

## Re-Organizing “Caste” into Social Networks:

a case study of entrepreneurship by caste-ordained meat sellers in Kathmandu Valley

Kanako Nakagawa

This presentation examines how a caste group has been motivated into forming social networks through a case study of people of the Khadgi caste, who had traditionally been engaged in animal sacrifice and meat selling as a caste-based role.

Nepal has been in a transition period since the 1950s. In 2008, Nepal declared a shift from a Hindu kingdom to a secular democratic republic. Along with such political and religious transition, economic shifts are related to expansion of the global market.

As a part of national modernization programs, the government of Nepal announced a ban on buffalo slaughter within Kathmandu Valley. The government also campaigned to enhance acceptance of the idea of “eating healthy and hygienic meat makes life wealth” through media.

Khadgi people, who had been engaged in buffalo slaughter and meat selling near their residential area within Kathmandu Valley, were compelled to manage the meat modernization program conducted by the government. In 2016, Khadgi people established a company to produce and sell “healthy and hygienic meat” by introducing a shareholder system as a public limited corporation. As a partner of a governmental corporatism project, Khadgi people re-organized their networks based on their functional divisions such as meat sellers’ associations and women’s associations. Consequently, they strive to create opportunities to establish means to live through this transitional situation using the category of caste as a focal point to construct social networks.