

*Communicative View on Tourism Industry and Socio-
Political Impacts: The
Case of “Velvet Revolution”*

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Abstract

- The aim is to take a close look at the relationship between Armenia's tourism industry and the "Velvet Revolution/"
- To identify possible changes in the sphere and draw a conclusion on the overall relationship impacts.
- It argues that the Velvet Revolution not only has increased the country's popularity widely but also has given a potential for the advancement in the future.
- It also argues that during the revolution period, there were hardly any tension among tourists in contrast to the news reported.

INTRODUCTION

Historical Overview

- During the first decade of Armenian independence, there was no vision for tourism.
- The main reasons were the war, unstable economic conditions, and Soviet Union collapse.
- With more economic stability in the 2000s, the first arrivals were from Diaspora.
- Tourism is directly connected with a country's political, cultural, social and environmental domains and impacts occur on both sides.
- In April 2018, Armenia also encountered with a socio-political turnover, the "Velvet Revolution."



INTRODUCTION

Revolution Overview

- Got its rise at the beginning of April 2018 by Nikol Pashinyan, because of the constitutional referendum taking place in December 2015.
- Serzh Sargsyan, the Primer President of Armenia who had been elected twice, got the position of the Prime Minister in 2018, leaving the Presidency to Armen Sarkissian.
- After his election, huge protests began with a slogan “Deny Serzh,” which resulted in Serzh Sargsyan’s resign on April 23.
- The protests ended with the election of Nikol Pashinyan as the Prime Minister.
- The revolution was velvet as it took place without a single case of injury.



Literature Review

- The main disputes over tourism sphere are centered on whether or not it is a distinguished scientific discipline or an “object of scientific interest.”
- There has been a considerable increase in terms of tourism publications and philosophical debates over specific methodologies.
- There is also a common controversy between qualitative and quantitative research methods
- Others suggest case study and ethnography as applicable research methods in tourism.
- Tourism is announced as the central sector of the economy in Armenia.
- Rural tourism is not included in Armenia’s tourism strategy yet, which is a shortcut.

Research Questions

1. How did the “Velvet Revolution” communicate with Armenia’s tourism industry?
2. To what extent and how Armenia’s tour agencies maintained the relationship between the tourists during the revolution period?
3. Were there many trip cancelations during the revolution period, and if yes, which nationalities revoked the most?

Two types of methods are employed:



1. Survey- conducted with 27 tourists chosen randomly in the center of Yerevan.
2. Interview- conducted with four tour agencies and with AAPTG (Armenian Association of Professional Tourist Guides).

Research Findings

✓ Velvet Revolution has been marked as a practical promotional method.

✓ Few reported direct issues or concerns both during and after the Velvet Revolution among tourists.

✓ The communication between the revolution and Armenia's tourism industry went somewhat peacefully and balanced.

✓ So far, the Velvet Revolution has effectively increased Armenia's fame internationally and created impulsive reactions among tourists.

✓ Minor cancelations occurred by mostly Russians, which is more of a cultural matter, rather than the cause of revolution.

✓ In the countries where media control is comparatively tough, the essence of revolution was somewhat unknown.

Limitations and Avenues for Future Research

- The limited time did not let the set of interviews, as well as surveys, gather extensive application.
- Lack of numbers and statistical evidence because of the short-time gap of the research after the revolution.
- The study was limited both terms of numbers and a distinct observation on the consequences of the revolution.

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