

## **Abstract**

Thynell, Marie, 2003, *The Unmanageable Modernity. An Explorative Study of Motorized Mobility in Development*. Ph. D. Thesis, Department of Peace and Development Research, Göteborg University Box 700, SE-405 30 Göteborg, Sweden. ISBN: 91 87380 57 9

This thesis is an explorative study of a neglected area in International Political Economy and Development Studies. Modernisation has provoked the global extension of motorized mobility. The establishing of motorized transport systems is a core area in modern development.

The theoretical framework of the study builds on a combination of theories in International Political Economy and the theory of Large Technical Systems. The study includes three empirical parts: a comparison of the historical evolution of motorization in Brasília and Tehran, a comparison of the handling of current urban transport problems in Rome and New Delhi, and a study of the views of three global vehicle corporations and one oil company regarding the future of motorized transport. The historical study of the role of motorized mobility in two very different social and cultural contexts stresses the strength of hegemonic influence from Western countries, particularly of the US. It also shows the limited role of the local interpretation of the problems and the need for increased motorized mobility in modernisation. The study of current problems in two very different cities has identified significant differences among the political and professional actors as well as among representatives of NGOs in the two cities. At the same time there seems to be a firm belief in the ability of technological development to solve the current problems of transport systems.

The text analysis of the views of three leading car companies and one large oil company on the future possibilities of handling the problems of motorization and automobility shows very clearly that these actors only focus on the development of their products and their production, not on the necessary changes of the entire motorized system. It is therefore a dangerous to rely only on technical development.

Finally, it is concluded that there are no signs of any reflexive thinking among representatives of the state or the market about how to manage the fundamental crisis of motorized transport systems and their negative side effects. Hence, there is room for new research initiatives in this field to improve sustainable and human development.

**Keywords:** Development Studies, International Political Economy, Large Technological Systems, Hegemony, Local Interpretation, Automobility, Motorization, Sustainability, Brasília, Tehran, Rome, New Delhi.