Abstract

This article analyses urban poverty from the perspective of social vulnerability in five communities living in the city of Cali ranked in socioeconomic strata 1, 2 and 3. The work involved combining surveys having structured and open questions and collecting verbal accounts. The empirical evidence revealed some risk situations in these households within the context of Colombia’s economic recession from 1998 to 2004. The most frequently identified strategies were indebtedness, reducing household spending on food and clothing and incorporating other household remembres in seeking paid work.

**Key words:** social vulnerability, subjective poverty, cluster analysis. **JEL:** D63, I38, J19.