

GLOBALIZATION, ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR INDUSTRIALIZING ECONOMIES OF VITNAM, NETHERLANDS ANTILLES AND KENYA

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I. INTRODUCTION

In the 1970s and early 1980s, the damage done to environmental quality by the institutions of modernity held center stage in the environmental discourses in industrialized countries. Since the mid-1980s, a more balanced position has moved to the forefront of environmental debates; however, scientific and technological developments, economic markets and mechanism, nation-states and political institutions and arrangements, increasingly have been recognized not only for harming the environment, but also for contributing to its protection. Though economic dynamics and interests continue to dominate institutional developments and transformations in western societies, environmental interests and considerations play an increasing role. Theories of ecological modernization, in particular (cf. Spaargaren and Mol, 1992; Weale, 1992; Mol, 1995; Mol and Sonnenfeld, 2000), have tried to conceptualize and understand these environment-informed institutional transformations and dynamics. In doing so they have entered into debates with more conventional political economy analyses, in which environmental reforms are usually interpreted as marginal, window dressing or only to the profit of the elite.