

12. Care of the Self as a Spatial Practice

The Digital Tools Supporting Physical Activities of Migrant Domestic Workers

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Abstract: This paper explores the collective mediated fitness practices of low-income migrant women in Hong Kong as practices of the Care of the Self. Little is known of how the widespread availability of smartphones and social media has changed the ways MDWs organise their social gatherings across time and diverse urban spaces. To explore the impacts of smartphone technologies on the spatiotemporal structuring of these care practices, we focus on three highly visible fitness groups: Zumba dance, yoga, and martial arts. Through semi-structured interviews and content analysis of MDWs' social media activities, we analyse how digital tools support the operation of collective care practices, their presence in the urban space, and the relations between these activities and citizenship.

Keywords: Care of the self, digital tools, spatial practices, physical activities, migrants, domestic workers

Prologue

During a warm Sunday, with the humid subtropical weather that characterises Hong Kong in July, some cheerful music could be heard in the otherwise empty central business district of the city. With social distancing measures in place, the weekly gathering of migrant domestic workers that typically takes place on Chater Road was somewhat scaled down. A group of twenty women with bright orange uniforms was in the middle of the street, setting up phone stands for live streaming. Some women were chatting, while others were just taking a break after a long work week. Some were coordinating the

group, while others were choosing the next soundtrack with their phones for their Zumba practice. I asked one participant for a short interview on the ongoing dancing activity, and after a few questions, she suggested: 'Why don't you ask the admins? [indicating two fellow women] I will add you to our Facebook group; they are organising all'.

Introduction

A recent branch of scholarship in urban studies is increasingly focusing on amateur fitness practices, such as dancing, running, skating, fighting, and yoga practice, performed in urban spaces of several cities around the world (Latham and Layton 2019; 2020). These activities are commonly observed in urban environments and are known to potentially facilitate social connections, establish social networks, and enable communities to flourish (Simone and Pieterse 2017). Research on fitness activities in urban environments is informed by scholarship on the Care of the Self and performativity. Broadly, these studies investigate how identities are (re)produced through a wide array of practices and performances. Multiple accounts of Foucault's seminal work elaborate on how self-care can become a way to experience somatic pleasure (Foucault 1984). Besides, the *self* is always intertwined with everyday life interactions, formed and altered by societal and bodily practices (Debord 2012). The act of self-care can become a collective practice when different bodies—in particular, bodies of disenfranchised groups who are less visible in cities—come together in streets or squares to dance or perform.

Seeing groups performing collective dances, tai chi, or yoga is an increasingly common experience in urban parks, streets, and street corners of cities around the world (Chen 2018; Loukaitou-Sideris et al. 2016). While research has previously concentrated on professional, extreme, and niche sports activities (for example, mega-events, marathon running, parkour, or skateboarding) and the urban environments that support or hinder them (O'Connor 2018), more mundane fitness activities, which are part of daily life in many cities, are relatively less documented. Concurrently, there is limited research on the plurality of active bodies. Research has focused mainly on youth and on extreme, thrill-seeking groups with their respective urban sub-cultures. Meanwhile, 'other bodies', such as vulnerable groups with precarious working and living conditions, are often less well documented. For example, groups of migrant workers, particularly women, may engage in different fitness and training activities, such as Zumba or martial arts, thus surmounting their daily labour, care duties, and localities.

Collective fitness activities typically rely on the social infrastructure present in cities, the everyday infrastructure that accommodates exercise and sports, such as fitness courts, gyms, and dance studios, or urban public spaces, such as public parks, squares, or streets (Latham and Layton 2019). The social infrastructure provides essential spaces to enable or facilitate collective activities. However, distribution of these supportive environments is often unequal, as wealthier neighbourhoods tend to host more of such activities than peripheral or deprived areas. In addition, race, gender, class, sexuality, and disability also condition people's access to and use of urban facilities for fitness and performance. Understanding how these environments cater to sport and collective fitness activities, and how these practices can be facilitated for ordinary residents is a crucial topic for reimagining a collective urban future (Simone and Pieterse 2017) as well as for a more just city (Low and Iveson 2016).

In Hong Kong, the ethnographic site of our investigation, deep-seated socioeconomic divisions typical of Asian global cities are manifested through the allocation of urban public space. Such space is limited in quality and quantity and is highly contested. Nevertheless, in Hong Kong, spaces for coming together and *counterspaces*, which allow for some degree of inclusivity, are present within the highly unequal urban environment (Villani and Talamini 2023). One such example is visible on Sundays in central areas of the city, with the large-scale gathering of (mainly) women migrant domestic workers (MDW). For workers otherwise relegated to their employer's home, this meeting epitomises the possibility of their claiming part of the city as their own, at least one day per week. The Sunday gatherings show how the powerless use 'underutilised or abandoned space that lies forgotten' (Sassen 2013, 217) in global cities, manifested at an even greater scale in Hong Kong. One way in which this group makes its presence visible is through collective performances in streets and parks during the weekend, when these central areas are empty of office workers (Lai 2010).

While such collective practices of reclaiming public spaces have been present in several Asian cities for decades, more recent disruptions have come about through the widespread use of digital tools and online platforms, which have impacted collective activities. As will be elaborated later in this chapter, smartphones, social media, and messaging platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Messenger, and WhatsApp offer digital affordances for collective activities. Several studies highlight the importance of cyberspace in supporting the logistical, informational, and relational dimensions of collective social movements (Padawangi et al. 2014). With the rising importance of new communication platforms in the urban public sphere, cyberspace offers

digital settings for networking and recurrent everyday communications that can create and facilitate collective activities, sharing online and in physical space, and self-promotion (Costa 2018; Trepte 2015).

Cities in Asia are especially relevant locations for investigating cyber-urban relations in social movements. Here, the increasing accessibility of digital online platforms is being studied as a potential door to new participatory collective platforms: ‘An online space beyond the geographical’ (Padawangi et al. 2014, 8). For example, insurgent social movements have relied on smartphones for the coordination of on-site activities. Our study indicates that the online—new media and communications—and urban space are sometimes strongly linked. However, while social media seem to facilitate networking, they can also have some access restrictions (e.g., technical literacy). Moreover, online platforms may also be subjected to control, regulation, and specific rules. Previous studies also suggest the interdependent dimension of digital media and physical urban spaces for sustaining specific collective activities and larger social movements like protests. In particular, this interconnection could provide ‘spaces’ for people to interact, allowing for the agency and expansion of social networks of movements (Lim 2014).

By investigating the collective fitness activities of low-income migrant women in Hong Kong, we contribute to an understanding of the relationship between digital and urban spaces in the production of collective everyday fitness activities. These activities are an expression of more ordinary manifestations of this online-physical interdependence (compared to mass protests) and shed light on the diversity among some migrant women’s groups that are currently underrepresented in research (e.g., Indonesian women or older women). By analysing MDWs’ physical activities as networks engaging physical and online media spaces, this study examines the relationship between spatial practices, digital support, and care. In the remainder of this chapter, we investigate both how digital platforms and social media support fitness practices and how urban areas cater to and support these physical activities.

New directions in the study of leisure activities of migrant domestic workers

Currently, more than 330,000 MDWs are employed in Hong Kong. These full-time live-in caregivers for children, the elderly, or animal companions account for approximately one-tenth of Hong Kong’s total working population.

About one-third of Hong Kong households with children rely on MDWs for childcare (thirty-two and a half percent) (HKSAR Census and Statistics Department 2021). MDWs are mainly women who migrate from Southeast Asian countries, primarily the Philippines (fifty-seven percent), Indonesia (forty-one percent), and other countries such as Thailand and Cambodia (two percent). A basic two-year employment contract stipulates that they must live in their employer's residence, and grants them twenty-four hours off weekly. It also includes some other basic labour protection measures, including the ability to participate in labour organisations. Restrictive migration policies make MDWs subject to heavy control and precarious contracts and ensure that they are denied pathways to citizenship or long-term residency status. This group is also highly subject to regulation and discipline by employers, which (as highlighted by our respondents) may include control of mobile phone use or even denial of access to specific spaces in the house or city.

Although MDWs are subject to strict labour conditions and may seem to be a disempowered group, multiple accounts in relevant literature reveal their agency and the urban tactics they use to subvert existing hierarchies of power. We see this in the ways they use to reproduce and express their identity during leisure time, which is mainly on Sundays (Constable 1997; 2009; Law 2001). Their mass presence, and the ordinary use they make of public space can be studied as a manifestation of resistance and resourcefulness (Kwok 2019). For example, specific activities like beauty styling and beauty pageants can be a means to connect personal appearance with civic engagement (Chu and Catalan 2020). Larger collective activities involving dancing and singing are studied as outlets for greater labour demands and collective longings (Lai 2010). In summary, the cosmopolitan landscape (Law 2002) created by these social Sunday activities creates a safe space for this group to use their limited leisure time and increase their agency.

In recent years, multiple groups of MDWs practising fitness activities have made their presence felt in gathering spaces. Although dance and cultural performances in public spaces have previously been linked with labour struggles and political rallies, more ordinary fitness practices have also occurred. Activities such as group dancing, yoga, and martial arts are typically visible in places like Chater Road and Victoria Park. However, the mechanism behind the organisation of these activities has been less studied. In addition, MDWs—often considered a homogeneous community—show distinctive differences along ethnic, cultural, and religious lines and in their spatial occupation practices.

Furthermore, digital tools have become essential in the daily life of migrant domestic workers for the organisation of their leisure activities. While some

workers are forbidden to use their phones during the working day, especially if their employer is present, most of them can use them after completing their duties or when their employer leaves the house. Research has concentrated on the impact of smartphone use on the personal relationships of MDWs, on their intrafamilial parenting practices (Waruwu 2021), or as a means of collective empowerment (Wisnu Wijaya et al. 2022). Yet, the impact of increasingly popular online platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp) on the organisation of MDWs' collective activities remains unclear.

Studying MDWs' fitness activities

Our investigation focuses on three fitness groups, all highly visible in recognised MDW gathering spaces. These groups comprise mainly MDWs who perform Zumba group dance on Chater Road, yoga at Central Ferry Pier and Shau Kei Wan, and *pencak silat*, a martial art native to Indonesia, in Victoria Park (see [Figure 12.1](#)). This study employs qualitative methods, including participant observation in Hong Kong's public spaces, semi-structured direct interviews, and data collection from Facebook and WhatsApp groups of the relevant fitness groups. To examine transcribed and documentary material we used content analysis. On-site observation of the fitness activities took place from September to December 2021, before the stringent anti-pandemic restrictions implemented in Hong Kong led to heavy patrolling of public spaces by authorities.

Through on-site participant observations of MDWs' leisure practices, we were able to identify the organisers and participants of the three fitness groups. [Figure 12.1](#) shows the main gathering locations. While Zumba and martial arts are organised by and consist mainly of MDWs, yoga practice (in Pier 9) is organised by one migrant woman. However, this activity is open to (and targets) a wider audience. We collected nine semi-structured interviews and ten informal interviews with participants and selected the organisers and the participants of the fitness groups using a purposive and snowball sampling procedure.

Direct semi-structured phone interviews with these organisers and participants were collected between December 2021 and July 2022. Surinem is a self-taught yoga instructor from Indonesia and one of the leaders of a migrant organisation in Hong Kong (Interview #1). Indy is a yoga practitioner from Indonesia (Interview #2), and Asty is a former leader of the martial arts group (Interview #3). Rina, Asty's protégé, is also a member of the martial arts group (Interview #4). Carmel (Interview #5), Liliana (Interview

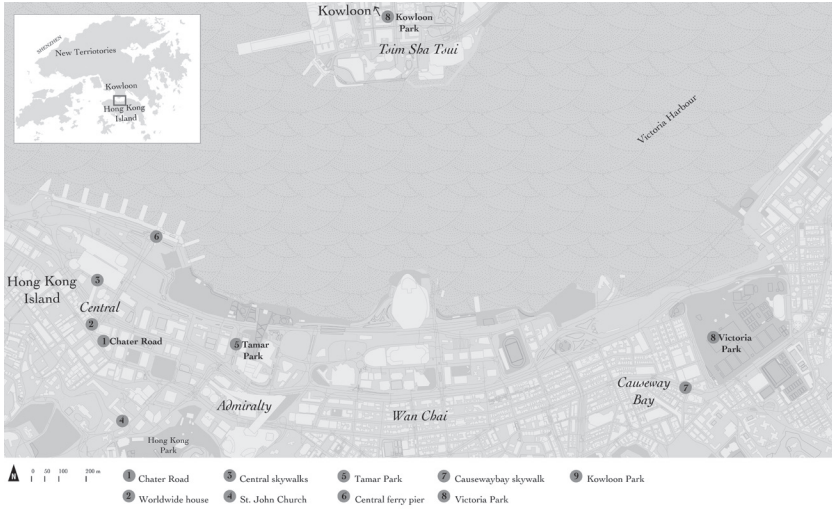


Figure 12.1. Migrant domestic workers' typical gathering places on Sundays.

#6), and Regina (Interview #7) from the Philippines are organisers of the largest Zumba group training in Chater Road and *admins* of its Facebook group. Cilo (Interview #8) and Angie (Interview #9) from the Philippines frequently join the Zumba classes. (All names of interviewees have been altered to maintain anonymity.)

Most of the MDWs we interviewed began to be actively involved in fitness activities only after they moved to Hong Kong and familiarised themselves with the city, its public space, and its social infrastructure. The Zumba group was founded by its main instructor in 2018 as a spin-off group of friends from a different Zumba practice who gathered at Central Ferry Pier. These women later created the Zumba Facebook group, now having more than one thousand online members, with about forty of them dancing each Sunday. Zumba participants usually give a minimum voluntary contribution (about HK\$20) to join a two-hour class on Sunday afternoons in Chater Road. The yoga and martial arts groups are free of charge. Surinem's yoga participants usually consist of about fifteen members. Indy's group has twelve members, and the martial arts group has up to thirty members.

Digital tools supporting physical activities

Respondents reported using various communication platforms to facilitate their physical activities. The most common media for organizing events was

Facebook, followed by Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp group chats. Facebook groups, Messenger, and WhatsApp groups are used primarily as tools to distribute useful information, which helps members coordinate collective priorities and schedules. For example, on Wednesdays the Zumba Facebook group shares information with its members, including schedules, meeting locations, and preferred outfits for the Sunday practice, as well as any changes to these (see Figure 12.2). Weather-related information affecting fitness practice is also circulated via these group chats.

Apart from their informational value, we found that these media also function as tools of social cohesion, keeping participants connected throughout the week. This was done through a regular stream of information to build anticipation for the event. Yoga and martial arts practitioners have dedicated WhatsApp groups. These group chats enable them to share information about the events throughout the week. Members shared pictures of their new workout gear and links to tutorial videos on YouTube. The respondents said that the constant flow of messages throughout the week reminds them of their ties to other members, thereby reducing the sense of isolation they often experience living in employers' homes. This social function of the group chats solidifies the importance of membership in these fitness-based groups, as it allows individual members of a marginalised group to find their place in a society where they are largely (and in some cases) systemically overlooked (Oktavianus and Lin 2021).

Compared to Facebook groups, dedicated WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger group chats are preferred as participatory decision-making platforms. These are spaces where members discuss, make decisions, and exchange suggestions or comments on the fitness practice. The Zumba group chat is essential for discussions regarding location, time, soundtracks, and outfit changes and for giving feedback to the admins who organise the activity. Our respondents expressed the importance of the participatory character of these groups. As Carmel, the admin of the Zumba Facebook group noted, 'Admins should be friendly and not too bossy [...] I can tell that we [Zumba group] are very close because we treat each other equally and listen to preferences' (Interview #5). Digital platforms also support the organising of bigger events, such as competitions, anniversaries, parties, and seasonal celebrations that can take up to a month to be set up. For the Zumba group, these events typically involve several steps to engage participants and online cooperation between different dancing groups, instructors, charities, and other organisations. The involvement of wide networks of actors for these events is made possible primarily through participation in online groups and chats throughout the week. This reinforces the importance of the online

platform for scaling up the organisation of MDWs' activities when fitness is a means to reach broader aims like fundraising for humanitarian causes.

Access to these online platforms differs across groups. Existing members can add new members to the group chat for yoga groups. Although the Zumba Facebook group is private, it is open to new members and frequently accepts them. As such, the entry barriers to the yoga and Zumba groups are low. However, for the martial arts group, only those officially inducted into the group are eligible to join the chat and only group leaders may add new members. This procedure was a social ritual in its own right; people not only welcome new inductees into the group, they congratulate them for succeeding in joining. Asty, former leader of the martial arts group, revealed that there is currently a waiting list for new joiners. For Surinem, the closed system of the WhatsApp group makes it suitable to share pictures of individual members as they hold a yoga pose (see Figure 12.2). They share the images among themselves to see and correct any wrong postures. Surinem noted that members always look forward to seeing these pictures after the exercise.

Nevertheless, specific rules govern the online spaces, and the admins of each group often enforce them. As unwritten rules, the yoga and martial arts group chats promote positive attitudes and supportive language. Carmel (Interview #5), Liliana (Interview #6), and Regina (Interview #7) clarify that when accepting new members in the online Zumba group, they ask them to share content related to the fitness activity and 'avoid any negativity', which is seen as unsocial behaviour. Similarly, using foul language or body shaming can lead to a member's ban from the Zumba group.

During the weekly practice, some groups allow their members to stream the fitness activity on the group's or the members' individual profiles. Sharing (live) videos appears to be an important activity for Zumba participants. Respondents find it a good way to connect with fellow Zumba *aficionados*, friends, and families in their home countries. Video livestreaming appears to be a way to promote a different (health-minded) identity. As Cilo notes, 'I want my family to see that I am not *just* sitting on the streets, I am doing something, I am burning [calories]' (Interview #8). Similar videos are, at the same time, tools for member recruitment through word of mouth. Interestingly, for privacy reasons both yoga and martial arts groups do not allow members to livestream their practice. Sharing videos requires the consent of all members. The formation of social media rules observed among MDWs can be understood as part of the ritual mechanism of group membership and group boundaries that are crucial in collective self-care practices. For a social group to thrive, clear boundaries must exist between

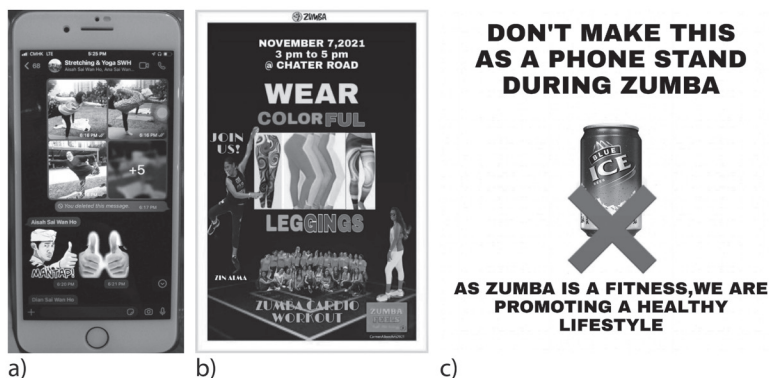


Figure 12.2. a) Members' feedback on the yoga WhatsApp group, b) Schedule and outfit shared on the Zumba Facebook group, c) Lifestyle and rules of the Zumba group.

the in- and out-groups, and certain thresholds must be met by potential new members (Collins 2004). Whether regarding the rules about who can join the group chats or how to handle online privacy issues, we found MDWs increasingly confident in activating their agency while also thoughtful in their adherence to their collective norms and rules.

From online coordination to presence in city spaces

All the fitness groups gathered regularly in public spaces for their practice. The choice of a specific location is based on its targeted audience. Zumba and martial arts groups have established meeting locations for MDWs, where they can be visible to potential new members and newcomers to the city. The yoga group near Central Pier aims to involve a wider audience and targets a location far from these other gathering spaces. Although none of these spaces requires bookings, appointing a person to arrive an hour early to 'hold the place' is a recurrent spatial occupation practice for smaller fitness groups such as yoga and martial arts. For larger groups, speakers and higher sound levels are essential in establishing their use of space in competition with other groups on the same street.

Locational aspects appear to be very important in choosing a gathering space. Every MDW newcomer to the city will likely visit Chater Road and the nearby Worldwide House to connect to the Filipino community. In contrast, the Indonesian community usually gathers in Victoria Park and Causeway Bay. Surinem holds her yoga sessions at a shaded part of a public seating area in Sau Kei Wan every Sunday from three to five pm. This allows her to appeal to a broader array of participants, including local Hong Kong youth and foreign professionals from other countries.

Indy organised her yoga in an open area near Central Ferry Pier 9. She said that this location is suitable for her and other participants because it is accessible and spacious. Interestingly, while Surinem selected her venue based on her intention to recruit domestic helpers who gather around the vicinity, Indy picked her spot because it is not a popular location for domestic helpers.

When asked about the space where the fitness practice occurs, respondents usually mention that there are few available outdoor spaces for their large groups and location considerations are important in deciding where to gather. Among the four spaces observed, Surinem's yoga and the martial arts gathering spaces consist of urban parks where members practice on a grass surface. In contrast, the Chater Road space and Indy's yoga location at the ferry pier consist of a large asphalt and pavement surface (see [Figure 12.3](#)). None of these locations are shaded, weather-protected, or equipped for fitness practice, nor do they include urban furniture to accommodate these social activities. As a result, both Surinem's and Indy's yoga activities are contingent upon the weather because neither space is roofed. When it rains, the event is cancelled. Similarly, Zumba organisers and participants explain that in case of inclement weather, they 'pray it will stop before four pm [when Zumba starts]' (Interview #6).

The martial arts group has been training in the same spot in Victoria Park for the last twelve years, and members are not concerned about the weather. They brave heat and rain as part of their endurance exercise. Asty, the group's former leader, explained that although the grass field where they work out is packed with Indonesian workers every Sunday, they have never encountered any problem or competition for the space because the regular park users know their schedule. More competition for space occurs on Chater Road, where the Zumba members with powerful speakers weekly assert and re-negotiate the space as their own.

Similarly to the online platforms, these weekly fitness practices in public spaces have clear rules. Usually, the organisers of the Zumba Facebook groups continue to refer to themselves as 'admins' during these weekly gatherings. They are the ones enforcing the regulations. With numerous phone stands live streaming the dance activities, Zumba participants are given a clear layout of where the phone stands are permitted (in the front) and where they obstruct free movements and dances (between dancers). Similarly, in line with the healthy lifestyle Zumba admins promote, certain objects, such as beer cans, are not allowed to be used as phone stands. Participants who appear intoxicated are also excluded from the practice.



Figure 12.3. Fitness activities in space.

Physical activities and collective citizenship practices

Each group showed a particular connection between fitness practice and their understanding of citizenship practices. Asty explained that, for her, the martial arts group is an ambassador of Indonesian culture (Interview #3). Performing this activity enables her to take pride in her nationality and ethnicity. She fondly recalls how the Hong Kong police department invited her group to perform at a cultural event in 2017. She was proud to perform in front of locals and other foreigners in Hong Kong. According to Asty, this is one of the ways in which she shows her patriotism and love for her home country. At the same time, she uses the activity as a platform to advocate for her compatriots and, more broadly, for the empowerment of migrant workers. Echoing a similar sentiment, the organisers of the Zumba practice are highly motivated by showing MDWs' agency and visibility in the city and by providing them with alternative leisure options. Numerous compatriots who are newcomers to the city will visit Chater Road during their first day off. Newcomers and long-term workers interested in picking up a new hobby will likely see this Zumba group as soon as they exit the subway station. For the organisers, providing and promoting health-and-care-related leisure options to their peers is crucial. Regina said, 'We just encourage them [MDWs] to join us for stress relief. Some people don't really find a group of friends that really treat them as family. We are here, so far from our family and we can have many different problems' (Interview #7). Carmel adds, 'You exercise your body, and then it makes you laugh. So, it's not only your body that becomes happy. It's your soul' (Interview #5).

Participation in collective physical activities may also overlap with the civic and organisational duties of MDWs. For Surinem, yoga is also a means of recruiting people to join organisations dedicated to fighting overcharging among migrant helpers in Hong Kong. She acknowledges the reluctance of fellow helpers to join social organisations for fear of their employers' disapproval. By approaching them through physical activity, such as yoga, Surinem claims that her fellow helpers are more willing to join (Interview #1). As such, this physical activity is a supplementary practice that helps them establish a more robust community; this, in turn, strengthens their collective presence in Hong Kong. Another respondent, Indy, explained that her weekly yoga sessions helped her cope with the discrimination she faced when she first moved to Hong Kong (Interview #2). She recalled her experience when a taxi driver did not understand the directions she was giving him in English, and he yelled, 'Go back to your country!' Her yoga sessions allowed her to meet local residents of Hong Kong, who have taught her Cantonese. In the group, she also meets other expatriates who help her feel more confident.

Discussion and Conclusion

While seemingly unrelated, the three constructs examined in this study—physical activities, urban landscape, and identity performance—are increasingly intertwined in city life around the world. This study investigated the interrelatedness of these three constructs in the context of self-care among a marginalised migrant population, namely migrant domestic workers (MDWs) in Hong Kong. Given the technological saturation in Hong Kong, we also looked at the critical role played by the pervasiveness of digital media in materialising the civic and cohesive potentials of these activities.

We found that various fitness practices, particularly yoga, Zumba, and martial arts, emerged as tools to enhance MDWs' collective empowerment, self-care, engagement, and advocacy. To varying degrees, fitness activities are a means for MDWs to exercise agency in the city. The MDWs' agency coexists with their living with precarity, residing in the city on short-term working permits, and not having access to long-term residence or citizenship. Beyond the formal meanings of citizenship in a global city, MDWs establish new spatial practices that reinterpret their civic role as part of the city and of communities. While most MDWs' routines and mobilities during the week are highly controlled and confined to domestic spaces and their role as home carers, their personal interests and identities emerge during the weekend. Indeed, we found that Zumba, yoga, and martial arts activities offer MDWs not only physical benefits but also a symbolic context within which they hone their leadership skills and self-care practices. In particular, yoga serves as a secondary function in recruiting people to join an organization dedicated to labor protection in Hong Kong. Zumba enables organisers to engage proactively with and deliver care to newly arrived MDWs and offer alternative leisure activities while redefining the use of a sought-after street in the financial district. Finally, martial arts groups offer opportunities for members to exercise self-discipline and national pride during their time abroad.

Physical activity (enabled primarily by online platforms) is a supplementary practice that occurs in ordinary urban spaces and helps MDWs establish a more robust community. This sense of community, in turn, strengthens their collective presence in Hong Kong. Fitness practice contributes significantly to group identity formation both online and in urban spaces. Different participants can freely join Zumba and yoga practice. For example, Zumba participants are distinguished by bright-coloured uniforms and adherence to health-related behaviours (e.g., no smoking or drinking). For the martial arts group, a clear boundary existed between members. Marking the in-group versus the out-group gives the MDWs a sense of visibility as participants.

Digital media, particularly Facebook and WhatsApp, enable an efficient weekly appropriation of urban space by MDWs, similar to what is observed in larger social movements (Padawangi et al. 2014). Social media platforms emerged as virtual spaces in which collective activities can be organised and social identities validated. At the same time, different digital media inevitably introduced some restrictions to members who were not allowed (or lack the means to) to access them. The interdependent dimension between online and physical space becomes evident during the weekly Zumba practice. Livestreaming allows MDWs to be present in both dimensions and connect to fellow dancers, families, and friends in the digital space.

In Hong Kong these mundane and everyday practices do not rely on established fitness infrastructure or training spaces as in other cities (Latham and Layton 2020). They appear to create shared space and social cohesion and should thus be recognised at a policy level as an integral part of the public city. However, looking at the fitness practices of three groups of low-income migrant women also sheds light on the precariousness and fragile nature of their lives in the city, from many parts of which they are often excluded. Although not officially considered part of the city's place-making activities, MDWs' fitness practices contribute to their quality of life and awareness of their rights as well as a better understanding of a just city (Mitchell 2003). These collective practices also give an alternative meaning to the role of citizenship for those who lack formal pathways to it. Alternative citizenship practices are entwined with matters of care for the body and well-being, as well as care for each other, and are a way of keeping their own cultural practices alive. The streets and parks where these collective care practices occur support new meanings and understandings of citizenship. To echo the words of Suzanne Hall (2021,155):

In writing [of] the street as world I am compelled to explore the alternative resumptions to belonging that can only be formed at the edge, since they emerge through the realities of exclusion. A citizenship of the edge gives us an edge grammar that rearticulates citizenship as an adaptive and audacious constitution.

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