Article

Metamodernism and Social Sciences: Scoping the Future

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Abstract: At this moment, humanity is confronting several global metacrises that demand a new image of science to deal with the complex problems associated with these crises. In addition to natural sciences and humanities, social sciences can become an equally efficient resource for use in this transformation if they succeed in constructing new frameworks congruent with the new reality. The purpose of this theoretical paper in the discourse of philosophy of science is to discern the features of the social sciences within a new paradigm of metamodernism. For the first time, the authors elaborate on the new principles of metamodernist philosophy and apply them to the ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology of the social sciences. The set of six transversal principles comprises the ontological principle of paradoxical simultaneity, caused by oscillation, epistemological principles of paradoxical understanding of truth and grand narratives, as well as metaxis-based thinking and dia/polylogue, axiological negotiation between rhizomatic and hierarchical social relations and values, and methodological pluralism. The last principle showcases the coexistence and interlinkage of previous stages of metamodernism. The application of these principles to the social sciences was designed from the perspectives of a specific discipline, inter/transdisciplinarity, and instrumental level of social practice. The paper concludes with a discussion of additional avenues for the development of metamodernism in the social sciences.

Keywords: axiology; epistemology; metacrisis; metamodernism; methodology; modernism; ontology; philosophy of science; postmodernism; social sciences

1. Introduction

Looking back from the perspective of the 2020s of the 21st century to the beginning of this millennium, we could notice several turning points such as 9/11, the Great Recession (2007–2009), the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Russia–Ukraine war, which have changed the global scene and stipulated the need to revisit much of the conventional knowledge and assumptions. In addition, we should not forget other global issues such as ecological crises, demographic problems, migration, and financial systems, as well as the digital revolution, to mention just a few. All these problems require constant adaptation and polarize society with real life and death consequences. However, it seems that we are not facing a linear sequence of crises, but rather an entire system of crises with underlying currents and interrelated networks of problems.

To illustrate this more complex level of thinking in relation to crises, we will use the term metacrisis. The metacrisis is the underlying crisis driving a multitude of crises, not just ecological collapse (Rowson 2020), and it is interesting that, for the most part, they are related to both the natural and social sciences. Another explanation of metacrisis takes us to the interconnected nature of the many crises (mentioned above) we are facing as a society. For example, Watters (2022) argues that a metacrisis is constituted by war in Europe, pandemics, and climate emergencies.

A concise selection of four great interrelated metacrises can be borrowed from Henriques (2019). The first of these crises and probably the cause of all other crises is the meaning crisis, a pervasive feeling of alienation from the world and from each other, spilt over as increasing bulsh*t in society, and exhilarated during recent decades, although

the causes of this crisis have perennial roots in our ability both to quickly adapt to the world and indulge in self-deception and self-destruction (Vervaeke 2019). Next, there is the mental health crisis, which is closely dependent on meaning crisis and appears as an epidemic of depression, anxiety, isolation, and suicidality, specifically extensive for the young generation and some socioeconomic groups. It should be mentioned that this crisis is also closely integrated with the education crisis (The World Bank et al. 2021). The third metacrisis is the most 'advertised' and already mentioned techno-environmental crisis. In the minds of people, it is the crisis related to the duty of (natural) science to cope with it in order for humanity to survive. The last crisis mentioned by Henriques (2019) is the digital globalization crisis, bringing to life whole new complex adaptive behavior systems hard to manage by old institutions and radically changing the boundaries between groups and nations, as the COVID-19 pandemic strikingly showed.

Almost four decades ago, the world was exposed to constant changes, looming uncertainty, and unavoidable interdependencies, or, in other words, it was clearly the VUCA world (V—volatility, U—uncertainty, C—complexity, A—ambiguity). Since 2020, metacrises have added some new dimensions to our world, best described by the acronym BANI (B—brittleness or fragility, A—anxiety, N—nonlinearity, I—incomprehensibility). Although the term VUCA was first introduced in 1985 and later used in relation to the collapse of the USSR in the early 1990s (Bennis and Nanus 1985; Mack et al. 2016), BANI was coined by the collaborator of the Institue for the Future in Palo Alto, Jamais Cascio, in 2016, and is described in more detail in his article "Facing the Age of Chaos" (Cascio 2020). As dystopian as it seems, BANI also provides a productive framework and promises an optimistic future scenario, if only brittleness is overcome by capacity and resilience, anxiety is dealt with empathy and mindfulness, nonlinearity is embedded in context and met with adaptivity, while incomprehensiveness is surmounted by transparency and intuition (Cascio 2020; Grabmeier 2020).

In the new world where VUCA meets BANI, the role of science in general and the tasks of different fields of science should be changed as they reorient from the solutions to inner problems of narrow, specific disciplines in a context of division of labor and in a framework of the discipline's own cultural, technological, and/or organizational structures to the overall coordinated assistance for humankind to deal with the complex and nonlinear problems and their consequences. The situation calls for a new image of science and its fields in society and discussions of the aims, tasks, values, and knowledge of science (Wiesmann et al. 2008). Similarly, we need to reconsider the relationships between the natural, social sciences, humanities, and different areas of technology, art, spirituality, and other spheres of human practice (McGregor 2004).

The present covert and overt transformations in all spheres of life can be described and labeled on different levels and discourses. Synergistic confluence and interaction between ecological crisis, digital transformation, pandemics, and wars, the most obvious and current crises, require the active search for different ways of life, first of all, reassessing our mental and social life, values, and behavior, considered mostly in social sciences. In these circumstances, we should ask ourselves what framework we can use to succeed in the construction of a new image of social sciences. The given treatment of the subject matter, conceived in the traditions of theoretical papers and embedded in terminology and discourse of philosophy of science, is an attempt to discern and outline the features of the future of social sciences within a new paradigm of metamodernism.

To begin with, we would like to position ourselves as the authors of this paper. Although researcher's reflections on their position are most often integrated into qualitative research papers (Berger 2015; Pitard 2017), we feel the need to also set the stage for this theoretical paper. This short insight will outline our experience and perspectives, which seem to be especially pre-eminent writing on the philosophy of science, not to mention the very recent and ambiguous phenomenon of metamodernism. Actually, our humble efforts toward the purpose of this treatise are inspired by our education, roles, experience, and positions as academics and researchers. We would only guess that, possibly, to be

capable of grasping metamodernism and projecting it on any area of science, the horizon of understanding and experience of scientists would need inter/transdisciplinary orientation and T-shaped skills (excellent knowledge of and skills in specific area and collaborative capacity at working with representatives from other areas). Their epistemological, ontological, axiological, and methodological experience of life and scientific work could possibly be based on the integral framework of (pre)modernism/postmodernism and metamodernism.

We believe that these skills and the integral framework have at least partly determined our position in this paper. Our previous experience as scientists and the horizon of interests merged as the pieces of the puzzle put together by the invisible hand and led to the need to find an answer to several urgent questions. The commitment to describe metamodernism in the field of social sciences through multidisciplinary lenses was incited by our education background. The first author has an educational background in music education and psychology, while the second author has different degrees in education, linguistics, health care, and psychology. The topics of interest in our studies, such as sustainability and sustainable education, complex problems, wicked problems, mono/inter/multi/transdisciplinarity, dialogical science and dialogical self, research methodology in social sciences, health and education, and qualitative/mixed research methodology (e.g., Bitēna and Mārtinsone 2021; Pipere 2016, 2017; Pipere et al. 2020; Pipere and Lorenzi 2021) also explicate the search for new ways to deal with metacrisis by means of social science. In addition, we are interested in issues of the digital revolution, transhumanism, artificial intelligence, and their solutions in social science. The authors of this article position themselves as interdisciplinary-oriented scientists who integrate philosophy, art, education, health and educational psychology, and psychotherapy. Recently, we also served as the scientific editors and main authors for three panoramic books and two dictionaries on research in social sciences, health, and education (Mārtinsone and Pipere 2016, 2021; Mārtinsone et al. 2019), covering, among others, the topics of philosophy of science. In some aspects, this article will develop ideas introduced in our book "Methodology of scientific work: An interdisciplinary perspective" (Mārtinsone and Pipere 2021).

The position of the authors helped to elaborate the aims and goals of the article. Thus, our aim in this theoretical narration is to present our version of the image of social sciences within the framework of the new philosophical paradigm of metamodernism. This aim will be reached by focusing on two main goals, namely, (1) to elaborate the new transversal principles of metamodernist philosophy and (2) to apply these principles to the ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology of social sciences.

In the following pages, we will first explicate the social science in modernism and postmodernism to set the scene for the new paradigm. The central segment of the paper will lead in two directions: the first part will briefly outline the context of the birth of metamodernism, its terminology, definitions, and classification, and present the six principles of metamodernist philosophy. The second part will reflect on metamodernism in the social sciences, conceptualizing metamodernism for science and research, and elaborating the philosophy of science for metamodernist social sciences. At the end of the paper, we will brainstorm some future perspectives and visions related to the projection of metamodernism in the social sciences.

2. Social Sciences in Modernism and Postmodernism

To start this chapter, we will focus on a short excursion into philosophical paradigms of modernism and postmodernism, followed by an explanation of the social sciences and their entanglement with these two paradigms.

Modernism, which started during the age of Enlightenment approximately 300 years ago, advances the beliefs in objective truth, reason, rationality, progress, and inventions (Dember and Ceriello n.d.). Along with it, the mastery of nature, freedom, and the political system of capitalism contributed to the Industrial Revolution, the development of modern science and technology, and improved the quality of life in industrialized societies, initiating the grand narratives of optimistic vision, linear progress, and a utopian future of happiness

(Franco-Torres 2020; Pinker 2018). In modernism, metaphysics is grounded in realism (naturalism), subject–object relationships originated by Descartes (the subject is separated from the objective world), while epistemologically, it rests on objectivism (experience and reason). Human nature is explained by the theory of *tabula rasa* and the autonomy-based ethics of individualism and universal human rights (Hicks 2011). The new phase of modernity, reflexive modernity, discloses the replacement of an industrial society with a risk society (Beck 2009; Giddens 1994, 1998), recognized by the distribution of goods (wealth) and "'bads" (pollution, contamination, and other by-products of production) as well as the increasing scale and potential for catastrophe, the loss of faith in science to predict and protect humanity from these hazards, and increasingly diverse expert ideas about the management of technological, environmental issues. Both phases of modernity advocate the objective truth (Franco-Torres 2020), although the critical realist philosophy of reflexive modernists, for several decades, has suggested that the accumulation of knowledge and triangulation among multiple methods and perspectives in an interdisciplinary context can bring us close to a perfect understanding without ever attaining it (Bhaskar 1975).

The massive social movements of the second half of the 20th century, denigrating existing structures of power, fed the philosophy of postmodernism with broad skepticism, subjectivism or relativism, a general suspicion of reason, and an acute sensitivity to the role of ideology in asserting and maintaining political and economic power (Duignan n.d., para. 1). Postmodernism opposes the objective natural reality independent of human beings, calling it naive realism and viewing reality as an artifact of scientific practice and language (Duignan n.d.). Focusing on the epistemology of postmodernism, one can refer to the idea of Wittgenstein [1953] (Wittgenstein [1953] 2009) regarding the operation of language systems as tools, thus making the construction of knowledge of daily life contextual. Postmodernists/poststructuralists (e.g., Derrida 1992; Feyerabend 1975; Foucault [1976] 1990, Foucault [1975] 1995) acknowledge the inevitable fusion of truth with social power. However, the central role in the crisis of modern meaning plays the role of fracturing knowledge (Henriques and Görtz 2020). Postmodernism opposes the single, grand unifying narrative of life; it pronounces knowledge as unknowable and history as incoherent (Bunnell 2015; Dember and Ceriello n.d.; Henriques and Görtz 2020) and rejects the optimism of modernism in favor of nihilistic irony and distrust (Gibbons 2015).

Reacting on the critique of postmodernism, new theories of modernism have been proposed. If the first line of defense of modernism toward postmodernism was already mentioned as reflexive modernism that was programmatically reconstructive (Lee 2006), the next trend with different tasks was liquid modernity, which tried to expose "the consequences of advanced social differentiation and alienation" (Lee 2006, p. 357). It was the sociologist and philosopher Bauman (2000) who redefined postmodernity as "modernity in its liquid phase" and suggested that the liquid phase of modernity aims to erode frontiers and boundaries (Pollock 2007) and emphasizes open-ended meaning (Green and Gary 2016). Speaking about liquid society, Bauman comments on "the effects of globalization, migration, nomadism, tourism, the effects of world wide webs and Internets, socket-free phones and texters: a world and its transforming subjectivities redefined by interaction with the huge and fascinating potentials of new technologies and information systems" (ibid., p. 114). In addition, in the reality of liquid modernity, "life considers highly what is transitory rather than permanent, immediate rather than long term; and regards utility as prior to any other value" (Palese 2013, para. 1). The different facets of liquid modernism have been further interpreted and applied, for instance, in social theory (Lee 2006), cultural theory (Pollock 2007), pedagogy (Green and Gary 2016), and even in science (Mattiazzi and Vila-Petroff 2021). Interestingly, anticipating the upcoming metamodernism, the theory of liquid modernism itself could not avoid preserving some principles of postmodernism, such as fussy boundaries, subjective meanings, and pessimistic views on transitory life.

Now, shifting our focus from the description of paradigms to the specificity of social sciences, we will recall that social science is any branch of academic study or science that deals with human behavior in its social and cultural aspects. Usually included within the

social sciences are cultural (or social) anthropology, sociology, psychology, political science, and economics (Greenfeld and Nisbet n.d., para. 1), although disciplinary affiliation to social sciences currently varies depending on the country and political discourse. For example, the approach used in the UK, related to innovation and multidisciplinary sources, renders this list much longer, including demography, development studies, human geography and environmental planning, management and business studies, education, linguistics, law, social history, international relations, science and technology studies, social policy, and social work (UKRI 2022). Hinting at the history of social sciences, one should say that the origins of social sciences go back to the rationalist ideas of ancient Greece and Rome. Taking a break in the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and the Enlightenment rediscovered philosophical ideas from the ancient world on human nature, state, and morality. Then, at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, the world evidenced the birth of social sciences as distinct academic disciplines (Greenfeld and Nisbet n.d., para. 3).

In the following, we will return to the description of social sciences in the frameworks of modernism and postmodernism. For a long time, social sciences have attempted to compete with and imitate natural sciences in what the latter seems to be more capable of producing elegant and powerful theories about the world. However, according to Gorton (n.d.), the social sciences can show success in scientific inquiry by revealing something useful and non-obvious about the social world, radically different from the material world.

Since the beginning of social sciences as a specific scope of disciplines coincides larger with the expansion of modernism, we will start to chronicle social sciences in a framework of naturalism. Naturalists in social sciences advocate for the adaptation of the aims and methods of natural science to social inquiry. They also point out that science is a fundamentally empirical endeavor with the main aim of creating causal explanations based on lawlike regularities, and science is value-neutral. During much of the 20th century, striving to prove their scientific character (Gellner 1984), many disciplines of social science tried to operationalize social phenomena so that they could be measured to obtain raw material for the construction and testing of theories. Theories, in turn, produce causal explanations of events or regularities found in the natural and social worlds. At the beginning of the 20th century, the defender of value neutrality, German sociologist Weber [1919] (Weber [1919] 2015), insisted that although social scientists should describe the values of individuals, they can and should keep their ethical judgment of these values separate from their scientific analysis of the nature and effects of these values. Critics of modernism in social sciences insist that research methods of the natural sciences cannot be used in the social world since the natural and social world are totally different entities. Furthermore, naturalism not only mischaracterizes the social world but also imposes inhuman and confining beliefs, values, and social practices (Gorton n.d.).

In academic circles, postmodernism gained its popularity in the 1970s–1980s, especially in fields such as philosophy, history, and sociology, although its use sometimes was quite contradictory and puzzling (Franco-Torres 2020). Next, we will briefly address the postmodern opposition to naturalism in social sciences exposed in interpretivism (descriptivism and hermeneutics) as well as phenomenology, critical theory, and social constructionism. Describing postmodernism as a time frame and, at the same time, the paradigm orientation, we will refer to these directions in connection with the postmodernist paradigm described above.

Since the social world, unlike the natural world, is meaningful, interpretivists insist that social studies should try to develop our understanding of this meaning instead of revealing the causes of social phenomena. Thus, social sciences should make sense of elements comprising the social world, discovering the intentions and beliefs that inform human behavior, as well as the wider social context of these beliefs and actions. The fields of cultural anthropology and ethnomethodology, drawing on ideas of interpretive theory, oppose the discovery of laws or mechanisms of the everyday world, suggesting the description of the social milieu. However, the criticism of this approach proposes that the main task of social inquiry is to create more penetrating and critical reports than

descriptivism can offer. The alternative version of interpretativism echoes the philosophy of hermeneutics of Heidegger [1927] (Heidegger [1927] 1962), Gadamer (1975), Ricoeur (1965), etc. This philosophy, applied in social sciences, rejects the understanding of knowledge as an accurate representation of an external world in the mind of a subject: "Instead, explaining the beliefs of a culture or society involves a kind of *dialogue* with it. Understanding is produced through a dialectical process in which the self-understanding of both parties—the investigator as well as the culture being studied—may be transformed" (Gorton n.d., para. 24). In the view of hermeneutics, the data of social science are not external, objective, and conclusive such as those of naturalism; data always remain multivocal and open for multiple interpretations and discussions.

Parallel to hermeneutics, a new viewpoint on consciousness and new research methods were proposed by phenomenology; however, they are sometimes placed in between modernism and postmodernism. This school of philosophy, initially voiced in works by Husserl [1913] (Husserl [1913] 2012) and then in the publications of his successor Heidegger [1927] (Heidegger [1927] 1962), alluded to the main ontological feature of the existence of human beings and a key element of consciousness being meaning. In Europe, phenomenology and philosophy of existence, resonating with social, political, and cultural developments before WWII, disclosed the vision of the world of this time and became the form of culture. This direction significantly changed the intellectual background of Europe and, a little later, the United States, making its way into the many spheres, e.g., literature, art, and different disciplines of social sciences (Mārtinsone and Pipere 2021).

The school of thought in social sciences aligning with postmodernism critique of value neutrality is a critical theory. In addition to descendants of the Frankfurt school (Horkheimer (1995), Adorno (2001), and Marcuse (1972)), approaches such as feminism and other emancipatory ideologies systematically explain and critique different oppressive economic, social, and political structures, institutions, or ideologies. Representatives of this approach interpret social science as an evaluative and political enterprise. However, critical theorists align with naturalists in their attitude toward knowledge, stating that the truth provided by the expert will enlighten the subjects of inquiry and, hopefully, will set them free. In turn, social constructivism is firmly based on cultural and historical relativism and the idea that truth depends on the cultural and historical context. In addition, they emphasize the socially constructed and contextualized human nature. To this end, one of the harshest critics of social science, Michel Foucault, has argued that the state, together with social science, creates the criteria and conceptualizes behavioral regulation, thus becoming the latest oppressive power regime in human history (Foucault [1976] 1990, Foucault [1975] 1995).

To summarize, among the reasons for the succession of modernism by postmodernism and other '(post)modernised' alternatives of modernism (reflexive, liquid) is the perception that modernism did not fulfill its promises related, for example, to the mastery of nature, the omnipotence of science, universal freedom for all, linear progress, and a utopian future of happiness. It appeared that keeping these promises either turned into its opposite (in line with the principle of enantiodromia by Jung (1990)) or fulfilling these promises appeared to be possible in a very far future. One of the answers to why postmodernism was defeated suggests that relying on selective, individual cognition and experiences does not provide the opportunity to construct a holistic view of the world, thus paving the way for the next paradigm with more inclusive and flexible frameworks. This abridged and selective insight into the voicings of modernism and postmodernism in general and in social science will hopefully serve as a background for creating better awareness and aid in understanding the essence of metamodernism and its emergent features related to social sciences.

3. Metamodernism: Introduction

The review of literature on metamodernism exhibits a myriad of vibrant discourses, levels of argumentation, and formats (books, monographs, book chapters, articles, conference papers, postgraduate theses, blogs, vlogs, tweets, podcasts, YouTube materials,

etc.), thus making the navigation in this ocean quite hard; academic references to the term metamodernism increased 14 times between 2010 and 2018 (Dember 2020) and continue to grow. For the purpose of this paper, we will try to revisit only those specific aspects of metamodernism that could be related to scientific inquiry and social sciences. In this short chapter, we will sketch the context and terminological issues, as well as ontological, epistemological, and axiological facets of metamodernism.

From a philosophical perspective, providing necessary distancing and levels of generalization for a thorough perspective on the world, humanity, and individuals, and in the context of the philosophy of science, allowing for in-depth and critical analysis of processes in science, at the beginning of the 21st century we can reflect both on the successive development and current cohabitation of stages of cultural evolution, which implicitly and explicitly have brought us to our current situation. The dramatic and complex situation of the current world is a scene for the birth of metamodernism. The overture of this stage echoes the crises of late globalization (Turcan 2016), mentioned at the beginning of this article. In the last 20 years, humanity has foretold at least 2–3 apocalypses, creating the 'no hope attitude' (Baciu et al. 2016), and these apocalypses still keep coming. Some could wonder if these crises exemplify the manifold failures of reflexive modernism or reflect the incapability of postmodernism to deal with a global situation where the world fluctuates between the states of VUCA and BANI. The side effects of reflexive modernization are 'wicked problems' (Rittel and Webber 1973), difficult ones without an optimal or definitive solution. According to Franco-Torres (2020), they represent both enthusiastic faith in science, technology, progress (modernistic beliefs) and uncertainty, seeing chaos and decline as a natural part of life (postmodernist beliefs), thus featuring metamodernism in the practical discourse of life problems. It is important to pin down from the start that metamodernism combines modernist faith in progress with a postmodernist critical point of view (Metamoderna 2022), resulting in the perspective on reality illustrated by the long, complex, and paradoxical path of development toward larger complexity, sophisticated simplicity, and existential depth.

It should be noticed that further in this chapter, while characterizing metamodernism, we will repeatedly refer both to the elements which metamodernism has 'borrowed' from modernism and/or postmodernism and, of particular importance, to the way of combination and interrelation of both paradigms emblematic only for metamodernism. The volume of the given article does not allow for the detailed analysis of the complete list of elements from modernism and postmodernism or their combinations potentially related to metamodernism; however, holding to the aims and tasks of the material set from the beginning of the article, we will try to illuminate those elements, especially important to the context of the philosophy of science and subsequent definition of metamodernism in the discourse of social sciences.

Discovering the term. The term 'metamodernism' appeared in the 1970s and was used by critics of philosophy, politics, and social theory (Bunnell 2015). In 1975, Masud Zavarzadeh coined this term in literary theory (Zavarzadeh 1975), announcing its roots in the field of aesthetics, and used it to convey "the transcendence of the typically modernist narrational plane (the inner plane of the character) in the direction of metafiction (the interpenetration of facts and fiction, life and art), irony, black humor, or pastiche" (Jovanović 2021, p. 58). Later, with different overtones, it was adopted by other scholars and writers (Borgmann 1992; Carruth 1986; Dumitrescu 2014; Furlani 2002, 2007; González 1996; Haig 1991; McCloskey 1992; Koutselini 1997; Stambler 2004; Truitt 2006; Wallace 1996; Valiandes and Koutselini 2009). Therefore, in the 1990s, some conferences and several critical studies discussed the transition from the age of postmodernism to metamodernism (Yousef 2017). The formal beginnings of metamodernism could be traced to the last decade of the 20th century and the first decade of the 21st century, although some scholars admit that this movement entirely belongs to the 21st century.

Before the wider usage of metamodernism as a term, authors suggested several other terms, mostly containing the root of modernism: e.g., digimodernism (Kirby 2009)—

foregrounds digitalization; pseudo-modernism (Kirby 2006)—culture dependent on the individual; postpostmodernism (currently also used alongside with metamodernism) (McLaughlin 2004; Reed 2006); cosmodernism (Moraru 2011); planitariness (Elias and Moraru 2015; Moraru 2015); Anthropocene (Trexler 2015)—environmental concern; hyper-modernism (Lipovetsky 2005)—emphasizes consumerism. However, metamodernism, as it is understood today, was first described in the foundational theory of Dutch philosophers and cultural theorists (Vermeulen and Akker 2010).

Classification of metamodernism. The next question of value relates to the classification of metamodernism. According to the structural logic established at the beginning of this paper, we agree with the proposition of metamodernism as a phase of cultural evolution. Still, the current usage and diversity of metamodernism discourses seem to be much wider. Freinacht (2021), for example, suggests the classification of metamodernism not only as a cultural phase but also as the developmental stage of society, abstracted metameme, stage of personal development, philosophical paradigm, and a movement with a certain project for culture and society. Similarly, Set Abramson (2015) holds an open view on the classification of metamodernism, following the idea that metamodernism can be taken from very diverse angles (Abramson 2015; Freinacht 2021). To develop our story, we will use a two-fold account of metamodernism, both as a phase of cultural evolution (in comparison with other phases) and as a philosophical paradigm (Clasquin-Johnson 2017; Cooper 2017), which can be used for the further development of the philosophy of science. The philosophy of metamodernism is the world of ideas and assumptions in opposition to many ideas of previous paradigms, and, according to the hopes of some scholars, one day, they (ideas of metamodernism) may become as dominant as modern philosophy is today (Metamoderna 2022). Cooper (2017) suggests that metamodernism could develop into a major philosophical framework that addresses metacrisis and uses metathinking, metacognition, metanoia, and abstraction to deal with complex problems. In their 'grand opening,' Vermeulen and Akker (2010) describe metamodernism as an emerging structure of feeling, a new Zeitgeist. Later, they explained that for them, metamodernism is not so much a philosophy with a closed ontology but rather a sort of open-source document that might contextualize and explain what is going on in the political economy as much as in the arts (Potter 2012). Five years later, Van den Akker and colleagues (Van den Akker et al. 2017) described metamodernism as a specific stage in the development of western capitalist societies, in all its many forms and disguises. One more attractive description holds that metamodernism is a particular lens for thinking about the self, language, culture, and meaning of everything (Abramson 2017).

Now, acknowledging that metamodernism, among other expositions, is also a developing philosophical approach, we will try to summarize the main aspects of current metamodernism philosophy in its ontological (study of existence and reality), epistemological (theory of the acquisition of knowledge), axiological (theory of goodness or value), and methodological (study of the methods of inquiry in a particular field) stances, inferring the main principles of each stance. However, before proceeding with this pivotal subject matter, it should be mentioned that both metamodern ontology (between) and its epistemology ("as if . . . ") should be approached through the dynamics of neither. As we have mentioned before in relation to the combination of modernism and postmodernism, metamodernism is defined by the tension between the zeal of modernism for meaning and postmodern doubts about whether there is any meaning at all. Metamodernism corroborates that faith, trust, dialogue, and sincerity can defeat the irony and alienation of postmodernism. If modernism was epistemologically oriented (spoke to the nature of knowledge), but postmodernism was an ontological endeavor (spoke to the nature of existence), metamodernism questions the universality and truthfulness of old modernism and the fragmentation and skepticism of postmodernism. Metamodernism strives to quell postmodern separation in order to return to the sense of wholeness, thus empowering local and global positive changes (Yousef 2017). Having stated these introductory and general ideas about the interplay of modernism

and postmodernism and the recycling of their ideas by metamodernism, we will start the analysis of the ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology of metamodernism.

Ontology. The important concept to use for the ontology of metamodernism is metaxis. By referring to ancient Greece, Plato described metaxis as the oscillation between two states, as in the case of Heracles, tragically entrapped between the worlds of the gods and humans, never fully belonging to either of them. In Greek, the prefix meta designates notions such as 'with', 'between', and 'beyond'. Meta represents an oscillation, a swinging or swaying with and between future, present, and past, here and there and somewhere, with and between ideals, mindsets, and positions (Vermeulen and Akker 2010). Vermeulen and Akker (2010) acknowledge that metamodernism should be epistemologically situated with (post) modernism, ontologically between (post) modernism, and historically beyond (post) modernism (p. 2). Thus, this permanent ontological oscillation or negotiation could be between premodernity, modernity/reflexive modernity, and postmodernity (Jovanović 2021; Vermeulen and Akker 2010).

Although Morrissey (2021) suggests a method of oscillation in which a work acts like a pendulum swinging between innumerable poles (and meta-modernist works are not always looking for the exact center between modernist and postmodernist elements) approaching culture, this framework seems to be applicable not only for the works of culture but in much wider discourses. We agree with Turner (2015) that oscillation between modernism and postmodernism can sometimes be quite hard, and we should respect both perspectives regarding both of them with relevance depending on the issue at hand. Considering the ontological paradox in metamodernism, we could also interpret oscillation through simultaneity, inscribing not the movement of the metamodern self between innumerable poles on a multidimensional continuum of energies and intensities but inhibiting all of them at once (Abramson 2015; Clasquin-Johnson 2017; Vermeulen 2011). Thus, this challenging and paradoxical, though holistically oriented simultaneity, caused by oscillation in any discourse related to different dimensions (physical, natural, social, psychological, spiritual, etc.) of the world, in our view, might become the first transversal principle of metamodernism.

Epistemology. Looking from the perspective of German idealist philosophy, in opposition to absolute idealism by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, aligned with the epistemology of modernism and postmodernism, metamodernism is based on 'as if' thinking rooted in Immanuel Kant's 'negative' idealism (Vermeulen and Akker 2010). Though meta-modernists can subscribe to the search for usable knowledge and truth, as well as the need for reason, they do not ground their epistemology on the subject–object metaphysics of modernism. Instead, they stress the constant situatedness of individuals in a communal or cultural context that limits our understanding of the world (Feldman 2005). In addition, one of the markers of meta-modernistic epistemology is the paradoxical understanding of truth. Certain ideas can be 'objectively' true for a specific individual, while he or she is aware that they are not universally true; this requires simultaneous awareness and acceptance of individual activities and the differences of these activities from how others do. The stories we tell ourselves about our lives and their meaning are absolute truths for us, although this 'local' truth is not shared and understood by others (Abramson 2017).

Addressing the appeal for universal truth in totalizing accounts of grand narratives, if modernism is marked by the belief in grand narratives and postmodernism by disbelief in such narratives, relationships between metamodernism and grand narratives show the large diversity of approaches: from one side Cooper (2017) views metamodernism itself a grand narrative, while Abramson (2017) argues that metamodernism allows for the beliefs in larger meta-narratives working as an umbrella to organize smaller narratives. However, we agree with the suggestion of Dember (2020) that metamodernism is not a grand narrative, but it creates the space allowing for beliefs in grand narratives, though it does not require them.

According to Jovanović (2021), the production of meta-narratives might become possible by reconstructing old narratives. Postmodernism, based on infinite deconstruction, has led to mindless relativism, which needs to be reassembled in a better way, thus bringing

solutions to practical problems. Freinacht (2019) also calls for following deconstruction with reconstruction, though in the form of a synthesis, never considered as absolute truth. Based on Piro (2018), the thinking style in metamodernism resembles the oscillation between the poles, denoting constant repositioning, not necessarily a balance between both dichotomic choices. In such a rotation, both (or several) poles are maintained and not always perceived as equal: any of these poles could be prioritized at different times and in alternative contexts.

Exposing the epistemology of metamodernism, we can endorse one more important principle of metamodernism for finding truth and discovering knowledge. This principle closely ties in the communal context of our positioning in the world and ways to make choices while repositioning between a large number of poles, as in metaxis. This positioning/repositioning can be initially cognized by the concept of dialogue, already promoted in recent philosophical and educational discourse (Burbules 1993; Freire 1981; Gadamer 1980; Habermas 1979; Kazepides 2010; Sidorkin 1999). Interestingly, Foster (2020) already talks about dialogue in terms of Gadamer's horizons of understanding and metamodernist flavor not as static convergence but rather as a fusion of horizons of understanding where perspectives meet in a fleeting and ever-developing manner and where a dyadic oscillation in power defends against one-sidedness. Already in the context of metamodernism and commonality, Vervaeke and Maistropeitro (2021) introduce the idea of Dialogos, describing it as 'a practice of onto-intimation that discursively disciplines our existential attitudes by arranging our loves to seek self-transformation.' When it comes to metaxis, active dialogue (Dumitrescu 2014) between metamodernism and all other cultural codes (prepostmodernism) or synthesis, seriously considering the postmodern critique, without denigrating achievements of modernism and reintegrating human ways of traditional society (Murray 2021), also seems to be one of the possibilities to embrace the metamodern understanding of metaxis. According to Abramson (2015), if postmodernism supported dialectical thinking implying the battle between two primary opposing elements until the victory of one of them, metamodernism vindicates dialogic thinking suggesting the middle ground or means of negotiation between different positions since the overlap between opposite views could lead to effective collective action towards the solution of problems. Going one step further to transform this communal context in the discourse of metamodernism, it seems that metamodernism cannot limit the dialogue as occurring only between two elements (not necessarily opposite). Relationships in the metamodernist world would also demand the transition from dialogue to polylogue, as already suggested (Sardar and Sweeney 2016). Coined for the first time by Julia Kristeva in 1977 in a book with the same name, polylogue is described as multiple logics, speeches, and existences, going beyond the dialogue, being aware that contradictions can only be transcended, not resolved. Polylogue can involve an infinite number of voices and positions, as long as each of them is heard, honored, and considered in making new syntheses and knowledge. At the same time, this does not mean that dialogue (in between two poles) should be abandoned or left for postmodernism. The dialogue between two poles, certainly not engaged in devastating battle but constant negotiation, in metamodernism can probably be viewed as a specific case of polylogue.

All in all, the epistemological discourse allows us to suggest the second principle of metamodernism, paradoxical understanding of truth and grand narratives, stressing the oscillation and free space allowance for knowledge and meaning production, and the third principle, metaxis-based thinking and dia/polylogue envisaging the contextual negotiation both within the territories of theoretical abstractions, individual mental, and communal social life.

Axiology. As maintained by Dumitrescu (2016), axiological dimension and ethical concerns are the dominant discourse in metamodernism, compared to the dominance of epistemology in modernism and ontology in postmodernism. She links metamodernism (especially in the literature) with the reintegration of the fragmented self, reconfiguration of new meanings, and search for a balanced, fulfilling existence. It is especially important to note her idea that metamodernism values the connection with all humans and nature, in opposition to the individualism and isolated experience of (post)modernism. This idea

is based on the proposition of collaboration for collective activities (Abramson 2017) as one of the main principles of metamodernism. Metamodernism also revisits and redefines the forgotten values of protection of the innocent and the disempowered, compassion, empathy, altruistic love, forgiveness of past injuries, respect for difference, creativity, and ingenuity (Dumitrescu 2014). From another perspective, the axiological dimension of metamodernism can also be pictured as a constant negotiation between rhizomatic social relations and values, considering collective collaboration and value determination in a framework of relational, polymorphic, open, and heterogeneous networks from one side and traditional hierarchical structures of society and value systems from the other side. This negotiation between rhizomatic and hierarchical social relations and values could be coined as the fourth principle of metamodernist philosophy.

Methodology. Some scholars (e.g., Clasquin-Johnson 2017) already clearly admit that metamodernism can be used as a methodological tool used for academic studies. Focusing on the scientific discourse, it should be admitted that working in the paradigm of metamodernism, the scientist has to routinely choose between the methodology of modernism and postmodernism based on a decision of which approach would provide the best solution to the specific research problem. Thus, the problem appears to be that scientists (especially in social sciences) should be familiar with both methodologies regardless of their personal perspectives (Meyer 2021). Metamodernism in science as a methodological tool would also help disentangle modernist theories and constructs, identify the good in them, learn from them, and reconstruct a new possibility by joining distinct and even contradictory positions (Abramson 2017).

Considering that it is impossible to use or even hold in mind all the diversity of the world in its infinite aspects, we can notice the discussions about the so-called pluralistic approach in philosophy/philosophy of science (Chang 2012; Ramadan 2010). Although it has roots in postmodernism, this term is well aligned with the metamodernist concept of metaxis. The methodology is inevitably based on a relevant philosophical understanding of ontology and epistemology, which provide their own explanations of pluralism. For example, ontological pluralism would assert that we are living in multidimensional reality and that there exist myriads of world views or an infinite number of 'bubbles' (not necessarily with negative connotations), none of them more fundamental than others. The potential existence of such 'bubbles' and oscillations between them should be kept in mind when conducting research in any discipline of social sciences. Such pluralism reverberates the metaphor by Andersen (2019) talking about the research as travel between the islands of an archipelago, where each island is the strong and already explored land of knowledge to come ashore, while the knowledge could be enriched in a motion between making bridges and connections amidst the islands and grasping the archipelago from the bird's eye view. Epistemological pluralism reminds us that even views on the seemingly most objective results of studies should be coupled with an awareness of their limitations and complementary nature. Methodological pluralism itself can be explained by observing that one story can be told in different ways (Mārtinsone 2011), and one of the most common explications of methodological pluralism could be observed in the approach of mixed-method research. Mixed-method research integrates qualitative and quantitative reality, two contradictory realities, both of which can be viewed as completely feasible to reach a solution to the problem. The ontology of mixed methods emphasizes changeable, cognizable reality and understanding of the world based on the pragmatic orientation toward the public good. This approach is beneficial when performing the exploration of contemporary social phenomena, dynamic, nonlinear, diverse, multidimensional, both complex and chaotic in their nature (Mārtinsone and Pipere 2021). Thus, it seems relevant to pinpoint pluralism as the fifth principle of metamodernist philosophy.

Now, in the second decade of the 21st century, we could ask if we already live in the new stage of cultural evolution based on the traditional critique of the previous stage (postmodernism). This question is quite puzzling, and the answer is not so unanimous. We take side with those (e.g., Cooper 2020; Gibbons et al. 2019) who admit that today

we can notice the confluence and coexistence of previous stages of cultural evolution, in opposition to the view that modernism and postmodernism are over and substituted by the new stage of metamodernism. In particular, this transversal coexistence of these stages as 'parallel universes' and the interlinkage of components from previous stages to some extent determine the shape of a new cultural code of metamodernism and, possibly, can represent the last principle of metamodernist philosophy.

At the end of this chapter, we want to stress that although it is doubtful that humanity ever in its future will achieve the utopian state for which so many yearn and there is no guarantee of progress, metamodernists should choose to act and think as if humanity could and would progress toward great ends (Corsa 2018). Although the features and principles of metamodernism are now beginning to unfold in philosophy, humanities, art, and architecture, they are not much theoretically reflected or digested in the field of science and social science.

4. Metamodernism in Social Sciences

In this chapter of the article, we will reflect on some essential features of metamodernism for science and research and particularize the metamodernist principles of philosophy for social sciences, focusing on ontological, epistemological, axiological, and methodological discourses.

Conceptualizing metamodernism for science and research. Choosing a new approach to life, society, and thought (Rhodes and Conti 2016), we should ask if metamodernism could add something to science as a human endeavor and a possible answer to the current metacrisis of humanity. Struggling to align metamodernism with the context of science and research and continuing our previous illustration of social sciences in modernism and postmodernism, we can ground this analysis on the dual metaphor of science. From one side, different essential classifications in the discourse of science (for instance, classification of knowledge, disciplines, proofs) conform with the metaphor of the pyramid (hierarchy) or tree typical of modernism. On the other hand, since the 1980s and 1990s, one can observe the gradual expansion of a new metaphor of network (rhizome) or grass, conceptualizing the diversification of data, knowledge, and webbing of disciplines indicative of postmodernism. Additionally, at the beginning of the 21st century, we witnessed the ontology of metamodernism (Yousef 2017; Vermeulen and Akker 2010) in continuous oscillation from the hierarchical system (in certain contexts and fields) to the network approach (again, in particular settings and areas) dia/polylogically embracing one another and changing polarity (pyramid or net) depending on the situation.

Currently, the scholarly literature discerns different forms of interaction between scientific disciplines, reflecting the gradual enrichment and qualitative transformation of this partnership. Contemporary science needs all types of interaction between scientific disciplines; however, each has its own objectives, aims, and potential for the development of society (Dodig-Crnkovic et al. 2017; Soriano 2022; Vári et al. 2022).

Attributing the metamodernist concept of metaxis to the fragmentation and/or integrity of knowledge, we can conclude: if monodisciplinarity, in general, is connected with the fragmentation of knowledge, mainly to deal with problems peculiar to a given discipline, interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinary are characterized by the synthesis of knowledge (integrity), to deal with complex social and global problems, holding to the optimistic belief that solutions are possible. Furthermore, in the case of transdisciplinarity, we can observe the oscillation not only between the knowledge of different scientific disciplines but also between the distinct types of knowledge in general, between scientists and society, between natural sciences and humanities, etc. Faith in a better future, mutual trust of different scientific disciplines and society, dia/polylogue, and sincerity can surmount the irony and detachment of postmodernism based on mutual contradictions and reluctance or incapability of different scientific disciplines, subdisciplines, and groups of society to collaborate. Both interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity embrace the paradox when one team to deal with a common problem can equally collaborate, for instance, physicist and

musician, mathematician and psychotherapist, professor of the university and long-term unemployed, bringing contrasting subjectivity to the research process (Pipere 2022).

Philosophy of Science for Metamodernistic Social Sciences. The highly generalized ideas of metacrisis, depicted in the introduction of this article (crises of meaning, mental health, techno-environmental, and digital globalization crises) can be rephrased as more focused questions based on metamodernist discourse and related to some complex problems to be dealt with by social sciences. In this way, the ideas inherent in metamodernism could serve as theoretical guidelines for the survival and further development of society, individuals, and science. These questions would ask, for instance, how we could use the best from modernism and postmodernism, ensure more effective individual development, recreate the local and global processes of social management, make the inner dimensions of life more important for society, adapt politics to an increasingly complex world, what is the unique role of humanity in the natural ecosystem, and how do we ensure a productive coexistence of persons oriented to modernism, postmodernism, and premodernism (Metamoderna 2022)? These questions could also be stated as an ethical dilemma or potential for oscillation, particularly salient in social sciences: What would be more important for humanity to reach a logically justified, clear, objective, that is, scientific view on the world, reflecting the important relationships between the isolated elements of individual and social systems in some specific discipline, to advocate the 'traditional' nature of science as an elitist activity, or to emphasize the instrumental aspect of science, focusing not so much on the peculiarities of scientific discipline, but rather on immediate individual or social problems, seeking creative engagement of all available resources in order to mitigate both present and future problems?

Trying to find the common denominator for all social sciences from the perspective of metamodernism, we could probably view these sciences as a social practice (Begg 2019). According to Gorton (n.d.), "social scientists should participate in a larger, ongoing human project to better understand ourselves and our world and make them better. The facts, patterns and mechanisms that mainstream social science uncover, the meanings that descriptivism unveils, and the self-reflective awareness of the values embedded in such inquiry that critical theory and hermeneutics counsel should all be part of this broader human conversation" (para. 66). Additionally, considering the close connections between metamodernism and pragmatism (Franco-Torres 2020), it seems probable that social practice within the social sciences would allow scientists not only to reach intrinsic aims such as the development of discipline/s but also to answer on above-mentioned questions, thus coping with threatening metacrises.

Speaking about the interaction between scientific disciplines, as mentioned above, inter-/transdisciplinarity seems to be an appropriate and context-relevant scientific form to deal with metacrisis, and social sciences have an important role to play side-by-side with other fields of science to build a more sustainable world. Again, narrowing the focus toward distinct disciplines, it is clear that they still should be preserved as a core element even in a metamodernistic framework of science, as without strong, albeit reflective, core disciplines, inter/transdisciplinary dia/polylogue between disciplines would not be possible (Mazzocchi 2019).

In what follows, we will offer our suggestions for the ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology of metamodernism applied in social sciences (for the first time presented in Pipere 2022), viewed in some simplified manner from the point of view of six principles of metamodernist philosophy elaborated above (e.g., simultaneity, paradoxical understanding of truth, metaxis-based thinking and dia/polylogue, negotiation between rhizomatic and hierarchical social relations and values, pluralism, and transversal coexistence of paradigms), and demonstrate three interrelated tentative perspectives in the development of science, namely, the perspectives of monodisciplinarity (e.g., economics, psychology, sociology), inter/transdisciplinary, and the focal point of social sciences as social practice mentioned above. These perspectives can be viewed as freely chosen reference points to navigate the archipelago of science. Each element of further explanation (e.g., ontological, epistemological, etc.) will inevitably be based on the principle/s elaborated from this

perspective (see Chapter Metamodernism: Introduction); however, this does not mean that, for instance, the ontology of metamodernism in social sciences has to be grounded only on holistic simultaneity. In a complementary way, elaborating on this discourse, we could also use other principles such as metaxis-based thinking and dia/polylogue or ontological pluralism. The same applies to epistemology, axiology, and methodology.

The ontology of metamodernism in social sciences. This ontology can be described as metaxis between different opposite realities, all of them retaining their significance in one or another context.

The perspective of a specific discipline. The existence of two contradictory realities, quantitative (QUAN) and qualitative (QUAL), both of which are viewed as completely reliable to solving the problems, can be integrated into mixed method research (MMR). QUAN reality corresponds to the perspective of (post)positivism (modernism), whereas QUAL (postmodernism) reality is subjective, contextual, and multidimensional.

Inter- and transdisciplinary perspective. This perspective is determined by the polylogue (oscillation) between objective, quantitative, positivism-oriented, and generalizing science/research approaches and subjective, qualitative, postmodernism-oriented soft data science/research approaches.

Social sciences as social practice. In metamodernism ontology, MMR emphasizes a turbulent, though detectable, reality and worldview based on the pursuit of benefits for all members of the community and individual well-being.

Epistemology of metamodernism in social sciences. It can be based on the idea of multidimensional reality with different forms and sources of knowledge for the solution of complex problems in different contexts.

The perspective of a specific discipline. In this perspective, the metamodernistic flavor is brought about by a dialogue between QUAN and QUAL methods of data collection and analysis in a framework of MMR. However, considering the pragmatic orientation of MMR, it should be stressed that this orientation accommodates causal links, which are changeable and difficult to identify. Even in QUAN research, which embraces multidimensionality, scientists gradually turn away from searching for simple causal links and, using methods of mathematical statistics, model complex networks.

Inter- and transdisciplinary perspective. In this perspective, the point of departure is the polylogue between scientific knowledge/nonacademic partners and generalized/contextual knowledge, and oscillation between different types of knowledge (scientific, artistic, fictional, spiritual, indigenous, traditional, etc.) and various sources of different knowledge (intuition, experience, thinking, imagination, emotional sensitivity, bodily knowledge, etc.).

Social sciences as social practice. The metamodernist scholars representing social sciences admit that humanity lives in a complex world, asking for a specific way of thinking and global awareness to deal with the complex problems of the present world.

Axiology of metamodernism in social sciences. This discourse in social sciences can be described as the interaction of the values of the researcher (or team of researchers) and those of research participants and also as an oscillation between these values in different contexts and stages of research.

The perspective of a specific discipline. Depending on the context and nature of a specific social science discipline, metamodernism will ask for interaction and emphasis on the values of the researcher/s or research participants depending on the context of research. It is no longer axiologically neutral but rather axiologically dependent (by analogy with ontological dependence (Tahko and Lowe 2020)) and value-sensitive social science.

Inter- and transdisciplinary perspective. At this level, the axiology of metamodernism encourages discussions and solutions related to the diversity of values, coordination of interests of scientists and community, and attempts to endorse multidimensional reality. Both the research participants and social stakeholders (partners of the research team) with experience in research problems can usually provide awareness, knowledge, or at least hypotheses regarding the possible solutions to complex problems (Novy and Bernstein 2009).

Social sciences as social practice. The most important in social science research is to deliver outcomes, work in practice, and foster social justice, as well as focus on socially oriented goals.

Methodology of Metamodernism in Social Sciences. The metamodernism in social sciences allows us to explain the metaxis both as a stabilization at quantitative or qualitative poles of methodological amplitude and also as MMR, situated simultaneity, where we dialogically integrate and contextually oscillate between quantitative/qualitative reality, inductive/deductive logic, etc.

The perspective of a specific discipline. In the principle of metamodernism, juxtaposition (one thing is put together with another, completely different thing with different meaning) seems to be represented in MMR and different types of triangulation.

Inter- and transdisciplinary perspective. At this level, metamodernism manifests its principle of collaboration, urging one to join the efforts, perspectives, ideas, and thoughts, instigating the collaborative work and collective activities between different scientific disciplines/groups of stakeholders, between different methodologies, and specific research.

Social sciences as social practice. Research design should be planned and implemented based on the idea of the best way to answer research questions. These theories, programs, or activities that have proven their practical utility for a specific group of people should be considered the most correct.

Searching for the imprinting of metamodernism in specific disciplines of social science, already for almost a decade, we can observe the emanations of metamodernism in some disciplines, although these are still the first theoretical exercises to project several principles of metamodernism on a given research field (Clasquin-Johnson 2017) or to mold the approaches to research or single studies, based on particular ideas and principles of metamodernism (Komanda 2016; Piro 2016, 2018; Rhodes and Conti 2016; Seikkula 2002).

5. Conclusions and Future Perspectives

The current situation in the world, considering several old and new metacrisis, testifies that science in general and, particularly, social sciences will have to lend a hand in dealing with such problems that were not even imaginable at the break of the new 21st century.

In this paper, we view metamodernism both as a phase of cultural evolution (in comparison with other phases such as modernism and postmodernism) and as a philosophical paradigm applicable for the further development of the philosophy of science both in general terms and in terms of specific areas of science, such as social sciences.

Social sciences are just making their first steps to probe the relevance and validity of metamodernism in theoretical and practical discourses both in monodisciplinary and inter-/transdisciplinary studies, and the bulk of articles in mainstream journals and monographs are yet to come to fully claim or perhaps critically denigrate the metamodernistic approach and substitute it with other more appropriate and scientifically sound philosophy and phase of cultural evolution.

The strategic aim of this paper, embedded in the discourse of philosophy of science, to discern the image of social sciences in a framework of the new paradigm of metamodernism, was reached, embedding social sciences into the historical context of modernism and postmodernism and also introducing metamodernism within detailed historical and terminological explications.

The first goal of our treatise to elaborate on the new principles of metamodernist philosophy was attained by illustrating the background and development of six transversal principles of metamodernist philosophy. To put it briefly, the first principle in the ontological discourse features paradoxical, though holistic, simultaneity caused by oscillation. The epistemological discourse exhibits the second principle of the paradoxical understanding of truth and grand narratives and the third principle, metaxis-based thinking and dia/polylogue. The fourth principle of axiological rhetoric speaks of the negotiation between rhizomatic and hierarchical social relations and values. The fifth methodologically oriented principle showcases pluralism as a possibility of telling one story in several ways. The sixth transversal

principle of metamodernism manifests the coexistence of previous stages of metamodernism as 'parallel universes' and acknowledges the interlinkage of components from previous stages as the determining force of metamodernism.

The second goal of the paper was to apply these principles to the ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology of social sciences by elaborating the suggestions for the mentioned philosophical discourses from the point of view of these principles of metamodernism, using three interdependent planes of science: perspective of specific discipline (monodisciplinarity), perspective of interactive science (inter/transdisciplinarity), and instrumental perspective (social sciences as social practice).

Speaking of the limitations of this paper, we should mention our attempt to offer an analysis of wide and debatable topics in a very short form, inevitably reflecting the subjective view of the authors (priorities, biases, and stereotypes) and the selected methodological approach used. However, we are open to critique and discussions that would start dia/polylogic, pluralistic, and polyphonic exchange, necessary for developing the social sciences in the 21st century.

As time goes on, further avenues of development will hopefully open for the social sciences, showing the more elaborated and clear definitions of metamodernism and demonstrating its benefits and/or setbacks in science and other fields of application. The game is on, and a large number of the rules for it are written by modernism; some of the players are deeply embedded in postmodernism, while few are trying to play the game using both modernism and postmodernism. Time will show whether these players will be drafted into the joint team and be capable of switching gears at high speed, depending on the goals to be achieved. Today, and as it seems, at least in the near future, many disciplines of social sciences will deal with outdated or objectionable frameworks, separated rhizomes, and strange or deadlock research directions, as well as redundant or old discussions. It appears that in the future, metamodernism could help cope with fragmentation created by a lack of coherence or convergence (Cooper 2017) and inspire the sustainable development of social sciences as a social practice. In the future, the social sciences will need a more detailed review that reflects the full diversity of disciplines and their connections with metamodernism, the participation of social sciences in inter-/transdisciplinary studies, and the application of metamodernistic research methodology in these investigations. One of the avenues for further exploration of the metamodernistic approach to social sciences would be based on the classification of social sciences according to their potential involvement in dealing with specific metacrisis, reconfiguration of grand narratives, and answering important questions.

Additionally, a further movement in this direction would require a systematic review to conduct a close examination and evaluation of different disciplines of social sciences in terms of recognition and adaptation of the metamodernist paradigm, as well as to analyze how it is conducted and with what tools and approaches. In addition, it would be useful to discern which (and why these) principles and concepts of metamodernism the disciplines of social science recognize and apply the most often.

Notwithstanding the swiftness of dissemination of metamodernism in different spheres of life and inquiry, which probably testifies to the promising nature and potentiality of this new cultural stage or philosophical paradigm for science and societal development, it has not still reached its full potential (Cooper 2020) and the rest of the 21st century will show if these promises will come true, and the grand narrative of metamodernism (if we accept this idea) will be able to serve as a pulling force out of metacrisis into the bright future of humanity.

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