

Volume 2 (2016) Civil Engagement of the Future: Creating Liveable Communities in Increasingly Aging and Diverse Racial-Ethnic Societies

The theme of Volume Two, *Civil Engagement of the Future: Creating Liveable Communities*, is one of the most crucial topics of the 21st Century. Addressing this theme is especially important in developed societies where populations are getting older. In general, older people in these societies are healthier. Many elders wish to live independently for as long as they can yet be in contact with their children and grandchildren. In societies where many people have few children, generational trees get higher but become slimmer. Having increasingly elderly populations in developed societies is a demographic change that will shape social life in many countries in coming decades of the 21st century. This demographic change, along with the increasing racial-ethnic diversity of the populations in many countries, raises a concern about how engaged residents can create «liveable communities».

In the August/September 2015 issue of AARP Magazine, Jeannine English, President of the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), recently defined “A liv(e)able community as a place where people of all ages can enjoy secure, healthy lives and stay engaged in civic and social life. Liv(e)able communities offer housing choices, transportation, shopping and other services that meet everyone’s needs.... A liv(e)able community can reflect a rich tapestry of life, in which all generations contribute and interact, and the strength and wisdom of elders are not only respected but embraced” (p. 73).

In order to manage the transition from a welfare-oriented society of the past and present to an active, civilly-engaged society of the future, social participation and new forms of voluntary engagement will be crucial. The formation of trust and networks will deliver not

only the kit for social cohesion but also the central elements for new social capital and a new solidarity across generations.

For Volume Two, *Sociology between the Gaps* is seeking submissions which deal with innovative ways of creating and sustaining liveable communities and meeting the challenges of the 21st century. These challenges include finding ways to create social cohesion by developing new types of voluntary relationships of mutual aid and support built around the needs of multi-generational communities. Models of communities could include young families with children, childless couples, single parents, single working people, older people with few or no children living near them, etc. The models would provide access, within the community, to needed services like elder and child care, obtaining fresh products from community gardens, shopping for other necessities, food preparation, coaching in digital literacy skills, helping to manage households, etc..

Submissions which address the following questions are encouraged: Are these kinds of diverse, socially cohesive communities possible? What factors are essential to building successful communities of people across social class, race, ethnicity, age, marital status, and so on? Would obtaining needed services work not only through payment but also through the use of bartering of items or exchange of services? What role should governments and economic institutions such as private companies but also third sector institutions such as charity organizations and the social media take in these innovative communities in order to free society from the hidden economy?