Behind Separation: Chinese couples living apart together
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Research Background
My research focuses on living apart together (LAT) relationships in China. Some people might be forced to live apart from their partner due to external circumstances, such as work locations, whereas others prefer living separately, and do so out of choice. Thus, these ‘unusual’ living arrangements and relationships are inevitably regarded as lacking intimacy and commitment. But my research asks, is that really so? In so doing, I contribute to and extend sociological research on intimacy, emotions, and gender relationships.

Research Aim/questions
This phenomenon has not yet been systematically researched in China, therefore, this original research aims to explain the meaning behind LAT relationships, and how couples that cannot meet face-to-face on a regular basis maintain intimacy. I also ask, in a broad sense, what is the impact of social change on personal and familial relationships.

Research Method
I have conducted in-depth face-to-face interview with 35 women and 4 men, aged between 23 to 57, in China during summer 2016. They came from varied backgrounds, such as migrant workers, professionals, and housewives.

References: