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“A Patrimony for the Children”: Low-Income Homeownership and Housing (Im)Mobility in Latin American Cities

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Data are presented from a 2007 restudy of some 300 low-income self-builder owner households across eight settlements in Bogotá and Mexico City originally interviewed in the early and late 1970s, published in the mid-1980s (Gilbert and Ward 1985). Framed within a longitudinal perspective, the article analyzes the level of turnover of household owners living in irregular settlements over a period of thirty years; the current (2007) housing arrangements of households in dwellings and on plots; and the expectancies of ownership and inheritance of (now) adult children and grandchildren. The findings from the resurvey show minimal land-use changes and that more than 80 percent of the original families remain living on the lot. Densities have increased significantly, as has the average number of households sharing the lot. In Mexico City, sharing a lot is almost exclusively done with close kin (adult children), whereas in Bogotá it is both kin as well as renters. Self-estimated property values and tax office assessments show that house values in these consolidated settlements are often so high as to make it very difficult to sell, thereby reducing residential mobility. Also, the use value, and the inheritance expectations for second- and third-generation households living on the lots, gives little incentive (or option) to sell up and exit the settlement. Some of the social, judicial (tenure and inheritance), and housing policy implications and challenges are discussed. *Key Words:* consolidated self-help housing, innerburbs, Latin America, longitudinal studies, mobility patterns.

本文所呈现的数据是一项对来自跨越波哥大和墨西哥城 8 个定居点，约 300 个低收入自建房屋主家庭的重新研究的结果。最初的数据是在 20 世纪 70 年代早期和晚期采访得来，并于 20 世纪 80 年代中期发表的 (Gilbert and Ward 1985)。从一个纵向的角度，本文分析生活在非正规住宅区家庭户主在超过三十年期间的流动水平；目前 (2007) 住户的住房和地块的排列；以及 (现在的) 成年子女和孙辈的所有权和继承权的预期。再调查的结果显示出很小的土地利用变化，超过 80% 的家庭仍居住在该地段。密度显著增加了，共享该土地的家庭平均人数也如此。在墨西哥城，分享同一块土地的几乎完全是近亲 (成年子女)，而在波哥大则是双方亲属以及租客。自我估计的财产价值和税务评估显示，在这些综合定居点的房屋价值往往是如此之高，使其很难销售，从而降低了住宅的流动性。此外，使用价值，以及生活在这些土地上的第二代和第三代住户的继承期望，给予了他们很少的动力 (或选择) 去出售和离开该地。本文也讨论了一些社会的，司法的 (使用权和继承权)，和住房政策的影响和挑战。关键词：综合自建房，老郊区，拉丁美洲，纵向研究，流动形态。

Se presentan los datos de 2007 sobre un nuevo estudio de alrededor de 300 personas de bajos ingresos dueños de viviendas familiares auto-construidas en ocho asentamientos de Bogotá y Ciudad de México, originalmente entrevistados a principios y finales de los años 1970; estos datos se publicaron a mediados de los años 80 (Gilbert y Ward 1985). En el marco de una perspectiva longitudinal, el artículo analiza el nivel de recambio de los propietarios que viven en asentamientos irregulares, a lo largo de un período de treinta años; las características actuales (2007) de los hogares en viviendas y predios; y las expectativas de propiedad y herencia de quienes ahora son hijos adultos y nietos. Los hallazgos del nuevo estudio muestran cambios mínimos del uso del suelo y que más del 80 por ciento de las familias inicialmente entrevistadas siguen viviendo en el predio original. Las densidades se han incrementado significativamente, lo mismo que el número promedio de hogares que comparten un predio. Compartir un predio en Ciudad de México se hace casi exclusivamente con parientes muy cercanos (hijos adultos), en tanto que en Bogotá se comparte tanto con parientes como con arrendatarios. Los estimativos del valor de la propiedad por su propio dueño y los avalúos por la oficina de impuestos indican que los valores de las casas en estos asentamientos consolidados con frecuencia son lo suficientemente altos para dificultar su venta, lo cual reduce la movilidad residencial. También, el valor de uso y las expectativas de herencia de las familias de segunda y tercera generación que viven en los predios genera pocos incentivos (u opciones) para vender y

salir del asentamiento. Se discuten algunas de las implicaciones políticas y retos sociales, judiciales (tenencia y herencia) y de vivienda. *Palabras clave:* *barrio de auto-construcción consolidado, barriadas interiores, América Latina, estudios longitudinales, patrones de movilidad.*

Few households are ever unconstrained in making residential choices in urban housing markets, and most observed intraurban mobility is fettered by individual capacity to afford particular types of home, select a location, match amenity to their needs, and so on. But within most segments of the housing market some level of choices and trade-offs do bear on mobility decisions—stage in the life course, marital status, place of employment, tenure, amenity and location, ethnicity, educational opportunities, and a number of other variables might come into play. Thus, some choice is exercised, and although effective choices might be quite limited, individuals and households are able to make degrees of some selection between various types and costs of accommodation (rental vs. ownership), different housing locations, familiarity and sense of identity with particular neighborhoods, and specific household structure and choice of living arrangements.

In developed countries, intraurban mobility is invariably heavily constrained, but classical studies emphasized that stage in the life cycle explained the majority of moves (Rossi 1955). Many other variables also enter the equation, of course, and over the years our understanding of the rationale shaping these choices and constraints has become more nuanced. Residential movement—“churn” in current marketing parlance—is commonplace: Today everyone is a migrant, even if they do not move very far from their original neighborhood. In less developed countries such as those in Latin America, widespread residential mobility is also observed, albeit less systematically researched. Even the very poor who have minimal disposable income are seen to make trade-offs around a number of housing dimensions (Turner 1968a), namely: (1) tenure (i.e., whether to rent in a tenement or inner-city shackyard or to aspire to homeownership by squatting and self-building); (2) location, such as proximity to downtown informal jobs, or to live in the distant periphery where relatively cheap land without any basic services can be acquired illegally; and (3) “amenity”—whether to have access to a modicum of services and utilities in the inner urban areas or to endure the high social costs associated with becoming home “owners” in the poorly serviced and often distant periphery of the city. It might be considered perverse to view these as choices, given that effective decision making is often highly constrained by the low and very low incomes, but even here there is consider-

able evidence of mobility that is in large part explained by the functioning of the housing market (Gilbert and Ward 1982; Abramo 2003; Di Virgilio 2007).

Indeed, whether in developed or undeveloped countries, studying residential mobility patterns for particular economic groups will tell us much about market efficiency and the extent to which residential choices can or cannot be activated. “Blockages” in the housing market, whether due to an undersupply, mortgage and financial constraints, bureaucratic practices and allocation procedures, tenure legality, ethnic prejudice or racism, can all lead to poor market performance. Policymaking usually seeks to reduce these blockages by opening up the marketplace to make it easier to exercise choice and to encourage intraurban movement based on supply and demand. In Latin America in particular, so-called regularization policies in informal settlements (squatter areas, illegal subdivisions, etc.) have long since been associated with making the overall low-income housing markets work more effectively, whether by providing basic services to enhance access to serviced land and thereby reducing prices (Linn 1983) or by providing de jure tenure to illegal land occupants (Turner 1968b; de Soto 2000; but cf. Varley 1987, 2002) or by a combination of these policies. Thus, improving housing market operation has become a key element in increasing a person’s capacity to exercise housing choice and to mitigate these constraints, thereby enhancing physical mobility and the opportunities of matching individual housing needs to the available supply.

Understanding housing market performance per se is not the focus of this particular article, except insofar as it might help explain mobility patterns and the exercise of choice among long-term low-income residents in two major Latin American cities, Mexico City and Bogotá. Instead, the primary aim is to examine housing and household residential arrangements and mobility patterns as these have evolved over the past thirty to forty years, comparing residential trajectories and outcomes of first-generation settlers of irregular (self-build) settlement with those of their (now) adult children and grandchildren (i.e., the second and third generations). Although many of these original 1960s and 1970s settlers were migrants born outside the two cities discussed here, their children are almost always city-born; indeed, they have often lived their whole lives in the same neighborhood. As cities continued to expand

physically, what was once the periphery of suburban squatting and informal self-building has gradually become part of the intermediate ring of the city, forming today's old and often rather dilapidated first-ring suburbs. Throughout metropolitan Latin America these inner suburbs today house between 15 and 30 percent of the total population and, although a significant minority of the population are now renting, the majority of the lots and the housing fabric itself is in the hands of low-income owner occupiers who, over many years, have undertaken the primary role in building their homes through self-build. Thus, in any one city, thousands of homes and often millions of people are living in what are now consolidated and fully serviced settlements, and yet the residential mobility and housing conditions of these households are rarely the focus of geographical and sociological enquiry. Nor are these areas the primary focus of contemporary housing upgrading and improvement policies that remain directed almost exclusively toward the more recent and poorly serviced housing developments at the periphery.

This article explores the household and dwelling arrangements in these consolidated settlements some thirty years later; the level of demographic stability of the original pioneer squatters and self-builders; and the aspirations and housing mobility of the second and third generations of children and grandchildren as this relates to the family homes in which they grew up. It forms part of a major comparative study of a number of Latin American cities in nine countries¹ that explores the contemporary social and housing dynamics in the first generation of irregular settlements that formed in the 1960s to the early 1980s, i.e., some thirty or more years ago. Made up of different research groups and principal investigators, the Latin American Housing Network (LAHN) is coordinated by the author at the University of Texas at Austin, LBJ School of Public Affairs. Further details and access to the database on which this article is based, as well as subsequent (2009–11) survey databases for a number of cities across these nine countries, can be found at <http://www.lahn.utexas.org>.

Restudying the Past in Bogotá and Mexico City: Aims, Hypotheses, and Paradigm Change

Housing has *use value* (i.e., its capacity to provide an adequate environment in which to live, raise a family, etc.), as well as *exchange value*, which is usually understood as the value that the dwelling has in the

marketplace if one was to sell it or to acquire income through renting or selling the rights to rent (Burgess 1982; Ward 2011). Being able to liberate the exchange value of one's dwelling is important in a number of ways: for the smooth functioning of the housing market; to facilitate property transfers and inheritance; to create wealth and mobilize assets; and for providing economic security. An appreciation of these two dimensions of housing value will help guide the following analysis and three principal hypotheses. First, given the previous commentary that "churn" and mobility are commonplace in cities, I examine the counterintuitive notion that residential mobility among first-generation (low-income) squatter "consolidator" owner households in Latin American cities is actually very low (Varley 2002, 457). Briefly stated, once land has been acquired informally and substantial self-build improvements have been made to it by the squatter family, few owner occupiers are wont to move out, such that "a home is forever" (Gilbert 1999). Second, in the case of self-build informal settlements, the potential realization of the home asset (exchange) value is actually highly constrained, and the low-income housing market is dysfunctional, notwithstanding the paradox that there is high demand for housing from poorer sectors of the urban population. The third hypothesis seeks to address that paradox and the constraints on mobility. On the one hand, much of the high demand and housing needs are met through extended residence by some adult children and grandchildren who live permanently on the same lot as their parents and who thereby continue to benefit from the use value of the parental home. On the other hand, there is an inability to meet housing demand through the marketplace (i.e., to mobilize the exchange value) due to the fact that most would-be purchasers are unable to afford the now relatively high house prices in valorized and consolidated self-built settlements. This weak effective demand is fueled by inadequate or nonexistent financing mechanisms that would sustain a mortgage market and help to facilitate sales in these lower income neighborhoods.

The following sections examine several of these ideas. Methodologically, this study is not strictly speaking longitudinal, following a family or household over a protracted period of time. Rather, it includes a restudy of first-generation, low-income homeowners who acquired land illegally and self-built and consolidated their homes in Mexico City and Bogotá starting during the 1960s and 1970s. Specifically, the data include interviews with some 300 households that were first interviewed in a study that Alan Gilbert and I

conducted during the late 1970s (see Gilbert and Ward 1985).²

The idea of going back and restudying populations thirty years later is relatively rare in contemporary geography and sociology, although there are notable exceptions in the distant past from anthropology, such as Oscar Lewis's (1951) restudy of Tepotzlán, first studied by Robert Redfield (Lewis's mentor) in the 1930s. More recently, Janice Perlman returned to the *favelas* (squatter settlements) of Rio de Janeiro, which she first studied as a political science doctoral student in the late 1960s (Perlman 1976, 2004, 2010). Caroline Moser's (2009) study of Guayaquil, Ecuador compares three generations of household members with whom she lived and worked at different times between 1978 and 2004.³ And although it is not uncommon for social scientists to return to study locations after a relatively short time has elapsed (i.e., several years, such as Gough and Kellett 2001; Shefner 2008), relatively few scholars have the wherewithal to restudy environments or communities in which they worked many (twenty to thirty) years earlier. In part, of course, this reflects career needs and pressures to publish and demonstrate intellectual evolution sooner rather than later, and most researchers move on theoretically as they become engaged in other research and teaching priorities.

Nevertheless, looking back over thirty or more years can be salutary, as it makes one more aware of how paradigms have shifted (and we with them), and it encourages us to examine retrospectively the prisms through which we analyzed the dynamics of change at the time and thereby to consider the adequacy of our earlier analyses and interpretations (Ward 2005; see also Shefner 2008). As teachers in higher education, this experience can be an important part of our pedagogy. Framing the analysis against these paradigms is particularly important in studying Latin American social processes, not least because models of economic development have shifted dramatically since the 1950s and 1960s, passing through state-sponsored orthodoxies of import substituting industrialization, to crisis management, state downsizing and structural adjustment policies, restructuring and fostering export-oriented growth and free trade, to liberalization and globalization strategies today (Roberts 1995; Gwynne and Kay 2004; Wood and Roberts 2005). None of these models led to dramatic reductions in levels of poverty; indeed, the so-called lost decade of the 1980s was a period of rising poverty and social retrenchment. Interpretations of "marginality" in the 1960s morphed into informal sector theories in the 1980s (González de la Rocha

1994; González de la Rocha et al. 2004) to more recent theories of social exclusion (Roberts 2005). Elsewhere I have mapped how broader intellectual paradigm shifts shaped scholarly understanding and policy approaches about low-income housing and urban development (Ward 2005). The important point that I wish to underscore here is that as one engages in retrospective analysis and, as in this case, undertakes a restudy of neighborhoods and populations after three or four decades, it is imperative to understand how the changing lenses of analysis have also shifted. Moreover, self-help consolidation processes and community development evolution are far from linear but are affected by changing economic structures and opportunities, by political change and decentralization, by the effectiveness (or not) of evolving public policy, and by the individual identities among different generations of low-income household members, many of whom were first-generation migrants, although their children were barrio born and bred. Nowhere is this process better depicted than in González de la Rocha's research about survival strategies to mobilize what she termed the "resources of poverty" (reciprocity, etc.) in the 1980s to an erosion of those survival capacities by neoliberal social and economic policies in the 1990s, creating a "poverty of resources" (González de la Rocha 1994, 2001). We see similar 180-degree turnarounds in community responses to economic and social change, housing arrangements, and organization in Perlman's (2010) latest study and in the housing market and residential mobility search behaviors that will be discussed in this article (see also González de la Rocha et al. 2004), as well as in subsequent and forthcoming LAHN forthcoming publications.

The Study Backdrop: Residential Mobility in Latin American Irregular Settlements

In Latin America as in many other less developed regions of the world, rapid urbanization has been marked by the growth of low-income irregular settlements, be they squatter invasions or illegally developed subdivisions (Gilbert and Ward 1985; Azuela 1989; Connolly 1982, 2008). As the phenomenon of irregular settlement became widespread from the 1950s and 1960s onward, and as informal or illegal land development outpaced formal urbanization, by the 1980s self-build settlements made up anywhere between 10 and 60 percent of the built-up area in many cities (Gilbert 1996, 74). Up until the 1980s, growth was fueled largely by

industrialization predicated on a low-paid labor force, but in later decades as neoliberalism unfolded, formal sector employment opportunities declined and the informal sector increasingly took up the slack (Portes and Hoffman 2003). Prior to the 1980s, government policy either turned a blind eye to such settlements (Ward 2005) or selectively eradicated them (Perlman 1976, 2010). Increasingly thereafter policy interventions sought to “regularize” these illegal settlements, gradually providing essential infrastructure (water, electricity, drainage, street paving, schools, etc.) in an attempt to upgrade their physical status and ensure that they were more fully integrated into the city as working-class neighborhoods (Calderón 2005, 2006). The illegal nature of land capture was also addressed more systematically by policymaking, and in many countries an integral part of upgrading policy has entailed the transfer of title to *de facto* owners who had either squatted on land or had purchased it illegally, unserviced, and therefore at low cost. By the late 1980s regularization policies were widely accepted and promoted alike by multilateral agencies and by governments.

Moreover, the decentralization of government, administrative modernization, and improved local governance from the 1990s onward has meant that the effectiveness of housing interventions and regularization have increased and have brought low-income communities into the formal planning and taxation structure of cities, as public officials have sought to reduce housing and public utility subsidies to the poor and to create a more sustainable basis for city development (Ward 2005). However, these more effective governance and planning controls have dramatically slowed the pace of new informal settlement formation and, although some new irregular settlements still form at the urban periphery (or beyond), there has been a significant tightening of the land market. Access to new self-build settlements has invariably become much more difficult over time. Formal housing in the form of very large-scale uniform housing projects has been promoted quite successfully in Mexico (especially) and elsewhere since 2000, but these housing developments rarely provide an effective alternative, being located in the distant periphery or in periurban locations outside of the city, and tend to target the better-off (formally employed) working classes and lower middle-income groups, rather than the poor and very poor. Among the latter, many of whom are the adult children and grandchildren of the successful consolidator families of the 1970s, the demand for housing remains extremely high, and this article focuses on the housing prospects

of these second- and third-generation households, many of whom were raised in the same neighborhood.

The housing “consolidation” process will often have extended over much of the adult lives of these children as their parents built the home over an extended period, gradually replacing a provisional shack with brick-built rooms, until after fifteen or twenty years these homes usually would include several rooms, often on two or more stories (Figures 1A–1D). The house “grew” as the family grew and as household extension embraced parents and other kin. In many respects this informal self-build consolidation process was both rational and an effective form of housing alternative because it gave considerable flexibility to these households, allowing the addition of new rooms to accommodate new members (usually children) at a pace and level of building construction that the family could afford. By using their own “sweat equity” (labor) and by mobilizing social capital of kin and neighbors, self-help settlements became a residential process that allowed poor households to raise a family (i.e., to mobilize the use value of their dwelling). It also gave them a foothold in the housing market and offered a modest opportunity to build an asset and create wealth (i.e., potential exchange value of the dwelling itself). Moreover, as the city continued to grow, these original peripheral locations became part of the consolidated intermediate ring or “old suburbs”—today’s “innerburbs” in Latin America (see Figures 2A and 2B).⁴

As mentioned already, compared with their middle- and upper-income counterparts, intraurban mobility patterns among low-income households were of necessity very different. This is because the better-off are able to adjust their socioeconomic status and stage in the life cycle by moving through the housing market, searching out new neighborhoods, matching housing types to their amenity and lifestyle needs, upsizing or downsizing, and so on. Economic downturns and housing mortgage crises such as those of 2008 and 2009 might precipitate mobility as foreclosures force people to move out and seek alternative housing. Although something of a perverse perspective, the fact that many low-income self-help consolidators are outside of the financial markets means that they are less directly affected by interest rate changes and mortgage fluctuations and therefore less likely to be affected by market foreclosure (although their jobs and income levels might be at risk). Moreover, low-income owners have little effective mobility because their socioeconomic and income-earning profiles are relatively “flat” and do not improve significantly with age, job experience, and seniority.



Figure 1. (A) Black-and-white street view of Casablanca barrio, Bogotá, 1978. (B) View of the same barrio, 2007. (C) Black-and-white photo of Colonia Isidro Fabela, Mexico City, looking north toward three-story dwelling. (D) Same three-story dwelling in close-up, now occupied by four (renter) households as well as the owner's family—a total of thirteen people. (Color figure available online.)

For them, the most effective way of adding income traditionally was to add workers—the spouse, adult children, and adult siblings—or to mobilize the resources of poverty through reciprocal exchange relationships, household extension, shared living expenses, and child minding with kin living on the same lot (Lomnitz 1976; González de la Rocha 1994). Thus for the first generation of self-builders, physical immobility, tied to home improvement and family expansion, offered some degree of in situ upward socioeconomic mobility, even though the household remained poor. Globalization and neoliberal economic strategies have thrown an ever increasing number of workers into the informal sector (Portes and Hoffman 2003), and the capacity to mobilize the resources of poverty has declined, creating new rounds of “marginality” and a “new urban poor” (González de la Rocha 2001; González de la Rocha et al. 2004).

This is not to suggest that there is no physical mobility whatsoever among these households. Indeed, a large proportion of the original consolidator families would originally have been migrants to the city, and as young singleton adults they would have spent a number of years living in rental tenements before starting a family and chancing their arm by squatting or buying an unserved lot on the margins of the city (Gilbert and Ward 1982). For them, acquiring a lot and self-building was often the culmination of many moves. Furthermore, as settlements consolidate over time, new rental opportunities are developed either in purpose-built tenements by entrepreneurial self-builders (especially the case in Mexico City) or by renting out rooms in a petty landlord–tenant relationship—especially prevalent in the case in Bogotá (see Gilbert and Varley 1991; Gilbert 1993; Coulomb 2010). The increase in rental opportunities affords widespread mobility and



Figure 2. (A) 2007, Colonia Isidro Fabela. Lot on left is divided between two kin-related families (note double electricity meters). Lot on right has been divided and one part has been sold as a separate dwelling (garage door with rooms above). (B) 2007, Soacha, Bogotá. Consolidated home divided in two for related nuclear households. (Color figure available online.)



“churn” as renters move around in search of the best deal.

Similarly, adult second and third generations who do not wish to live with their parents and grandparents are also likely to be physically mobile. Some become owners in their own right, and one study in Mexico conducted in the early 1990s in Puebla and Guadalajara found that as many as 40 to 50 percent of adult children who had exited from parental homes in consolidated settlements were found to be “owners” in their new homes (Varley 1994). This suggests that a signif-

icant number of second-generation sons and daughters have experienced some upward socioeconomic mobility, allowing them to purchase a lot or home of their own. Exactly how many are buying into formal housing or informal settlements elsewhere must wait on the survey data of more detailed residential trajectories that is the focus of current work (see also Di Virgilio 2007); however, it appears that today relatively few adult children appear willing to emulate their parents by striking out to the current distant periphery as self-builders, in part because these opportunities are in sharp decline but

also because they are now invariably located far away in the periphery, so that a more popular option is to rent or share with kin locally.⁵ Others leave home and migrate abroad or seek job opportunities in other parts of the country, although they might ultimately return either to the parents' lot or to separate accommodation elsewhere (often nearby).

Although there is considerable population turnover, as I show later, it appears that this rarely involves the original homeowners moving out, or the actual sale of the family home. *Prima facie* there are good reasons that help to explain such inertia. One reason is the relatively low level of upward job mobility among low-income urban populations, which elsewhere is often a primary reason for residential relocation. Second, there are limited housing alternatives provided by public or private sector social interest housing, which for many families remains unaffordable. A third reason is that the original rationale for undergoing the struggles of self-build and life in an unserved irregular settlement was to create a *patrimonio para los hijos* (an inheritance and home place for the children). In the early 1970s my interviews with self-builders in Mexico City often elicited a quizzical and surprised response when participants were asked whether they had ever considered selling out and moving elsewhere. They were quick to describe their (and their family's) struggles and sufferings in creating a patrimonial foothold albeit without legal titles, so much so that there was no way that they would wish to leave (Ward 1976; see also Varley 1987, 2002, 457). Although it is quite common to see "for sale" notices and other evidence of market turnover and exchange in informal settlements, this is much more frequent in the early days of settlement upgrading and consolidation, when dwellings are little more than shacks with few or no services, making lots relatively cheap and therefore relatively affordable.⁶ For a few, the hardships of squatting or living without essential services might lead to them quitting, taking a modest "windfall" cash gain; most households, though, once established, are in for the long haul.

Methodology and Data Collection

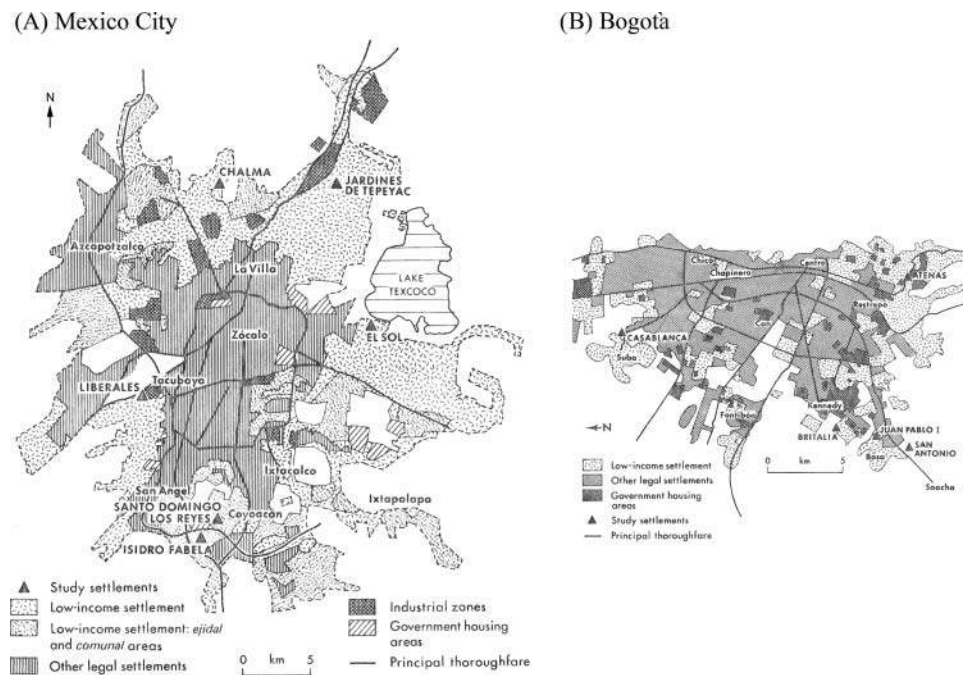
This article presents the results of an initial phase of a major multisite research project (<http://www.lahn.utexas.org>) about housing and social policy in the older low-income suburbs of many Latin American cities (the *innerburbs* as we refer to them),

equivalent to what some researchers in the United States call the *first suburbs* (Katz, Berube, and Lang 2005; Puentes and Warren 2006). Although the study examines twelve cities in nine countries, for Colombia and Mexico I was presented with an immediate opportunity to undertake a preliminary restudy of several settlement populations in the innerburbs of Bogotá and Mexico City where Alan Gilbert and I had collected data some thirty years earlier. Today these two cities constitute major metropolitan areas: Mexico City with more than 20 million people split almost equally between two major federal entities (the Federal District and the State of Mexico; Ward 2004) and Bogotá with almost 8 million people, most of whom are resident in Santa Fé de Bogotá itself, with some largely working-class populations also living in neighboring municipalities such as Soacha (one of the areas included in this study; see Figures 3A and 3B). Although the overall physical configuration of both cities in 2007 was quite different from that of the 1970s, it was relatively easy to identify the old formerly peripheral suburbs, which some thirty years later were often located in the intermediate ring of the city and showed common characteristics of age, considerable relative poverty, high densities, mixed and often somewhat deteriorated self-built buildings, and paved streets and all basic infrastructure installed.

In the 1970s study,⁷ household data were gathered for six self-built settlements in Mexico City and five in Bogotá (Figures 3A and 3B). In addition, two of the Mexico City settlements formed part of a 1973 study by the author (Ward 1976). Most of the settlements surveyed in the 1970s were at that time in their "early to mid-consolidating" physical development trajectory phase (including shacks and poorly serviced rudimentary brick-built homes). Thus, the comparative analysis for 2007 derives from settlements that were in 1978 and 1979 between three and five years old (Santo Domingo and Liberales in Mexico City) and between eight and fifteen years old for most other settlements included in the 1978–1979 Public Intervention, Housing and Land Use (PIHLU) study (see Gilbert and Ward 1985, 271–82, for summary data and contemporary descriptions of the settlements).

The baseline (1979) surveys included a random sample of households drawn from a lot-based sample and therefore included both *de facto* "owners" (as they had not yet received legal titles) as well as a minority of renter households; however, in the 2007 restudy only original owners were targeted for interview because the central hypothesis related to what was anticipated to be

Figure 3. (A) Mexico City and (B) Bogotá, showing location of the 1978 study settlements (from Gilbert and Ward 1985).



a lack of mobility among low-income owners, whereas it was well known that renters do change residence quite regularly (Gilbert and Varley 1991; Gilbert 1999, 2010). Therefore, an integral element in the restudy was to ensure that we returned to the *exact same lots* and dwelling units contained in the original 1978–1979 databases, and this is the starting point for the analysis described here. Although the original data had been analyzed electronically, the data tapes no longer existed, so it was necessary to reconstruct certain variables from a hard-copy output of the 1978–1979 raw data. The first task, therefore, was to “harvest” basic information from the original data sets for a number of variables: tenure (to exclude renters and nonowners), household size and structure, number of households per lot, the projected current age of the head of household (if still alive), as well as their names and addresses, migrant status, state of provenance, and so on. (It was anticipated that these latter variables would be helpful in identification and triangulation to find the exact home locations in which interviews had been conducted in the 1970s.)

Once harvested, this data set provided the basis for the second stage of the research project, that of identifying on the ground in 2007 the lots and dwellings that had been surveyed previously. This was far from easy, not least because in the late 1970s the settlements were still at an early stage of their physical development with incipient (unmade) streets and a very pro-

visional dwelling unit numbering system (see Figures 1A and 1C). Some streets and blocks had disappeared entirely, replaced by structures such as schools and covered markets. In addition, street names had changed and new numbering systems had been adopted or amended, sometimes several times over. Fortunately, we had the original street maps prepared for the earlier 1970s surveys, and the names and addresses and provenance (where migrants) of the original householder was also collected.⁸ Comparing those earlier maps with contemporary city street maps and with Google Earth data, it was possible to get an initial idea of the settlement layout (streets and blocks) and, where applicable, to figure out the new street names relative to the previous ones. The author then made a preliminary reconnaissance of each settlement to assess whether it would be feasible to track lot numbers to contemporary street addresses. Two or three settlements were excluded at this stage, usually because it was anticipated that matching original address to the contemporary layout would be nearly impossible.

This process left a total of eight settlements (five in Mexico City and three in Bogotá). A questionnaire survey was prepared and precoded, and in July and August 2007 the author led two teams to conduct the follow-up survey in each city. Before seeking to interview householders, team members walked every street and made a preliminary assessment about their level of confidence in having correctly identified the dwellings and lots to

be interviewed. They were sometimes helped by the fact that occasionally the previous numbering system was still apparent (albeit painted over), which further helped us to “crack the code” and thereafter count lots and dwellings (odds and evens) from these known anchor points. In Mexico, too, the original family name dating from the 1970s sometimes appeared on the outside of the residence, and this also greatly helped in making a prima facie assessment about the level of confidence that the original site had been found. After the interview we devised a scoring metric to confirm whether the original dwelling had, in fact, been successfully located. Where the original owners had moved away, we interviewed the new owners. Confirmation that we had, indeed, located the original lot was essential if the analysis was to accurately assess turnover, and that we not be misled by including spurious data from lots that had been incorrectly identified as having been interviewed in the original survey.⁹

Whereas preliminary harvesting of the data was relatively straightforward, checking and cross-checking locations in the field proved to be the most difficult and time-consuming elements of the survey. Indeed, the actual survey itself was relatively short and could usually be completed in fifteen minutes or less.¹⁰ Applied to the current owner, or to an adult member of the household, it recorded inter alia: (1) the current land use and tenure of the lot; (2) whether the original family members (from the 1970s) were still living on the lot and, if so, the exact current whereabouts of those who had been resident in 1978–99; (3) whether either of the original owners was still alive; (4) whose names had been placed on the original property at the time of the title regularization, and so on. Where it was found not to be the original (1970s) family, the interviewers gathered data about from whom the new owner had purchased the lot or dwelling, the year, the costs, and so on. Then all interviewees on owner-held lots were questioned about the household structure, residential living arrangements (number of households and relations with each other), whose name(s) appeared on the property titles, whether the title had changed, their knowledge of out-movers (neighbors), and self-estimates of the current value of the dwelling or of recent property sales and turnover in the settlement. Once the survey had been completed in each city, property value assessments were gathered from the appropriate government offices for each address that had been interviewed. (The latter was relatively straightforward in Bogotá but proved to be extremely difficult in Mexico City.) The data sets were coded, cleaned, and analyzed using IBM Statis-

tical Package for the Social Sciences software (SPSS for Windows, Release Version 18, © SPSS, Inc., 2008, Chicago, IL, <http://www.spss.com>).¹¹

Findings: Squatter Settlement Homes Are for the *Longue Durée*

The first major finding of the restudy highlights the very high affinity and use value that low-income owners ascribe to their homes in self-build consolidated settlements. In both study cities, in more than 80 percent of all cases the same family was found to be still living on the lot, and that often included at least one or other original spouse, if not both. (Given their advanced age, however, the interview was often conducted with a resident adult son or daughter.) Similarly, almost all lots remained in residential land use (Table 1), usually for ownership, although in Bogotá a significant variation was that a proportion of lots and dwellings had been turned over to renting either a series of rooms or small apartments, with the original owner or family now living elsewhere but continuing to own the lot and dwellings from which they collect rents. There was minimal evidence of lot conversion to commercial or other land uses, although it was relatively common to find that the residence also contained a small store or workshop and, as in the Bogotá case, petty landlord–tenant accommodations. It should be noted, however, that the methodology of a lot-based sample selection meant that only a small number of lots had been included along the principal thoroughfares, which is where there has been greater turnover, buyouts, and land-use changes, points to which I return later.

Subsequent surveys in 2009 across several other cities included in the comparative LAHN study further corroborate the generalized and high levels of immobility among owners of the earlier self-build settlements. Depending on the city in question and the age of the settlements, the average period of owner household residence in their dwellings was marginally under twenty-four years, with almost half (49 percent) of owners in residence for more than twenty-five years and almost 70 percent for twenty years or more.¹²

Minimal Outward Mobility among Homeowners

Taken overall, population turnover appears to have been modest at best. Even those owners who had bought out an original pioneer family had often been living in the settlement for many years, and many considered

Table 1. Residential turnover in ownership and land use between the original survey (1970s) and 2007: Mexico City and Bogotá

Changes of ownership and land use	Mexico City		Bogotá	
	#	%	#	%
Confirmed as the same family	125	82.8	83	80.6
Different family now on lot	26	17.2	20	19.4
Total	151	100	103	100
Land use changes				
No change—owner residential	160	89.4	78	76.5
Residential—rental	13	7.3	20	19.6
Vacant lot	3	1.7	2	2.0
Public land use	2	1.1	0	0.0
Industrial	0	0.0	1	1.0
Transportation/warehousing	0	0.0	1	1.0
Other	1	0.6	0	0.0
Total	179	100.0	102	100.0

Note: Data are only for those lots where it was determined that there was a high degree of certainty that the original site had been located.

Source: Author's longitudinal survey, 2007.

themselves to be one of the original settlers, although this does not mean that there is little or no population “churn” in these older suburbs. If one takes a sample from among all the families living in consolidated settlements, renters are often found to make up a large minority of households and, as might be expected here, one sees a high level of turnover and low number of years of residence in the same dwelling (Gilbert 1999, 2010; Abramo 2003). Also, although the owners might remain in their residences, other household members come and go: Sons and daughters marry and move into renting or to share with other family members, others move elsewhere for work, and so on. Nor is it unusual for those same household members to return at a later date, permanently or temporarily. In short, one observes a dynamic and often cyclical pattern of turnover and residence in the parental home. Moreover, between one quarter and one third of interviewees in the 2007 survey in Mexico City and Bogotá, respectively, reported that a near neighbor had moved away in the previous twelve months, although it was unclear whether these were all “owners,” or just other families that they knew previously who had moved elsewhere. Thus, within the context of parental immobility, the data do suggest significant turnover and movement within households and dwellings in these consolidated low-income settlements, with some settlements reporting higher rates of turnover than others.

Use Value: Household Structure, Organization, and Flexibility

As already mentioned, self-building to provide a home in which to raise a family and to ensure some sort of inheritance and security for the children (*un patrimonio para los hijos*) is widely mentioned as the principal reason for acquiring a lot in an irregular settlement. Another reason often offered is *vivir más tranquilo*, which figuratively usually meant the feeling of freedom and security for one's family and to be free of hassle from other renters and other neighbors. These attributes are clearly important elements embedded in the meanings associated with use value that are accorded to their (often rudimentary) shelters, especially in the initial early consolidating phase of settlement.

Table 2 provides some before-and-after comparisons of demographic and household organization characteristics. At the time of the original survey when urban and national fertility rates were still high, the majority of the households included large nuclear families with some modest vertical expansion to (grand) parents or a sideways inclusion of a sibling, nephew, or niece of one or the other spouse. Thus, one would expect that the average or median household size would be larger in 1979 than in 2007 (except maybe in recently formed settlements such as *colonia* Santo Domingo, where in 1974 the usual scenario was that of a young couple with one or two babes in arms). Indeed, comparing the household size data from the original surveys (Gilbert and Ward 1985), average household size for owner households today in Bogotá is down from 6.4 to 4.27, and has been reduced by almost two persons on average in Mexico (5.5 to 3.66; see Table 2). In part this is because average family size has declined significantly in both countries, but it also reflects the fact that these are often vestige households (namely, the elderly parents whose children have left the home) or include young adult children who share the lot with their parent(s) but live apart as a separate nuclear family. A common scenario is for them to set up their own household unit in another part of the dwelling or lot. What used to be their bedrooms as adolescents become the primary rooms of the newly married households, perhaps with a small kitchen or stove added, and they share the bathroom(s) or the full kitchen area with their parents or with other resident siblings. This internal lot division among adult sons and daughters is evident in Table 2, which shows the sharp increase in the number of separate households who were found to share the lots (up from 1.63 to 2.55 and 1.65 to 2.24 in Mexico City

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of households and lot composition: Mexico City and Bogotá barrios compared, 1970s and 2007

	Mexico City										Bogotá									
	Isidro Fabela		Santo Domingo		El Sol		Salitrero / Liberales		Chalma Guadalupe		Total (weighted for 2007)		San Antonio (Soacha)		Atenas		Casablanca		Total (weighted for 2007)	
	1978	2007	1974	2007	1979	2007	1978	2007	1974	2007	1979	2007	1979	2007	1978	2007	1979	2007	1979	2007
Colonia/barrio	1978	2007	1974	2007	1979	2007	1978	2007	1974	2007	1979	2007	1979	2007	1978	2007	1979	2007	1979	2007
Size of household	6.58	3.64	3	4.23	6.61	3.73	5.91	3.27	5.17	3.07	5.55	3.66	5.53	4.43	6.57	3.83	6.1	4.46	6.37	4.27
Average household size																				
Households per lot	2.29	2.91	1.24	1.81	1.39	2.49	1.4	2.91	1.94	2.71	1.58	2.55	1.4	2.11	1.26	2.91	1.76	2.71	1.6	2.7
Average no. of households per lot																				
Persons per lot	10.86			6.91	9.94		8.56		8.14		9.16		8.56		9.5		9.86		9.7	
Average no. of persons on each lot																				

Note: Totals for 2007 are weighted for settlement size.

Source: 1970s data from Gilbert and Ward (1985), and author's longitudinal survey, 2007.

and Bogotá, respectively).¹³ Those children who do exit during the life course rarely go far: Most remain in the same or in an adjoining neighborhood or sector of the city.

The rising density of separate households also corresponds with an increase in lot population densities. In both Mexico and Bogotá the (weighted) average number of persons living on a lot is around nine. Some settlements show exceptionally high average lot numbers, usually reflecting the age (older means more subdivision) as well as the modal size of lots (smaller lots have greater restrictions on their potential for subdivision; note, though, that the relationship is not linear, because on smaller lots families tend to build additional second or third stories earlier in the phases of dwelling expansion). Also, it must be remembered that these data do not include specific lots dedicated exclusively to rental accommodation where average lot numbers would be even higher because five or six families with two to four members each is commonplace. Densification in low-income settlements is both an ongoing process tied to family building, as well as one that has been actively promoted by policymakers seeking to encourage more efficient land use by targeted infilling in certain inner-urban areas and by increasing land taxes and service consumption charges so that households will share costs or adopt rent-seeking activities.

Living in an extended household or in some sort of “compound” arrangement with kin on the same lot is quite common (Lomnitz 1976).¹⁴ As noted earlier, in both cities in the 1970s the majority of on-lot household structures housed nuclear families of a young couple and their children, with occasional extension to their own parents (grandparents) or to the owner’s siblings. At that time, nuclear household arrangements accounted for three quarters of households in Mexico City and for over half in Bogotá, where there was a greater variety of household arrangements that also included renters. Today these patterns have changed quite markedly (Table 3): The “compound” household arrangements whereby several close kin-related households share a lot is especially common in Mexico City where 61 percent of lots were found to include a mix of parents or in-laws and adult children (sometimes with their own children), a further 15 percent are adult brothers and sisters (or in-laws) who share, and another 15 percent are the original parents and other kin.

Renter households living on the same lot in a petty landlord–tenant relationship with the owner are relatively rare in Mexico City, but they form an important component of lot and dwelling sharing in Bogotá, where

Table 3. Household composition in Mexico City and Bogotá, 2007

	Mexico City		Bogotá	
	#	%	#	%
Living in household				
My spouse and I	4	4.0	3	4.5
Myself and my siblings (or in-laws)	15	15.2	8	12.1
A mix of parents/in-laws and siblings (children of the parents)	60	60.6	15	22.7
Parents and other kin	15	15.2	3	4.5
A mixture with nephews or nieces	0	0.0	2	3.0
A mixture of parents/ children and with (unrelated) renters	3	3.0	18	27.2
Mixture of kinsmen and renters	0	0.0	15	22.7
Others (unclassified)	2	2.0	2	3.0
Total	99	100.0	66	100.0

Source: Author’s longitudinal survey, 2007.

over half of the lots include renter households, albeit usually in some combination with the owner (parents, their adult children, or both; see Table 3). In Bogotá this early renting tradition is explained by the nature of irregular land market development in the so-called pirate barrios, which was always a more secure (but somewhat more expensive) process of land capture than in Mexico and most other Latin American countries, so much so that from the outset self-builders often built one or two rooms for their own family and then added another room or two to rent out, something that we noted with interest in our original study (Gilbert and Ward 1985, 99–100). In Mexico City where the land capture process was more precarious, renting to another household prior to establishing a strong claim of ownership was to invite trouble and possible dispossession of all or at least a part of the lot when regularization of titles later came online. In Bogotá, over the years the process has evolved further as more dwellings accommodate renters, often alongside adult children. In Gilbert’s 1997 survey of self-help settlements in Bogotá (including two of those considered here, Atenas and Casablanca), more than half of the lots contained renters, whereas in formal housing projects (with much less dwelling and lot space) only 11 percent of dwellings included renters (Gilbert 1999, 1084). In Mexico City, where renting is especially significant in the older suburbs of former self-help settlements), dwelling structures are mostly purpose-built and exclusively rental tenements in which the owner landlord lives off site, although there is also modest

evidence for some on-lot petty landlord–tenant renting (Gilbert and Varley 1991; see also Table 1).

Use Value, Patrimony, and Inheritance

In both cities the desire to have a dwelling (patrimony) to leave to one's children was always an important goal, although it often appears to have been fast-forwarded premortem, as adult children remain living on the lot (as prospective future owners) with living parents or a parent. Most likely this is due to two principal factors: First, there is the longer life expectancies of the parents, so that children are not inheriting so early as in the past, and the elderly often look to one of their resident children to care for them in old age. A second reason is the declining opportunities for homeownership acquisition within the broader housing market, whether this is through purchase of a titled property or through squatting or purchase in an irregular settlement by (now) married adult children, who appear to be reluctant to make the same self-help sacrifices as did their parents, moving out to an unserved lot in the distant periphery. Unless low-cost ownership opportunities exist nearby (see note 5), there are many good reasons to stick around in the barrio in which one grew up: inertia itself, and the fact that most local rental housing opportunities are advertised informally and locally, or by word of mouth. In terms of dwelling conditions and amenities, staying in the lot with one's parents is likely to be as good as renting a room elsewhere and will usually cost very much less. Also, living with one's immediate kin is often preferable to living with strangers given the considerable social capital embedded within "compound" and extended household arrangements. These advantages include mutual child minding, shared food costs and housing expenses, reciprocity, and close social interaction between family members.

Another reason to stay put is to ensure that one remains an active stakeholder in any anticipated (future) shared lot ownership with one's siblings. In countries with testamentary freedom such as Mexico, fewer than 12 percent of irregular settlement owners have a will, and most die intestate (Ward and Jiménez 2011). In these cases, and in countries that have "forced heirship" mandating shared inheritance, property inheritance and succession will be determined by the Civil Code. The law notwithstanding, our data in Mexico suggest that just under half of owner households have made informal arrangements about how they expect their property to be disbursed among the children (Gra-

jeda and Ward forthcoming; Ward and Jiménez 2011). In these circumstances and in light of the high lot densities and the frequent lot sharing alluded to earlier, it is not unreasonable for adult children to assume that those actually living on the lot will have the strongest claims on the basis of need; however, the Civil Code provides for an equal share for all children (including those who are illegitimate), and it remains to be seen if the informal wishes of the parents are adhered to, or whether other legitimate heirs will claim their share under the civil code.¹⁵ The point here is that alternative ownership opportunities are severely constrained, and the inheritance expectations among the children as a route to homeownership (albeit shared with siblings) are likely to be an important factor in remaining in the home or in close touch from elsewhere in the neighborhood.

For aged parents, too, there are clear advantages in sustaining the informal arrangement, because as long as they have adult children who depend on them and have future expectancies of part inheritance, they—the parents—are likely to be better looked after in their old age (Varley and Blasco 2000, 2003). Few parents transfer property to their children before death for fear of being kicked out of their own home, and the few who do make a will or a formal "en vivo" assignment of their property quite sensibly ensure that they retain a life interest and residence in the home.

In both cities only a relatively small proportion of properties had changed title from the original ownership assigned in the 1970s and 1980s when titles were regularized by the government. In Mexico City and Bogotá only 16 percent and 30 percent, respectively, reported a change of name on the title, and most of the changes observed were later arrivals who bought out earlier residents, transferring the title to their own names. Calculating from the sample of original lot owners from the 1970s who are still living on the lot, we see that some 33 percent of men are now aged over seventy, and 82 percent over sixty. Given the fact that the life expectancy of men is less than that of women, and the fact that a higher proportion of titles remain in men's names, I estimate that anywhere between 30 and 60 percent of those original property titles are no longer registered in the name of a surviving or newly designated owner. For most families this does not appear to be a major issue because the surviving spouse (most often the mother) is unlikely to be challenged about the succession of ownership, and most children profess to respect the informal designations of their parents, at least while they are still alive, and demonstrate little interest

in changing the name(s) on the title. This might become more problematic (and messy) in the future, however, once the surviving parent dies or if the surviving parent wishes to sell the property without (now) having clean title transferred from their late spouse. Newfound irregularity of title will further exacerbate the ability to sell the property, at least at its face value, compounding immobility (Ward and Jiménez 2011).

The Home as an Asset: Exchange Values and Immobility

In this article the focus has been on the use value of low-income property ownership and the fact that such use value is now being exercised transgenerationally. Clearly this practice imposes a major constraint on intraurban mobility because it effectively ties families to home sites, seemingly in perpetuity; however, these dwellings have also accumulated substantial exchange value over the years through a process of general neighborhood upgrading, self-build and “sweat equity” initiatives and investments by the families themselves, and the general valorization of property values locally. In theory, therefore, having a real asset to trade up or to trade sideways should be expected to offer greater opportunities for intraurban mobility, not less. Former irregular settlement housing that has increased significantly in value and gained full legal title is now part of the formal property market and theoretically enhances people’s ability to exercise housing choice by selling and moving elsewhere. Indeed, this is the principal argument of de Soto (2000) and his followers who argue that the legalization of property titles anchors property relations, creates assets and wealth, and enables greater access to credit and to market (and household) mobility.

Setting aside the rather dubious merit of such arguments that have been amply addressed by scholars elsewhere (Varley 1987, 2002; Gilbert 2002; Bromley 2004; Ward, Guisti, and de Souza 2004; Ward 2011), it ought to be apparent that the transgenerational expectancies and rights of children and grandchildren outlined earlier will greatly impede any attempt to convert housing assets for cash. Moreover, there are other equally important reasons why exchange values inhibit immobility, specifically the very limited effective market for these consolidated properties. Who will, or who can, afford to buy out a consolidated home in the innerburbs? The data contained in Table 4 will come as a considerable surprise to many, even those familiar with low-income housing and poverty in Latin American

cities. The third column in Table 4 provides the bottom line, showing the self-estimated property values among some of those interviewed and the rumored sale prices of recently sold properties in the same street. The median value in 2007 was almost US\$91,000 in the survey settlements in Mexico City, with a much lower median value of US\$23,000 in Bogotá. As one might expect, median values vary by settlement, although with the exception of one settlement (Chalma Guadalupe in Mexico City) where it was considerably lower the range is not great. Of course, several immediate issues arise in interpreting these data. First, they are made up of self (owner)-estimates and rumored sales prices, so they are likely to be inflated. Second, the cell size is small, as most people professed to having no idea what their property was worth or at least were unwilling to discuss the matter in a short survey. Third, the Mexico City values are especially high as to invite disbelief. Therefore, it was necessary to cross-check these alleged values by comparing them to the property tax assessment records for each settlement in both cities—which was done with varying degrees of success (see the notes to Table 4). In both cities interviewers had occasionally been shown the *boleta predial* (the property tax bills sent to each household), so these amounts were known not to be wildly out of line with the market rates. Indeed, when the property tax data were later acquired, they confirmed that although the self-estimated market values were somewhat higher than the tax office assessments, they were within range. (In the United States, also, property assessments usually come in a little lower than the market value, if only to minimize taxpayer challenges and formal review.) More recently acquired data (2009) for a number of the research sites in the LAHN have confirmed that these housing values are not unusual for consolidated self-help settlements, although they vary considerably according to the local market.¹⁶

Surprising though these data might appear at first sight, they are central to the explanation of immobility because unless there is an active market for the purchase of these consolidated homes in working-class settlements, few people can exercise the choice to move. Specifically, these prices are unaffordable to would-be low-income homeowners, most of whom have no access to formal financing. Thus, only those who have a better paid job, some savings, or a cash windfall or those who can engage informally with kin to parse together sufficient resources will be able to buy out an existing homeowner. Sensitive policymaking to make available financing that will allow low-income

Table 4. Property values for consolidated low-income settlements: Self-estimated values and property tax assessments compared, Mexico City and Bogotá

City and barrio Settlement	Modal lot size (m ²)	Self-estimated property values US\$ = median value (N)	Annual property tax values: Our calculations ^a (bracket = sample of city assessments ^b)			
			Catastral land values (and in m ²)	With 100 m ² of construction (= total including land)	With 200 m ² of construction (= total including land)	With 300 m ² of construction (= total including land)
Construction values for the four DF settlements				23,953	47,907	71,860
Mexico City						
Isidro Fabela (DF)	250	109,091 [12]	32,400 (= \$129.6 m ²)	56,352 (46,815)	80,307 (nd)	104,260 (nd)
Santo Domingo (DF)	200	100,000 [8]	16,080 (= \$80.4 m ²)	40,031 (41,498)	63,984 (51,911)	87,938 (89,887)
El Sol (Netza.)		72,727 [7]	18,636 ^c	nd	nd	nd
Liberales (DF)	120	81,818 [3]	11,412 (= \$95.1 m ²)	35,376 (30,629)	59,329 (42,117)	83,283 (nd)
Chalma Guadalupe (DF)	250	45,455 [2]	15,175 (= \$60.7 m ²)	39,135 (28,067)	63,089 (51,330)	87,042 (69,801)
Mexico City median value (brackets = average)		\$90,909 [32] (\$113,780)	(18,741)	(42,675)	(66,677)	(90,630)
			Property taxes for interviewed lots			
Bogotá						
San Antonio (Soacha)	nd	\$26,243 [14]			nd	
Aténas	150	\$20,995 [17]			\$18,085 [28]	
Casablanca	113	\$32,044 [14]			\$22,334 [38]	
Bogotá median value (average in brackets)	128	\$23,204 [45] (29,370)			\$21,852 [66]	

Note: Values all in U.S. dollars (2007). DF = Distrito Federal (Federal District); nd = no data.

^aIn Mexico City these calculations are based on the formula for assessment given to us by the Oficina del Catastro for construction areas and land values per square meter for each of the four DF settlements. They are calculated on the modal lot size for each settlement.

^bIn Mexico City for privacy reasons it was not possible to get individual property tax values for the surveyed lots, but we were furnished with a small random sample of lots in each settlement, although we have no clear sense of the accuracy or typicality of the selected lots and data given to us, hence our decision to show these data in brackets. They are not greatly out of line with our calculations, however. When assessing property values, some reduction is made to allow for age of construction of the property and this probably helps to explain the general lower value provided by the Oficina del Catastro. All construction areas are self-reported, so they also probably underestimate the actual market value. In Bogotá we were provided with the actual property assessments for the lots on which we interviewed, so we can be more confident about the comparability with the self-estimated property values.

^cFlat rate on land charged in El Sol, Nezahualcóyotl, Edo de México. There is no assessment on construction.

households to buy properties at these relatively low values will do much to make the market work more effectively (Ward, Guisti, and de Souza 2004), but that is not the issue here. Instead it seems likely that only a few barrios in particularly attractive locations and only a relatively small number of well-located lots in any one settlement will ever attract potential buyers. In Mexico City, for example, the Chalma Guadalupe settlement is

less attractive relative to the others because it is rather inaccessible (in the far north of the Federal District), situated on steep slopes, the upper levels of which are difficult to access, and it is located adjacent to one of the city's major prisons (the Reclusorio Norte). Santo Domingo and Isidro Fabela, on the other hand, occupy prime locations in the south, and the latter in particular has been subject to some buyouts—but only on certain

selected lots. Only those owners lucky or astute enough to have acquired lots on the main street or alongside the motorway access road are likely to be bought out by a commercial land use or by a “gentrifier.” But the number of prime lots is very limited, with the result that for most resident owners there is little prospect of selling given the low effective demand for the majority of lots.

This is not uniquely a problem of urban areas in middle-developing countries in Latin America. Similar market constraints were observed among low-income settlements (*colonias*) in the border region of south Texas, where after twenty years of residence and self-help improvements, owners’ property values averaged between \$30,000 and \$35,000 (Ward, Guisti, and de Souza 2004). In Texas and elsewhere, although low-income owners also aspire and share in the American dream, housing assets accrue value more slowly to working-class families than to better off segments of society, perversely increasing the social and economic wealth divide (Wilson 1999). From a sociological point of view, market dysfunction and residential immobility might actually intensify those stratification patterns: between working- and middle-class populations, as well as between low-income renters and owners. The same is true in cities like Bogotá and Mexico City, albeit on a much greater scale given the size of these cities, and the more unequal income distribution in poorer countries.

Explaining Immobility: The Constraints on Mobilizing Exchange Values and the Expectations and Needs for Continuing Use Values

This article began with a discussion about the ways in which a longitudinal perspective can help to shed light on the changing nature of socioeconomic processes over time and the ways in which we observe, analyze, and interpret those changes. This also allows us to deconstruct the ways in which our analysis and interpretations are embedded in earlier paradigms and how these ways of thinking have evolved and shaped the intellectual discourse. In the case of irregular settlement development, early interpretations were embedded within the various theories of modernization, marginality, and structuralism and shaped the ways in which we wrote about rapid urbanization, irregular housing development, and population exclusion or integration as part of the means of low-cost social and labor reproduction (Portes 1972;

Perlman 1976). Although few researchers other than modernization theorists in the 1960s imagined a linear trajectory of development, most of us would never have expected a 360-degree turnaround as many of the earlier marginality claims about an excluded underclass have become truisms three decades later, as the impacts of neoliberal reforms began to bite and as later (second and third) generations began to cope with social exclusion, and so-called “new” poverty. Nor, at the time, as we focused attention on these migrant pioneers in squatter settlements, did we imagine the second- and third-generational complexities that might evolve and that recent research is only beginning to lay bare. Nor did we anticipate the paradigmatic changes that democratization and decentralization have brought to the policymaking environment. But those mid- and late-career scholars who experienced and observed urbanization and social outcomes in the *longue durée* are in a relatively privileged position to be able to take a longitudinal perspective and can maybe better anticipate the social and spatial outcomes that are likely to unfold over the next one or two decades.

The data discussed in this article suggest that the very low mobility patterns observed derive from two principal processes: (1) the inability to activate exchange values through property sales (even if people wished to do so) and (2) the continuing and transgenerational use values that self-build housing offers for so many low-income residents in Latin American cities. The high ongoing demand for access to informal housing and the dynamics of household formation and sharing among immediate children, in combination with the low incomes and limited employment and alternative housing opportunities, makes long-term residence with kin a highly rational housing strategy, especially within today’s context in cities where alternative access to home ownership for the poor is highly constrained. It also makes for immobility and longevity of residence in the family home.

These findings have important implications for theory and for future policy formulation and practice. Sociologically, the data suggest that while the first generation of irregular settlement played an important role in housing workers between the 1950s and early 1980s during the period of import substituting industrialization and urbanization, those same settlements will continue to provide much of the housing supply, albeit now for the second and third generations of low-income workers. The “lost decade” of the 1980s and neoliberal restructuring from the 1990s onward have led to a

recasting of labor markets in major Latin American cities, throwing more people back onto the informal sector and into self-employment (Portes and Hoffman 2003). Today there is little cause for optimism that job opportunities will expand significantly or that there will be a ratcheting-up of incomes to make formal housing and financing more affordable. Therefore, just as in the 1980s when household extension was an important mechanism through which the poor survived (Chant 1991; González de la Rocha 1994), so also are current and future generations intensifying intradwelling and intralot arrangements on a more or less permanent basis. For many of the children and grandchildren of the original self-builders in irregular settlements the future lies in their continuing to live close to their parents and in their future as inheritance stakeholders in the property market (Deere 2007; Grajeda and Ward forthcoming; Ward and Jiménez 2011).

It is important to know much more about the processes that are already entrained and to seek answers to the following questions: How do those second and third generations view their housing prospects, and what determines property inheritance and the spatial and household organization among adult children as their parents die? What are the differences in expectations and likely residential outcomes between second and third generations (children and grandchildren)? How are these expectations socially constructed, and how do such constructions intersect with the perceived opportunities and constraints of the low-income housing market? Finally, to what extent is the accommodation of adult third generation (i.e., the grandchildren) feasible, given that in cities like Bogotá and Mexico City lot and dwelling space are often already seriously stretched, and how will those intrafamilial social relations fare, and be negotiated, between different generations and stakeholders? Several of these questions are in the process of being researched by the author and other researchers in the LAHN through census and GIS analysis of the innerburbs, through broader sample surveys, and especially through intensive analysis of a small number of household cases using mixed method techniques of participant observation, multiple interviewing of household members, focus groups, and charting and matching over time the physical configuration of dwelling expansion and adaptation of the use of space to household formation, dynamics, and organization.¹⁷ That research will also provide a better understanding of people's mobility patterns—their exit and reentry strategies to the home place—as they strike out on their own, seek work opportunities elsewhere, and embark on their own fam-

ily building trajectories. A sidebar point here is how remittances can be an important factor in upgrading and home improvement of the parental (original family) home (at least in Mexico and Guatemala, where international migration and remittances are especially significant). Here, too, there are interesting questions about how far those who have regularly remitted money home and contributed directly to home construction are likely to retain a significant stakeholder interest in the family home, even though they might be distant absentee family members (Grajeda and Ward forthcoming).

Another important issue is the extent to which these social arrangements and informal contracts will be able to provide a buffer that will allow for the absorption of the “new poor” in the future: Second-generation family members might be accommodated, but will the third generation (i.e., the grandchildren) have a share in the patrimony provided by their grandparents? If so, how? And how will the supply of one-room rental opportunities be shaped by these rising densities and new generational demands? As observed in Bogotá, some petty landlord renting alongside shared accommodation with kin has always been an important feature, but it is not clear how such rent-seeking opportunities will fare in the future. In Mexico, where petty owner-renting relationships are relatively rare, inherited homes or shares of homes that cannot be sold on the open market because of title irregularity or the active use by one or two siblings might generate rent-seeking opportunities from those who are unable to cash in on their inheritance but wish to mobilize the benefits of their part share. These can include renting out one or two rooms to kin or to strangers, using the room as a workshop or for storage, and so on. Although informal arrangements are likely to prevail without conflict until the passing of the second parent, such rent-seeking is likely to generate tensions between siblings who have different housing needs, trajectories, and expectations (Grajeda and Ward forthcoming).

There are also important policy questions to be addressed. First, and foremost, these dwellings need to be reconfigured physically to bring them into line with the current needs and the newfound household structures described in this article. These homes were largely self-built in an ad hoc manner, at lower densities, and with technology, water and drainage piping, and wiring that are now twenty-five to thirty years old, are often inadequate, and sometimes have become hazardous. Housing renovation and retrofitting of utilities is crucial to improving the physical fabric of these dwelling structures that are becoming permanently shared family homes.

Working with the families themselves, this will require both sensitive qualitative research and design about in-situ remodeling, as well as the development of some informal and formal mediation service capacity to resolve intrahousehold conflicts as and when these arise. In addition, new credit and financing mechanisms will be required to support housing rehab, and that is probably the first step in moving forward with a new housing strategy for retrofitting consolidated settlements.

Second, and also in a normative vein, the resolution of property title for those second-generation beneficiaries who inherit homes from their parents will become an increasingly important issue—as it was in the past when these settlements were illegally created and required regularization to provide clean titles. From the 1970s and 1980s onward, legal title was transferred to de facto owners in irregular settlements as an integral part of the consolidation process. As described in this article, however, many of these owners are now dying intestate with significant housing assets, and although it appears that a range of informal succession arrangements are in place, no one really knows how effective they will prove in practice and whether beneficiaries will adhere to the familial understandings or will challenge through the courts or through negotiation and mediation. Whatever transpires, if titles are not formally registered in the name(s) of the new owners, and wherever there is conflict between legitimate claimants, so a new round of regularization and title transfer will be required. Far from being definitively resolved by earlier rounds of title regularization, “clouded” titles have reemerged and morphed into a new and potentially even more complex stage (Ward 2008; Ward and Jiménez 2011). So long as juridical conflicts over ownership exist, they are likely to stymie any possibility of home renovation outlined earlier and will encourage the continuation of informal lot-sharing arrangements.

Title impediments will also impede property transfers—for those wishing to cash in their hard-won housing asset. Title transfer from one owner to another is not usually a complicated process, although it can be relatively costly. But when one owner buys out another without “clean” title (e.g., if the vendor’s title is in the name of a deceased spouse or parent), the sale price is significantly reduced, leaving it to the purchaser to undertake the title change (which he or she usually does). Unclear title further depresses market prices, and it could be a deal breaker that prevents sale and intra-urban mobility.

These broader socio-geographical and normative issues form part and parcel of the larger comparative study of the innerburbs in Latin American cities of which the

material in this article formed a preliminary phase. The restudy of settlements for which data were gathered in the 1970s has allowed researchers—perhaps for the first time—to begin to build cross-generational snapshots of housing processes that were previously thought to culminate in a single consolidated family home, albeit of markedly differing degrees and heterogeneity in each settlement (see Ward 1982). Self-help housing is no longer simply a route to ownership and a space in which the original household could raise a family but instead today it also forms part of the residential calculus for ownership among second and third generations of low-income urban residents (see also Moser 2009). This makes necessary a recasting of the contemporary and future dwelling arrangements to fit their newfound needs. Mobility is highly constrained, and more than ever there are incentives and rationalities for adult children and grandchildren to remain living close by or to remain on the family lot. For those who have and will continue to experience mobility, exploring labor markets in other urban centers and abroad, sometimes sending remittances and making investment in the family home, their personal stakeholder commitment to the patrimony that their parents created is likely to remain strong. Policymaking needs to focus both on making the market work more effectively so that those wishing to mobilize their hard-earned housing assets can do so by selling and moving out. It also needs to offer innovative and creative policy solutions that will help recast the housing environment and secure the stakeholder interests of those families for whom a home is, indeed, likely to be forever.

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Notes

1. Specifically: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, and Uruguay.

2. That 1985 text was republished in paperback in 2008 as part of Cambridge University Press's digital publications series.
3. In 1999 Alan Gilbert published a study in which he returned to two of the five settlements in Bogotá that formed part of our PIHLU study in 1979, but he took a fresh random sample of lots rather than following up with the original interviewees, which was the primary aim of the 2007 study reported on here.
4. Katz, Berube, and Lang (2005) have recently begun to analyze the "first suburbs" that formed in the United States between 1950 and 1980. The research findings of the LAHN project described earlier are now beginning to offer parallel insights for Latin America, with the difference that it focuses on the first ring of irregular settlement formation between 1960 and 1980.
5. In the Puebla and Guadalajara study, Varley (1994) reported that around 15 percent of adult children exited the parental home and rented and a further 25 to 35 percent shared (either on the same lot or exiting and sharing elsewhere).
6. One also observes "for sale" signs in consolidated settlements, but this should not be taken to indicate a well-functioning housing market. Our data show that many homes remain on the market for many months or even years before selling (if ever), and others that do sell are invariably sold at bargain basement prices—one third or one half off the apparent market value (information gathered from author's 2009 fieldwork in Monterrey and Guadalajara).
7. A major 1978–1979 database of housing and household characteristics, *Public Intervention, Housing and Land Use in Latin American Cities (PIHLU)*, reported in Gilbert and Ward (1985).
8. In the original study we retained the names and addresses, ensuring confidentiality (rather than anonymity) about our respondents. Today, of course, data records are subject to much greater scrutiny from human subjects' review boards. If studies like this one are to be replicated in the future, however, then it is important that researchers adopt the confidentiality route rather than that of anonymity (which would require the expunging of all personal identification data). Had we not retained the original addresses, then this study would have been impossible. This underscores the responsibilities of lead researchers to maintain strict confidentiality in constructing their data sets (rather than anonymity) and to ensure that such confidentiality is preserved when offering public access to their data sets (as in the case of the data sets analyzed here; see <http://www.lahn.utexas.org>).
9. This is why some of the tables analyzed here only relate to data where there was a high level of confidence that the interview was being conducted on exactly the same dwelling site as thirty years earlier.
10. One of the anonymous reviewers expressed surprise that the final survey was so short given the care and time that was expended in tracking down the respondents in the first place. This is a fair criticism, but the primary aim of the study was specifically to measure the degree of turnover of ownership, as well as the nature of household change and structure compared with the earlier baseline data set. We also wanted to get some preliminary insights about property values, lot occupation by second- and third-generation family members, and inheritance patterns and expectations. It also served as a "pilot" survey to the later (2009) and more detailed, broader based surveys of innerburbs settlements in wider range of cities and countries, data that would ultimately allow us to analyze comparatively the current conditions, house structures, mobility patterns, assets, and inheritance, and so on. Furthermore, it was always intended that we would later conduct a small number of detailed qualitative "interesting case studies" with some of the families from the later 2009–2010 surveys. Indeed, in Mexico City the 2007 study led to additional qualitative work with some of the families we interviewed, resulting in a master's thesis by one of the graduate researchers (Grajeda 2008; Ward and Grajeda forthcoming) and an additional round of intensive case study interviews in the summer of 2011.
11. To comply with normal scientific study replication protocols, these data and associated coding guides can be accessed at <http://www.lahn.utexas.org> by clicking the 2007 Restudy Database link.
12. These results were from 2009 surveys across fifteen settlements (almost 1,200 cases) in Santiago, Chile; Buenos Aires, Argentina; Montevideo, Uruguay; and Guadalajara and Monterrey, Mexico (<http://www.lahn.utexas.org>). The higher end averages were common in Chile and in Mexico, whereas in Argentina and Uruguay, where settlements are not quite so old, the average number of years in residence on the lot is somewhat less (eighteen and twenty years, respectively).
13. It should be noted that the same degree of lot sharing among independent households is not as high in other cities in which we gathered data in 2009, where the average is commonly 1.4 families per lot (LAHN data). Similarly, the average total number of residents living on these lots is considerably less: an average of five persons in the four other cities not discussed here (Santiago, Montevideo, Guadalajara, and Monterrey). This suggests that the propensity to share on lots relates primarily to the operations of the land market and the low-cost housing opportunities that exist nearby—either for ownership or for rental. Land markets in both Bogotá and Mexico City are highly competitive and there is a scarcity of low-cost housing at affordable prices for new would-be self-helpers (Gilbert and Ward 1985). In Monterrey, Mexico, for example, the state sponsored FOMERREY low-cost land subdivisions generated a significant supply of new low-cost lots that provided a nearby alternative to remaining on the lot with their parents.
14. These "compound" arrangements—akin to those in tropical Africa, hence the term—are made up of several (close) kin-related families living in a single compound or residentially enclosed space (Lomnitz 1976).
15. If there is an inheritance challenge the effect will be to delay or prevent the process of title transfer to the intended beneficiaries, creating a new round of clouded titles to be "regularized" downstream (Grajeda 2008; Ward and Jiménez 2011). This new informality will further inhibit market performance, housing sales, and mobility.
16. In 2009 the following (trimmed) average values were recorded (from much larger samples): Guadalajara (\$47,100) and Monterrey (\$25,000), Mexico; Guatemala City (\$39,936); Montevideo (\$12,500),

Uruguay; and Santiago (\$27,100), Chile. In all cases the formal property (*catastral*) values, although somewhat lower, confirm that these estimated property values are realistic locally.

17. For further details on the methods see <http://www.lahn.utexas.org> (and click Methodology and Intensive Case Studies).

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