Participatory communication and community-based rabies elimination in Bang Bon, Bangkok, Thailand

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ABSTRACT

Rabies is a global epidemic that affects the developing world disproportionately. This deadly disease is largely transmitted to humans via dog bites and is caused and perpetuated by human behaviors, including people not sterilizing and vaccinating dogs. Through the lens of participatory communication and culture theories, this thesis explores the extent to which communication tactics of a dog population and rabies control program in Bangkok, Thailand are participatory and whether this influences community efforts to vaccinate and sterilize free-roaming dogs in the city’s Bang Bon district. At a high level this study examines how empowering people at all levels of society in the planning and implementation of solutions to development challenges affords more sustainable outcomes. In doing so, it attends to issues of communication purpose, access, dialogue, culture, voice, feedback, cultural reflexivity, agency, participation and ownership. This study is an inductive qualitative inquiry that employs case study and interview research methods—specifically semi-structured, in-depth interviews with key informants and a small-scale survey. It uses the comparative analysis approach alongside its theoretical framework to draw conclusions from the research.

Key words: Rabies, participatory communication, culture, voice, community, qualitative, development, Bangkok, Thailand, dog population control, vaccination, sterilization
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1. INTRODUCTION

This thesis explores the extent to which communication tactics of a dog population and rabies control program in Bangkok, Thailand are participatory and whether this influences community efforts to vaccinate and sterilize free-roaming dogs in the Bang Bon district of Bangkok. Rabies is a vaccine-preventable virus that kills an estimated 59,000 people annually around the world. Its transmission to humans is almost always via untreated bites from infected dogs (Zero by 30, 2018). Thailand is one of the many places around the world impacted by rabies; in 2018, 18 people died from the disease (Rujivanarom, 2018), a resurgence largely caused by human behavior—specifically poor dog management—according to the Department of Livestock Development (“Thailand rushes,” 2018). In conjunction with Association of Southeast Asian Nations’ (ASEAN) goal to eliminate rabies by 2020, Thailand is implementing a rabies elimination national action plan. As part of this, efforts are underway to sterilize and vaccinate dogs throughout Bangkok, educate the public about responsible dog ownership, and shift the way people perceive stray dogs so they are thought of as a shared community responsibility. These initiatives and their communication tactics, carried out by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) Soi Dog Foundation and the Hope Thailand, with support from various levels of government and other entities, comprise this thesis’ case study detailed in the next chapter.

This thesis is grounded in Communication for Development (ComDev) theories of participatory communication and culture, which deviate from the dominant, modernization theories that most development initiatives have historically emerged from. As opposed to one-way, top-down communication tactics that aim to inform, educate and change behaviors without accounting for issues of culture, participatory communication approaches intend to give voice to the people who development purports to serve so they can lead the formation and implementation of solutions to their own perceived development challenges. Participatory communication is a dialogic process that invites people at all levels of society to speak, balancing political economy in the process and promoting cultural reflexivity by placing cultural values, norms and voice at the center of development solutions. Participatory communication advocates situated in the social and communication sciences profess that ComDev projects rooted in alternative paradigms—such as participatory communication—will have more sustainable and just development outcomes compared to
those of dominant paradigms (e.g. Clammer, 2012; Enghel, 2015; Freire, 1972; Hemer & Tufte, 2016; Manyozo, 2012; Schech, 2014; M. Scott, 2014; Waisbord, 2001 and others).

There is also some evidence that community ownership and even participatory processes are important to rabies elimination. These findings and suggestions claim that when communities work together to implement dog ownership and rabies elimination best practices, monitoring and evaluation—as well as care of stray dogs—rabies elimination efforts are more effective and sustainable. To that end, this thesis explores the relationship between the use of participatory communication tactics in the aforementioned case study and the dog sterilization and vaccination behaviors of people in Bang Bon, Bangkok.

This thesis continues with the Background chapter next, which provides more information about rabies globally and in Thailand, and this thesis’ case study and research questions. The subsequent Literature review chapter looks at the intersection of communication, development and culture theories, highlighting how participatory communication affords more sustainable development and how theories of culture dovetail this approach; then the chapter provides a brief overview of related research. The Methodology chapter outlines the philosophical approach of this thesis, its reflexivity, ethics, limitations, research methods and how they reflect the study’s theoretical framework. Finally, the Analysis chapter discusses the research findings through the lens of this thesis’ theoretical framework, triangulating the communication tactics employed in the case study; the Bang Bon community’s efforts to control the free-roaming dog population in support of rabies elimination; and factors that influenced these decisions. In doing so, the analysis aims to understand the role of participatory communication in the Bang Bon community’s decision-making process around dog vaccination, sterilization and thus rabies elimination, concluding with an answer to this thesis’ overarching research question.
This chapter provides relevant context for this thesis’ central case study—a dog population and rabies control program in Bangkok, Thailand—introduced later in this chapter. It aims to reveal the role that participatory communication with communities have in sustaining rabies elimination efforts in Bangkok—the focus of this thesis. The chapter begins with an overview of rabies, and then discusses different rabies elimination strategies and their manifestations in Thailand. Emphasis is placed on how free-roaming, unvaccinated and unsterilized dogs spread rabies to humans; the role of communities in creating as well as controlling stray dog populations; the interrelated influence of Thailand’s cultural context; and how participatory communication can support the elimination of rabies in Bangkok. The “Bangkok Dog Sterilization and Vaccination Program” (BDSVP) case study is then introduced, highlighting how the program’s success depends on engaged communities. This provides rationale for this thesis’ research questions at the conclusion of the chapter, which explore whether participatory communication has had a role in influencing the Bang Bon community’s efforts to vaccinate and control its dog population and thus help eliminate rabies.

2.1 RABIES WORLDWIDE

Present in over 150 countries and territories (World Health Organization, 2018), rabies is considered a neglected tropical disease due to a lack of capacity to address the myriad public health problems many countries face, compounded by the complexity of controlling rabies (Gongal & Wright, 2011). This vaccine-preventable, infectious viral condition is almost always fatal when contracted through exposure to infected mammals’ saliva (World Health Organization, 2018). While various mammalian species carry rabies, 99 percent of human rabies cases are transmitted via dog bites (Zero by 30, 2018).

Rabies kills an estimated 59,000 people every year globally, equivalent to one person every nine minutes (Zero by 30, 2018). Of rabies deaths worldwide, an estimated 95 percent occur in Asia and Africa combined, and 45 percent occur in Southeast Asia alone, with 21,000 to 24,000 people dying each year in the region (Gongal & Wright, 2011). Rabies is endemic in
the dog populations of almost all ASEAN member states (OIE World Organisation for Animal Health, 2015).

Rabies mainly impacts people in developing countries for a variety of reasons, including less knowledge about rabies, less access to post-exposure vaccines for people who come into contact with rabid animals, and financial factors. Importantly, large stray and otherwise unvaccinated and unsterilized dog populations are common in many developing countries, which catalyzes the spread of rabies to humans (Taylor et al., 2017). This chapter will later expand on this point since the management of free-roaming dogs to control stray dog populations is fundamental to eliminating rabies, and the ways in which communication can promote dog population management is central to this thesis’ BDSVP case study.

### 2.2 RABIES ELIMINATION STRATEGIES

Various approaches have been attempted around the world throughout history to eliminate rabies in dogs and humans, such as mass dog euthanasia (Herbert et al., 2012) or application of traditional medicine to bite wounds (Wilde et al., 2017). Current evidence shows that preventing rabies in humans depends on a series of tactics that work side-by-side: accessibility of pre- and post-exposure vaccines for humans; controlling the spread of rabies in animals through sustained mass dog vaccination programs; humane dog population management, which is commonly done through surgical sterilization (Gongal & Wright, 2011); restriction of dog relocation; promotion of pet ownership best practices; culturally appropriate education (Velasco-Villa et al., 2017; Wilde et al., 2017; World Health Organization, 2004); and community participation (Herbert et al., 2012). With this in mind, most current rabies elimination strategies follow the ‘One Health’ framework, which takes a socio-cultural approach that involves government advocacy, public outreach and education, mass dog vaccination and humane dog population management tactics (OIE World Organisation for Animal Health, 2015).

An emphasis in current rabies elimination strategies is placed on vaccinating and controlling dog populations because studies show that “unvaccinated owned, stray or community dogs are the major reservoirs and vectors of rabies worldwide” (Wilde et al., 2017, p. 2293). Thus, eliminating human rabies is dependent on eliminating rabies in dogs given the majority of human deaths are caused by dog bites. For a rabies immunity wall to be established in a dog
population, 70 percent of the dogs in that area must be vaccinated to break the rabies transmission cycle (ibid.). In conjunction, routine and thorough sterilization of dogs is important for sustainability because it reduces the need for rabies vaccinations to be administered to new litters and prevents dog population growth (Taylor et al., 2017).

2.2.1 RABIES AND THE ROLE OF STRAY DOG POPULATION MANAGEMENT IN THAILAND

The following section details rabies prevalence and dog population control measures in Thailand, which shall provide rationale for the design of a dog population control and rabies elimination program in the country’s capital, Bangkok, which is the focus of this thesis and discussed later in the chapter as a case study.

Rabies is endemic in Thailand; it was first found in the country in 1920 (Phoonphongphiphat, 2018). Based on 2007 data, Thailand was ranked as having the third highest rate of rabies in Asia after India and Vietnam. As of 2013, World Health Organization (WHO) ranked Thailand’s rabies risk for humans as moderate and Thailand was moving to a low-endemic status (WHO, 2013; Gongal & Wright, 2011). The number of confirmed rabies cases in animals in Thailand dropped from 4,263 in 1993 to 243 cases in 2011, and until 2018 there had been less than 10 annual confirmed human rabies cases in the previous decade (OIE World Organisation for Animal Health, 2015; Wilde et al., 2017). But in 2018, a resurgence in Thailand resulted in 18 confirmed human rabies deaths. The worst outbreak since 1980, rabies was detected in at least 54 of 77 provinces (Rujivanarom, 2018).

Thailand’s Department of Livestock Development, which spearheads rabies control in animals, says the uptick in rabies was caused by dog owners not vaccinating their pets and letting them roam free, which increases the likelihood that they will bite or be bitten by other rabid animals (“Thailand rushes,” 2018). This is in line with a study that found that almost 75 percent of human rabies cases in Thailand in the three years prior to 2016 were from people’s own animals biting them, 98 percent of which had never been vaccinated (OIE World Organisation for Animal Health, 2015). The Department also pointed to a lack of awareness about rabies in the public (“13 provinces are ‘rabies red zones,’” 2018). Other sources suggest the increase had to do with the production and sales of ineffective rabies
vaccines over the past few years (Phoonphongphiphat, 2018) and rabies vaccines not being available everywhere in Thailand (“Thailand rushes,” 2018).

WHO, the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Global Alliance for Rabies Control (GARC) have established a global “United Against Rabies” strategy with the goal of achieving zero human rabies deaths worldwide by 2030 (WHO, 2018). ASEAN has also set an ambitious goal to eliminate rabies in animals and humans by 2020 (OIE World Organisation for Animal Health, 2015). Accordingly, Thailand is implementing a national strategy rooted in a mass education campaign; provision of human, dog and cat vaccinations; and a dog and cat sterilization initiative. The rabies elimination strategy is being carried out in conjunction with various levels of government, ranging from the capitol to the village level, as well as civil society organizations (WHO, 2017). The dog vaccination and sterilization component of this effort underway in Thailand’s capital, Bangkok, will be profiled later in this chapter as this thesis’ case study.

In Thailand there is a large stray dog population, which can be attributed to strong cultural values and norms and a lack of knowledge about the importance of dog population management (Toukhsati, Phillips, Podberscek, & Coleman, 2012; Arluke & Nattrass Atema, 2017). The stray dog problem in Thailand is largely caused by human behavior (Toukhsati et al., 2012). Thailand is a deeply religious country with approximately 94 percent of the population identifying as Buddhist (U.S. Department of State, 2005). Stray dogs are generally treated well in Thailand thanks to the predominance of a Buddhist principle known as “ahimsa,” or non-injury of animals, which proclaims that mistreatment of any living creature is a sin (Toukhsati et al., 2012, p. 2). In Thailand many people do not sterilize their dogs, sometimes for religious reasons, and the majority of owned dogs roam free and thus reproduce with other dogs. People will abandon unwanted dogs and puppy litters in public places like temples and universities knowing the dogs will be fed by the surrounding community, since many think feeding stray dogs is a good deed that will bring them luck, known as ‘making merit’ in Buddhism (ibid.). Cultural attitudes like this alongside economic barriers enable large free-roaming dog populations to flourish and grow in many countries with a persistent rabies problem like Thailand; and healthy dog populations are more susceptible to rabies transmission than those in poor health (Taylor et al., 2017).
In Bangkok, there are an estimated 640,000 stray dogs that roam the streets (“Soi Dog launches,” 2016). Given Bangkok’s large stray dog population and the link between free-roaming dogs and human rabies cases, the sustainability of rabies elimination programs via dog vaccinations is dependent on limiting the growth of the stray dog population (OIE World Organisation for Animal Health, 2015; Taylor et al., 2017). Moreover, research shows that public perception toward stray dogs may improve when dog populations are controlled and in good health, in turn increasing the likelihood that communities seek rabies vaccinations for stray dogs in the future (Taylor et al., 2017).

### 2.2.1.1 METHODS FOR MANAGING STRAY DOG POPULATIONS IN THAILAND

There are various ways to control stray dog populations; three of the most common methods globally are euthanasia, birth control injections and surgical sterilization. How these methods manifest in Thailand is discussed here. Importantly, all dogs—owned, community or wild—must be vaccinated and sterilized to prevent the spread of rabies to humans (ibid.; Toukhsati et al., 2012).

Many past euthanasia programs around the world and in Thailand have been unsuccessful because of a lack of public support due to animal welfare and religious concerns, which in Thailand is related to the aforementioned Buddhist principle of doing no harm to animals (Gongal & Wright, 2011; Hemachudha, 2005; Toukhsati et al., 2012, p. 2). Euthanasia is not as effective as sterilization programs for reducing dog populations anyway as they do not address root causes of overpopulation and are therefore generally condemned as a contemporary rabies control means (Taylor et al., 2017). Many people in Thailand give their dogs birth control injections since they are easy to obtain in drug stores and viewed as less invasive than sterilization surgery. But canine birth control injections available in Thailand are dangerous to dogs when used long-term as they frequently cause a deadly uterus infection, pyometra (Mass, 2017; Toukhsati et al., 2012). Surgical sterilization is the most frequently documented tool for effectively reducing dog populations over time humanely and safely, especially for free-roaming owned and stray dogs in low-income and urban contexts (Taylor et al., 2017). But at least one study conducted in Thailand found that surgical sterilization of dogs conflicts with religious beliefs, as previously described (Toukhsati et al., 2012).
Outreach, education and community engagement about the shared responsibilities of people and communities to limit the growth of stray dog populations and thus prevent the spread of rabies is also key to raising awareness and acceptance of dog population control measures. Public education campaigns on rabies prevention tactics, including dog population control and responsible pet ownership, were fundamental to eliminating rabies in most countries in the Western hemisphere (Velasco-Villa et al., 2017). Researchers found that past failures of dog population control and rabies elimination programs in Bangkok and other parts of Thailand were largely a result of insufficient community engagement and public education campaigns (Hemachudha, 2005). To address this, part of Thailand’s 2020 national action plan for rabies elimination involves a mass education campaign to increase public awareness of rabies prevention and people’s associated responsibilities (WHO, 2017). The role that communication plays in a dog population control and rabies elimination program in Bangkok, which is supporting Thailand’s national rabies elimination strategy, will be discussed in the case study that follows.

2.3 CASE STUDY: BANGKOK DOG STERILIZATION AND VACCINATION PROGRAM

This section details this thesis’ spotlight case study, hereby called the “Bangkok Dog Sterilization and Vaccination Program” (BDSVP) and considers the role of communication in the BDSVP, the focus of this thesis. This is important given that culturally responsive community engagement can aid dog population control and rabies elimination initiatives in the long-term (Toukhsati et al., 2012). “BDSVP” is not an official name; it is used in the context of this thesis as a succinct reference to its case study. Some readers with familiarity of Thailand’s work to end rabies might consider the case study’s parameters and focus an arbitrarily abstracted component of the country’s much larger rabies elimination strategy. However, the case study’s area of focus was determined in the interest of ensuring a manageable scope, accessibility to information and relevancy to ComDev principles.

The BDSVP provides free sterilization surgeries and vaccinations to primarily free-roaming dogs in and around Bangkok, both owned and stray, to control the greater metropolitan area’s dog population. The BDSVP conducts outreach to inform affected communities of its efforts since it relies on dog owners and caretakers knowing about the program and the benefits of surgical sterilization and vaccination and allowing the program to administer
these services in districts throughout Bangkok. The BDSVP also depends on the ongoing support of communities to provide temporary space for sterilization and vaccination mobile clinics to set up; to carry out and facilitate dog ownership best practices, including sterilization and vaccination; and to help locate, catch, monitor and care for Bangkok’s stray dogs. In Thailand this can be culturally sensitive and complex for social, religious and logistical reasons, and because dog ownership structures are typically ambiguous (Arluke & Nattrass Atema, 2017; Hemachudha, 2005; Taylor et al., 2017; Toukhsati et al., 2012). For these reasons, communication approaches that achieve buy-in and ownership from communities in Bangkok are crucial for the long-term success of rabies elimination efforts (Hemachudha, 2005).

Figure 1 Soi Dog Foundation mobile clinic at the Ninsukaram Temple in Bang Bon, Bangkok, Thailand

The BDSVP is a collaboration between Thailand-based NGOs Soi Dog Foundation and the Hope Thailand, Thailand’s Department of Livestock Development and the Bangkok Metropolitan Authority, and other entities such as local district municipalities. Soi Dog Foundation’s ‘mobile clinic’ program aims to vaccinate and sterilize 80 percent of dogs—
both owned and stray—for free in the greater Bangkok area. Following Soi Dog Foundation’s successful model in Phuket, Thailand ("Soi Dog Foundation," 2019), the mobile clinics target three primary categories of dogs: free-roaming owned dogs (first priority), free-roaming stray dogs (second priority) and free-roaming feral dogs (third priority). Free-roaming owned and community dogs account for 90 percent of its focus.

With seven years of funding from Dogs Trust, the U.K.’s largest dog welfare charity ("Dogs Trust," 2019), and with technical support from the Thai government and other NGOs, Soi Dog Foundation is setting up mobile clinics in 50 districts within and surrounding Bangkok. Soi Dog Foundation determined which districts to prioritize based on the volume of free-roaming dogs in each district, which they measure through a field surveying technique. The clinics remain in place until the surveying teams find that 80 percent of the visible dogs in the district have been vaccinated and sterilized, and then they move to an adjacent district. Soi Dog Foundation’s mobile clinics are located at public venues, most often temples, and each is staffed by a Thai-national team of two veterinarians, nursing staff and two teams of animal handlers—also known as dog catchers. By the end of 2019 there will be six clinics operating simultaneously, with eventual plans for 10.

For long-term efficacy, dog vaccination and surgical sterilization programs require sustained operations (Taylor et al., 2017). According to Soi Dog Foundation, it will likely take 15-20 years and three or four rounds of mobile clinic operations in most districts to get Bangkok’s dog population under control. Soi Dog Foundation will operate its clinics until this happens. The program has already completed the first round in all 50 target districts and is now carrying out the second round.

In conjunction, the Hope Thailand is working with communities to shift the way stray dogs are viewed from being seen as a nuisance to a shared community responsibility. In the process, it raises awareness of the importance of sterilization and vaccination and Soi Dog Foundation’s mobile clinics. The Hope Thailand is staffed by five people and is primarily self-funded by its founder.

The Bang Bon district has been selected for this study to narrow its scope, and because this district hosted a Soi Dog Foundation mobile clinic at the Ninsukaram Temple for three months in early 2019 during the data collection phase of this study.
2.3.1 BANGKOK DOG STERILIZATION AND VACCINATION PROGRAM OUTREACH

Culturally sensitive education, social mobilization and community participation regarding best practices for dog ownership—including vaccination and sterilization—is crucial to the long-term management of dog populations and thus rabies elimination efforts. Without community support, it falls to the responsibility of governments and NGOs, which is not always a sustainable solution (Denduangboripant et al., 2005; Gongal & Wright, 2011; Taylor et al., 2017; Toukhsati et al., 2012). Inclusive community engagement has been shown to foster a sense of responsibility and care for community dogs’ health and wellbeing, and it helps ensure sustainable rabies prevention mechanisms are carried out long-term by communities, such as ongoing monitoring, surveillance and rabies reporting. Together, these elements are essential to maintaining the rabies immunity wall once a dog population is under control (Arluke & Natrass Atema, 2017; WHO, 2018).

Therefore it is worth considering whether the BDSVP’s communication tactics have been participatory, which is critical to the efficacy and sustainability of development initiatives (Clammer, 2012; Manyozo, 2012; M. Scott, 2014; Tufte, 2017). With this in mind, it is also important to understand whether the program’s communication efforts have had the intended impact of a) more dog owners vaccinating and surgically sterilizing their free-roaming dogs, and b) receiving support from communities to do so for community dogs, and if there is a connection between these behaviors and any participatory communication tactics employed by the program. This inquiry leads to the following research questions.
2.3.2 OVERARCHING RESEARCH QUESTION

To what extent have participatory communication tactics of the Bangkok Dog Sterilization and Vaccination Program (BDSVP) influenced community-based dog vaccination and population control efforts for the elimination of rabies in the Bang Bon district of Bangkok, Thailand?

2.3.2.1 SUB-QUESTIONS

A) Why has the BDSVP chosen the communication tactics it employs and to what extent do they account for cultural needs and perceptions; enable the Bang Bon community to voice their questions, concerns and ideas about the program; and feed this input back into program implementation?

B) Is the Bang Bon community in Bangkok, Thailand taking action to sterilize and vaccinate free-roaming dogs, and what motivated them to do so (or not)?

C) Are there connections between the BDSVP’s participatory communication tactics and the decisions community members make around whether to sterilize and vaccinate free-roaming dogs in the Bang Bon district of Bangkok, Thailand?

2.4 BACKGROUND CHAPTER RECAP

This chapter has explored rabies prevalence globally and in Thailand, its causes and various elimination strategies as demonstrated by initiatives and studies around the world. The chapter introduced the BDSVP case study, emphasizing the role of participatory community engagement for long-term impact, which is this thesis’ focus. The subsequent Literature review chapter develops a theoretical framework for this thesis, illustrating the intersecting role of communication, development and culture and underscoring how participatory communication affords more sustainable development results. It then summarizes existing research related to the role of participatory communication in maintaining dog population control and rabies elimination efforts.
3. LITERATURE REVIEW

The first section in this chapter provides an abridged overview of some of the literature on communication, international development, culture and their intersections through the lens of the hybrid academic discipline of communication for development and social change (ComDev). It starts by tracing the evolution of the ComDev field, moving from a discussion of top-down, dominant paradigms to bottom-up, participatory approaches to ComDev. The latter promotes and leverages concepts of culture and inclusive community engagement for the long-term success of development projects, providing a segue to an exploration of related theories of culture and thus voice. The literature reviewed in this chapter offers theoretical grounding for the growing recognition that sustainable management of stray dog populations and rabies elimination efforts, such as the above case study, depends on communication that results in dog ownership best practices and community-led care of free-roaming dogs (Arluke & Nattrass Atema, 2017; WHO, 2018). The chapter then offers a summary of the existing research related to the use of participatory communication in rabies elimination efforts, showing how this study dovetails and contributes to that body of research. The chapter concludes by extracting core theoretical concepts from its discussion of participatory development communication theory to establish this thesis’ theoretical framework, pointing out why these are relevant to the BDSVP case study. These core theoretical concepts are emphasized in bold font and then underlined in subsequent references. The theoretical framework established in this chapter guides the research design and data analysis in the chapters that follow, which inform an answer to the research questions.

3.1 COMMUNICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL CHANGE THEORY

ComDev is a multidisciplinary field of study and practice within the social sciences that blends theoretical concepts from both international development and communication epistemologies, as well as other disciplines. Also known as communication for development (Servaes, 2007 in Enghel, 2015, p. 11); development communication (e.g. Enghel, 2015 et al.); media, communication and development (Manyozo, 2012) and other terms, ComDev encompasses various schools of thought that apply communication approaches to development challenges (Tufte, 2017, pt. 582). Broadly speaking, the multitude of
paradigms that fall within ComDev can be placed on a spectrum ranging between two main competing conceptual orientations: behavior-change models situated within the dominant modernization theory on one side, and on the other, participatory communication models that offer alternatives to the dominant paradigm (Beltrán, 1979; Waisbord, 2001, p. 2).

The top-down strategies associated with modernization theory view a lack of knowledge as the main barrier to development, and thus intend to inform and educate target groups often via external ‘experts’ without incorporating the views of individuals impacted by the interventions (Hemer & Tufte, 2016, p. 16; M. Scott, 2014, p. 183; Waisbord, 2001). In contrast, bottom-up participatory communication approaches are less concerned with relaying information to target groups, and instead empower individuals to define their own problems, solutions and take active involvement in implementation (Tufte, 2017, pt. 591). As such, participatory communication projects are driven from ‘below’ by people who have directly experienced the problems to which solutions are sought, as they are the experts of their own suffering and successes (ibid.; Manyozo, 2012, pp. 4, 11). These paradigms will be explored further in the forthcoming sections.

3.1.1 DOMINANT COMDEV PARADIGMS

Dominant ComDev paradigms are relevant to this thesis in that its research questions aim to understand the degree to which the BDSVP case study’s communication tactics are participatory. To do so, it is necessary to unpack participatory communication theory, but also communication approaches that are not participatory as a comparison; this section focuses on the latter. In doing so, we can better comprehend where the case study’s communication tactics fall in the spectrum of ComDev theories, helping to answer this thesis’ research questions.

The dominant development paradigm from which many ComDev theories derive took root in the 1950s-60s in a post-war context, purported to replicate the Western ideals of development success such as political democracy, productivity, industrialization, literacy, life expectancy and prosperity in ‘undeveloped’ countries (Waisbord, 2001, p. 1). Modernization theory, one of the most prominent within the dominant development paradigm, aimed to change behaviors by providing information and economic assistance that would lead to
development progress to those who were seen as lacking knowledge and cultural necessities. In fact, culture and traditional norms and values were seen as preventing the realization of development goals. By changing people’s ideas, it was thought that behaviors would change too. To remedy this, modernization theorists offered communication in the way of media, technology, innovations and culture derived from the West (ibid., p. 3).

Within modernization theory, ‘transmission’ and ‘persuasion’ models view communication as a one-way process that uses media to provide information to the public, including larger-reach mediums such as newspapers, radio and television, as well as smaller-reach formats such as publications, posters and brochures (ibid.). Accordingly, ‘media for development’ looks at how media can be employed to inform, educate, sensitize and mobilize a range of target groups on development and social issues (Manyozo, 2012, p. 54). Dominant media-centric approaches can be problematized as propelling Western-driven agendas that lack participation and contradict regional realities (Beltrán, 1975, p. 190; O’Sullivan-Ryan & Kaplun, 1978 in Huesca, 2003, p. 211). They also mask root problems of development policies influenced by inequitable political economies that put those who are most marginalized in their underdeveloped situations (Manyozo, 2012, p. 110; M. Scott, 2014, p. 49). Martin Scott echoes this in his critique of media for development approaches, noting they tend to focus on changing individual behaviors instead of “deep-rooted social, economic and political structures which shape behaviors,” and they may in fact increase inequalities (2014, p. 46). This exertion of influence to change behaviors is the communication purpose of dominant paradigms, according to Beltrán (1979, pp. 16–18), who suggests there are times when persuasion is appropriate or more feasible than interpersonal dialogues, the latter a hallmark of participatory ComDev approaches. In his view, persuasion is acceptable so long as it does not manipulate, mislead, exploit or coerce its audience and respects human dignity. That said, persuasion is just one of many possible communication goals and should not be the most important (ibid.).
3.1.2 PARTICIPATORY COMMUNICATION

Participatory development communication approaches—which contrast the dominant paradigm just discussed—will be expanded upon in this section, from which core concepts are extracted to shape the theoretical framework that informs this thesis’ research design and helps answer its research questions.

Participatory communication approaches were established in the context of postcolonial theory, when critiques of the falsity of independence purported by newly independent governments in the 1950s emerged (Manyozo, 2012, p. 41). They aimed to establish an alternative form of communication, as opposed to dominant practices, to improve people’s livelihoods by addressing the growing inequalities—such as rural poverty, underdevelopment and marginalization—facing the majority of developing countries, largely caused by neocolonialism and imperialism (Rodriguez, 2003 in Manyozo, 2012, p. 31). These alternatives intended to liberate people from the oppressive modernization development and mass communication paradigms that effectively subjected aid recipients “to the rules for implementation imposed by the intervening countries ‘even though the rule-makers are not accountable to those whom they govern’” (Fraser, 2008 in Enghel, 2015, p. 12). Such outdated paradigms, which interpreted culture as an obstacle to development and communication as just a tool to enhance development, were increasingly seen throughout the 1970s by scholars and practitioners as propagators of inequalities.

While defining development is challenging given the many perspectives, influences, theories and eras that it has been analyzed and shaped by, doing so is important to a discussion of ComDev since its meaning shifts with the meaning of development (Quebral, 2002 in Manyozo, 2012). One way to characterize development is a site of conflict over access to and/or control over resources, power, decision-making capacity, and the ways in which people are represented by various powerholders and the communication tools powerholders use to do so (Manyozo, 2012, p. 3). In this light, participatory communication approaches work to adjust the political economy of communication and development approaches, in other words, the power structures that typically serve the interests of the powerholders who control the communication and development agenda (M. Scott, 2014, p. 183).
Participatory development communication can be described as a multidirectional praxis—a cycle of “reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it” (Freire, 1972, pt. 644). In the participatory communication praxis, dialogic interpersonal communication facilitate community-led discussion and action to alter social conditions and produce social change. This process engages development stakeholders—specifically the people whose ‘problems’ aim to be solved by dominant development models—in negotiating decisions within their communities to promote locally led, ‘bottom up’ development and social change (Manyozo, 2012). This is facilitated through exchange between equals to locate community needs (M. Scott, 2014, p. 48). Participatory development communication projects can improve community welfare and individual equality, empowerment, decision-making capacity and ownership of communication and development processes within communities, all of which are fundamental to sustainable positive changes in societies (Figueroa, et al., 2005; Huesca, 2003; Manyozo, 2012, pp. 6–9; Waisbord, 2001, pp. 21, 29). In other words, participatory development communication projects enable agency—individuals’ abilities to influence and take action on decisions.

Participation—or the right to ‘send messages’ to others—depends on everyone having equal access to communication, meaning they can effectively ‘receive messages’ (Beltrán, 1979, p. 16). Dialogue then, being central to participatory development communication, is when people can and do exercise their right to send and receive messages in tandem. Also crucial to dialogue is the comparable ability for all involved to give and receive feedback (ibid., pp. 16–18). Together, communication can be described as a “democratic social interaction” in which people voluntarily share experiences under conditions of equal access, dialogue and participation (ibid., p. 16). In this way, participatory development communication ideally gives all voices an opportunity to express their needs and wants for their own development—in other words participate—and ensures all community members know they can speak (M. Scott, 2014, p. 49).

Education scholar Paulo Freire had a significant role in shaping participatory development communication. His seminal work on what he called the “pedagogy of the oppressed” professes that those who are oppressed—e.g. people targeted by development—must drive the fight for their own liberation from their oppressors whose positions of power are maintained by the status quo of oppression. Freedom from oppression will not be achieved
following models offered by the oppressors; instead the oppressed must develop the blueprint for their own emancipation (Freire, 1972, pt. 676). Transformation can only occur when carried out with the oppressed, not for them—in other words when the oppressors and oppressed participate in dialogue that results in a process of growth for all, including the oppressors reconsidering their earlier positions based on feedback from the oppressed (ibid., pt. 1116). In Freire’s conceptualization of what he calls the ‘banking education’ model, educators—akin to development communicators in the ComDev context—deposit information in their students—or development constituents—without challenge or critical reflection from the latter in an attempt to maintain dominance and societal hierarchy. This means the teacher/communicator chooses the ‘program content’ without consulting the students/development constituents (ibid., pts. 1004–1013, 1330). Contrarily, a main tenant of participatory development communication processes is that development constituents take a leading role in planning and implementing their own ComDev solutions—thus they have agency (Bessette & Rajasunderam, 1996; Cadiz, 1991; Servaes, 2008; Tufte & Mefalopulous, 2009 in Manyozo, 2012, pp. 27, 155). In that way, participatory communication builds the capacity of people to ‘speak and unspeak’ their worlds, which is to say people’s ability to recognize their position in society and then contradict it, modifying their context to better represent their needs and aspirations. This in turn helps equalize the political economy of society (Freire, 1996, pp. 133–134; Manyozo, 2012, p. 194). But local power relations are also an important consideration of participatory development communication, since even at the community level there are differences in members’ degree of social capital—relationships that afford them more opportunities to control community decisions. Therefore it cannot be assumed that just because some community members are involved in planning and implementation of development projects, the outcome is representative of a community’s collective voice (Manyozo, 2012, p. 207; Tufte, 2017, pt. 1665). For Arnstein (1969, p. 217), the ideal form of participation is when ‘average’ citizens have “enough power to make the target institutions responsive to their views, aspirations and needs,’’ and thus they have agency.

Manyozo suggests a healthy model for participatory development communication processes includes “informing, consulting, involving, collaborating and building partnerships” with communities (2012, p. 190). Such community engagement strategies are precursors to
social mobilization, whereby communities learn about a problem and take action to address it, which ideally leads to ownership of such initiatives as well as balanced political economies, all core to sustainable development and social change (Hickey & Mohan, 2004; Manyozo, 2012, p. 153; Waisbord, 2001, p. 26). Freire (1972, pt. 1224) cautions that leaders should resist the temptation to carry out dominant approaches for the sake of expediency with the intent to later conduct participatory projects, affirming that instead initiatives must be dialogic from the beginning. This relates to communication purpose.

As noted previously, within the paradigm shifts from dominant models of the social sciences—including ComDev and its related discourses—to alternative approaches, culture took an increasingly central role, ultimately becoming inherent to participatory processes and the sustainability of social change (Clammer, 2012; Downing, 2016 in Hemer & Tufte, 2016, pp. 9–10; Peruzzo, 1996 in Tufte, 2017, pt. 1587; Waisbord, 2001, p. 1). This shift and its implications are elaborated in the next section, which explores the intersection of culture, participatory communication and development further.

3.2 INTERSECTION OF CULTURE, DEVELOPMENT AND PARTICIPATORY COMMUNICATION

Given the significant role culture has played in the evolution of the ComDev field, this section considers culture’s meaning and manifestations in participatory communication processes, which broadly involves inclusive engagement and empowerment of community voices and is key to achieving sustainable development and social change outcomes (Peruzzo, 1996; Tufte, 2017, pt. 1587). The relationship between culture, development and communication is important to the BDSVP case study since the sustainability of contemporary rabies elimination strategies depends on communities taking leadership roles in caring for stray dog populations, which has significant cultural implications (Denduangboripant et al., 2005; Gongal & Wright, 2011; Toukhsati et al., 2012). Research shows individual behavior change does not result from knowledge acquisition alone; instead development projects tend to be more successful when cultural contexts are factored alongside inclusive partnerships with communities (Tufte, 2017, pt. 1032).

In this discussion, it is first necessary to clarify what is meant by ‘culture’ and trace its role within the development communication paradigm shifts described earlier, which reflect
changes that have occurred in the broader communication and social sciences discourses. In the dominant modernization model for development and its attendant communication theories, culture was viewed as a bounded and static set of traditional traits, values, practices and institutions that should be discarded for societal progress to occur (Schech, 2014, p. 43). As alternative models emerged, such as participatory development communication, culture was increasingly viewed within development and communication discourses as a resource to improve development outcomes. This period in the late 1980s and ‘90s is known as the ‘cultural turn’ of the social sciences (Clammer, 2012; Hemer & Tufte, 2016, p. 15). This evolution also marked a distinction in how social science scholars studied the notion of culture, with a shift from culture being seen as a structure to it involving agency, enablement and choices (Clammer, 2012). The cultural turn also changed the way communication is understood from being an instrument to persuade behavior change, as it was in modernist and dependency development paradigms, to being a democratization and empowerment process in participatory approaches (Hemer & Tufte, 2016, p. 15). Here the concept of ‘participation’ naturally comes forward: empowering people at the local level, individually or communally, to make their own decisions means they are participating in the development of their own lives.

Culture can be understood as an organizer of evolving processes that occur when forming a collective identity, which through repetition and socialization processes manifests as patterns (Clammer, 2012, p. 50). Abstract as this notion is, it points to the fact that culture is not easily pinned down to particular things, activities, groups or the like, but instead can be explained as a continually influenceable creation of meaning that morphs with time, contexts and actors. This meaning can be seen as a narrative that is constantly recreated in response to realities that people collectively face through storytelling, myths, values, spiritual beliefs and aspirations, future intentions, desires for self-agency, rituals, experiences, mortality, etc. (ibid., p. 47). In Clammer’s (2012) explanation of culture, it is never set in stone or fixed in time; in other words, culture can shift. Culture can also be explained as “the beliefs, values and attitudes that structure the behavior patterns of a specific group of people” (Merriam, 2009, p. 27).

Just as political economy is central to the discussion of participatory communication, “the issue of being culture-centered is closely tied up with issues of power relations, social
hierarchies and opportunities for participation” (Tufte, 2017, pt. 1073). Being culture-centered means “clarifying the role of local communities, their ways of life, [and] their experiences and knowledge, information and communication systems in proposed communication strategies for change” (ibid.). A culture-centered, or culturally reflexive, approach to development and communication gives significance to voice and the willingness and capacity to listen (ibid.). Voice can be understood as “the ability of the world’s poor to express their needs and demands in public fora” and falls under the universal human right to communicate (Downing, 2016 in Hemer & Tufte, 2016, pp. 9–10). For people who development is meant to serve, obtaining and expressing voice is intrinsically linked to their ability to access development matters such as education, infrastructure and health services (Hemer & Tufte, 2016, p. 11). But whether these people can express their voice only matters if powerholders are actively listening to the priorities, context or experience of those who are speaking (ibid). Therefore a culturally reflexive approach to development reflects the right for all people’s opinions, needs and wants—and thus their culture and voice—to be understood (Husband, 1996 in Downing, 2016, p. 9; Tacchi, 2016 in Hemer & Tufte, 2016, p. 118). This matters because development interventions emerging from modernist and other dominant paradigms that intend to improve the human condition without accounting for regional cultures and conditions have been unsuccessful (Scott, 1998 in ibid., p. 18 & Clammer, 2012, pp. 36, 42, 44, 45).

3.3 OVERVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH

A range of studies are summarized in this section to identify existing research related to the intersection of rabies control programs and participatory development communication, showing how this thesis can contribute to the area of inquiry.

A plethora of studies on rabies elimination strategies across the globe and in Thailand document successes and failures in controlling rabies as well as managing free-roaming dog populations, but they do not address participatory communication (e.g. Velasco-Villa et al., 2017; Wilde et al., 2005; Kongkaew et al., 2004; Hsu et al., 2003; Taylor et al., 2017). Research exists on rabies elimination ‘participatory action research (PAR)’ (e.g. Okell et al., 2013), but PAR is a research method more than a communication approach, the latter of which is the topic of this thesis. Many studies use the word ‘participation’ in relation to
rabies elimination programs but in these contexts ‘participation’ usually means taking part in interventions rather than having a role in planning them (e.g. Matibag et al., 2009; Herbert et al., 2012). Some studies involve community engagement that is closer to participatory communication approaches in that they strive to capture the perspectives of individuals in communities but even these do not appear to involve significant agency (e.g. Lapiz et al., 2012, p. 4).

There are exceptions, however, of studies that do investigate the intersection of rabies and/or dog population management and participatory communication and related concepts. For example, a study of dog and cat ownership models and sterilization practices in Thailand examined how Thai people’s beliefs, values and attitudes toward sterilization impact community leadership of animal population control efforts (Toukhsati et al., 2012). And another study in Thailand found that participatory community engagement could be key to the success of rabies vaccination fund in Thailand (Tridech et al., 2000).

While the above overview is far from exhaustive, it gives a broad sense of the existing research related to this thesis. Given the relatively limited amount of directly relevant literature, this thesis aims to expand the repertoire of the above ‘exceptions.’

3.4 LITERATURE REVIEW CHAPTER RECAP

This chapter provided an overview of some of the main ComDev approaches and the field’s evolution from dominant paradigms toward participatory approaches, showing the elevation of culture’s role throughout these transitions. The chapter also demonstrates the critical relevancy of participatory development communication approaches and culture to the long-term sustainability of development projects, such as that of the BDSVP case study. The chapter builds the theoretical framework for this thesis that will be operationalized in the Methodology chapter, next—which establishes the research design—and the subsequent Analysis chapter. It does so by extracting core concepts from the discussion of participatory development communication theory that are most relevant to the BDSVP case study and this thesis’ research questions: ownership, participation, agency, cultural reflexivity, feedback, voice, culture, dialogue, access and communication purpose. These theoretical concepts are key to this study for the following reasons. Research shows that rabies elimination depends on community ownership of efforts to sustain rabies prevention,
monitoring and evaluation programs (Denduangboripant et al., 2005; Gongal & Wright, 2011; Taylor et al., 2017; Toukhsati et al., 2012). Community ownership is ideally a result of participatory development communication processes (Hickey & Mohan, 2004; Manyozo, 2012, p. 153; Waisbord, 2001, p. 26), which involve additional core theoretical concepts as follows. Communication purpose—or the reason for communicating—underscores the fact that communication always has a goal, and while dignity-respecting persuasion is a legitimate goal, it should not be the most important in participatory communication approaches (Beltrán, 1979, pp. 16–18). Understanding how and why the BDSVP chose its communication tactics helps determine whether they are participatory and answers one of this thesis’ research sub-questions. Breaking down the act of communicating further, access—the ability to receive messages—relates to whether the Bang Bon community has knowledge of the BDSVP initiatives. Dialogue relates to the Bang Bon community’s capacity to both send and receive messages simultaneously with staff of the BDSVP initiatives, meaning they engage in dialogue with one another. Taking this a step further, voice is important to answering this thesis’ research questions and is thus a core theoretical concept since it represents all people’s ability to express their culture. Culture is a fundamental aspect of participation and an important consideration of whether the BDSVP’s programming and communication tactics account for Bang Bon community members’ needs and spirituality, among other cultural considerations, since for example spirituality has been shown to influence some Thai people’s views toward dog sterilization and stray dog care, which has impacts to rabies elimination (Taylor et al., 2017; Toukhsati et al., 2012). This also relates to feedback, another core theoretical concept. Whether the Bang Bon community’s feedback, including their needs, views, ideas and suggestions, are incorporated in the BDSVP’s design indicates the degree to which the communication tactics are culturally reflexive, meaning they value individual and community voice by way of initiating, engaging in, and listening to dialogue. A step even further, agency, or the ability for individuals to exert decision-making power in development initiatives from ideation to monitoring and evaluation, is the ultimate objective of participation, and will thus serve as an indicator of the degree to which the BDSVP communication tactics facilitate participation. These core concepts are the foundation of this thesis’ theoretical framework, as visualized below.
The above recap aims to knit together the core concepts that constitute the theoretical framework of this thesis and demonstrate its relevancy to the BDSVP case study. The theoretical framework guides the research design, which is explained in the Methodology chapter next, and the analysis that serves to answer the concluding research questions.

4. METHODOLOGY

This chapter establishes the methodological foundation for this thesis and its research design, informed by the core concepts of the theoretical framework detailed in the previous chapter. It starts by conveying the study’s philosophical stance, followed by a reflection on the researcher’s reflexivity and research ethics and this study’s limitations. The chapter then moves to describe the data collection methods used in this thesis and how the core theoretical concepts are operationalized, concluding with an explanation of the data analysis process.

4.1 PHILOSOPHICAL POSITIONING

This thesis’ epistemology is grounded in a qualitative approach, which supports its theoretical underpinnings and research questions discussed in the previous chapters. Qualitative research explores human experiences to locate, understand and interpret
meaning and complexities within the social world (Scheyvens, 2017, p. 81). It does so by investigating people’s “attitudes, interpretations, behaviors, value systems, concerns, motivations, aspirations, culture or lifestyle” (Marshall & Rossman, 2006 in Scheyvens, 2017, p. 81). These are fundamental considerations to understanding how participatory communication or other factors influence decisions around dog population management and rabies elimination efforts in communities of Bangkok, Thailand. Instead of producing results that can be generalized to much broader contexts, qualitative approaches tend to illuminate, understand and extrapolate findings to similar scenarios (Hoepfl, 1997 in Scheyvens, 2017, p. 80).

Within its qualitative framing, this thesis leans toward an ‘anti-naturalist’ philosophical point of view since non-empirical, value-based evidence is an important factor in this study—e.g. culture. In contrast, naturalist research is exclusively interested in empirical evidence that is dependent on the ability to test laws, stemming from its basis in the natural sciences instead of the social sciences (Kitchin & Tate, 2000, p. 19). This thesis also takes a constructivist stance, which sees meanings of experiences as being subjective, non-singular—i.e. there are multiple ways to interpret these meanings—and influenced by people’s social interactions and cultural norms. An ‘inductive approach’ is also taken in that while this research is based upon a ComDev theoretical framework of participatory communication and cultural studies, it does not present at the outset its own theories or hypotheses to test or validate. Instead, research-derived theoretical concepts emerge in the process of analyzing the data collected in the field (Merriam, 2009, pp. 9, 15).

The philosophical approaches outlined in this chapter support a slew of research methods; the three used in this thesis—case study, in-depth interview and survey—will be expanded upon later in this chapter.

4.2 REFLEXIVITY AND OTHER ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The credibility of a research project is dependent on the trustworthiness of the researcher. Trustworthiness entails many moral and technical considerations; most relevant to this study are self-reflexivity, a sound methodology, the conduct of rigorous research methods and an overall ethical research process, as well as analytical integrity (Merriam, 2009, pp.
Some of the steps taken to ensure credibility and ethicality in this study are detailed below.

Reflexivity is crucial to the credibility and validity of a study since a researcher’s own beliefs and values impact the way we interpret our research findings. Reflecting on how our actions, perspectives and preferences may bias research results is a reflexivity exercise (Simons, 2009, p. 95). Case study research—one of the methods utilized in this thesis—can be particularly vulnerable to subjectivities, so identifying my personal biases is necessary to promote transparency and prevent unintended consequences to the research’s credibility (ibid., p. 98). Therefore, it is worth raising my position on rabies elimination strategies: After extensive reading, it is clear I favor a particular approach to eliminating rabies, which involves administering surgical sterilization and vaccination to dogs. This could conflict with cultural attitudes and beliefs of people surveyed in this study (Toukhsati et al., 2012). Knowing this, especially given this thesis’ theoretical framework is situated in issues of culture and voice, the research is undertaken with special attention to remain open to views that are different from my own, making sure interviews do not have a persuasive affect (Simons, 2009, p. 98).

An important feature of an ethical study is the protection of those involved, especially the subjects interviewed (ibid., p. 230). In this study, all participants of in-depth interviews voluntarily participated, and anonymity was not required by the participants as determined through verbal permission to include interview transcripts in the thesis. For the survey component of the study, verbal consent was given by all interviewees after they were informed of the high-level purpose of the study and anonymity was assured.

A final thought on ethical considerations of this study involves the impact of translations. Since I do not speak Thai but the survey respondents and one key informant did, the interviews were done in Thai and translated by the interviewer to English. The process of translation is a decision-making process that involves interpretation and subjectivity about meaning and words, and it brings about ‘cultural transfer’ since translations reflect the translator’s own cultural understandings (Birch, Edwards, & Edwards, 1996). This could invite an unintended alteration of interview subjects’ meanings as a result. However as
described above, the interviews were conducted by a resident community member who speaks Thai to help prevent cultural transfer and misinterpretations.

4.3 RESEARCH METHODS

The following research methods—case study, in-depth interview and survey—were chosen as the best tools for generating qualitative data in relation to the theoretical framework and methodology of this thesis, as discussed above. The reasons these methods were selected for this study are elaborated below, with some considerations of their inherent limitations as well.

4.3.1 CASE STUDY

This thesis highlights a single case study: the Bangkok Dog Sterilization and Vaccination Program (BDSVP). A case study is a primarily qualitative approach\(^1\) to research that aims to understand meanings and interpretations surrounding a particular phenomenon (Simons, 2009, p. 12). It does so through in-depth data collection from multiple sources of information and participants, guided by prior-developed theoretical propositions, such as those of this thesis’ theoretical framework (Merriam, 2009, p. 43; Simons, 2009, p. 26). Case studies have clearly defined boundaries, so what falls within the parameters of the unit of study and what does not is distinct, making it a ‘bounded system’ (Merriam, 2009, p. 43). A case study is one way to explore particular entities or instances like a program in-depth, such as the BDSVP, in contrast to studying an active process, such as how rabies spreads, which would fall under different quantitative and qualitative research approaches like ethnography or grounded theory (Gerring, 2007, p. 1; Merriam, 2009, pp. 40–44). Case studies are ‘descriptive’ in that the end product of a case study is generally a verbal and visual ‘thick description’ of the unit of study, as opposed to numerical, meaning it provides a fully comprehensive explanation of the bounded system, in this case, the BDSVP.

\(^1\) Some consider case study research a ‘method,’ others a ‘strategy,’ but here it is called an ‘approach’ to distinguish between data collection methods that enrichen the case study like surveys and interviews later discussed in this chapter (Simons, 2009, p. 11).
This thesis utilizes case study research because while the BDSVP is a bounded system, within it the relationships and interrelated influences between the cultural context in Bangkok communities, the flourishing nature of Bangkok’s stray dog population, the existence of rabies, and communities’ involvement in combatting rabies are less clear. These factors make it a complex empirical inquiry well suited for a case study, since the approach enables researchers to “uncover the interaction of significant factors characteristic of the phenomenon” under investigation (Merriam, 2009, p. 43).

Case studies also have some limitations. In a qualitative case study, the researcher is the main instrument for data collection, interpretation and reporting, which has the potential to create additional opportunities for bias over other research approaches where multiple researchers and tools are used to collect and analyze data (Merriam, 2009, p. 39; Simons, 2009, p. 31). Case studies also tend to be less generalizable than other types of qualitative and quantitative approaches like random sample surveys or experimental design research, since the results are limited to explanations about the particular unit under investigation (Merriam, 2009, pp. 51–52).

4.3.2 INTERVIEWS

Interviews are one of the most common methods of knowledge production in qualitative research processes. In this study, interviews consist mainly of face-to-face conversations where the interviewer asks questions of the interviewee who responds with his or her answers (Brinkmann, 2008, p. 3). This thesis uses two forms of interviews to collect its data. The first is semi-structured, in-depth interviews to understand extensive details about the BDSVP case study from those who are closely involved in its planning and execution. The second is a qualitative survey to gather information directly from people who have strong potential to be impacted by the case study given their geographic proximity to the Bang Bon district’s mobile clinic. Interviews were chosen as the data collection method because they were expected to yield the most tailored information to be able to comprehensively answer the research questions through this thesis’ theoretical framework.
4.3.2.1 SEMI-STRUCTURED, IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW

To gather background information about the BDSVP case study highlighted earlier, in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with five key informants who have intimate knowledge of the case study and/or its context. These people are staff and leadership of Soi Dog Foundation and the Hope Thailand, and individuals actively involved in dog rescuing in Bang Bon, Bangkok and who work closely with Soi Dog Foundation. Semi-structured interviews were selected to guide the conversation in the direction needed to inform the case study and thus the thesis’ research questions—primarily sub-question A—while addressing the theoretical framework and providing flexibility for interviewees to share their views and understanding of the world, and more specifically the BDSVP (Merriam, 2009, p. 90).

4.3.2.2 QUALITATIVE SURVEY

To present a different perspective than those of the key informants closely involved in or aware of BDSVP operations, a survey was conducted in the Bang Bon community. This study’s survey can be considered an interview since it was conducted as a conversation between the interviewer, Ms. Payga Punmiles, and interviewees, with responses given to semi-structured, open-ended questions. This enabled deeper probing by Ms. Punmiles to uncover issues around respondents’ perceptions, opinions, experiences, beliefs, cultural contexts and other complexities, which are inherently relevant to the BDSVP case study and this thesis’ theoretical framework (Given, 2008b, p. 4).

This survey used a small, nonprobability sample, meaning the results are not generalizable; they do not represent the broader population in a statistically significant way (Julien, 2008, pp. 3, 7; Merriam, 2009, p. 77). Instead this survey aims for transferability, which means the results may be used as reference to other studies with similar contexts (Scheyvens, 2017, p. 2).

Ms. Punmiles played a key role in this thesis by conducting and translating all 22 survey interviews and one key informant interview, as well as providing critical insights that informed the survey questionnaire design and this study overall. As someone who is heavily involved in volunteer dog rescue work in Bangkok, especially in Bang Bon, this study greatly benefited from Ms. Punmiles’ invaluable knowledge, time and passion.
This survey’s sample is also a ‘convenience sample’ in that respondents were the first 22 people encountered in the area surrounding the Ninsukaram Temple mobile clinic in Bang Bon, Bangkok, as long as they met the criteria of living or working in the district. Therefore, the sample also has elements of ‘cluster sampling’ in that respondents were identified based on geography (Julien, 2008, p. 7). This is important because the survey is designed to capture the experiences, views and behaviors of people who may have encountered communication from the BDSVP team in that district. That said, critics of convenience samples suggest they are less likely to produce credible or rich information (Merriam, 2009, p. 79). It was also important that the sample represents both dog owners and community members who may care for dogs but do not own a dog themselves, since the BDSVP aims to increase sterilization and vaccination behaviors as well as community-led stray dog responsibility among both these groups. Given that, the sample also has traits of a ‘quota sample’ since it includes individuals with certain characteristics (Julien, 2008, p. 7). The sample size of the survey is 22 households, which is believed to have achieved “reasonable coverage of the phenomenon given the purpose of the study” (Patton, 2002 in Merriam, 2009, p. 80). The interviews stopped once there was frequent redundancy in responses (Lincoln & Guba, 1985 in Merriam, 2009, p. 80).

This survey aims for ‘internal validity’ and ‘reliability’ but not ‘external validity’: The data should help answer the research questions of this thesis without distortion from other factors, but it does not intend to represent the views of all who live and work in the district under study (Julien, 2008, p. 8). The qualitative survey was selected as a primary research method to generate an understanding of people’s awareness, behaviors, motivations, experiences and views regarding the BDSVP and stray dog care. This helps determine whether the BDSVP’s communication tactics are participatory and if there are connections between the program’s communication tactics and community-based dog vaccination and population control efforts for the elimination of rabies in Bang Bon, Bangkok. The next section explains how this thesis operationalizes the theoretical framework to capture data using the research methods described above, which are then analyzed to answer the research questions.
4.4 OPERATIONALIZATION OF THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK + DATA ANALYSIS PROCESS

This section explains the data analysis process and uses a table to show how the core concepts from this thesis’ theoretical framework are carried through the research design. The table gives examples of the general types of questions asked in the in-depth and survey interviews to collect data that adequately respond to the research questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core theoretical concept</th>
<th>Data collection methods</th>
<th>Interview question types</th>
<th>Related research questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ownership</td>
<td>Key informant interviews</td>
<td>Program goals, what ownership means, why this matters to rabies</td>
<td>Overarching, Sub-question B, Sub-question C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Stray dog care and motivations; perceptions of rabies control and stray dog population control responsibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication purpose</td>
<td>Key informant interviews</td>
<td>Communication tactic rationale</td>
<td>Overarching, Sub-question A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Knowledge of BDSVP initiatives</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Key informant interviews</td>
<td>Communication targeting</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Engagement with mobile clinic staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialogue</td>
<td>Key informant interviews</td>
<td>Community engagement: why, how, who</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>How issues of culture manifest in program design and community behaviors</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>Key informant interviews</td>
<td>Motivations for sterilization/vaccination behaviors and stray dog care; perceptions of mobile clinics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Who can participate, shape, decide, give ideas, act; why these people; how?</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the interest of brevity, these are high-level overviews of the general types of questions that were asked; specific survey questions can be found in the survey questionnaire in the appendix.
The data analysis process for this thesis is comparative and inductive, common to qualitative and interview data analysis. Using MAXQDA software, individual data points were compared to other data collected in the study, making it comparative, and data relevant to the research questions were given codes to show themes in the data (Richards, 2015; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, pp. 102–202, 206; Glaser, 1965, p. 439). The below code cloud shows code use frequency; codes that occurred more often in the transcriptions are displayed in larger fonts. Taken together, the codes and the core theoretical concepts outlined in the theoretical framework table above provide a structure to analyze the data and answer this thesis’ research questions.

<table>
<thead>
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<td>All</td>
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<td>10 Participation</td>
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The data analysis process for this thesis is comparative and inductive, common to qualitative and interview data analysis. Using MAXQDA software, individual data points were compared to other data collected in the study, making it comparative, and data relevant to the research questions were given codes to show themes in the data (Richards, 2015; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, pp. 102–202, 206; Glaser, 1965, p. 439). The below code cloud shows code use frequency; codes that occurred more often in the transcriptions are displayed in larger fonts. Taken together, the codes and the core theoretical concepts outlined in the theoretical framework table above provide a structure to analyze the data and answer this thesis’ research questions.
4.5 LIMITATIONS

This study has the following limitations:

- The small-scale nature of the qualitative survey means that while it may indicate trends that could be explored in subsequent research, it is not representative of the Bang Bon community’s views (Scheyvens, 2017, p. 80).

- Additional stakeholders such as government, academic institutions, public health experts and particularly participants of the Hope Thailand community dialogues could have served as key informants to this study. Limited time or an inability to make contact prevented this study from including the perspectives of all potential informants with relevant knowledge to this topic.

- More detailed information, particularly from the Hope Thailand, would have provided better insights into how participatory their work really is. Given this, the assessment is limited to the knowledge I had at the time of writing.
5. ANALYSIS

This chapter presents the findings of semi-structured in-depth interviews that provide context about the BDSVP case study as well as findings from the qualitative survey. These data are analyzed through the theoretical framework established in the Literature review chapter, which involves core concepts related to participatory development communication, including communication purpose, access, dialogue, culture, voice, feedback, cultural reflexivity, agency, participation and ownership. Through the lens of these core theoretical concepts, the following analysis builds to answer this thesis’ research questions.

5.1 COMMUNICATION PURPOSE

According to key informants from Soi Dog Foundation, the following activities encompass the repertoire of mobile clinic communication tactics. Here the communication purpose, a core theoretical concept of this thesis, is discussed alongside these tactics.

Soi Dog Foundation partners with local municipalities to find a suitable space for a mobile clinic to set up within the local community; this is generally temples, but sometimes learning facilities and other public spaces. If the program’s preferred space does not want the mobile clinic there, the district manager may try to negotiate or address concerns, but ultimately the decision is up to the space’s overseer. Venues and communities do not always welcome the mobile clinics. Here the communication purpose is persuasion.

Once a venue for the mobile clinic is confirmed, the municipal district manager and Soi Dog Foundation conduct local outreach to inform residents of the free services, why Soi Dog Foundation trucks will be driving around capturing and releasing dogs, and to ask for communities’ help in locating and catching dogs. They do this through social media; brochures; a large banner at the mobile clinic; a loudspeaker attached to Soi Dog Foundation trucks, which drive around catching and releasing stray dogs while announcing the mobile clinic’s purpose and services; and talking with community leaders. Here the communication purpose is to inform and educate, but also to persuade people to bring their dogs to the clinic for vaccination and sterilization or help locate stray dogs, albeit doing so in a human-dignity preserving manner (Beltrán, 1979).
In partnership with Soi Dog Foundation’s mobile clinic program, an NGO called the Hope Thailand is working with communities around Thailand, including in Bang Bon and other districts of Bangkok, to educate them about the importance of rabies vaccines and sterilization as well as Soi Dog Foundation’s free services. Hope Thailand’s overarching communication purpose is persuasion in that they aim to shift the perception of free-roaming dogs from being seen as a nuisance to a shared community responsibility and to
prevent the growth of the stray dog population. But the way in which they do this is more nuanced and will be analyzed later in this chapter. These goals are relevant to this thesis in that community-led vaccination and population control improves long-term, sustainable rabies prevention efforts (Taylor et al., 2017).

Overall, the BDSVP’s communication purpose is primarily persuasion, which can be appropriate within participatory approaches when it is not the main reason for communicating (Beltrán, 1979). But given that persuasion, outreach and education are the primary purposes of communication with the intended outcome a particular behavior—dog sterilization and vaccination—the BDSVP’s communication purpose is most aligned with dominant ComDev paradigms.

5.2 ACCESS

Access—or the ability to receive messages (Beltrán, 1979)—relates to who the BDSVP targets in communication efforts, who it does not, and how effective its communication is in reaching community members.

“Soi Dog Foundation determines which communication tactics to use based on people’s behaviors and our target groups. For example, brochures can reach people who stay home all the time or someone who can’t reach social media. Loudspeakers reach elderly persons because it is easier for them to hear than it is for them to read a leaflet. And social media is used to attract the new generation.” — Key informant

Soi Dog Foundation mainly targets owners of free-roaming dogs and community members who care for stray dogs. Of survey respondents, only two fifths had heard of the Soi Dog Foundation mobile clinic. But it was not until within roughly 2 km of the mobile clinic that respondents began reporting knowledge of it. Four respondents said—unprompted—that the program’s outreach is poor based on the community’s lack of knowledge about the clinic. More than half of respondents who knew of the program had learned of it from Soi Dog Foundation dog catchers driving down the street, which tended to be busier main roads near the mobile clinic. One third of respondents who knew of the clinic had heard of it from a neighbor or friend. And while most survey respondents reported awareness of the importance of vaccinations and sterilizations to prevent rabies and dog population growth, respectively, this knowledge usually came from other sources, with only one respondent
learning about it from Soi Dog Foundation outreach. These data show that while Soi Dog Foundation’s intended access to the community is broad, in actuality their reach and thus the community’s access appears to be limited.

The Hope Thailand’s work is responsive to calls they receive for assistance to facilitate negotiations with dog owners, feeders, local government and other community members, as applicable. This project will be expanded upon in subsequent sections. Anyone who knows of the Hope Thailand can ask for assistance—the organization receives up to 120 calls per day from local governments, dog feeders and individuals seeking this assistance—but it does not proactively conduct widespread outreach. Therefore, at a high-level and similar to Soi Dog Foundation’s work, the community has limited access to the Hope Thailand given its lack of outreach.

5.3 CULTURE

Understanding the degree to which culture—in this context: community needs, values, spiritual beliefs, attitudes and practices—are accounted for in the BDSVP is an important consideration of how participatory its communication tactics are and helps answer the research questions. As discussed in the Background chapter, spirituality and religious beliefs have potential to impact people’s views toward dog sterilization and consequentially, the BDSVP (Toukhsati et al., 2012). While many people have told key informants to this study that they did not sterilize their dogs for religious reasons, none of the survey respondents shared this view. In fact, all survey respondents who had heard of the Soi Dog Foundation mobile clinic expressed positive views toward its purpose and said it respects their cultural values and beliefs, even if they personally choose not to sterilize their dogs.

Community needs, also a consideration of culture, must be accounted for in culturally reflexive, participatory programs. One aspect of the mobile clinic program that could better address community needs and thus program outcomes is a matter of convenience. The mobile clinic is only open on weekdays due to staffing capacity, but key informants involved in dog rescuing have heard the operating hours conflict with many people’s work schedules. This is an example of a community need that is unaddressed in the mobile clinic program design, but could be identified in dialogue with the community, which is discussed in the next section.
The Hope Thailand’s work does aim to understand and account for individuals’ needs through the process of dialogue and identifying agreeable solutions to community identified dog-related problems; it therefore seems at least somewhat responsive to issues of culture.

5.4 DIALOGUE + VOICE

Dialogue, or individuals’ abilities to both send and receive messages, thus exercise voice, enables all people to express their needs and wants (Beltrán, 1979; Downing, 2016 in Hemer & Tufte, 2016, pp. 9–11). Fundamental to participatory development, these concepts will be discussed here to illuminate whether community members—and which ones—are able to engage in dialogue and thus express their voice with regards to the BDSVP’s initiatives.

Soi Dog Foundation says they have not solicited or received ideas from community members about the mobile clinics but they are open to comments and suggestions, discussions and feedback by way of social media or email. Therefore, while the program is available to receive input from development recipients, it does not actively engage in dialogue to capture the voices of those targeted by the program. Survey responses reflect this: One third of respondents that had heard of the mobile clinic had an opportunity to proactively ask Soi Dog Foundation dog catchers about the mobile clinic program and its services when the catchers drove around in their branded trucks capturing and releasing free-roaming dogs to the streets after being sterilized at the mobile clinic. But none of the respondents were solicited for questions or feedback during the program design or implementation, thus they were not engaged in dialogue. Therefore, it appears that while Soi Dog Foundation engages municipal leaders to negotiate with community leaders who have capacity to accept or decline proposals to set up mobile clinics at their venues, there are not opportunities for other community members to exercise their voice. This indicates an imbalance in political economy.

The Hope Thailand acts as a negotiator and convener via two workstreams. The first is discussing and negotiating with individuals who plan to abandon unwanted dogs—which contributes to the growth of the stray dog population and thus rabies—to understand their concerns and find a mutually acceptable solution so the dogs remain with the owners. When this is not possible, the Hope Thailand finds a new home. Sometimes community members contact the Hope Thailand directly, but other times animal welfare advocates or
the local government initiate. This means that while all community members who want to give up their dogs can engage in dialogue and thus exercise voice, negotiations are not always initiated or wanted by everyone. The second workstream brings together stray dog feeders and other community members, local governments, Thailand’s Department of Livestock Development and civil society, such as Soi Dog Foundation and other NGOs and funders, to identify solutions to community-identified stray-dog related problems, such as the below example.

"A group of dog feeders who take care of community dogs called for our help. A dog had bitten a child and the government came to take away the dog after the child’s parent reported the bite to local authorities. The feeder didn’t want the dog to be taken to the terrible government shelter. So I brought together the community head, a local government representative, the feeder group and the child’s parent to find an acceptable solution all parties could agree on. This resulted in the feeder paying for the child’s medical expenses and the feeder group agreeing to take full responsibility for any future incidents with community dogs.”

— Key informant, the Hope Thailand

This raises questions of who can participate in dialogue. Anyone can initiate a community dialogue facilitated by the Hope Thailand: Sometimes community members such as dog feeders do, other times the local government. But only individuals—at any level of society—and agencies directly involved in the case are invited to the meeting by the Hope Thailand, indicating restricted access to general members of the public. In the meeting, anyone can speak and exercise voice. Therefore, it can be said that while the Hope Thailand’s access is limited, their work does promote dialogue with community members when these individuals are involved in a dog-related conflict. This leads to a discussion of agency, which comes in the next section.

5.5 FEEDBACK, CULTURAL REFLEXIVITY, AGENCY + PARTICIPATION

While Soi Dog Foundation is open to receiving feedback from the community about their ideas, concerns and suggestions, less than half of survey respondents who had heard of the

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4 Certain details about the community meeting process were not captured in the interview, such as where the meetings take place or which negotiation and facilitation methods were used. In hindsight, this information could better indicate the degree to which the Hope Thailand’s work is participatory.
mobile clinic knew how to provide input about the program. Also, by encouraging particular ways for individuals to give feedback, Soi Dog Foundation exerts a sense of power over how people can express voice. Given community members are not solicited for feedback and Soi Dog Foundation reports they have not received any, the program is not culturally reflexive in that it does not initiate or engage in dialogue, and therefore it does not listen to community voice. This means individuals have not had opportunities for agency in program design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and thus the program does not foster participation.

Analysis of the Hope Thailand’s work is more complex. At a macro level, it does not solicit feedback from communities about its approach. The organization says their community negotiation and facilitation method is based on past experiences of successes and failures. The organization is a small group of primarily self-funded volunteers whose passions for helping stray dogs grew into a full-time case load.

But at a micro level, the program does take feedback into account. For instance, when negotiating with people who want to abandon their dogs, the Hope Thailand tries to address their concerns by helping find solutions to the reasons they want to give up their dogs. When a feasible solution is not found, the Hope Thailand will help people find new homes for their dogs. In this way, any community member who initiates dialogue with the Hope Thailand—or who is approached by the Hope Thailand based on a referral from a third-party—has the ultimate decision-making power, meaning they have agency, and thus the Hope Thailand facilitates culturally reflexive participation. In its other line of work—facilitating community meetings to negotiate dog-related conflicts—the Hope Thailand encourages suggestions from all involved in the meeting to identify a solution that works for everyone, especially those directly in conflict. Since mutual consensus is mandated, all parties have decision-making power and thus agency, meaning the meetings yield some degree of participation. But given the municipal presence and other potential local-level power imbalances between those in the meeting, biases could sway the outcome in ways that were unspecified in the data collection. This research is therefore unable to say conclusively whether the Hope Thailand’s work is participatory or culturally reflexive.
Community ownership should be engrained in participatory processes, but it can also be an outcome. The latter is the aim for the BDSVP since rabies elimination efforts, including dog vaccination and sterilization, are better sustained when communities take leadership roles in carrying these out (Denduangboripant et al., 2005; Gongal & Wright, 2011; Taylor et al., 2017; Toukhsati et al., 2012). This section looks at whether people in the Bang Bon district are sterilizing and vaccinating dogs and caring for stray dogs, which is indicative of whether community-based population control efforts are underway, addressing this thesis’ research questions.

While all applicable survey respondents but one had vaccinated their dogs against rabies in the last year, half of dogs had not been sterilized, and most of the surgeries had not been done by the mobile clinic. Those who sterilized their free-roaming dogs mainly did so to prevent a burden to themselves, while only one respondent reported wanting to help curb the growth of the stray dog population. The survey also explored people’s care of stray dogs and their views of who is responsible for rabies control and stray dog population management. Half of respondents reported taking care of stray dogs by feeding them, but only four respondents cover medical care related to sickness and two facilitate vaccination and sterilization for stray dogs. Almost half of respondents believe the government is responsible for controlling rabies, while slightly over half believe it is the responsibility of the community and/or a collective effort of various actors such as government, NGOs, community, individuals, etc. Likewise, almost all respondents believe stray dogs should be surgically sterilized to prevent population growth, but over half of respondents believe the government is responsible for that. These data are evidence of a lack of community ownership of dog vaccination and population control efforts for the elimination of rabies in Bang Bon.

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5 This study’s data did not determine whether the Hope Thailand’s work has facilitated community ownership; instead the discussion here pertains mostly to the survey data about the Soi Dog Foundation mobile clinic program.
This analysis has found that the Bangkok Dog Sterilization and Vaccination Program (BDSVP) case study primarily falls within dominant paradigms of ComDev. As shown in the below map, when analyzed through this thesis’ theoretical framework, most aspects of the case study involve top-down, one-way communication approaches. That said, there are some elements of the Hope Thailand’s communication tactics that facilitate participation.

**Figure 6 Core theoretical concept map**

The primary purpose of the Soi Dog Foundation mobile clinic program’s communication is to inform, educate and persuade its audiences. While this can be a communication purpose in participatory approaches, it should not be the main one. Similarly, while Soi Dog Foundation intends for its communication efforts to have a wide reach, in effect the community has limited access to its communication, as evident in their lack of knowledge of the program. Similarly, Soi Dog Foundation staff do not engage in interpersonal outreach or solicit input from the community at large, meaning there are not clear opportunities for individuals to exercise voice through dialogue with program staff. While survey respondents feel the
program respects their cultural values, other issues of culture are unaccommodated such as community needs. Given that the program does not seek community feedback in the program design and there are unmet needs, the program is not culturally reflexive. Community members do not have agency to impact program decisions, meaning the mobile clinic program does not facilitate participation.

The Hope Thailand’s primary communication purpose is also persuasion at a high level in that their goal is to shift the way communities think of stray dogs to be considered a shared community responsibility. But at a micro level, persuasion is not the main communication purpose, but rather to reach community-led, mutually agreed upon solutions to dog-related conflicts. While anyone can reach out to the Hope Thailand for support to negotiate or facilitate conflict resolution around dog-related disputes, the organization does not conduct outreach to increase awareness of its work; therefore, community access to the Hope Thailand is limited. The Hope Thailand’s programs do engage community members at all levels of society in dialogue, providing opportunities for them to voice concerns of culture such as needs and values, but community members are not able to give feedback about the Hope Thailand’s approach generally outside of the context of the specific engagement. And while community members have decision-making power within the negotiations facilitated by the Hope Thailand, questions remain about the extent to which local power dynamics bias outcomes. This means this study cannot conclusively say the Hope Thailand fosters culturally reflexive participation by enabling community members’ agency.

**Overarching research question:**

To what extent have participatory communication tactics of the Bangkok Dog Sterilization and Vaccination Program (BDSVP) influenced community-based dog vaccination and population control efforts for the elimination of rabies in the Bang Bon district of Bangkok, Thailand?

**Response:**

The data find that the BDSVP case study’s communication approaches fall within the dominant ComDev paradigm more than within the participatory approach. They also find that community ownership of rabies prevention strategies is limited, with mixed levels of
commitment to sterilizing free-roaming owned dogs, and minimal commitment to sterilizing and vaccinating stray dogs. Therefore, it can be said that the BDSVP case study’s communication tactics do not appear to be participatory, nor have they influenced community-based dog vaccination and population control efforts for the elimination of rabies in Bang Bon district of Bangkok, Thailand.

A final note of consideration pertains to striking a balance between theory and field. This thesis has explored the role of participatory communication in rabies control efforts. Rabies is an epidemic of massive proportions beyond just the Bang Bon community. Participatory communication is a hands-on approach that usually requires intensive, prolonged time and financial resources (Lennie & Tacchi, 2011). In reality, given the amount of people and the geographic range rabies touches, as well as the technical complexities of its eradication (WHO, 2004), it is challenging to capture and represent the wide-ranging voices of ‘all people’ as culturally reflexive, participatory development communication projects strive to do (Clammer, 2012; Freire, 1972; Hemer & Tufte, 2016; Tufte, 2017). In view of Freire’s (1972, pt. 1224) caution against carrying out rapid, non-dialogic initiatives, there is room for research and practice to explore how participatory communication can scale nationally, regionally and even globally to end rabies and other public health and humanitarian crises in a resource- and time-efficient manner.
REFERENCES


Qualitative survey questionnaire

Survey introduction:

This survey aims to understand whether people sterilize and vaccinate their own dogs and/or soi dogs in the Bangkok district, where the Ninsukaram Temple and the Soi Dog Foundation’s dog sterilization and vaccination clinic are located. This survey also asks questions about people’s knowledge of and engagement with the Soi Dog Foundation mobile clinic and rabies elimination activities. The survey data will be used in a Master’s degree thesis about the link between communication and rabies control. Survey respondents will remain anonymous.

Survey questions:

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<th>DEMOGRAPHICS (OPTIONAL)</th>
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| 1 | Do you live or work in this district? | • Yes  
• No  
• Other: |
| 2 | If yes | Age |
| 3 | Gender | • Male  
• Female  
• Other |
| 4 | Religious affiliation, if any | If no | Discontinue survey |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DOG OWNERSHIP, KNOWLEDGE AND CARE</th>
<th></th>
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| 5 | Do you know what rabies is? | • Yes  
• No  
• Other: |
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>If yes</td>
<td>What do you know about rabies?</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
| 7 | Do you own a dog? | • Yes  
• No  
• Other: |   |
| 8 | If yes | Is your dog free-roaming or is it contained at your home? | • Free-roaming  
• Contained at home |
| 9 | Has your dog been vaccinated against rabies in the last year? | • Yes  
• No  
• Other: |   |
| 10 | If yes | Why did you choose to vaccinate your dog against rabies? |   |
| 11 | If no | What is the reason your dog was not vaccinated this year? |   |
| 12 | Is your dog sterilized to prevent it from getting pregnant or impregnating another dog? | • Yes  
• No  
• Other: |   |
| 13 | If yes | Why did you choose to sterilize your dog? |   |
| 14 | How was/is your dog sterilized? | • Surgical sterilization  
• Hormonal injections |   |
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<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td>Why have you chosen this sterilization method?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Other:</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>If no</td>
<td>What is the reason your dog is not sterilized?</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Do you look after soi dog(s)?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>If yes</td>
<td>How do you care for soi dog(s)?</td>
<td>Feed them, Help to get them sterilized and vaccinated, Medical care, Other:</td>
<td></td>
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<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td>Why do you take care of soi dogs?</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>If no</td>
<td>Why not?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Have you heard of the mobile clinic at the Ninsukaram Temple that provides free vaccinations and sterilizations for dogs?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>If yes</td>
<td>How did you hear about this program?</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td>What do you think of this program?</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td>Does the program respect your cultural values and beliefs?</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td></td>
<td>Have you taken a dog to the mobile clinic for sterilization and vaccination?</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>If yes</td>
<td>Why did you take a dog to the clinic?</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>If no</td>
<td>Why have you not taken a dog to the clinic?</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td></td>
<td>Have you helped Soi Dog Foundation dog catchers locate or catch a soi dog so it could be brought to the clinic?</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>Have you had an opportunity to ask clinic staff or municipal workers questions about the clinic and its services?</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>Did anyone from the clinic or municipal workers ask for your ideas or concerns about the clinic and its services?</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td><strong>If yes</strong> What are your ideas or concerns about the clinic?</td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>Have you noticed whether your ideas or concerns have been incorporated in the clinic operations?</td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>If you want to provide feedback to the clinic staff, do you know how to?</td>
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<td>34</td>
<td>Have you heard about the importance of vaccinating and sterilizing your dogs or soi dogs from other sources other than Soi Dog Foundation (e.g. another person, group, media, etc.)?</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td><strong>If yes</strong> Where did you hear this?</td>
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<td>36</td>
<td>What did you learn?</td>
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<td>37</td>
<td><strong>PERCEIVED RESPONSIBILITIES</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Whose responsibility is it to control rabies in dogs?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Government</td>
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<td>- Community working together</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Individuals</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Other:</td>
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<td>38</td>
<td>Should soi dogs be surgically sterilized to limit the soi dog population?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Yes</td>
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<td>39</td>
<td>If yes Whose responsibility is it to ensure soi dogs are sterilized?</td>
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<td>40</td>
<td>If no Why should soi dogs not be surgically sterilized?</td>
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