

Knowledge Diplomacy in International Relations and Higher Education, by Jane Knight, Springer Nature, 2022, 179 pp., £39.99 (paperback), ISBN 978-3031149788

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This timely book is essential for researchers and scholars in the fields of contemporary diplomacy of international relations (IR) and the internationalisation of higher education (HE). Knight discusses how globalisation has impacted these two fields, and whilst the world has been facing global challenges such as climate change, food security, epidemics, refugees and poverty reduction, the need for closer examination of engagement between the new actors of modern diplomacy and internationalisation of HE is required.

Knight, in her coherent writing manner, scrutinises and reviews a multitude of terms and interpretations used to understand and conceptualise the role of international higher education, research, and innovation (IHERI) in IR such as cultural diplomacy, cultural relations, science diplomacy, public diplomacy, science cooperation, education diplomacy, education relations, innovation diplomacy, academic diplomacy, exchange diplomacy, citizen diplomacy, knowledge diplomacy, science and technology diplomacy and soft power, which can easily confuse researchers and scholars. The genre of the book appears to be a textbook initially, it may seem overly-descriptive. However, it helps readers to focus on chapters that are most relevant to their interests.

The book highlights four main objectives. Firstly, it reveals through a comparative study how diplomacy and higher education scholars frame the role of international HE, research and innovation in IR. Secondly, the book proposes “knowledge diplomacy” as a framework to

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adequately capture the contemporary and comprehensive role that IHERI can make in developing IR among countries. Thirdly, it examines how knowledge diplomacy differs from related concepts such as science diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, public diplomacy, education diplomacy and soft power. Despite the author's efforts the boundary between the concepts remains debatable. And lastly, Knight attempts to identify questions and issues for further reflection and research.

Drawing from two distinct fields of study, namely IR and HE internationalisation, Knight used an interpretivist and interdisciplinary approach to explore the role of IHERI - in the building and strengthening of relations among countries and addressing common global challenges.

One of the many advantages of this book is the inclusion of clear tables to visualise the conceptual framework for IHERI in both a soft power and a knowledge diplomacy manner, featuring intentions/motivation, actors/partners, principles/values and activities/instruments parameters. A table (Table 3.2, p. 35) illustrating differences between the role of IHERI in knowledge diplomacy and soft power approaches with parameters such as self-interest, modes, values, outcomes and nature of relationships for the mentioned frameworks is extremely beneficial.

Another strength of the book is its logical structure and transitions between chapters. For readers, this provides a consistent understanding of the valuable material depicting theoretical frameworks, tables, case studies and examples. At the start, Knight briefly describes the changes happening in the realm of soft power and contemporary diplomacy as well as IHERI, which leads to a discussion of why it is crucial to explore the understudied role of IHERI in IR. An insight into the challenges of contemporary diplomacy is critical for exploring its other “branches” related to IHERI, which are widely used in current literature. By providing an overview of the areas of diplomacy and international HE, Knight prepares her readers for the main analysis and discourse, namely, when, where, why and how these two fields intersect.

Knight was one of the first to introduce an evolutionary view of the internationalisation of HE, therefore following the dramatic changes in international education outlined by her over three decades is insightful. For example, the role of IHERI in IR is traditionally understood to employ scholarships, student/scholar mobility, bilateral agreements and projects, joint research projects and international student recruitment; however, the book also draws attention to the new developments such as education cities, knowledge hubs, international joint universities, regional centres of excellence, international private/public partnerships, regional-based universities and others.

There is a debate regarding the role of state and non-state actors in diplomacy which raises the important question of whether IHERI is a public or private good. Knight draws attention to this debate which could prompt IR and IHERI researchers and scholars to evaluate relationships between HE institutions and governments. It would have been beneficial if the book included a deeper discussion on state and non-state IHERI actors and expanded on the differences between public diplomacy and knowledge diplomacy in the

chapter.

The implications of these developments offer new opportunities for the international exchange of knowledge, ideas, technologies, policies, culture, innovation and science. Thus, providing more room for further research in various fields. Knight also poses a variety of unanswered questions which require detailed consideration and acknowledges how critical values and principles are to distinguish between a knowledge diplomacy approach and a soft power approach. This descriptive book both enlightens the reader and calls for a better understanding of and contribution to addressing global challenges by means of IHERI based on multilateral and multi-sectoral approaches.

■ Author's Biography

Natalya Steane is a Cotutelle PhD student at Coventry University (UK) and Aarhus University (Denmark). Her research “Examining Public Universities’ Internationalisation Policies and Strategies Through a Public Diplomacy Lens” is in the fields of public diplomacy (soft power) and internationalisation of higher education. During her master by research programme she explored the role of South Korea’s public diplomacy actors in Uzbekistan.

She earned her MA in Diplomacy and Communication at the University of Kentucky (USA) through a MUSKIE fellowship (awarded by the US State Department and IREX) and Master by Research degree in Korean Studies at Coventry University.

Her areas of interest are public diplomacy, soft power, international relations, nation branding, higher education, internationalisation of higher education, Korean studies and multicultural and inclusive education.