



An Outlook on Behavioural OR

- 3 tasks, 3 pitfalls, 1 definition

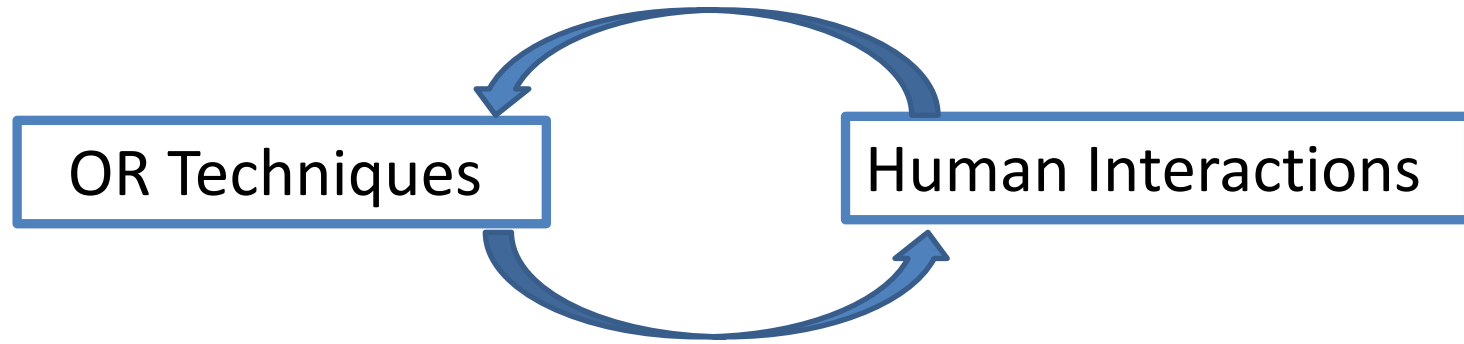
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3 Tasks of Behavioural OR



Descriptive level	Investigate the consequences of the use of OR techniques in the social context of organizations
Methodological level	Provide concepts that allow for reflecting on the use of OR techniques in concrete practical settings
Technological level	Stimulate the development of novel or improved OR techniques that enable organizations to make better decisions

Pitfall 1: A too narrow understanding of what “behavioural” means I

The social sciences are multi-paradigmatic.

(1) Classification according to scientific objective

	<i>Erklaeren</i>	<i>Verstehen</i>
Ontological and epistemological position	Social phenomena and phenomena studied by the natural sciences part of the same objective reality	In contrast to other phenomena, social phenomena invariably depend on human activities, which are based on interpretation and sense-making
Scientific objective	Nomological explanation	Meaningful understanding

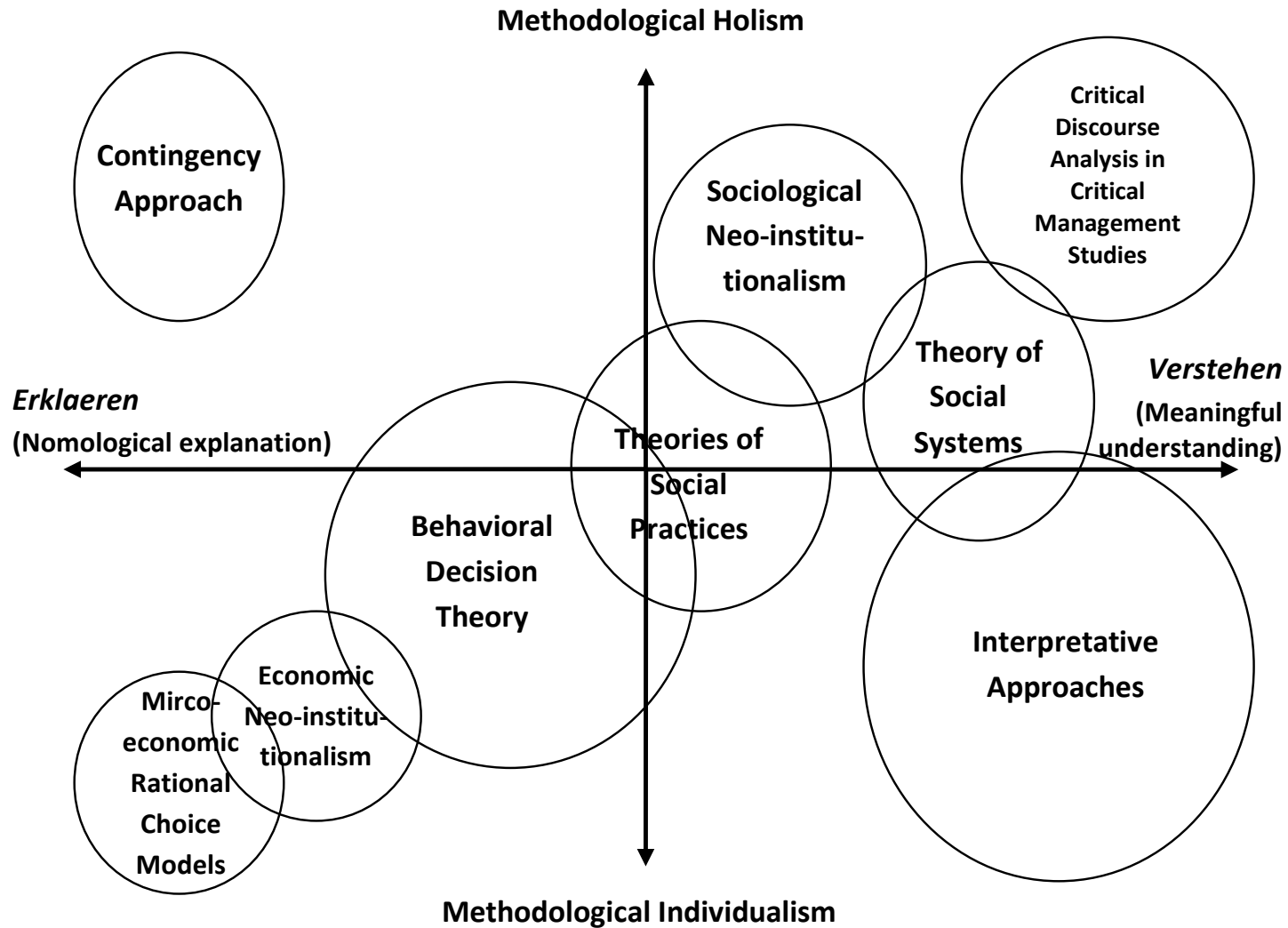
Pitfall 1: A too narrow understanding of what “behavioural” means II

The social sciences are multi-paradigmatic.

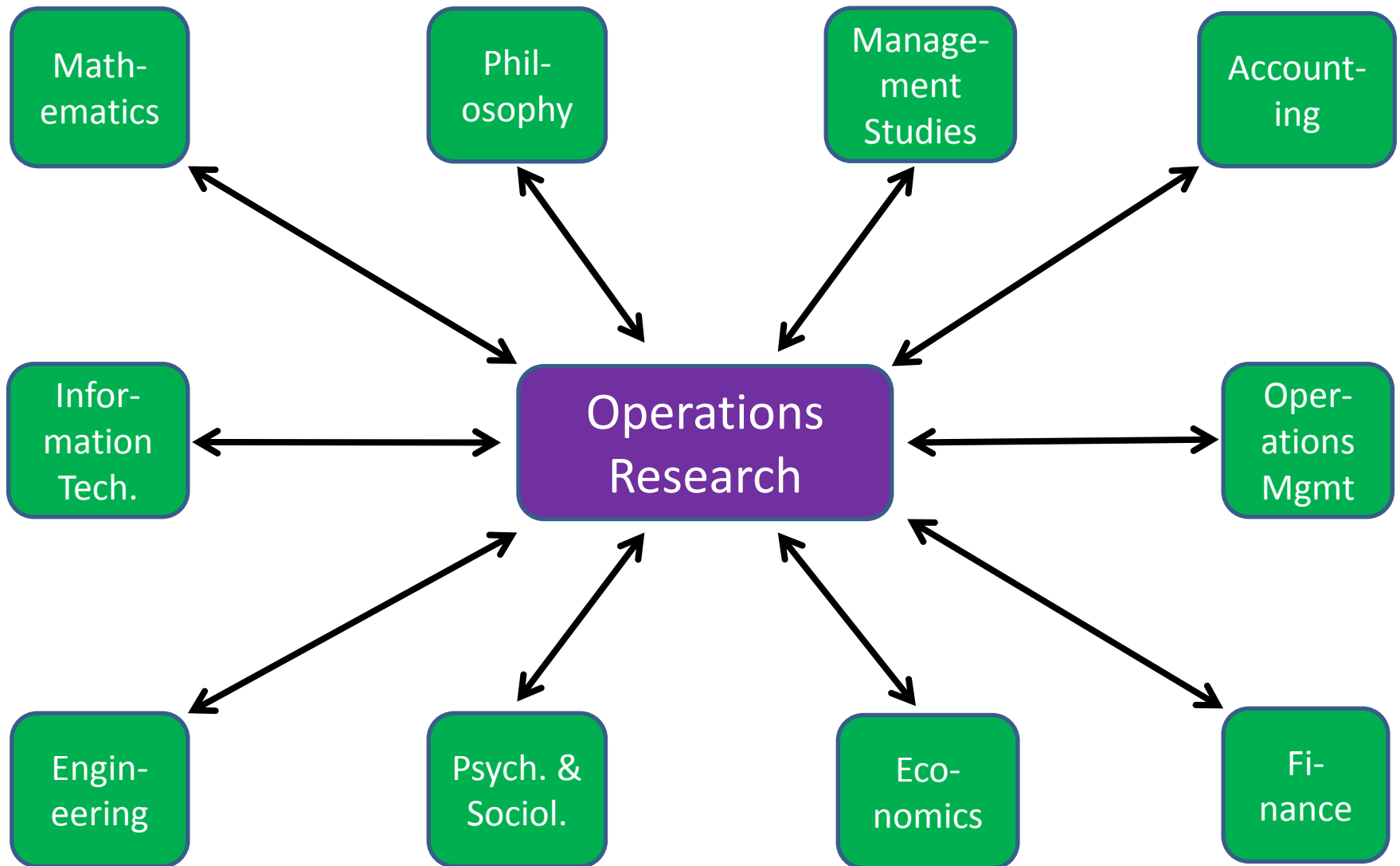
(2) Classification according to methodological approach

	Methodological Individualism	Methodological Holism
Ontological position	Social phenomena are just consequences of the activities of individual actors.	Social phenomena are phenomena <i>sui generis</i> on an “emergent” level of reality (“systems”/“structures”) that shape individual actors.
Methodological position	Social phenomena should be analysed as the outcome of the activities of individual actors.	Social phenomena should be analysed in terms of their own rules and patterns.

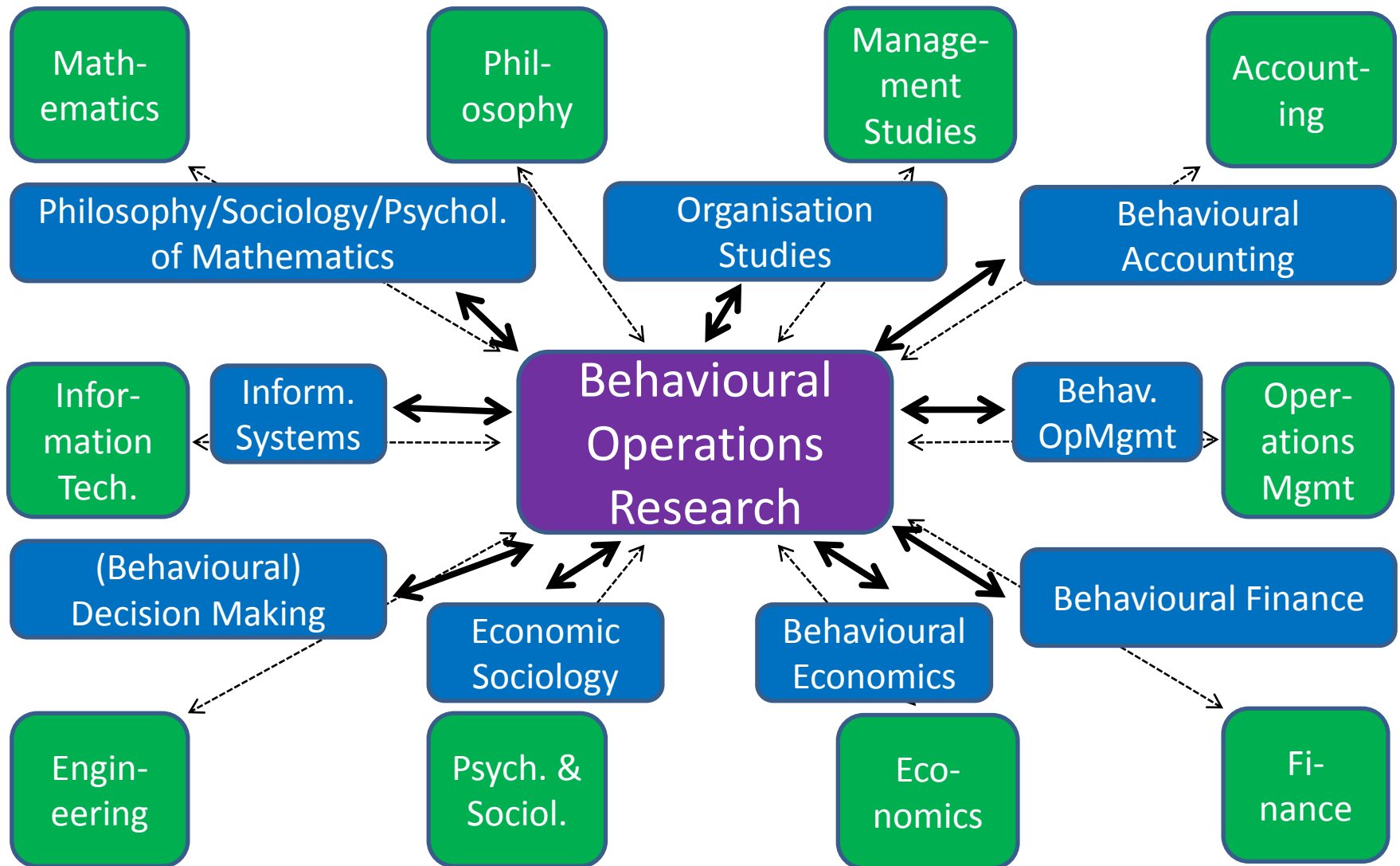
Pitfall 1: A too narrow understanding of what “behavioural” means III



Pitfall 2: Ignorance of interdisciplinary links I



Pitfall 2: Ignorance of interdisciplinary links II



Interlude: Behavioural Accounting

- From 1950s: Insight that behaviour is important for accounting
- 1973: Anthony Hopwood *An Accounting System and Managerial Behaviour*
- 1975: *Accounting, Organization & Society* (A+) supporting a broad variety of approaches
- From 1980s: Political dimension (Thatcherism) -> new fields of enquiry, more interdisciplinarity
- From 1990s: Internationality, many new positions in Behavioural Accounting / Social Accounting
- From 2000s: broadened scope, *Calculative Practices*
- Present: **fully established sub-discipline**

Pitfall 3: No close connection with OR

- Show presence within OR discourse
 - Clear communication of what we do
 - Journals (INFORMS, EJOR, journals of other disciplines)
 - Working group, conferences
 - Textbooks
- Demonstrate relevance for “hard”, quantitative OR, not only DA and PSM
- Achieve high standard in methodology of social sciences to raise acceptance
- Fill academic positions / provide career options

A possible definition of Behavioural OR I

Behavioural OR is the sub-discipline of OR that,

- *in carrying forward the interdisciplinary tradition of OR,*

- *on the basis of the current level of theoretical, empirical and methodological insights in the social sciences, understood as a broad, multi-paradigmatic field,*

- *in close connection with recent problems and results of other OR sub-disciplines, including those with a strongly quantitative focus,*

studies the way in which the use of OR techniques shapes and is shaped by human interactions

A possible definition of Behavioural OR II

... in order to

(a) investigate, on a descriptive level, the consequences of the use of OR techniques in the social context of organizations,

(b) provide, on the level of methodology, concepts that allow for reflecting on the use of OR techniques in concrete practical settings, and,

(c) stimulate, on a technological level, the development of novel or improved OR techniques that enable organizations to make better decisions;

thereby contributing to realizing OR's *raison d'être* and aspiration of being The Science of Better.