

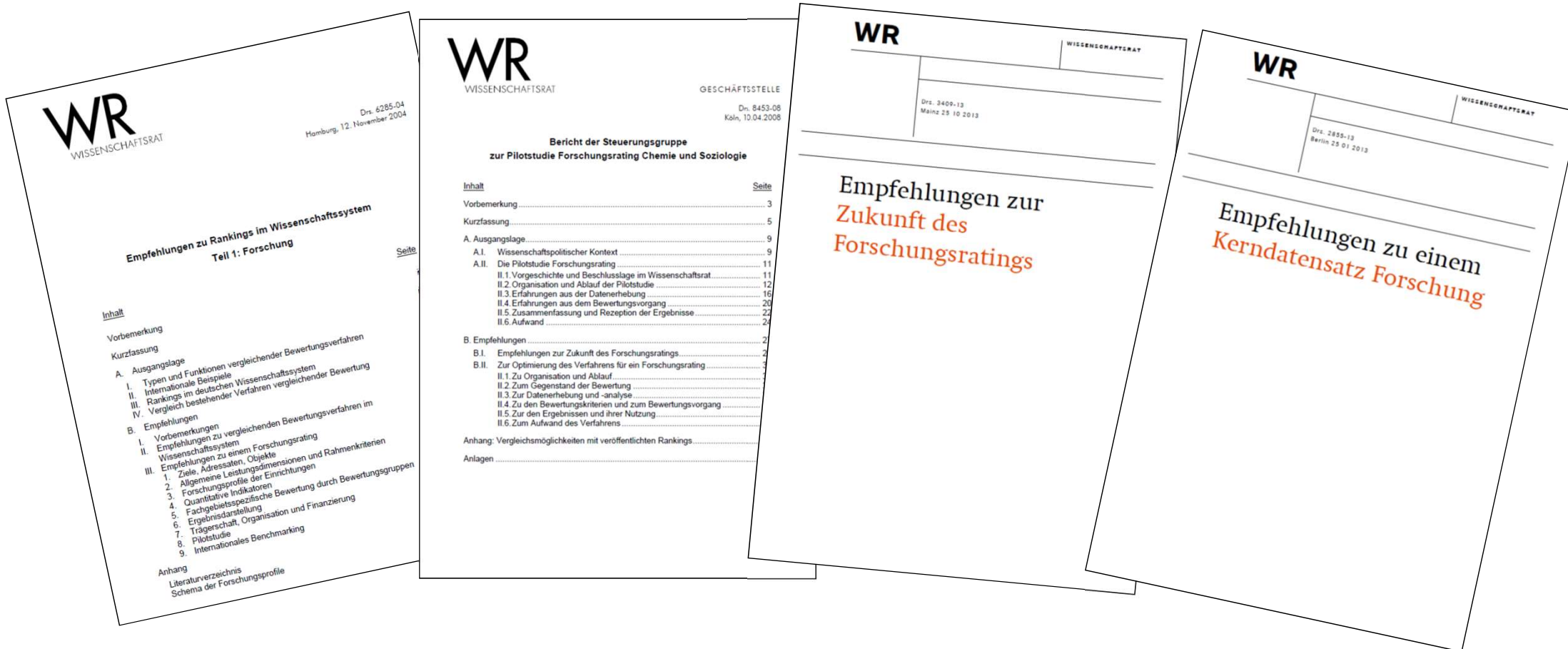
THE GERMAN COUNCIL OF SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES
PROVIDES ADVICE TO THE GERMAN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
AND THE STATE GOVERNMENTS ON THE STRUCTURE AND
DEVELOPMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH.

HRK NETWORKING EVENT „INTERNATIONAL RANKINGS“ | DRESDEN | NOVEMBER 25, 2019

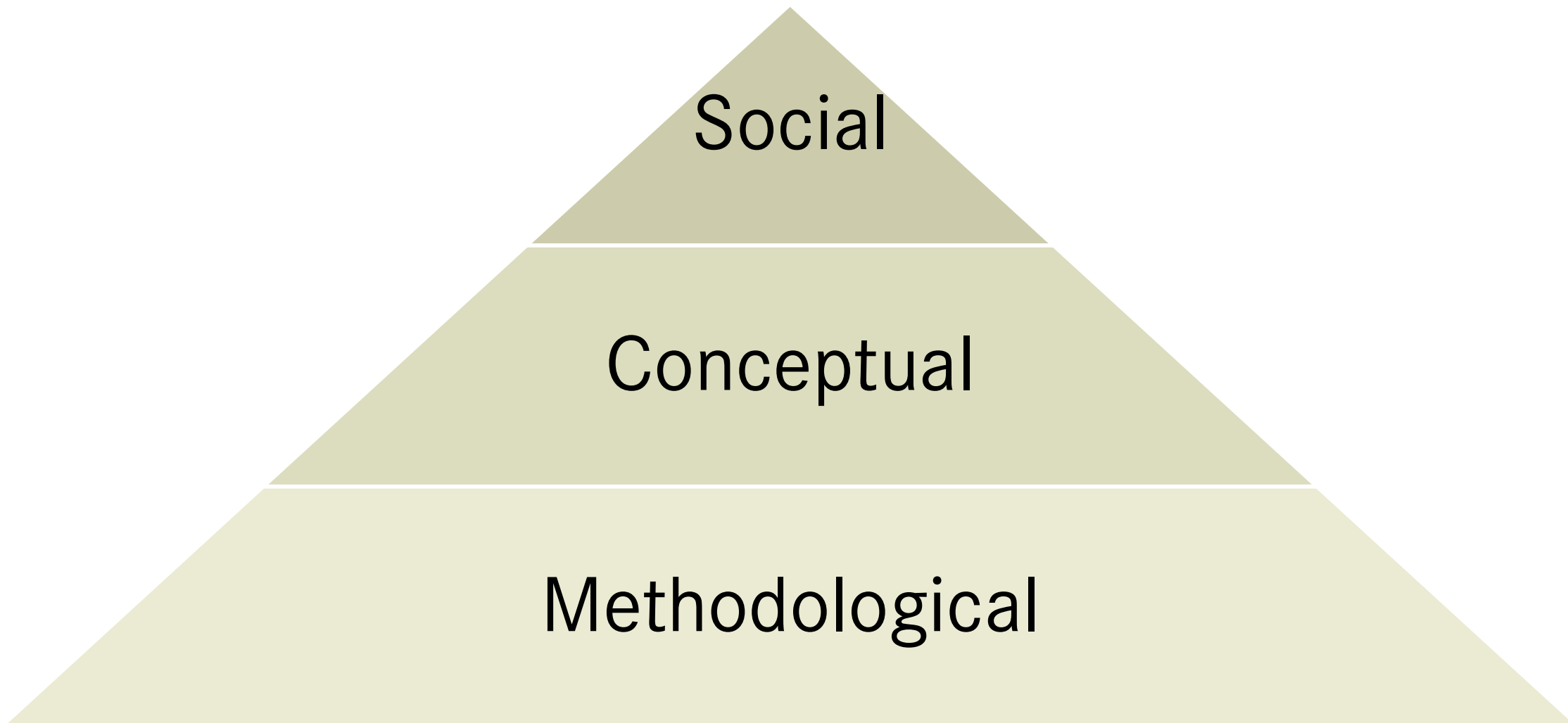
University Rankings

Criticism and Policies

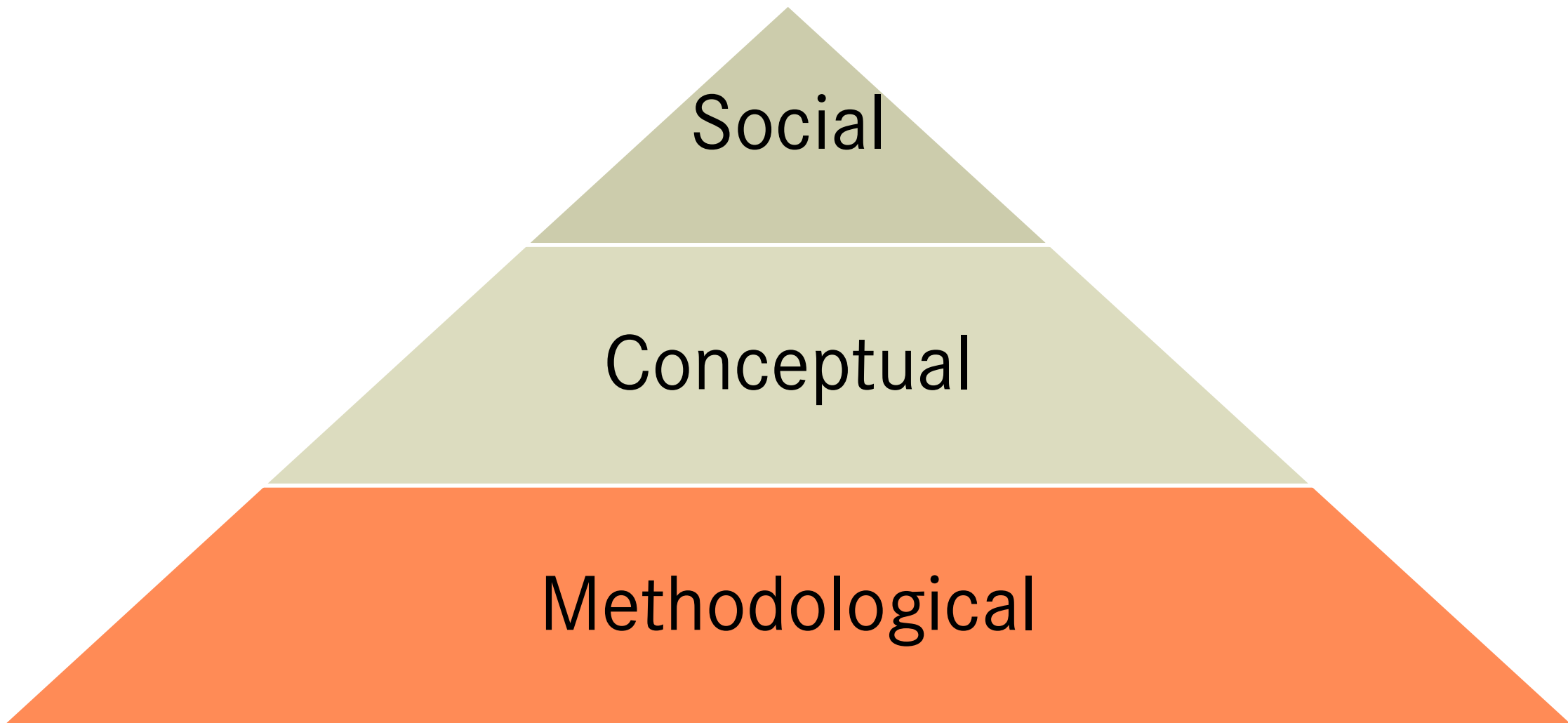
A little bit of history...



University Rankings: Three Levels of Problems



University Rankings: Three Levels of Problems



Data Quality

Unclear and/or incompatible definitions

Underreporting due to lack of compliance

Biases

Disciplinary Bias

Linguistic Bias

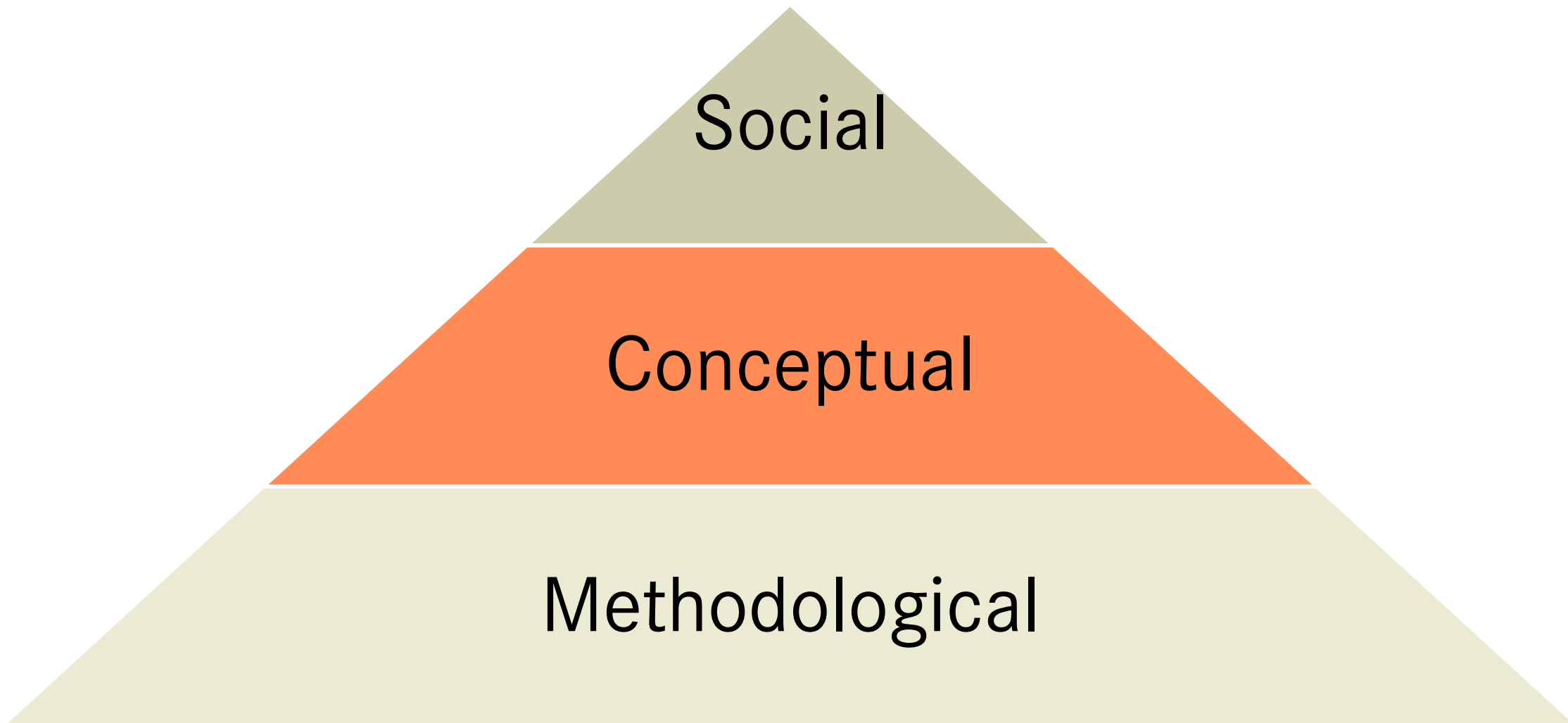
Publication Type Bias

Statistics

Lack of an error theory

Using averages for measures that are asymmetrically distributed

University Rankings: Three Levels of Problems



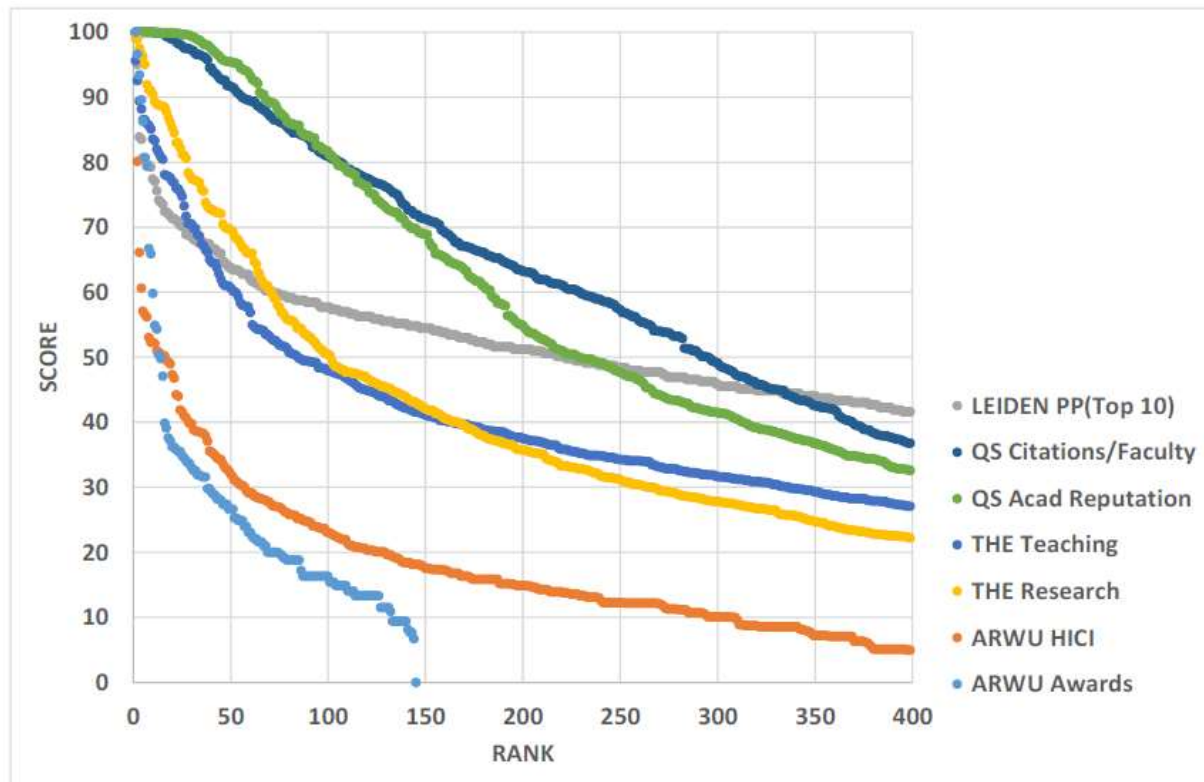
Measuring Past Performance

Long data collection periods

Long time lags in performance & measurement processes
(citations; impact; Nobel prizes...)

Unknown delays in reputation measures

Spurious Precision



Henk F. Moed (2016): A critical comparative analysis of five world university rankings. <https://arxiv.org/abs/1611.06547>

Comparing the Incomparable

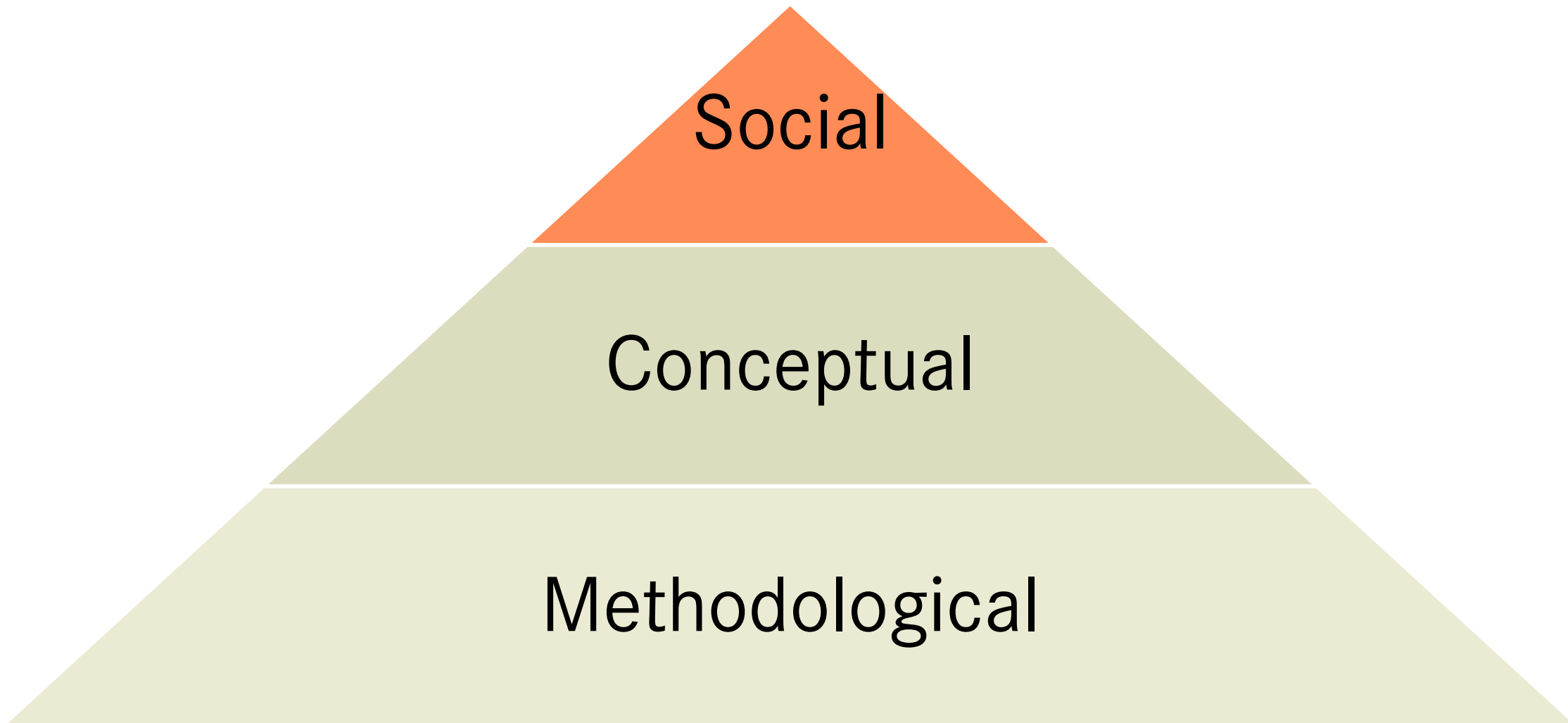
Academic staff

Funding mechanisms & accounting

Institutional profiles & types



University Rankings: Three Levels of Problems



Goodhart's Law

When a measure becomes a target,
it ceases to be a good measure.

Social problems

Incentives for window dressing and manipulation

Goal displacement

- _ Only what is measured counts.
- _ Competition drives out cooperation.

A kinder research culture is possible

Wellcome is right to call out hyper-competitiveness in research and question the focus on excellence. But other funders must follow its move.



[PDF version](#)

RELATED ARTICLES

Some hard numbers on science's leadership problems



Science needs to redefine excellence



"Excellence R Us": university research and the fetishisation of excellence

Which **policy options** do we have?

Ignore

See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil.

See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil.

See no evil, hear no evil, speak no



Ignore?

Double Top Universities Plan (China) etc.

Researcher Mobility

Student Mobility

Ignore?

„Wenn wir dann in einigen Jahren wirklich vier oder fünf international reputierte Hochschulen haben, die in den Rankings ganz vorne liegen, dann können wir sagen: Das war genau die richtige Entscheidung, die wir jetzt getroffen haben.“

Bundesministerin Johanna Wanka anlässlich des Beschlusses über die Exzellenzstrategie

Boycot



Universities boycott Maclean's rankings

CAROLINE ALPHONSO > EDUCATION REPORTER

PUBLISHED AUGUST 15, 2006

UPDATED APRIL 24, 2018

PUBLISHED AUGUST 15, 2006

This article was published more than 10 years ago. Some information in it may no longer be current.

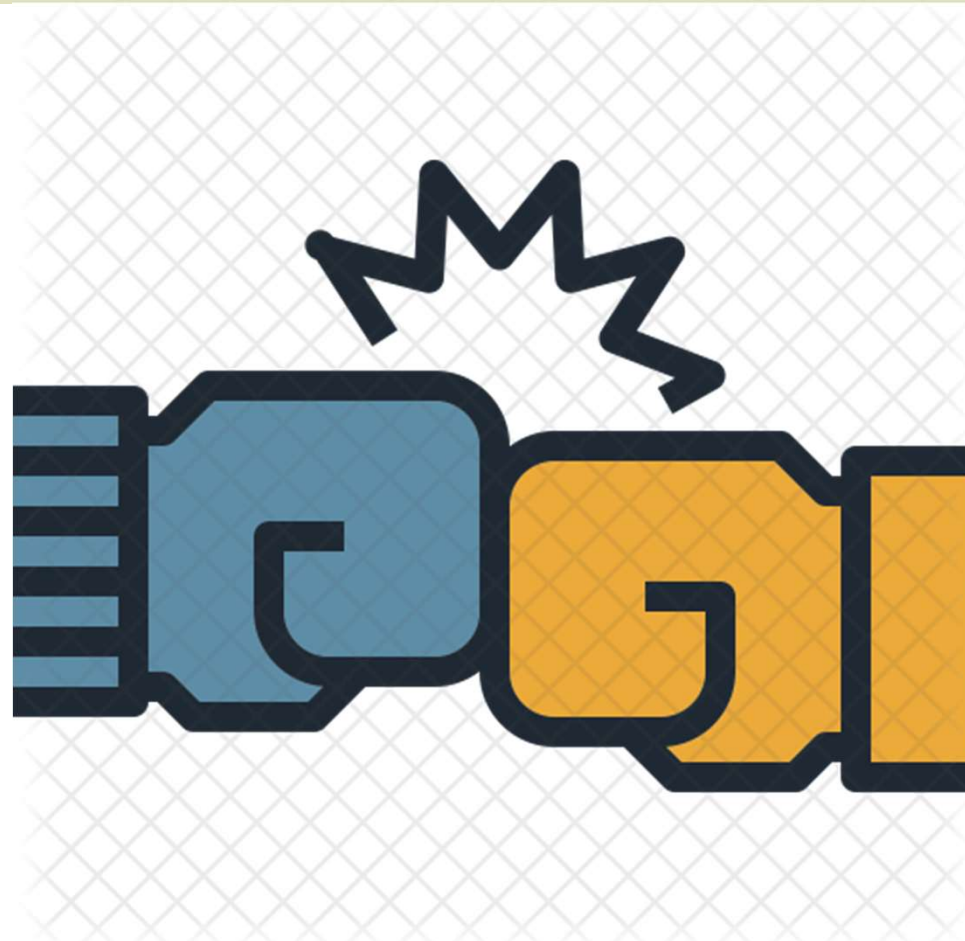
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Eleven of Canada's universities are refusing to participate in the Maclean's university ranking issue, saying they find the magazine's survey methodology to be "oversimplified" and "arbitrary."

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Adapt

If you can't beat them, join them.

Adapt, but do not compromise.

- _ Be consistent in your communication.
- _ Don't succumb to the ranking hype.
- _ Resist goal displacement.
- _ Have a say.

Thank you!