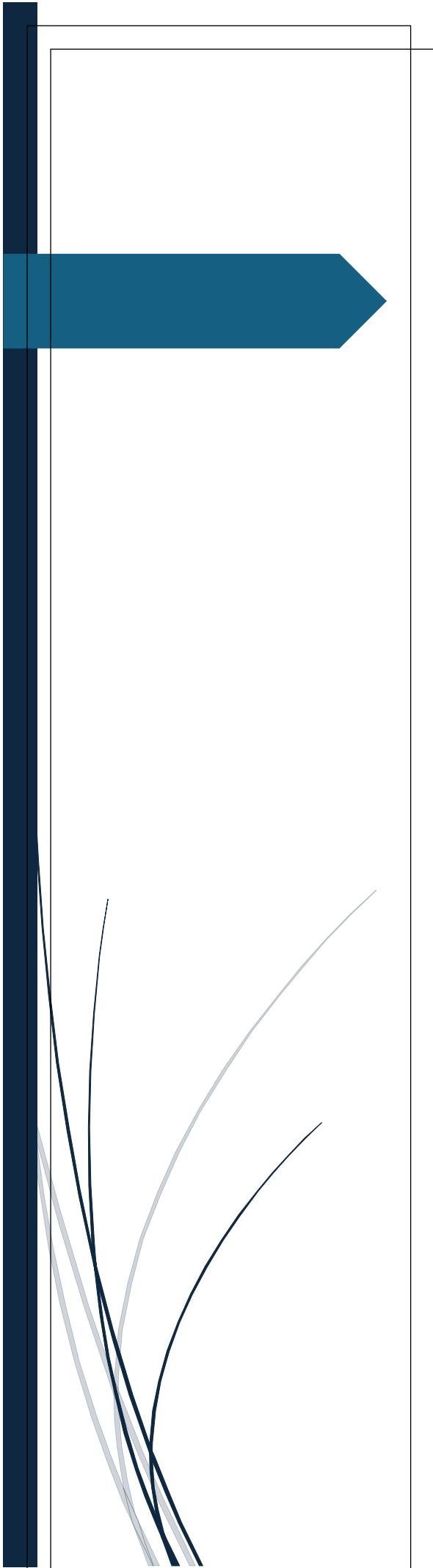




BMTP6016

‘Trumping Tourism’:
Investigating the Strategic
Effects of Donald Trump on
Events Tourism in the
United States

FIFA World Cup Focus

Angelika Jasnos- 2308967

LECTURER: DR ERNEST BALUTIE WAVEI

Executive Summary

This report critically examines the strategic influence of Donald Trump's political leadership on events tourism in the United States, focusing on the FIFA World Cup as a major upcoming mega-event. Using strategic frameworks such as PESTLE, SWOT, and stakeholder theory, the analysis evaluates how Trump's policies, rhetoric, and governance style shape destination branding, international visitor demand, and stakeholder confidence.

Findings indicate that Trump's leadership presents a dual impact. Positively, it enhances domestic tourism engagement, strengthens perceptions of national security, and increases global media attention. In contrast, restrictive immigration policies, polarising rhetoric, and geopolitical tensions significantly weaken inbound tourism demand and damage the USA's image as an inclusive destination.

The report concludes that successful event tourism management requires adaptive governance, inclusive branding strategies, and proactive risk mitigation. Strategic coordination between policymakers, event organisers, and tourism stakeholders is essential to ensure the successful delivery of global mega-events in politically sensitive environments (Freeman, 1984; Dredge & Jamal, 2015).

Introduction

Events tourism is a rapidly growing sector within the global tourism industry, driven by mega-events such as the FIFA World Cup, Olympic Games, and major cultural festivals. These events generate substantial economic benefits through international arrivals, infrastructure development, and global media exposure (Getz, 2012). The United States, as a future host of the FIFA World Cup (FIFA, 2026), is strategically positioned to benefit from increased tourism flows and enhanced destination branding.

Mega-events are not only sporting competitions but also tools of soft power and nation branding (Hall, 2018). They shape international perceptions of a destination and influence long-term tourism demand. However, their success depends heavily on political stability, government policy, and international relations (Ritchie & Smith, 1991).

In this context, political leadership plays a crucial role in shaping tourism outcomes. Donald Trump's political influence, characterised by "America First" policies, strict immigration controls, and nationalist rhetoric, has significant implications for tourism and events management (Baum, 2019; The White House Washington, 2025). His approach to governance has reshaped perceptions of the United States as a global destination, particularly among international travellers.

This report focuses on events tourism, specifically analysing how Trump's political influence may impact the planning, perception, and performance of mega-events such as the FIFA World Cup in the United States. The FIFA World Cup is one of the world's largest sporting events, attracting millions of visitors and generating billions in economic activity (FIFA, 2026).

The analysis applies PESTLE analysis, SWOT analysis, and stakeholder theory to evaluate both internal and external factors affecting events tourism. The methodology is based on secondary qualitative research drawn from academic literature, industry reports, and policy analysis (Dredge & Jamal, 2015).

The aim of this report is to critically assess both opportunities and risks associated with political influence in tourism and to provide strategic recommendations for policymakers, destination managers, and event organisers.

Findings

PESTLE Analysis of Events Tourism in the Trump Political Context

Political Factors

Political leadership is one of the most influential external forces in tourism development. Trump's administration introduced strict immigration and travel policies, including travel bans affecting several countries. These measures directly influence inbound tourism and international event participation (U.S. Travel Association, 2023).

For mega-events, political barriers such as visa restrictions can reduce fan attendance and media participation.

Economic Factors

Trump's pro-business stance may encourage private investment in event infrastructure (OECD, 2023).

Yet, political instability and international criticism may reduce foreign direct investment and inbound tourism demand (World Economic Forum, 2024).

Social Factors

Social perception is central to destination branding. Trump's rhetoric on immigration and nationalism has influenced how international audiences perceive the United States (Baum, 2019; The White House Washington, 2025).

This may result in reduced willingness among some international tourists to travel due to perceived hostility.

Technological Factors

Technology plays a vital role in mega-event delivery, including digital ticketing, crowd management, and security systems. While Trump's policies do not directly restrict technological innovation, public investment priorities may shift depending on political agendas (Smith, 2015).

Legal Factors

Legal frameworks governing visas, entry requirements, and security screening are critical to events tourism success. Under Trump-influenced policy environments, stricter immigration laws may increase administrative burdens for international visitors.

Environmental Factors

Mega-events require sustainable planning due to their environmental impact. Trump's historically weaker emphasis on climate policy may affect sustainability commitments linked to events tourism (UNWTO, 2023).

Overall, the PESTLE analysis demonstrates that events tourism in the United States is highly vulnerable to the wider political climate shaped by Trump-era policies, with political leadership emerging as the most influential external force.

Stricter immigration controls, travel bans, and nationalist rhetoric reshape international perceptions of the U.S., directly affecting inbound tourism, global event participation, and the country's destination image. These political dynamics also influence economic outcomes by affecting foreign investment, tourism demand, and exchange-rate stability.

Although technological innovation can enhance event delivery, it cannot fully offset the barriers created by restrictive legal frameworks and complex visa requirements. Collectively, these factors show that the success of future events-such as the FIFA World Cup depends not only on infrastructure and planning but on how the nation's political stance is perceived globally, reinforcing the critical link between political context and tourism performance.

SWOT Analysis of Events Tourism under Trump Influence

The strategic position of events tourism in the United States under Donald Trump's political influence can be better understood through a narrative SWOT analysis. This approach highlights how internal strengths and weaknesses interact with external opportunities and threats in a politically sensitive tourism environment, particularly in relation to mega-events.

One of the key strengths of the United States as a host destination is its established global reputation for delivering large-scale international events. The country has world-class infrastructure, advanced transport systems, and globally recognised cities such as New York, Los Angeles, and Miami (Getz, 2012). In addition, the global visibility associated with Donald Trump's political leadership can increase media attention on events hosted in the United States.

In contrast, these strengths are offset by significant weaknesses, particularly in relation to immigration policy and destination image. Events tourism depends heavily on the free movement of international visitors, athletes, and media personnel. Restrictive visa policies or increased border controls can create barriers to participation, reducing overall attendance at global events (U.S. Travel Association, 2023). Additionally, Trump's political rhetoric has at times contributed to perceptions of the United States as less welcoming to foreign visitors. Destination image is a key driver of tourism demand, and negative perceptions can directly influence travel intentions (Hall, 2018).

Despite these challenges, there are clear opportunities that can be leveraged within this political context. One major opportunity is the potential growth of domestic tourism. Mega-events hosted under high-profile political leadership often receive

intensified media attention, which can increase sponsorship value and commercial returns (Weed, 2008). These developments can generate lasting benefits beyond the event itself, strengthening the overall tourism system.

However, there are also serious threats that must be considered. One of the most significant risks is the potential reduction in international participation due to geopolitical tensions or restrictive entry policies. If certain visitor groups feel excluded or discouraged from travelling, this could result in reduced attendance or even informal boycotts. Such outcomes would directly undermine the global nature of events tourism. Another major threat is reputational damage to the United States as a tourism destination. Once damaged, destination image can take years to rebuild (Richie & Crouch, 2003).

In addition, uncertainty in political decision-making creates challenges for event organisers, sponsors, and investors. Long-term planning for mega-events requires stability, and political unpredictability increases perceived risk (World Economic Forum, 2024). Finally, global competition in events tourism is increasing, with many countries positioning themselves as more accessible and politically neutral hosts. This intensifies pressure on the United States to balance political identity with international tourism expectations.

In summary, the SWOT analysis demonstrates that while the United States holds strong structural advantages in hosting mega-events, these strengths are significantly influenced by political conditions. The interaction between opportunity and risk highlights the importance of strategic governance in ensuring that political influence does not undermine the long-term success of events tourism.

Stakeholder Theory Analysis

Stakeholder theory suggests that tourism outcomes are shaped by multiple interdependent actors (Freeman, 1984). Stakeholders in tourism include tourists, event organisers, hospitality sector, local communities, sponsors and media.

International tourists are highly sensitive to political climate, visa accessibility, and safety perceptions. Restrictions may reduce inbound demand significantly.

Organisers such as FIFA must coordinate with governments on logistics, security, and immigration processes. Political instability increases operational complexity.

Hotels, airlines, and tourism operators benefit economically from mega-events but are vulnerable to demand fluctuations caused by political uncertainty.

Communities benefit from job creation and infrastructure improvements but may experience disruption, congestion, and heightened security presence.

Sponsors seek positive global exposure. Political controversy may reduce brand association appeal and influence investment decisions.

Destination Branding and Strategic Risk

Destination branding is highly sensitive to political discourse because politics directly shapes how places are perceived, governed, and represented in global markets (Hanna et al., 2021). Under Trump-influenced political conditions, the “America First” narrative reinforces a strong domestic identity but simultaneously risks projecting an image of reduced openness and inclusivity to international audiences. This perception is intensified by official government actions such as the 2025 Presidential Proclamation restricting the entry of foreign nationals, which publicly frames immigration through a national-security lens. Such policies and rhetoric can create a sense of exclusion among global travellers, directly affecting the emotional and symbolic dimensions of the U.S. destination brand (Biglin & Purdam, 2023).

Any perception of exclusion or political hostility undermines brand equity, reduces international fan engagement, and weakens long-term tourism competitiveness (Hall, 2018). Political discourse also becomes amplified through global media systems, meaning that statements made by political leaders can rapidly influence international sentiment and shape travel intentions (Kerry et al., 2024).

In this context, political rhetoric, immigration policy, and media amplification interact to create strategic risk for destination branding. When political discourse signals restriction rather than openness, the destination brand becomes vulnerable to reduced trust, lower international visitation, and weakened global partnerships—factors that are especially consequential for mega-events such as the FIFA World Cup.

Conclusion

This report has examined the strategic influence of Donald Trump’s political leadership on events tourism in the United States, with reference to the FIFA World Cup. The analysis highlights that political factors represent a significant external force shaping destination competitiveness in mega-event tourism.

The United States possesses strong structural advantages, including advanced infrastructure, global city branding, and extensive experience in hosting international sporting events (Getz, 2012).

Yet, these advantages are moderated by political and perceptual challenges. Restrictive immigration policies and polarising political discourse can negatively influence destination image, which is a key determinant of tourism demand. As a result, perceptions of accessibility and inclusivity may be weakened, potentially reducing inbound tourism flows and international engagement (Hall, 2018).

Domestic stakeholders may experience increased economic activity and engagement, while international stakeholders such as tourists, sponsors, and event organisers may face greater uncertainty and barriers.

Overall, the success of events tourism in the United States depends not only on physical infrastructure and operational capability, but also on the management of political perception and stakeholder confidence. Without strategic alignment between political governance and tourism objectives, there is a risk that political dynamics

may weaken the long-term economic, social, and reputational benefits associated with hosting global mega-events.

Recommendations

This report demonstrates that Donald Trump's political influence has a complex and dual impact on events tourism in the United States. While his leadership style may enhance domestic engagement, strengthen security perceptions, and increase global media attention, it also introduces significant risks to international tourism demand and destination branding.

Restrictive immigration policies and polarising rhetoric reduce the perceived accessibility and inclusiveness of the United States as a global tourism destination. This is particularly critical for the FIFA World Cup, which depend on international participation and global cooperation.

Base on the findings the following recommendations are made.

First, to mitigate the impact of restrictive immigration policies, the United States should introduce streamlined, event-specific visa systems for the FIFA World Cup. Dedicated event visas, supported by biometric verification and digital processing platforms, would reduce administrative delays and improve international accessibility while maintaining national security priorities (U.S. Travel Association, 2023).

Second, destination marketing organisations should adopt inclusive and politically neutral branding strategies. By emphasising hospitality, cultural diversity, and global unity, event branding can distance itself from domestic political rhetoric and strengthen international visitor confidence, protecting the long-term destination image (Hall, 2018).

Third, multi-stakeholder coordination should be strengthened across federal agencies, local governments, FIFA, tourism boards, and private sector partners. Drawing on stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984), structured communication frameworks and joint decision-making processes would improve alignment, reduce operational risk, and ensure consistent policy implementation.

Fourth, global communication and reassurance campaigns should be developed to counteract negative perceptions linked to political discourse. Partnerships with international media, digital platforms, and tourism influencers can reinforce the United States as a safe, accessible, and welcoming destination for global visitors (Kerry et al., 2024).

Fifth, scenario-based political risk management should be embedded into event planning. Contingency strategies for potential geopolitical disruptions such as sudden visa restrictions, diplomatic tensions, or policy shifts would enhance resilience and ensure operational continuity. Investment in smart border and entry technologies should support these plans by improving efficiency and security (UNWTO, 2023).

References:

- Baum, T. (2019) *Human Resource Management in Tourism*. Oxford: Goodfellow Publishers.
- Biglin, J. & Purdam, K (2023) 'Measuring public attitudes towards immigration: A critical discourse analysis of social survey questions' Vol. 57(5) pp. 1227-1248. *Sociology*. Available at: [Measuring Public Attitudes Towards Immigration: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Social Survey Questions](#) (Accessed on: 05.05.2026)
- Brookings Institution (2023) *Immigration Policy and Tourism Impacts*. Washington, DC. Available at: [Immigrants & Immigration | Brookings](#) (Accessed on: 18.04.2026)
- Dredge, D. and Jamal, T. (2015) *Tourism and Governance*. London: Routledge.
- FIFA (2026) FIFA World Cup 2026. View the FIFA World Cup 2026 match schedule. Available at: [World Cup 2026 | Match schedule, fixtures & stadiums](#) (Accessed on: 08.05.2026)
- FIFA (2024) *FIFA World Cup 2026 Stadium Guidelines*. Available at: [Stadium Guidelines](#) (Accessed on: 22.04.2026)
- Freeman, R.E. (1984) *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach*. Boston: Pitman.
- Getz, D. (2012) *Event Studies: Theory, Research and Policy for Planned Events*. London: Routledge.
- Getz, D. and Page, S.J. (2016) *Event Studies and Tourism*. 3rd Ed. Companion Website. Available at: [9781315708027_previewpdf.pdf](#) (Accessed on: 01.05.2026)
- Hall, C.M. (2018) *Tourism and Politics*. Bristol: Channel View Publications.
- Hall, L. (2026) *How UD politics is affecting international travel*. BBC News Travel. Available at: [How US politics is affecting international travel - BBC Travel](#) (Accessed on: 03.05.2026)
- Hanna, S, Rowley, J, Keegan, B., (2021) Place and Destination Branding: A Review and Conceptual Mapping of the Domain. *European Management Review*, Vol. 18, pp. 105-117. EMG. Available at: [Place and Destination Branding: A Review and Conceptual Mapping of the Domain - Hanna - 2021 - European Management Review - Wiley Online Library](#) (Accessed on: 08.05.2026)
- Johnson, G., Scholes, K. and Whittington, R. (2020) *Exploring Corporate Strategy*. London: Pearson.
- OECD (2023) *Tourism Trends and Policies*. Paris: OECD Publishing.
- Porter, M.E. (1980) *Competitive Strategy: Techniques for analysing Industries and Competitors*. New York: Free Press. Available at: [Competitive Strategy: Techniques for Analysing Industries and Competitors - Book - Faculty & Research - Harvard Business School](#) (Accessed on: 03.05.2026)
- Statista (2024) *Inbound Tourism to the United States*. Available at: <https://www.statista.com/topics/1987/travel-and-tourism-industry-in-the-us/#topicOverview> (Accessed on: 29.04.2026)

- The White House Washington (2025) Restricting the entry of foreign nationals to protect the United States from foreign terrorists and other national security and public safety threats. Available at: [Restricting The Entry of Foreign Nationals to Protect the United States from Foreign Terrorists and Other National Security and Public Safety Threats – The White House](#) (Accessed on: 08.05.2026)
- UNWTO (2023) *International Tourism Highlights*. Madrid: World Tourism Organization.
- U.S. Travel Association (2023) U.S. Travel Association Policy Priorities: Quantitative Research. Available at: ustravel.org/sites/default/files/2024-01/2023-11-te-oxford-us-travel-policy-priorities.pdf? (Accessed on: 21.04.2026)
- Richie, J.R.B. and Crouch, G.I. (2003) *The Competitive Destination: A Sustainable Tourism Perspective*. Wallingford: CABI.
- Smith, A. (2015) *Events and Urban Regeneration*. London: Routledge.
- The Guardian (2026) More Americans say US is no longer welcoming to immigrants, survey finds. Available at: [More Americans say US is no longer welcoming to immigrants, survey finds | US immigration | The Guardian](#) (Accessed on: 18.05.2026)
- World Economic Forum (2024) *Travel and Tourism Development Index: 2024*. Available at: [Preface - Travel & Tourism Development Index 2024 | World Economic Forum](#) (Accessed on: 22.04.2026)
- Weed, M. (2007) *Sport & Tourism: A Reader*. London. Routledge. Available at: [Sport & Tourism: A Reader | Mike Weed | Taylor & Francis eBooks, Refer](#) (Accessed on: 01.05.2026)
- UNWTO (2022) *Sustainable Tourism Development*. Madrid: UNWTO Available at: [A Year in Review | 2022 has been the year to rethink tourism](#) (Accessed on: 05.05.2026)