to whether the Chinese case will still qualify as a HPES based in the coming PISA results. All of these questions could be probed further in future studies. A comparative perspective helps to promote innovation through highlighting the effectiveness of different policy strategies in varying social circumstances. We look forward to upcoming volumes in the *Springer Education Innovation* book series.

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University Rankings: Implications for Higher Education in Taiwan. William Yat Wai Lo. Singapore: Springer, 2014. xxi +179 pp., (hardcover), £90, ISBN: 978-981-4560-34-4.

University rankings, or more broadly, international league tables for higher education institutions, have become a subject receiving great attention around the world. Although research has lent increasing focus to this emerging phenomenon, few studies have examined the global ranking movement from a macro-theoretical perspective and within a meta-methodological framework. Dr. William Yat Wai Lo has devoted considerable effort to mapping out this new arena and attempting to construct a new form of understanding through a case study of the Taiwanese higher education system. This research supplements the knowledge gap with respect to theoretical interpretations of world university rankings. He tactically investigates the major effects of university rankings, how the Taiwanese system may be reshaped in the global higher education landscape, and how this phenomenon can be theorized.

Adopting an innovative approach, William Lo proposes a synthesis framework in Chapter 3 of his book to examine the rankings phenomenon. This theoretical

framework is composed of four parts, namely ecological, geographical, technological, and conceptual aspects. Following this logic, the book sequentially deals with four dimensions as shown below in Table 1.

Table 1 Four Dimensions of the Ranking Phenomenon

	Technological	Conceptual
Ecological	Dimension 1 (Influence of rankings on policy, university governance and individual behaviors)	Dimension 2 (Love and hate for rankings and the normative power of rankings)
Geographical	Dimension 3 (Local interest in rankings and global landscape of higher education)	Dimension 4 (Open and closed nature of rankings and the relation to post-colonialism)

Source: p. 71.

In this matrix, the four dimensions are seen as closely related to each other. In examining Dimension 1 in Chapter 4, the author focuses on mainstream issues of university rankings including national policies/responses, governance reforms, and individual reactions. As the empirical evidence indicates, all of the investigated aspects are substantially affected. For example, the rankings movement has led to an overemphasis on research or academic publications. As a matter of fact, this development has led to polarized emotions towards university rankings, as indicated in Chapter 5. For those who favor the global league table, this leads to greater pride and competitive honor. For those who dislike it however, this international pressure is regarded as a “normative” cage, forcing universities to abandon the conventional notion of academic quality and become subject to greater institutional hierarchy. According to the theorized stance shown in Chapter 6, university rankings are said to be used by the Taiwanese government as “governing” and “zoning” technology to develop its global and regional status. On the one hand, world-class standards and criteria on the basis of rankings have been deemed as effective tools in driving institutional and national competitiveness; on the other hand, the book argues that rankings can also be deemed as an instrument to promote “regionalization” in the greater China area. The dual roles that world university rankings play at global and regional levels vividly demonstrate various facets of influence. In line with the position of “love” and “hate” in Chapter 5, Dimension 4 deals with the “openness” and “closedness” of rankings. Positively approached, Taiwan has used rankings to build world-class universities and deepen its internationalization

of higher education institutions. In terms of negative aspects, rankings might contribute to “a new dependence culture,” intensified positional competition, and global hegemony. All of these result in further academic inequality, a new imperialism, and Western dominance.

The significant breakthrough of this book lies in the way it theorizes the process of the ranking experiences in Chinese Taiwan. Although this book reiterates some themes from previous studies, new insights such as zoning technology and the closed aspect of rankings are provided. The classification of the matrix might be improved, however, given some ambiguity around the “ecological” and “geographical” notions. In addition, the author attempts to reflect upon the ranking experiences from the perspectives of structuralism and post-structuralism in Chapter 8. These methodological stances would be best presented and discussed earlier in Chapter 3 so as to indicate their relevance to the latter chapters. Nevertheless, this is a book with novel ideas and an effectively arranged framework offering theoretical explanations for these new phenomena. It is recommended reading for those who have a sincere concern about higher education development in this increasingly globalized world.

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New Directions for Education in China. Steven Cowan, Tinghe Jin, Lucia Johnstone Cowan, and Zimeng Pan (Eds.). London, England: IOE Press, 2014. 232 pp., (paperback). £24.99, ISBN: 978-17-827-7103-6.

Many research students will be very pleased to see this volume become available. It can be appreciated on two distinct levels. Firstly, it is a practical guide to small-scale research projects that have mostly been undertaken by individual