

**UPAYA *NATION BRANDING* AZERBAIJAN MELALUI FORMULA 1
AZERBAIJAN GRAND PRIX DI TENGAH KONFLIK
NAGORNO-KARABAKH (2016–2023)**

ABSTRAK

Azerbaijan menghadapi tekanan reputasional akibat eskalasi konflik Nagorno-Karabakh sepanjang periode 2016–2023. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pemanfaatan Azerbaijan Grand Prix sebagai instrumen *nation branding* yang secara konsisten diselenggarakan selama periode tersebut. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif-analitis dengan teknik pengumpulan data berupa studi dokumen dan literatur. Analisis dilakukan menggunakan kerangka Nation Brand Hexagon oleh Simon Anholt dengan fokus pada empat dimensi yang dinilai paling relevan dengan karakteristik Formula 1 sebagai *mega-sporting event*, yaitu *Tourism, Investment and Immigration, Culture and Heritage*, serta *Governance*. Konsep *sportswashing* digunakan sebagai perspektif pendukung untuk memahami berbagai kritik terhadap strategi tersebut. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Formula 1 dimanfaatkan secara aktif dan terencana sebagai platform komunikasi global untuk memproyeksikan identitas, daya tarik, serta kapabilitas Azerbaijan melalui keempat dimensi *nation branding*. Namun, upaya tersebut berlangsung berdampingan dengan kontra-narasi yang bersumber dari konflik Nagorno-Karabakh dan isu hak asasi manusia, termasuk kritik yang memandang penyelenggaraan Formula 1 sebagai bentuk *sportswashing*. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa konflik yang berlangsung tidak menghalangi Azerbaijan dalam memanfaatkan Formula 1 sebagai instrumen *nation branding*, tetapi menjadi faktor yang memengaruhi bagaimana narasi tersebut diterima dan ditafsirkan oleh publik global.

Kata kunci: *Nation Branding, Formula 1, Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh, Nation Brand Hexagon*

AZERBAIJAN'S NATION BRANDING EFFORTS THROUGH THE FORMULA 1 AZERBAIJAN GRAND PRIX AMID THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT (2016–2023)

ABSTRACT

Azerbaijan faced significant reputational pressure due to the escalation of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict throughout the 2016–2023 period. This study aims to analyze the utilization of the Azerbaijan Grand Prix as a nation branding instrument, which was consistently hosted during that timeframe. The study employs a descriptive-analytical qualitative approach, collecting data through document and literature studies. The analysis is conducted using Simon Anholt's Nation Brand Hexagon framework, focusing on four dimensions deemed most relevant to the characteristics of Formula 1 as a mega-sporting event: Tourism, Investment and Immigration, Culture and Heritage, and Governance. The concept of sportswashing is utilized as a supporting critical perspective to understand various criticisms directed toward this strategy. The findings reveal that Formula 1 was actively and strategically leveraged as a global communication platform to project Azerbaijan's identity, attractiveness, and capabilities across the four analyzed nation branding dimensions. However, these efforts operated alongside counter-narratives stemming from the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and human rights issues, including critiques viewing the hosting of Formula 1 as a form of sportswashing. This study concludes that the ongoing conflict did not deter Azerbaijan from utilizing Formula 1 as a nation branding instrument, but rather served as a key factor influencing how these narratives were received and interpreted by the global public.

Keywords: Nation Branding, Formula 1, Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh, Nation Brand Hexagon