

Attributional Shifts Among the Bereaved and Their Implications for Public Policy: Exploring Social and Psychological Factors

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Abstract The coping behaviors of the orphans after the loss of independence are to a large extent directly affected by the individual's attribution of the loss of independence. Under the influence of comparative cognition at the individual level, assimilation of the concept of self-organization at the group level, and social exclusion encountered in the process of reintegration into society, the attributions of the separated people for the loss of independence differed greatly at different stages after the loss of independence, in the face of different interactions with different people, and in different psychological and living conditions, and on the whole, there was a tendency to evolve from self-attributions to attributions to family planning policies, which triggered a shift from self-redemption actions to collective rights defense actions by the separated people, creating potential collective action risks. This has led to a change in the mode of action from self-redemption to collective rights defense, creating a potential risk of collective action. Therefore, through defining the government's rights and obligations towards the lost children, giving full play to the positive guiding role of the lost children's organizations, and encouraging the lost children's self-redemption, reconstructing the positive attributional cognition of the lost children is an important direction for the governance of China's lost children at the present time.

Keywords: • lost persons • self-attribution • institutional attribution • one-child policy • family planning

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1 Introduction

With the Fifth Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in October 2015 proposing the "universal implementation of the two-child birth policy", the one-child family planning policy, which had been strictly implemented in China for more than thirty years, drew to a close; however, the one-child policy of this thirty-year period has had a fundamental impact on the basic structure and developmental dynamics of China's population (G. Z. Wang, 2016). It is estimated that the number of one-child children in China will remain between 110-120 million in 2020, while the total number of one-child deaths in China has already exceeded one million in 2010 (G. Z. Wang, 2013), and continues to increase at a rate of 76,000 per year (F. X. Yi, 2012). The increase in the number of single-childless families has become a major social and public topic, and its social impact will continue to exist in China for a long time.

After the loss of independence, those who have lost their families experience psychological collapse, fear and despair, and their interactions with society are caught in a vicious circle, which ultimately leads to both psychological and structural marginalization (X. J. Xu & N. N. Zhang, 2020). In addition, in reality, the unsoundness of the policies to help the single orphans and the lagging implementation of these policies have led to the repeated obstacles in the process of expressing the demands of the single orphans, and their collective petitions have been increasing. They are trying to attract the attention of high-level governments through petitions, so as to force local governments to respond positively to their demands. This kind of collective petitioning with strong anti-social sentiments is usually accompanied by such characteristics as over-the-level petitioning, illegal gathering and violent tendency, which has a strong negative demonstration effect on other marginalized groups in society, and can easily evolve into a major hidden danger to social stability and development.

After encountering the death of an only child, there is a general similarity in the stages of psychological state of different people who have lost their children. From the initial disbelief and unwillingness to admit to the gradual recognition and acceptance of the fact, this process is usually accompanied by the cognition and attribution of the fact of the death of the only child (daughter). Attribution is a universal human need, and the attributions people make about their own or others' behavior, as well as the resulting cognition and emotion, will jointly determine the post-attribution actions, i.e., changes in attributional cognition will inevitably lead to changes in individual action strategies. The contingent behaviors of the separated person in relation to the separated event are largely influenced by the individual's attributions about the separated event. Then, what kind of cognition and attribution will be generated after the loss of independence event? What changes exist in the attributions behind the behavioral shift from self-healing to collective petitioning? What factors affect the attributional changes? These

questions are of great significance to the alleviation of the current plight of the separated people in China.

2 Textual representations of attributions of loss facts by lost persons

Attribution strengthens the self-knowledge and identity of the childless to a certain extent, and becomes an important means of identity construction for the childless. Through the combing of existing literature, it can be found that there are the following two main attributional orientations for the death of the lone child by the loser: first, family planning policy attribution, as high as 89.7% of the loser believes that the family planning policy is the main reason for the occurrence of lone child phenomenon, and regards themselves as the direct victims of the family planning policy (Y. F. Chen & H. Y. Wu, 2014); second, self-attribution, the loser attributes the death of the lone child to their own ineffective supervision and care, regretting that they failed to take care of their only child. Through the collection and organization of existing literature (Table 1 and Table 2), it is possible to summarize the textual representations of these two completely different attributional orientations of lost children.

2.1 Textual representations of self-attribution

Self-attribution refers to an attributional orientation in which the person who lost his or her child takes himself or herself as the subject of responsibility when faced with the attribution of the death of the only child, i.e., the person who lost his or her child believes that he or she has an unshirkable responsibility for the death of the only child. There are two main textual expressions of the self-attribution orientation (Table 1): first, the lone parent believes that he or she has been negligent as a parent, taking poor care of the child and failing to fulfill his or her responsibility as a guardian, resulting in the loss of the child; second, under the influence of the belief in karma, many of the lone parents attribute the loss of the child to their own destiny or predestined fate, believing that they have done too many sins in their previous life, and so they have to be punished in this life. The reason for such a strong self-attribution cognition is that, on the one hand, the traditional Chinese culture, such as "filial piety is three times as great as having no offspring" and "passing on the family name to the next generation, and raising children to prevent old age" and other old concepts, are holding them hostage; on the other hand, children are the core of the whole family in the Chinese family culture, and "children are the core of the whole family". On the other hand, in Chinese family culture, the child is the core of the whole family, and the "loss of independence" is not only a disaster for a family of three, but also an injury to the whole family, and the person who has lost his/her independence not only has to face his/her own inner torment and pain, but also has to bear the accountability of the elders, relatives and friends. However, in the case of the loss of a single person who has been extremely self-blame, the relatives will not bear to be too much

blame, which is a kind of human nature. Therefore, the strong self-attribution to some extent reflects a kind of self-protection and self-defense psychology of the person who has lost his/her independence when facing the accountability of some of his/her relatives and friends.

Table 1: Textual representations of self-attributions in the unaccompanied population

Type	Attributional expressions
Dereliction of duty	"That was a knot in my heart, if I hadn't turned off my old partner's cell phone, maybe" (L. N. Zhao, 2012). "A child as good as that was cut off in my hands" (L. He, Tang, Zhu, & J. P. Wang, 2014). "I have not been put on the heart, early to know. Blame me, if I noticed earlier, my son would not have" (Xiao & L. W. Li, 2015). "After my daughter died, I was going crazy. I not only counted down his faults when he took care of his daughter, but also counted down his silence now" (B. C. Zhang & M. H. Liu, 2014).
Karma and fatalism	"Why is my life so bad, what did I do wrong that the gods would punish and torture me so devastatingly" (Y. M. Huang, 2014)? "What bad things have (I) done" (E. Chen, 2016)? "Being an unfortunate and ominous person myself, my son was sent by heaven to cheat me." "I only blame my own life, it is destined that I have no food (no fortune), I do not blame anyone, it is impossible to blame others or the government." "My own life is not good, my life is good my daughter will definitely not go" (W. H. Chen, 2017).

Behavioral results brought about by self-attribution are usually manifested in two aspects: first, the emotional reactions of guilt, self-blame and self-absorption in the person who has lost his/her own life. Self-attribution-oriented people who have lost their children have a deep sense of guilt about their deceased children, and a strong sense of self-blame when facing the concern and inquiries of friends and relatives. These complex negative emotions make people who have lost their children afraid of interacting with friends and relatives, afraid of mentioning the topic of their children, choosing to close themselves off, or even selling their house and moving to a completely strange place in a determined attitude, choosing to live in a humble manner in an "invisible" posture. They even sell their house and move to a completely strange place in a determined manner, choosing to live in a humble manner in an "invisible" posture. Second, self-punishment, self-harm and even suicidal behavior. The death of an only child makes all the efforts originally made for the child go down the drain, and the collapse of the family

structure leads to the formation of an irreparable gap in the daily life of the childless, and some of the childless have thoughts of self-harm or even suicide due to the unbearable psychological pain, believing that only by following the child(s) to leave can they truly be relieved.

2.2 Textual representations of policy attributions for lost persons

Policy attribution refers to an attributional orientation in which the family planning policy is the subject of responsibility when attributing the death of an only child to the person who has lost his or her child, i.e., the person who has lost his or her child believes that the long-term, mandatory implementation of the family planning policy and the loss of his or her child is directly causally related. The textual formulation of policy attribution has two important features: first, it is a policy attribution that is consciously and spontaneously generated. Those who have lost their children believe that they could have had two or more children in the first place, that the reason why they did not do so was purely to carry out the State's family planning policy, and that some of them were even forced to abort on their own initiative or under their own responsibility when they were already pregnant with their second child. Some of them even aborted their second child of their own accord or were forced to do so. Therefore, this group of people who lost their children see themselves as the bearers and victims of the risks of the family planning policy. The second is the policy attribution constructed on the basis of interactions and exchanges among the orphans. When single persons connect the pain experienced by the micro-individuals with the feelings of other people with the same life, through emotional resonance and fermentation, the feeling of pain of the single persons rises from individuality to a group nature. From the "glorious generation" that responds to the policy to the lonely and unsupported "childless people", the childless people no longer think that childlessness is an individual factor that causes suffering and misfortune, and then construct the "family planning policy", "one-child family - childless people", and "childless people". Thus, the logical chain of "family planning policy - one-child family - loss of independence" is constructed.

There are two main behavioral consequences of policy attribution for people who have lost their children: first, a strong psychological feeling of resentment and discontent. When the orphans link their mental pain and life difficulties to the government's policy behavior, a sense of relative deprivation and unfairness arises, resulting in strong anti-social emotions. Secondly, they rely on the government's help in their coping behavior and give up self-redemption, and tend to take excessive collective actions to express their interests. Under the dominant cognition of policy attribution, the separated people construct and strengthen their identity as "vulnerable groups" and "policy victims", and petition the government in a collective action to express their self-appeals and strive for benefits, overly rely on external forces and seek social compensation. In addition, they exaggerate

the suffering of those who have lost their independence and weaken the individual's subjective initiative. Obviously, this kind of neglect or even abandonment of positive self-redemption is not conducive to the real reintegration of the separated into society.

Table 2: Policy attribution formulations for the unaccompanied population

Causes	Attributional expressions
Spontaneous generation	“How I love children, but in order to enforce family planning, I only had to have one child, and at the end of the day, I felt what now” (J. X. Wu & W. H. Yu, 2012). “How I loved children then, but I could only have one after being forced many times by the family planning committee. When I was old now exactly when I needed him, he was gone.” “I was then dragged by the Health and Family Planning Commission to be forcibly induced for all three of my subsequent pregnancies, and if I had given birth to them at that time, I wouldn't be in the pain I'm in now” (Lu, 2015). “If I had been allowed to give birth at that time, even if one of them was in trouble, there would have been others, and there would have been something to look forward to” (W. H. Chen, 2017). “If it had not been for family planning, it would not have been like this.”
Group construction	“Don't sing so high and mighty. We are already in this situation, and we are still thinking about the country or not. It is the rigid requirements of the country's ‘basic national policy’ that have caused the tragedy of our ‘loss of independence’” (Y. Dong & X. X. Chen, 2014). “We have fulfilled our obligations, and it is only because we have lost our independence that we have no one to turn to.” “As ordinary citizens, we actively responded to the State's family planning policy and fulfilled our obligations, but now we have lost our only child who could support us.” “At first, I thought it was bad luck that so many of my children were fine, but then I joined the organization and found that I was surrounded by many others like me, and I was not convinced that it was fate.” “When I first joined the organization, I was shocked by what they said about defending our rights and petitioning. Later, after hearing more about it, I also felt that it should be like this, I didn't want to make trouble, but the state should really face up to our rights and interests” (Mu, 2015).

3 The evolution of attributions of facts of loss by lost children

Differences in cognition and attribution can lead to differences in individual emotions and behaviors. After the death of their only child, the responding behaviors of the single childless people show a trend from self-healing to group warming to collective petitioning, which implies a change in the cognitive and attributional strategies of the single childless people. As a matter of fact, people's

attributional behavior is not always completely rational, nor is it always logical and strict, and people are swayed by their emotions under certain circumstances, which will inevitably lead to attributional bias or even attributional errors (Yu, 2006). It can be said that the alternating changes in the attributional cognition of those who lost their children are a manifestation of attributional bias. From the early stage of the one-child death incident, which focused on self-responsibility, to the later stage of the incident, which blamed the state's family planning policy for the loss of independence; from the individual attribution of self-blame and self-repentance in the face of relatives to the undisguised policy attribution in the face of outsiders. When faced with different objects in different times and spaces, the loss of independence people take the real cause of the death of the only child as the baseline, and adopt a flexible attribution expression. This attributional change reflects, on the one hand, the egoistic personal rational action choice, and this self-interested attributional bias can enhance and protect personal self-esteem; on the other hand, it also reflects the lack of national attention and protection for the childless, which leads to serious insecurity and relative deprivation, and then accompanies the change of cognition and action strategy.

3.1 Changes in attributions of lost persons at different stages after loss of childhood

The attributions of the bereaved change with the time of the bereavement. From the early stage to the late stage of the loss of a child, the attributions of the childless show a general trend from self-attribution to policy attribution: in the early stage of the loss of a child, the childless are completely occupied by the fact of the death of the child, and the individual is in a state of psychological traumatic stress, and the childless are caught in the great grief of the death of the child and can hardly be extricated from the grief, and they focus on the internal family, and thus the attributional orientation of self-responsibility dominates at this stage; as time passes, after the traumatic stress period, the attributional orientation of the individual tends to change. As time passes, after the traumatic stress period, out of the individual's instinct of avoiding harm and self-protection, those who have lost their children try to transfer their own pain, and the policy attribution of taking the family planning policy as the main responsibility becomes the main attributional choice in this stage. The change of this attribution is mainly manifested in two aspects: first, the direct conversion of the attribution text expression. From the self-attribution-led "I am a sinner", "Why don't you let me die instead of my child", "I am just bitter" and so on, to "I should have known that it would have been better to have two children at the beginning" and "I wouldn't have ended up in such a situation if I had two children", which is a clear shift of the responsible subject in the attributional expression text. Secondly, there is a shift in the attributional behavior of those who have lost their children. From the self-isolation and self-healing in the early stage of the death of their only child to the repeated recounting of the fact of loss of independence to others in the later stage, to

joining the self-organization of the loss of independence and warming up with people of the same life, this series of changes in action fully reflects the transformation of attributional cognition of the loss of independence.

The shift of attribution from self-attribution to policy attribution is essentially a process of rational choice of cognitive strategies. In the early stage of the death of an orphaned child, the orphaned person not only has to face his or her own internal pain and suffering, but also has to face the pressure from family and friends, and is worried that outsiders will also think that the death of the child is due to the failure of the parents' responsibility. By placing all the blame for the child's death on the self, the bereaved person can, in a way, minimize the accountability from friends and family. This is because fewer people will place more blame on the person who has already blamed himself/herself to an extreme degree. It can be seen that self-attribution at this stage of the bereaved person's life is both a natural spontaneous response and an attributional self-protection strategy.

Over time, attributions become more and more situational, and people will tend to interpret things that happened long ago in the past as the cause of the situation rather than the cause of the actor (N. F. Guo, 2005). As the loss of one's life gradually recognizes and accepts the fact that one child has died, the trauma of loss of one's life shifts from explicit to implicit, and the loss of one's life begins to try to get out of the self-enclosed sanctuary. Under the influence of social interactions, especially the interactions between people with the same destiny, people with loss of independence began to re-examine the incident of loss of independence, and the attributional cognition with the state policy as the attributional subject began to emerge. In a word, the change of attribution of the separated people essentially reflects the beginning of the formation of self-interest striving behavioral motives of the separated people, and in the process of reintegrating into the society, their logic of action begins to develop from individual self-protection instincts of avoiding harms to the rational action of striving for self-interests.

3.2 Confronting differences in attribution among different groups of lost persons

Changes in the attributions of the lone person show variability depending on the interacting objects, which is mainly manifested in the fact that when the lone person talks about the incident of the death of his/her only child with different interacting objects, he/she chooses different attributional orientations according to the identities of the interacting objects and the degree of affinity. In a society with a differential order pattern, one of the most important features of the concentric ripple-like social network is the differentiation of affinity, and the boundaries between group and self, and person and self are clear and explicit (Fei, 1998). Accordingly, as the relationship of the interaction object changes from close to

distant, the attribution of the lost person also changes from self-attribution to policy attribution. This is mainly manifested in the following ways: first, when the target of the conversation is in-group members such as friends and relatives, the attributions of the separated persons are usually based on self-attribution and self-responsibility, and they will resist and avoid mentioning the topic of their children; second, when the target of the interaction is out-group members who are relatively distant from one another, especially staff members of the government departments or journalists, the separated persons will take the initiative to mention the fact of the death of their children repeatedly, and their attribution statements are obviously clear and obvious. The fact of the death of their children was mentioned repeatedly, and the attribution expression was obviously changed to policy attribution with strong victimization feelings.

Attribution is essentially an instrumental means of self-interest striving, and the individual's interpretation of self-involved matters in the attribution process has a clear tendency to protect self-worth, i.e., the attribution is tilted in the direction of favoring the establishment of self-worth (Jin, 2010). Since the interactions between the lost and the in-group members are mainly governed by emotions, their interactions are more of an emotional interaction. In-group members have close interactions with the loser in their daily lives and have a deeper emotional experience than out-group members in the loser's case. As a result, when confronted with members of the in-group, the person with loss of a child more often chooses self-attribution, which is an expression of guilt and self-blame for the deceased child, for emotional catharsis. In contrast to the in-group, the interactions between the separated and the out-group members were oriented towards maximizing self-interest. In the face of outsiders, especially government and media workers, the expression of policy attribution constructs and reinforces the "policy victim" status of the childless. This kind of proactive "weak" behavior of the orphans helps to arouse the sympathy and attention of outsiders to their own suffering, and furthermore, to obtain more social support and assistance. In conclusion, from "self" to "person", from self-attribution to policy attribution, this shift reflects the rational choice of cognitive and action strategies of the orphans, and the maximization of individual interests has always been the dominant factor in the shift of the attribution of the orphans.

3.3 From contingencies to established facts: Attributional differences across states

Attributional behavior is, at its root, a causal explanation of the outcome of an event, and the outcome presented by the event is the main basis for attribution. The same thing happens to different individuals will lead to different results, the results of the event will finally be affected by a variety of factors and present different states, which may lead to different attributions. In terms of time sequence, the death of an only child will gradually become an established fact from a sudden

event in the life course of the person who lost his or her child. In this process, the psychological course of the childless person from resistance, and denial, to gradual acceptance, its psychological course will go through a painful, repeated process of change, the individual's psychological state, and the state of life will also go through the same complex changes. Therefore, different attributions will be generated when the orphaned person is in a different state. In the early stage of the death of the only child, the loss of independence is an unexpected and unacceptable event, the result is to cause the individual to fall into a huge trauma and psychological pain, in such a state of stress, the loss of independence of the person's sadness and self-blame of the emotions dominate, thus triggering the self-blame and guilt-based self-attribution. With the passage of time, the death of the only child has become an inescapable fact, which leads to the serious consequences of the psychological pain gradually transferred to the personal life after the loss of the reality of the difficulties faced. Lost parents' old age, medical care, care and other real needs can not be properly solved, this difficult state of life is the main basis for attribution in this stage. After the loss of independence has become an established fact, the loss of independence people have to think about their own current state of existence and the way out in the future. When they realize that the real problems of old age, medical treatment and care cannot be solved by their children, they will focus their attention on the government and the society. Especially when the government and society are lagging behind in responding to the demands of the orphans, the attribution of the orphans will change from self-attribution to policy attribution.

4 Factors influencing the evolution of attribution among the lost

Individuals have different social perspectives when making attributions, and consequently, their explanations of the causes of behaviors or events can differ markedly. In most contexts, behaviors and events are not caused by a single factor, but are shaped by a combination of factors and interactions among them (N. F. Guo, 2005). The dynamics of attributions of disengaged individuals in complex social situations are influenced by a combination of many factors. These influences include the formation of comparative cognition and the action logic of self-interest striving at the individual level; the influence of assimilation of self-organized group identity on individual cognition at the group level; and the reshaping of attributions by the social exclusion and relative deprivation encountered by the singletons in their attempts to reintegrate into the society. These factors and the interactions among them directly or indirectly lead to changes in the attributional cognition and choice of action strategies of the single child deaths of the single child.

4.1 The individual level of loss: Comparative perceptions and the logic of interest-driven action

The attributional cognition of the lost children is generated based on the social comparison and social cognition of individuals or groups, which is the reconstruction, cognition and identification of the lost children's individual or group with their own predicament and suffering, in which the comparative cognition and self-interest striving are the two important variables affecting the attributional transformation of individuals. Since October 2015, when China officially announced the full implementation of the two-child policy, those who lost their children have taken more frequent collective actions to defend their rights and petition. In the view of the orphans, the "unexpected" two-child policy is tantamount to announcing that they will become an unrepeatable "extinction song", and the stark contrast between the happiness of the non-orphans and their own difficult situation brings mental stimulation to the orphans and strengthens the orphans' mental loss and pain. The resultant comparative cognition leads to an increased sense of imbalance and unfairness in their hearts, and the attributional cognition is also transformed (Z. H. Liu, 2017).

When people with a loss of independence understand "loss of independence" as a violation of their own interests and lack of rights rather than just an accident or fate, the subject of responsibility for attribution has begun to shift to society or policy. On the one hand, personal problems such as mental trauma, physical damage, lack of support in old age, and lack of medical care have gradually developed into social and political issues such as the policy deprivation of personal life rights and imbalance in the allocation of social resources through objective facts and subjective constructions. On the other hand, the state's current support policies for people who have lost their independence are not implemented in place and are highly scalable, which aggravates the resentment of people who have lost their independence. The gap between their expectations of government support and the government's response to them has made them realize that they must be more proactive in expressing their demands and fighting for their interests, and that the expression of policy attribution is an important bargaining chip in the process of fighting for their interests.

4.2 Group level: Group identity and group pressure

The group is the foothold of the individual's social existence and the fundamental source of social identity, value and meaning in life (X. J. Xu, 2014). The death of an only child results in the severance of social relations and the crippling of intimate relations among the separated persons, who, fearful of being stimulated by the joys of family life, take the initiative to escape from their original groups. In order to re-adapt to the reality of life, most of them choose to interact with "people of the same fate" who have the same encounter with them. The self-organization of the separated people is a miniature "homogeneous society", in which the organization consists of "their own people", and their self-organized group is composed of "their own people", and their self-organized group is

composed of "their own people" (Y. L. Zhang, 2015). In this kind of society, the organization is purely composed of "their own people", and the identity of its group members shows a high degree of consistency and singularity. The spiritual solace of empathy between people of the same destiny is the catalyst for the rapid growth of the identity of the lost organization group. The common traumatic memories among the lost are the core elements of group identity, and group identity is the necessary condition for the organic integration and close solidarity of the members of the lost organization, as well as the ideological basis for their collective action and organization (X. J. Xu & Y. F. Peng, 2017). This highly homogeneous group identity provides spiritual comfort and emotional support for the lost person on the one hand, and on the other hand, it also affects the awareness and attribution of the lost event by the members of the group. In a highly homogeneous group, the group's values and behaviors, as well as the group's atmosphere, profoundly influence and shape the group members' perceptions and behaviors through the interactions and interactions among the group members, resulting in a high degree of consistency in the attributional perceptions, which is an obvious drawback of being confined to the organizational interactions of the lone parents for a long time.

Gustave Le Bon's work in the rabble is an example of this. Gustave Le Bon in the rabble: "People who gather in groups, whose conscious individuality disappears, and whose thoughts and feelings are all directed in the same direction, form an extreme collective mentality" (Le Bon, 2016). The Lost Alone Organization brings together the emotionally repressed, sensitive, and mentally fragile Lost Alone people, and this process of organizational participation plays a positive role in helping Lost Alone people to get out of the shadow of Lost Alone and integrate into social life. However, at the same time, this process is also prone to psychological polarization, and the psychological polarization of group members can easily be generalized through the interaction of group members, and thus generate group pressure, which affects and assimilates every member of the self-organization of the orphans. This psychological polarization is undoubtedly a direct variable in the shift from self-attribution to policy-attribution, with those who have lost their independence identifying the family planning policy as the main culprit in their loss of independence, thus triggering large-scale collective action.

4.3 The social dimension: Social exclusion and relative deprivation

Social exclusion is an important factor affecting the attribution and behavioral change of lost person from a social perspective. The social exclusion perceived by the orphans is mainly composed of two aspects: on the one hand, after the death of a single child, the orphans do experience in the process of interpersonal communication or have "the same life" suffered from the application for subsidies was rejected, stigmatized labels, friends and relatives deliberately alienated and

other extreme cases of rejection, the objective existence of social exclusion causes the orphans in their minds and hearts, the social exclusion of the orphans is also the most important factor. This kind of objective social exclusion causes the orphans to build up a psychological fear of interacting with non-orphans and even the general public; on the other hand, extreme thinking and the experiences of individual members will trigger the orphans in the group to subjectively build up even stronger social discrimination and exclusion, which will make them exaggerate their own sufferings and pains and lead to the orphans' radical thinking and extreme behaviors, and to put forward excessive demands, which are difficult to be accepted by the general public. Therefore, the objective existence of social exclusion and the subjective construction of the orphans themselves is also an important factor in causing a change in the attribution of the orphans.

The further negative effect of social exclusion is that it will make the lost person feel a sense of relative deprivation, thus accelerating the change of their attributional behavior. The sense of relative deprivation refers to people's internal feeling of being deprived of their own interests by other groups through comparison with the reference group, which mainly stems from the gap between what they expect to get and what they actually get, and it is an internal psychological state when their own needs are not effectively satisfied (X. H. Guo, 2001). Generally speaking, people with damaged interests are usually more likely to have a strong sense of relative deprivation, frustration and unfairness. The reasons for the formation of the sense of relative deprivation of people who have lost their children involve the distribution of social resources such as economy, social security, social welfare and opportunities for childbirth, etc. The current institutional arrangements for people who have lost their children in our country are characterized by the misalignment of the supply of resources and the lack of effective synthesis, etc. The government failure and the market failure are the main reasons for this. This dual pressure of government failure and market failure exacerbates the sense of relative deprivation of those who have lost their children, strengthens their negative evaluation of the government and society, and prompts their attributional cognition to shift from self-attribution to family planning policy attribution.

5 Conclusions and recommendations

Attributional cognition is an important basis for individuals' emotional reactions and action choices, and has a significant impact on their interpersonal and social life. In different periods of time, the attributional cognition of the single child deaths showed a gradual evolution from self-attribution to policy attribution; when interacting with people of different degrees of closeness, the attributional choices of the single-child deaths also showed a development from self-attribution at the core of interpersonal relationships to policy attribution at the periphery. At the same time, when the death of a single child gradually becomes an established fact

from a sudden event, the attribution of the loss of independence also changes from the initial self-attribution to the policy attribution. This transformation is both subjective and objective, including both the attributional transformation of the person who lost his or her child as the subject of action and the attributional transformation triggered by the influence of continuous social interactions of the members of the society as the object. Whether it is self-attribution or policy attribution, the person without a family is constructed as an image of suffering, and this attributional cognition with biased and irrational emotions further maintains and strengthens the weak identity of the person without a family. Under the strong self-attribution-dominated cognition, the self-condemnation and self-contained behavioral reaction will increase the suicide risk of the single person; while when the policy attribution dominates, the single person will produce strong irrational negative social emotions, overly rely on governmental help and give up positive self-redemption, and then take radical ways of expressing their demands. Therefore, neither the single self-attribution nor the policy attribution is conducive for the separated persons to get out of the difficult situation and return to the normal social life.

Changing the attributional bias and forming a positive attribution is not only good medicine to help the separated persons get out of their difficulties, but also the key to alleviating the problem of separated persons from a macro perspective. Therefore, it is necessary for the government, the organization and the individual to work together.

Define the rights and responsibilities of the government in the social security system for the separated. A large part of the attributional bias of the orphans is due to the fact that they have no way to seek help after they have suffered misfortunes, and that the relevant governmental departments have not responded effectively to their demands, which has led to a tense relationship between the orphans and the government. Based on this, the government should fully understand the great misfortune in life suffered by people without children, put itself in the shoes of people without children, open up and open up diversified and multidirectional reflection channels for people without children, actively and positively respond to the demands of people without children, and formulate and effectively implement the overall plan, try its best to alleviate the plight of the people without children, and realize the two-way interaction between the government and the people without children, and help the people without children to correct the irrational attribution, and to form the positive attribution of the people without children. To realize two-way interaction between the government and the separated people, and to help the separated people correct irrational attributions and form positive attributions.

Give full play to the positive guiding role of the organization for the separated persons. For one thing, participation in group life is an important way for the

singletons to break the plight of marginalization and return to normal social life; for another, the communication and interaction within the singleton organization has a profound influence on the singletons' individual cognition and attribution. Therefore, the organization of the lost alone plays a crucial role in the process of solving the problem of the lost alone, the government should attach great importance to the cultivation and regulation of the self-organization of the lost alone, encourage the lost alone to actively join the organization of the lost alone, and through the positive interaction within the organization to help the individual to carry out the reconstruction of the positive attribution.

Encourage the lost person to actively carry out self-redemption and form positive attributional cognition. In the final analysis, the solution to the plight of the lost child depends on the lost child himself/herself to change the cognitive bias from his/her thoughts and take positive self-redemption measures from his/her actions. On the one hand, through the intervention of social workers, they can stimulate the potential of the lost children, build up confidence to overcome difficulties, help them form positive identities, and gradually overcome the pain and fear caused by the death of their children; on the other hand, they should be encouraged to play the subjective initiative, understand the difficulties of the government, and express their own demands in a rational way, and find and realize their own value by enhancing social participation.

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