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World-class living?

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Abstract

Encircling along the Bangkok inner and outer ring roads, one could feel the positive prospect of its urban growth. Billboards advertising grandiose urban living utopias are aplenty – an invitation to a living pleasure that does not yet exist. The billboards display houses and their prices in private housing estates which could fetch to one million USD, while the population average income is of less than 1,000 USD, ten-times lower than the house price.

This paper problematises the image of world-class living represented by billboard advertisement the ways in which it portrays the contrast of the ideal living condition and the local existence. It will first analyse how the billboard stimulating a more imaginary way of living. Then it will discuss the effect of social exclusion caused by the development of gated community - the key spatial pattern of urban growth. Hence, the development of transport infrastructure, particularly the mass transit, reserves exclusively for the rich rather than the public. The paper ends discussing the world class city is not simply made up of illusion of the luxury living, nor is the urban development-easily-turned-exclusive at the cost of the local.