# Analysis of Visual Mascot Cimahi City with a Semiotic Approach C.S. Pierce

**Paku Kusuma[1,2], Dharsono[2], M. Dwi Marianto[3], Guntur[2]**

[1]Visual Communication Design Study Program, School of Creative Industries, Telkom University, Bandung, indonesia
[2]Fine Arts Study Program, Postgraduate Program, Surakarta Indonesian Art Institute, Surakarta, Indonesia
[3]Fine Arts Study Program, Postgraduate Program, Yogyakarta Indonesian Art Institute, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

masterpaku@telkomuniversity.ac.id; dharsono@isi-ska.ac.id; mdwimarianto@gmail.com; guntur@isi-ska.ac.id

**Abstract** The city mascot as one of the supporting elements in the effort to improve the image of cities in Indonesia still leaves a lot of land for research. The research on the visual mascot of the city of Cimahi departs from a search effort on the mascot of the city in Indonesia as a complement to the research that has been done. The existence of the Cimahi city mascot itself can be said to be the pioneer of city mascot in Indonesia, which started from the idea of the first mayor of the city of Cimahi in 2009, Itoc Tochija during the second period of his reign. The idea was then only realized visually in 2013 during the mayor Atty Suharti Tochija. The Cimahi city mascot named Chima has a unique visual to position Cimahi as an autonomous city and promotion of the 3C (Cimahi Creative Cyber City) program. The Chima embodiment process is a long process carried out by the Cimahi City Investment Office as the executor of the task. This cultural phenomenon can be analyzed with the Semiotic scientific approach. Semiotics is the science of signs that presupposes a series of assumptions and concepts that enable us to analyze symbolic systems systematically. According to CS. Peirce, the science of semiotics is based on the logic that studies how people reason and reasoning is done through signs. These signs according to Peirce allow us to think, relate to others and give meaning. This research will reveal the relationship between the symbolic form of the mascot and the implied meaning and the results of people's perceptions so that they can be used as a basis for the better manifestation of similar works.

**Keywords** City Mascot, Semiotics, Signs and Meanings

## 1. Introduction

The city of Cimahi began its history when Governor-General Willem Daendels built the phenomenal cross-roads of java island from the west end of Anyer to the east end of Panarukan in 1811. For this purpose, at that time in the Cimahi area (now the Cimahi town square) a security post and train station were established which later developed into a military centre. In a further development in 1935, Cimahi became a district following the *staad blad* in 1935. After independence in 1962, this area was developed into a level of *kewedanan* covering 4 districts, namely Cimahi, Padalarang, Batujajar and Cipatat. In 1975 this area was upgraded as an administrative city (PP no.29 in 1975) and was inaugurated on January 29, 1976, as the first administrative city in West Java. In 2001 its status increased again to become an autonomous city. The authority of the city of Cimahi as an autonomous region includes all the authority in the field of government as well as the authority of other fields following statute number I of 2003 concerning the authority of the city of Cimahi as an autonomous region.

Cimahi City as an autonomous region is led by a Mayor. The first mayor of the city of Cimahi was Mr Itoc Tochija who began to carry out his leadership mandate in 2002 after being officially declared an autonomous city on June 21, 2001. He became mayor for 2 periods (2002-2007 and 2007-2012), which was then continued by his wife who became mayor for the 2012-2017 period. In the second period of Mr Itoc's government, Cimahi City began to position branding as an autonomous city and the Cimahi 3C (Cimahi Creative Cyber City) program by adopting the latest technologies and innovations in telecommunications and information technology. The identity that is expected to be raised and become the image of the city is as a modern and technologically advanced city.

The Cimahi Creative Cyber City program began with the debut of an event called the Cimahi Creative Festival (CCF) in 2009. In the event also competed for activities to make comics, mascot creations and tagline copyrights. The theme of the competition for the mascot's creation is "Cimahi Creative Cyber City" with the provision that the mascot made is a 2-dimensional / 3-dimensional picture that can take the form of animal characters, living things or other objects that have a spirit and represent the

character / culture of Cimahi city as " Cimahi Creative Cyber City ". The involvement of the Cimahi Creative Association (CCA) was a major factor in the idea of making a city mascot that at the time was arguably not yet popular. The Mayor also agreed to this so that eventually Cimahi became the first city in Indonesia to implement a mascot as one of the supporters of the imaging of the city.

In the mascot creation contest, based on information from interviews with Mr Rudi Sutedja, almost 40 mascot designs were collected from students, students and the general public in the Cimahi and surrounding areas. Mr Rudi Sutedja is the chairperson of the Cimahi Creative Association (CCA) as well as the head of the event's judging team along with 2 other colleagues, namely Mr Nino Puriando (Bandung animator) and Mr Henri (lecturer and Cimahi art community). The assessment team was appointed by the Cimahi City Investment Office as the organizer of the CCF activities by the direction of the Itoc mayor.

Based on the selection, a work was chosen from Fatimah Zahra (Faza), a practitioner with an academic background from the Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB) FSRD (Fakultas Seni Rupa dan Desain/ Fine Arts and Design Faculty) graduate with a mascot design named Robot Chima, which was later called Chima. Chima was officially used as the mascot of the city of Cimahi along with the celebration of the 8th anniversary of the city of Cimahi, on June 21, 2009. Furthermore, this mascot began to be applied in various strategic locations in the Cimahi city area. Utilization of this visual mascot is in several public spaces such as city parks (Taman Kartini), pedestrian main roads, under the Cimindi bridge, the square, Baros and of course in government facilities; ranging from employee absence machines, transportation equipment, trash bins and so forth.

The Cimahi city mascot, named Chima, the creation of Faza, spontaneously took the idea from a form of a cat that was considered by many to be liked by urban communities and animals that were very friendly to be kept in the urban sphere. The mascot figure in Faza's understanding at that time was something that had to be funny, adorable and liked by many people. Although during received her academic education at the college, the scientific understanding about the process of mascot forms, the definition or concept has not been specifically studied by her, but the various forms of ideas as the basis of visual works have been studied on the lecture bench. So when choosing the form of a cat as an idea of creation has a strong foundation. Especially in her observations, cats as pets dominate in every house in urban areas, including in Cimahi, of course. Its representation as the mascot of Cimahi city is considered to be appropriate for the spirit and character/culture of all entities in Cimahi according to the direction desired by the organizer.

This Chima form will be used as a reference in research, considering that the city mascot is one of the visual elements in the branding process which also has an equally important contribution. The selection of the Cimahi city mascot as a research study topic is crucial at this time, considering that for the first time in Indonesia the mascot was used in the city branding effort and is now beginning to become a trend in the image of a city. It can be said that Cimahi is a pioneer of urban mascot users in the country and is now entering the age of a decade. This research will focus on the visual appearance of China which will be analyzed using the Semiotic science approach according to Charles Sanders Peirce's view.

Semiotics is a science or method of analysis to study signs (Sobur, 2003: 15). Signs are devices used by humans in the process of finding the way in the world, among humans and with humans. According to the understanding of Peirce's Semiotics theory, semiotics is based on logic, because logic studies how people reason, whereas reasoning according to Peirce is done through signs. These signs according to Peirce allow us to think, relate to others and give meaning to what is displayed by the universe. It is deeper revealed that the signs are related to the objects that resemble them, their existence has a causal relationship (conventional bonds). Peirce uses the term icon for its similarity, the index for causal relations and symbols for conventional associations (Sobur, 2003: 34).

According to Peirce, an analysis of the essence of a sign leads to proof that a sign is determined by its object. Because, imaginative and intellectual work done by artists is a form of research (Sullivan, 2005: 223). So that in this study the strength of the visual elements of the mascot of the Cimahi city displayed will make it easier for viewers to think and give their interpretations. Artworks such as mascots are also made through a process that reflects the process of inquiry in other fields; ending in a product that required the process through which information is born, analyzed, and interpreted (Thompson, 2006: 3). From this, it will raise the consequences of the question about how the visual analysis of the Cimahi city mascot as an object of research reviewed from the C.S.Peirce's Semiotics approach.

## 2. Theoretical Review

A sign is something that represents something for someone and to manifest it according to CS. Peirce must be interpreted; "... is something that stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity" (Pateda, 2001: 44). In an effort to interpret the process, of course, this has the consequence of something that is used so that the sign can function. This is called Peirce by the

term ground, so there is always a triadic relationship in the concept put forward by Peirce. Signs associated with the ground are divided into qualisign, sinsign and legisign. Qualisign is the quality that is in the sign, SinSign is the actual existence of the object or event that is in the sign, while legisign is the norm contained by the sign.

Based on the work on the object, Peirce divides the marks of icons, indexes and symbols (Sobur, 2003: 41). An icon is a sign that the relationship between a marker and its signifier is at the same time a natural form (the relationship between a sign and an object/reference is similar). The index is a sign that shows a natural relationship between signs and marker that are causal or a causal relationship (a sign that directly refers to reality). Symbols are signs that indicate the natural relationship between a marker and its signifier, this relationship is arbitrary (based on conventions in society).

The symbol itself involves three elements, namely the symbol itself, one or more references, and the relationship between symbols and their references. These three things are the basis for all symbolic meanings (Sobur, 2003: 156). Symbols are forms that mark something else outside the embodiment of the symbolic form itself. In this connection, Peirce argues that: "*A symbol is a sign which refers to the object that is denoted under a law, usually an association of general ideas, which operates to cause the symbol to be interpreted as referring to that object*" Derrida, 1992 in Sobur, 2003: 156. Peirce's concept shows that symbols need a more intensive process of meaning after they are connected to an object, in other words, symbols are more substantive than signs. And the ability of humans to create symbols proves that humans already have a high culture of communication. Furthermore, Peirce also emphasised that all manifestations are readable signs to find out their meaning.

**Table 1**. Trichotomy of Icons / Indexes / Symbols according to Peirce's theory. Reference source: Berger, 2000 p.14

| SIGN | ICONS | INDEX | SYMBOL |
|------|-------|-------|--------|
| Marked by: | Equation (similarity) | Causality | Conversion |
| Examples: | Visual Robot Chima (Cimahi City Mascot) | Modern autonomous city with technologically advanced | *Cimahi Creative Cyber City* |
| Process: | Visible | Predictable | Must be learned |

## 3. Subject

A city mascot is also a form of a sign that the visual can be perceived and interpreted, the variety of formations that appear in the visual design contains certain signs related to the objects that resemble it. Its

existence has a causal relationship that can be explained through signs or conventional ties with these signs. This communication intertwined through signs is the basis of the orderliness of the means of thinking as confirmed by Peirce.

So that the fundamental problem that will be discussed in this study related to communication through the sign in the form of this mascot is how the visual analysis of the Cimahi city mascot through the Charles Sanders Peirce semiotic approach? This formula contains three parts of the discussion, namely the visual mascot as an embodiment of icons, representing the city of Cimahi as an autonomous city (index), and the symbolization of the concept of Cimahi Creative Cyber City. In short, this research is expected to be able to find problems with code confusion, changes in meaning or ambiguity in signs that can be interesting studies.

## 4. Discussion

The city mascot as one of the important elements in the process of imaging and positioning a city at this time should be an obligation to think about in its implication by policymakers, industry players, the media, the community and creative workers. In addition to providing added value to the economic interests of the city community, the mascot is also a symbol of togetherness and the embodiment of the character of its citizens. Often what appears in the strength of the appearance of a city mascot comes from cultural symbols, characteristics that characterize a society, conventions or perceptions that apply in the order in the city. Although in some cases there are mascot forms that have a different appearance, the tendency of minimal association with the characteristics of the city community, but the application process gets a warm welcome and can be received. This is of course through a fairly long research process for determining the idea. So the signs and markers are interwoven in the entwined communication of this research. The fact that the relationship between signifiers and markers arbitrary is one of the subjects that can be discussed as research. In the context of this Cimahi city mascot sign, the scientific theory of semiotics is based on CS thinking. Peirce is used as a theory that analyzes its form to explain the interrelationships of various cultural symbols that are intertwined and must be understood as something substantial. The earliest analysis is to describe the essence of the sign in Peirce's thought, namely the icon.

**The Icon**

An icon is a sign that the relationship between a marker and its signifier is at the same time a natural form (the relationship between a sign and an object/reference is resemblance). The iconic form here is the image of the Cimahi city mascot, Chima. The depiction of the figure Understanding the visual mascot

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of Chima Perception is a sensory description of the external structural features of the objects and processes of the material world that directly affect sensory organs (Yongky Safanayong, 2006: 36).

Chima took the idea of a cat with a rounded body (fat) with a predominance of platinum white colour (*gilap*) or tend to be silvery. Described as having two hands (not claws) without arms (only in the form of a fist), each of which has four fingers. This fist is described as being covered by a blue glove (cyan) and its anatomy is detached from the main body. Likewise for the depiction of the soles of the feet in the form of orange tapered cylindrical pads that are also separated from the body of the main part. At the top, there is a picture made showing having a rocket in the sole as a driving force.

From the interview with Faza as the visual creator of Chima, both its hands and feet are separated from the main body but have an inseparable unity with the magnetic field area as the integer. Chima's body is made of metal plates because it is a robot-like Doraemon in Japanese comics. The head is shaped like a flat bowl with both ends tapered upwards like ears. The personification of the face has two round eyes and a mouth shape but without an elongated nose (snout) as is commonly found in cats in general.



Img 1. Chima, the Mascot of the city of Cimahi
Source: Fatima Zahra, 2009

This appearance makes the shape is far different from the original animal idea. On the front of the body, the chest area has displayed the symbol of the city of Cimahi, following the mandatory to place the symbol of the city of Cimahi as the mascot's unique identity. While on the back there is a tail in the form of a thin line with a small ball at the end as a depiction of the antenna. The appearance of this Chima form belongs to the mascot category created from a combination of animal adoption as well as fictitious forms because the result is that many unique parts of the reference animal are left behind.

The depiction of this form of engineering by Faza is said as the result of processing ideas through various ideas related to the mandatory references given by the competition organizers. The same thing was acknowledged by Mr Rudy Sutedja that the organizers adjusted the keywords that were the hope of the Cimahi city government for the city imaging process going forward.



Img 2. Variety of Chima gestures and facial expressions
Source: Fatima Zahra,2009

Judging by the iconic form displayed in Faza's visual processing result, it can be observed that her desire to adopt the Cimahi concept as a sign of a technologically advanced autonomous city has adopted many of the common objects relating to technology in a layman around it. Starting from the dominant colour is clean and shiny as a reflection of metal, transmitter antenna tails, rockets on the legs, ultrasonic ears and others.

**Index**

Analysis of the Chima icon provides a sign as a form of a picture of the future and its technology. Visually visible tendencies will be re-analyzed about the presence of the mark as an index. An index is a sign that shows a natural relationship between signs and markers that are causal or a causal relationship (a sign that directly refers to reality).

Cimahi city area which consists of three districts geographically is a plateau in the form of a basin that slopes towards the south. Referring to the strategic area, then as the outline of the Cimahi's position as the support of the provincial capital, the city of Bandung,

became very dominant. Access roads and the ease of information technology become an important part of the development of the city.

On its website https://cimahikota.go.id/page/detail/2, the name Cimahi itself has the meaning of *Citra Mandiri Hidup Insani* (Human Living Independent Image), which is intended to strengthen its position as an autonomous city. The slogan "*Saluyu Ngawangun Jati Mandiri*" ("Constructing a line independent self") was chosen to be the embodiment of the character of the people who harmoniously worked for hand in hand to build an independent self-image in progress.

Bandung City is the centre of many business fields, including PT. Telkom Indonesia, Tbk. As a service provider in the field of information technology, networks and communications on a national and international scale, this automatically impacts the role of the Cimahi city as a neighbouring region. From this, it can be seen that Cimahi's position as a modern autonomous city with advanced technology is very likely to continue its development. The immediate impact is the construction of the BITC (Baros Information Technology and Creative Center) which is the result of a research collaboration with the Bandung Institute of Technology in 2009 with its strategic location. The grand building as the centre of creativity and home for the creative community-based technology in Cimahi.

On September 29, 2009, in the second focused forum discussion, it was also agreed to establish the Cimahi Creative Association (CCA) which is a forum for creative industry players. The continuation in the third discussion forum, on October 28, 2009, CCA institutional and management was inaugurated with Mayor Decree No.530 / KEP 304 - PENMO / 2009 which was inaugurated by Mayor Cimahi Ir. H. M. Itoc Tochija, MM. This moment is a milestone of the city of Cimahi as a city that positions itself technologically advanced following the iconic image of the Chima mascot.

**Symbol**

Symbols are signs that indicate the natural relationship between a marker and its signifier, this relationship is arbitrary (based on conventions in society). Explore the relevance of Chima as the most obvious symbol with the appearance of the Cimahi city symbol on the chest. This symbol is a symbol of the convention that is accepted and is attached to the people of Cimahi city.

Whereas in other symbolic understanding in addition to the disclosure of urban areas with the selection of urban environmentally friendly animals is also a marker of the character of the people. Whereas in symbolic understanding other than the disclosure of urban areas with the selection of urban environmentally friendly animals is also a marker of the character of the people. Simple character-making pattern with symmetrical lines,

curved but firm. Part of the face with the deconstruction of elements makes it simpler. Another symbolization can be seen from the pattern of making the anatomy of the mascot, which means the speed of movement, the flexibility of the urban community in daily life. Colour as expressed earlier also intends to characterize technology. The use of other colours, especially on footwear and gloves means compatibility (harmonization). The use of gloves and footwear has the same reason as Mickey Mouse's character, which is a symbol of living more human things, besides facilitating the process of visual reproduction. The important thing is remembering that the reproduction process is part of the direction of communication that will be built by the city government to realize the symbol of Cimahi Creative Cyber City.

# 5. Conclusion

The Cimahi city mascot named Chima so far from the results of research in the field is still accepted by most Cimahi residents. A few others do not have adequate information and knowledge about the mascot's existence. The city government as a visual user has implemented Chima in various activities and purposes, including being used as a communication medium in government offices and public spaces. So it can be concluded that the linkage between visuals that are appeared with the hope of the realization of Cimahi as a modern city based on the technology will be realized through the Cimahi Creative Cyber City jargon.

Research on the results of the Cimahi city mascot analysis through CS semiotics. Peirce succeeded to find the connection between the object created by Faza and the interests expressed by stakeholders so that it was indeed worthy of being the mascot that was won in the Cimahi city mascot creation competition. The graphic elements used by Faza indirectly express the anxiety of city residents referring to the scope of their existence. Stepping on the age of the mascot for a decade, it is unfortunate that there is no uniformity in applications that are applied in public spaces. There are weaknesses in the design created by Faza, including the lack of a reference system that can be used as a guide for the reproduction process. Besides that, Faza also did not think much about the media that would be used later, especially related to the area of public space and its media type, which according to Peirce was part of the sign convention process.

Thus the process of the Cimahi city mascot analysis research report may bring benefits. We do not forget to thank the academics of the Faculty of Creative Industry, Telkom University and the Institute of Education Fund Management (LPDP) who have supported the research to be completed on time.

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