation, particularly among those directly affected. The project aims to assess the potential for fostering social innovations within the researched communities. In addition, we are tasked with developing and testing social innovation formats.

For this article, we elaborate on our conceptual framework and reflect on how the link

between our empirical research results and the implementation of social innovation formats could be designed. It is structured as follows: building on theoretical considerations and critiques discussed elsewhere (Bösch, 2023; Erhard & Jukschat, 2023; Ghys, 2023; Godin & Vinck, 2017; Rammert, 2024), we argue that even though the idea of social innovations comes with promises for transformation processes, it carries implicit assumptions that need reflection before applying it. This reflection shows

- a) that implementing social innovations should not be understood as a straightforward process that offers transparent and replicable results,
- b) that the notion of a common good is sometimes more contested than one might think, and
- c) that social power relations within a researched community but between the community and the research team as well must be considered before initiating social innovation processes.

Therefore, a high degree of context sensitivity and local grounding is needed to initiate social innovation processes successfully. Thus, introducing an ethnographic methodology elevates the debate insofar as social innovations are thought of as community-driven.

Subsequently, research methods are sketched, and insights from our case studies that led us to our conceptual considerations are provided. We end with a short conclusion.

1 Research Subject: The Concept of Social Innovations – Implicit Assumptions

In a classical sense, innovation has long been synonymous with economic science, technology, and engineering, primarily focusing on creating new products, technologies, and methods (Schumpeter, 1939). However, as society transforms from an industrial to a knowledge and service-oriented paradigm and grapples with escalating social and economic challenges, the notion of social innovations has gained significant traction in public discourse and innovation research (Moulaert et al., 2014; Howaldt & Kaletka, 2023a). Various departments of the German federal government have recently launched a plethora of funding initiatives to promote and support social innovations, recognizing them as instrumental and crucial in addressing societal crises and challenges, particularly in the transformation and development of structurally weak rural regions. One such initiative is the “REGION.innovativ” program (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, 2024), which also funds our present research.

When the concept of social innovation first rose to prominence, the primary focus was on the social requirements, consequences, and processes concerning technological innovations. Later, sociologists such as Wolfgang Zapf (1989) and Jürgen Howald and colleagues (Howaldt et al., 2022; Howaldt & Schwarz, 2011; Howaldt & Schwarz, 2021) emphasized that social innovations are distinct phenomena with autonomous aspects and specifics rather than merely being a starting point for, side effect of, or outcome of technological innovation. They advocated for a sociological conceptualization of social innovations, differentiating it from technological innovation on the one hand and from the broader sociological concept of social change on the other hand. These efforts culminated in a widely recognized definition of social innovation:

“A social innovation is a new combination and/ or new configuration of social practices in certain areas of activity or social contexts prompted by certain actors or constellations of actors in an intentional, targeted manner with the goal of better satisfying or answering needs and problems than is possible on the basis of established practices” (Howaldt & Schwarz, 2011, p. 210).

The definition provided by Howaldt and Schwarz marks a crucial advancement in recognizing the role of actors and their lifeworlds in shaping social innovations. By emphasizing this aspect, the definition acknowledges the agency and influence of individuals and groups in driving innovation processes. It underscores the importance of considering different actors' diverse needs, challenges, and potentials in transformation and future outlooks.

However, a deeper analysis of this definition unveils implicit assumptions that align with the modernization paradigm, which could potentially limit its applicability and relevance in specific contexts. One such assumption is the inherent association of social innovation with the notion of progress – a notion that increasingly has been challenged by experiences and impressions of discontents (Baumann, 1997), regression (Jaeggi, 2023) and loss (Reckwitz, 2024) in postmodern societies. This framework often equates innovation with improvement or optimization, implying a linear development trajectory toward a perceived ideal state (Schubert, 2023). It overlooks that modernization, while driven by a belief in progress, is inherently characterized by what Degele & Dries (2005) describe as an ambivalox process. Social systems are complex, and notions of progress vary significantly depending on cultural, social, and historical contexts. Social change is not always straightforward but often unfolds through ambivalent and dialectical processes, where positive advancements coexist with setbacks. Adopting an “ambivalox” perspective highlights social innovation as a process shaped by tension and unpredictability, rather than continuous improvement. In addition, as authors concerned with the post-socialist transformation of Middle and Eastern Europe in the 1990s already argued (Wiesenthal, 1994; Dittrich, 2005; Thomas, 2005), renewal and social change can only be intentionally planned and managed to a limited extent. They always take place under the condition of contingency and necessitate consideration of unintended side effects and local resistance practices.

Moreover, the emphasis on “*better satisfying or answering needs and problems*” (Howaldt & Schwarz, 2011, p. 210) suggests a utilitarian approach to social innovation, where the primary goal is to address existing challenges and enhance outcomes. Here, the progress paradigm carries a strong normative undertone, raising critical questions about who defines what is valuable or beneficial and whose needs are prioritized. Despite Howaldt and Schwarz’s (2011, p. 210) emphasis that the term “social” in social innovation should be understood structurally, focusing on social practices rather than normative notions of the common good, their definition still inherently includes normativity in the formulated goal. Contrary to this normative stance, social innovations, depending on the interests of the parties and the social attribution, do not necessarily have to be regarded as inherently good or socially desirable. Even more, the labeling of certain deliberate changes and plans for change as socially innovative is highly intertwined with power structures within society. The reading of an innovation as “better satisfying or answering needs” (Howaldt & Schwarz, 2011, p. 210) often reflects the dominant values and interests of those equipped with discursive power. Thus, social innovations are not neutral but deeply embedded in social, political, and economic contexts. What one group views as a positive innovation may be perceived by another as undermining or exclusionary.

Furthermore, the question of mandate is crucial to understanding the dynamics of social innovation. Who has the authority to drive change, and whose interests are represented in the process? Conflicting agendas often emerge as different social groups may hold divergent visions of desirable change. This situation underscores the necessity of examining power relations within social innovation processes, recognizing that the framing of innovations as socially beneficial exists within a contested terrain shaped by struggles over legitimacy and authority. This conceptual shift emphasizes that imagined futures (Ergen, 2023) that surround innovation processes are contested and carry conflict potentials that are sometimes overlooked

in discussions. Due to the rise of conflict arenas concerning issues like migration, climate change, or identities, questions of whether or not to change and innovate socially should be evaluated rationally. However, they are highly morally and affectively charged (Mau et al., 2023). Additionally, the “BePart” project’s central insight suggests that openness to innovation and change cannot be taken for granted, as there are both enabling and inhibiting factors, such as former biographical and collective experiences of change, that determine whether innovation opportunities and demands are embraced by the actors or experienced as an imposition.

Uncovering these implicit assumptions of the social innovation concept underscores the necessity for comprehensive reflection before its application in social science research. Specifically, it becomes clear that implementing social innovations requires a thorough understanding of the local social structure and its inherent logic and the inclusion of the local population.

2 Research Methods

Methodologically, our research is situated within the reconstructive paradigm (Bohnsack, 2014; Przyborski & Wohlrab-Sahr, 2014), combining Grounded Theory Methodology (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) with Hermeneutical Sequential Analysis (Erhard & Sammet, 2018). Data collection and analyses are intertwined and aim to unravel the tacit knowledge (Collins, 2000), implicit orientational patterns, and indexical rules (Garfinkel, 1967) that guide social behavior. During our ethnographic field stays in the two case study towns, we collected a variety of data: we did focused participant observations (Knoblauch, 2005), produced field notes, initiated conversations over the garden fence and conducted planned narrative interviews (Schütze, 1983) as well as group discussions (Bohnsack, 2000). The goal was to capture the personal stories of the people in their communities, their experiences with the forced changes of the past and present, and their outlook on the future. So far, we have conducted in each community 21 resp. 28 participant observations, three resp. four group discussions, and eight resp. 11 narrative interviews. Building on our conceptional reflections, we finally took our empirical results and searched for models for translating our in-depth understanding of the two communities into possible social innovation goals and initiating the respective innovation processes practically. In the following chapter, we give condensed insights into these considerations and how they played out in the field.

3 Initiating Social Innovations in Two Small Towns in Lusatia: Conclusions from Case Studies

In the following, we give insights from our work-in-progress analyses. Due to the space limitations, we spell out the contrasting and idealized constituencies of the two researched towns and conclude on how they open up the space of possibilities for social innovation formats. Here, we want to call them Rabenfurt and Ostenau.

Most significantly, the two communities are almost structured opposite concerning public participation in shaping and implementing renewal. Whereas Rabenfurt is characterized by a solid top-down structure in which the mayor and a relatively small network of an economically prosperous and politically established male elite shape the community's fate, we find a robust civil society and a proactive, bottom-up structure in Ostenau. This difference lies partially in the differing histories of the two municipalities. Though both were equally dependent on coal mining and went through the turbulent era that ensued after German reunification, characterized by the sudden shuttering of local industries, economic decline, and a palpable sense of instability, both had differing starting points for their paths to post-socialist consolidation. Rabenfurt has been home to a large chemical site since the 1930s and

experienced private and public investments in its infrastructure after the reunification. Therefore, equipped with job and consumption opportunities, the town was established as the center of the surrounding districts. Ostenau took a different approach. Building on lively church groups and their late-GDR protest background, they engaged in ecological model projects in the 1990s and tried to navigate the difficult times of unemployment and uncertainty by, for example, offering low-wage public employment.

As a result, today, one can find two contrary cultures with respective world views and ways to tackle the transformative challenges posed by the end of coal production. Rabenfurt has established a solid economic orientation concerning innovative projects and practices. Renewal is thought of as investments in infrastructure, educating and attracting labor force, and guaranteeing a social order that holds few surprises. Ostenau is much less economically successful but more adventurous. The community creatively organized against the usurpation of Ostenau by radical right-wing organizations, pushing them out of their town. There is an atmosphere of grassroots activities, with various groups and agents sensing local needs, coming up with unconventional ways, and implementing new ideas. At the same time, we find a dominant narrative of decline accompanied by a nostalgic mourning for a prosperous past.

Given these diverse characteristics, what qualifies as a social innovation and how it can be implemented in the respective communities vary significantly. In Rabenfurt, one has to deal with the high degree of social structuration and, e.g., find ways of activating the local inhabitants, mainly organized in social and sportive associations. There are needs and potentials that may be covered up by the dominant perception of a well-kept town represented by the mentioned elite and how they could be addressed. In Ostenau, one can dock on to an (in parts) already mobilized civil society with a sense for tackling local challenges, struggling with precarious economic conditions. Therefore, one could help guide initiatives and equip them with infrastructure.

These analyses were further validated through our initial experiences in implementing specific formats within municipalities. For instance, during a citizen dialogue in Rabenfurt, where preliminary findings from the case study were also presented for discussion, participants spontaneously reproduced the case structure reconstructed in the project—both in terms of social interaction patterns and discursively. The alternative perspectives raised by the research project were hardly taken up productively due to the solid inherent logic; instead, the participants interpreted them within their established frames of reference. We conclude that social innovations can only thrive in such a strongly normed social context if they are in some way compatible with the established logic—or are located entirely outside the established structures. In Ostenau, too, our findings on the case structure corresponded with how the local community reacted to the presentation of our initial results. The discrepancy identified in the project between a vibrant, creative civil society on the one hand and a widely prevalent local narrative of nostalgic mourning for a prosperous past on the other was met with open ears and led to a shared reflection on ways to bring the hidden treasures of the community more into the public consciousness. This process took on a life of its own through the initiative of a local citizen who mobilized large parts of the community to participate in a village competition and highlight the invisible „treasures of Ostenau“. Although, given the ongoing nature of our research, we cannot yet say with certainty what role our project played in this process, it is clear that the external research intervention has ultimately been absorbed into the local logic.

Conclusion

Given considerations in previous sections, it becomes apparent that social innovation, while offering promise for transformative change, harbors implicit assumptions and needs an

elaborate contextualization when applied practically. A thorough knowledge of and sensitivity to the local community, its history and social structure, and its inherent logic are essential to understanding how innovations can be initiated. It includes respecting that change is not always unilinear and manageable, remaining analytically open to peculiar local characteristics, and differing understandings of the typical excellent and social power dynamics. Thus, ethnographic groundwork enables projects like ours, which are tasked with testing social innovation formats, to identify local challenges, uncover discursive entry points, and engage the necessary personnel to start social innovation processes.

Acknowledgements

The grant supporting the reported research is the “*REGION.innovativ*” program, established by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), which is acknowledged for its funding contribution to the present study. We also express our gratitude to all individuals who supported the creation of this article.

References

- Baumann, Z. (1997). *Postmodernity and its Discontents*. Polity Press. ISBN 0745617905.
- Bohnsack, R. (2000). Gruppendiskussion. In Flick, U., von Kardorff, E., & Steinke, I. (Eds.), *Qualitative Forschung: Ein Handbuch*. (pp. 369–383). Rowohlt. ISBN 978-3-499-55628-9.
- Bohnsack, R. (2014). *Rekonstruktive Sozialforschung: Einführung in qualitative Methoden*, 9th ed. Verlag Barbara Budrich. <https://doi.org/10.36198/9783838585543>
- Bösch, S. (2023). Ambivalence and side-effects of social innovations. In Howaldt, J., & Kaletka, C. (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Social Innovation*. (pp. 2–6). Edward Elgar Publishing. ISBN 978-1-80037-334-1.
- Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung. (2024). *REGION.innovativ*. https://www.innovation-strukturwandel.de/strukturwandel/de/innovation-strukturwandel/region-innovativ/region-innovativ_node.html
- Collins, H. (2000). What is tacit knowledge? In Knorr Cetina, K., Schatzki, T. R., & von Savigny, E. (Eds.), *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory*. (pp. 115–128). Routledge. eISBN 9780203977453. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203977453>
- Degele, N., & Dries, C. (2005). *Modernisierungstheorie. Eine Einführung*. München: Fink (UTB). <https://www.soziologie.uni-freiburg.de/personen/dries/1degele-dries-2005-modernisierungstheorie.-eine-einfuehrung.pdf>
- Dittrich, E. (2005). Perspektiven neuer Transformationsforschung. In Kollmorgen, R. (Ed.), *Transformation als Typ sozialen Wandels. Postsozialistische Lektionen, historische und interkulturelle Vergleiche*. (pp. 85–92). Lit. ISBN 978-3-8258-7868-6.
- Ergen, T. (2023). Imagined futures and social innovation. In Howaldt, J., & Kaletka, C. (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Social Innovation*. (pp. 7–10). Edward Elgar Publishing. ISBN 978-1-80037-334-1.
- Erhard, F., & Jukschat, N. (2023). Soziale Innovationen: implizite Annahmen und analytisches Potenzial. *Behemoth A Journal on Social Dis/Order*, 16(2), 109–122. <https://doi.org/10.6094/behemoth.2023.16.2.1102>. <https://freijournals.ub.uni-freiburg.de/behemoth/en/archive/>

- Erhard, F., & Sammet, K. (Eds.). (2018). *Sequenzanalyse praktisch*. Beltz Juventa. ISBN 978-3-7799-3695-4.
- Garfinkel, H. (1967). *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. Polity. ISBN 978-0-745-60005-5.
- Ghys, T. (2023). Resistance to social innovation. In Howaldt, J., & Kaletka, C. (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Social Innovation*. (pp. 18–22). Edward Elgar Publishing. ISBN 978-1-80037-334-1.
- Glaser, B. G. & Strauss, A. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Aldine Transaction. ISBN 978-0-202-30260-7.
- Godin, B., & Vinck, D. (Eds.). (2017). *Critical Studies of Innovation: Alternative Approaches to the Pro-Innovation Bias*. Edward Elgar Publishing. ISBN 978-1-78536-696-3.
- Howaldt, J., & Kaletka, C. (Eds.). (2023a). *Encyclopedia of Social Innovation*. Edward Elgar Publishing. ISBN 978-1-80037-334-1.
- Howaldt, J., & Kaletka, C. (2023b). Introduction to the Encyclopedia of Social Innovation. In Howaldt, J., & Kaletka, C. (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Social Innovation*. (pp. xxv–xxx). Edward Elgar Publishing. ISBN 978-1-80037-334-1.
- Howaldt, J., Kreibich, M., Streicher, J., & Thiem, C. (Eds.). (2022). *Zukunft gestalten mit Sozialen Innovationen: Neue Herausforderungen für Politik, Gesellschaft und Wirtschaft*. Campus. ISBN 9783593451268.
- Howaldt, J., & Schwarz, M. (2011). Social Innovation – Social Challenges and Future Research Fields. In Jeschke, S., Isenhardt, I., Hees, F., & Trantow, S. (Eds.), *Enabling Innovation: Innovative Capability - German and International Views*. (pp. 203–223). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-24503-9_22
- Howaldt, J., & Schwarz, M. (2021). Soziale Innovation. In Blättel-Mink, B., Schulz-Schaeffer, I., & Windeler, A. (Eds.), *Handbuch Innovationsforschung: Sozialwissenschaftliche Perspektiven*. (pp. 247–262). Springer Nature. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-17668-6>
- Jaeggi, R. (2023). *Fortschritt und Regression*. Suhrkamp. ISBN 978-3-518-58714-0.
- Knoblauch, H. (2005). Focused Ethnography. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 6(3). <https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-6.3.20>
- Mau, S., Lux, T., & Westheuser, L. (2023). *Triggerpunkte. Konsens und Konflikt in der Gegenwartsgesellschaft*. Suhrkamp. ISBN 978-3-518-02984-8.
- Moulaert, F., MacCallum, D., Mehmood, A., & Hamdouch, A. (Eds.). (2014). *The International Handbook on Social Innovation: Collective Action, Social Learning and Transdisciplinary Research*. Edward Elgar. ISBN 978-1-78254-559-0.
- Mulgan, G. (2019). *Social Innovation: How Societies Find the Power to Change*. Policy Press. <https://doi.org/10.56687/9781447353805>
- Przyborski, A., & Wohlrab-Sahr, M. (2014). *Qualitative Sozialforschung: Ein Arbeitsbuch*, 4th ed. De Gruyter Oldenbourg. ISBN 978-3-486-70892-9.
- Rammert, W. (2024). Innovation. In Peer, C., Semlitsch, E., Güntner, S. A., Haas, M., & Bernögger, A. (Eds.), *Urbane Transformation durch soziale Innovation*. (pp. 89–98). TU Wien Academic Press. https://doi.org/10.34727/2024/isbn.978-3-85448-064-8_12
- Reckwitz, A. (2024). *Verlust: Ein Grundproblem der Moderne*. Suhrkamp. ISBN 978-3-518-58822-2.

- Schubert, C. (2023). Social innovations as a repair of social order. In Howaldt, J., & Kaletka, C. (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Social Innovation*. (pp. 31–35). Edward Elgar Publishing. ISBN 978-1-80037-334-1.
- Schumpeter, J. A. (1939). *Business Cycles*. McGraw-Hill.
- Schütz, A., & Luckmann, T. (2003). *Strukturen der Lebenswelt*. UVK.
<https://www.utb.de/doi/book/10.36198/9783838524122>
- Schütze, F. (1983). Biographieforschung und narratives Interview. *Neue Praxis. Zeitschrift für Sozialarbeit, Sozialpädagogik und Sozialpolitik*, 13(3), 283–293.
<https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/handle/document/5314>
- Thomas, M. (2005). Ostdeutscher Stillstand versus ungleichzeitige Lernprozesse – Transformationsmodus und Innovationsblockaden. In Kollmorgen, R. (Ed.), *Transformation als Typ sozialen Wandels. Postsozialistische Lektionen, historische und interkulturelle Vergleiche*. (pp. 95–110). Lit. ISBN 978-3-8258-7868-6.
- Wiesenthal, W. (1994). Die Krise holistischer Politikansätze und das Projekt der gesteuerten Systemtransformation. *Antrittsvorlesung*, 48. <https://doi.org/10.18452/1643>
- Zapf, W. (1989). Über soziale Innovationen. *Soziale Welt*, 40(1/2), 170–183.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/40878048>

ÚČAST NA STRUKTURÁLNÍCH ZMĚNÁCH – POROZUMĚNÍ SOCIÁLNÍM INOVACÍM V LUŽICI Z PERSPEKTIVY PROSTORU PRO ŽIVOT

Tento článek se zaměřuje na pochopení sociálních inovací v Lužici z perspektivy orientace na život. Etnografické případové studie ve dvou malých městech zkoumají pohled lidí na transformaci, zejména její dopad. Analýza kriticky hodnotí koncept sociálních inovací a odhaluje implicitní, často nereflektované předpoklady. Na základě sociologické perspektivy článek zpochybňuje pojmy záměrného řízení změn a normativního pokroku a místo toho zdůrazňuje komplexnost sociálních praktik. Naznačuje, že podpora sociálních inovací vyžaduje diferencované chápání a citlivost ke kontextu místních komunit, přičemž uznává různé zkušenosti, jež utvářejí řízení změn.

BETEILIGUNG IM STRUKTURWANDEL – SOZIALE INNOVATIONEN IN DER LAUSITZ AUS EINER LEBENSWELTPERSPEKTIVE

Der Beitrag fokussiert aus einer verstehenden, lebensweltorientierten Perspektive auf Soziale Innovationen in der Lausitz. Anhand von ethnografischen Fallstudien in zwei kleinen Städten werden die Perspektiven der Menschen auf den Strukturwandel und seine Folgen untersucht. Die Analyse beleuchtet das Konzept der Sozialen Innovation mit seinen impliziten, oft unhinterfragten Annahmen kritisch. Gestützt auf soziologische Perspektiven hinterfragt der Beitrag Steuerungsphantasien und normative Fortschrittsannahmen und betont stattdessen die Komplexität sozialer Praktiken. Erkenntnisse aus den Fallstudien heben unterschiedliche Wahrnehmungen vergangener und bevorstehender Strukturwandelprozesse hervor. Während einige Interviewte Zukunftsoptimismus zum Ausdruck bringen, bleiben andere in Erzählungen des Niedergangs verhaftet, die anhaltende existenzielle Sorgen widerspiegeln. Zusammenfassend legt der Artikel nahe, dass die Förderung sozialer Innovationen eine Abkehr von simplifizierenden Konzepten sowie ein differenziertes Verständnis erfordert, das die vielfältigen Erfahrungen anerkennt, die den Umgang mit Veränderungen prägen.

UDZIAŁ W ZMIANACH STRUKTURALNYCH – ZROZUMIENIE INNOWACJI SPOŁECZNYCH NA ŁUŻYCACH Z PERSPEKTYWY PRZESTRZENI DO ŻYCIA

Niniejszy artykuł skupia się na zrozumieniu innowacji społecznych na Łużycach z perspektywy zorientowania się na życie. Na podstawie etnograficznych studiów przypadków, przeprowadzonych w dwóch małych miastach, badane są spojrzenia ludzi na transformację, a zwłaszcza jej skutki. Analiza w sposób krytyczny ocenia koncepcję innowacji społecznych i pokazuje ukryte, często nieuwzględniane założenia. Opierając się na perspektywach socjologicznych, artykuł kwestionuje pojęcia celowego zarządzania zmianą i normatywnego postępu, zamiast tego podkreślając kompleksowość praktyk społecznych. Wskazuje, że wspomaganie innowacji społecznych wymaga zróżnicowanego rozumienia i wrażliwości w kontekście społeczności lokalnych, przy czym uznaje różne doświadczenia kształtujące zarządzanie zmianami.