Urban Mortality in Lima, Peru: The Socio Economic Inequality of the City Studied from a within-City Analysis of Infant Mortality

Urban mortality has been importantly studied in United States in the last decade producing an interesting amount of works that by now have constituted a significant understanding of the factors that affect patterns of mortality in metropolitan areas as well as an important tradition in the use of methods and data. A spatial perspective has also been developed in connection with the preoccupation of the role of neighborhoods and communities in explaining the differentials of mortality within a city and the concern of the effects of spatial segregation (Massey and Denton 1987, Guest et al.1998 among others).

This already important branch of studies suggest us different possibilities of research for Peru, where individual level and aggregated level data produced by censuses and surveys has become accessible in the last years, but where demographic research using them are still a few. In addition, lack of research in the area of mortality is serious. However, sociological research in economic issues as poverty and living standards has been and it is important in Peru since the last decade, fundamentally in relation with state policy making, for example the Peruvian fund of social investment FONCODES have calculated several poverty indexes for all the districts of Peru in order to target state investment for the poorer areas after the structural adjustment occurred in 1993. On the other hand rural areas have been studied but the dense majority of studies on socio-economic issues using aggregated level data have been conducted in urban areas, most importantly in Lima city. A common explanation of this tendency is that Lima concentrates around 6,987, 984 inhabitants from the national population of 26,749,000 (2002 projections).

Our aim in this paper is to use both types of research traditions (US urban mortality studies and Peruvian research on socio-economic issues in urban areas) when examining the patterns of urban mortality in metropolitan Lima, considering as key elements for areal variations in infant mortality rates, the socio-economic factors at the level of the 43 districts of this city. Since postneonatal mortality is interpreted as a better indicator of the effect of socioeconomic factors on infant mortality, I plan to calculate postneonatal mortality rates for each one of the 43 districts of Lima as the dependent variable. With this purpose I will use the 2000 DHS for Peru, and recode the clusters selected for each one of the districts into a new variable: "district". As predictors of this multiple regression I will use in a first model, measures of adult educational attainment, unemployment, and number of single-parent households, utilizing as sources two different household surveys of Peru: ENAHO and ENNIV for this year. In a second model I will use the poverty indexes by district calculated by FONCODES the social investment fund mentioned before.

This is a work in progress, and it is in its initial phases. However it will be concluded by December 2003 as a term paper for the Human Mortality seminar conducted by Dr. Parker Frisbie in the Program of Demography of the University of Texas at Austin and it is also part of graduate level works motivated by the "Project on

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