An Outlook on Behavioural OR
- 3 tasks, 3 pitfalls, 1 definition

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### 3 Tasks of Behavioural OR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Descriptive level</strong></td>
<td>Investigate the consequences of the use of OR techniques in the social context of organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Methodological level</strong></td>
<td>Provide concepts that allow for reflecting on the use of OR techniques in concrete practical settings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Technological level</strong></td>
<td>Stimulate the development of novel or improved OR techniques that enable organizations to make better decisions</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Pitfall 1: A too narrow understanding of what “behavioural” means

The social sciences are multi-paradigmatic.

(1) Classification according to scientific objective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ontological and epistemological position</th>
<th>Erklären</th>
<th>Verstehen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social phenomena and phenomena studied by the natural sciences part of the same objective reality</td>
<td>In contrast to other phenomena, social phenomena invariably depend on human activities, which are based on interpretation and sense-making</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methodological Individualism</th>
<th>Methodological Holism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ontological position</strong></td>
<td><strong>Methodological position</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social phenomena are just consequences of the activities of individual actors.</td>
<td>Social phenomena should be analysed as the outcome of the activities of individual actors.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pitfall 1: A too narrow understanding of what “behavioural” means III

Methodological Holism

Methodological Individualism

Verstehen  
(Meaningful understanding)

Erklären  
(Nomological explanation)

Theories of Social Practices

Sociological Neo-institutionalism

Theory of Social Systems

Interpretative Approaches

Critical Discourse Analysis in Critical Management Studies

Behavioral Decision Theory

Economic Neo-institutionalism

Economic Rational Choice Models

Contingency Approach

Micro-economic Rational Choice Models
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.