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Conference: Midwest 2022 – International Studies Association

On 18-20 November 2022, the annual conference of MidWest 2022, organised by the International Studies Association, was held at Hilton Hotel in St. Louis, Missouri. The participants were coming dominantly from US universities, and the author of the article belonged to the exceptions as he represented a Slovak university.

The conference's official opening took place on Friday morning at 8.00 am, and the first panels commenced immediately at 8.15 am. On the first day, a long list of panels happened; thus, we could find and listen to contributions for Rethinking of IR Theories, Civil-Military Relations, Conflicts or Alliances. Herein, we can point out the presentation of Clint Work, PhD, who elaborated in detail on the US-South Korean Alliance after the Cold-War environment in his presentation called *New Apertures, Fitful Trajectories: The Early Post-Cold War Transformation of the US-South Korea Alliance*. Mr Work is the Fellow and Director of Academic Affairs at the Korea Economic Institute of America. Thus it serves as an example that this conference extends beyond universities only. However, it gathers all researchers from the public and private sectors.

Among the panels, the attendees could also visit the roundtables, particularly the one dedicated to Burnout or the panel dedicated solely to Undergraduate students who presented about Human Security. The panels were scheduled from 8.15 am until 5.30 pm, followed by the reception for all guests and participants.

On Saturday, 19 November, the program started again at 8.15 and proceeded until 5.30 as on Friday. Again, we could attend the roundtables related to the student's life as Job Seekers' Roundtable. Herein, we should consider the different environment in the USA than in Europe, which is more competitive; thus, this roundtable plays a vital role in the conference. Besides that, we could find panels regarding terrorism, Russian foreign policy, elections or gender topic. The attendees had a chance to listen to various interesting topics within the panels. Among them, the presentation of Gabriela Okundaye from Midwestern State University and DeAnne Roark from The University of North Texas should be highlighted. The presentation of their research – *Is There a Link Sexual Violence and Post-Conflict Women's Rights?* – surprised the audience with shocking results saying that gender-based violence during the conflict directly impacts women's political participation. In other words, the bigger the gender-based violence during the conflict, the bigger the women's political participation in the Post-Conflict environment. This mobilisation also brings its benefits to Women's rights in a post-conflict settlement. Saturday concluded with the business meeting in Hilton's lobby, where networking continued almost until midnight.

Although the main program finished on Saturday evening, active participants who did not leave could still attend two morning workshops on Sunday morning regarding computational discourse analysis, colonial responsibility, and international politics.

The conference illustrated that US academia, even in political science, emphasises statistical-oriented research as almost each research presentation was based on statistical methods applied within political science. Therefore, mixed research – quantitative and qualitative – dominated all panels. Also, the participants agreed that PhD students are well-trained in methods and methodological frameworks. According to them, they spend approximately two years of methodological training with at least four courses. The in-depth knowledge was apparent in the methodological approaches applied throughout the panels and all contributions.

MidWest 2022 was held for the second time in a row in a face-to-face set-up; as before, the conference was held for two years in online mode. Compared to other conferences organised by ISA, the MidWest one is smaller, emphasising considerable discussion time with additional activities such as workshops, roundtables and business events – meaning academia networking. MidWest 2022 was taken during the difficult time of the Ukrainian crisis and its associated threats that were reflected in the presented research papers.