

## **The Rehabilitation of Consolidated Irregular Settlements in Latin American Cities: Towards a “Third Generation” of Public Policy Analysis and Development.**

This multi-city comparative research project will analyze the largely understudied arena of urban revitalization in Latin America – in this case focusing upon the older irregular settlements that were established twenty or more years ago. These self-help settlements began as shantytowns in the then suburbs, but with city expansion, are today located in the inner or intermediate rings of city development and correspond to what, in the USA, have recently begun to be identified as the “innerburbs”. In Latin America (and in other developing area regions) these older self-built low-income suburbs are today relatively consolidated, comprising as they do all services, paved streets and brick-built often two-story dwellings, etc. Part of the problem that these areas now face is that these dwellings were built gradually – as families grew, and as resources allowed. Being self-built and low cost, they relied upon little or no formal building skills, they were rarely conceived according to a complete dwelling plan, and they made no effort to comply with safety norms and codes, etc. That worked fine at the time, but 20-30 years later it has led to severe deterioration of the built environment. Moreover, many of the original owners have since died, leaving their children and other kinsmen’s families sharing the lot often without having any security of title. And while many of the original owner-settler households do remain in these neighborhoods, these areas are mixed tenure offering an important housing niche for some of the most vulnerable families: female headed households, the elderly, and others who form part of the so-called “new poor” who are increasingly excluded from the urban economy as well as from public and private welfare supports. Despite their apparent full spatial and physical integration, these settlements are invariably in urgent need of attention and policy support for revitalization. This new or “third” generation of housing analysis and policy will build upon the earlier rounds of policy development of the 1980s and 1990s, which continue to focus upon peripheral and newer irregular settlements. The primary anticipated product is to contribute new and sensitive policy recommendations to international housing agencies, national and city governments, as well as a number of journal articles and a final book manuscript.

A research network has been created comprising a number of university teams working to a comparative framework and methodology in various Latin American cities. UT Austin is the “umbrella” institution and the applicant is the coordinating PI. At its formative meeting in August 2006, a research strategy and initial methodology was agreed. This comprises: the creation and analysis of a dataset for each city’s intermediate ring or “arc” using census data; the preparation of sample (stratified) surveys of original squatter households whose family members and stakeholders still live on site; and over-sampling of households interviewed by several of the PIs some thirty years ago (where these can be found); and in a small number of cases, the detailed reconstruction the architectonic development of the dwelling analyzed against the life history of the family.