

Some in Hong Kong Feel Frustrated, as Their City Is Losing to Mainland China

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Global Research, October 11, 2019

Region: [Asia](#)

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Hong Kong is losing to Mainland China. Its poverty rates are high, it suffers from corruption and savage capitalism. It is now the most expensive city on earth. People are frustrated, but paradoxically, they are blaming socialist Beijing for their problems, instead of the legacy of British colonialism. 'Across the line', Shenzhen, Shanghai, Beijing, Xiang and other cities are leaving Hong Kong behind in almost all fields.

When my dear friend and a great concert pianist from Beijing, Yuan Sheng, used to live in New York, recording, giving concert and teaching at prestigious Manhattan School of Music, he told me that he used to cry at night: "In the United States, they smear China. I felt hurt, defenseless".



He returned to Beijing, gave back his Green Card and began teaching at Beijing Conservatory. He never regretted his decision. "Beijing is much more exciting than New York, these days", he told me.

It is obvious that Beijing is booming: intellectually, artistically; in fact, in all fields of life.

Yuan's friend, who returned from London and became a curator at the iconic "Big Egg" (the biggest opera house on earth), shared her thoughts with me:

"I used to sit in London, frustrated, dreaming about all those great musicians,

all over the world. Now, they come to me. All of them want to perform in Beijing. This city can make you or break you. Without being hyperbolic, this is now one of the most important places on earth. Just under one roof, in one single night, we can have a Russian opera company performing in our big halls, in another one there is a Chinese opera, and a Bolivian folklore ensemble in a recital hall. And this is only one of Beijing's theatres."

When the Chinese artists and thinkers are fighting for the prime with their Western counterparts, it is usually Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen, 'against' London, Paris and New York. Hong Kong is 'somewhere there', behind, suddenly a backwater.

While Hong Kong University and the City University of Hong Kong used to be the best in China, many Mainland institutions of higher learning, including Peking University and Tsinghua, are now producing many more cutting-edge creative thinkers. I spoke at all of these schools, and can confirm that the young people in Beijing and Shanghai are extremely hardworking, endlessly curious, while in Hong Kong, there is always that mildly arrogant air of exceptionalism, and lack of discipline.

It used to be that the so-called "Sea Turtles" (students who went abroad and to Hong Kong, and then returned to Mainland China), were treated like celebrities, but now, it is much easier to get a job with the Mainland China's diplomas.

Recently, while filming the riots in Hong Kong, I was told by a receptionist at one of the major shopping plazas:

"We do not treat visitors from Mainland China well. And, they lost interest in Hong Kong. Before, they used to come here, to admire our wealth. Now, most of them are avoiding this place. What we have, they have, too, and often better. If they travel, they rather go to Bangkok or Paris."

These days, the contrast between Xiang, Shanghai, Beijing and Hong Kong is shocking. Mainland infrastructure is incomparably better. Public areas are vast, and cultural life much more advanced than that in a former British colony.

While the Mainland Chinese cities have almost no extreme poverty, (and by the end of 2020 will have zero), in Hong Kong, at least 20% are poor, and many simply cannot afford to live in their own city. Hong Kong is the most expensive place on earth. Just to park a car in could easily cost over US\$700 per month, for just working hours. Tiny apartments cost over a million US dollars. Salaries in Hong Kong, however, are not higher than those in London, Paris or Tokyo.

The city is run by an extreme capitalist system, 'planned' by corrupt tycoons/developers. The obsolete British legal system here is clearly geared to protect the rich, not the majority. That was essentially why the "Extradition Bill" was proposed: to protect Hong Kong inhabitants from the unbridled, untouchable, as well as unelected de facto rulers.

But there is this 'deal', negotiated before Hong Kong was returned where it belongs, which is - to China. "One country, two systems". It is an excellent contract for the turbo-capitalist magnates, and for the pro-Western "activists". And it is extremely bad one for the average people of Hong Kong. Therefore, after months of riots sponsored by the West, the Hong Kong administration scrambled the bill.

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Young hooligans know very little about their city. I talked to them, extensively, during their first anti-Beijing riots in 2014 (so-called “Umbrella Revolution”).

Correctly, then and now they have been frustrated about the declining standards of living, about the difficulties to get well-paid jobs and find affordable housing. They told me that ‘there is no future for them’, and that ‘their lives are going nowhere’.

But quickly, their logic would collapse. While realizing what tremendous progress, optimism and zeal could be observed in the People’s Republic of China, under the leadership of the Communist Party, they would still be demanding more capitalism, which is actually ruining their territory. In 2014, and now, they are readily smearing the Communist Party.

Being raised on the shallow values of selfishness and egotism, they are now betrayed their own country, and began treasonous campaigns, urging foreign powers, including US and UK, to “liberate them”. All for just fleeting moment of fame, for a “selfie uprising”.

To liberate from whom? China does not, (unfortunately for Hong Kong), interfere in Hong Kong’s economic and social affairs. If anything, it builds new infrastructure, like an enormous bridge now connecting Hong Kong with Macau (a former Portuguese colony) and a high-speed train system, linking Hong Kong with several cities in Mainland China.



Huanzhou high-speed train station - one of the biggest in the world

More restrain Beijing shows, more it gets condemned by the rioters and Western media, for ‘brutality’. More subway stations and public property get destroyed by rioters, more sympathy flows for them from the German, US and British right-wing politicians.

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For decades, the British colonialists were humiliating people of Hong Kong, while

simultaneously turning their city into a brutal, and by the Asian standards, ruthless and fully business oriented megapolis. Now people are confused and frustrated. Many are asking, who they really are?

For Hong Kong, this is a difficult moment of soul-searching.

Even those who want to “go back to UK”, can hardly speak English. When asked “why do they riot”, they mumble something about ‘democracy’ and ‘freedom’ in the West, plus ‘evilness of Beijing’. Brochures of some obscure, extremist Japanese religious cults get distributed. It is one big intellectual chaos. Rioters know nothing about Syria, Afghanistan, Venezuela, countries which are being ruined by the West.

Leaders like Joshua Wong are proudly colluding with the Western embassies. To praise Chinese socialism publicly is now dangerous - people get beaten by the “pro-democracy” rioters, for such “crimes”.

Highly educated and overly-polite Singapore is literally sucking out hundreds of foreign companies from Hong Kong. Its people speak both English and Mandarin. In Hong Kong, great majority speaks only Cantonese. Many foreigners are also relocating to Shanghai. Not only big businesses: Shanghai is now full of European waiters.

Even tourism is down in Hong Kong, by 40%, according to the recent data.

Absurdly: the rioters want precisely what the Communist Party of China is providing: they want real struggle against corruption, as well as determined attempt to solve housing crises, create new jobs, and provide more public services. They want better education, and generally better life. They want “Shanghai or Beijing”, but they say that they want to be a colony of the UK, or a dependency of the USA.

They loosely define communist goals, and then they shout that they are against Communism.

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China is now ready to celebrate its 70th Anniversary of the Founding of The People’s Republic of China.

Clearly, the West is using Hong Kong to spoil this great moment.

After leaving Hong Kong, in Shanghai, I visited a brilliant, socialist realism exhibition at the iconic, monumental China Art Museum. Country under the leadership of President Xi is once again confident, revolutionary and increasingly socialist; to horror of declining West. It is a proud nation with great, elegant cities constructed by the people, for the people, and with progressively ecological countryside. Its scientific, intellectual and social achievements speak louder than words.



China Art Museum, Shanghai

Contrast between Hong Kong and Shanghai is tremendous, and growing.

But do not get me wrong: I like Hong Kong. I have more than 20 years of history with that old, neurotic and spoiled lady. I can feel her pulse. I love old trams and ferries, and out-of-the-way islands.

But Hong Kong's charm lies in its decay.

Mainland China's beauty is fresh. China is one of the oldest cultures on earth, one of the deepest. But it feels crisp, full of hope and positive energy. Together with its closest ally, Russia, it is now working and fighting for the entire world; it is not selfish.

Hong Kong is fighting only for its vaguely defined uniqueness. Actually, it is not Hong Kong that is fighting, as most of people there want to be where they truly belong - in their beloved nation - China. It is a gang of kids with their face-masks that is fighting. In brief: a relatively big group of pro-Western extremists, whose leaders are putting their fame above the interests of the people.

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Hong Kong has no "Big Egg"; no famous theatre where the greatest musicians are stunning the world. Its only art museum is closed for reconstruction, for years, and will re-open only at the end of 2019. Its cultural life is shallow, even laughable, for the place which is branding itself as the "Asia's World City". There are no great discoveries made here. It is all business. Big, big business. And creeping decay.

Beijing could 'liberate' Hong Kong, easily; to give it purpose, pride and future.

But young hooligans want to be liberated by Washington, instead. They want to be re-colonized by London. And they do not consult their fellow citizens. That clearly reflects their

idea about 'democracy'. Not the "rule of the people", but the "rule of the West".

Not only they feel spite for their country, but they also scorn and intimidate their fellow citizens who just want to have their meaningful life, based on the Chinese values.

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