
Sensemaking in Leadership Communication Practices to Maintain Environmental Security in Ketapang Subdistrict, Tangerang City

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Abstract

This study aims to understand how sensemaking operates within the leadership communication practices of neighborhood leaders (RT heads) in maintaining environmental security in Ketapang Subdistrict, Tangerang City. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with two RT heads actively involved in community security efforts. Thematic analysis was conducted using NVivo software to map communication patterns and the formation of social values. The findings reveal that RT heads construct sensemaking by framing security threats based on their contextual realities, ranging from social issues like drug abuse to structural challenges such as inadequate public facilities. These interpretations inform the communication strategies and channels, including digital tools and face-to-face engagement. Furthermore, participatory decision-making processes produce technical responses and cultivate social values such as collective responsibility, information ethics, and anti-vigilantism. This study contributes to developing sensemaking theory in community leadership contexts and offers practical recommendations for local leaders in building participatory, value-based security systems. The research emphasizes the importance of contextual, inclusive, and ethical leadership communication in strengthening social cohesion and resilience at the grassroots level.

Keywords: Community Security, Communication, Leadership, Sensemaking

INTRODUCTION.

Environmental security is one of the essential pillars in building a harmonious and stable social life. It is a branch of the principle of sustainable development that emphasizes the sustainability and peace of the social and global environment in the face of uncontrolled environmental damage (Biswas, 2011). In urban communities, high social dynamics and diversity of community backgrounds give rise to various potential conflicts and security threats, such as theft, disturbances of public order, and conflicts between community members.

Environmental security is one of the main pillars in creating a harmonious and stable social life, and is the basis for creating a sense of security, social trust, and order in interactions between community members (Akiyode, 2013; Vellayati et al., 2016). More than just an effort to maintain order, environmental security is also an integral part of

the principle of sustainable development, which not only emphasizes ecological and economic aspects but also includes the social dimension, namely, how communities live side by side peacefully and support each other amidst the complexity of modern life. In this context, social security and environmental order cannot be separated from global development goals emphasizing sustainability, social inclusion, and conflict prevention. The challenges to environmental security are increasingly apparent, especially in urban areas experiencing rapid population growth and urbanization. Large cities and suburban areas such as Ketapang Village face high social dynamics, population mobility, cultural, economic, and educational diversity, and pressure on public spaces and resources. This diversity, on the one hand, creates great potential for collaboration, but on the other hand, is also vulnerable to triggering various forms of security threats, such as theft, destruction of public facilities, riots between residents, and other criminal acts (Ntakana et al., 2022; Cheng & Chen, 2021). In addition, social inequality and low citizen participation in environmental security programs often worsen the situation (Khaliji & Ghalehtemouri, 2024).

This condition shows that maintaining environmental security is not just the responsibility of formal authorities, but also requires active community involvement in building a participatory and sustainable security system. Therefore, ecological security must be understood as a collective process that relies on collaboration between residents, local leaders such as RT heads, and social institutions to create safe, comfortable, and harmonious living conditions for all elements of society. In this context, the Head of the Neighborhood Association (RT) becomes very strategic as a micro-level community leader in direct contact with residents (Rofiana & Teguh, 2022; Aman et al., 2019).

However, efforts to maintain security cannot be carried out structurally or administratively. The RT head needs to be able to identify, interpret, and respond to complex environmental situations. In this case, the concept of sensemaking becomes relevant. Sensemaking is a social cognitive process in which individuals or groups construct meaning from ambiguous, uncertain, or confusing events to take appropriate action (Weick, 1995; Le Bris, 2021; Lousberg & Pikker, 2015).). Effective leaders can sensemake well when dealing with the social dynamics of society (Helms Mills et al., 2010).

Leadership communication is the main instrument in the sensemaking process (Dubrin, 2022). The RT Head constructs a collective narrative through verbal and non-verbal interactions to mobilize residents, convey threats, and invite active participation in creating a community-based security system. This practice can be seen in various forms, such as night patrols, deliberation forums, security community service, and communication technology such as WhatsApp groups for fast and transparent coordination (Wahyono, 2018).

In the context of Ketapang Village, the RT Head's leadership communication in building collective awareness of security reflects how the sensemaking process occurs in real terms at the grassroots community level. Therefore, it is essential to examine in depth how the sensemaking process shapes the RT Head's leadership communication practices, and how this affects citizen involvement in maintaining environmental security. This research is expected to enrich the study of sensemaking and leadership communication from a community perspective and provide practical contributions to strengthening a security system based on citizen participation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sensemaking in Leadership Communication

Karl E. Weick (1995) introduced sensemaking as an interpretive process in which individuals and groups try to give meaning to ambiguous, uncertain, and complex situations. In social organizations, sensemaking involves forming shared understanding through symbolic interaction and collective communication (Weick, 1995). This process occurs continuously and is influenced by past experiences, social context, and future goals.

According to Weick (1995), sensemaking has seven main characteristics: identity-based, retrospective, enactive towards the environment, social-based, ongoing, focused on clues, and plausible rather than accurate. This means that meaning is not found objectively but socially constructed through communication. This is particularly relevant in environmental security, where communities must understand and respond to social threats based on shared meanings (Weick et al., 2005; Kramer, 2016; Schildt et al., 2020).

Sensemaking is closely related to leadership communication style. Effective leaders can facilitate meaning-making through visionary, empathetic, and inclusive communication (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014; Aprianto et al., 2023). In this case, leadership communication is not only limited to conveying information, but also framing social reality so that citizens can understand the problems and respond to them collectively (Charteris-Black, 2007).

A leader who can adapt their communication style in ambiguous situations, while maintaining openness and providing support to the team, can help the organization remain resilient and effective amidst changing challenges (Mayfield & Mayfield, 2017). Rapid change and ambiguity often arise in organizations, requiring leaders to use language that is flexible and open to multiple interpretations. This way, team members can strengthen their engagement, provide meaning based on their perspectives, and align their understandings to achieve common goals.

Participatory and two-way communication styles are key to creating a communication climate that allows sensemaking to take place in a dialogical manner. (Servaes & Malikhao, 2005). Leaders who listen to the aspirations of their citizens and involve them in the decision-making process will find it easier to build trust and high social engagement (Helms Mills et al., 2010). In local communities, this is evident in community deliberations, night patrol activities, and the preparation of security policies based on shared consensus.

Sensemaking in leadership communication helps organizations understand the situation more fully, strengthens the collaborative foundation, encourages active participation, and creates a more structured workflow in dealing with complex challenges (Mahel, 2021). Sensemaking bridges the tension between information and action, and between ambiguity and clarity, so leaders can direct teams more rationally, fairly, and adaptively in achieving common goals (Sidharta et al., 2024).

Leadership communication is an interactive process in which a leader not only consciously influences his followers, but is also open to being influenced by them through various communication strategies, both verbal and non-verbal. Effective communication in leadership must be authentic, reflecting the leader's personality and in line with the organization's vision, values, and goals. In this process, two critical stages are interrelated. First is the planning or design stage of communication (backstage), where the leader prepares messages, strategies, and communication approaches. Second is the implementation or performance stage of leadership (front stage), where the leader

interacts directly with followers and demonstrates his leadership in public, as shown in Figure 1 (Charteris-Black 2007).

Leadership style design is the initial foundation in leadership communication. At this stage, leaders design communication strategies that include using various communication resources, both in the form of language (verbal) and symbols (non-verbal). The use of verbal strategies, such as metaphors, plays a vital role in forming collective understanding. Metaphors allow leaders to transfer the meaning of a concept into a new context, provide fresh perspectives to followers, and strengthen their leadership narrative. Charismatic leaders often use metaphors and rhetoric to describe their vision and mission in an inspiring and memorable way.

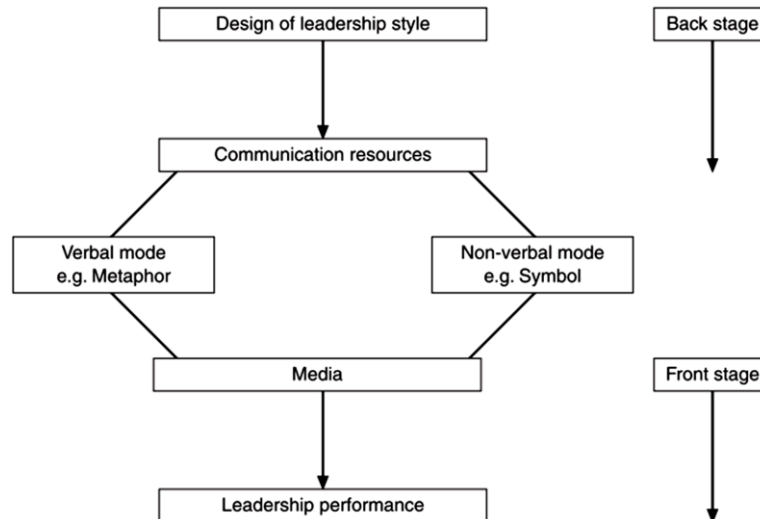


Figure 2. Leadership Communication Model Charteris-Black (2007)

On the other hand, non-verbal communication, such as using symbols, also plays a role in communicating leadership. Symbols can reflect organizational or leadership changes, for example, by replacing old symbols with new ones to mark the transformation of vision and policy direction. Leaders use metaphors and symbolism extensively to realize and communicate their vision, while binding the organization. In this process, metaphorical and symbolic elements blend, forming a distinctive leadership identity and image.

Metaphors and symbols work in harmony; if metaphors create tension and arouse imagination, symbols resolve that tension and provide a sense of certainty. The two combine to form myths, narratives, or stories that provide understanding and explanation of various aspects of the organization, while also helping to ease psychological tension among members.

In maintaining environmental security, sensemaking is vital because it allows leaders and citizens to interpret emerging threats together and develop appropriate response strategies. In urban communities such as Ketapang Village, various forms of potential conflict and disturbance, such as theft, fighting, or juvenile delinquency, require a collective response based on a shared understanding of the situation at hand (Cheng & Chen, 2021; Khaliji & Ghalehtemouri, 2024).

As a local leader, the RT Head is his community's primary agent of sensemaking. The RT Head seeks to form a collective awareness of the importance of protecting the environment through informal communication, community discussions, digital media such as WhatsApp groups, and security activities such as patrols and community service. In this process, the meaning of security is built from the top down, and from the

bottom up, namely through interactions between residents who mutually shape perceptions and actions. The sensemaking approach can enrich understanding of how leadership communication at the RT level can mobilize the community to build an adaptive, participatory, and sustainable environmental security system. Thus, this study aims to analyze the sensemaking process in the practice of RT Head leadership communication in forming shared meanings with residents to maintain environmental security in Ketapang Village, Tangerang City.

METHOD

Research Design

This research adopts a qualitative descriptive approach with an intrinsic case study design (Creswell, 2018; Yin, 2018). The goal is to explore how sensemaking operates in the leadership communication practices of RT (Neighborhood Association) Heads in maintaining environmental security. A qualitative case study allows the researcher to deeply examine the contextual, dynamic, and participatory aspects of grassroots leadership that statistical generalization cannot capture. The study focuses on two RTs in Ketapang Subdistrict, Tangerang City, representing different approaches and challenges in dealing with community-level security threats.

Research Location and Subjects

The research was conducted in Kelurahan Ketapang, located in Cipondoh District, Tangerang City, Banten Province. This area was selected due to its high level of social dynamics and diverse security issues, such as drug abuse, poor infrastructure, and low youth supervision. The research subjects consist of two RT Heads who have actively led their communities in addressing such issues. These individuals were selected based on their leadership roles and involvement in local safety and communication initiatives.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected using semi-structured interviews, allowing flexibility and depth in uncovering the informants' sensemaking processes and leadership experiences. Each interview lasted approximately 60 minutes and was conducted face-to-face in the respective neighborhood of each informant to ensure contextual richness. A structured interview guide with open-ended key questions was used to maintain consistency while allowing informants the freedom to elaborate. Questions included: "How do you perceive and respond to security threats in your area?", "What communication strategies do you use to involve residents?" and "How are decisions made collectively regarding community safety?" Audio recordings and detailed field notes supported data collection. Early-stage coding and memo writing were performed immediately after each session to retain contextual accuracy.

Selection of Informants

Two RT Heads were selected as informants using purposive sampling, emphasizing relevance, leadership experience, and active involvement in community security practices. Rather than aiming for statistical representation, this study prioritizes in-depth understanding of contextual sensemaking processes in grassroots leadership. The limited number of informants is therefore a strategic decision. One RT Head represented a social-based threat interpretation, focusing on youth drug abuse, while the other highlighted structural issues such as inadequate lighting infrastructure. This diversity of perspectives enriched the study by showcasing varying leadership communication styles in framing threats and mobilizing collective action.

Data Validation and Reliability

To ensure the validity and reliability of data, the study employed source triangulation, method triangulation, and member checking. Source triangulation included cross-verifying interview data with field observations (e.g., night patrols, communal clean-ups, and religious gatherings) and supporting documents such as RT meeting notes and WhatsApp group transcripts; method triangulation combined interviews, observations, and document analysis to confirm thematic consistency. Member checking was conducted by presenting preliminary interpretations to the informants for validation. The RT Heads were asked to verify the researcher's interpretations and offer feedback or corrections where necessary. These strategies collectively enhanced the findings' trustworthiness, credibility, and accuracy.

Data Analysis Techniques

Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data, assisted by NVivo 12 Pro software documents (Jackson & Bazeley, 2019). The process included open coding, axial coding, and theme generation based on frequency and relevance. NVivo's visualization tools, such as word clouds and model diagrams, supported thematic mapping and clearly illustrated the relationship between leadership communication, sensemaking, and environmental security practices. Data were analyzed iteratively, with continuous reference to theory and literature to ensure coherence and depth in interpretation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sensemaking on Security Threats in Leadership Communication Strategy

The findings of this study indicate that the sensemaking process undertaken by neighborhood heads in addressing neighborhood security threats is not singular, but instead is formed through the interaction of personal perceptions, social experiences, and communication with residents. Two main sensemaking patterns emerged from the two informants: (1) social threats in the form of drug trafficking, which emphasizes affective and moral approaches, and (2) structural threats in the form of limitations on physical facilities, which emphasizes functional and infrastructural approaches.

Both forms of sensemaking reflect Weick's (1995) principle that interpretations of situations do not occur objectively but are socially and contextually constructed. For example, neighborhood head 4 framed the dangers of drugs as a "major threat," which became the central narrative in his communication with residents. His communication strategy became more normative and collective, encouraging residents to conduct night patrols and foster youth through positive activities. In contrast, neighborhood heads framed limitations on lighting and security equipment as major obstacles requiring collaborative action in the form of community service and discussions on facility procurement. These differences in sensemaking demonstrate that the initial interpretation of the threat significantly determines the direction of leadership communication.

Understanding the dynamics of leadership communication at the community level cannot be separated from the social context in which the communication takes place. In a heterogeneous and dynamic community environment such as Ketapang Village, security threats do not only come from criminal acts alone, but also from more complex social problems such as drug abuse, lack of supporting security infrastructure, and weak social control between residents. In conditions like this, the role of the RT Head as an informal leader becomes crucial, not only in conveying information, but also in forming collective awareness and directing joint action.

The sensemaking approach provides an appropriate analytical framework to see how the RT Head interprets the situation, builds shared meaning with residents, and develops communication strategies that can respond to security challenges in a participatory and contextual manner. This chapter will discuss the main findings obtained from interviews with the RT Heads 4 and 5, and analyze them within the framework of sensemaking and leadership communication theory.

Figure 1 is a thematic visualization using NVivo software, depicting the relationships between key codes (nodes) based on interview transcripts with two neighborhood heads in Ketapang Village. This model displays the dynamic process of sensemaking regarding security threats, involving three main components: Threat Perception, Strategic Response, and Communication Channels. Each node is connected by arrows representing the logistical and causal flows within the communication-based leadership process.

At the beginning of the model, the "Threat Perception" node serves as the center of each neighborhood head's initial interpretation. This is where the sensemaking process begins. Neighborhood Head 4, for example, frames drugs as the most serious threat disrupting social transmission and threatening the future of the younger generation. Meanwhile, Neighborhood Head 5 considers the lack of street lighting and security facilities to be structural problems affecting residents' sense of security. Although different, both demonstrate that interpreting a situation is not objective but is heavily influenced by individual experiences and environmental context. This aligns with sensemaking theory (Weick, 1995), where leaders observe reality and create it through how they frame problems.

Arrows from the Threat Perception node point to Strategic Responses, demonstrating how the interpretation of the threat influences the leadership's response. The head of neighborhood association (RT) 4 responded by increasing night patrols, involving youth in neighborhood watch, and developing a moral narrative for teenagers. Meanwhile, the head of neighborhood association (RT) 5 focused on providing additional lighting, coordinating security facilities, and community service. This connection between perception and strategy demonstrates that the sensemaking process does not stop at simply generating meaning but continues with concrete actions based on socially agreed-upon meanings.

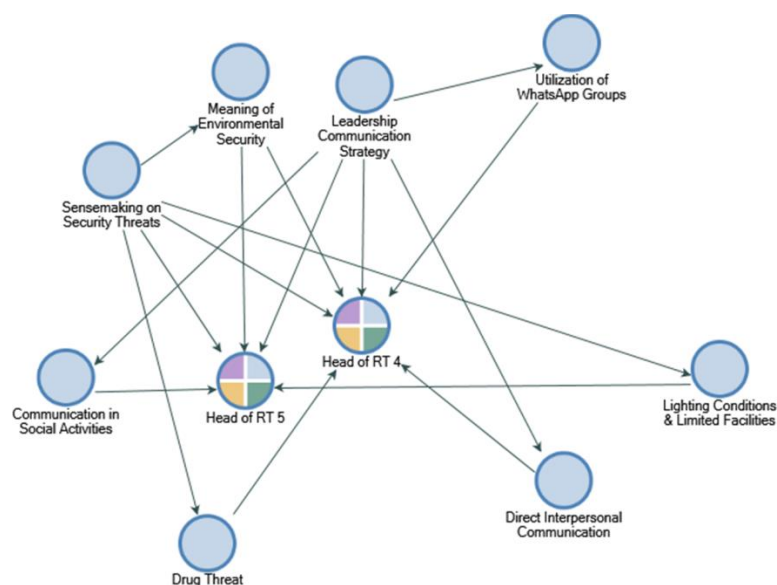


Figure 1. Sensemaking and Strategy against Security Threats
Source: NVivo Data Processing

Furthermore, the "Communication Channels" node connects to Strategic Responses, emphasizing that strategies will be ineffective without appropriate communication channels. The head of neighborhood association (RT) 4 utilizes WhatsApp Groups as a quick means of coordination, while still emphasizing the importance of face-to-face community meetings. Conversely, the head of neighborhood association (RT) 5 incorporates security messages into informal forums such as religious study groups and religious celebrations, demonstrating a more socially-driven communicative approach. The arrows from Strategic Responses to Communication Channels demonstrate that the effectiveness of a strategy is highly dependent on the appropriateness of the communication channels used.

The interconnectedness of the nodes in Figure 1 reflects the cyclical and mutually influencing sensemaking process within the context of neighborhood association (RT) leadership. Perceptions of threat trigger strategies, strategies determine communication media, and communication becomes a means of continuously reproducing meaning. These patterns may not be explicitly captured through interview text alone, but they become apparent when visualized through NVivo mapping. For example, only through this mapping can we see that social threat narratives tend to shape strategies based on social training and moral communication. In contrast, structural threat narratives lead to technical strategies and informal media.

Sensemaking in this context is the basis for compiling communication strategies used to frame security issues and direct residents' collective responses. This aligns with Weick's opinion (1995), which states that sensemaking is a process in which individuals retrospectively interpret events to create meaning that enables action. The Head of RT 4, for example, frames his main security threat in the form of the dangers of drugs that lurk in the younger generation.

"Because now there are many things that need to be considered. In terms of security, the main one is the drug problem. Therefore, our focus is indeed more on problems like that." (Head of RT 4).

Through this interpretation, the Head of RT 4 not only conveys that drugs are a problem, but also makes it the main narrative used in building collective awareness of residents regarding the importance of maintaining a healthy social environment. This threat is then used as a starting point to motivate residents' involvement in security activities such as night patrols and monitoring young people at night. On the other hand, the Head of RT 5 frames the security threat more towards structural aspects, such as limited environmental facilities.

"There are many challenges. The main ones are inadequate lighting conditions and incomplete safety equipment. That is an obstacle in maintaining environmental security." (Head of RT 5).

The framing used by the Head of RT 5 reflects how sensemaking can also be shaped by physical factors and infrastructure that affect residents' sense of security. The threat was then responded to by developing a communication strategy that utilized social activities such as community service, religious studies, and other informal forums to convey security messages.

Both RT Heads integrated the results of interpreting the threat into their leadership communication strategy. The Head of RT 4 actively utilized WhatsApp Group as a fast and direct communication channel while maintaining face-to-face meetings with residents.

"I also use WhatsApp Group to convey information. However, I do not put all residents in the group, because the number of residents is quite large." (Head of RT 4).

On the other hand, the Head of RT 5 emphasized the importance of inserting security messages in moments of togetherness with residents. The Head of RT 5 took advantage of events held by residents, such as religious studies and religious holidays.

"In addition to community service, the approach is also carried out through religious study activities, thanksgiving events, and during the Eid al-Adha. When many people gather, we use that moment to convey information." (Head of RT 5).

From here, sensemaking towards security threats is used to formulate communication strategies. This is the view of Maitlis and Christianson (2014), who stated that "sensemaking is often sustained and amplified by leadership discourse that frames the environment in ways that encourage interpretation and coordinated action." In other words, leaders who can frame threats effectively can trigger shared interpretations and move residents towards collective action. Therefore, in this context, the sensemaking process carried out by the RT Head not only produces an understanding of the threat but also determines the communication approach used to build awareness, encourage participation, and maintain the sustainability of environmental security in a participatory manner.

Decision Making through Participation to Build Social Values and Ethics

Participatory decision-making is at the heart of the RT (Neighborhood Association) head's communication practices in maintaining neighborhood security. In this context, the decision-making process not only aims to outline technical steps such as night patrol schedules or the procurement of security facilities, but also serves to shape and strengthen social values among residents. This process demonstrates that sensemaking is not merely cognitive but also a social process that shapes the structures of meaning, ethics, and organization of collective action within a community. In deliberations and interactions between residents, leaders direct decisions and instill values such as openness, shared responsibility, and a rejection of violence.

The thematic visualization in Figure 2 demonstrates the close connection between the Residents' Deliberation as the initial node and the various social value nodes generated through this participatory process. The arrows leading from the Deliberation to the Proposal Screening indicate that the deliberation process does not stop at gathering opinions but continues to the evaluation and collective agreement stages. The heads of RT 4 and RT 5 stated that all residents' proposals were discussed openly, then screened based on urgency, feasibility, and context. This reflects a retrospective and social sensemaking practice, where diverse perspectives are compiled and processed into a shared understanding to shape collective action.

The Proposal Screening Node then connects directly to four key social values formed from this process: Collective Responsibility, Information Ethics, Anti-Vigilance, and Openness and Trust. Each value is a concrete outcome of social interactions within the deliberations. For example, the anti-vigilante value emerged from the agreement that all violations must be resolved procedurally, not unilaterally. The head of Neighborhood Association (RT) 4 emphasized the importance of first reporting to the neighborhood association (RT) and authorities, rather than acting immediately. The head of Neighborhood Association (RT) 5 also emphasized the value of information ethics as a

form of moral responsibility in conveying accurate information and not sending it. This demonstrates that communication leadership conveys information and shapes how residents treat it ethically.

Figure 2 also displays key statistics from the Karang Taruna (youth group) as supporting actors in distributing and reinforcing these values. This node is connected to all other central nodes, indicating that youth are active in physical activities such as night patrols and act as agents of values in the community. They act as intergenerational liaisons, maintaining the continuity of social norms and expanding the communication reach of neighborhood association (RT) leadership. Thus, the interconnectedness in Figure 2 demonstrates that participatory decision-making functions as a value-shaper for the ecosystem, not simply an administrative procedure. This reinforces the understanding that sensemaking-based leadership at the community level has a strong social dimension in building shared ethics, solidarity, and social cohesion in addressing environmental security challenges.

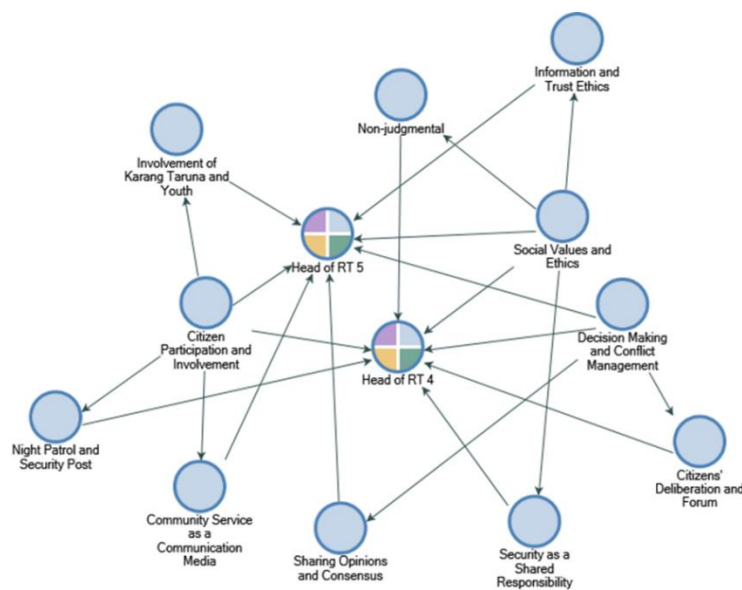


Figure 2. Decision Making to Build Social Values and Ethics
Source: NVivo Data Processing

Based on the results of interviews with the Head of RT 4 and Head of RT 5, it was found that the participatory approach was not only used to formulate technical security measures such as night patrol schedules or facility submissions, but also to form shared social values such as cooperation, openness, and trust between residents. This process reflects the practice of collective sensemaking that takes place through communication and deliberation. The Head of RT 4 stated that every resident's opinion was accommodated and discussed openly.

"As residents, their thoughts must be different. But as RT, I must be able to make the best decision. I do not force my personal opinion or that of certain residents. All proposals are accommodated and discussed in the forum." (Head of RT 4).

This statement shows that decision-making is based on consensus, not unilateral authority. By listening to and accommodating various residents' views, the RT Head builds a sense of belonging while strengthening the social structure of his community. The Head of RT 5 conveyed the same thing, stating that every resident's opinion is part of the collective discussion process.

"There will definitely be differences of opinion, because the goal is to build each other. We filter the differences first, what needs to be added and what is not needed yet." (Head of RT 5).

In this case, filtering citizen opinions is not done in a closed manner, but through open interaction based on common goals and a spirit of collaboration. Practices like this show how sensemaking can facilitate the development of inclusive and dialogical social values. Figure 2, a thematic visualization, shows how decision-making practices in RT 4 and RT 5 are aimed at formulating collective actions and becoming a strategic vehicle in forming and strengthening residents' values and social ethics. Resident deliberations, filtering opinions and consensus, information ethics, and anti-vigilante show that participatory leadership communication can create a value system that becomes a social foundation in maintaining environmental security. The decision-making process carried out by the Head of RT 4 strongly emphasizes the principles of openness and deliberation.

"All proposals from our residents are accommodated and discussed together with other residents in a meeting. From there, the residents' proposals are filtered until the best joint decision is obtained." (Head of RT 4)

This statement shows that deliberation functions not only as a forum for technical discussion but also as a space for producing social meaning where residents learn to listen to each other, respect differences, and form joint agreements. The head of RT 5 also has a similar practice, conveying that differences of opinion between residents exist. Still, not all arguments from residents are immediately followed up on; they are first collected and filtered to make a joint decision with other residents.

"Differences of opinion among residents are certain to exist, because each individual has different arguments, and we filter the arguments first, collect them first, then discuss them together to make the best decision" (Head of RT 5).

Citizen participation occurs in formal forums and social activities such as community service, religious studies, and night patrols. The head of RT 5 explained that "community service is a medium of communication," *where messages of security and togetherness are inserted informally but effectively*. In this context, community service is not merely a physical activity but a means of strengthening the values of cooperation, concern, and social solidarity. This is in line with the principle of sensemaking, which states that social meaning is formed through joint activities full of interaction and symbolism. (Weick, 1995).

The social values built from this participatory process are very diverse, ranging from collective responsibility for security, as conveyed by RT 4: *"Security is a shared responsibility."* to the importance of information ethics and trust, emphasized by RT 5: *"Information must be valid, do not add or reduce."* When information is kept accurate and decisions are made through deliberation, citizen trust in leaders increases, and social ethics are continuously strengthened. This trust becomes necessary social capital in creating a community that is resilient to the threat of conflict or crime. One of the social values that continues to be upheld is the principle of anti-vigilante justice. RT 4 firmly stated:

"If there is an incident in our neighborhood, the first thing that residents do is report it to the RT Head, then continue by reporting it to the authorities. So they don't immediately act alone or take the law into their own hands" (RT Head 4)

Residents are encouraged to resolve issues procedurally and collectively through participation and deliberation rather than violence or unilateral action. This value is essential for maintaining social cohesion amidst potential tensions that can arise in the community.

The visualization of Figure 2 also shows the critical role of youth and Karang Taruna in supporting these values. RT 4 and RT 5 rely on youth participation in night activities and environmental monitoring. RT 4 calls youth the *"spearhead of security"* because they have flexible time and social closeness to residents. Their involvement improves security and strengthens the sense of ownership and responsibility between generations towards their community.

Overall, the decision-making process carried out in a participatory manner by the RT Head in Ketapang Village has proven to not only produce operational decisions, but also build a healthy social structure through the values of togetherness, transparency, anti-violence, and collective responsibility. This process is in line with the concept of sensemaking in social organizations that place communication, interaction, and participation as elements that form meaning and direction of joint action. Therefore, citizen participation cannot be seen as merely technical involvement but as a strategic effort in creating sustainable social ethics.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the sensemaking process in the leadership communication practices of neighborhood leaders (RT heads) in Ketapang Subdistrict is complex, contextual, and highly participatory. RT heads do not merely interpret security threats individually but actively construct collective narratives through social interaction, which are then communicated via strategic channels suited to their community's characteristics. Social threats like drug abuse are addressed through moral appeals and youth engagement, while structural issues such as poor lighting are handled through collaborative community action. Beyond tactical responses, the RT leaders play a central role in shaping social norms and values through deliberation forums, informal gatherings, and the involvement of youth organizations. These findings affirm that sensemaking is a tool for interpreting uncertainty and a mechanism for mobilizing action and fostering shared community identity.

Theoretically, this research expands the application of sensemaking and leadership communication theory to grassroots community contexts. It reinforces the idea that meaning-making occurs dialogically in informal yet strategic spaces such as citizen forums, community patrols, and neighborhood WhatsApp groups. Leadership communication in this setting is about delivering information and cultivating values like information ethics, collective responsibility, and anti-vigilantism. Consequently, theories of sensemaking, which have focused mainly on formal organizations, must also account for cultural and relational dynamics within localized, socially cohesive communities. The findings suggest that leadership in these settings is deeply intertwined with moral legitimacy, built through trust, empathy, and ongoing participation.

Practically, the findings of this study offer actionable insights for community leaders and local authorities in managing participatory security systems. RT leaders should receive communication training emphasizing shared values, dialogue facilitation, and adaptive message framing. Communication strategies should also integrate digital

platforms and face-to-face interactions to sustain social cohesion while ensuring efficiency. Moreover, youth groups should be systematically empowered as security volunteers and cultural agents who reinforce shared norms across generations. Transparency, deliberation, and procedural justice should be formalized into neighborhood codes of conduct. With such an approach, community security can be upheld through physical presence and ethical and inclusive communication practices that strengthen long-term social resilience.

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