**ABSTRACT**

Today most scholars, policy makers, and low-income “slum” residents themselves eschew the term slum and some argue that it is high time to retire the term altogether (Mayne 2017). We agree, and yet recent research of consolidated informal settlements in Latin America and the United States suggests that the conventional wisdom of successful self-building trajectories are sometimes severely constrained, or stymied altogether. In this paper, we analyze why some types of housing may enter a downward decline of deterioration, into what might constitute the erstwhile term of a slum, after having successfully consolidated over 20 or more years. This paper draws upon a nine-country study through the Latin American Housing Network or LAHN ([www.lahn.utexas.org](http://www.lahn.utexas.org)) of low-income housing in Latin America with comparisons to Texas, USA. Examples from the former comprise of different types of consolidated settlements that are located in the “innerburbs” or “first suburbs” today, and where authors argue there is a need for new policy imperatives of housing and community rehab to overcome deterioration and dilapidation (Ward et al., 2015). Despite the apparent success of self-building consolidation since the 1960s and 1970s, we are now beginning to observe evidence of heavy distress to the physical fabric of dwellings and communities, a process that may be considered de facto “slumification”. This process is triggered through structural changes under neoliberalism and the “poverty of resources,” heterogeneity of land access, physical constraints and deterioration, the lack of legal titles and title clouding, densification and stress on the built environment, and environmental hazards, and natural and man-made disasters. However, in part, slumification occurs due to the failure of policies to respond to deteriorated housing conditions after years of intensive use. Unless policies addressing the triggers of slumification area addressed, we argue that today’s consolidated informal settlements may very well become the slums of the future.

Keywords: Informal Housing, Slum terminology, Latin American cities, Public Policy and Housing Rehab, Neighborhood Densification