

Drop in Family Harmony in Hong Kong: An Ecological Analysis and Related Research

Daniel T.L. Shek

Quality of Life Centre

Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies

The Chinese University of Hong Kong

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Family Harmony in the Traditional Chinese Culture

Strong emphasis on family harmony in the traditional Chinese culture

- 「家門和順，雖饗餐不繼，亦有餘歡。」
《治家格言》
- 「父子篤，兄弟睦，夫婦和，家之肥也。」
《禮記·禮運》
- 「禮之用，和爲貴。」《論語》
- 「以爭鬥爲惡習。須是存心和順，律已謙恭。」
《廷尉公訓約》

Family Harmony in the Traditional Chinese Culture

- 「處家庭宜先忍耐，耐之稱久，既和且平。」
《仲氏家訓》
- 「同居長幼貴和。」 《袁氏世範》
- 「一家不和，則萬事瓦裂矣。」 《家戒》

Shek, D.T.L., & Lai, M.F. (2000). Conceptions of an ideal family in Confucian thoughts: Implications for individual and family counseling. *Asian Journal of Counselling*, 7(2), 85-104.

Shek, D.T.L., (2001). Chinese adolescents and their parents' views on a happy family: Implications for family therapy. *Family Therapy*, 28(2), 73-104.

Cultural Factors Contributing to the Drop in Family Harmony in Chinese Families

- ◆ Disintegration of traditional Chinese beliefs (e.g., virtues in women; filial piety; respect for old people; beliefs about marriage)

Shek, D.T. L. (2006). Chinese family research: Puzzles, progress, paradigms, and policy implications. *Journal of Family Issues*, 27, 275-284.

- ◆ Drop in the significance attached to the family (e.g., having children)

Shek, D.T. L. (1996). The value of children to Hong Kong Chinese parents. *Journal of Psychology*, 130(5), 561-569.

◆ Emergence of Popular and Youth Cultures in Hong Kong

- Decline in respect for parents: 「黑白天鵝，日哦夜哦」
- Detachment between parents and their adolescent children: 「冇大冇細」
- Focus on self: 「你有你要求，我有我感受」，「意見接受，做法照舊」
- Fast food culture: 「百份百感覺」，「啱feel」，「勉強無幸福」，「不在乎天長地久，只在乎曾經擁有」
- Divergent standards in human relationships: 「如果踩親你 ... 咪對唔住囉」

Shek, D.T.L. (2006). Perceived parental behavioral control and psychological control in Chinese adolescents in Hong Kong. *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 34(2), 163-176.

◆ Conflict between traditional cultural values and popular culture

<i>Traditional Chinese Culture</i>	<i>Contemporary Hong Kong Culture</i>
Patience	Speed
Enduring relationship	Transient relationship
“Feeling correct”	“Feeling good”
Focus on “we”	Focus on “me”
Vertical relationship	Horizontal relationship
Duty	Right

Shek, D.T.L. (1999). Perceptions of family functioning among Chinese parents and their adolescent children. *American Journal of Family Therapy*, 27(4), 303-314.

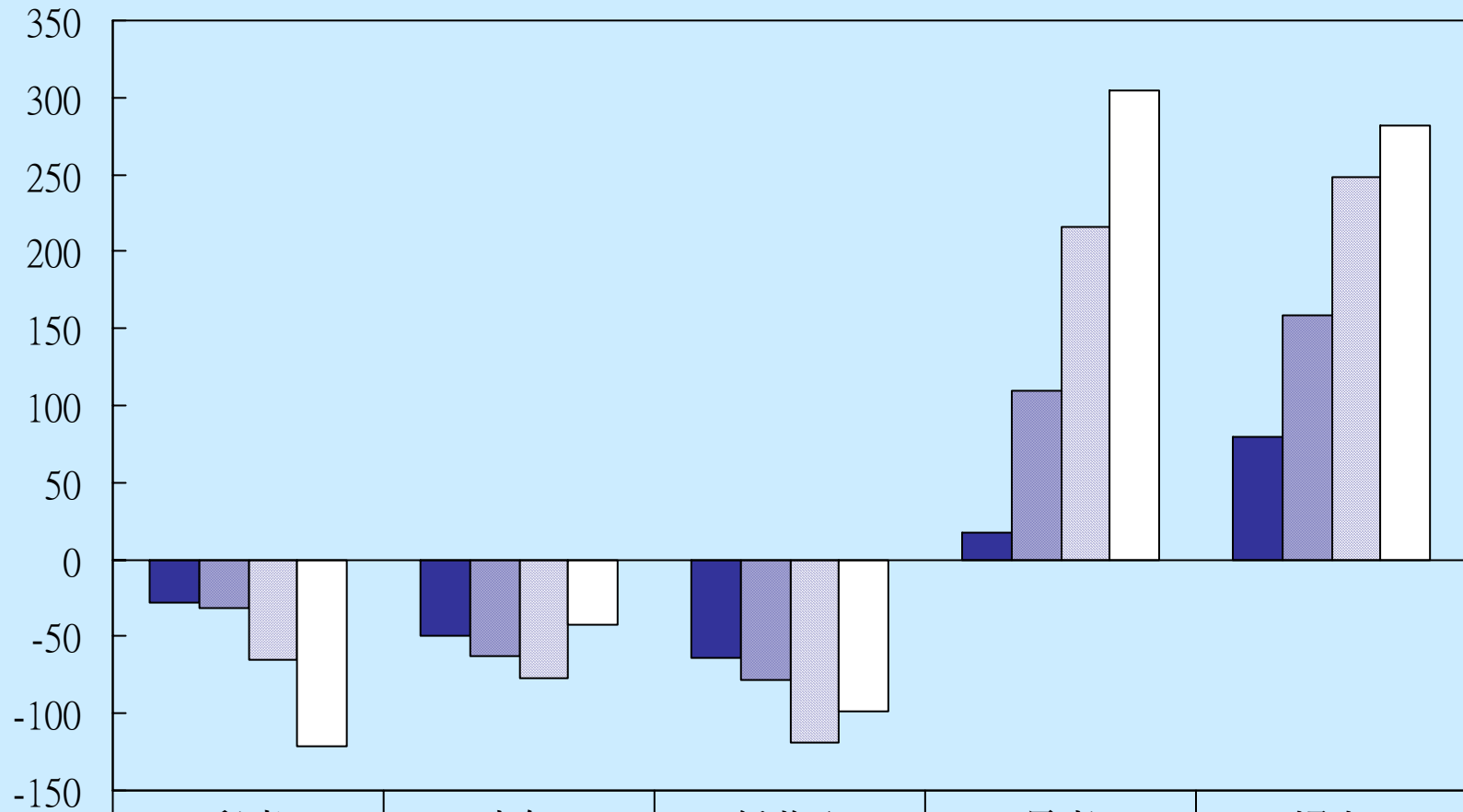
Societal Factors Contributing to the Weakening of Family Harmony

- ◆ Economic disadvantage and related stress (see Social Development Index published by the Hong Kong Council of Social Service)

Shek, D.T.L. (2003). Economic stress, psychological well-being and problem behavior in Chinese adolescents with economic disadvantage. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 32(4), 259-266.

Shek, D.T.L. (2003). A longitudinal study of parenting and adolescent adjustment in Chinese adolescents with economic disadvantage. *International Journal of Adolescent Medicine and Health*, 15(1), 39-49.

香港五類社群的社會發展趨勢（1998、2000、2002及2004）



	兒童	青年	低收入	長者	婦女
1998 (SDI 2000)	-28	-50	-64	18	80
2000 (SDI 2002)	-32	-63	-78	110	159
2002 (SDI 2004)	-65	-77	-119	216	248
2004 (SDI 2006)	-121	-42	-98	305	282

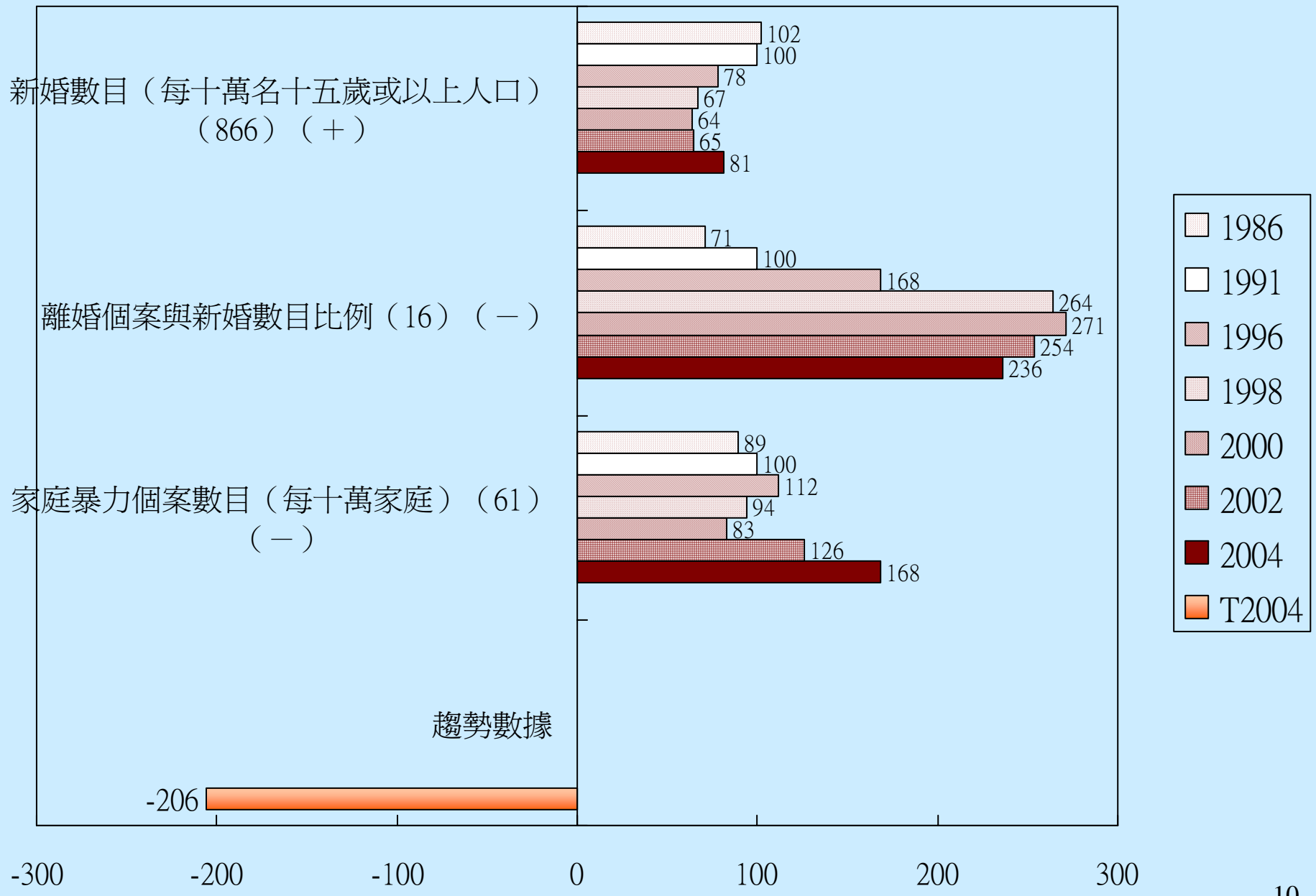
Societal Factors Contributing to the Weakening of Family Harmony

- ◆ Changing family forms (more family dysfunction observed in non-intact families)

Shek, D.T.L. (2002). Chinese adolescents' perception of family functioning: Personal, school related, and family correlates. *Genetic, Social, and General Psychology Monographs*, 128(4), 358-380.

Shek, D.T.L. (in press). Perceived parental control processes, parent-child relational qualities and psychological well-being of Chinese adolescents in intact and non-intact families in Hong Kong. *International Journal of Adolescent Medicine and Health*.

家庭團結分類指數標準化社會指標數值（1986-2004, 1991=100）及趨勢數據2004



Individual Factors Contributing to the drop in Family Harmony in Chinese Families

- ◆ Social stress and obsession about achievement orientation in Hong Kong

Shek, D.T.L., Chan, Y.K., & Lee, P. (Eds.). (2005). *Social Indicators Research Series (vol. 25): Quality of life research in Chinese, Western and global contexts*. The Netherlands: Springer.

Shek, D.T.L. (2005). Social stress in Hong Kong. In J. Estes (Ed.), *Social Development Index (pp.167-181)*. Hong Kong: Oxford University Press.

Individual Factors Contributing to the drop in Family Harmony in Chinese Families

- ◆ Lack of psychosocial competencies in dealing with interpersonal issues (e.g., lower emotional expression among men); over-emphasis of academic achievement; “problem free is not fully prepared” (Karen Pittman)

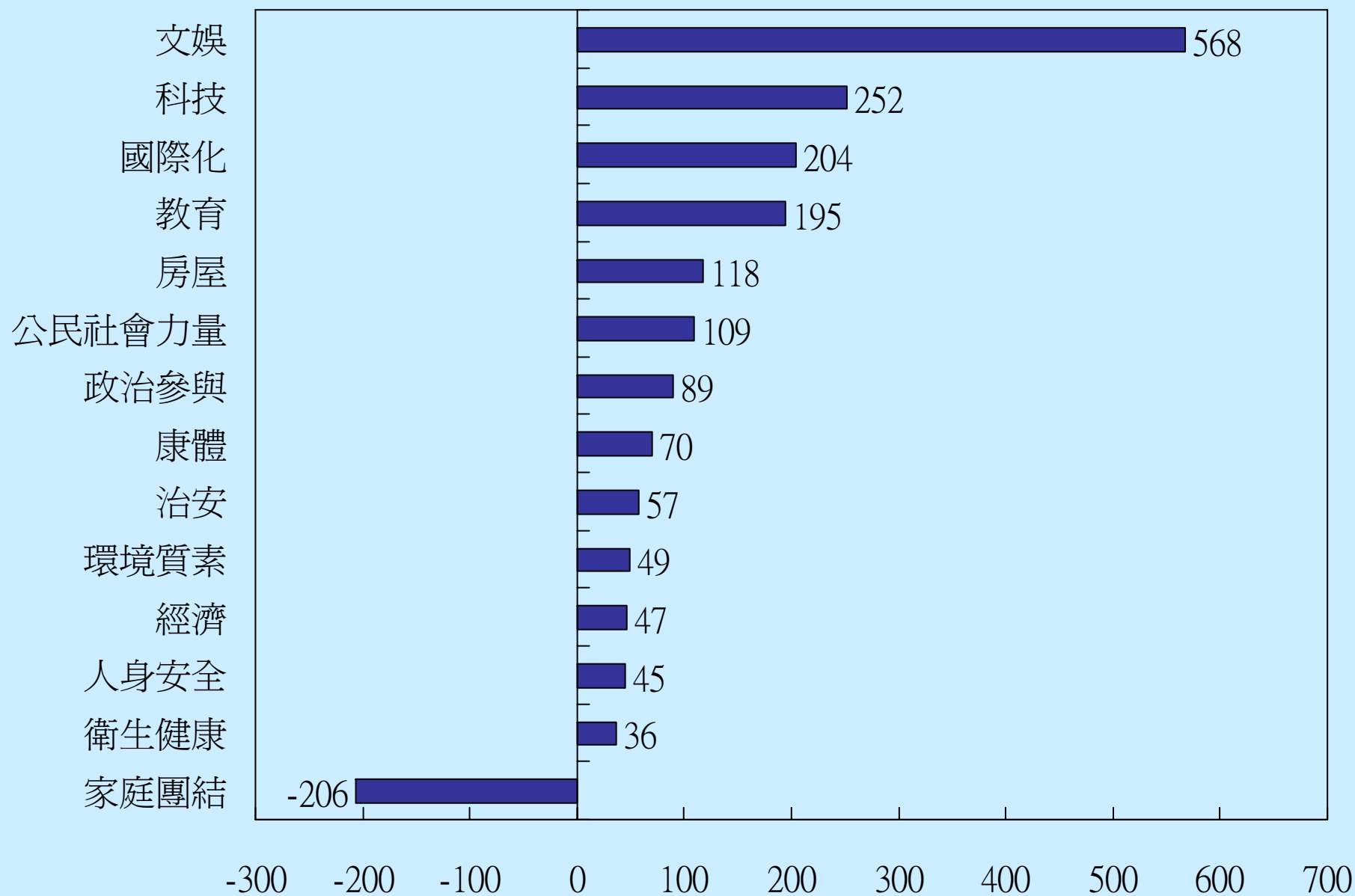
Shek, D.T.L. (1995). Gender differences in marital quality and well-being in Chinese married adults. *Sex Roles*, 32(11-12), 699-715.

Shek, D.T.L. (1998). Help-seeking patterns of Chinese parents in Hong Kong. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Social Work*, 8(1), 106-119.

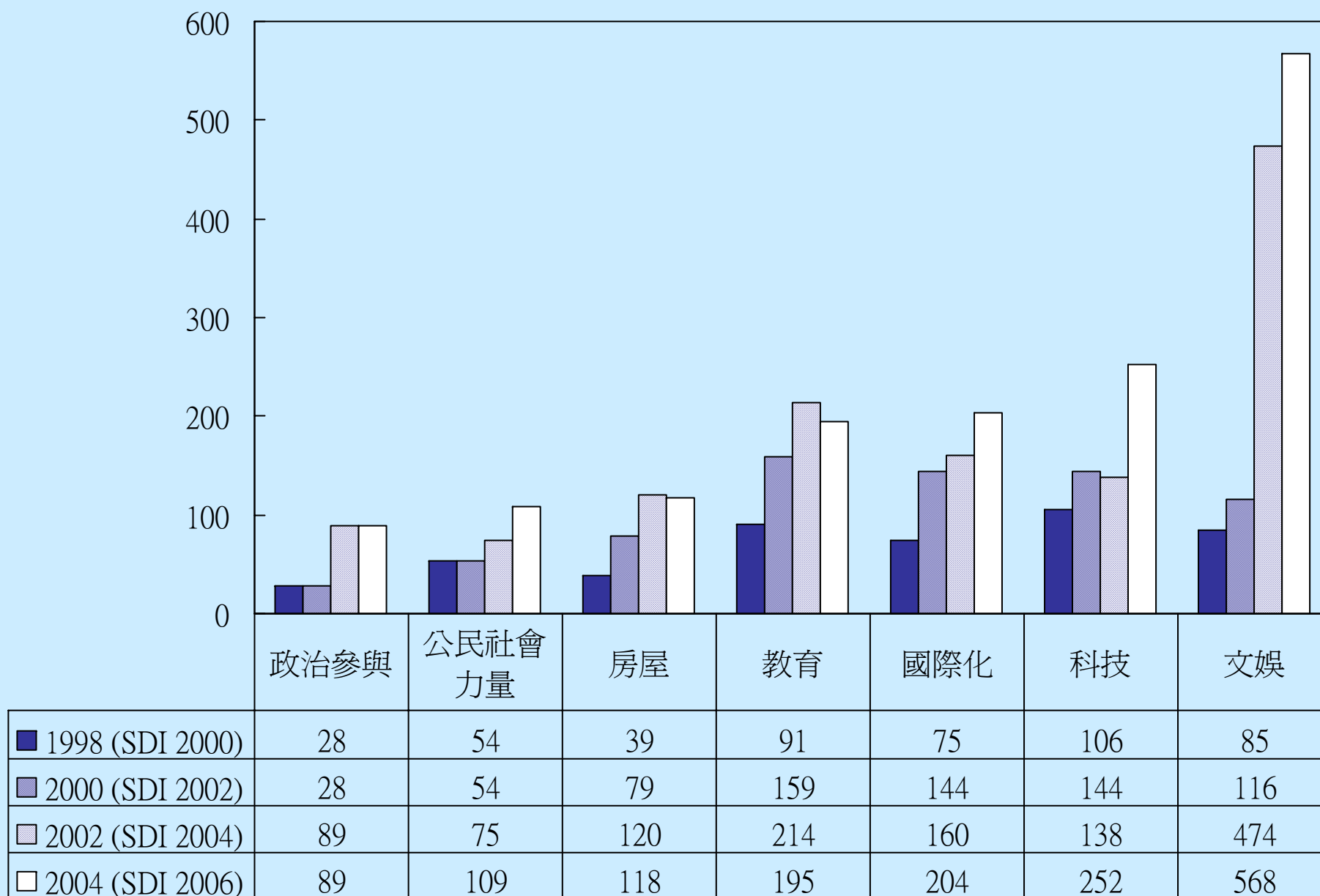
Warning Signal about Family Disharmony

- ◆ The findings reported in the **Social Development Index (SDI-2006)** developed by the Hong Kong Council of Social Service revealed that there had been a drop in family solidarity in the past decade.
- ◆ A warning sign that there is a gradual disintegration of families in Hong Kong

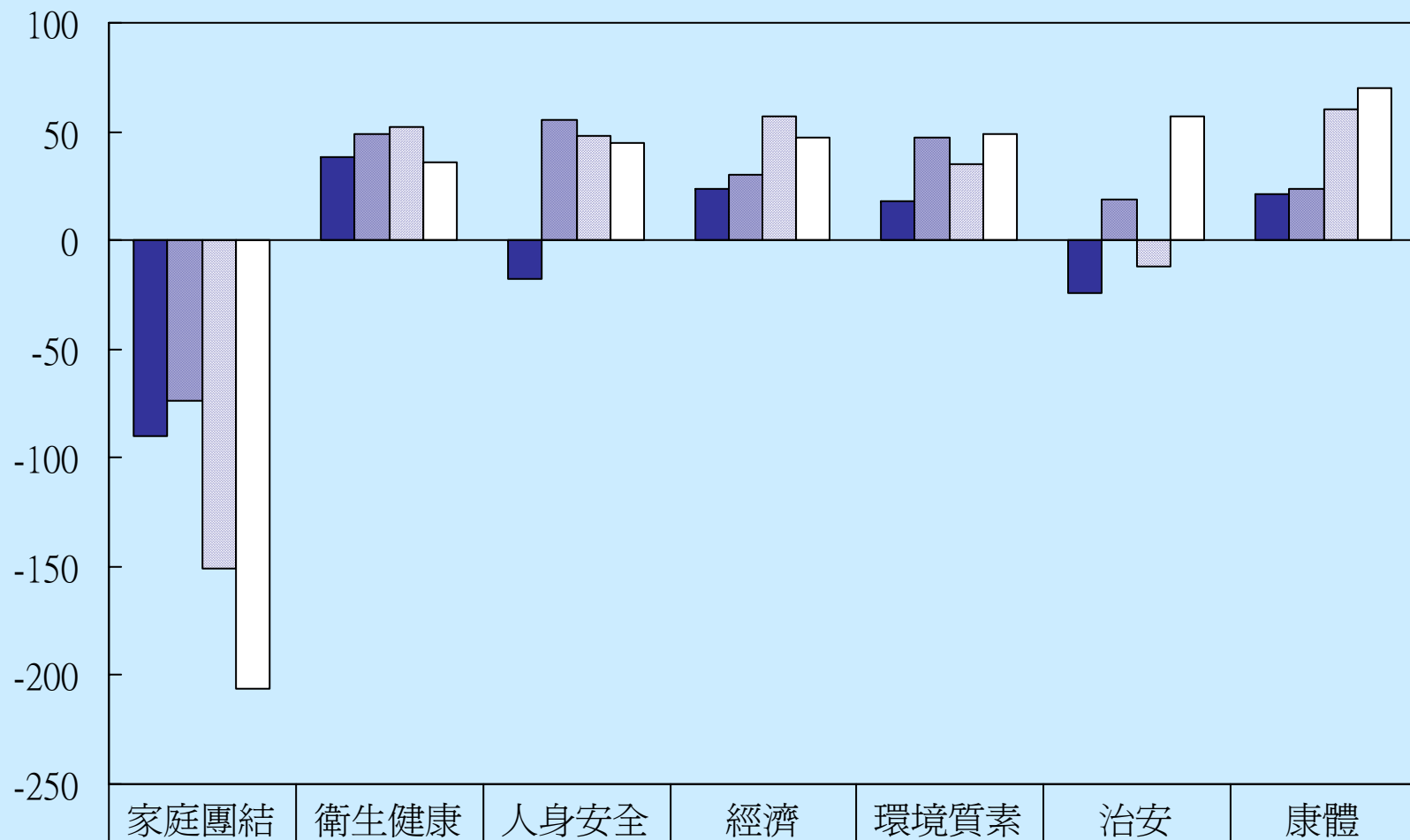
按分類指數劃分的香港社會發展趨勢（2004）



按分類指數劃分的香港社會發展趨勢（1998、2000、2002及2004）



按分類指數劃分的香港社會發展趨勢（1998、2000、2002及2004）



	家庭團結	衛生健康	人身安全	經濟	環境質素	治安	康體
■ 1998 (SDI 2000)	-90	38	-18	24	18	-24	21
■ 2000 (SDI 2002)	-74	49	55	30	47	19	24
■ 2002 (SDI 2004)	-151	52	48	57	35	-12	60
■ 2004 (SDI 2006)	-206	36	45	47	49	57	70

Warning Signal about Family Disharmony

Several cross-sectional and longitudinal studies conducted by the author suggested that family disharmony occurred in a significant proportion of families in Hong Kong

- ◆ Roughly 10-20% of adolescents expressed having constant parent-adolescent conflicts

Shek, D.T.L. (1998). A longitudinal study of the relations between parent-adolescent conflict and adolescent psychological well-being. *Journal of Genetic Psychology*, 159(1), 53-67.

Warning Signal about Family Disharmony

- ◆ Roughly one-tenth of married couples expressed marital conflicts

Shek, D.T.L. (1995). The Chinese version of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale: Does language make a difference? *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 51(6), 802-811.

Shek, D.T.L. (1998). Linkage between marital quality and parent-child relationship: A longitudinal study in the Chinese culture. *Journal of Family Issues*, 19(6), 687-704.

Warning Signal about Family Disharmony

- ◆ Roughly 10-30% of adolescents perceived global family conflicts in their families

Shek, D.T.L. (2002). Assessment of family functioning in Chinese adolescents: The Chinese Family Assessment Instrument. In N.N. Singh, T.H. Ollendick and A.N. Singh (Eds.), *International Perspectives on Child and Adolescent Mental Health* (vol. 2) (pp.297-316). Amsterdam, Netherlands: Elsevier.

Siu, A.M.H., & Shek, D.T.L. (2005). Psychometric properties of the Chinese Family Assessment Instrument in Chinese adolescents in Hong Kong. *Adolescence*, 40(160), 817-830.

Warning Signal about Family Disharmony

Findings arising from **comparative studies** showed that family and parenting problems were more prevalent in Hong Kong.

- ◆ Low levels of parental knowledge about their children
- ◆ Low levels of parental expectation
- ◆ Low levels of parental monitoring
- ◆ Higher levels of parental psychological control
- ◆ Low levels of satisfaction with parental control

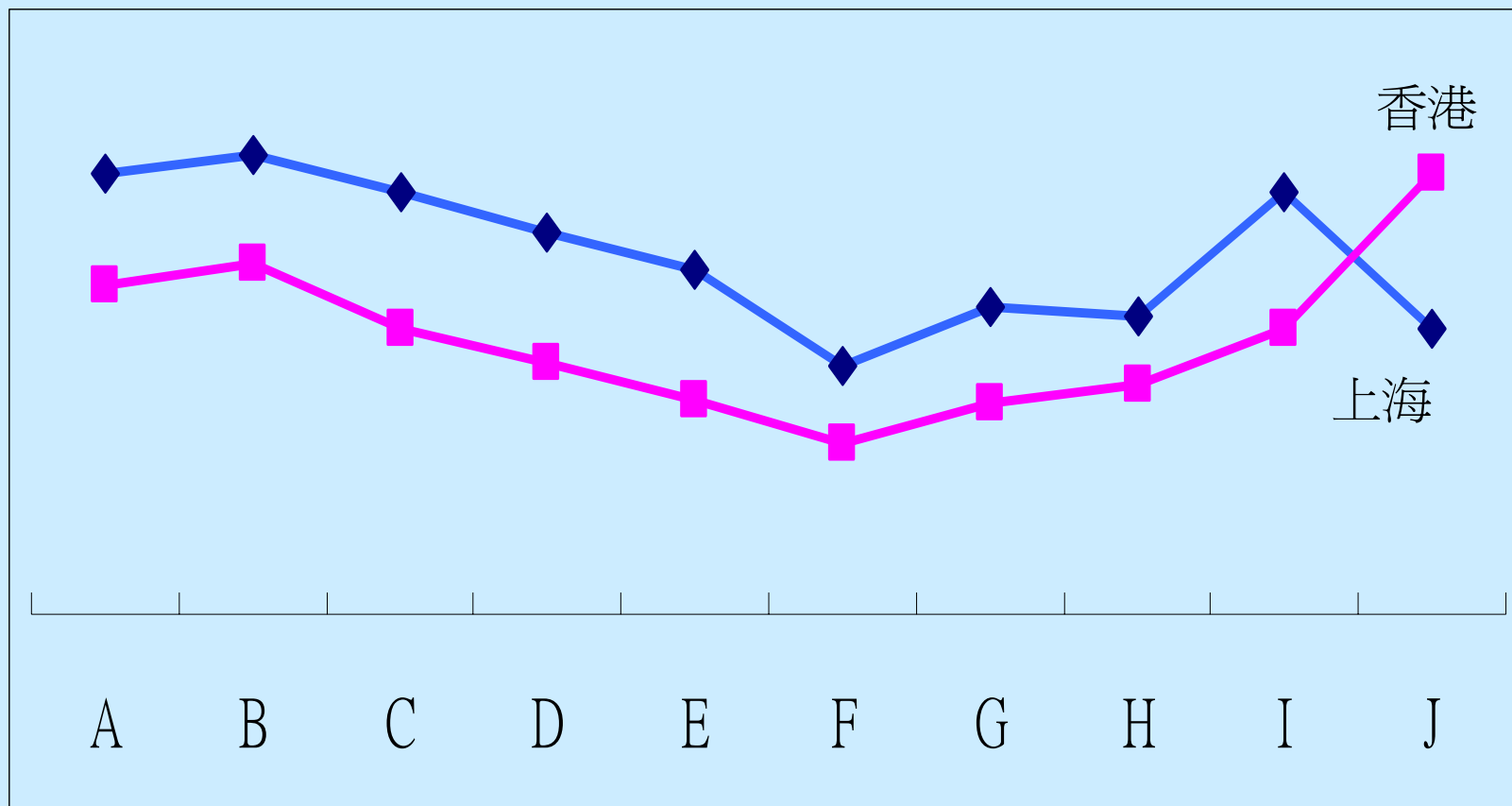
Warning Signal about Family Disharmony

- ◆ Low levels of readiness to communicate with the parents
- ◆ Low levels of global parent-adolescent relationship

Shek, D.T.L., Han, X.Y., & Lee, B.M. (2006a). *Perceived parenting patterns and parent-child relational qualities in adolescents in Hong Kong and Shanghai: A comparative study*. Shanghai: Institute of Youth and Juvenile Delinquency, Shanghai Academy of Social Science.

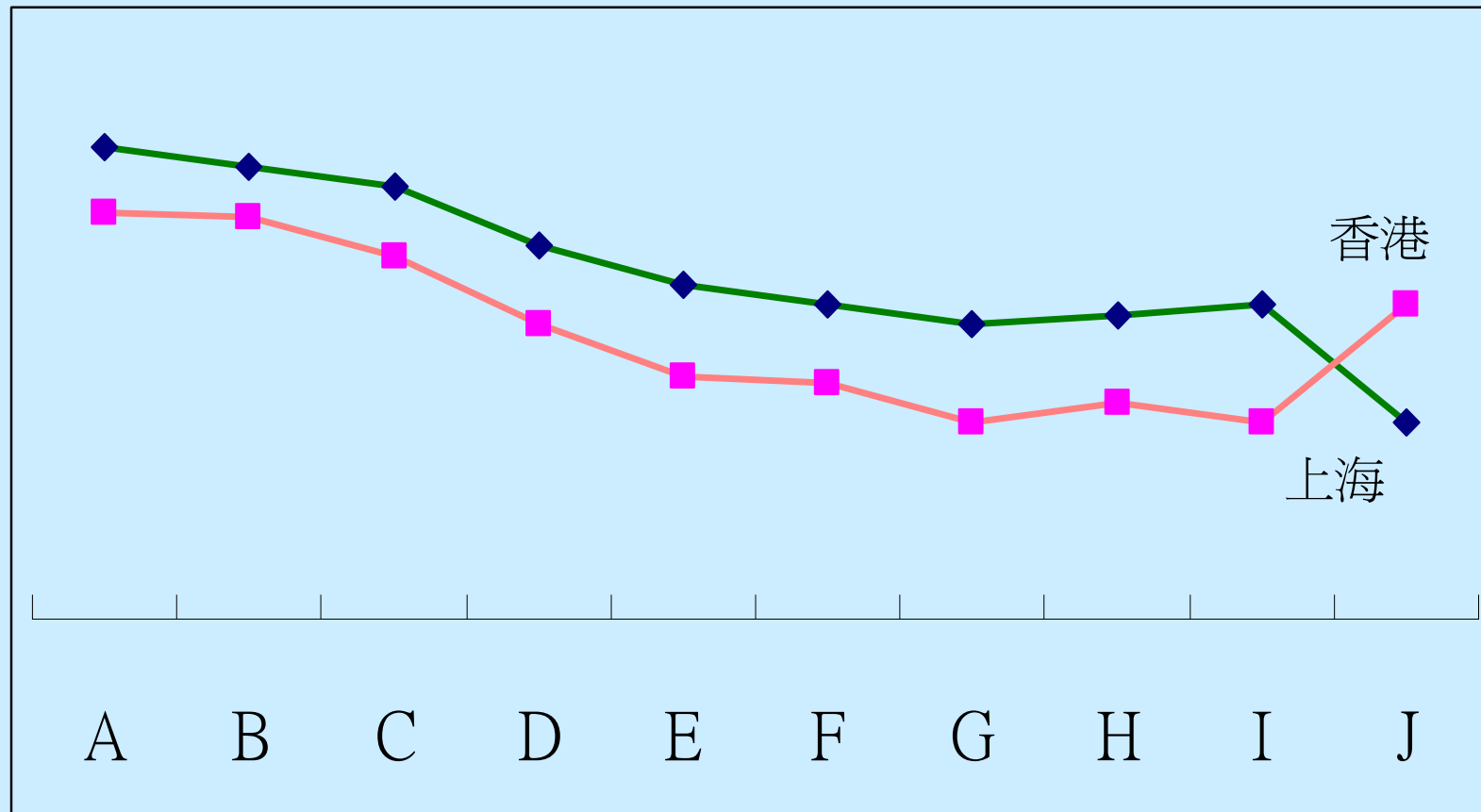
Shek, D.T.L., Han, X.Y., & Lee, B.M. (2006b). Perceived parenting patterns and parent-child relational qualities in adolescents in Hong Kong and Shanghai. *Chinese Journal of Sociology*, 26, 137-157.

學生對親職及親子關係的觀感（香港與上海的比較）



A=父親對子女的認識。B=父親對子女的期望。C=父親對子女的主動監控。D=父親對子女的管教。E=對父親管教的滿意程度。F=子女對父親的主動溝通。G=父親對子女的信任。H=子女對父親的信任。I=父親的管教(本土化觀念)。J=父親的心理控制。

學生對親職及親子關係的觀感（香港與上海的比較）



A=母親對子女的認識。B=母親對子女的期望。C=母親對子女的主動監控。D=母親對子女的管教。E=對母親管教的滿意程度。F=子女對母親的主動溝通。G=母親對子女的信任。H=子女對母親的信任。I=母親的管教(本土化觀念)。J=母親的心理控制。

Conclusions

Ecological Analyses

1. Heavy emphasis on family harmony in traditional Chinese culture.
2. Cultural factors impairing harmony in Chinese families: weakening of traditional Chinese cultural values; emergence of popular Hong Kong culture; conflict between the old and new ideologies.
3. Social factors impairing harmony in Chinese families: economic disadvantage; vulnerable families.
4. Individual factors impairing harmony in Chinese families: stress; personal and family competencies.

Conclusions

Warning Signs

1. SDI-2006 shows gradual drop in family solidarity in the past decade.
2. Local cross-sectional and longitudinal studies reveal worrying trends.
3. Comparative studies: Hong Kong parents are comparatively less involved and their relationships with their adolescent children are less positive.