Power Paradigm Unleashed: The (Re)Configuration of International Higher Education Arising from the Russia-Ukraine Conflict and What it Means for Higher Education

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Abstract

The war in Ukraine has opened a Pandora's Box of internationalization concerns that, heretofore, took a backseat to concerns with the effectiveness and sustainability of the field. In analyzing the impact of the war on international higher education, scholars offered various assessments of the conflict's effects, especially in the combatant countries and post-Soviet Eurasia: e.g., the disruption of organizational forms and methods of internationalization in Ukraine, the forced relocation of international students and faculty, and the creation of special programs to accommodate transferring international students from Russian and Ukrainian universities. Each of these assessments catches aspects of the emerging reality. Yet, they miss a crucial change that the war has triggered: ideational change regarding the rationales, norms, and values that underpin internationalization and shape the behavior of states and other related actors. Through this work, I advance this line of inquiry and examine its problematic implications for policy and practice.

Keywords: internationalization, knowledge diplomacy, power paradigm, realism, soft power, Ukraine War

Introduction

The war in Ukraine has opened a Pandora's Box of internationalization concerns that, heretofore, took a backseat to concerns with the effectiveness, priorities, and sustainability of the field during times of changing economic, cultural, and geopolitical power structures worldwide (see Altbach & de Wit, 2021 for the state of pre-Ukraine War internationalization). Seeking to understand how the war impacts international higher education (IHE), social scientists have not hesitated to proliferate assessments of the conflict's cascading consequences for internationalization and other adjacent

fields, especially in the combatant countries and post-Soviet Eurasia: e.g., the disruption of organizational forms and methods relating to internationalization in Ukraine (Upton, 2022), the forced relocation of international students and faculty (Packer, 2023), and the creation of special programs to accommodate transferring international students from Russian and Ukrainian universities (Kakuchi, 2022; Kukharuk & Kharchenko, 2022). Each of these assessments catches aspects of the emerging reality. Yet, they miss a crucial change in IHE that the Russia-Ukraine war has precipitated: ideational change regarding the rationales, norms, and values that underpin internationalization and shape perspective and behavior of states and other related actors. While this issue is particularly important for understanding the nature of and implications of change instigated by the war and for envisioning the future role of IHE, it is still understudied and undertheorized. Through this work, I advance this line of inquiry.

The main thrust of the article is that the Russia-Ukraine War has given renewed momentum to the power paradigm, which was the definitive factor in international politics during the Cold War (1945-1989). In my view at least, this development is a setback for the higher education community efforts to use IHE as a catalyst for peace-building and development. This is mainly due to the dismal assumptions that underpin the power outlook of international relations, which justify hegemony and domination as legitimate institutions to manage national interests (Adam, 2024a). The reinvigoration of this view is going to be consequential to international collaborations in my many fields, including collaboration in higher education. This is because the view overemphasizes the conflictual and competitive side of world politics, conceiving of the pursuit of noble normative goals as only attainable in the domestic arena (Mearsheimer, 2014). I therefore contend that (re)structuring IHE within a power paradigm will weaken the ability of higher education to function as a mechanism of cooperation, development, and sustainability. As an alternative, I call attention to Knight's (2022a) knowledge diplomacy framework, which, as will be shown, holds promise for moving beyond zero-sum conflict, and for sustaining the original ideas of international cooperation and exchange in higher education as promoters of peace and mutual understanding and of global engagement (Altbach & de Wit, 2015). The Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations further underscore the need for global cooperation in higher education to generate the knowledge and capabilities necessary to address some of the most pressing challenges facing our shared humanity. These ideas have continually been sidelined by the tendency of internationalization in the past 30 years to be considered in a more westernized and predominantly English-speaking paradigm (Tight, 2022), to be more driven by government priorities of soft power, reputation, review generation, and global rankings (de Wit & Deca, 2020), and to be less inclusive (Stein & Andrepotti, 2016).

Following an interdisciplinary approach that integrates knowledge from higher education studies and diplomacy studies, I pursue the argument, first, by considering some of the questions raised by the war in Ukraine about IHE. I then sketch the broad contours of the power paradigm in its two versions: hard power (Morgenthau, 1967) and soft power (Nye, 2017). In the process, I problematize how both versions played out in IHE. Next, I introduce the knowledge diplomacy framework as conceptualized by Knight (2022), highlighting its basic features and its pragmatic and moral justifications. The final section discusses the battle of ideas and the problematic implications of ideational transfer to a power-centric reasoning of IHE with a focus on integrating IHE as a pillar of national security.

Being the largest conflict in Europe since World War II, the war in Ukraine has been a massively disruptive event–a critical juncture (Lowndes & Roberts, 2013). Such critical junctures could spell the end of many institutional and systemic practices, processes, and policies associated with IHE. They could also conceivably provide an opening for substantial institutional reconfiguration. Within the latter scope, this article aims to broaden our conception of internationalization, encouraging rigorous attention to the ideas underlying debates and policymaking of this critically important dimension of higher education. Thereby, the text contributes to the ongoing debate regarding a more pertinent conceptualization of IHE (Beelen & Jones, 2015; de Wit & Jones, 2022; Lee, 2021). Indeed, the war in Ukraine has brought IHE at a crossroads. For the crossroads to be decided and sound directions to be established, scholars should continue to contemplate what constitutes internationalization that can viably support the building of academic and institutional cultures that cultivate the necessary conditions for human flourishing worldwide.

To that end, there exists several possibilities for cross-fertilization between higher education and diplomacy. To illustrate one of those possibilities, higher education continues to be the key knowledge institution in society that sustains diplomatic institutions by training which guides diplomats and foreign policy professionals in their thinking and actions. It also conducts research on national, regional, and global problems. Diplomacy, on the other hand, focuses on the processes of managing international relations to address those problems in such a way as to contribute to a more peaceful, just, and orderly world. Given the multi-interest nature of educational decisions, the porous nature of borders in today's global age, the institutionalization of internationalization in most universities, and the trade-off realities of educational policy (driven by the search for national interests and the impulse of global impact), many educational policy choices are diplomacy decisions. Therefore, studies that draw on academic and international relations (like the one presented in this article), serve as a two-way road between foreign policy and diplomacy agents and scholars, alerting the former of the implications of their thoughts and actions while reminding the latter that that understandings of international relations from which diplomacy agents are absent may not be complete. The need for such roads has never been greater.

Utilizing International Higher Education in Conflict

From the onset of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, it was clear that this conflict was a watershed moment for IHE. Along the first reactions of the higher education community – official denunciations (Northwestern, 2022) to the European Union suspending and terminating grant agreements to Russian academic institutions (O'Malley, 2022), and Russia considering retaliatory measures (Vorotnikov, 2022) – several questions emerged. Given the values underlying international activities in higher education, such as exchange and cooperation, peace and mutual understanding, human capital and development (de Wit & Deca, 2020), should the international higher education community react by emphasizing the traditional values of IHE, or can Russia's aggressive behavior only be met with a strong response as the imposition of sanctions on Russian academic assets, even if those measures affected the thousands of Russian scientists who condemned their government's actions (Gaind & Else, 2022)? Given that those measures are atypical in the scope of IHE, at least over the past three decades, does this development signify the end of the post-Cold War IHE? And perhaps more importantly, when and to what extent are we morally justified to use IHE as a tool to alter governments' actions that we consider to be unacceptable or ethically questionable? These questions and the consternation caused by the war on many university campuses moved concerns about internationalization from a limited constituency to front page news, exposing it to new audiences. Nowhere is this clearer than in the controversy sparked by the U.S. Congressman Eric Swalwell's idea to expel Russian students from American universities.

The idea did not pass unquestioned by scholars from different disciplinary leanings who raised ethical and procedural concerns about the proposed punitive action (Fischer, 2022). Swalwell's view and the debate it sparked were certainly catalyzed by the war in Ukraine, but his comments were not born *ex hinilo*. Rather, his comments were concomitant with another event. At that time, Swalwell was a member of the United States House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. International relations scholars (e.g., D'Hooghe & Lammertink, 2022) show that this is the time when the debate was at an historic high and efforts within government circles about managing the risks presented by international collaboration in science, technology and innovation to national security. This said, the Ukraine's war accelerated already existing trends.

D'Hooghe and Lammertink (2022) provide comparative analysis of nine countries' approach (the United States included) to knowledge security, highlighting the geopolitical and technological forces shaping these approaches. This work is pertinent to higher education in two ways. First, it elucidates the changing global context preceding the war which is generally characterized by geopolitical shifts, with economics, technology and security intertwined. Second, it analyses a critically important development: knowledge security policies, highlighting their potential implications for IHE. Specifically, it warns against the possibility of unintended consequences such as fueling xenophobia and prejudice,

encouraging interference of state actors in higher education, influencing academic freedom, and jeopardizing research ethics.

However, lost in much of the conversation is understanding of the ideas and theories that policymakers like Swalwell bring when making sense of a major contemporary issue on the international stage as knowledge security, or the war in Ukraine for that matter. The following sections shed light on the intellectual underpinnings of their actions, or inactions, by discussing two major concepts that continue to affect how governments approach to international relations, diplomacy, and international education. Perhaps an understanding of the concepts underlying government action on the international stage can help to establish appreciation of the extent to which ideas can impact the directions adopted by governments. And with a better understanding of this dynamic, perhaps we would be more able to discern the change that the war in Ukraine presents for IHE and the opportunities for – and limits to – steering that change into desirable outcomes in politics.

The Power Paradigm Described

In the battle of ideas, it is important to know what we are fighting for and why the battle is worth fighting. Doing so requires first an examination of alternative ideas and the institutional transformations they cause. I undertake this task, first, by discussing the power paradigm and its dynamics in IHE during two periods: The Cold War (1945-1989) and the post-Cold War (1990-2022). The year 2022 is intentionally selected. It marks the beginning of the war in Ukraine, which (I believe) heralds a new regime of international order similar to that of the Cold War era with respect to perceptions of world politics and inter-state relations. Given these parallels, probing into the intellectual forces that forged foreign policies is critically important for understanding the role of IHE in the past, which could in turn purvey valuable lessons for higher education community efforts to make sense of current global realities, their impact on internationalization and get them incorporate that knowledge into future focus.

The Cold War (1945-1989): Hard Power Politics, Soft Power Policies

To understand the power paradigm consequences for internationalization of tertiary education during the Cold War, it is necessary, first, to explore the main tenets of realism: the school of thought that came to dominate international relations (IR) after World War II. Generally, realists of all hues converge on a set of ideas regarding the nature of IR. One is that international politics is a realm characterized by a constant strife for power among states, ensuing in inevitable conflicts (Jönsson, 2022). Hence, states are the main actors within international politics, a realm characterized by anarchy and inevitability of conflict. As an anarchy, the world is a self-help system, where "nations meet under an empty sky from which gods have departed" (Morgenthau, 1967, p. 249). Put differently, the world system has no supranational authority that resolves grievances faced by individual states. Therefore, states can only sustain themselves and avoid situations inimical to national interests by amassing hard power. This is, briefly, the essence of—*realpolitik*—power politics—which can be traced back to the Athenian historian Thucydides (circa 460-400 BCE) and the Florentine philosopher, Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527 CE). Both observed that states meet potentially unfettered by morality or a supreme power, and, therefore, hard power is not merely complementary to a particular state's diplomacy but indispensable to it (Machiavelli, 1950). Although their views reflected different political climates, they remain central planks of the modern tradition of political realism (Mearsheimer, 2014). This raises a question as to how this worldview had influenced IHE during the Cold War.

An answer to this question is inseparable of the theory on which most foreign policy officials cut their professional teeth: realism. It can be aptly argued that the realist worldview created a collective mindset about diplomatic engagement in the West (led by the United States) or the East (led by the Soviet Union). The realpolitik, military aggression was countered by an equilibrium of power in the form nuclear deterrence, which dissuaded both superpowers from pursuing their foreign policy objectives through military action, especially against each other. Instead, both blocs used what the architect of 'containment'—America's strategy of fighting the Cold War—George Kenna described as "means short of war" (Harlow & Maerz, 1991, p. xxii). Nonetheless, both superpowers continued to consistently employ hard power rhetoric and

threats of mutual assured destruction while engaging in proxy conflicts fought mainly by allied countries in the Global South. Hence, the Cold War was mainly waged on propaganda, political, and economic fronts. IHE was the intellectual front.

Drawing on archival records of the former Soviet Ministry of Education and declassified documents of the United States National Security Council, Tsvetkova (2008) shows IHE was enlisted by both powers for winning the hearts and minds of people in foreign lands and ultimately making them susceptible to their ideological influence. The two superpowers employed a similar approach: providing scholarships that allowed foreign students to attend universities in the United States or the Soviet Union as part of government-sponsored international education programs. However, the selection criteria of students and intended outcomes of programs were different. While the Soviet programs targeted students from unprivileged backgrounds to engineer a pro-Soviet social transformation, the United States focused on students from the existing dominant groups to reproduce an elite with positive attitudes toward America (Tsvetkova, 2008).

The striking characteristics of those programs were, first, the low cost and, second, the securitization of IHE in the sense of treating IHE as a matter of national security, thereby enabling extraordinary methods to be used in the name of security. For example, the Soviet programs, such as those run by the Soviet People's Friendship University were totally free. Free tuition attracted thousands of students even from countries that were still under the yoke of colonization. Foreign students were closely watched by the KGB, the Soviet primary security and intelligence agency. Similarly, the Western agencies briefed their own students before travelling to the Soviet bloc countries and sought information and sometimes affiliation after they had done so (Perraton, 2020). This analysis shows that both superpowers treated IHE and universities as just another vector of national security. On both sides of the ideological spectrum, various methods were utilized to ensure a strategic preponderance for one ideology over the other in the cultural Cold War of internationalization (Tsvetkova, 2022).

If there is one conclusion to be drawn from this historical analysis, it might be that IHE was not so much aimed at cultivating understanding, academic quality, and solutions to commonly faced challenges as it was aimed at ideological incorporation through education within competing ideological camps. This is a far cry from our contemporary understanding of IHE to which I now turn.

The Post-Cold War (1989-2022): Soft Power Politics, Hard Power Policies

The collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989 marked the end of the Cold War and the emergence of new world order. And as a new order arises, different understandings and priorities for states arise as well. It was a time of optimism about the prospects of world peace and prosperity. In the flush of optimism, scholars such as France Fukuyama thought, or at least hoped, the 'end of history' would bring in its train the end of realism and its dismal assumptions of world politics (Fukuyama, 1992). A range of scholars were already on the scene who posed an intellectual challenge to realists' conception of international relations. Among those scholars was the American political scientist, Joseph Nye. In the post-Cold period, probably few concepts have more profoundly influence discussions of foreign policy and IHE worldwide than Nye's idea of *'soft power.'* The term first appeared in his 1990 book *Bound to Lead* in which Nye defined soft power as "getting other to want what you want" (Nye, 1990, p. 31). But, in its original formulation, the lineage of the idea could be traced to Nye and Robert Keohane's 1977 book *Power and Interdependence*. Much of the book's thesis is that the world has become more interconnected, where multiple formal and informal ties connect societies, a condition described as "complex interdependence" (Keohane & Nye, 1977, p. 20). The multiplicity of linkages within a system of complex interdependence has transformed how power is exercised on the international stage. In an increasingly connected world, the primacy of military power is diminished relative to other aspects of foreign policy like political and cultural values to persuade: soft power (Nye, 2017). Then, as now, the idea of soft power presented an intellectual challenge to the realist power and dominance paradigm. This is because it captured a liberal perspective on IR, such as the possibility of conflict resolution and development through international institutions and cooperation in economy and education.

In higher education studies, as in IR and diplomacy studies, the idea of soft power gained great prominence. But with important exceptions (Knight 2015, Knight, 2022b), the concept of soft power found particular traction in IHE,

popularized by legions of scholars who viewed it as emblematic of the ideal underlying IHE. There is a paradox in this trend that underscores the importance of interdisciplinary research and scholarship that both cut across and reach beyond disciplinary boundaries. While the majority of higher education literature suggests resistance to neoliberalism and its problematic implications for international cooperation in higher education, the literature also showcases a wide appeal of soft power, a concept broadly considered as a neoliberal idea in IR and diplomacy literature (Bloor, 2022; Wendt, 1992). IR and diplomacy scholars view soft power as a neoliberal concept, because while the concept dismisses as counterproductive the use of hard power to advance national interests, it does not reject dominance and hegemony as desirable outcomes of soft power efforts and initiatives (Kearn, 2011; Golub, 2019; Marlin-Bennet, 2022; Zahran & Ramos, 2010). The danger, Knight (2022a) cautions, is that because domination and national self-interest are built into the concept as essential features, IHE driven by soft power will be aimed at gaining competitive advantage in science and technology for hegemonic reasons, in a zero-sum or near zero-sum relationship. This is especially the case with countries that can project more political, military, and economic power on the international stage. Thus, the concept of soft power has only reinforced the unidirectional nature of internationalization in contemporary practice (Global North to Global South), thereby leading to a loss of diversity, epistemicide, and linguicide (Lin et al., 2021). Put differently, internationalization as a soft power perpetuates neocolonialism and Western hegemony (Guo et al., 2022).

Yet, soft power has been enthusiastically embraced by IHE and found its way to the minds of statemen with profound results for policy. Analysis of internationalization policies in tertiary education demonstrate disturbing patterns. For example, Lomer's (2017) textual analysis of policy discourse on IHE and international students in the United Kingdom shows that policies espouse power relations assumptions, predicated on Cold War politics. Key assumptions are that international students will identify with the host country and will treat the United Kingdom favorably when they reach positions of power in their home countries. Mihut et al. (2017) show that this logic guides IHE initiatives and programs in many countries today. It is noteworthy that this is the same logic that guided IHE programs during the Cold War. But there are important differences to note as well.

The first is the cost of these programs, especially those provided by Western countries. For self-funded students from the Global South in particular, studying in a college or university abroad is a financial burden for students and their families, which is a trend with wider societal implications. First, it creates and reinforces socioeconomic inequalities and hierarchies, creating a global class of graduates who enjoy access to better paid jobs for attending Western universities (Van Mol & Perez-Encinas, 2022). Second, it increases the importance of global rankings, given the fact that international students use rankings to decide where to study abroad (Adam, 2023). This in turn propagates a narrow view of academic excellence. The third implication concerns who benefits from the human capital created through international student mobility programs, especially in the wake of recent changes in immigration policies in several Western countries that started to consider international students as potential immigrants. Adam (2024b) shows that the international education strategies of Canada and German, which is not typically an immigration country as Canada, have shifted emphasis to recruiting and retaining international students as future immigrants. It is perhaps an exaggeration to claim these are deliberate policies to encourage brain drain, because many international students (e.g., in the United States) often remain after obtaining their degrees from American schools (Altbach, 2013). However, this direction of mobility represents an irretrievable loss for the sending countries, which incur direct costs like tuition fees and indirect costs due to the loss of human capital from some of the brightest young people and from teaching, research, and innovative ideas that had been cultivated from overseas experience.

The analysis in this section shows that the distinction between soft power and hard power is only of semantics as the two concepts are quintessentially hegemonic. Thus, the separation between hard power and soft power is artificial. The logic and values underpinning the two concepts betray the claim that they are significantly different. Countries that wield more military and economic prowess are better positioned to exercise soft power and achieve their national self-interests. This said, the post-Cold War era of higher education internationalization was a time of soft power politics in which governments toned down their rhetoric of hard power. But as shown in this section, their policies sought the same ends

pursued by hard-power mechanisms: to sustain political and economic preeminence in the new global order. As will be shown, knowledge was a crucial aspect within this dynamic in an age where intellectual capital and brainpower is replacing physical capital as the key to strength and prosperity. And while the internationalization of higher education has loosened the grip of Western powers on knowledge, it has also afforded them opportunities to ride over the Global South countries' investment in human capital by attracting and retaining knowledge workers and talents from those countries, thereby weakening their capacity to build their own knowledge economy (Stein & Andrepotti, 2016). As a result, a monetized version of IHE was established, a model that draws on foreign income and talent from source countries. This is a form of national aggrandizement: hard power rooted in knowledge. Therefore, the post-Cold IHE can perhaps be described as an era of soft power politics and hard power policies.

2022: The Strong Comeback of the Power Paradigm

The war in Ukraine is not the first in Eurasia during the post-Cold War era, which saw no less brutal conflicts such as the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. But what distinguishes Ukraine's war is that it resulted in weaving IHE into the Western sanction regime targeting Russian academic institutions and individual scientists. By so doing, the imposition of coercive sanctions to punish Russian aggression on Ukraine has given realist great power politics a new lease on life. Realist theoreticians like John J. Mearsheimer are now at the heart of the debate on the war, waxing eloquent on how their perspective explains the events unfolding in Ukraine. Generally, realists see the war as a validation of their theory (Mearsheimer, 2022; Hughes, 2023; Smith & Dawson, 2022). And as this text shows, IR theories have had significant influence on the views, rhetoric, and policies of IHE, which broadly oscillated between two versions of the power paradigm over the past 70 years. My purpose in the next section is to start a conversation on an alternative to the power paradigm in its two versions: the hard and the soft. Therefore, I call attention to Jane Knights' knowledge diplomacy, believing that it holds important potential for harness the power of higher education in the liberal interest of advancing world peace through institutions, cooperation, and interdependence.

The Diplomacy Paradigm: The Road Untaken

Rarely in the course of modern history has there been a challenge to realism from disciplinary fields other than IR, political science, and political philosophy. Hailing from a background in higher education studies, Knight (2022a) presents an important intellectual challenge to realists' dismal conception of international relations, showing us that national interests can be advanced through mechanisms and strategies that do not necessarily entail a domination and aggression, and that higher education is the cornerstone of this vision. In her book *Knowledge Diplomacy in International Relations and Higher Education*, higher education institutions emerge from the text as an instrument of diplomacy and strengthening relations between and among countries, an idea that goads our reforming impulse into reimagining the role of higher education in the 21st century.

Integrating knowledge from higher education studies and diplomacy studies, Knight examines the role international higher education, research, and innovation (IHERI) in building and strengthening international relations. She conceptualizes this role as *'knowledge diplomacy'* (KD), which is defined as "the process of building and strengthening relations between and among countries through international higher education, research and innovation" (Knight, 2022a, p. 103). Few cautionary notes are in order in this regard. First, while IHE is situated at the center of KD, it avoids Knight's widely cited definition of internationalization: "The process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education" (Knight, 2004, p. 11). The definition is value-neutral, and therein lies the rub. In the philosophy of social sciences, neutrality is never uncontroversial insofar as it is difficult to obtain (Zecha, 1992). Definition, after all, is about identifying the most relevant facts and dimensions of a phenomenon. And even when facts are irrefutably true, in the process of selecting which facts are more relevant, scholars might, subconsciously sometimes, reveal personal biases. By this token, while Knight's definition of internationalization is descriptive (aka value-neutral), its neutrality makes it elastic and vulnerable to various (mis)interpretations. As noted earlier, internationalization

tends to be seen as the Westernization of higher education. This tendency in IHE initiatives is not covert. The competitiveness introduced by global rankings exemplify how internationalization is being interpreted as spurring the impulse toward *Harvardization*, or the "Harvard-here" model (Moodie, 2008 cited in Hazelkorn, 2011). Stated differently, rankings spur the veneration of Harvard University, which came to define the gold standard in American higher education (Crow & Dabars, 2015). The point I am trying to make here is that the neutrality of Knight's definition of internationalization opens it to overstretching to mean many things. Perhaps it is noteworthy that Knight's work warns against such eventuality. For example, in stressing the importance of not using internationalization for proselytizing, Knight (2021) acknowledges the importance and uniqueness of local contexts and suggests that "internationalization must be customized to the local situation and that a 'one size fits all' approach to internationalization is not appropriate" (p. 65). Second, the definition KD is more expansive than IHE. The definition does not include the term knowledge. Instead, IHERI are used as fundamental concepts to represent the transfer, production, and application of knowledge. Thus, the concept encompasses three dimensions: higher education, research, and innovation. In this definition diplomacy is framed as a process – a means to an end, a positive end, for all the parties involved in diplomacy. This definition, Knight (2022) explains, is consistent with the understanding that diplomacy is generally understood as the process of developing relations between and among countries to operationalize foreign policies. This is a key difference between KD and soft power. Third, the definition is value explicit. That is, KD is anchored in values of reciprocity, mutuality and finding common ground. It is quintessentially aimed at positive outcomes for all the parties engaged in IHERI, not hegemony or zero-sum relationships. This is a key difference between soft power and KD.

Within a KD framework, IHERI is about addressing national, regional, and global challenges both science-oriented issues (e.g., climate change, epidemics, sustainability, water security) and socially oriented issues (e.g., poverty, migration, social justice). It is about using the expertise of diverse IHERI actors whether they are universities, centers of excellence, research networks, foundations working collaboratively among themselves as well as with actors from other sectors toward a common goal. Put differently, IHERI in KD framework is not about cultivating ideological conversion or getting your way as it is the case with soft power.

Although not explicitly stated, Knight's diplomacy framework aligns with key principles of classical liberalism, which places considerable emphasis on the primacy of universal equality of human beings in dignity and rights as a foundation for ethical individual and collective actions in matters of domestic and international relations (Fukuyama, 2022). Knight extends this liberal principle to the domain of IHERI, highlighting in the process the potential of this approach to world politics for both building interstate relations on the basis reciprocity and mutuality and achieving sustainable solutions to the problems facing the world today.

In my opinion, there is a moral and pragmatic justification for Knight's (2022) KD. The moral justification arises from the possibility that IHERI, through the prism of KD, to lower the horizons of politics, so that politics would not be about a particular country's will, ideology, or interests being imposed on other countries. KD is basically an assertion of the equal human right to live the good life. Hence, KD runs afoul of the a widely accepted philosophical view of justice which holds that "the scope of obligations of justices is defined by membership in a common political community" (Young, 2006, p. 710). On this account, individuals have moral obligations of justice only to those people who recognize one another as belonging to the same country. Young (2006) shows that the fact many issues nowadays have global reach, and thus, moral agents, individual or institutional, have obligations that are identical for all human beings, as "[t]here is a moral imperative to minimize suffering, wherever it occurs" (Young, 2006, p. 710). The pragmatic justification arises from the fact that no country, no matter how advanced it is, can single-handedly and unilaterally tackle the biggest challenges facing the world today. Issues, such as climate crisis, corruption, geopolitical tensions, and growing disparities in wealth and wellbeing, all require multilateralism and a sustained commitment to cooperation and reciprocity.

Nonetheless, this essentializing view of IHERI, which forms the conceptual basis of Knight's definition of KD, raises a question about whether diplomacy employing knowledge other than IHERI can also be considered as knowledge diplomacy. Do indigenous knowledges, which have the capacity to perform a critically important role in international

diplomacy, also account as knowledge diplomacy? The experience has thus far shown that this capacity is diminished by entrenchment in Western paradigms of knowledge that often perpetuate existing academic culture of subordination of the Global South higher education systems and institutions (Gildea, 2019; Kuzhabekova, 2020).

Furthermore, in the context heightened global competition in intellectual property-intensive industries and the rise of neo-nationalism (Douglass, 2021), which is fueling anti-immigrant and xenophobic rhetoric, economic protectionism, and attacks on journalists and academics, how can KD initiatives navigate this environment and function as a building block of international relations? These questions need to sufficiently addressed in order for KD realize its potential in the future.

Discussion: The Danger of Uncontested Ideas

The war in Ukraine has ignited a battle of ideas that has thus far gone in favor of realist power-based view of the world. This is best expressed in the attention that realist work has received since 2022. There is a danger in conceding to the rhetoric and reasoning of the power paradigm, given the exploitive character of this worldview, as shown in this article. But there is a far more dangerous aspect that should not be ignored or underrated: the susceptibility of realism to unstated assumptions, especially in terms of their obsession with the ideas of anarchy and the inevitability of conflict. Allison's (2017) book *Destined for War* provided testimony to this realist view of world politics. In a rebuttal of this view, Wendt (1992) eloquently shows that, even if the world was an anarchy, it is how states and different actors view and react to anarchy is what really matters. Wendt (1992) shows that our views of anarchy, and the world for that matter, is socially constructed: "anarchy is what states make of it" (p. 391). If states decided to adopt another conception of their security on the basis of cooperation, not security, they can escape the debilitating consequences of conflict and war. Therefore, Wendt (1992), and rightly so, draws attention to the fact that concepts and conventions are not immutable, and that they can be changed by human practice, out of agency. Furthermore, he encourages to continually challenges ideas lest they occupy the public space and impact policy.

Nowhere is this dynamic clearer than in the field of knowledge security, which has been a growing concern on the policy agenda in several countries. D'Hooghe and Lammertink (2022) show that nine countries have recently started developing national policies and frameworks to defend their science and technology from foreign interference. A big concern raised about these policies is that they are often at odds with academic freedom and international collaboration in IHE. Another major concern is about their unintended consequences, as they sometimes create hostile environment for foreign students (D'Hooghe and Lammertink, 2022). These developments echo the securitization procedures that weakened the raison d'être of IHE during the Cold War. Can the higher education community avoid the institutionalization of this myopic vision of IHE? Only if we listen closely to the echoes of history and avoid replaying the discordant notes of the past. Perhaps redefining IHE as a knowledge diplomacy is the first step on this path.

Conclusion

Wars bring in their train misery, but they also offer valuable opportunities for change. The war in Ukraine is no different. I sought in this article to salvage from the misery bequeathed by the ongoing war some knowledge for the future. Toward this end, I argued that the biggest change triggered by the conflict for higher education internationalization is ideational. Specifically, the war has revived interest in instituting cooperation in higher education as a pillar of national security, in the same manner that prevailed during the Cold War (1945-1989). I showed that the factor underlying this development is the renewed interest in the realist power paradigm, which came to dominate political thinking during the Cold War. I also showed that the softer version of power paradigm—soft power—which was largely embraced by higher education scholars socialized to chafe at the exertion of hard power, is undergirded by, and suffused with, the hegemonic logics and aspirations that characterize the realist hard power paradigm (though using different methods). To help eschew an epistemic entrenchment in hard and soft power models of internationalization, I drew attention to Knight's (2022a) knowledge diplomacy framework, which, I argued, holds potential for higher education to become an effective mechanism

of cooperation, development, and diplomacy. I examined the knowledge diplomacy framework and elucidated its moral and pragmatic justifications.

While this article broadens understanding of major contemporary development as the influence of the ongoing war in Ukraine on higher education internationalization, IR realism, and soft power, the ideational perspective it takes makes it somewhat less informative in prescribing detailed policies and procedures to adopted in pursuit of the knowledge diplomacy ideal. However, the text provides the basis for future research and debate on practical approaches to using higher education as a mechanism of knowledge diplomacy.

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