

# Reflection on Strengthening National Security Education for Young People in Hong Kong

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## Abstract

National security is an important strategic cornerstone to realize national sustainable development. In recent years, there are young people constantly emerging in the incidents of "Occupy Central" and "Revise the regulations" in Hong Kong. Strengthening the national security education for young people in Hong Kong has been high on the agenda unprecedentedly with the "Color Revolution" occurred in Hong Kong in recent years. It is an important embodiment of the national concept, Hong Kong feelings and international vision to comprehensively and accurately accept national security education and consciously take the initiative to safeguard national security, which is also the only way for a new generation of Hong Kong teenagers with qualities to grow up and become competent. This paper explores the reasons for the lack of national security education in Hong Kong from three main aspects and gives some relevant suggestions. Globally, it is a normal education model all over the world to carry out national security education for teenagers in primary and secondary schools. The implementation of National Security Education for young people in Hong Kong is still at an exploratory stage. This paper aims to provide relevant ideas for the promotion of National Security Education for young people in Hong Kong.

## Keywords

Hong Kong; Teenagers; National security education.

## 1. Threats and Problems Faced by National Security Education

Since Hong Kong's return, internal and external forces have never stopped to make trouble and carried out some political activities that endanger national security and undermine the prosperity and stability of Hong Kong. In May 2020, the Chinese government made national security legislation in Hong Kong. The United States once again got deeply involved, launched a large number of so-called "sanctions" and urged other western countries to focus on Hong Kong issue. In addition, Western forces like the United States and Britain have also increased their support and cultivation for the opposition forces in Hong Kong. They supported the opposition forces in Hong Kong to seize the "governance" of Hong Kong, and attempted to make Hong Kong and "one country, two systems" move towards a direction more in line with their interests under their control and influence. The "Hong Kong Independence" forces in Hong Kong work with western external forces to obstruct the work of safeguarding national security and carry out political activities undermining national security through public power platforms such as the Legislative Council and district councils, as well as professional organizations such as the "Education Association", "Journalists Association" and the Bar Council. Before the release of the Curriculum framework of national security education in Hong Kong, the national security education for young people in Hong Kong has been in a blank state. The school has no special courses to help students understand the importance of national security, students have insufficient knowledge of national security, and their identification with national identity needs to be strengthened. Moreover, the ability of teachers in local primary and secondary school of Hong Kong is different. Some teachers who grew up in the British colonial era have a superficial

understanding of Chinese history and Hong Kong's area conditions and culture due to the lack of patriotism education and Chinese history and culture education. They are even full of negative cultural cognition and national prejudice. Their in-depth exposition of Chinese history and psychological guidance to students have actively promoted the dissatisfaction of many young people with the current social situation. The opposition and Western forces have been carrying out political brainwashing and cultural infiltration to young people with the so-called "universal values" for a long time, so as to eliminate the national concept of young people in Hong Kong.

## **2. Reasons for the lack of national security education for young people in Hong Kong**

### **2.1. The Special Historical Background of Hong Kong**

After 1840, Hong Kong gradually became a British colony, and Britain began to rule Hong Kong for more than 150 years [1]. In the more than 150 years of British rule over Hong Kong, the British Hong Kong government has carried out all-round penetration into all aspects of Hong Kong such as politics, economy, culture, education and so on. The long-term history and culture separation has finally led Hong Kong compatriots to a serious lack of understanding of the mainland history with a very poor sense of national identity and belonging. Also, due to its special historical background, Hong Kong integrates Eastern and Western values. This value system neither belongs to the traditional oriental culture nor the value category of modern western culture. It is precisely this kind of special value system that makes Hong Kong people confused about their identity and prompts the breeding of local consciousness from Hong Kong people. This concept will also imperceptibly affect the national identity of the next generation of young people in Hong Kong with comprehensive factors such as school, family and society. Without the identification of national identity, it's so difficult for the implementation of national security education.

### **2.2. The Absence of the HKSAR Government in the Aspect of Safeguarding National Security**

Obstructed by internal and external forces, the HKSAR government has stalled in legislation on safeguarding the national security in Hong Kong since the failure of the "Article 23" legislation. The loopholes in national security have brought a great opportunity for the western and Hong Kong Independence forces to undermine Hong Kong. While Macao, which is also a special administrative region, has completed relevant national security legislation as early as February 2009 [2]. Comparatively, the HKSAR government has been in a difficult state of "Absence" for a long time in maintaining national security. Since the reunification, the HKSAR government has been ignoring issues related to promoting national security education for a long time and is unwilling to settle the problem. Its national education teaching content mainly focuses on comprehensive application, which only concerns about the citizens' individual basic rights and democratic values, but lacks attention to the country, nation and history, with the potential cultural tendency of over whitewashing and dignifying the West, but vilifying and belittling the mainland.

### **2.3. Schools Neglect the National Security Awareness Education for Students**

Before the release of the National Anthem Ordinance, the primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong did not clearly stipulate that the national flag raising ceremony should be held on major festivals. Many students had no understanding of the history and spirit of the national anthem, as well as the etiquette of playing and singing the national anthem. Schools had failed to set up supporting national security education courses for students. In addition, schools attached little importance to the cultivation and supervision of teachers' political position,

professional ethics, national security concept and rule of law spirit. Some teachers tending to Hong Kong Independence took the classroom as their propaganda position to brainwash and educate young people, which poisoned generation after generation of young people in Hong Kong, making their national consciousness and national concept very indifferent. In the selection of teaching materials, some schools lacked management and control of teaching materials, resulting in many "bad" teaching materials entering schools.

### **3. Suggestions on Improving National Security Education for Teenagers**

#### **3.1. The HKSAR Government Should Actively Take Its Responsibility**

Sufficient financial support should be provided to the primary and secondary schools, so as to help them carry out national security education. In addition, the SAR government should also formulate the curriculum framework of national security education to ensure that schools have rules to follow in the implementation of national security education, so that schools can also have relevant basis for the comments of students on national security education. The SAR government should also enhance the cooperation with the mainland education departments, invite mainland scholars and excellent teachers to publicize national security education in primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong, and send Hong Kong teachers to the mainland for exchange and study at the same time, so as to promote the professional level of teachers.

**Primary and Secondary Schools in Hong Kong Should Actively Implement National Security Education**

Primary and secondary schools should actively carry out the national security education curriculum implementation framework issued by the Bureau of Education. It is suggested that primary and secondary schools hold flag raising ceremonies on major festivals and Mondays to enhance students' national concept. In the process of implementing national security education in schools, it should gradually be promoted in different stages of primary and secondary schools based on students' age and cognitive thinking ability. In terms of teaching materials selection, schools should strengthen the supervision and prohibit "bad" teaching materials from entering schools. Besides, the assessment of teachers should also be enhanced, and teachers tending to Hong Kong Independence should be strictly prohibited from entering the classroom. Schools should also try their best to provide students with opportunities to exchange and study in the mainland, so as to strengthen their understanding of the motherland and their national identity [3].

#### **3.2. Promote the National Security Awareness By Making Use of Hong Kong Garrison**

The garrison is the "patron saint" to maintain Hong Kong's prosperity and stability. The open day of the garrison has been greatly favored by young people in Hong Kong with active response. However, due to the limitation of military barracks on the opening frequency, it is still unable to fully meet the needs of all young people. It is suggested to increase the opening frequency of military barracks under the condition of ensuring safety, especially increase the opening of military facilities such as warships, and the holding of military summer camp activities, so as to make Hong Kong people feel more about the development and progress of the state, which will enhance the national pride of teenagers in Hong Kong.

### **4. Conclusion**

In the context of Hong Kong's "second return", national security education should be promoted vigorously, integrating decolonization education, national education and patriotism education. The government, schools and society should play their roles to help Hong Kong teenagers well understand the future and be better integrated into the overall situation of national

development. As the main force for the construction of Hong Kong in the future, only by strengthening the national security education on then and enhancing their national identity, can we ensure that one country, two systems will be stable and go further in Hong Kong and Hong Kong will maintain prosperity and stability all the time.

## References

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