

Hong Kong's Protests Could Be Another Social Media Revolution That Ends in Failure | The New York Times

By Thomas L. Friedman

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HONG KONG — Pay attention to Hong Kong. The three months of protests here speak volumes about the state of democracy today — how the human quest for freedom can't be snuffed out, even by the most powerful autocratic systems, and how hard it is to turn that quest into lasting change in the age of Twitter when everyone is a leader, a follower, a broadcaster and a critic, and compromise becomes nearly impossible.

Yes, Hong Kong reminds us that people — God bless them — have both *bodies and souls*. And the great mistake that autocrats regularly make is thinking that they can thrive indefinitely by feeding just the first and not the second.

While the Hong Kong protests have been fed by many grievances, including income gaps and shortages of affordable housing, the hot molten lava of this volcano is that many Hong Kongers self-identify as free men and women and they viscerally reject the ruling bargain the Communist Party has imposed on mainland China and would like to impose on Hong Kong: To get rich is glorious, but to speak your mind is dangerous.

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