

**WHO CARES? UBUNTU,
CARE ETHICS, AND
WOMEN'S WORK IN SOUTH
AFRICA: A NON-WESTERN
REIMAGINATION OF THE
MODERN STATE**

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Abstract

Modern states are underpinned by a Hobbesian rationality which conceptualizes states as predominantly security actors. Feminists have long critiqued this as a masculine construct which is detrimental to the concerns of women as well as society in general. In this context, this paper explores the nature of the South African state through an examination of the experiences of South African women in the country's gendered labour market. The apartheid state normalized gender norms about women's work and these persist even though the subsequent liberal democratic South African regime has undertaken efforts to increase gender equality in all spheres of the society. Through an extensive data analysis, the article argues that there is gender pay gap, gender disparity in labour participation rates, among several other issues. Women's care work is not even counted as work. The article calls for a reinvention of the idea of state using principles from feminist care ethics and 'ubuntu' to make the state 'caring' and argues for seeing care as a political and public good, at both national and global level.

Keywords

Care Ethics, *ubuntu*, South Africa, Women's Work, Non-western International Relations

Introduction

Modern states have been conceptualized predominantly as security actors (Bhattacharya 2016), and this is largely due to the

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Eurocentric underpinnings of the evolution of the modern state system and political philosophy (Keita 2020). A Hobbesian logic of self-interest and security obsession characterizes most modern states which makes them less responsive to other concerns, especially that of women and other marginalized sections of society despite being dependent on them in several ways (Steinberger 2008). Women's work for instance is indispensable to any state but their work is often undervalued, equitable access to jobs for women is denied, and their care work is often not even counted as work. In such a context, this article examines the nature of modern states by drawing insights from the experiences of South African women with labour market disparities. The article argues that despite three decades of democracy, gender disparities persist with women facing several obstacles like gender pay gaps, persistent gendered division of labour, and their care labour being ignored or undervalued. It is contended that the persistence of these disparities is due to the masculine, Hobbesian nature of modern states (Hirschmann & Wright 2012) that makes them focus on security and ignore aspects like care and wellbeing which are equally important. The article calls for a reconceptualization of the prevalent Eurocentric Hobbesian understanding of state and argues that the bringing together of feminist care ethics and *ubuntu* allows for the imagining of a 'caring' state which values care labour and sees itself as a caregiver, rather than merely as a security provider. The article argues that such a reconceptualization which sees care as an important political and public good is important at national and global levels to achieve not just gender equality but also for addressing other pressing domestic and global concerns like addressing climate change, achieving social justice, and resolving political polarization.

The article starts by examining the labour market of South Africa by doing an extensive analysis of data from various sources including the South African government, international organisations, and scholarly works. Based on that analysis, it is argued that the South African state does not give sufficient value to women's work and despite three decades of liberal democracy, South African women face systematic discrimination in the labour market. The subsequent section contends that the predominant reason for this gender disparity is South African state's gendered nature which does not value women's work, especially their care work. It is proposed that the merger of care ethics and the *ubuntu* framework can help in framing 'care' as a political and public good. It is argued that care is a political idea, and this finds resonance in *ubuntu* and feminist care ethics. The article

concludes by identifying future avenues of research opened by this article and argues that the South African experience holds important lessons for all modern states, especially other multicultural and plural countries in the world like India.

Critical Evaluation of Women's Work in South Africa

South Africa has a strong gender gap, like most other states in the world, in its labour force participation. This is not only because of the legacy of racial apartheid laws but also because of prevailing gendered norms within family structures and communities. The apartheid state was a manifestation of gendered conceptualizations of power and authority, and it adversely affected South African women (United Nations Centre Against Apartheid 1978). The apartheid state exploited traditional patriarchal practices of different communities to shape the construction of women's identity in apartheid South Africa for its own benefit. Hence, like colonial states elsewhere in Africa, construction of gender and race was done in a manner that black women in South Africa were erased from public life (Tamale 2020). The apartheid state therefore created the foundations of gendered citizenship in South Africa (Ojha 2015). With the end of the apartheid regime, there was hope among South African women that gender equality will be prioritized, especially because of the progressive nature of the South African constitution. However, after three decades of democracy, the gendered identity of women normalized by the apartheid state persists to a great extent. It has to be noted that in a country as complex and diverse as South Africa, women have an intersectional existence. Thus, apart from gender, South African women's lived experiences are shaped by race, class, space, and other identities (Salo 2007). Yet, gendered conceptions of work impact all women, irrespective of their race, class or other identity, to a considerable degree, highlighting the permeation of gender biases across communities and spaces.

Women were considered non-productive or less productive by the apartheid state because their care work within the family, the rural economy, and as domestic workers was considered private (women's domain) and hence not counted as work. This pattern largely continues in post-apartheid South Africa where women's work is characterized by gender pay gap, concentration in low-skill/low-pay professions, lack of representation in skilled/high paying jobs, and a persistent failure to count the work women do which includes care work and subsistence farming (Mosomi 2019a, 2019b). This exists despite the fact that post-apartheid democratic South Africa adopted a progressive liberal democratic

constitution which is committed to gender justice and racial equality. Moreover, in the past three decades, several legal initiatives were introduced by the state to improve equality in the labour market such as the 'Basic Conditions of Employment Act' (1997), 'Employment Equity Act (EEA)' (1998), 'National Minimum Wage Act' (2018) etc. South Africa is also a signatory to international conventions, protocols, and regional initiatives for gender equality. South Africa has committed itself to women's empowerment, and to end gender-based violence (UN Women 2015). To this end, there are two legal mechanisms in operation - the 'Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 4' (2000) and the EEA (1998). There are indeed some positive changes with respect to the status of women's work in South Africa in the last three decades of democracy. However, these changes are slow, and they still do not break the larger gendered construction of work that is prevalent in much of South African society.

Globally, labour force participation of women has been on the rise, but this trend masks the fact that many women remain in precarious employments as women work largely in informal sectors (Rogan & Alferts 2019). The apartheid period population census records are not fully reliable as they were impacted by the prevalent racial biases. However, they do reflect global trends as labour force participation of women stood at 23 percentage in 1960, and it increased to 36 percentage in 1985, and eventually to 41 percentage in 1991 (Casale et al. 2021). Based on Post-Apartheid Labour Market Series (PALMS) surveys from 1994-2019, one can observe that the same trend continued, and the growth rate for women was also considerably larger in comparison to men. PALMS surveys show that women's labour force participation increased from 40 percentage in 1994 to 54 percentage in 2019 whereas for men it was an increase to 67 percentage from 60 percentage (Casale et al. 2021). This increase is also reflected in women's share in the labour force (working or looking for work), which increased from 42 percentage in 1994 to 46 percentage in 2019 (Casale et al. 2021). This increase in women's workforce participation is partially explained by the democratic turn in South Africa as restrictions on black African women's mobility and social rights got relaxed with the end of apartheid. This increase was also made possible by affirmative action policies and an increase in women's education standards. Alongside, there was also a rise in the households that were dependent on women as the sole breadwinners (Casale et al. 2021). Further, the gender gap in labour force participation rate was 12.9 percentage in 2014

(Quarter 2) and this reduced to 9.8 percentage in 2024 (Quarter 2). This represented an overall increase of 4.9 percentage in the last decade.

While these are all promising signs, it must be noted that much of this progress for women in the first decades of democracy in employment was concentrated in low skilled jobs, predominantly in the unorganised sector. Moreover, the gender disparity in labour force participation rate persists even in 2024 (Quarter 2) with men's participation standing at 65.6 percentage while the comparative figure for women was only 55.8 percentage (Statistics South Africa 2024). Further, the gender gap in unemployment among those searching for jobs also remains high. PALMS data from 1994 to 2019 show that for women it rose from 24 percentage to 31 percentage while for men it rose from 17 percentage to 27 percentage (Casale et al. 2021). This is when fewer women reported actively searching for jobs than men due to caregiving responsibilities (Posel & Bruce-Brand 2021). The Gender Series Data of South African government released on the occasion of 30 years of democracy highlights further concerns in the labour market (Statistics South Africa 2024). According to that report, many South African women face challenges in accessing economic opportunities due to unemployment. The lowest workforce participation rate is found among women who have five or more children which further establishes the fact that the size of household matters. This is so because women from large families are more actively involved in care work. While national employment rate declined from 2014 to 2024, men's employment rate remains higher than women on a steady basis (Statistics South Africa 2024). The percentage of female headed households relying on women's income increased from 32.4 percentage in 2014 to 36.1 percentage in 2023 alongside a decrease in percentage of those dependent on grants which fell from 63.3 percentage in 2014 to 58 percentage in 2023 (Statistics South Africa 2024). However, women were more likely to receive grants, especially in the rural areas and the figure stood at 47.2 percentage in rural areas and 23.1 percentage in urban areas (Statistics South Africa 2024). Managerial positions in public sector companies are still predominantly with men. Women's managerial presence has marginally increased with a 45.2 percentage representation in middle management in 2019 increasing to 46.4 percentage in 2023 while senior managerial roles increased from 42.4 percentage to 45.2 percentage in the same period (Statistics South Africa 2024). Women are also less represented in STEM sector and are mostly distributed in the

undervalued 'care economy' (Casale et al. 2021) such as education, psychology, and health (Statistics South Africa 2024). Although, the percentage of women working in highly skilled work increased from 11 percentage to 13 percentage (Casale et. al. 2021), women remain immensely under-represented in this category.

Further, in neo-liberal economies, entrepreneurship can be one of the most lucrative careers to be pursued but here as well one can see clear gender disparities. The gender difference in self-employed data available through Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) in the context of Total early-stage Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA) in South Africa shows that men are more likely to start a business than women. TEA for men in 2023 was at 12.7 percentage while for women it was 9.7 percentage (GEM 2023, Meyer et al. 2024). GEM 2023 report provides entrepreneurial mindset data based on perceived opportunity, perceived capability, fear of failure, and networking opportunities. In all these, one can see a clear and persistent gender gap. The perceived opportunity for women in South Africa was 61.7 percentage while for men it was 66.7 percentage and perceived capabilities for women stood at 66.2 percentage while for men it was 72.4 percentage. Fear of failure in business for women was 52.5 percentage while for men it was 51.6 percentage and networking opportunities for women stood at 36.7 percentage while for men it was 41.5 percentage. GEM 2023 report identifies barriers to women's entrepreneurship such as cultural and social norms which create imbalance between family caring responsibilities and entrepreneurial aspirations (GEM 2023). Women face hurdles in networking opportunities as many fields are dominated by men. This limits women's ability to obtain mentorship and funding opportunities. Stigma and discrimination against women entrepreneurs result in harmful biases which hinder women from establishing credibility (GEM 2023).

Moreover, women face discrimination even when employed as there is a pay gap between men and women doing similar jobs. While there has been a fall in gender gap in pay in lower end occupations due to the impact of South Africa's minimum wage legislation, there has been steady gender gap in pay in mid to high end jobs between women and men (Segooa 2012: 97). Access to education also affects women's chances of entering the labour force. Women with tertiary education have eight times more chance to participate in the labour force. Among women with tertiary education, unemployment increased from 15.1 percentage in 2014 to 26.9 percentage in 2024. The same figure went up from 28.8 percentage in 2014 to 39.5 percentage in 2024 among women

with matric education (Statistics South Africa 2024). Unemployment was at 10.7 percentage in 2024 for women with graduate education which was a 3.8 percentage increase from 2014 (Statistics South Africa 2024). Thus, education does play an important role but it has to be kept in mind that in South Africa access to education is not equal as it is characterized by gender and racial disparities, thereby playing a role in reinforcing labour force gender inequalities (Dunn and Maharaj 2024).

A key dimension of women's work in South Africa is the presence of discriminatory attitudes towards care work. Budlender (2019a, 2019b) argues that despite minimum wage protections, EEA, and other such measures, the lack of improvement in women's wages is due to the fact that their work in public is underpaid as it is seen as care related work and women's work in private (care) is not even recognized as work. By 2019, domestic work became even more feminized compared to other sectors of employment in South Africa (Casale et al. 2021). The quantitative evidence for the same can be seen from household surveys. 'National Income Dynamics Study' (NIDS 2019) and 'Time Use Surveys (TUS)' (Statistics South Africa 2001, Rubino-Matulevich & Villaz 2019) throw light on women's work in the household. Among the black African community, out of all those who reported themselves as full-time homemakers, 98 percentage were women, and a mere 2 percentage were men. The homemakers did disproportionate amount of care-work, and this was common across racial groups (Statistics South Africa 2001, Rubino-Matulevich & Villaz 2019). In fact, both women homemakers and working women spend more time in household work and care-work than men (Budlender et al. 2001, Budlender & Brathaug 2002). TUS data shows that the average time spent on household work by women was four hours (240 minutes) a day, whereas for men it was less than 100 minutes. It is also important to note that childcare is often clubbed together with other activities of the household and hence the number of hours reported exclusively for child-care would be less in the data (Budlender & Lund 2011). Among working mothers who required assistance in childcare by other family members, the support was provided predominantly by grandmothers which also shows how women's care work spans the entirety of their life cycles (Magadla et al. 2019). Scholars have long argued that childcare has been a hindrance in women's participation in the labour force (Dunn & Maharaj 2024).

Moreover, as noted before, large household size negatively effects women's participation in labour force because the burden of the care of elderly and children fall on women (Button et al, 2018).

Many women might not perceive caring as a burden, but it is definitely a gendered work which remains unrecognised and undervalued. Women earn more when they enter non-care related professions which are still dominated by men (Gardin 2021). They also have better professional careers when their partners share the burden of care-work (Dunn & Maharaj 2024). However, the trend of men and women entering previously gender segregated workspaces has reached a point of stagnation in South Africa which is a cause for worry (Gardin 2021). GEM reports recommend access to affordable daycare, afterschool programmes, and elder-care services as possible solutions (GEM 2023). In this context, the negative role played by the social construct of hegemonic masculinity which expects men to be the breadwinner, the decision maker, and the patriarch of the household also has to be acknowledged as it constructs a masculinity that is antithetical to gender equality, especially in the context of care work which is seen as women's work (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005, Buikema et.al. 2007).

In a diverse country like South Africa, the labour market is influenced by several factors, and it is important to understand them in an intersectional manner. Race especially is an important factor in South African society. Racial inequality is most stark in low skilled jobs. For example, less than 1 percentage of white women were employed in domestic work, compared to 16 percentage of black African women as of 2019 (Casale et. al. 2021). In contrast, 23 percentage of white women were employed in top managerial professions whereas the comparative figure for black African women was just 4 percentage (Casale et. al. 2021). So, the increase in percentage of women in high skilled professional occupations is happening at a relatively much slower pace for black African women in comparison to white women. One can also see clear racial differences in the broader unemployment rate. Unemployment among black African women was 45 percentage compared to 11 percentage for white women in 2019 (Casale et al. 2021). Intersectionality of gender and race can also be seen informing entrepreneurship opportunities among women in South Africa. GEM reports show that lesser number of black African women were entrepreneurs than white women (GEM 2023). Moreover, the diversity of cultural and socio-economic landscapes in South Africa ensures drastically varied experiences among women in South Africa. Apart from gender and race, the geographical space they inhabit also affect the ability of women to take part in the labour force. Rural women's lives are burdened by traditional gender expectations while the economic burden is more

for urban women (HSRC 2024). NIDS 2017 shows that urban women have a higher labour force participation rate of 55.7 percentage compared to rural women whose labour force participation rate stood at 40.29 percentage (NIDS 2017). Further, many rural women engage in subsistence farming but they are counted as unemployed (Posel & Casale 2001).

Hence, a critical examination of the present status of women's work in South Africa indicates that the concerns are many fold, and they intersect with other factors like gender, race, and class. Data indicates that there is a persistent wage gap, women carry disproportionate burden of unpaid or undervalued care-work, and they are concentrated in low-skilled, low-paid jobs and are overrepresented in unemployment (Oosthuizen 2018, Dunn & Maharaj 2024).

Non-western Reimagination of the State: Care ethics and *Ubuntu*

A key reason for the failure of the liberal democratic constitutional framework in South Africa to deliver the promised egalitarian guarantees for women is the inherent patriarchal nature of modern states which prioritize certain categories of jobs and incentivize the continuation of the sexual division of labour (Connell 1990). Modern states tend to not adequately challenge the gender socialisation which results in the persistent gendered distinction between public and the private that gets reflected in the labour market with care work getting seen as private, personal labour that need not be valued. Beyond economic reasons, this is because modern states tend to prioritize what many feminists see as 'masculine' values like power, security, and control over values like 'care' (Brown 1992). Modern states, South Africa included, are therefore largely security states, not 'caring' states. Security, however, includes in its fold the performance of care. Without care, security cannot take place. Care and security are hence co-constitutive. Not recognising care as a public good therefore is a faulty philosophical and political premise. The lack of a 'caring' orientation reflects in the policies of states with respect to their labour markets and in other areas which affect the social and economic lives of their citizens. Hence, the indifference shown to care labour is a reflection of the nature of modern states and resolving it requires an alternate conceptualization of state wherein the state is reimagined with care ethics embedded in its very nature. A 'caring' state has to emerge and only then the indispensable and invaluable nature of care work will be recognised, and the ethics of care will also inform other aspects of

the functioning of the state and this can be transformative for the entire society.

However, a main reason for the inability for many to have an alternate conceptualization of the state is due to the dominance of a Eurocentric understanding of the logic of the state which goes back to Machiavelli and more particularly Hobbes (Forsyth 1979). The Hobbesian social contract is contingent on a particular understanding of 'rationality' which defines self-interest in securitized terms and thereby making the logic of the state essentially about security (Read 1991). Feminist theorizations have challenged the Hobbesian notion of rationality as well as the resultant perspective on state from a care ethics perspective with many feminists questioning the logic of rational choice theories in general (England 1989). Moreover, several non-western conceptualizations of state and politics have gained prominence in recent years which have also challenged the Eurocentric understandings of state and politics. There is a growing realization among academicians that there is an urgent need to move beyond Eurocentric conceptualizations in political theory and international relations (Keita 2020, Kuru 2016, Smith 2018). It is in such a context the idea of *ubuntu* offers an alternate imagination, emerging from African heritage and culture and it complements key insights of feminist care ethics. In fact, as will be argued, feminist care ethics and *ubuntu* can mutually benefit from a constructive engagement with each other.

A state like South African do not have to look far to become a 'caring' state as the ethics of care and the relational worldview that care ethics proposes is already present in Africa's relational morality as epitomized by *ubuntu*. Contemporary engagements with *ubuntu* (Gouws & Zyl 2015) define *ubuntu* as a relational philosophy, having a worldview of interdependence, an obligation to community, justice, and ethics. This concept of *ubuntu* is further elaborated by Archbishop Desmond Tutu who says that "*a person is a person through other people*" (Tutu 1999: 31). He expands the meaning of *ubuntu* to include values like being generous, hospitable, caring, and showing compassion (Tutu 1999: 31). Gouws and Zyl (2015) argue that in the South African context where Eurocentric ontologies of the state have failed to deliver justice, relational ontologies that focus on human interdependence like care ethics and *ubuntu* can inform each other. Feminist scholarship has a great deal to learn from non-western perspectives as care ethics remains greatly attached with the epistemic umbilical cord of the global north which is limiting and problematic (Gilligan 2011, Noddings 1984, 2010, Tronto

1993, 2001, 2013, 2017, Kittay 2001, Held 2006). It has to move beyond those confines and embrace non-western ideas which are compatible with care ethics like *ubuntu* in order to have global resonance. Similarly, there are several critiques of the communitarian philosophy that underpins *ubuntu*. Communitarian philosophies have been critiqued as upholding gender inequalities in the name of community, and this has led many feminists to question the value of communitarian thinking (Shields & Serna 2011). Hence, reinterpreting *ubuntu* through the lens of care ethics can address some of the limitations of its communitarian underpinnings by giving it a firm political direction that is emancipatory for women and other marginalized sections of society. Thus, feminist care ethics and *ubuntu* can immensely benefit from each other. Gouws and Zyl (2015) differentiate between “*ubuntu-talk*” and “*ubuntu-do*” whereby *ubuntu* is not practiced in its full sense, especially when it comes to gender equality where communal gender prejudices take priority. Gouws and Zyl argue that ‘both rights and *ubuntu* have failed women’ and yet there is a possibility of merging feminist praxis and *ubuntu* in a manner that the pitfalls of liberal individualism can be avoided (Gouws & Zyl 2015). Individualist human rights framework fails to address the interdependencies and responsibilities attached with human social existence and this leads to ignoring the importance of care and caregiving in society. As an alternative, Gouws and Zyl (2015) propose a feminist ethics of *ubuntu* which reorients society towards ‘caring for’ and ‘caring about’.

In South Africa, as in most other states, the connection between care and women has been naturalized (Gouws & Zyl 2015) so that the political nature of ‘care’ is often missed. Care is not just a condition that makes political life possible, but it is also a political act through which humans as interdependent beings achieve meaning in their lives (Gouws & Zyl 2015). Simply put, this means people can be themselves through others (Tutu 1999: 31). The democratic transition in South Africa happened at a time when globally neo-liberal work conditions became the norm. For many women, neoliberal policies increased the caring burden and care work became more difficult than before due to lack of allocation of resources for caregiving (Abramovitz & Zelnick 2010). This was especially true for black African women. This not only affected women’s career prospects but even their physical and mental health as even self-care was not a possibility for many women (Gouws & Zyl, 2015). The care deficit in South African democracy affects not just women’s work. A participatory, inclusive, and democratic public life demands a caring state that functions as a

care-performer imbibing the principles of feminist care ethics and *ubuntu*. Instead, those who are care givers and those who are in disproportionate need of care are marked out as 'dependent' and they struggle alone. This is true for all gendered, classed, and racialized groups who provide care work globally (Heier 2020). This is because, as noted before, the materiality and necessity of care as political good is absent in state discourses about work at present. The state does not count care as work and the Hobbesian state does not see caring and relational responsibilities as part of its core functions. As a result, the state forgets that it is the interdependent life of its citizens, all of whom need caregiving at some point in their lives that ultimately makes the state's existence possible. This act of selective amnesia by most modern states is costing their citizens the possibility of a better life and has to be challenged politically and conceptually.

South African state and other modern states should look at care as work, provide the material opportunity for caring and imbibe the political value of care ethics. *Ubuntu* has been often mentioned as an African alternative to the Western framework of abstract individual rights with its focus on relational existence and community. It is argued that feminist ethics of care discourse can reinvent *ubuntu* such that a new political imagination can be normalized which values care as a public good in conceptualizing the state itself. Such a reconceptualization has the potential to move the discourse on state from the logic of security to include the logic of care which can open up many possibilities for constructive engagement with key challenges faced at national and global levels. For instance, because the logic driving modern states is predominantly security, securitization theorists argue that in order to make an issue politically important, it has to be securitized which is why some are even trying to securitize climate change in order to elicit strong actions from states (Rychnovská 2014). This essentially means, one has to construct a threat perception and make the state 'fear' something. However, this also results in polarization as constructing a threat is necessarily exclusionary which itself can create more problems than it solves. Moreover, the failure to act adequately by states on issues like climate change shows that threat construction does not work effectively in all scenarios. In contrast, instead of making the state fear, the caring state approach focuses on making the state care, be it about climate change or peace or social harmony etc. Such an approach will be inclusive, transformative, and can help in resolving many domestic and global challenges. Feminist care

ethics and *ubuntu* provide the conceptual basis for conceptualizing and operationalizing such a caring state.

Conclusion

The transition to liberal democracy led the South African state to guarantee the rights of individuals which included equal rights for women. However, there is a conflict between social realities and constitutionally enshrined gender rights in South Africa as gender disparities continue to exist especially with respect to women's work. This article, through an extensive analysis of recent data, highlights how there is still considerable gender disparity in the labour environment of South Africa. Women's work is often ignored and not counted as work. Racial and spatial factors play an important role, further complicating women's access to work in South Africa. One can borrow from Sachs who explained that the place women occupy in South Africa is a 'zone where different patriarchies meet' (1990). This is very much true of the present status of women's work in South Africa. However, it has to be noted that the undervaluing of care work and ignorance of care as a public and political good is a global phenomenon. This is due to the Hobbesian underpinnings of modern states which values masculine values like power and security over care which is detrimental for women and many other marginalized groups in society.

The article suggests a possible way forward through a reinterpretation of the relational approach of *ubuntu* which recognizes individuals as interdependent and feminist care ethics. It is proposed that we expand *ubuntu* relationality to include care as a public and political good. The synthesis of care ethics and *ubuntu* can lead to a better future for all citizens, especially women and other marginalized groups in society. This will be true for not just South Africa but also for other countries of the global south who also have a multicultural and plural population like India. The reimagination of the Hobbesian security state as a 'caring' state can potentially transform the way critical national and global challenges are approached by states, leading to eventually the emergence of a 'caring' international society. This research also highlights the possibility and importance of further explorations of different indigenous knowledge traditions from around the world as they may offer alternate perspectives to the dominant Western conceptualizations.

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