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CONSERVATIVE POLITICS AND TOURISM INDUSTRY: REALITIES AND PROSPECTS

Anna Romanova,
Doctor in Economic Sciences, Associated Professor,
Kherson State University, Kherson, Ukraine, Florida
State University, USA,
Tallahassee, Florida, USA
romanova.welcome@gmail.com
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7336-1032>
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Topicality. This article studies the positioning of tourism and hospitality sectors in the US modern conservative political views, using Donald Trump's public statements and strategic document of the conservative movement for reform managing in the US, entitled Project 2025 "Mandate for Leadership". The research highlights how key ideological tendencies, including national security, economic protectionism, cultural conservatism and even isolationism, intersect with political discourse related to travelling, tourism and hospitality. **The main objective and research methods.** The goals of this study are to analyse the attitude of representatives of the conservative movement of the US to the development of the tourism industry, to determine how modern American conservative political priorities shape the discourse and regulation of tourism-related topics, to identify new types of tourism Donald Trump's administration refers to. **Methodology:** the article applies quantitative and qualitative content analysis of the political manifesto "Project-2025", supplemented with discourse analysis of President Donald Trump's public statements during last 15 years (2010–2025), including his both presidential terms, as well as other leaders' of the US conservative movement. **Results.** Conservative politics view tourism as economically beneficial only when it is aligned with national values, but also as a risk factor when associated with liberal policy or transnational mobility. New types of tourism are identified, which the leaders of the American conservative movement define as a negative phenomenon: birth tourism, abortion tourism, propaganda tours. **Conclusions and discussions.** The results of the study indicate the bifurcated attitude of the conservative movement to the development of the tourism industry. The scientific novelty and results of this research are of practical importance in the context of advocacy of the tourism and hospitality industry, policy reform and sector sustainability.

Keywords: US conservatism, tourism policy, Project 2025, hospitality industry, travel regulation, discourse analysis, abortion tourism, birth tourism.

Topicality of the Problem

Problem Statement. 2024 became a “year of elections” globally and marked the largest electoral year in the whole history. National elections were held in over 70 countries, home to more than half of the world’s population (O’Neill, 2025). The outcomes of these elections, especially in the most influential countries such as the United States, broadly signaled a shift toward conservative values and right-wing political agendas.

It is evident that the new conservative agenda in the US will have a significant impact on the global tourism industry. Historically, the US have helped in shaping international tourism demand – ranking second after Germany in 2024 in the number of outbound tourists, and thus representing a major consumer base for the global tourism product. Simultaneously, it remains one of the top global providers of tourism products and destinations, ranking third worldwide in terms of inbound tourism volume (after France and Spain). In addition, the US tourists lead the world in total travel spending (*International tourism*, n.d.).

In 2024, travellers in the US directly spent \$1.3 trillion, producing an economic footprint of \$2.9 trillion and supporting over 15 million American jobs (U.S. Travel Association, n.d.). According to the International Trade Administration, total US citizen international departures in 2024 reached 107.7 million – an increase of 9.2% from 2023 and 108% of 2019 levels. Meanwhile, total non-US resident arrivals into America reached 6.45 million in December alone, marking a 9.5% increase from December 2023 and 94% of the December 2019 pre-pandemic level (International Trade Administration, n.d.).

The state of studying the problem. Previous scholarship has analysed tourism as a tool of soft power and economic diplomacy (Richter, 1989; Dredge & Jenkins, 2011), while critical approaches examine its relationship with ideology, gender and geopolitics (Hollinshead, 2007; Pritchard & Morgan, 2001).

The Project 2025 policy framework, prepared by the Heritage Foundation and allied think tanks, serves as a revealing artefact of conservative statecraft. This article studies how tourism-related terminology is embedded in its vision for governance.

Unresolved issues. In spite of the fact that today there is a great interest in the studies of conservative ideologies in the context of military, economic and humanitarian policies, the issue of conservatives’ attitude to the development of the tourism and hospitality industry is almost not studied. Yet, limited attention has been given to how far-right populist movements and conservative policy agendas reframe tourism.

Objectives and Methods

The main objectives of the study are:

- 1) to identify how tourism and hospitality are addressed in modern conservative US policy and discourse;
- 2) to determine how modern American conservative political priorities shape the discourse and regulation of tourism-related topics;
- 3) to define new types of tourism Donald Trump’s administration refers to.

Research methods include quantitative and qualitative methods of content analysis, in particular:

- Qualitative content analysis of the US conservative strategic policies papers, public statement of the American modern conservative leaders.
- Quantitative frequency of terms.
- Contextual classification and coding.
- Discourse analysis of Donald Trump's and other US conservatives' public statements

The informative source for database that is analysed includes:

- Project 2025 “Mandate for Leadership”.
- Donald Trump's X (formerly Twitter) Account (Trump, n.d.-b).
- Donald Trump's Facebook Account (Trump, n.d.-a).
- Public statements on the White House website.
- Public personal interviews with leading media.

Research Results

Tourism policy in the US has traditionally remained peripheral to mainstream political discourse. The Project 2025 “Mandate for Leadership” as a main conservative policy framework and agenda for the nearest years, prepared by the Heritage Foundation and allied think tanks, serves as a revealing artefact of conservative statecraft (*Project 2025 publishes*, 2023).

In order to understand the attitude of leading American conservatives to the tourism, hospitality and travel industry, the use of the terms “travelling” and “tourism” is analysed in this strategic document.

Firstly, these terms are mentioned quite rarely – no more than 50 times for the entire document, which is up to 0.02% of the entire text – which indicates the lack of prioritisation of the development of the tourism industry.

Most of the mentions are not directly related to the development of the tourism industry but rather are used to describe other processes (e.g., protocol, security issues, migration).

Mentions that can be associated with the tourism industry have different connotations, both negative, and the most neutral and positive.

In particular, among the positive mentions there are recommendations to develop the domestic aviation industry and take measures to reduce the cost of air tickets by changing baggage standards, as well as a protectionist policy to prevent foreign air companies from entering the American market.

Another important term for the industry, the use of which was tracked in this document, which defines the main priorities for the American state in foreign and domestic policy, is a term “hospitality”. However, it turned out that the document, which contains 321,046 Words (excluding prepositions), never mentions this term.

Thus, tourism industry appears in three primary contexts within Project 2025: Arctic economic development, abortion-related interstate travel (“abortion tourism”), and student exchanges with China. In some cases, terms related to Travel&Tourism industry are used negatively in relation to labor deregulation and funding restrictions. The word “travelling” appears in some instances, ranging from neutral logistical uses to strong opposition to certain forms of movement (e.g., undocumented immigration or abortion access).

Table 1. Mentions of “Travelling” and “Tourism” in Project 2025

Term	Context	Connotation	Page
Traveling	Presidential logistics (Air Force One)	Neutral	26
Traveling	Ethics optics of Cabinet member travel	Negative	34
Traveling	DHS leaders visiting border facilities	Positive	139
Traveling	Banning migrant travelling to US interior	Negative	152
Traveling	Trade routes in the Indian Ocean	Neutral	188
Traveling	Environment Protection Agency travel policies	Neutral	445
Traveling	Abortion-related travel funding	Negative	472
Traveling	Reduced travel burden for Bureau of Land Management officials	Positive	525
Traveling	Improved public air travel access	Positive	630
Traveling	Jones Act restriction between US ports	Negative	842
Tourism	Arctic economic development, mentioning tourism growth	Neutral	189
Tourism	“Abortion tourism” – cross-border abortion access	Negative	455
Tourism	Student and cultural exchange with China	Positive	817

Source: own elaboration

Analysis of Donald Trump’s Statements on Tourism, Travelling and Hospitality Industry (2010–2025).

The next important step in the study was the analysis of public statements of Republican leader Donald Trump during 2010–2015, both verbal, and made on social media.

An analysis of the public statements of the 45th and 47th presidents of the US from the Republican Party is also of interest because Donald Trump’s deep personal connection to the hospitality industry. As of 2024, Trump Organization owns or operates more than a dozen hotel properties globally, generating hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue and reinforcing his public persona as a hotelier (Alexander, 2024). During his presidency and post-presidency, he frequently referenced his business in speeches and social media, stating that he “still considers himself to be in the hospitality business” (Cornwell, 2019).

Summary and Key Trends of Trump’s Attitude toward Tourism Industry: Donald Trump has spoken about tourism and travel in a wide range of contexts, from business and the economy to national security and immigration. Two main patterns can be observed in his rhetoric:

Support for Tourism as an Economic Sector

Given his background in the hotel business, Donald Trump has often spoken positively about the hospitality industry. He often praised the industry’s role in job creation, investment, and branding. For example, during the COVID-19 crisis, he referred to tourism professionals as “great people” and promised relief support. He proudly promoted his hotels’ awards and launched policies like tip tax elimination.

Travel as a Security or Immigration Threat

Donald Trump frequently framed travel as a risk, especially immigration-related or linked to abortion. The 2017 ‘travel ban’ is a notable example. He also attacked ‘birth tourism’ and federally supported abortion-related travel.

Table 2. Use of Terms in Trump’s Public Statements (2010–2025)

Term	Context	Attitude	No. of uses	Source
Travel	Immigration policy – advocating a travel ban for national security	Negative	2	Tweet (Twitter, June 2017): “ <i>I am calling it what we need and what it is, a TRAVEL BAN!</i> ”
Travel	Public health – suspending travel to prevent COVID-19 spread	Negative	1	Oval Office Address (Mar 2020)
Tourism	COVID-19 context – supporting tourism industry	Positive	2	Official Remarks (Mar 2020)
Tourism	Immigration – “ <i>birth tourism</i> ” to gain the US citizenship	Negative	3	White House Fact Sheet (Jan 2020)
Tourism	Visa policy – enhancing travel with Poland	Positive	1	Press Statement (Oct 2019)
Hospitality	Business context – self-identification with hotel industry	Neutral	1	Interview (Fox/Reuters, Oct 2019)
Hotels	COVID-related closures and promises of aid	Neutral	1	Tweet (Mar 2020)
Hotels	Business promotion of Donald Trump hotels	Positive	1	Tweet (Oct 2015)

Source: own elaboration using AI technologies

Frequency and Tone

Donald Trump rarely used the term “tourists” but referenced tourism as a sector. Travel was mostly used in restrictive contexts, while “hospitality” often aligned with his business identity.

Thus, Donald Trump’s tourism rhetoric reveals dualism: as a businessman, he celebrates tourism; as a politician, he limits travel for perceived security reasons.

The designation by American conservatives of new types of tourism, which they consider a negative phenomenon

Since the tourism industry is characterised by dynamism and grounding along with the society development, it is always important to monitor the emergence of new terms denoting a new tendency in tourism (Romanova, 2017). In addition to all the above mentioned, there is the emergence of new types of tourism industry, which conservative leaders use only in a negative sense, these are such as:

Birth tourism is travel for the purpose of giving birth in a destination (country) other than residence. Particularly, this refers to maternity tourism in the US, where visitors aimed not only at the best medical conditions for childbirth, but also at the possibility of obtaining American citizenship for a newborn, and in the future (after reaching the age of majority) – naturalisation of parents.

Abortion tourism is travel with the purpose of having an abortion in a destination other than residence (state, country). This refers to a phenomenon that became widespread in the US after the restriction of abortion rights by the Supreme Court in 2022

(Congressional Research Service, 2022). Since the term and conditions of abortion were determined differently in different states, pregnant women began to travel from Republican states to Democratic ones for the abortion purpose.

“*Propaganda tours*” are trips to get acquainted with the humanitarian, military-political and/or socio-economic situation of a destination (country). This definition was publicly voiced in a negative connotation by one of the most prominent new conservatives, US Vice President James David Vance, during a meeting with President Volodymyr Zelenskyi in the Oval Office in February 2025 (Junk, 2025).

Thus, the economic policy direction of the new US presidential administration under Donald Trump may influence not only the domestic tourism industry, but also the global tourism sector in the years ahead.

Conclusions and discussion

Tourism policy in the US has traditionally remained peripheral to mainstream political discourse. However, in the wake of intensified ideological polarisation, particularly during and after the Trump presidency, tourism has acquired new political salience.

This research attempts to analyse Donald Trump’s public statements as well as the US conservative movement’s policy document (Project 2025) with respect to their stance on tourism development. While economic conservatives often highlight its job creation potential, social conservatives view aspects of tourism as vectors of liberal influence, particularly, in debates surrounding abortion, immigration and international exchanges.

The study reveals that US conservative politics simultaneously endorse and resist tourism depending on context. It is embraced when aligned with nationalist economic goals and security issues (domestic travelling, Arctic development, grounding cultural exchanges with China), and opposed when linked to progressive causes (abortion, immigration, transnationalism, “propaganda tours” to Ukraine).

This dichotomy suggests that tourism is not ideologically neutral in the current policy sphere. For stakeholders in the tourism and hospitality industries, advocacy strategies should address these conflicting framings. Future research can study tourism narratives in other ideological manifestos (e.g., progressive platforms), and how policy implementation affects real-world mobility flows.

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Анна Романова,
докторка економічних наук, доцентка,
Херсонський державний університет, Україна
Університет штату Флорида, США,
Таллахассі, штат Флорида, США
romanova.welcome@gmail.com
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7336-1032>

КОНСЕРВАТИВНА ПОЛІТИКА США І ТУРИСТИЧНА ІНДУСТРІЯ: РЕАЛІЇ ТА ПЕРСПЕКТИВИ

Актуальність дослідження зумовлена зростанням впливу консервативної ідеології на формування державної політики США, зокрема в секторах туризму та гостинності. В умовах активізації політичної діяльності представників консервативного руху та появи таких стратегічних документів, як Проект 2025 «Мандат на лідерство», туристична галузь дедалі частіше розглядається не лише як економічний сектор, а як інструмент ідеологічного впливу. З огляду на зазначене дослідження взаємодії таких ідеологічних концептів, як національна безпека, економічний протекціонізм, культурний консерватизм та ізоляціонізм, з політичним дискурсом, пов'язаним з подорожами, туризмом і гостинністю, набуває особливої значущості. **Мета і методи.** *Мета статті* – проаналізувати ставлення представників консервативного руху США до розвитку туристичної галузі, визначити вплив сучасних американських консервативних політичних пріоритетів на формування дискурсу та регулювання туристичної тематики, виявити нові види туризму, що стають об'єктом критики з боку адміністрації Д. Трампа. *Методологія:* у статті використано кількісний і якісний контент-аналіз політичного маніфесту Проект 2025 «Мандат на лідерство», доповнений дискурс-аналізом публічних заяв президента Дональда Трампа протягом останніх 15 років (2010–2025 рр.), а також інших лідерів консервативного руху США. **Результати.** Консервативні політики розглядають туризм як економічно вигідний лише тоді, коли він відповідає національним інтересам. Водночас вони сприймають його як потенційно небезпечний чинник, коли йдеться про ліберальну політику чи транснаціональну мобільність. Виявлено нові види туризму, які, на думку лідерів американського консервативного руху, мають негативні ознаки: пологовий туризм, абортний туризм, пропагандистські тури. **Висновки та обговорення.** Результати дослідження свідчать про дихотомне ставлення консервативного руху до розвитку туристичної індустрії. Наукова новизна та результати дослідження мають *практичне значення* в контексті адвокації індустрії туризму та гостинності, реформування політики та стійкості сектору.

Ключові слова: консерватизм США, туристична політика, Проект 2025 «Мандат на лідерство», індустрія гостинності, регулювання поїздок, дискурс-аналіз, абортний туризм, пологовий туризм.

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