

## From the communitarian ideal to the public sphere: The making of foreigners' assemblies in kawasaki city and kanagawa prefecture

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### Abstrak

Since the mid-1990s, several Japanese cities have responded to the gradual increase in their non-Japanese populations by setting up 'foreigners' assemblies'—venues in which representative foreigners, generally appointed by local officials and civilian representatives, can come together to discuss the social, economic, and cultural challenges of life in Japan. These bodies have no administrative power, but serve as advisory panels to local governments. This paper uses ethnographic studies of two such bodies—those of Kanagawa prefecture and Kawasaki city—to ascertain their role in contemporary Japanese society. I find that they have powerful relevance to three hotly debated issues: internationalization, local empowerment, and the development of civil society in Japan.