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Factors Of Place Branding in Teluk Wondama Regency As The City Of Papuan Civilization: An Analysis Based On Anholt's Brand Hexagon Model

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify factors influencing the formation of place branding in Teluk Wondama Regency as the "City of Papuan Civilization". A qualitative approach with thematic analysis supported by NVivo 12 was employed. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with 18 purposively selected informants, field observations, and documentation analysis. The findings are interpreted using Anholt's Brand Hexagon Model (2007), encompassing six dimensions: Presence, People, Place, Pulse, Potential, and Prerequisites. Results reveal an asymmetric branding profile: Presence and People are the strongest dimensions, grounded in the historical legitimacy of modern Papuan education at Aitumieri (1925) and the cohesive, inclusive character of local communities. Pulse and Place exhibit moderate strength through periodic cultural celebrations and rich symbolic heritage spaces. Conversely, Potential and Prerequisites remain the weakest dimensions due to infrastructure limitations, accessibility constraints, and the absence of formalized branding policies. This asymmetry confirms that symbolic branding strength has not been fully converted into measurable economic capacity. This imbalance challenges the Brand Hexagon Model's implicit assumption that brand dimensions develop in relative equilibrium, suggesting that heritage-driven, organically grown brands may instead follow a structurally uneven developmental path. The study offers empirical insights into the Brand Hexagon Model's relevance in heritage-based informal place branding in Eastern Indonesia, a context previously underrepresented in place branding literature. Strategic recommendations include institutionalizing Pulse and Place dimensions while progressively strengthening Potential and Prerequisites through concrete policies.

Keywords: *Brand Hexagon; City of Civilization; place branding; Papua; Teluk Wondama; heritage branding; regional identity.*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan mengidentifikasi faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi terbentuknya *place branding* Kabupaten Teluk Wondama sebagai "Kota Peradaban Orang Papua." Pendekatan kualitatif dengan analisis tematik berbantuan NVivo 12 diterapkan dalam penelitian ini. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam terhadap 18 narasumber yang dipilih secara *purposive*, observasi lapangan, dan analisis dokumentasi. Temuan diinterpretasi menggunakan kerangka Model Brand Hexagon Anholt (2007) yang mencakup enam dimensi: *Presence, People, Place, Pulse, Potential,* dan *Prerequisites*. Hasil menunjukkan profil branding yang asimetris: dimensi Presence dan People merupakan kekuatan utama, bersumber dari legitimasi sejarah masuknya pendidikan modern di Aitumieri (1925) dan karakter masyarakat yang kohesif serta inklusif. Dimensi *Pulse* dan *Place* menunjukkan kekuatan moderat melalui perayaan budaya periodik dan ruang simbolik kawasan bersejarah. Sebaliknya, dimensi *Potential* dan *Prerequisites* menjadi titik lemah akibat keterbatasan infrastruktur, aksesibilitas, dan formalisasi kebijakan *branding*. Ketidakseimbangan ini mengonfirmasi bahwa kekuatan simbolik branding belum sepenuhnya terkonversi menjadi kapasitas ekonomi yang terukur. Ketidakseimbangan ini juga menantang asumsi implisit Model Brand Hexagon bahwa keenam dimensi berkembang secara setara. Penelitian ini memberikan wawasan empiris terhadap relevansi Model *Brand Hexagon* dalam konteks *place branding* informal berbasis sejarah di wilayah timur Indonesia.

Kata kunci: Brand Hexagon; Kota Peradaban; place branding; Papua; Teluk Wondama.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the context of inter-regional competition in the era of regional autonomy, *place branding* has become a crucial strategy for building identity, competitiveness, and attractiveness of a territory (Kavaratzis, 2004; Kotler & Gertner, 2002). Unlike *city marketing*, which is transactional in nature, *place branding* operates at the level of long-term identity and perception. Ashworth & Kavaratzis (2010) distinguish between formal branding deliberately initiated by governments or consultants, and informal branding that grows organically through social construction (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) and cross-generational historical narratives. Place branding scholarship has increasingly moved beyond promotional tools to become a social, political, and symbolic construction of identity (Aronczyk, 2013; Zavattaro, 2014).

Teluk Wondama Regency, located in West Papua Province, Indonesia, offers a distinctive model of *place branding* that has not been widely documented in academic literature. The region is known as the "City of Papuan Civilization," an identity rooted in the historical events of 1925. On 25 October 1925, Dutch missionary Izaak Samuel Kijne established a school on Aitumieri Hill in Miei Village, and delivered a declaration that has since become a pillar of Papuan identity: "Upon this rock, I lay the civilization of the Papuan people." This narrative has grown organically for nearly a century, reinforced by the physical symbol of "*Batu Peradaban"* (Civilization Rock), and is recognized across all layers of Papuan society as the starting point of their modern educational awakening (Wanma, 2025).

Studies on history-based *place branding* in Indonesia, particularly in Papua, remain very limited. Most *place branding* literature focuses on large cities with formally government-initiated branding, while informal, bottom-up branding models rooted in historical heritage remain underexplored (Kalandides, 2011; Zenker & Braun, 2017). Kalandides (2011) refers to branding that loses relevance to local identity as "branding without identity" a condition that is precisely the antithesis of the Teluk Wondama case. Zenker & Braun (2017) further assert that the most enduring branding is that which emerges from the *lived experience* of communities, not from consultant workshops.

To comprehensively analyze the factors shaping *place branding* in Teluk Wondama Regency, this study employs the Brand Hexagon Model developed by Anholt (2007). This model offers a multidimensional analytical framework that integrates *intangible* dimensions (historical reputation, community character, cultural dynamics) with *tangible* dimensions (physical quality of the territory, economic potential, infrastructure) within a single systematic framework. The strength of the Brand Hexagon Model lies in its capacity to capture the complexity of factors forming place branding in informally unplanned, history-based regions precisely the situation in Teluk Wondama (Ashworth & Kavaratzis, 2010).

Although Anholt's Brand Hexagon Model is most commonly applied as a blueprint for deliberately planned, top-down city branding campaigns, relatively little is known about its applicability to brands that emerge organically, without formal planning particularly in developing regions where heritage functions as a primary driving force. This study addresses that gap by examining Teluk Wondama, a locality whose brand identity was not formally designed but instead developed gradually over more than a century with minimal government intervention. The findings indicate that this type of organically formed brand does not conform neatly to the model's implicit expectation that all six dimensions develop in synchrony; instead, it exhibits a markedly asymmetric profile, strong in some dimensions and weak in others.

Based on this background, the objective of this study is to identify the factors influencing the formation of *place branding* in Teluk Wondama Regency as the "City of Papuan Civilization" based on the six dimensions of Anholt's Brand Hexagon Model (2007): *Presence, People, Place, Pulse, Potential*, and *Prerequisites*. By identifying the strength and weakness profile of each dimension, this study is expected to contribute to the development of sustainable formal branding strategies for Teluk Wondama Regency while enriching the history-based *place branding* literature in Eastern Indonesia. These six dimensions — Presence, People, Place, Pulse, Potential, and Prerequisites — together provide a comprehensive framework for assessing both the tangible and intangible assets that constitute a region's brand identity, and structure the analysis presented in the following sections. This study contributes to the place branding literature in three specific ways: (1) empirically testing Anholt's Brand Hexagon Model in a heritage-based, informally and organically developed branding context; (2) proposing the concept of 'asymmetric branding' grounded in empirical data, which challenges the model's implicit assumption of dimensional equilibrium; and (3) providing what is, to the authors' knowledge, the first documented academic analysis of place branding in Papua.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative approach using thematic analysis assisted by NVivo 12 Pro software. An inductive approach was chosen because the study aims to understand social processes and meanings that develop organically from field data, rather than testing predetermined hypotheses (Creswell, 2014). Data were collected through three complementary techniques.

Research Location

Teluk Wondama Regency is located in West Papua Province, Indonesia, covering an area of approximately 3,959.53 km². Geographically, the region occupies a strategic position at the center of Tanah Papua (the Papuan Land), flanked by the Wondama Bay to the west and the Cenderawasih Bay National Park (TNTC) to the east. This position — referred to by informants as the "golden triangle" between Teluk Wondama, Serui, and Jayapura — was one of the primary considerations for I.S. Kijne's selection of Aitumieri as the center of modern Papuan education (Figure 1).

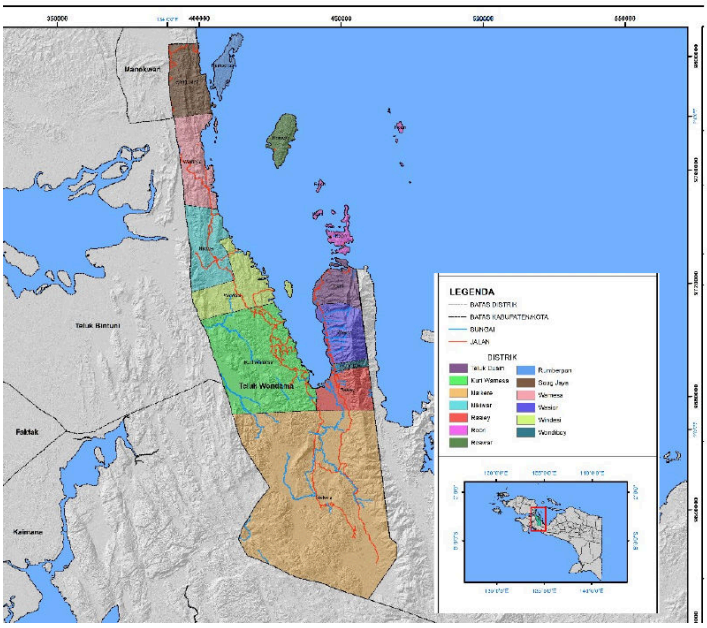


Figure 1. Administrative Map of Teluk Wondama Regency, West Papua Province
Source: *Authors, 2026*

Data Collection and Analysis

First, *in-depth interviews* were conducted with 18 informants selected through *purposive sampling*, comprising government officials (Regent, Head of Tourism Office, Head of Community Empowerment Office), customary leaders, religious leaders (GKI Papua ministers), small and medium enterprise (SME) actors, academics, and members of the general public. Across all categories, informants were required to demonstrate adequate familiarity with the Aitumieri historical narrative, given that Wondama's branding is fundamentally history-based; category-specific criteria further required customary and religious leaders to hold a recognized role as custodians or transmitters of this narrative, SME actors to be directly engaged in tourism- or heritage-related livelihoods, and academics to have applied understanding of both the developmental potential and the structural problems facing Teluk Wondama. Broader tourism perspectives were incorporated through these tourism- and heritage-engaged community and business informants rather than through visitors as a separate informant category. Data collection proceeded until theoretical saturation was reached (Guest et al., 2006), which occurred after the 15th interview, with three additional interviews conducted to confirm no new themes emerged. Interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes on average and were audio-recorded using a mobile phone, supplemented by handwritten field notes; recordings were subsequently transcribed prior to coding in NVivo 12, with the verbal consent of each participant obtained prior to recording.

Second, field observations were conducted at the Aitumieri area, Batu Peradaban (Civilization Rock), Batu Inspirasi (Inspiration Rock), Taman Masasoya, and other historical sites in Teluk Wondama Regency. Third, documentation was drawn from official policy documents (RPJMD 2021–2026, RDTR, Aitumieri Area Masterplan, Cultural Heritage Decree) and primary historical sources (Wanma, 2025).

All interview transcripts were uploaded to NVivo 12 and thematically coded through *open coding*, *axial coding*, and *selective coding* processes. This process produced 6 parent (selective) codes corresponding to the six Brand Hexagon dimensions, 14 child (axial) codes, and 66 leaf-level (open) codes; the complete coding structure is presented in Appendix A. The resulting codes were then further analyzed using the Brand Hexagon Model theoretical framework encompassing six dimensions: *Presence, People, Place, Pulse, Potential*, and *Prerequisites* (Anholt, 2007). Word frequency analysis was employed strictly as an exploratory technique to surface dominant linguistic patterns within each dimension; the resulting percentages are not treated as standalone quantitative confirmation, but rather as supporting indicators that were subsequently triangulated with, and interpreted through, thematic coding.

Data validity was ensured through three-layered source triangulation: (1) triangulation between NVivo coding results and direct interview quotations; (2) triangulation with official policy documents (RPJMD, Masterplan, Cultural Heritage Decree); and (3) triangulation with primary historical sources (Wanma, 2025). This iterative process was applied to each sub-theme in the results and discussion section prior to writing the final interpretation, ensuring no finding rested on a single source alone. In instances where sources diverged, priority was given to findings corroborated by at least two of the three source types, with unresolved discrepancies reported as differences in stakeholder perception rather than presented as settled fact.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the NVivo-assisted thematic analysis yielded an interpretation of the six dimensions of Anholt's Brand Hexagon Model (2007) in the context of *place branding* in Teluk Wondama Regency as the "City of Papuan Civilization." The findings reveal an asymmetric branding profile: two dimensions are very strong (*Presence, People*), two are moderate (*Pulse, Place*), and two are weak (*Potential, Prerequisites*).

A. Presence Dimension: Historical Legitimacy as Reputational Capital

The *Presence* dimension in the Brand Hexagon Model refers to the level of existence and recognition of a region in the public mind, encompassing historical reputation, contribution to global life, and breadth of recognition. The findings reveal that Teluk Wondama's *Presence* is built primarily through historical legitimacy as the birthplace of modern Papuan education. The 1925 event at Aitumieri, when I.S. Kijne placed the Batu Peradaban (Civilization Rock), created a *founding moment* that serves as the primary reference for the entire branding narrative. The Batu Peradaban functions as a collective symbol not possessed by any other region in Papua, providing a powerful identity differentiation.

"What is interesting about Wondama in Papua that you will not find in other cities is the Batu Peradaban. It seems that Batu Peradaban is only in Wondama, along with the local specialties I mentioned earlier. So when people say that term, we already know it is Wondama." (CM, Interview in Manokwari)

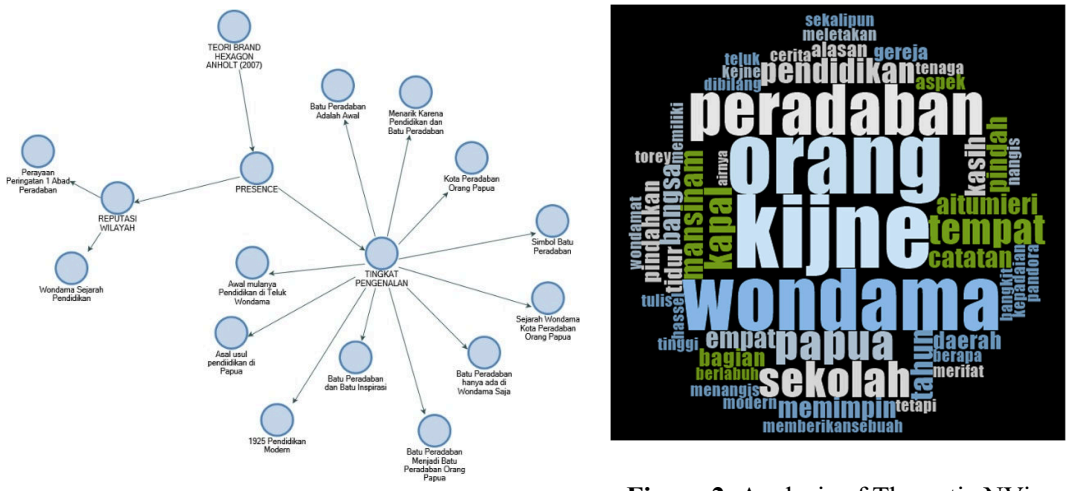


Figure 2. Analysis of Thematic NVivo Presence element
Source: *Authors, 2026*

The *Word Frequency Query* analysis of the *Presence* element reveals the dominance of the words *Wondama* (2.32%), *Kijne* (2.23%), and *peradaban* (civilization, 2.15%), indicates that Wondama's reputational identity is anchored not in its current performance, but in a foundational historical event. This is a critical finding: unlike cities that brand through contemporary achievements (e.g., Singapore's efficiency, Barcelona's urban renewal), Wondama's brand legitimacy is backward-looking — it derives authority from a singular 'founding moment' (1925). This structure creates both strength and vulnerability (dependence on a single historical narrative). Alongside historical value, social stability also reinforces *Presence*: Teluk Wondama is perceived as a safe territory amid a regional Papuan context often associated with issues of violence. Nevertheless, Wondama's *Presence* remains latent — its strong reputational capital has not yet been fully converted into optimal public recognition at the national and international level, as no official branding outreach has ever been conducted.

B. People Dimension: Social Capital and Cross-Papua Alumni Network

The *People* dimension refers to perceptions of community character, competence, openness, and contribution to development (Anholt, 2007). The findings reveal that the *People* element in Teluk Wondama's branding is substantive and value-based: the Wondama community is positioned as a representation of civilizational values themselves through a distinctive social hospitable, inclusive, highly religious, and strongly oriented toward education.

"Reverend Kijne said that the people of Wondama are people who love to be in fellowship. It means that if there is one Wondama person in a gathering, they can break the ice, they become a blessing. So there are three things that make Wondama people different." (HW, Interview in Mansinam)

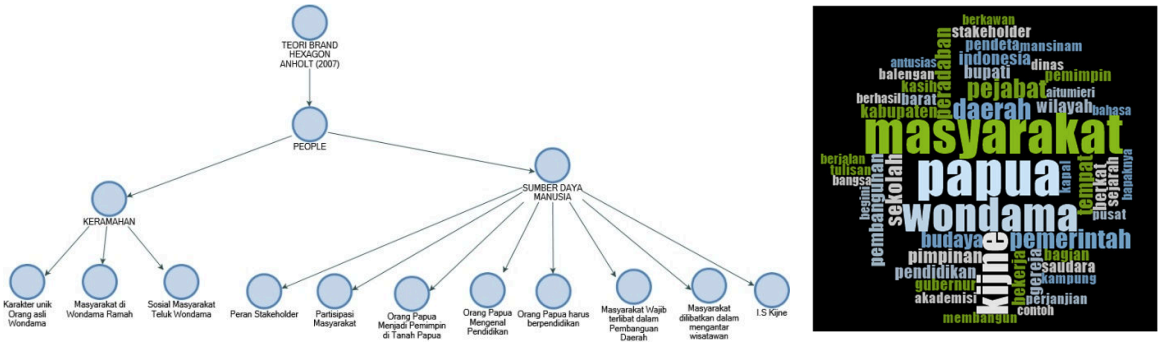


Figure 3. Analysis of Thematic NVivo People element
Source: *Authors, 2026*

The *People* dimension carries a layer often missed by conventional analysis: *People* does not only refer to those currently residing in Wondama, but also encompasses thousands of alumni of the Normal School Aitumieri who have spread across Papua since 1927. They are organic disseminating agents of the branding narrative: every alumnus returning to their hometown carries the narrative of "civilization from Wondama" as part of their own identity. This dissemination mechanism is organic and layered, making Wondama's branding a cross-territorial phenomenon. *Word Frequency* analysis shows the dominance of *Papua* (2.18%), *masyarakat* (community, 2.03%), and *Wondama* (1.60%), underscoring that the region's image strength rests on the collective identity of the community as the primary subject of branding.

C. Place Dimension: Symbolic Space and Strategic Geography

The *Place* dimension concerns the physical quality and attractiveness of a region, encompassing landscape, infrastructure, spatial planning, and geographical position (Anholt, 2007). Informants constructed Wondama's Place identity through spatial-symbolic markers. The Aitumieri corridor, Batu Peradaban, Batu Inspirasi, Kijne's house, and YPPK School, functions not merely as heritage sites but as an evidence system that materializes the abstract 'civilization' narrative. This spatial anchoring is reinforced by Wondama's central position in Papua's 'golden triangle' (with Serui and Jayapura), a geography that, as informant EN noted, 'perhaps had specific reasons' for Kijne's original choice. The Aitumieri area in Kampung Miei constitutes the symbolic spatial center of branding. Batu Peradaban, Batu Inspirasi (Inspiration Rock), the house of missionary I.S. Kijne, and YPPK Aitumieri School form a cultural heritage corridor with high historical, religious, and emotional value.

> *"Its location is also strategic — in the central part, from the east, north, and west, everything is accessible. Wondama is part of the golden triangle: Teluk Wondama, Serui, and Jayapura. Perhaps there were specific reasons that led to this outcome." (EN, Interview in Wondama)*

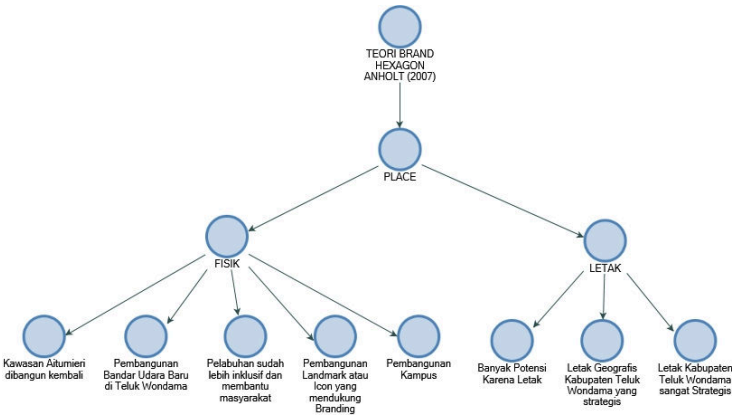




Figure 4. Analysis of Thematic NVivo Place element
Source: *Authors, 2026*

The *Word Frequency Query* analysis of the *Place* element reveals the dominance of *pariwisata* (tourism, 3.02%), *geografis* (geographical, 2.09%), and *potensi* (potential, 1.40%), confirming that *Place* identity is understood primarily through physical character and tourism potential. The main limitation of this dimension is the lack of integration between the arrangement of historical spaces and adequate supporting infrastructure — the Bukit Aitumieri Masterplan is available but not yet fully realized so the potential of symbolic space has not yet been able to optimally support the branding experience. Field observation conducted in September–October 2025 confirmed that the Batu Peradaban commemorative house and the visitor center (pusat kunjungan) have been physically realized. However, other elements deviate from the design: the open plaza area and the stage (panggung) were constructed in a configuration that does not match the original Masterplan layout, indicating that the gap between planning documentation and on-the-ground implementation lies not only in what remains unbuilt, but also in inconsistencies between what has been built and what was originally designed.

D. Pulse Dimension: Cultural Dynamics and Periodic Celebrations

The *Pulse* dimension refers to the dynamism of a region's life through cultural activities, celebrations, creativity, and public events (Anholt, 2007). The findings reveal that Teluk Wondama's *Pulse* is culturally dynamic, sustained by periodic celebrations bearing deep symbolic significance. The most significant event was the 1 Abad Peradaban Orang Papua (1 Century of Papuan Civilization) celebration on 25 October 2025, which successfully elevated the branding from a local-regional to a national scale.

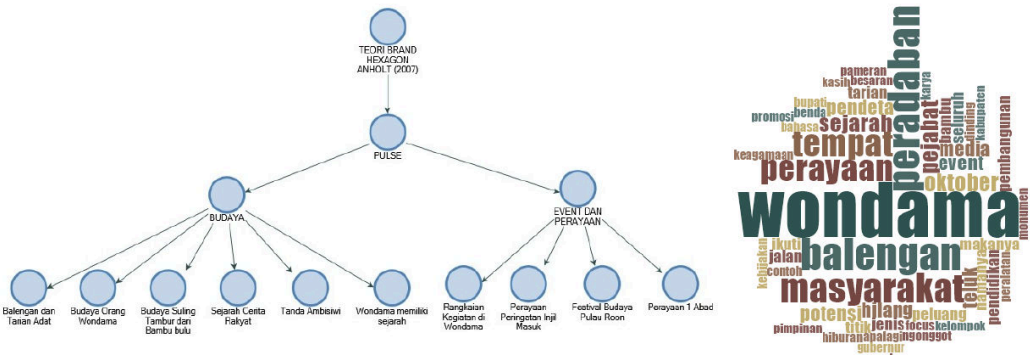


Figure 5. Analysis of Thematic NVivo Pulse element
Source: *Authors, 2026*

The *Word Frequency* analysis reveals the dominance of *wondama* (2.16%), *balengan* (1.20%), and *peradaban* (civilization, 1.20%). The *balengan* culture (traditional dance) and the distinctive tambur flute of Wondama are living expressions of *Pulse* within the community. The main challenge of this dimension is its incidental nature and dependence on the policies of individual leaders it has not yet been institutionalized within the routine development agenda of the region. Ideally, Wondama's *Pulse* should extend beyond annual ceremonial events to include regular events that can sustain and strengthen branding throughout the year.

E. Potential Dimension: Abundant Resources Amid Governance Limitations

The *Potential* dimension refers to perceptions of a region's future opportunities, encompassing economic potential, investment, education, and leading sectors (Anholt, 2007). The findings reveal that Teluk Wondama possesses large strategic potential that has not yet been optimized. Key potential includes: religious and historical tourism in the Aitumieri area; marine nature tourism within the Cenderawasih Bay National Park (TNTC), which is internationally recognized for its marine biodiversity; and the fisheries sector and SMEs based on local products. This pattern is consistent with the broader cultural tourism literature, which identifies heritage- and identity-based assets as an increasingly significant driver of destination development strategies worldwide (Richards, 2018).

> *"Wondama is not just a destination for underwater tourism, Wondama is also part of the protected Cenderawasih Bay National Park. So I think with these two assets, branding can really be developed." (CM, Interview in Manokwari)*

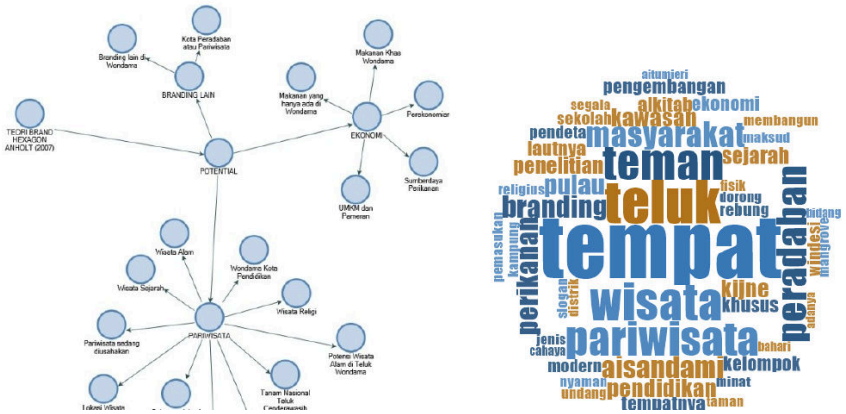


Figure 6. Analysis of Thematic NVivo Potential element
Source: *Authors, 2026*

The *Word Frequency* analysis reveals the dominance of *tempat* (place, 1.70%), *teluk* (bay, 1.10%), and *wisata* (tourism, 0.95%), confirming that Wondama's potential is perceived primarily through spatial character and tourism attractiveness. The weakness of this dimension is that SMEs are only active during events, there are few structured tourism packages, and there is insufficient sustained guidance from the regional government. This indicates that the region's large potential has not yet been managed systematically to optimally support territorial branding.

F. Prerequisites Dimension: Infrastructure as a Conversion Barrier

The *Prerequisites* dimension refers to the basic preconditions of quality of life, including infrastructure, security, and public services (Anholt, 2007). The findings reveal that this is the weakest dimension and simultaneously the most critical barrier to developing Teluk Wondama's branding. Limited road conditions, a small-capacity airport, the scarcity of adequate accommodation facilities, and limited communication networks constitute significant structural barriers. Several districts in Teluk Wondama Regency can only be reached by sea.

> *"Regarding security: if we compare with cities outside Wondama, there are still issues of violence to this day. But in Wondama, there has been no violence to this day. And that is what makes other cities, when they are in turmoil, Wondama remains safe. That is one of the strengths that can be reinforced." (EN, Interview in Wondama)*

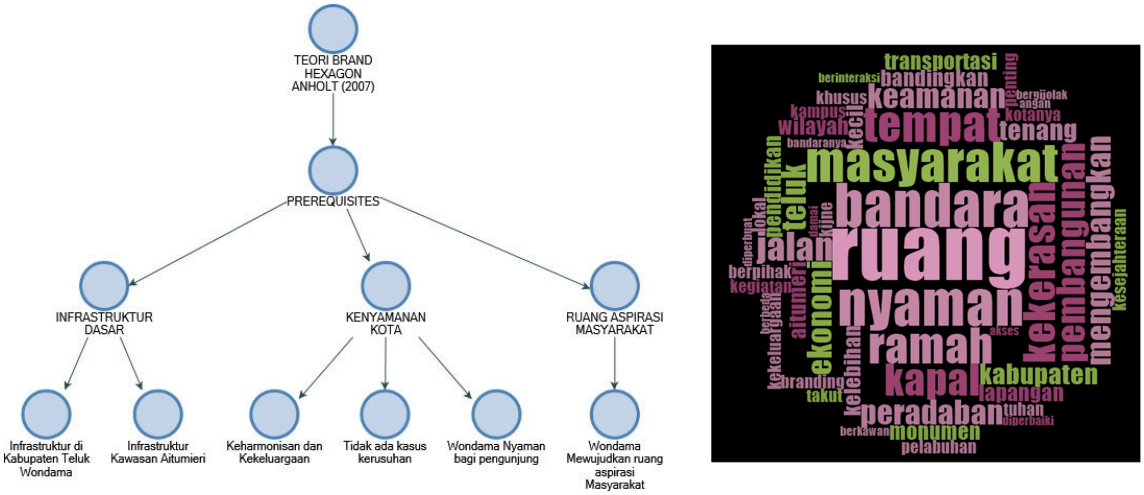


Figure 7. Analysis of Thematic NVivo Prerequisites element
Source: *Authors, 2026*

The positive side of this dimension is the high social stability and an environment perceived as comfortable (*slow living*). The *Word Frequency* analysis reveals the dominance of *ruang* (space, 1.58%), *bandara* (airport, 1.09%), and *nyaman* (comfortable, 1.09%), reflecting that issues of space provision and accessibility are the primary focus of the branding prerequisites. From an institutional standpoint, several planning instruments are already available (Aitumieri Hill Masterplan, Cultural Heritage Decree, RDTR), yet no specific regulation formally codifying branding through a Regent's Decree or Regional Regulation has been issued.

G. Asymmetric Brand Hexagon Profile and Strategic Implications

Based on the analysis of all six dimensions, the branding profile of Teluk Wondama Regency exhibits a meaningfully asymmetric pattern. The six Brand Hexagon pillars do not operate independently; rather, they form a relational system: *Presence* functions as the *triggering pillar* that builds public curiosity; *People* as the *disseminating pillar* that transmits the narrative across generations; *Pulse* as the *renewal pillar* that prevents the narrative from becoming static; *Place* as the *evidence pillar* that concretizes the abstract narrative; and *Potential* and *Prerequisites* as the *conversion pillars* that determine whether symbolic strength can be converted into tangible economic impact.

The asymmetric brand profile identified in Wondama, strong Presence/People, weak Potential/Prerequisites, challenges Anholt's implicit assumption that brand dimensions develop in relative equilibrium. This raises a theoretical question: is asymmetry a deficit to be corrected, or a distinctive brand type that requires different management approaches? Our data suggest asymmetry is not merely a gap but a structural condition: the very factors that produce strong Presence (historical narrative, organic community dissemination) may also produce weak Prerequisites (because the narrative does not generate the investment needed for infrastructure). This asymmetric pattern gives rise to what Anholt (2007) considered as the *identity trap*: an identity that is trapped within a narrative without being able to generate measurable value. Wondama's branding feels "strong inwardly, weak outwardly" — internal social legitimacy is very high, yet the structural capacity to communicate and convert that strength into economic

value remains severely limited. This asymmetry can be understood as a transmission failure rather than a simple resource gap: strong Presence and People operate through social and narrative channels (word-of-mouth, alumni networks, commemorative events) that require no institutional intermediary, whereas converting that symbolic capital into Prerequisites depends on a distinct chain of formal agency — budget allocation, regulatory codification, and sustained bureaucratic follow-through — that has so far not been activated. In other words, the narrative itself is not "closed" to conversion; rather, no institutional actor has yet been tasked with translating it into infrastructure investment. Read this way, the asymmetry is better characterized as a distinctive structural condition of organically grown brands than as a deficit per se: it reflects a strength (deep, low-cost social legitimacy) that has simply not yet been paired with a corresponding conversion mechanism, and it therefore calls for institutional intervention rather than a wholesale reinterpretation of the brand's identity.Table 1 summarizes this asymmetric profile alongside its strategic implications. It should be emphasized that the Word Frequency Query percentages reported throughout this section are exploratory and indicative rather than statistically confirmatory; given the modest size of the interview corpus, small shifts in word frequency can be misleading if treated as primary evidence, and they are therefore presented here only as supporting indicators alongside the coded thematic findings. Figure 8 visualizes this asymmetric profile as a radar chart, offering a single, publication-ready view of Wondama's uneven strength across the six Brand Hexagon dimensions.

Table 1. Brand Hexagon Profile of Teluk Wondama Regency as the "City of Papuan Civilization"

Dimension	Status	Key Finding	Strategic Implication
Presence	STRONG	Historical reputation of 1925 recognized across Papua; Batu Peradaban as an unrivalled identity symbol; terms 'Kijne' (2.23%) and 'peradaban/civilization' (2.15%) dominate Word Frequency.	Extend to national and international audiences; coordinated digital communication strategy needed.
People	STRONG	Welcoming and inclusive community character; Aitumieri alumni as organic disseminators of branding narrative across Papua; 'masyarakat/community' (2.03%) dominates Word Frequency.	Formalized through alumni programs, annual reunions, and documentation of Papuan leaders' stories.
Pulse	MODERATE	25 October celebrations and 1 Century of Civilization 2025 were vibrant; balengan dance and tambur flute are Wondama cultural hallmarks; yet events remain incidental.	Institutionalize as an annual cultural calendar independent of leadership changes.
Place	MODERATE	Aitumieri holds Cultural Heritage Decree status; strategic geographic position at the center of Papua; Bukit Aitumieri masterplan available but not yet fully implemented.	Physical revitalization of Aitumieri is urgent to transform historical space into a tangible visitor experience.
Potential	WEAK / DEVELOPING	Large potential in TNTC, religious-historical tourism, and fisheries; SMEs exist but are only active during events; 'tempat/place' (1.70%) and 'wisata/tourism' (0.95%) dominant.	Permanent SME incubation and structured heritage tourism packages year-round.

Dimension	Status	Key Finding	Strategic Implication
Prerequisites	WEAK	Limited accessibility (small airport, infrequent vessels); high social stability; branding regulations not yet formally codified.	Regent's Decree on Official Regional Branding as a first step; followed by integration into the Regional Mid-Term Development Plan (RPJMD).

Source: *Authors' Analysis, 2026*

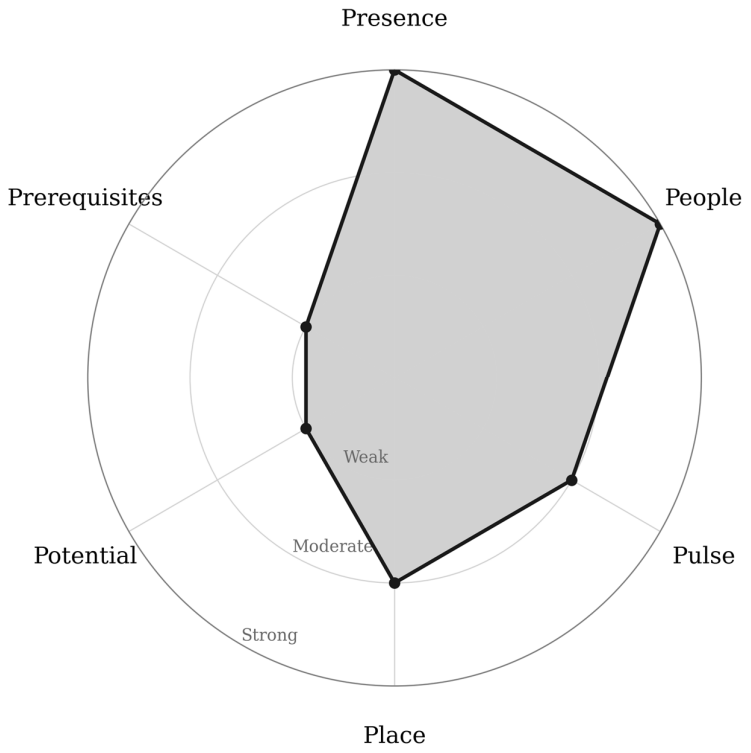


Figure 8. Radar Chart of the Asymmetric Brand Hexagon Profile of Teluk Wondama Regency
Source: *Authors' Analysis, 2026*

The strategic implications of these findings point to the necessity of a *sequencing* approach in developing Teluk Wondama's branding: (1) maintain *Presence* and *People*, which are already strong; (2) institutionalize *Pulse* into an annual cultural calendar independent of leadership changes; (3) realize the Aitumieri Masterplan to strengthen *Place*; (4) develop *Potential* through permanent SME incubation and heritage tourism packages; and (5) strengthen *Prerequisites* by issuing a Regent's Decree on Official Regional Branding as the first formalization step, followed by integration into the RPJMD with measurable performance indicators. As 2026 marks the final year of Teluk Wondama's current Regional Mid-Term Development Plan (RPJMD 2021–2026), the most immediately actionable step is to integrate these branding recommendations into the 2027 Regional Government Work Plan (RKPD), while formally embedding Presence, People, Pulse, Place, Potential, and Prerequisites as measurable indicators within the forthcoming RPJMD 2026–2031 cycle.

These findings are consistent with the argument of Kavaratzis & Hatch (2013) that the most authentic and sustainable territorial branding emerges from social construction spanning an extended period of time. The Teluk Wondama case reinforces Zenker & Braun's (2017) argument that branding grown from the *lived experience* of communities possesses social legitimacy that far surpasses branding designed from above. This study also confirms the

empirical validity of Anholt's Brand Hexagon Model in the context of informal, history-based branding in Papua a context previously unanticipated in international *place branding* literature.

4. CONCLUSION

This study identified the *place branding* factors of Teluk Wondama Regency as the "City of Papuan Civilization" through an analysis of the six dimensions of Anholt's Brand Hexagon Model (2007). The main conclusions are as follows.

Key Findings

Three patterns emerge across the six Brand Hexagon dimensions. First, Presence and People constitute Wondama's primary branding strengths: Presence is anchored in the historical legitimacy of the 1925 Aitumieri event embodied in the Batu Peradaban and the figure of I.S. Kijne recognized across Papua as the starting point of modern education, while People is sustained by the community's cohesive, inclusive social character and by the cross-Papua alumni network of the Normal School Aitumieri, which organically disseminates the civilization narrative. Second, Pulse and Place show moderate strength: Pulse through periodic cultural celebrations, most notably the 2025 Centennial of Civilization, which remain incidental rather than institutionalized; Place through the symbolically strong Aitumieri area and its Cultural Heritage Decree status, which nonetheless remains only partially realized in physical infrastructure. Third, Potential and Prerequisites are the weakest dimensions and the principal barrier preventing symbolic strength from converting into measurable economic impact substantial tourism, fisheries, and SME potential remains unmanaged systematically, while infrastructural limitations and the absence of formal branding regulation constrain implementation. Critical barriers include budget constraints (addressable through public-private partnerships with alumni associations), leadership discontinuity (addressable through regulatory codification independent of individual leaders), and capacity gaps (addressable through technical assistance partnerships with universities).

Theoretical Implications

This asymmetric profile substantiates Anholt's (2007) concept of the identity trap: Wondama's branding possesses extraordinary internal identity strength that has not yet been converted into external economic and structural capacity. As argued above, this asymmetry is better read as a structural condition of organically grown, heritage-based brands a strength not yet paired with a conversion mechanism than as a deficit requiring correction. Theoretically, this study extends Anholt's Brand Hexagon Model by (1) empirically testing it in a heritage-based, organically developed branding context outside its usual top-down application; (2) proposing the concept of ‘asymmetric branding’, which challenges the model's implicit assumption that all six dimensions develop in equilibrium; and (3) offering what is, to the authors' knowledge, the first documented academic analysis of place branding in Papua, a context previously unrepresented in international place branding literature.

Practical and Policy Implications

The practical implication of this study is the necessity of a sequencing strategy: maintain Presence and People, which are already strong; institutionalize Pulse and Place through an annual cultural calendar and continued physical realization of the Aitumieri Masterplan; and progressively build Potential and Prerequisites through planned, measurable policies. Because

2026 marks the final year of Teluk Wondama's current Regional Mid-Term Development Plan (RPJMD 2021–2026), the most immediately actionable step is to integrate these recommendations into the 2027 Regional Government Work Plan (RKPD) and to formally embed all six dimensions as measurable indicators within the forthcoming RPJMD 2026–2031.

Limitations

This study is subject to several limitations that should inform the interpretation of its findings and guide future research. First, as a single-case qualitative study of one regency, its findings are context-specific and not intended to be statistically generalizable to other heritage-based branding contexts, although analytical generalization to theoretically similar cases is possible. Second, the reliance on purposive sampling, while appropriate for accessing information-rich informants, may not fully capture the range of perceptions across all stakeholder groups in Teluk Wondama. Third, the Word Frequency Query analysis was employed strictly as an exploratory, supporting technique; given the modest size of the interview corpus, these percentages should not be read as statistically confirmatory evidence. Future research could extend this study through comparative multi-case designs across other Eastern Indonesian regencies, longitudinal tracking of the Prerequisites dimension as policy instruments are implemented, and disaggregated analysis of perceptual differences across informant subgroups.

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