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# SCIENCE REPORTS AND RELIGIOUS INSIGHTS IN ROMANIAN NATIONAL MEDIA

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## Abstract

The present paper will investigate the relationship between scientific and religious topics in the Romanian mainstream media over a five-year period (2007-2011). The research is based on quantitative data obtained by monitoring the most important three national newspapers in Romania. We argue that science and religion as media topics are juxtaposed in Romanian newspapers in the context of the major theme of death/eschatology, and that this situation could be related to the Eastern Orthodox theological view of death.

*Keywords:* science-religion relation, media, Orthodoxy, Romania, eschatology

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## 1. Introduction

The media play an important part in the way people understand and relate to the world. In contemporary society, the individual construction of reality depends much on scientific data and explanations, which provide models, theories, hypotheses related to key issues such as health, ageing and death, environmental protection and sustainable development, nuclear power and energy or global threats such as war, pollution, poverty, incurable diseases, etc. Moreover, religious accounts are also relevant for people attempting to make sense of the world, even in secular societies.

The way scientific and religious topics are depicted in the media is a vital concern for social research because, in many cases, the media are key sources in terms of what people get to know about these topics.

This paper will therefore focus on an analysis of the scientific and religious topics covered by national publications in Romania. The goal of the paper is to explore the possible relationship between Science and religion in Romanian national media, using quantitative data obtained through research targeting the three most important newspapers.

The research will focus on the quantitative side (the percentage of articles dedicated to scientific and religious topics) and will draw its conclusions on the

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basis of data obtained through monitoring three newspapers over a five-year period (2007-2011).

## **2. The complex relationship between Science and religion**

Contemporary research on Science and religion makes use of different models of interaction between these domains. The typologies found in recent works usually reveal four types of interaction between Science and religion.

For example, the Roman Catholic theologian John Haught identifies four categories: conflict and contrast, contact and confirmation [1]. Denis Alexander, the director of the Faraday Institute for Science and Religion at St Edmund's College, Cambridge and a molecular biologist, also mentions four models: the conflict model, the 'NOMA' model (the separation model), the fusion model and the complementarity model [2]. Another typology, designed by the scientist and theologian Ian G. Barbour, also includes four models: conflict, independence, dialogue and integration [3]. Therefore, for the purposes of our study, we will also make use of a fourfold typology, inspired by previous research on the relationship between science and religion.

The **conflict model** regards science and religion as fundamentally opposed. Their irreconcilable positions [1] are motivated by the expansionist attitudes of both bodies of knowledge that lead to the ideological abuse of science or religion: "people try and use the prestige of science, in particular its 'Grand Theories', to support their particular ideology" [2, p. 2]. Barbour argues: "The conflict thesis is represented today by two views at opposite ends of the theological spectrum: creation science and scientific materialism. Each gains a following partly by its opposition to the other. The popular image of 'the warfare of science and religion' is perpetuated by the media, for whom controversies provide dramatic stories." [3, p. 760].

The **'NOMA' model (Non-Overlapping Magisteria)/independence** model argues that science and religion are separate domains, corresponding to different expectations ("Science and religion do indeed ask different kinds of questions about the world") [2, p. 3].

Barbour argues that "dialogue portrays more constructive relationships between science and religion than does either the Conflict or the Independence view, but it does not offer the degree of conceptual unity claimed by advocates of Integration. Independence emphasizes differences between science and religion, whereas Dialogue emphasizes several kinds of similarity including presuppositions, and boundary questions of the scientific enterprise and methodological and conceptual parallels between the two fields." [3, p. 762] And Haught explains that from this perspective religion may support and nourish the entire scientific enterprise [1].

The **complementarity/dialogue/contact** model admits that science and religion address the same reality in different ways, providing explanations that complement rather than exclude each other. "This model has the great advantage

that it takes both scientific and religious explanations very seriously, doing justice to both”, argues Alexander [2, p. 4].

The **fusion/confirmation/integration** models tend to blur the distinction between science and religion, or try to use science in the religious system of belief or religion in the scientific body of knowledge. The use of the plural, ‘models’, is motivated by the numerous approaches to the interaction between science and religion: “fusion models go well beyond natural theology in proposing that the actual content of science informs the content of religious belief and vice versa” [2, p. 3]. However, the scientists and theologians quoted above agree that none of these four models can encompass the complexity of the relationship between science and religion. Nevertheless, they offer the possibility of evaluating the intricate relationship between science and religion in Christian societies.

As far as this relationship is concerned, the situation in Romania is anything but simple. First of all, we need to take into consideration the four decades of communism (1947-1989). Then we must acknowledge the spiritual heritage of Greek Orthodoxy, lasting for centuries.

The science vs. religion debate started in modern Romania as a result of Western philosophy and scientific research from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century or the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Romanian philosophers like Constantin Radulescu-Motru (1868-1957), P.P. Negulescu (1872-1951) and Mircea Florian (1888-1960) argued for a separation between Science and religion, on the grounds that they encompass different realities. P.P. Negulescu, a fervent supporter of science and its results, explained in public lectures that he preferred scientific research – be it incomplete or shapeless – to the false promises of metaphysics (seen by the professor as a religious cult that proselytizes) [4]. Between the 1920s and the 1940s, Romanian rationalist thinkers had strong counterparts among the young ‘experientialists’ (Mircea Eliade, Emil Cioran, Mircea Vulcanescu, Constantin Noica and many others) [5]. They were led by the influent philosopher and journalist Nae Ionescu, promoter of a *Lebenphilosophie* built on an Eastern Orthodox theoretical structure. In Nae Ionescu’s view science and religion were complementary, dealing with the same reality from different perspectives. Nae Ionescu considered scientific results as being equally important to religious beliefs [4, p. 91-96].

After 1947, science took a leading role in the Romanian public sphere and religion as institution/set of beliefs was completely excluded. The communist system – a scientific materialist one based on the ideas of determinism and progress – prohibited all Christian denominations with the exception of the Eastern Orthodox Church, the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant Church, imprisoned and persecuted priests of all cults and developed a sophisticated propaganda machine against religion in general. The media (newspapers, magazines, TV and radio channels) glorified science and scientific research, while religious followers were depicted as obscurantists, opposing the progress of humankind. Within society, communism generated “confusion and fear by introducing a secular religion instead of the soteriological one” [6].

Magda Stavinschi, a well-known Romanian astronomer born in 1942, explains: "My generation received an 'atheistic-scientific' education, which I had to practise also during the public meetings we often held for the general public. However, during those meetings, my colleagues and I did our best not to emphasize the ideological component, and made use of any opportunity to bring some light into the lives of the people deprived of any intellectual joy. It is true that given the circumstances it was pretty difficult to publicly answer questions like "If life were to be discovered on another planet, will those beings be also creations of God?" or "Where is the contradiction between the Book of Genesis and the official theory concerning the birth of the Universe?"" [7]

The conflict model can best describe the relationship between Science and religion in the communist period. However, the fall of communism brought religion to public light and restored the role of religious belief in the everyday lives of Romanians. Nevertheless, we argue that the conflict model was difficult to overcome in the given social circumstances (after 40 years of atheistic education in schools and the mass media [8]). Its place was taken by the separation model, which allowed religion to regain its place in society. From this point of view, we formulate below a research hypothesis which takes into consideration this reality.

We have to note that over the last years (from 2001 on) research on science and religion has been resurrected in Romania through the initiative of scientists and theologians involved in the research project, 'Science and Religion in Romania' [7].

At the same time, input from the Romanian Orthodox Church is in favour of a dialogue between Science and religion in the contemporary world. Daniel, Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church, explained in a public conference in 2002 (when he was Archbishop of Moldavia and Bukovina) that the Eastern Orthodox ecclesial tradition constitutes a solid base for the Science and religion dialogue. According to Patriarch Daniel, Science and religion are both trying to elucidate the meaning of the Universe and the value of un-created and created intelligence. Their dialogue will strengthen responsibility and love for all Creation [8, p. 23-25]. A special concern for Orthodoxy is, in Patriarch Daniel's opinion, environmental degradation, i.e. the current ecological crisis [8, p. 25].

The position of the Romanian Orthodox Church on the relationship between Science and religion is similar to that of other Eastern Orthodox Churches. The leading modern Orthodox theologians do not exclude Science from the theological vision of God and Creation, quite the contrary: "The task of Orthodox theology is to reconcile the cosmic vision of the Fathers with the vision that grows out the result of natural science" [9]. Contemporary theological works (including Dumitru Staniloae's contributions) argue that scientific progress must be taken into account, even if they do not reduce human beings to their physical and chemical level. The Science and religion dialogue must not focus on cosmological or philosophical dilemmas, but on ecological and bioethical issues, such as cloning, for example [9, p. 131].

### 3. The research

Our first intention was to select articles for this analysis after running keyword searches in newspaper archives. We chose a number of five online editions of Romanian quality newspapers and we ran a list of priorly prepared words (such as: science, religion, scientific, religious etc.). However, online newspaper archives proved to be scientifically unreliable. They were set up in different years, some of them in 2005 or 2007, or even as late as 2012 (the beta version of *adevarul.ro*). Moreover, their search engines generated thousands of results, and many articles were included in the list for unknown reasons. The search engines did not permit any combination of words, like science and religion, for example. The work of detecting the real science reports or news stories on religion among thousands of newspaper articles on economy or politics was too difficult, so we started working on print editions alone.

We kept only three titles: *Adevărul* (*The Truth*, founded in 1989), *Jurnalul Național* (*The National Journal*, founded in 1993) and *România Liberă* (*Free Romania*, founded in 1877). All of them are quality newspapers distributed on a national scale. Their editorial strategy consists of coverage of various topics: national and international politics, national and international economy, social events, sports, weather, lifestyle, science, technology and religion.

This study analyzes *Adevărul*, *Jurnalul National* and *România Liberă* for specific reasons. Firstly, there is the issue of their popularity: in 2007 and 2011 their average circulation was above that of other newspapers. According to the official data (Table 1), *Adevărul* had an average daily circulation of 85,446 copies, *România Liberă* – 59,737 copies, and *Jurnalul National* - 79,456 copies.

**Table 1.** Average circulation per year, according to the Romanian Bureau of Transmedia Audit.

Year	<i>Adevărul</i> (The Truth)	<i>România Liberă</i> (Free Romania)	<i>Jurnalul Național</i> (The National Journal)
2007	43,196 copies	68,251	103,260
2008	59,325	65,377	85,341
2009	129,397	58,624	84,194
2010	133,366	59,389	77,959
2011	61,944	47,045	46,526

The second reason was their durability: the newspapers managed to maintain their print version through a period of media crisis that forced many publications to make the move from print to online. In 2009 alone, the Romanian print industry suffered losses of 50 million Euros [10] and the situation of print media become “a test of durability, efficiency and feasibility” [11].

The third reason to monitor the three publications is their strong online presence, developed over the last years, which has allowed them to distribute their offline editorial content to e-readers.

The data for the research were collected solely by the author, after monitoring the print editions of the *Adevărul*, *Jurnalul National* and *România Liberă* newspapers, following a research protocol.

Ten editions from January 2007, April 2008, July 2009, October 2010 and December 2011 were selected (every three months, with the exception of December). The first edition analyzed was the one that was issued on the tenth day of each month (or the eleventh day in the case of newspapers that were not issued on Saturdays or Sundays, if applicable). The editions analyzed are consecutive, so the monitoring usually started on the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month and ended on the 20<sup>th</sup> or 21<sup>st</sup> of the month. 150 newspaper editions were monitored out of approximately 4,500 editions issued between January 1, 2007 and December 31, 2011.

Every edition selected was fully monitored, with the exception of advertising pages. Informative stories (news reports, interviews, features, reportages) and editorials (Op-Ed pages, columns) alike were included in the research. All reports that focused on science topics were evaluated for possible religious insight and coded. Seven codes were used, all of them corresponding to a specific branch of science. The names of the branches of science were partially taken from an authorized source of knowledge, *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica* (15<sup>th</sup> edition, 2007) [12]. Three amendments were made in order to adapt the categories for the study of media.

Firstly, we included a category named Formal Sciences (listed by the authors of the *Encyclopaedia* as a branch of knowledge, not as a branch of science). Then, we combined Earth sciences, Biological sciences and Medicine and Affiliated Disciplines in one category, Life and Earth Sciences. Also, a new category - Interdisciplinary Approaches - was included in order to cover new disciplines that combine information, methods, structures etc. from different areas of science.

The seven categories were: **Formal Sciences** (such as Logic, Mathematics, Statistics, Theoretical computer science, Information theory, etc.), **Physical Sciences** (Physics and Chemistry), **Life and Earth Sciences** (such as Anatomy, Biochemistry, Biology, Ecology, Genetics, Food science, Health sciences, Neuroscience and Geology, Hydrology, Geography, Pedology), **Social Sciences** (such as Anthropology, Archaeology, Criminology, Economics, History, Political science, Sociology, Human geography and Psychology), **Technological Sciences** (such as Engineering, Technology and their applications), **Interdisciplinary Approaches** (such as global warming, quantum information processing or sustainable development), **Philosophy and History of Science**.

All articles on religious topics, with or without scientific insight, were also taken into consideration and coded. From the three major categories indicated by the *New Encyclopaedia Britannica* (15<sup>th</sup> edition, 2007) as relevant for understanding the religious experience (religious belief, religious practices and religious institutions) [13], we derived seven categories to be used in our research.

Therefore, seven codes were used: **Theology, Lives of Orthodox Saints, Orthodox Rituals, Life in Orthodox Monasteries, Spiritual Perspectives** (opinions, attitudes or personal accounts related to a religious experience of any type and from any kind of denomination), **Religion and State, Religions of the World**.

By 'religious insight' we mean any information, opinion, remark, quote, in which God, faith, the act of praying, and religion as an institution or practice were explicitly used in media coverage of science.

For example, a story on a Romanian M.D., living in the US, who developed a medical technology for computerized surgery which helped him operate on a Jehovah's Witness, who explicitly refused any blood transfusion on religious grounds, was coded as "(medical) technology/with a religious insight" [Jurnalul Național, **December 14** (2011) 7].

By 'scientific insight' we mean any information, opinion, remark, quote, that brought into discussion scientific results, dilemmas, etc. in the context of religion.

For example, a story about an Orthodox nun studying to become an MD who states that "Medicine and religion mutually complete each other, because both of them are centred on the human being, and on love. God's will is in everything. (...) There are diseases of body that religion cannot cure, and there are diseases of the soul that medicine cannot cure" was coded as "life in Orthodox monasteries/with a scientific insight" [România Liberă, **19-20 April** (2008) 1, 4, 5).

A sample of 357 articles resulted and will be analyzed below.

Two hypotheses were formulated prior to the monitoring process:

**Hypothesis 1:** *On the basis of the features of Romanian society (mentioned above in the introductory part of the present paper), science and religion are perceived by journalists as being very different domains, without major intersections. Reports on science will have little religious insight and consequently, articles on religious aspects will not, as a rule, mention science topics. Moreover, the number of science reports clearly exceeds the number of reports on religion.*

**Hypothesis 2:** *Media reports on science will have a religious insight if they cover themes such as medicine/health and global warming. Studies conducted in other cultural contexts proved that there is a clear relationship between science and religion in media coverage of health issues and global warming [14]. Moreover, there is a probability that "hot" topics for world religions such as the misuse of science and technology, cloning, stem cell research, and Darwinist theories are most likely to generate a debate between science and religion.*

#### **4. Main findings**

The research yielded 357 articles, relevant to our study, distributed as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2.** The distribution of the total number of articles on Science and religion.

Total number of articles	Articles on science	Articles on religion
357	274	83
100%	76.75%	23.25%

**Table 3.** The distribution of the total number of articles per year (per 10-day sample).

	Science	Religion	Total
January 2007	75	11	86
April 2008	48	8	56
July 2009	32	6	38
October 2010	82	31	113
December 2011	37	27	64
Total	274	83	357

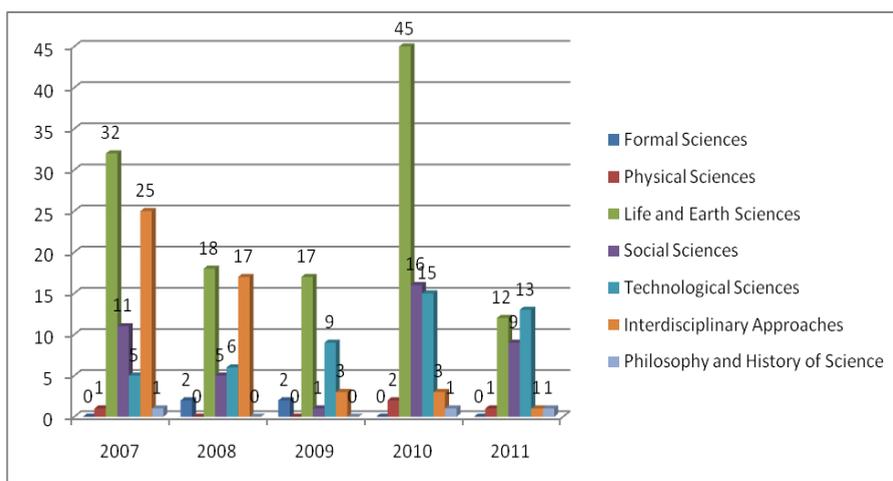
A chi-squared test applied on Table 3 showed that the years 2007 and 2011 are significantly above the 0.05 level. From 2007, we randomly selected January, which was the first month of Romania’s accession to the EU. Many articles focused on that particular political and social topic. On the other hand, January 2007 had an extraordinarily warm climate, which fueled media discussions on climate change and global warming, drastically increasing the number of science reports.

By far, the lead in covering science and religion is held by the year 2010, when *Adevărul* newspaper was re-launched and had 100-page weekend editions. The other two newspapers, *România Liberă* and *Jurnalul Național*, strived to compete with *Adevărul*, adding new topics as part of their editorial strategy. *Jurnalul Național* focused on health and well-being and *România Liberă* signed an editorial partnership with the *New York Times* (US edition) and included articles from the well-known newspaper among its contents.

The year 2011 was represented by data collected in December, when the Romanian media include numerous articles on Christmas, even as early as two weeks before the celebration date. If we eliminate the articles dedicated to Christmas the level of significance is below 0.05. We decided to keep the articles on Christmas in our research sample because Christmas celebrations are of great importance in Romanian society. Articles on Christmas are run in newspapers throughout the whole month of December. Moreover, other segments of popular culture, such as advertising, exploit Christmas celebrations more often than other celebrations/rituals such as weddings, Easter, baptisms and so on [15].

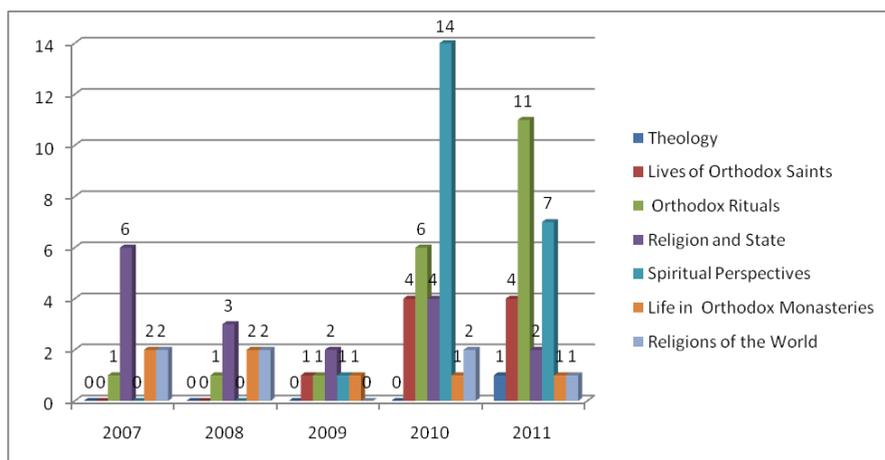
By far, the most prominent branches of science in Romanian newspapers are: **Life and Earth Sciences (124)**, **Interdisciplinary Approaches (49)**, **Technological Sciences (48)** and **Social Sciences (42)** (Figure 1). Among them, the following disciplines/themes/issues are the most prevalent: Medicine/health (prevention and treatments) – 90 articles, technology (from mobile technology to

aerospace technology) – 50 articles, global warming – 44 articles, Psychology – 23 articles and Ecology – 17 articles.



**Figure 1.** The distribution of articles on branches of science.

The sample from the year 2010 displayed the largest number of articles (82), for the above-mentioned reasons.



**Figure 2.** The distribution of articles on religious topics.

The distribution of branches of science displays the following characteristics:

- Life and Earth Sciences play a leading role, with the exception of the year 2011. In 2011, articles on health were replaced – most likely due to Christmas preparations - by articles on (healthy) cooking or by articles on spiritual perspectives and Orthodox rituals.
- The number of articles on Interdisciplinary Approaches (with global warming as the key topic) decreased from 2007 to 2011. Concerns about

global warming were extremely frequent in 2007 and 2008, when winters were warm and snowless.

- The number of articles on Social Sciences and Technology is relatively constant over the given period.
- There are only a few mentions of domains such as Formal Sciences (4) and Physical Sciences (4). Articles on these domains (i.e. 'hard sciences') are prompted by Romanian research performance in Mathematics, Physics and related fields.

The research showed that out of 274 articles on Science, 34 had a religious insight (12,40%). Among them, the distribution is as follows: technology – 9, global warming – 7, Ecology – 7, Medicine/health – 7, Psychology - 2, Physics (God's particle) – 1, Archeology – 1.

The most prominent themes in covering religious aspects in Romanian newspapers are: spiritual perspectives – 22, Orthodox rituals – 21, religion and state – 16, the lives of Orthodox saints – 9, and life in Orthodox monasteries – 7 (Figure 2).

The distribution of religious topics displays the following characteristics:

- Coverage of the relationship between religion and state is constant over the given period, as this constitutes an important debate in Romanian society.
- There are practically no articles on theological themes: there was only one piece in 150 newspapers analyzed (the Christmas pastoral letter of the Patriarch).
- Articles on spiritual perspectives increase in predominance in 2010, probably on the background of the beginning of the economic crisis in Romania and also as the result of the 'magazinification' of newspapers ('lifestyle' journalism: soft stories instead of hard stories) as a strategy of survival on the market in times of economic hardship [16]. The topics covered are: Christian mercy, science and religious belief, (spiritual) healing, health and religious beliefs, the importance of (Christian) love and so on.

The research showed that out of the 83 stories on religion, 15 had a scientific insight. This insight was present in articles on spiritual perspectives (9), Orthodox rituals (3), life in Orthodox monasteries (2), religion and state (1).

## **5. Discussion**

First, we have to point out that articles on science in Romanian newspapers are usually short pieces of news/stories with limited scientific data and explanations. As a rule, print media represent an important part of the scientists' efforts to publicly communicate scientific results in a comprehensible way. 'The public understanding of science' ('the public awareness of science'/'the public engagement with science and technology') refers to the actions meant to help people accurately grasp the significance of scientific discoveries, theories, models etc. The usage of media for the public

understanding of Science began in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and increased with every decade that followed [17].

However, media tend to massively simplify the complexity of scientific research, for reasons related to journalistic practice: information should be accessible to the general public.

It is the case of the media reports on science from our research, which include only limited scientific data, results or conclusions. Moreover, the statistics included above suggest the predominance of applied sciences over fundamental sciences ('hard science') in Romanian newspapers. In practice, fundamental sciences come to public attention when Romanian scientists (usually mathematicians working abroad in important universities or laboratories) gain notoriety due to their scientific findings.

Our research took into consideration all media reports on science, no matter how complete or accurate they were. 274 articles were identified and analyzed. Other 83 articles were also taken into consideration, as they covered religious topics. In total, 357 articles were considered relevant to our study

The main findings of the research lead us to admit as valid the first hypothesis. Science and religion are represented in Romanian newspapers over a five-year period (2007-2011) as being very different domains, without major intersections. The science-religion ratio is 3 to 1 (76,75% articles on science, 23,25% articles on religion). The predominance of Science over religion is to be expected in a secularized society. However, a dialogue between science and religion, lately cultivated by theologians and scientists, is also to be expected. Our findings show that over the given period reports on Science have little religious insight and consequently, articles on religious aspects do not mention science topics. Only 49 articles out of 357 (13, 72%) display a complementarity (dialogue) between Science and religion.

The second hypothesis needs an extended discussion. Data from the research prove that the first part of the hypothesis (media reports on science will have a religious insight if they cover themes such as medicine/health and global warming) is valid. An amendment must also be made: medicine/health and global warming are not the only themes in media that suggest a Science vs. religion dialogue/complementarity. In our research, technology and ecology, along with psychology, could also entail religious insight. Table 4 includes several examples from our research on how media associate scientific topics with religious insight.

Although the scientific areas displayed in Table 4 are very different, there is one common topic that unifies them: eschatology. The articles on medicine/health, global warming, technology and psychology that are more likely to have a religious insight cover themes/topics that are related to death, the imminence of death or the possibility of death, from the death of a particular person in the case of incurable diseases or suicides to the death of the planet in the case of global warming or pollution, from the possibility of death in a Chilean mining accident or in aerospace missions to the possibility of death in

the case of complicated medical procedures. Praying is seen as a solution to overcome fear of death.

**Table 4.** The dialogue of Science and religion (as shown in media articles).

	<b>Medicine/ Health</b>	<b>Global warming</b>	<b>Technology</b>	<b>Ecology</b>	<b>Psychology</b>
<b>Articles on science</b>	Incurable diseases  Successful medical procedures	Hell  Apocalypse Now Chaos  Criticism towards the so- called “evangelists of global warming”	Chilean mining accident (August 2010) – miners saved by aerospace technology and by God, at the same time  Man on the moon celebration  Restoring religious artefacts	Preserved areas = Heaven on Earth  Polluted areas = Hell on Earth	Suicide as an extreme gesture  Overcoming loneliness by praying
<b>Articles on religion</b>	Nun and priest studying to become MDs  Faith and healing		Church/religion on the Internet		The power of prayer  Suicide as a sin. Eternal life.

For Orthodox religion, eschatology (death, the end of the world, judgement, hell, heaven) represents a key theme. “Eschatology confers meaning to life on Earth” explains the Romanian Orthodox theologian Dumitru Staniloae [18], adding that “death demonstrates the Transcendence of God and of our complete life together” [18, p. 146]. Thus, the complementarity/dialogue of science and religion in media articles based on eschatology insights might be of extreme relevance in understanding contemporary Romanian society.

The second part of the hypothesis (there is a probability that ‘hot’ topics for world religions, such as the misuse of science and technology, cloning, stem cell research, and Darwinist theories are most likely to generate a debate between science and religion) is not valid for our research. Orthodox theologians are deeply concerned over “the misuse of the science or utopian reliance on the power of progress” and “possible moral and social implications of the fast advance of Biology and Medical science in terms of control and regulation of human life”, i.e. genetic engineering, cloning human beings and related fields of research [9, p. 131]. In Table 5 we inserted several examples of how Romanian newspapers cover important topics for the science vs. religion debate, without providing any religious insight. For example, in the case of embryo trafficking stories, the journalists mainly focused on the legal aspects. The ethical concern was expressed by the fear of resulting brothers/sisters with different mothers. The evolution theory is practically absent as a subject for media reports. It is mentioned only once in 357 articles, on the occasion of an archaeological discovery. At the same time, journalists express little concern over the misuse of science and technology and over the controversial CERN experiments related to

Higgs boson (particle). We consider the mentioned examples relevant for understanding contemporary Romanian society, too.

**Table 5.** The separation of Science and religion (no religious insights).

<b>'Hot' topics for the Science vs. religion debate</b>				
	<b>The misuse of science and technology</b>	<b>Genetic engineering, cloning and egg/embryo donation/trafficking</b>	<b>Higgs boson ('God particle')</b>	<b>Evolution</b>
<b>Articles on science</b>	Teachers questioning the benefits of technologies in education.  Chaotic development – the end of the world is close.	Fear of resulting brothers/sisters with different mothers.  Ethical issues.  Thousands of German and Israeli babies made in Romania.  Cloning mammoths.  Worries related to later age pregnancy.	Mentioned once: playing hide and seek with God's particle.  Short description of CERN experiment.	Mentioned once in the context of archaeological findings.

## **6. Conclusions**

The present paper has investigated the relationship between scientific and religious topics in the Romanian mainstream print media over a five-year period (2007-2011).

Science and religion are represented in Romanian newspapers as being very different domains, without major intersections. The science-religion ratio is 3 to 1. This finding may lead us to the conclusion that science and religion are perceived by journalists as being very different domains, without major intersections. Reports on science have little religious insight and consequently, articles on religious aspects do not mention science topics. The predominance of science over religion is to be expected in a secularized society, with a strong communist background (1945-1989). However, the research also showed that science and religion as media topics are juxtaposed in Romanian newspapers in the context of the major theme of death/eschatology and this could be related to the Eastern Orthodox theological view of death

This situation is somehow unexpected, as other authors indicated themes as the misuse of the science and technology, genetic engineering, cloning human beings or ecology crisis, as being 'hot' issues for Eastern Orthodoxy nowadays. Therefore, we dare to argue that the predominance in media articles of the key theme of death in the context of Science-religion dialogue reveals a strong Eastern Orthodox background of the Romanian society that was not destroyed by the atheistic education/media of the former communist regime.

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