

Citizen participation or low-cost care providers? welfare non-profit organisations in Japan

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Abstrak

This article examines the extent to which the increasing number of non-profit organisations (NPOs) can be considered a vehicle for promoting participatory democracy. Based on the analysis of data generated from my research, I argue that the rise of NPOs in Japan should not be uncritically considered the enhancement of participatory democracy. Based on the analysis of data generated from my research on NPOs that provide welfare services for older people in Japan, this article reveals that the degree and the location of participation of NPOs vary widely, depending on the organisational types of NPOs. NPO participation in welfare policy planning does not necessarily mean that their members also take part in such a process. NPO members participate in the delivery of welfare services but it may not be that they also participate in decision-making or policy-planning processes.