

In social scientific research about Cities, everyday knowledge has hitherto been largely unexplored and certainly not discussed in depth. This premise is the starting point for this thesis. The thesis aims to capture the design principles with which cities are actually constructed as well as the meanings which are attributed to them. Furthermore it aims to clarify the specific construction of cities. For this purpose an interdisciplinary approach is adopted linking the intrinsic logic of cities to the Sociology of Knowledge (Schütz, Berger / Luckmann) using Personal Construct Theory (Kelly). An exemplary analysis of 352 Repertory Grid Interviews shows that there are a large variety of meanings ascribed to Urban Realities and that they are more widely differentiated than previous attempts to define the City in social research have suggested. Through qualitative content analysis 43 general principles for the social construction of urban realities have been abstracted. Of these, Culture, Cityscape, Urban Mobility and the Attitude of the City to the Outside World are considered to be particularly relevant. A further result of this thesis is the "Social Sense Space of Cities" which explores certain aspects of the relationships which exist between the different general principles. Based on this, it is shown how specific meanings ascribed differentiate the relational field of Urban Realities of certain cities including Berlin, Bremen, Hamburg, Cologne and Munich. Herewith, the analysis shows that the City becomes not only a sensed object of everyday life by its characteristics of size, density and heterogeneity but especially by virtue of its qualitative effects. Thus, the work provides fundamental insights which can be used in urban sociological empirical analysis and theory postulation as well as in urban planning and development.