

FAKE NEWS AND THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE ROMANIAN INDUSTRY

Prof. PhD VIOREL PARASCHIV

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania

Prof. PhD CRISTINA-GEORGIANA VOICU,

Titu Maiorescu Secondary School of Iași, Romania

ABSTRACT: *This study analyzes the impact of several groups posts on social network, wick are aimed at focusing on the Romanian industry. Aftel the extended 3-month study, we found that most of the posts were aimed at distorting the facts about the Romanian industry and economy.*

Keywords: *disinformation; industry; Romania; social networks;*

Introduction

After 1990, with the fall of the Communist regime¹ the change of Romania's economic paradigm determined a fundamental restructuring of the industry. The transition from planned, energy-intensive and inefficient industry to free market industry required extensive structural changes to the production flows and then existing industrial platforms, most of which have disappeared over time. The transition from the "brownfields" landscapes specific to the large state-owned industrial platforms having no horizon after 1990 to the "greenfields" landscapes² specific to the current industrial parks (after the 2007 European Union integration) is the best proof of the current Romanian industry resilience. Unfortunately, the resilience³ of the Romanian industry is not accompanied by the educated population's mental resilience anchored in the countries and doctrines specific to the statism, a social aspect that is to be introduced by the following socio-geographical analysis!

Methods and principles

The present analysis is based on impact surveys carried out on a social communication network highly widespread in the Romanian media landscape, more

precisely on its thematic groups that have historical and current reverberations regarding the Romanian industry. The direct research methods concerned the age of those who posted the information, the acknowledged occupation/social status and the frequency of the posts (day and week). The already existing historical and quantitative methods were also applied.

Discussions

The perception of the current general public is induced by the statist (Communist) political legacy at the level of communication and the collective mind, i.e. "in today's Romania nothing is produced anymore, while the entire industry was destroyed on purpose..."⁴ since we have become a huge market for the West. The current industry no longer emits smoke massively polluting everything around, it is no longer located in the city centers, and the workers no longer walk around in their dirty overalls. The resilience of the current industry⁵ and the smart industries⁶ are the prevailing elements of the present and the future of this significant economic branch in our country (figure 1). The current industry is soundless, the big Communist platforms have been mostly decommissioned, while the industrial parks have been developed which have stimulated the strong economic

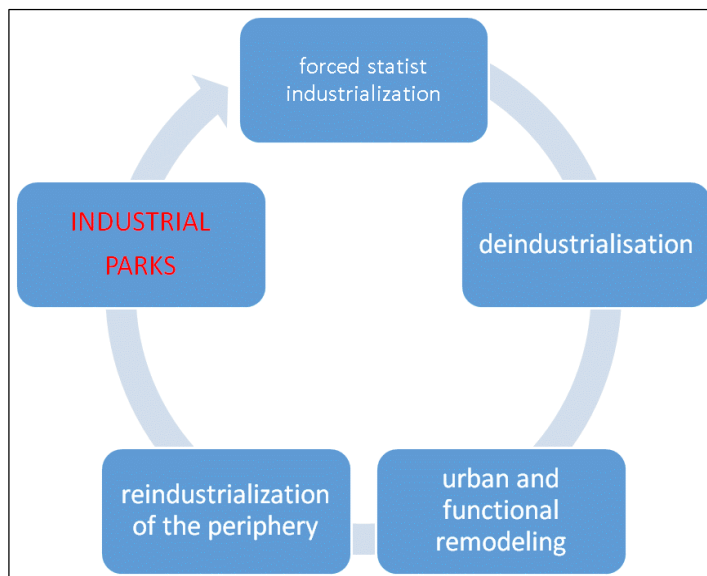


Fig. 1. The logical scheme of the Romanian industry resilience
(Paraschiv, 2022, mss)

development of the city's outskirts. Public transportation to current companies/companies is done by their own means, and workers no longer use public transportation and are no longer so visible!

The ongoing slander practiced by some representatives of the statist regime or the so-called "lumpenproletariat"⁷ results from the indoctrination specific to the Communist education following the class struggle being increasingly and visibly reflected in the media landscape of communication on social networks by relatively well-organized groups of individuals. Without knowing the basics of an economic analysis and without taking into account the analyzes and statistical data that are free for public consultation these groups of individuals publish their musings about the state of the industry in the social network.

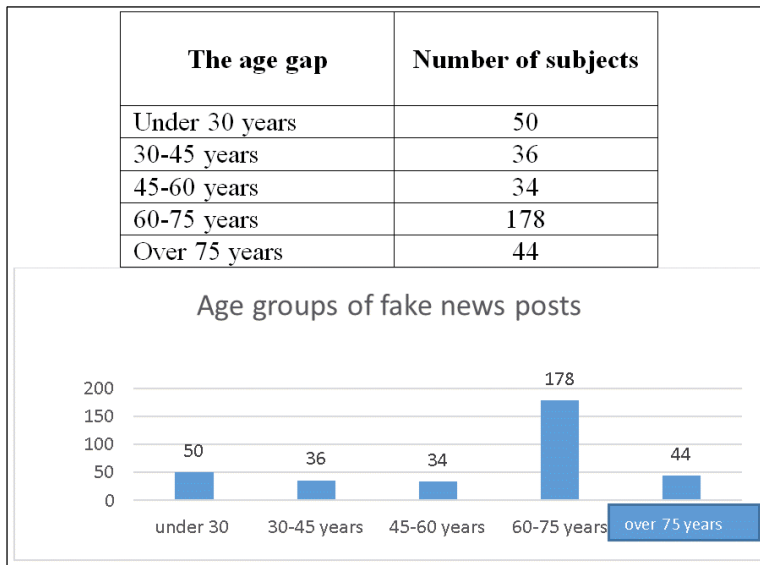
Research findings

The sample of subjects analyzed during the first semester of 2022 (January-July) included 342 adults... their ages and the

frequency of posts that fall under fake news, but also the declared place of residence. It is difficult to fully check on all those included in the research based on the actual data of the subjects' identity and on their residence. However, we managed to establish short conversations with some of them and found that many individuals' "public" data were intentionally fake!

According to the age criterion of those who frequently posted false information about the Romanian industry (at least 2-3 times a week), the situation is shown in table 1 and the graph in figure 2, almost 65%, i.e. a number of 222 subjects out of a total of 342 having the age of over 60 years, respectively the gap 60-75 years (178) and over 75 years (44).

Actually, the mentioned majority includes people in their third age p – retired. According to their educational level, it turned out that about 38% of them graduated their university studies and about 49% high school studies! It was not possible to precisely establish the level of their basic education for 13% of the researched sample.



Tab. 1 and fig. 2. Age of subjects

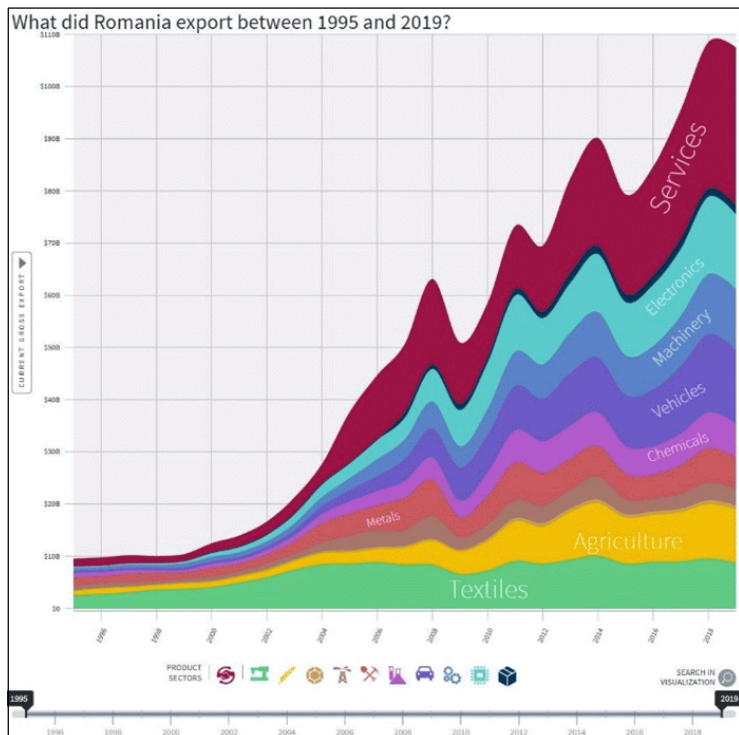


Fig. 3. Romanian exports

(Source: <https://atlas.cid.harvard.edu/countries/185/export-basket/2022>)

We tried a notifying voluntary action by providing the subjects with an analysis of the Romanian industry as a graph, published by a prestigious publishing house of a Western university (figure 3), in order to prove that their images are bad-wishful thinking and that they have no scientific coverage. The result was negative accompanied by receiving insults and being called “influencers”. However, we noticed that the fiercest “posters” in the target group of our analysis are also found on the pages of a nationalist and anti-system party, which is suspected of being financed by the Russian Federation. This could explain the frequency of the posts and the fierceness as well as the anti-national and anti-western nature of the posts!

Conclusions

Romania shows a severe lack of economic education, even 32 years after the events of December 1989. We find that there are still several nostalgic for the statist

regime while bearing significant skills to manipulate the public opinion on social networks. Unfortunately, in the name of democracy and pursuing deeply mercantile ends, social networks allow any individual to issue simplistic and worthless judgments for the participatory democracy, generating frustrations mixed with various misrepresentations, potentially interested, partisan and possibly for the benefit of another/other countries into the public sphere! We are now in the phase of “intentional counterfactual normalcy... where we lie to others and lie to ourselves... We lie out of self-interest or innocence... We lie by exaggeration, addition, invention, but we also lie by minimization, omission, silence. We lie by falsifying, or we lie... by proving!” (Cucuș, 1997:13). Surprisingly, only through the determined involvement of the civil society, which is the key regulator of correcting these fake news messages, we can limit the negative influence on a relevant segment of the still gullible Romanian population!

References

1. Bănică A., Muntele I., Reziliență și teritoriu. *Operaționalizare conceptuală și perspective metodologice [Resilience and territory. Conceptual operationalization and methodological perspectives]*. Editura Terra Nostra, Iași, 2015.
2. Coșniță D., Iorgulescu F., *Analysis of Cluster Competitiveness in Romania*. Editura Economică, București, 2016.
3. Cucuș C., *Minciună, contrafacere, simulare. O abordare psihopedagogică [Lie, counterfeiting, simulation. A psychopedagogical approach]*. Ed. Polirom, Iași, 1997.
4. Gross P., *Mass media și democrația în țările Europei de Est [Mass media and democracy in Eastern European countries]*. Ed. Polirom, Iași, 2004.
5. Miroiu A., Pasti V., Codiță C., Ivan G., Miroiu Mihaela, *Învățământul românesc azi. Studii de diagnoză [Romanian education today. Diagnostic study]*. Ed. Polirom, Iași, 1998.
6. Oprea B., *Fake-news și dezinformare online: recunoaște și verifică [Fake-news and online disinformation: exploration and checking]*. Editura Polirom, 2021.
7. Paraschiv V., *Reziliența industriei post-etatiste românești. Studii de caz județele Alba, Iași și Prahova [The resilience of the Romanian post-statist industry. Alba, Iași and Prahova counties case studies]* at the National Environmental Conference organized by SGR Alba, Ciuruleasa, Oct. 2022 (mss.).

8. Paraschiv V., *Noua paradigmă economică a industriei românești*, [The new economic paradigm of the Romanian industry] in the Annals of the Romanian Geographical Society Prahova Branch, vol. 3, nr. 1, Editura CDPRESS, 2021
9. Paraschiv V., Mărculeț I., Albăstroiu Elena-Simona, Epure T., *România. Geografia industriei* [Romania. Industry geography]. Editura Pim, Iași, 2020.
10. Paraschiv V., *The 2nd International Conference on-line Re-shaping Territories, Environment and Societies: New Challenges for Geography* University of Bucharest, 21 nov. 2020 (mss).
11. Pike, A., „De-Industrialization” in International Encyclopedia of Human Geography [“De-Industrialization” in International Encyclopedia of Human Geography], 3, Elsevier, 2009 (pages 51-58).
12. Preda M., *Politica socială românească între sărăcie și globalizare* [Romanian social policy between poverty and globalization]. Ed. Polirom, Iași, 2002.
13. Rouquette M.-L., *Despre cunoașterea maselor. Eseu de psihologie politică* [On discovering the masses. Political psychology essay]. Ed. Polirom, Iași, 2002.
14. Surd V., *Așezările din Transilvania* [Transylvanian Settlements]. Editura Terra Nostra, Iași, 2022.
15. Volkoff V., *Tratat de dezinformare* [Treatise on disinformation]. Editura Antet Revolution, 2002.
16. *** *Strategia națională pentru dezvoltarea durabilă a României 2030* [The national strategy for the sustainable development of Romania 2030], <https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/Strategia-nationala-pentru-dezvoltarea-durabila-a-Rom%C3%A2niei-2030.pdf>
17. Harvard University - *Atlasul economiei mondiale* [Atlas of the World Economy]: <https://atlas.cid.harvard.edu/countries/185/export-basket/2022>
<https://www.mlpsda.ro/pages/parcuriindustriale>
<http://www.economie.gov.ro/images/politici-industriale/SIPOCA7/document%20de%20Politica%20Industrial%20a%20Romaniei.pdf>

NOTES

1. “The fall of Communism came as a lament (the only exception being Romania, where the violent conditions of the fall of Communism are still a mystery). A traumatic, still unfinished process of transition and transformation to what some hope will be liberal democracy followed...” Gross Peter, 2004 (foreword).
2. Bănică A., Muntele I., „Reziliența-beneficii, dificultăți și oportunități în aplicații la nivel teritorial” [“Resilience-benefits, difficulties and opportunities in applications at the territorial level”] in *Reziliență și teritoriu. Operaționalizare conceptuală și perspective metodologice* [Resilience and territory. Conceptual operationalization and methodological perspectives], 2015:241.
3. Resilience refers to the individual or systemic ability to absorb the shock of the economic paradigm change through the new policies promoted by the post-1990 government to withstand stress and adversities, and by reorganizing production flows to calibrate the production within the competitive market (Paraschiv, 2022, MSS).
4. Paraschiv V. et al., 2020:20.

5. Industry resilience refers to the ability to return to economic normality after the economic shock of the paradigm shift (partially according to DEX on-line - Paraschiv, 2022).

6. The smart industry uses high technology and work ergonomics; it is based on industrial robotics and has production cycles with reduced/zero pollution (greenfield) – Paraschiv, 2022.

7. Preda M., 2002:114.