

Love, Freedom, And Promise Exploring The Practices of Living Apart Together (LAT) Relationship in China

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Abstract

Living Apart Together (LAT), also known as “weekend marriage” in China, involves couples living separately—ranging from having separate bedrooms in the same house to residing in different houses, cities, or even countries. LAT has attracted significant attention on Chinese social media platforms such as Sina Weibo and Little Redbook. Previous research has focused on migrant family separations, accompany-study mothers, and military wives, primarily examining women's experiences in LAT relationships due to migration, education, or job demands. This study, however, explored LAT from both men's and women's perspectives. It interviewed 13 married couples in Shanghai to understand their reasons for living apart, analyzing how they managed daily family life, negotiated gender roles, experienced intimacy from a distance, interacted with extended family, and handled caregiving and parenting responsibilities. The study aimed to analyze how these LAT experiences reflect broader changes in family practices within the context of China's evolving social landscape.

Keywords: family; gender; intimacy; marriage; parenting