

# The Motorcycle Taxi Driver as a Community Reporter: Guidelines for the Promotion of a Marginalized Group's Participation in the Improvement of Public Space by Using Information and Communication Technology

Nattapong Punnoi

Department of Urban and Regional Planning,  
Faculty of Architecture, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand  
Email: [nattapaong.p@chula.ac.th](mailto:nattapaong.p@chula.ac.th)

## ABSTRACT

**M**otorcycle taxi drivers are a group of laborers in the informal sector who are socially shunned and are often harassed by the authorities and local influential people. Research has found that motorcycle taxi drivers have the potential to gather information concerning problems occurring in public spaces to be compiled into a database to encourage problem solving. Furthermore, smartphones are found to be a tool that assists motorcycle taxi drivers in effectively collecting information relating to problems that they encounter. Thus, the researcher, in collaboration with motorcycle taxi driver groups, has developed key concepts and an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) system that can contribute to the motorcycle taxi drivers' becoming community reporters. Guidelines are also proposed for using the ICT system for reporting community problems to build a creative relationship between motorcycle taxi drivers and government institutions in managing public space.

**Keywords:** *Bangkok, motorcycle taxi driver, information and communication technology, public participation, urban management*

## INTRODUCTION

Public space management by Bangkok Metropolitan Authority (BMA) can be considered a failure, as can be seen in the deterioration occurring to public spaces around the city, namely, substandard and bumpy sidewalks, dangerous road conditions, garbage and wastewater disposal problems, and public space encroaching. Moreover, the executives' attitudes, personnel's incompetency, and corruption

problems are all significant factors obstructing BMA's improvement of public spaces. A situation like this has made the quality of life in Bangkok startlingly below standard in comparison to the world's leading cities (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2015).

Currently, Bangkok citizens have begun to inform BMA of their needs and the problems regarding public space management so that the government may be

aware of the places that require urgent attention. This effort can be seen in the demands for restoration and care of public spaces through various printed media and social activities organized to draw attention to the problems. In the past ten years, the evolution of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and the growth of Social Network Service (SNS) have facilitated online expression of demands and problems regarding public space management. A large number of websites now exist as platforms for people to share their demands for BMA to improve public spaces to meet their needs (Figure 1). This form of expression reflects the growth of democracy, awareness of rights, and attempts to create people's power to promote efficient urban governance. The phenomenon is supported by the civil society, scholars, and press with the hope that BMA will be driven to conduct better management of urban space.

Under the aforementioned conditions, the researcher has found that motorcycle taxi drivers in Bangkok have the potential to collect and create a database of problems occurring in public space; the purpose is to report such problems to the public and relevant agencies for concrete solutions. The motorcycle taxi is a semi-public transport used by people living in alleys and lanes that are far from the main roads to arrive at the public transportation service points such as bus stops, skytrain stations, etc. Motorcycle taxi drivers form stations in residential and commercial areas at various spots in alleys and public transport service points (Figure 2). Each station has its own specific service area, and motorcycle taxi drivers registered to one station cannot offer service in the areas allocated to other stations. Thus, most motorcycle taxi drivers are residents within or nearby the communities in which they operate.



Figure 1:  
Examples of the use of SNS and websites to demonstrate the need to improve public space in Bangkok



Figure 2:  
Atmosphere at motorcycle taxi stations in Bangkok. The orange vests worn by motorcycle taxi drivers have been the unique feature of the profession since before the government began having them registered.

The motorcycle taxi service was born out of the fact that the road networks in Bangkok are composed of deep alleys and lack urban growth control, as well as the failure of the government's public transportation system (Puapongsakorn, 1994). Such causes compel a large number of people living in distant areas from the main roads to rely on motorcycle taxis in their everyday life. The relative ease of joining the profession, coupled with the demand that increases with the population in Bangkok, a large number of laborers have elected to become motorcycle taxi drivers. In the present day, there are over 100,000 motorcycle taxis and over 5,000 motorcycle taxi stations spread throughout Bangkok (Department of Land Transport, 2017). However, these motorcycle taxi drivers are laborers in the informal sector who are often overlooked by government agencies, causing them to fall under the control of local influential people (Puapongsakorn, 1994; Selaanan, 2005; Sopranzetti, 2013). Even though the government and BMA have collaborated to register motorcycle taxi drivers, the process has shown no impact on the improvement of their quality of life and motorcycle taxi services (Selaanan, 2005; Sopranzetti, 2013). This is because the government's registration is merely an inventory of the drivers, but the government plays no role in controlling the safety of service, the fare, or the quality of life of the drivers. As a result, the drivers are still subject to giving illegal payments to local influential people in exchange for protection and facilitation in case of problems. Although motorcycle taxi drivers have formed the Motorcycle Taxi Drivers Association of Thailand to serve as a medium for negotiation with the government regarding the members' quality of life, most motorcycle taxi drivers are still struggling with financial and social hardships (Sopranzetti, 2013; Yuyen and Saiyawong, 2015).

Apart from the numbers and the many service areas spanning alleys throughout Bangkok, and the nature of the work that revolves around specific communities enables motorcycle taxi drivers to have a good understanding of their serviced area (Puapongsakorn, 1994; Sopranzetti, 2013). Also, the work allows them to witness problems occurring in public spaces of Bangkok, making them aware of the problems occurring in their communities. However, a significant obstacle is that motorcycle taxi drivers lack the channel to report community problems that they encounter to relevant agencies and to the public. Moreover, they are often not accepted by the society and exploited by government agencies and informal powers (Sopranzetti, 2013). This creates

a wall barring their participation in reporting the problems they witness to relevant agencies. From a preliminary survey, the researcher saw the possibility of using smart phones and information technology to devise a method for collecting information and creating a communication channel. This is based on the fact that at present, the use of smartphones by Thai people is widespread (National statistical office, 2017), and the number of smartphone users among motorcycle taxi drivers is likely to increase. Thus, the researcher saw that encouraging them to use smartphones and online portals to report community problems will help inform relevant agencies and the public of the problems more conveniently and will serve as a database for concrete solutions to problems. Furthermore, the new role as community reporters will hopefully lead to an elevation of social status and quality of life for motorcycle taxi drivers in the future.

For these reasons, the researcher has collaborated with the Motorcycle Taxi Drivers Association of Thailand to implement surveys and action research for devising an online system and promotion methods to help motorcycle taxi drivers perform their duty as community reporters. Their role is to gather urban problems and report them to relevant organizations and the general public. This would promote motorcycle taxi drivers' participation in public space improvement. This article will present information indicating the present conditions and potentials of motorcycle taxi drivers to become community reporters. It will also propose a process for developing an IT system to collect urban problems submitted by motorcycle taxi drivers. In addition this article will relate observations that could encourage a discussion to find an appropriate method to promote participation by civil society organizations, especially a group of marginalized people such as motorcycle taxi drivers, with the aim to push for further development of Bangkok's public space management.

## METHODOLOGY

In the first step of this research, members of the Motorcycle Taxi Drivers Association of Thailand were surveyed and interviewed to determine the current conditions and their potentials as community reporters. The questionnaire survey was randomly taken by 760 motorcycle taxi drivers from around Bangkok, and the group interview was conducted with 21 volunteer participants.

After the survey of current conditions and community reporting potentials, the researcher conducted action research to develop key concepts in creating an ICT system for motorcycle taxi drivers to report and gather the problems that they observe. There were two groups who participated in the action research. The first group consisted of 20 members, all of whom are leaders of taxi service stations and have expressed their desire to take part in the development of key concepts and application as well as an online portal prototype. The other group consisted of 40 motorcycle taxi drivers in a community who have been approached by the researcher to test the created application and online portal. Added to the process of developing and testing the ICT system, a group interview was also conducted with all participants to explore methods to promote motorcycle taxi drivers as community reporters.

## RESULTS OF SURVEY OF CURRENT CONDITIONS AND POTENTIALS OF MOTORCYCLE TAXI DRIVERS

The findings from the survey questionnaire and interviews can be summarized as follows:

### Demographic Information of Respondents

Those who participated in the survey were 697 males (91.71%) and 63 females (8.29%). The majority were between 26 and 50 years of age. The education

levels of 41.7% of the respondents were below junior high school, which is Thailand's compulsory education level (Figure 3). Approximately 60% of the respondents were married, while 35% were single. 57.23% had children.

### Career Information

Most who participated in the survey had been working in the field for over 10 years, and the majority of them worked every day. 44.74% of the motorcycle taxi drivers said that they worked over 12 hours per day, while most said they worked between 8 and 10 hours per day. A number spent their holidays and low-passenger hours, as well as nighttime, performing extra works such as a laborer, messengers, and security guards (Figure 4). The respondents reported that their earnings amounted to approximately THB300 – 600 per day on average, which was between THB5,000 - 30,000 per month. The drivers who earned THB5,000 - 10,000 make up 40.5%, followed by those who earned THB12,000 - 15,000 at 36.7% and THB18,000 - 30,000 at 22.6% (Figure 5). Although some were married to a person with more wages than theirs, they were still considered low-income people in Bangkok, where the average household earning is as high as THB41,002 (National statistical office, 2016). In addition, they often face various occupational problems such as lack of welfare, accidents on the job, occupational health problems, lack of job security, harassment from government officers, and social discrimination. The above information indicates that motorcycle taxi drivers have a relatively low quality of life and encounter social problems, making them a marginalized group who are often ignored by the government and the public.

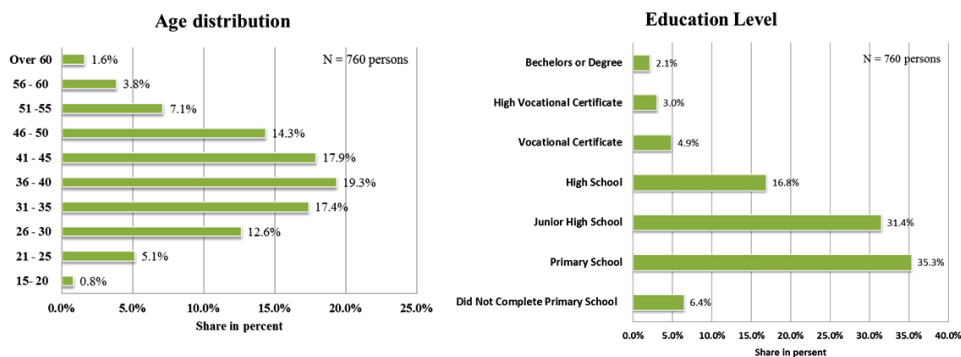


Figure 3:  
Age distribution and education level of motorcycle taxi drivers

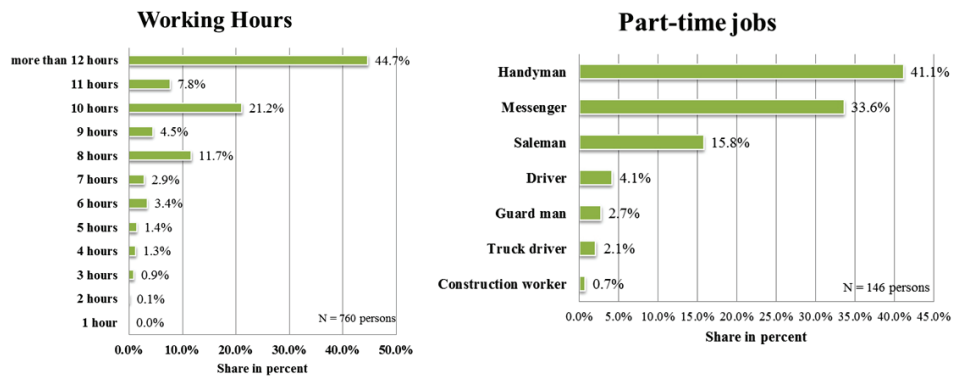


Figure 4:  
Working hours and part-time jobs of motorcycle taxi drivers

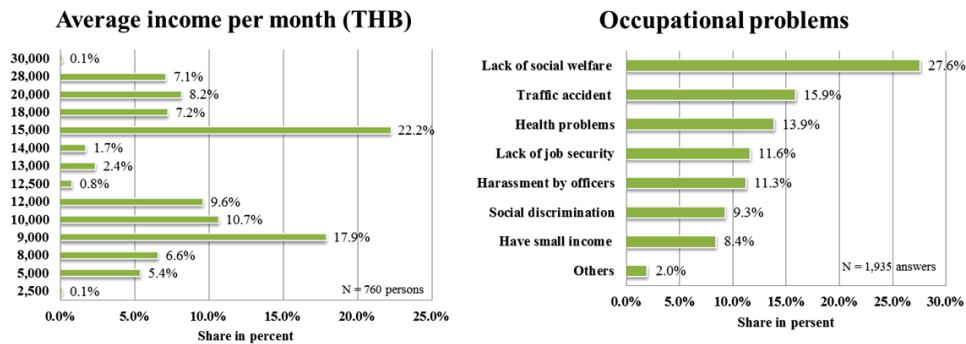


Figure 5:  
Average income and occupational problems of motorcycle taxi drivers

## Encounter of Public Space Problems and Participation in Problem Solving

Most motorcycle taxi drivers believed that they knew the communities in which they serviced well. Moreover, the interview revealed that they not only knew the transport infrastructure in their areas, but they also knew popular restaurants, special festivals, and careers and livelihood of people in the communities. While on the job, they often encountered problems in public space. The problems which are frequently seen include unsafe traffic, impaired roads and footpaths, garbage, crimes and drugs, wastewater and littering flowing into the water, homeless people, buildings and edifice constructed in public space, etc (Figure 6). It can be concluded that motorcycle taxi drivers witness public space problems within their communities in various dimensions.

When asked about the desired steps after encountering the public space problems, 52.7% responded that they wanted to inform responsible officials to have the problems solved. 27.17% of the respondents would like to share the problems on SNS and notify the media, and 15.90% would like to solve the problems by themselves. Of all the respondents, only 3.79% did not feel the need to take any action. However, when asked about past behavior, it was found that only 5% had ever reported the problems to government officials or relevant agencies.

The survey also found that the important obstacles to the participation in solving urban problems in the eyes of the motorcycle taxi drivers were the lack of channels to express their opinions and lack of knowledge regarding to which agency they could report the problems to have them solved. Some indicated that they had reported the problems to

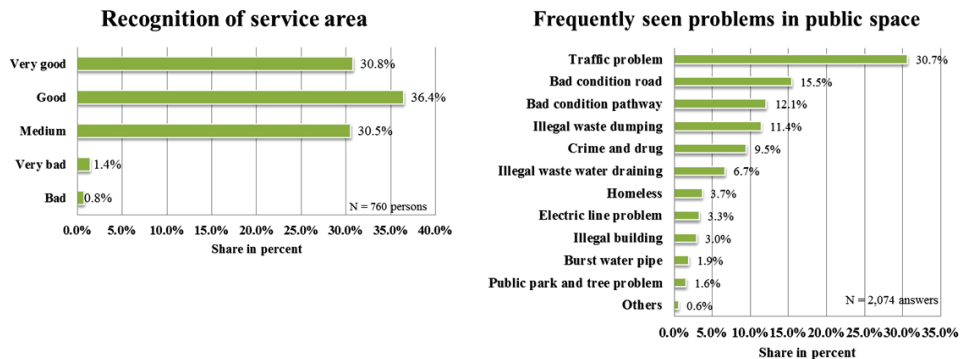


Figure 6:  
Recognition of service area and frequently seen problems in public space

relevant agencies but those agencies ignored their complaints and showed no further actions (Figure 7). Although BMA commonly offers the same treatment of complaints made by the public, such experience contributed to many motorcycle taxi drivers feeling like their comments were not accepted by government agencies. Nevertheless, 58.16% showed interest in participating in the improvement of public space in their service areas.

## Use of Smartphones

The survey found that 98.16% of the respondents had their own cellphones. Of those in possession of cellphones, the majority (77.61%) used smartphones. Apart from making phone calls, most of them regularly used their smartphones to take photos and video clips, send chat and short messages, read news, use SNS, listen to the radio, and use maps for navigation (Figure 8). When asked about the possibility of using smartphones to contact relevant organizations, a high number of respondents agreed

that it would be beneficial as a smartphone could easily be carried and was an item for personal everyday use.

## Possibility to Become Community Reporters

The analysis of the questionnaires from 760 motorcycle taxi drivers and group interviews shows that they witness and have a good understanding of community problems in their service areas. They come across problems in the city's public space, such as traffic, road conditions, sidewalks, trash, etc., both while on the job and in their everyday lives. Most of them would like to take part in reporting the problems to relevant organizations and in fixing the problems in their service areas. However, obstacles to such participation exist; a lack of channels to express their opinions and to report the problems, a lack of acceptance and acknowledgement of their opinions from relevant officials. The survey has also found that most motorcycle taxi drivers

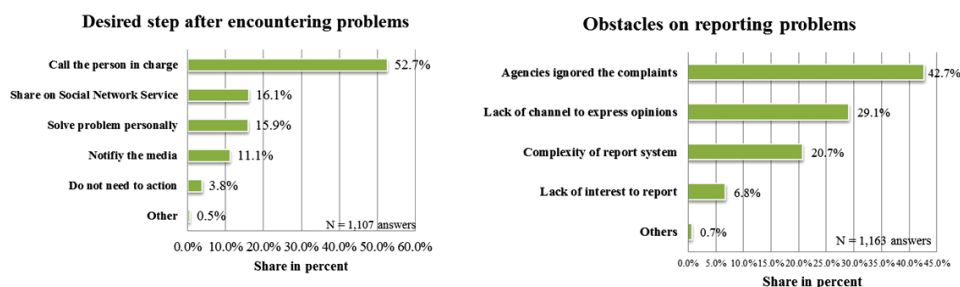


Figure 7:  
Desired steps after encountering problems and obstacles on reporting problems

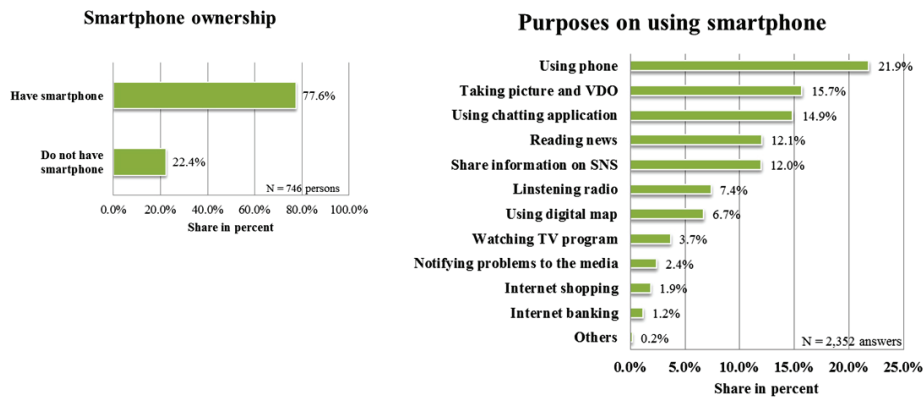


Figure 8:  
Smartphone ownership and purposes on using smartphone

use smartphones in their everyday lives and that smartphones are appropriate tools for reporting community problems to relevant organizations. Therefore, they have the potential to be community reporters. An online system via smartphones is an appropriate channel to report the problems that these motorcycle taxi drivers see to relevant organizations.

## THE DESIGN OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY SYSTEM FOR COMMUNITY REPORTING

The survey of community reporting potentials and internet use on mobile phones indicates

a possibility to develop an application and an online portal for reporting the problems seen by motorcycle taxi drivers. It also indicates a mode and for compiling such problems into a database for relevant organizations for future solutions. Thus, the researcher has conducted action research to develop key concepts in creating an ICT system to report and gather the problems that they have seen. The first phase of action research was conducted with 20 motorcycle taxi drivers who volunteered to participate in workshops, to ensure understanding and gather opinions on application and online portal development (Figure 9). Then, the researcher asked 40 participants, who had never participated in the workshops, to test the application and online portal in their community areas in order to check the potentials for on-site implementation.



Figure 9:  
Atmosphere at workshop with motorcycle taxi drivers

## Determination of Key Concepts to Develop Application and Online Portal

The discussions from the workshop can be concluded as guidelines for the development of the operation system as follows (Figure 10):

- (1) The motorcycle taxi drivers would like to report the problems in the community that they encounter through photos and simple explanations of the problems. They would also like to use pseudonyms while reporting due to the apprehension over possible harassment from government officials and gangsters.
- (2) The information reported will be forwarded to a database with an administrator to operate and manage the data to be put into a usable format. This is to prevent the use of the application as a tool to commit crimes, as well as to protect the privacy of the community reporters from leaking to third parties.
- (3) The information reported should be made available to the general public through a website

to raise awareness of community problems and arouse demands for solutions.

- (4) The information reported must be relayed to BMA, who is primarily responsible for addressing the problems, in the form of “community problems report” in order that BMA will give orders to relevant agencies to solve the problems.
- (5) Motorcycle Taxi Drivers Association of Thailand suggested assigning its members to serve as “solution examiners” who will patrol the areas to check whether the problems have been solved and then report the results to the database to update the fixed problems on the website for the public and the press.

## The Development of Application Prototype and Online Portal

The researcher transformed the concepts generated in the discussions into a prototype of an application and an online portal that can be implemented. The prototype was then given to participating motorcycle

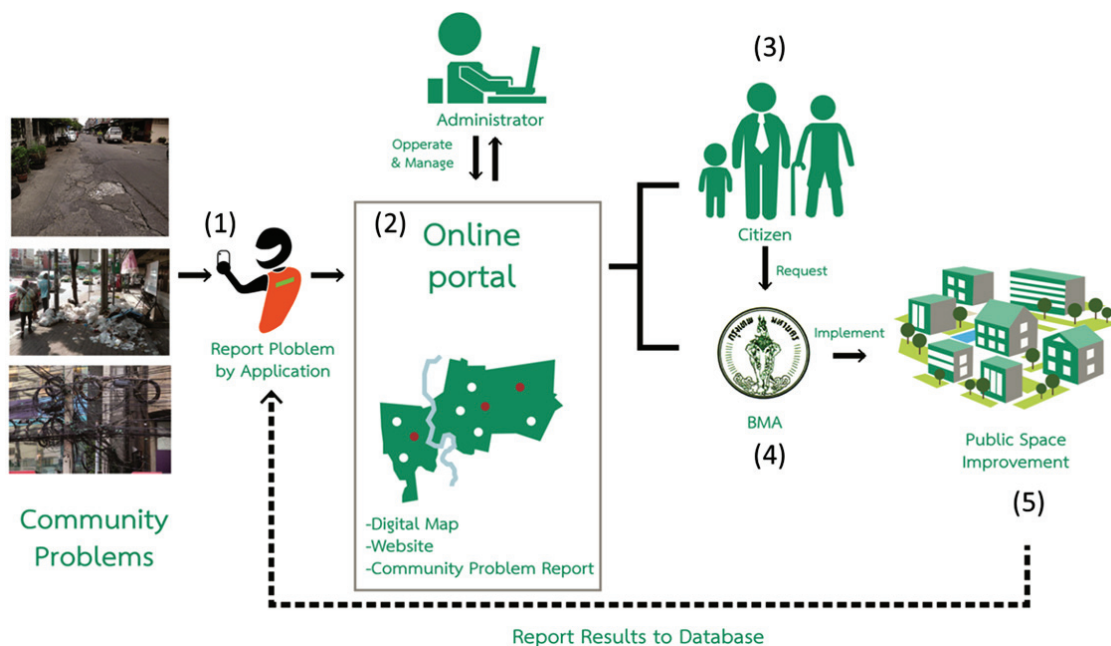


Figure 10:

Key concepts in developing application and online portal for community problem reports

taxi drivers to test out in actual fieldwork. After several revisions of designs as well as the operating system, the researcher finally achieved the application and online portal that correspond with the behavior and needs of motorcycle taxi drivers.

Motorcycle taxi drivers can use the application to take photos of the problems they encounter while working and include the details of the problems such as types of problems, urgency, and solutions needed. The location of the problems will be recorded automatically by the application (Figure 11). When the participants report the problems to the online portal, the photos and details of the problems will appear on an online map and will be processed into a community problems report with sufficient information for BMA or the community to further address the problems (Figure 12). Members of the Motorcycle Taxi Drivers Association of Thailand suggested acting as “solution examiners” who patrol the areas and check for updated solutions. Once the problems are observed as being as fixed, either by BMA or by the communities, they will be reported to the online portal to show updates. The public can access the reports and the updates, as well as share the photos and details in the community problems report to their own SNS.

## On-Site Application and Online Portal Testing

After completing on-site testing (Figure 13.), the researcher found that the application and online portal were functional in the actual field. However, who were over 45 years old needed time to learn the applications, while the younger ones were able to use the application and online portal promptly. Therefore, it is imperative to design the interface in such a way that will facilitate the use. Also, the database and operating system of the application must be developed to support a large number of users at the same time.

## Methods to Promote Motorcycle Taxi Drivers as Community Reporters

The researcher and the drivers who have participated in the development and testing of the application and online portal organized a workshop to discuss possible ways to motivate others motorcycle taxi drivers to engage in reporting community problems

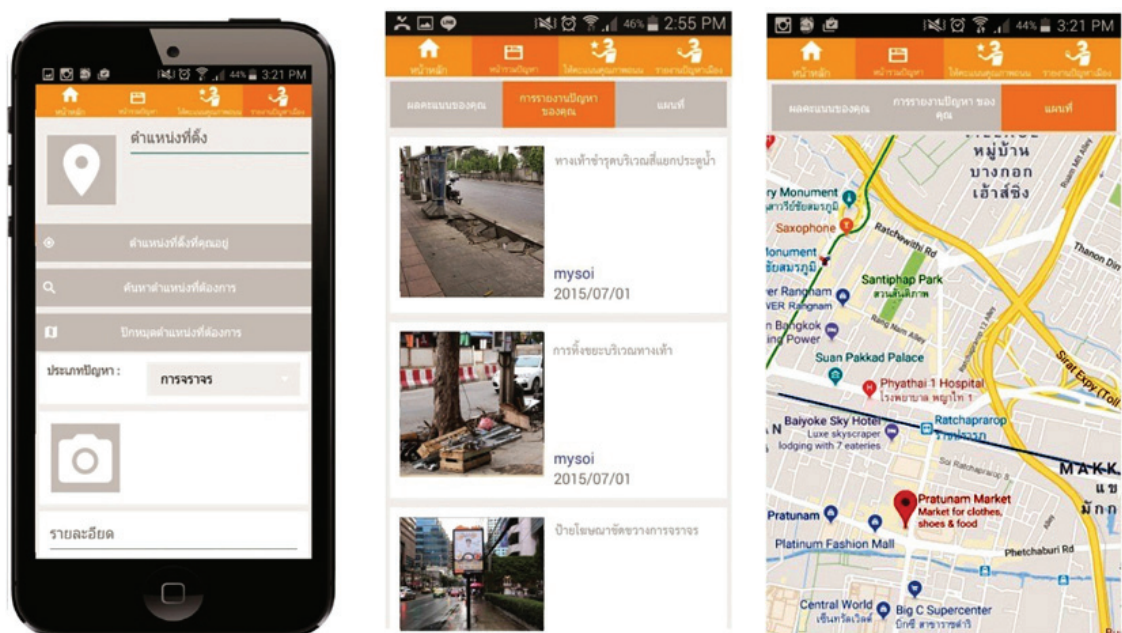


Figure 11:  
Application Screenshot Demo

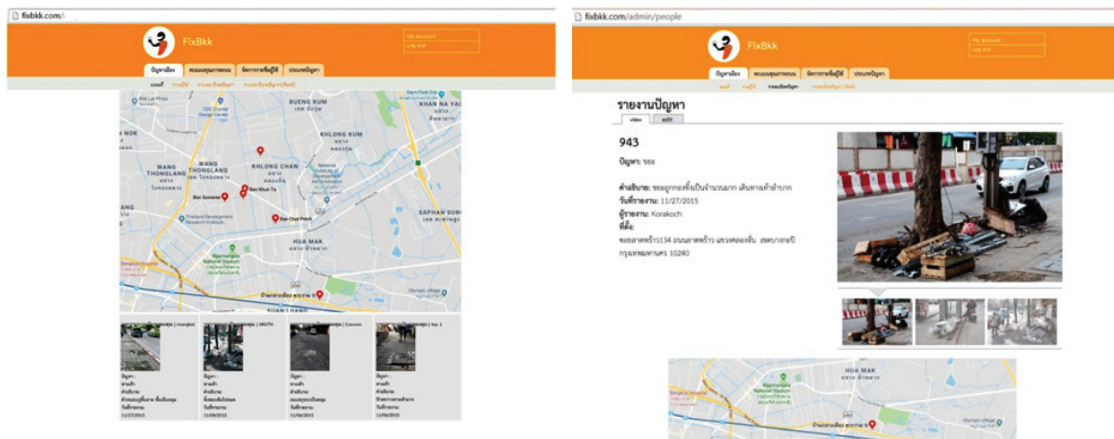


Figure 12:  
Online Portal Screenshot Demo

through the created tools. In general, the participants of the workshop agreed that being community reporters would help to improve public spaces in the community and to elevate the drivers' social status. As for the methods to encourage motorcycle taxi drivers to become community reporters, the important aspects concluded from the workshop are as follows:

### (1) Create a sense of responsibility for public space in the community among motorcycle taxi drivers

The participants agreed that creating a sense of responsibility for public spaces was significant as

currently they are still thought to be causing trouble in public spaces. For example, service stations are established on the sidewalks, motorcycle taxis are ridden on the sidewalks, and littering in public space is common, etc. Campaigning for motorcycle taxi drivers become role models in the use of public spaces is a first step for them to become community reporters. Moreover, the participants commented that most of motorcycle taxi drivers felt that government agencies overlooked their opinions and that they had low social status. This led to the disbelief that perhaps being community reporters would help solve the problems of public space management in the communities.



Figure 13:  
On-site application testing atmosphere

## **(2) Create motivation to become community reporters**

As motorcycle taxi drivers still have low quality of life and social status, their primary mission each day is to struggle to earn a living. As such, if serving as community reporters can improve their quality of life and social status, it will strongly motivate them to participate. The measures that are regarded as having strong persuasive potentials included awarding motorcycle taxi drivers who are community reporters, giving official recognition to Motorcycle Taxi Drivers Association of Thailand by government agencies, and generating income for motorcycle taxi drivers who are community reporters. In terms of generating income specifically, the Motorcycle Taxi Drivers Association of Thailand believes that giving wages to the “solution examiners” after the problems have been entered into the database could be another way to motivate them to become community reporters.

## **(3) Prevent harassment from government officials**

One concern posed by motorcycle taxi drivers regarding community reporting is the possible harassment from government agencies, as such actions would mean pointing out problems in the government's administration and increasing the workload of the officials. Thus, the motorcycle taxi drivers are afraid that harassment from government officials would ensue. The apprehension stems from the motorcycle taxi drivers' everyday experience that often involves being harassed and exploited by government officials. The participants in the workshop agreed that they needed to use pseudonyms when reporting the problems and the results of the government's solutions. At the same time, the system administrator must be able to protect the anonymity of the community reporters. Therefore, the organization administering the system must be a neutral agency with no ties with or funding from the government. Such ideas reflect the negative attitude that motorcycle taxi drivers have toward government agencies. They are still afraid and untrusting of cooperating with the government due to lack of current acceptance and harassment from government officials in daily life. These attitudes are significant obstacles preventing motorcycle taxi drivers from cooperating with government agencies that have the duty and authority to improve public space.

## **(4) Publicize community problems to drive BMA to solve the problems**

The participants of the workshop found that communities had limitations in dealing with problems concerning their public space in terms of budget, capabilities, and authority. This leads to the fact that BMA is the most significant agency that will apply the information gathered from motorcycle taxi drivers to solve community problems. However, there was a concern that BMA might not pay attention to or not attempt to solve the problems as reported by the motorcycle taxi drivers since their experience indicated frequent negligence and disregard by the government. As a result, there was a concern that if the database created could not push BMA to solve community problems, the motorcycle taxi drivers might be discouraged from being community reporters. One idea proposed in the workshop was that promulgation of the community problems to the public and the press in the form of negative criticism of government administration as this might pressure BMA to solve the problems. Hence, there was a proposal to publicly display names and photos of local politicians and government officials responsible for solving any given community's problems on the website along with the community problems report, as well as to publicize the community problems in the press.

Using community reports as a tool to criticize BMA's inefficiency was inspired by the trend that Bangkok citizens like to demand actions from the government by negatively criticizing the government in magazines, websites, and SNS. This form of criticism usually draws the attention of the media and, by extension, the public. The motorcycle taxi drivers' negative attitude toward the government increased their satisfaction of using an online portal to criticize and pressure BMA, rather than fuel their cooperation and public spirit in fixing problems in public space.

## **(5) Find funding for operation**

The participants in the workshop realized that promoting the idea of becoming community reporters required a source of funding for the development of the online system, motivation of the participants, and the allocation of the funds to help communities solve their public space problems by themselves. A group in the workshop felt that funding should be raised through corporate social responsibility(CSR)

activities from private companies. On the other hand, a large number of participants believed that the funding should come from the government sector, especially BMA who are responsible for solving public space problems in Bangkok, as community reports could help relieve the government's workload regarding urban management.

## DISCUSSION

The results of action research involving the use of an ICT system to report on the problems happening in public spaces and the encouragement to motorcycle taxi drivers to become community reporters reflect the contradiction in the relationship between the drivers and the government sector. This is clearly seen in the fact that despite understanding the roles and significance of government organizations in fixing the problems in public spaces and realizing that the government sector is a major source of funding, the motorcycle taxi drivers' experience of negligence and harassment from officials causes them to distrust the government. Thus they refuse to use the community reporting system as a tool to foster cooperation with the government. On the contrary, research participants attempted to design the community reporting system as a tool to assert their opposing standpoint against government organizations and to attack the officials' performance. Such a situation reflects the problems of Thailand's Civil Society Organization (CSO)<sup>1</sup>, especially regarding efforts to assemble marginalized people to effect fundamental change to the problems facing them, as well as reflects the obstacles preventing creative collaboration between the people and the government in urban management. Hence, identifying the guidelines to make motorcycle taxi drivers' role as community reporters would be beneficial to both the improvement of public spaces and to the elevation of their quality of life and social status requires. This requires a discussion of participation and relationship between CSOs and government organizations in Thailand.

## Situation of Civil Society Organization Engagement in Thailand in Urban Management

As mentioned previously, the Thai government's failures regarding attitudes of the administrators, efficiency of existing personnel, and corruption all resulted in poor urban governance with adverse impact on people's quality of life. Consequently, Bangkok citizens and communities are coming together to hold activities, create websites, and expressing their opinions through the media to pressure government agencies to solve the problems. Such movements often feature groups of people or Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) acting as both official and unofficial representatives. In most cases, the CSOs that have been created will act in opposition to government agencies and see the government as a threat to the people and communities. The image of the government as shown in activities held by the CSOs is usually that of bureaucratic people who prioritize the interest of capitalists over people's opinions, especially those who are socially underprivileged, and of workers who lack seriousness and knowledge in their work (Sutthisa, 2005). Thus, the CSOs will act as representatives of people and communities to criticize and express contempt regarding the operations of government agencies and, at times, offer new ways of administration. However, a large number of CSOs tend to avoid constructive discussion, cooperation, and relationship building with the government in the attempt to solve problems even though their demands require the operation or funding from the government (Rochanametasuwan, 2013).

Based on the behavior of NGOs in South Africa and Palestine, Lewis (2001) makes an observation that common experience of abuse by the government often renders NGOs paranoid and unable to cooperate with the government. This observation is similar to the situations in Thailand, especially the

<sup>1</sup> This paper defines CSO as an assembly or organization of people for social development with no government agencies as members, which includes volunteers, non-government organizations, student groups, general public, and group of marginalized people.

motorcycle taxi drivers. The fact that the government neglects their work, ignores aspects of people's livelihood, and sometimes takes advantage of the underprivileged in society has caused people to favor the opposite side and find ways to pressure the government to act toward efficient urban governance, rather than cooperate. In Thailand, the evolution of the information and communication technology (ICT) contributes to the trend of people's assembly against the government. This is because the online media often depicts the rights of the people and effective urban governance in foreign countries. In addition, the SNS provides CSOs with diverse channels to express their standpoint against the government and more conveniently spread their information to the public. This can be seen from the large number of websites and Facebook pages with content criticizing the operations and projects of the government. It also seems that such web portals are well-received by and popular among the media and the general public.

Over the years, CSOs in many countries have been continuously changing their roles to increase their efficiency in social development. Korten (1990), who has monitored the work of NGOs in multiple countries, has categorized NGOs' operations into three levels. Initially, NGOs start off as groups of people working together to help the socially underprivileged and create job opportunities. Then, in the second stage, NGOs evolve into activities that gather communities to create social capital and strength. In the third stage, NGOs begin acting as people's representatives with more emphasis on policy advocacy. In this stage, NGOs also build networks with relevant agencies including private, government, and political sectors in order to bring about the solution of structural social problems (Korten, 1990). After examining Korten's study, it is found that most CSOs in Thailand have evolved into stage two with the ability to create strength for communities using cultural roots and local folk knowledge and to help communities express their rights and negotiate with the government (Dechalert, 1999). Yet, since they distance themselves and avoid networking with government, political, and large private companies, expressions of rights and

negotiations with the government in the past have not fixed the structural problems in the long run (Wakefield, 2002).

The lack of strategies in cooperating with the government has become an obstacle for the people in demanding an improvement in public space management. This can be seen in the activities held by CSOs in Thailand which often lead to dead ends regarding concrete change as CSOs are limited in terms of budget, authority, and legislation. CSOs which act in opposition and avoid relationships with the government usually find that ultimately their demands need cooperation from the government to be realized. In the case where the government shows leniency and compliance with the people's demands, CSOs will find that their role is unclear and declining. While CSOs try to act as observers of government operations, they barely receive any rights to the information and decision-making. Moreover, CSOs' use of websites and SNS to attack and pressure the government sector has led to emotional conflict and pushed the government to increase the control of people's media use (Chumroonwongsakul, 2007; Magpanthong, 2013; Prachatai English, 2016).

The aforementioned situation happens to both CSOs of middle-class people and marginalized people; however, the latter group, like motorcycle taxi drivers, tends to behave aggressively toward the government and lack strategies to try and fix the problems through cooperation. This is the reason why the demands of marginalized people normally do not receive serious fundamental solutions. Nevertheless, for urban management to be developed in an appropriate direction and toward sustainability, efforts from both the government and the people are needed. Creative relationships between the two parties will occur only when a confident and capable government with populist policies meets a CSO that works to pursue mainstream development programs (Bratton, 1989). In a circumstance where Thailand's government holds centralized power and lacks the attitudes to create public participation, it is even more necessary for CSOs to operate strategically and creatively in order to induce sustainable change in society.

## Guidelines for Advancing Motorcycle Taxi Drivers Towards Becoming Community Reporters

As discussed above, distancing themselves from collaboration with the government prevents Thailand's CSOs, especially groups of marginalized people, from effecting fundamental change to their problems. Added to this, restrictions in terms of authority and funding to improve public space mean that the motorcycle taxi drivers' working as community reporters require strategies for cooperating with the government. The strategies will serve to prompt practical improvement of public space quality and improvement of the motorcycle taxi drivers' quality of life and social status. The researcher has found that the important strategy for creating their participation is to use the ICT system for reporting community problems in a way that will be beneficial to both the motorcycle taxi drivers and the government organizations. The Motorcycle Taxi Drivers Association of Thailand, as a representative of the profession, can encourage its members to be community reporters in two ways.

The first method is to collaborate with the district offices (Sam-nak-ngaan Khet; สำนักงานเขต) to monitor certain communities within the jurisdiction areas of the offices. Those communities can become model communities in implementing the online portal to gather community problems for the district offices to improve. The funding for this operation may be requested from CSR projects of private companies that are operating in the area. The Motorcycle Taxi Drivers Association of Thailand can select a community in which the residents and the private sector are willing to offer funding and where the district office is ready to take part in the operation. This method will allow the motorcycle taxi drivers to use the online portal to gather information on successful improvements or solutions as the success indicators of the CSR projects. The program can become success indicators of area management for district office directors. It is likely that this type of operation will foster a positive relationship among the motorcycle taxi drivers, the district offices, and the sponsoring private companies. Still, the Motorcycle Taxi Drivers Association of Thailand needs to have skilled members who can supervise the ICT system

to publicize the information to the public and create a database for the district offices.

The second method is the Motorcycle Taxi Drivers Association of Thailand may collaborate with the BMA executives to push for policies and budget that will support the community reporter project. In this case, BMA should be in charge of supervising the online portal to create a database of the problems and publicize the information to the people. Having BMA, which has direct authority and duty to improve public space, in charge of the online portal will facilitate the flow of the collected information through the chain of command at relevant organizations. In addition, the Bangkok Governor and the executives can use the results of the operations as the success indicators of their administration. This strategy of collaborating with the government will give the Motorcycle Taxi Drivers Association of Thailand a channel to collaborate with the government in making policy to elevate the social status and quality of life of their members. However, this type of operation runs the risk of motorcycle taxi drivers falling victim to political manipulation. Therefore, the Motorcycle Taxi Drivers Association of Thailand needs to have members who are skilled in policy advocacy on the team.

## CONCLUSION

The results of the survey and action research in collaboration with motorcycle taxi drivers show that they have the potential to become community reporters in order to achieve improvements in public spaces in Bangkok. In addition, smartphones and online portals are the tools that will assist in gathering community problems and creating a database of effective solutions. The participants asserted that to help them act as community reporters would require an awareness regarding the maintenance of public spaces as well as incentives either in the form of recognition or financial support for the community reporters. Nevertheless, a number of motorcycle taxi drivers believed that the created online portal needs to be able to protect the reporters from harassments by government officials and it should be used to gather the demands from the people to pressure the government to not ignore the problems.

The study of directions encourages motorcycle taxi drivers to participate in improving the quality of public spaces reflects that they still lack the strategies of reporting community problems to cooperate with the government for the purpose of improving public spaces and for elevating their quality of life. They showed distrust and concern over working with the government, causing them to use the online portal to criticize and pressure the government rather than create cooperation to fix the problems. This situation is a significant limitation to the participation of the Civil Society Organizations, especially the marginalized people, in Thailand's urban management at the present time.

The researcher has found that encouraging motorcycle taxi drivers to become community reporters leads to practical improvements in urban management; thus, it is necessary that they overcome their antagonism to the government and change their standpoint from being the opposition to being strategic cooperators with the government sector. The motorcycle taxi drivers can use the online portal that has been developed to gather community problems as a tool to create collaboration and a channel to propose the government policies for better quality of life. However, in doing so, they require members or associates who are skilled in technology and policy advocacy.

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