

A Crude Awakening: The Oil Crash



Modern society is a dynamic system that develops under various circumstances and adjusts to opportunities by creating a strong and growing demand for resources. Presently, humanity undergoes a process of globalization. In this context, oil is the main means of globalization that has a great influence on humanity. It is argued that oil and its refined elements introduce people to new challenges, offer numerous possibilities for progress, and affect the global economy. The current paper discusses the concept of globalization, evaluates the benefits of this process, as well as describes the main adverse consequences of globalization in terms of oil production, its history, and future perspectives. The paper focuses on the specific information given in the film *A Crude Awakening: The Oil Crash*.

According to the film under consideration, rapid development, which has started during the last century and increased global relations, is inextricably linked to the efficient production of oil around the world (particularly in Latin countries, the United States of America, and Russia). Crude oil is a valid natural resource. Oil and its refined elements (various petrochemicals) are hidden under the ground. Therefore, the massive production of it started only after humanity had created special instruments for extracting oil. Oil production allowed global cooperation that was otherwise impossible to achieve. On the one hand, oil is an important element of globalization. On the other hand, globalization “drives energy markets” and expands them for oil (Yergin, n. d., p. 34). There are a number of metaphors that capture the notion of oil and interpret the significance of the substance in terms of globalization. There are such common figurative descriptions that are presented in the film to emphasize certain attributes of the products as, for instance, “the bloodstream of the world’s economy” and “the blood of the earth” (Gelpke, 2006). The first metaphor describes the connection between oil and globalization. The economy depends on oil and its accessibility. This product is incorporated in many businesses, agriculture, and even space ship programs. The second metaphor implies the adverse consequences of globalization, related to violent attempts of political leaders to gain

control over oil. Here, the blood of the earth means the blood of people who suffer in order to produce oil, protect the security of its locations, and avoid foreign intruders. Thus, the film stresses the influence of the oil market on the process of globalization from different points of view.

Globalization is based on active global investments, trade, and technology that results in higher economic growth and the welfare of people. Judging from the motion picture, it may be said that globalization depends on energy that can be accumulated by the humankind in different forms. Oil is the leader among other resources. It is stated that according to the energy indicators one barrel of oil provides the energy that is a nominal value of work of twelve people during a year (Gelpke & McCormack, 2006). By taking this data into consideration, it is easy to imagine the immense effect of oil on the production. The film provides an example of the United States of America and shows how the discovery of oil on the territory of the country has changed its economic and technological status. In the 1960s, the United States was a major supplier of oil. As a result, people could use oil as a cheap energy resource for various needs, for example, to develop infrastructure and turn it into fuel. This access to oil was a foundation for a successful and prosperous society that ruled the global market. The film *A Crude Awakening: The Oil Crash* illustrates that the desire to gain more is a core principle of present-day globalization that may be described as a process of pursuit of oil.

Globalization provides humanity with multiple benefits. Massive consumption of oil around the world “represents the success of globalization” and is characterized by “the best global economic performance in a generation” (Yergin, n. d., p. 34). In order to demonstrate a positive effect of the use of oil, one should consider the fact that there are more than six billion people on the planet and most of them have sufficient amounts of food to eat (Gelpke & McCormack, 2006). Scientists and politicians stress the role of oil in this process. Due to the fact that oil became fuel for

technological units that are applied to grow and harvest goods, the production of food increased and people were able to support families in bigger numbers. This phenomenon is described in the film as a “green revolution” and it implies an intensive use of technology that simplified the work on the land and made it more efficient. In the process of globalization technologies were shared among countries.

Another visible benefit of globalization is the improvement of public transportation. Numerous roads were constructed to connect cities and towns that were strategically important for the economy. This enormous element of globalization was realized due to the production of oil. Apart from different road vehicles, humanity also applied scientific knowledge to map air routes for planes that are responsible for intercontinental connections. In this case, oil is applied not just as energy for transportation (for example, diesel fuel) but also as a basic and consistent element of the road construction. Additionally, the film gives information about the significance of oil in production of bitumen (also known as asphalt). Crude oil is used for creating a material that is basic for million miles of paved roads around the world. Furthermore, there are other things that are produced from oil and may be used daily.

Oil positively affects humanity in terms of globalization. In the twentieth century, when the boom of oil production started, people were introduced to the whole “galaxy of things” made of oil (Gelpke & McCormack, 2006). As it was mentioned above, the development of transportation is a direct result of the oil production. Oil, as a source of synthetic rubber, is used in cars and planes manufacturing due to its strength and thermal stability. The world manufactures rubber that is used as material for tires, shoes, cable insulation, sporting goods, and other things. With the help of oil, humanity produced plastic that is made of petrochemicals. Global oil market produces thousands of items that are made of plastic. Oil industry supplies farmers with pesticides and synthetic fertilizers that are used in food production. Oil byproducts serve as food flavoring and preservatives.

Thus, oil is a global means of cultivation and production of food. It is also used to manufacture synthetic fabrics (clothes, carpets, furniture, etc.) and cleaning products. The global cosmetics industry uses products made of petroleum-based ingredients. It may be argued that one of the most beneficial applications of elements that are produced with oil is the production of pharmaceuticals. Humanity is able to resist various diseases and disorders due to the fact that a part of medications is derived from petroleum (for example, painkillers such as aspirin and even homeopathic drugs). Petroleum engineering had its influence on the achievements of modern medicine, so this is one of the main advantages of oil and its impact on globalization. However, multiple benefits of globalization are linked to some negative consequences of this process.

The film depicts that under the influence of oil, globalization may have ill effects on humanity. Almost each positive aspect of globalization has its negative counterpart that is able to initiate deleterious processes. For example, the global green revolution, which is associated with prosperity, also means that humanity faces the issue of overpopulation. This “growth challenge”, as mentioned in the movie, is one of the reasons that lead to global warming. There is another kind of challenge that is associated with globalization and appears due to “the reaction against globalization – in the Middle East, the former Soviet Union or Latin America” (Yergin, n. d., p. 34). This consequence “can be encountered in many different forms – fundamentalism, resurgent nationalism, or renewed statism” and it deals with the problem of the future usage of oil (Yergin, n. d., p. 34). The core of the problem is hidden in the fact that oil reserves are limited and they may be exhausted in the next thirty-fifty years (Gelpke & McCormack, 2006). Presently, globalization signifies the “peak oil”. However, in the film, narrators raise a question whether their grandchildren will be able to travel by plane in future. In the context, there is a severe political fight for the places of oil accumulation. Thus, oil is described as a global magnet for war on the grounds of “competing for the customer’s dollar” (Gelpke & McCormack, 2006).

The first war that was driven by oil politics occurred between Saddam Hussein and Kuwait. Nowadays, the geopolitical position of different countries (for example, Iraq) intensifies the possibility of war. According to the data depicted in the film, people may expect multigenerational recourse wars if other sources of energy are not discovered and used. Meanwhile, if oil gets exhausted, the stock market may collapse and trigger a great worldwide depression.

In conclusion, globalization is a process that involves the distribution of various resources. Oil is considered to be the major “global currency” that establishes the character of international cooperation. Oil affects globalization, including economic and technological development. Globalization has a number of benefits, but it also imposes critical challenges. While the oil market flourishes with opportunities to produce fuel, food, plastic, drugs, and other goods, the industry may suffer from the loss of resources. This loss leads to the need of military intervention in order to secure the places of oil accumulation. The influence of oil on globalization and humanity is still being discussed on the international arena.

