

## Ingrid Meintjes

*Accepted abstract (peer-reviewed) for The National Women's Studies Association (NWSA), Annual Conference. Atlanta, GA. 8-11 November, 2018*

### **Towards a Biopolitics of Care**

From Carol Gilligan to Rosi Braidotti, feminist care theorists have reconfigured our approaches to traditional ethics. However, despite rigorous and nuanced theorizations on the ethics of care, the problem of care persists (Tronto, 2013). Why? To answer this question, my paper focuses on the example of unpaid, voluntary HIV/AIDS care work in South Africa during democratic transition – a highly feminized and debilitating form of care work. I trace the governance impacts of global public health policies (Weir and Mykhalovskiy, 2010) to demonstrate how the need for care and the proliferation of 'new' caring bodies is a product of the neoliberal milieu which operationalizes 'care' as biopolitical governance. Through novel theoretical frameworks such as postcolonial feminist science and technology studies, as well as history and philosophy of science, I reorient feminist theories on the ethics of care towards an analysis of transnational biopolitical assemblages of care (Murphy, 2015), assemblages produced at the intersection of care ethics, political theory, neoliberal economy, global public health policy, and public health crises. Then, through Gilles Deleuze's machinic ethics of care assemblages and Rosi Braidotti's post-human, nomadic ethics (2006; 2016) I think about "new caring bodies" as "bodies without organs" to reorient feminist theories on the ethics of care from individual practice, to population management, to emergent questions constellating around the construction and deployment of "social care robots" (DeFalco, 2017).

### **Affiliations**

Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies Dept.  
Emory University

### **Email**

ingrid.meintjes@emory.edu