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In this article, we investigate into local economic restructuring in rural areas that are affected by disruptive technologies. Drawing on an institutionalist framework we apply systematic theory-informed case study analysis of two rural communities in Austria and identify practices that are crucial for a sustainable development of local communities and find that disruptive technologies have to be accompanied by social innovations in the affected communities which consider the capacities and the needs of the local community and establish vertical linkages to policies on the regional and national level. We contribute to the theoretical discussion by presenting a feasible framework for contextual analysis of economic restructuring. Further, we show how this institutionalist perspective can generate insights that support entrepreneurs and policy makers in designing strategies and policies to handle disruptive technologies in rural areas.

Highlights

□ Suggests that new sociological institutionalism can provide a framework for the analysis on regional socio-economic change. □ Develops a multilevel framework of regional socio-economic change. □ Applies this framework on two contrasting, in-depth case studies. □ Finds that the interrelated nature of this multilevel framework impact on the effectiveness of restructuring practices.

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